



New courses gain students' interest.



Sophomore teaches English in Taiwan.



Preview of all fall sport teams.



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Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA

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## GUIDANCE

# Administration changes aim to benefit students

BY Caitlyn Chen

Following former assistant principal Kevin Mount's departure at the end of last year, the administration recognized the need to reorganize. Mount cited burnout with being the school's main disciplinarian as a main reason for stepping down.

On behalf of the other administra-

tors, assistant principal Brian Safine said that the old delegation of duties was not healthy.

"None of us got in this business to dole out discipline or talk to angry parents," Safine said. "It's not at the heart of what we do as educators."

Instead of seeing the whole picture, according to Safine, they were stuck in a "silo," unable to connect with the stu-

dents on a more personal level.

For this reason, each student has been paired with an administrator in addition to a guidance counselor this year. The administrator will handle all issues related to student support, including discipline, activities and academic advice.

Safine, previously only in charge of academics, is now paired with students with last names A-G. Assistant principal

Brian Thompson, Mount's replacement, is paired with students with last names H-M. Assistant principal Kerry Moh-nike, previously in charge of activities and special education, will now work with students N-S, and principal Paul Robinson, last names T-Z.

In order to retain consistency, the

>> **GUIDANCE** on pg. 4

## Controlling the cycle

### ACTION SPORTS ALLSTARS PROMOTE ANTI-BULLYING

BY Allison Lin

Upbeat music blared from multiple speakers in the parking lot on Sept. 2 as students gathered around a 14-foot half pipe. Collectively gasping, the mass of students stared as professional inline skater Eito Yasutoko from Japan floated and flew through every inch of the portable ramp, sometimes reaching heights 10 or more feet above it.

The Action Sports Allstars (ASA) show is an interactive action sports circuit that has teamed up with the U.S. Marine Corps and the Anti-Defamation League to discourage bullying among teens. Following the motto "No Place for Hate," the show included an emcee who served as a commentator while repeating a few

>> **ASSEMBLY** on pg. 6



BMX rider Trevor Meyer performs a trick during the ASA show on Sept. 2.

## MEASURE E

# PROJECTS START TO TAKE SHAPE

BY Kevin Chow & Jason Zhao

Walking onto campus the first day of school, students could not help but notice the swath of uncovered ground next to the McAfee Center.

This now-barren spot will become home to a new multimillion-dollar music building.

Creating a new state-of-the-art music building is the result of the Measure E bond, a measure passed in the spring of 2014 that will renovate facilities at both Los Gatos and Saratoga High School.

The new music building will be approximately 23,000 square feet and have two stories. Other projects around campus include an additional multi-purpose room to meet the needs of sports teams and other groups, renovation to the

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## STAFF

### >> what'sinside

#### NEW FACES

#### School welcomes seven staff members

Alves, Axelsson, Chung, Heher, Rieber, Ross and Tarbox join faculty. **pg. 3**

#### LIFE ADVICE

#### Surviving each year

Falcon staffers, faculty and alumni share their high school advice. **pg. 12-13**

#### ECUADOR

#### Serving abroad

Three seniors spend 10 days in Ecuador to dig a clean water trench for a rural village. **pg. 17**

## Former Branham principal joins administrative team

BY SpringMa & EileenToh

The clock strikes 5:30 a.m. as Saratoga High's new assistant principal Brian Thompson prepares for another school day. With his contagious smile and black rectangular sunglasses perched on his head, Thompson begins the morning routine of making breakfast for his three kids, "jumping into the car" with his two sons who attend Foothill Elementary, and finally arriving on campus with wife, SHS guidance counselor Monique Young.

In the morning chaos of students rushing to their first-

period classes, Thompson greets both staff and students, directing traffic in the parking lots with campus supervisor Mark Hernandez.

Thompson, who recently just began this routine, was welcomed to the school's administration in the summer. He assumed the position of former assistant principal Kevin Mount, who resigned last school year and is now working at the district office.



Thompson

Before coming to Saratoga High, Thompson was the principal of Branham High School (BHS) in San Jose for the past three years. He previously was an assistant

>> **THOMPSON** on pg. 6

## LANGUAGES

## French program struggles to find permanent teacher

BY FionaSequeira & RachelZhang

The administration has been scrambling to find a qualified full-time French teacher to teach all five levels of the program. French students have had three different teachers in the first three weeks of school and are currently taught by part-time substitute Scott Nelson, who does not speak fluent French and was left without any lesson plans.

"We really appreciate all of [Nelson's] hard work, but we're still searching for someone who is much more qualified in the French language," principal Paul Robinson said.

The lack of a permanent and qualified French teacher

was in part due to the administration's late start in interviewing potential candidates after the departure of former teacher Laura Lizundia to Gunn High School in June. According to Robinson, it was late July when the hiring process began. The administration was excited when it found Lori Carbone, a highly qualified French teacher from Scotts Valley High School, to fill the spot.

Carbone and Katia Touma Saade, another qualified French teacher, taught all of the French classes during the first week of school. Before SHS could fully bring Carbone on board, Scotts Valley strictly enforced her contract

>> **FRENCH** on pg. 6



news >> briefs

39 named National Merit Semifinalists

Out of over 1.5 million students who took the PSAT last October, 39 SHS seniors had scores among the top 1 percent, making them National Merit Semifinalists. This number matches last year's school record of 39. These students earned a score of 222 or above out of a possible 240.

Semifinalists of the competition who apply to be finalists have the opportunity to become National Merit Scholars in March 2016, when they will receive scholarship benefits and materials from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

Semifinalists: Nihar Agrawal, Avinash Arjavalingam, Nithika Arunkumar, Adithya Bellathur, Michelle Cen, Ashley Chen, Helen Chen, Jennifer Chen, Varun Choudhary, Giulia Corno, Daniel Eem, Yena Jeong, Andrew Jiang, Kayla Kim, Nicholas Lai, Chester Leung, Alexander Li, Elizabeth Li, Celine Liang, Katherine Liu, Nupur Maheshwari, Jayce Malwanar, Farbod Moghadam, Brendan Ney, Meera Kachamallu, Ashroita Ramesh, Kanaai Shah, Michelle Shen, Sean Shi, Dorrie Tang, Matthew Tran, Oksana Trifonova, Rishi Veerapaneni, Janani Velchamy, Kelly Xiao, Harrison Yang, Lisa Yu, Kristine Zhang, Andrew Zhou.

— Roland Shen

Falcon and SHSTV begin merged program

SHSTV and the Falcon newspaper have merged together as one program this year by creating a class where students can practice both print and broadcast journalism, while also bolstering the broadcast program.

By combining the two programs with the help of SHSTV adviser Tony Palma, Tyler said more students can "join in on the journalism experience, but [the school] can also keep the weekly broadcasts."

The two staffs now work in side-by-side rooms. The third-period Falcon staff currently consists of 43 students, but every six weeks, another group of six- or seven first-year staffers will work on SHSTV in Room 304 and learn the basics of broadcast journalism.

"As of now, I like working with SHSTV," said junior Mary Maccoun, one of the first-year Falcon staffers who is starting the school year working with SHSTV. "My first assignment was to film the Movie Night, and even though it is a struggle to learn how to use the equipment, I enjoy experiencing the different types of journalism."

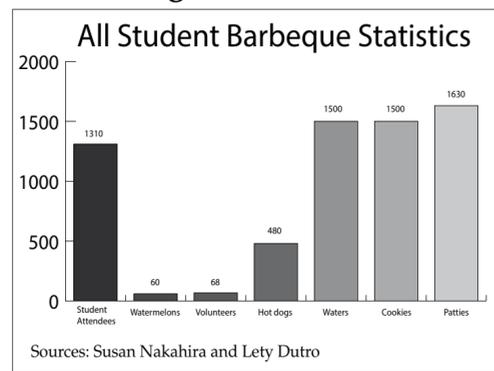
In addition to the rotating groups of Falcon staffers, the SHSTV staff has 11 "core members." The staff includes returning member junior William Chen and several MAP students and freshmen who have previous broadcast journalism experience with Griffin News Network (GNN) at Redwood Middle School. Senior Rotem Shaked also serves as the bridge between the Falcon and SHSTV staffs as the head broadcast editor.

As of now, the program still needs more adjustments, but according to Tyler, these problems will only be solved with time.

"With the talent from the Falcon and SHSTV members, it is just a positive for everybody," Tyler said. "If we continue to build it and get more core members, it could be really awesome."

— Eileen Toh

>> falconfigures



— Roland Shen

>> picturethis



FALCON // ISABELLE YANG

BBQ BASH >> A PTSO parent volunteer serves a variety of burgers and hot dogs to hungry students as they line up at the annual all-school barbeque. The barbeque was held in the quad on Aug. 24.

PERFORMANCES

Senior reflects on singing with solo recital in McAfee

By Maya Prasad

When her parents first heard her sing "Part of Your World" from The Little Mermaid in the back of the car, senior Ankitha Sarvesh, then a 3-year-old, was immediately put in voice lessons.

Fourteen years later, Sarvesh is looking back on a very different milestone: her first solo recital. On the evening of Aug. 23, on the McAfee Center stage, she performed a variety of music for her friends and family.

"My mom always wanted to put on a show before I graduated," Sarvesh said. "I thought it would be pretty cool to do the show with all my grand-

parents and friends around." Sarvesh started her singing journey with elementary school musicals and began studying the art more seriously with music teacher Margie Alejandro in sixth grade.

I thought it would be pretty cool to do the show with all my grandparents and friends around.

With Alejandro's help, Sarvesh started preparing for the recital in March and rehearsed the 15 songs on a daily basis for four months.

"[Even] after preparing

so much, I was still nervous about completely forgetting words because of nerves," Sarvesh said.

Luckily, Sarvesh's fears were unfounded. Despite facing an audience of 380 people, she performed everything from the Broadway tune "Reflection" by Mulan to the German classic "Wie Melodien" by Johannes Brahms without missing a single note.

Sarvesh said this show will not be her last, as she plans to study music in college.

"Next year, I will definitely continue singing either in [a] choir, as a soloist or even [in an] a capella [group]," Sarvesh said. ♦

MARCHING BAND

Musicians focus on Rose Parade

By Karissa Dong & Katherine Zhou

With Pasadena's Rose Parade approaching on Jan. 1, the marching band has adapted its class curriculum to help prepare for the parade's 7.2-mile march.

"[The parade] is a national, televised event, and requires a lot of preparations for the group, one of them being physical fitness," music director Jonathan Pwu said.

Physical training intensified during band camp, two weeks before school started. In the current rehearsal program, the students take part in endurance-building routines, such as running six laps around the track, and core-strengthening exercises like planks.

To prepare for the grand event, the band will also be performing in three local parades — the Cupertino Tournament of Bands on Oct. 10, the Foothill Band Review on Oct. 24 and the Los Gatos Holiday Parade on Dec. 5.

"I'm really excited [for the Rose Parade] because it's a unique opportunity that many people don't get to experience," junior manager Joyce Lai said. "It's one thing to watch it on television, but to be part of the event is something special."

According to Pwu, minor staffing changes have placed him in charge of the "visual aspects" of marching band, while band administrator Anthony Lanzino is responsible for the "musical aspects."

Together, they work on the show design, making edits to the musical score and creating concepts for patterns on the field.

"The students have been exceptionally hard-working and diligent this year, given the bigger push, but they are rehearsing at a really high level," Pwu said.

Meanwhile, the drum majors — seniors Shiva Djabbari, Katie McLaughlin and Avi Arjavalingam — have been focusing on the basic skills,

devoting practice time to perfecting their baton and mace twirling routines.

"The band as a whole has been focusing on simple things like marching forwards," she said. "We're basically cleaning up the basics to be able to march really well."

Besides football game performances, the band will host a home show on Oct. 3, participate in the WBA Dublin Competition on Oct. 31 as well as the Bands of America Regional on Nov. 7 in American Canyon.

This year's theme, "Quest," is based on the mobile game "Monument Valley," in which princess Ida is led through mazes of optical illusions. The show, resembling an optical illusion journey, has four stages that represent the four elements: fire, water, earth and air.

"Our goal is to have the most fun, build a family like we always should and be in shape for the Rose Parade," McLaughlin said. ♦



NEW YEAR, NEW STAFF

GRAPHIC BY MAYA PRASAD

Health/Driver's Ed teacher strives for an enjoyable experience

Current athletic trainer Liz Alves has spent the past seven years tending to athletes' sprained ankles, swollen fingers, scraped knees, concussions and other injuries that occur on the school's athletic fields, courts and pool.

This year, she will also be teaching Health/Driver's Ed, along with her job as sports trainer.

Alves got her undergrad degree in Sports Science from the University of Pacific and her Masters at San Jose State.

She then went on to get her teaching credential from National University.

She took online classes while maintaining her job at SHS as athletic trainer.

Alves said she decided to teach this course because she wants to make an impact on the freshmen.

"The freshmen are pretty traumatized when they come into high school, so I try

to make class relaxing and easy going," she said. "I want it to be a break from other stressful classes by not giving too much homework."

As the school's trainer, Alves has always been interested and passionate about helping students make good choices, because some choices students make now will affect them later in life.

"I'm a firm believer in giving students information, letting them acquire facts themselves and then [helping] them make their own decisions rather than saying 'Don't do that,'" Alves said.

Alves said she is excited to teach this course because she finds working with the freshmen very entertaining.

She also hopes that her students will both enjoy the class and benefit from it.

"I'm hoping [the class] will [teach them] to make good life choices since they will encounter similar situations to the ones we discuss in class through the years," Alves said.

— Ami Nachiappan

Rieber joins staff to assist students with learning differences

Newly hired teacher Clare Rieber first became interested in teaching when she started behavioral therapy for kids with autism in Santa Cruz. The experience made her realize that she really enjoyed working with kids; thus, she began to look for a full-time teaching position.

Rieber started her first real teaching job as a resource specialist teacher for Aptos High School in 2009.

Eventually, she soon started to look for a school district with a better learning environment for her students and herself.

"I [wanted] to be at a school [with] more resources and support than Aptos," Rieber said.

During her eighth year as a specialist teacher, she found a job in the special education department at Saratoga High.

At the school, she supports and assists students with learning differences,

and co-teaches English MAP 10 with social studies teacher Mike Davey and English teacher Suzanne Herzman during first and second period.

Rieber also assists the International Aid Services (IAS) program. Students in the program have three periods of study hall, where teachers help them keep track of their work, finish their assignments and study for tests.

"So far [the school has] been awesome," Rieber said. "I feel really supported. The teaching staff is really welcoming and friendly [and are always] asking [me] if I need anything and checking in with me."

— Jay Kim

Axelsson substitutes for teacher out on maternity leave

AP Government/Economics and Psychology teacher Erik Axelsson, a Los Gatos High School alumnus, recently joined the school's staff to begin his teaching career.

He is substituting for teacher Hana Chen, who is out on maternity leave for the first semester.

After graduating from Los Gatos, Axelsson joined the Navy and worked there as a ship serviceman.

When he left the Navy, he decided to dive into the field of hair styling.

He thus decided to go to Zenzi's Beauty college, located at San Francisco, to become a hairdresser.

His hair styling career continued for about 20 years until the profession became mundane for him.

"After 10 years of doing hair, I started to get really sick of it, and it wasn't really fulfilling anymore,"

Axelsson said.

Eleven years ago, Axelsson made up his mind to be a history teacher. He went back to school to get his bachelor's degree at University of California, Los Angeles, and teaching credential at San Jose State University.

Axelsson is happy to make LG-SUHSD the first district he has worked for.

Axelsson said he is also delighted to be teaching in such an education-centered environment as Saratoga High so far.

"It's great to be finally be teaching in a district where education is coveted as it is," Axelsson said. "It's been a long hard journey for me, but it's really gratifying to be back in the district where it all started."

Axelsson expects to find a permanent job elsewhere or to continue subbing after Chen returns from maternity leave.

— Jay Kim

Say 'hey' to new computer science and photography teacher

The school's math department gained a valuable staff member this year with the addition of Judi Heher (pronounced HEY-ER). As a first-year teacher, she is teaching AP Computer Science, Intro to Programming and Web Development and Digital Photography. She is also the new adviser for the Robotics team.



Heher

Heher earned her bachelor's degree of mathematics at the University of Waterloo, in Canada, along with a master's degree in education from Santa Clara University. Previously,

she taught at Valley Christian High School. She, however, did not originally intend to become a Falcon.

"I thought I was applying for a job at Los Gatos High School, and as it turns out, [math teacher Debra] Troxell saw my resumé and asked me to interview for a math position here," Heher said.

Heher said she is looking forward to meeting all the students and staff at this school after having had her "best first week of school ever."

— Claire Rhee

Ross substitutes for teacher Ryan while on maternity leave

With English 9 teacher Susanna Ryan out on maternity leave, substitute Sheryl Ross will be teaching her classes for the first six weeks of school.

Ross attended Cabrillo College in Aptos, where she studied Jazz Theory, and then to San Jose State University in 2010 and graduating with degrees in performance for violin and music education.

Ross has worked as a substitute teacher for the Los Gatos-Saratoga Union School District for the past three years in a variety of subjects.

"I couldn't ask

for a better working environment," Ross said. "Everyone has just been so supportive and I am thrilled to be in such a progressive, academic environment."

Since she is prioritizing her six-week task, she has put many of her projects on hold, including the publication of her own book. Despite the sacrifice, she thoroughly enjoys her time in the classroom, where she gets to see the same kids regularly.

"I know I'll miss [the kids] a lot when the six weeks are up," Ross said.

When Ryan returns, Ross will continue in her role as a substitute teacher, rotating around various classrooms.

— Claire Rhee

English teacher enjoys working in new atmosphere

Ninth- and tenth graders are getting to know English teacher Rosalie Chung, who is currently taking Kelly Wissolik's place during a one-year maternity leave. Chung has previously taught at Gilroy High School and Aragon High School in San Mateo.

Chung said she wanted to teach at SHS because she values experiences, in the same way she enjoys traveling to new places. She views it as "a good way to grow professionally as a teacher and as a person," as she is able to learn alongside different students and teachers.

"In this school, there are many respectful students who want to work hard without much encouragement," Chung said.

English piqued an interest in

Chung during her time in the University of Michigan. While becoming a teacher, she set one major goal: giving students the tools they needed to continue improving and building themselves throughout the school year.

"Being able to read, write and communicate well are skills that are definitely important to be taught," Chung said. "They'll be needed during college and in the professional world. English will be applicable for the rest of your life."

— Vivien Zhang

New Media Arts teacher offers diverse background to the school

Media Arts teacher Joel Tarbox, former Media Arts teacher Cathy Leather's replacement, is teaching Multimedia Journalism, Media Arts 2 and Senior Media Arts Lab. He serves as MAP's technology coordinator.

Previously, Tarbox taught at Pacific Collegiate School in Santa Cruz for eight years, a charter school with college preparation focus. At Pacific Collegiate, he taught many subjects, including Video Production, Graphic Design, AP Art History and AP Studio Art.

One of his personal interests also relates to the arts: painting. He earned a master's degree in fine arts. In his free time, he paints in his

own studio and sells his artwork. Tarbox has been an admirer of the school's MAP program for several years after visiting several years ago.

"I was impressed with way it combined academics and digital arts, a very collaborative process," Tarbox said.

After coming to the school this year, he has found the environment exceptional, and enjoys its "beautiful facility and positive attitudes."

"[All of my students] are pretty good natured and affable, which is great because they're willing to follow along and work with me without calling them out to pay attention," Tarbox said. "I'm really looking forward to working with my students this year."

— Vivien Zhang

MEASURE E >>>

continued from pg. 1

paths near the tennis courts, turfing of the upper field and a Wi-Fi upgrade, among many other improvements.

According to principal Paul Robinson, construction for a new music building was long overdue.

"Our band program is huge," Robinson said. "The facilities they have right now were built way back in the '60s, so it can't house a band that can put 200 people on a field. They were just inadequate."

To make room for the new building, the testing and learning center, the CASSY program and the ASSIST program, all of which used to be housed in the demolished Building H, will be moved near the parking lot behind the office by Labor Day.

Relocating the music program opens up space on campus to build more classrooms for the Media Arts Program or for traditional instruction, Robinson said.

In addition to the new music facilities, a multi-purpose room will be built near the tennis courts.

The exact location has not yet been determined.

"It's almost like putting in one more

small gymnasium, yet you can use it for all sorts of different purposes," Robinson said. "You can use it for instruction purposes, and you can use it for athletic purposes."

Other large-scale projects are continuing on at the school, including the turfing of the upper field and softball field.

This upgrade will cut the high water costs involved in maintaining these fields.

Additionally, the multi-purpose field will be lit, so more than one group can use the fields for evening practices.

While these projects are still gradually progressing, other projects have been completed, including construction meant to prevent water runoff on the paths around the pool and the tennis courts.

"That whole upper field used to drain right through the middle of the tennis courts and run all the way to the parking lot, so that our parking lot would have mud and dirt all over it from time to time," Robinson said. "Now we've redone all the drainage for the fields, because they'll be artificial turf, and they'll drain a lot easier."

Stopping the runoff will also prevent structural damage to the tennis courts.

On the technology side of Measure E, the school is also working to upgrade its Wi-Fi.



Measure E is funding the construction of a new music building by the McAfee Center.

Robinson said that the plan is to expand the Wi-Fi bandwidth to increase speed and strength, while also increasing coverage, so that there would be Wi-Fi around the sports stadium.

Wi-Fi upgrades are set to be completed by the end of September.

Turfing is expected to be finished by late October of this year and current cal-

culations estimate that the music building will be completed in July 2017.

Costs for these projects are expected to around \$19 million out of the more than \$40 million of allotted funds for Measure E construction on Saratoga High's campus. ♦

Updates can be found on Twitter by following @SHSMeasureE.

CONSTRUCTION

# Softball team protests against artificial turf

By Neil Rao & Summer Smith

Looking around school, renovations seem to be happening in every corner.

But not all have been received with enthusiasm.

One of these areas is the softball field, which, along with the upper field, is newly being covered in turf.

The only area that will not be turfed on the softball field is the pitcher's mound and the batter's box.

However, some members of the softball team say they aren't happy with the decision to put in the turf and wanted more of a say in the matter.

Senior Eleni Spirakis, a pitcher on the varsity softball team, raised concerns last May in a letter to the Los Gatos Weekly Times concerning the efficacy

of turfing the softball field and the likelihood of actually saving water. However, their main concern lies in the way that softball will be played on the surface.

"(Artificial turf) is hot, unsafe, and it's not real softball in

"We have so little field space that we need to be able to maximize its usage. By utilizing turf, we'll save close to a million gallons of water this year from those fields," Robinson said. "The turf is also safer because the surface is more consistent than a dirt or grass field."

Spirakis, however, argues that playing on a turfed softball field is unorthodox and not beneficial to the playing style of the game.

"Softball is played with a dirt infield, which can be seen on nearly all college campuses and at the fields of other schools," Spirakis wrote. "There is no evidence that [turf] will save water or reduce maintenance, as the district claims."

Despite the softball team's

protests, the district is still moving forward with the renovation.

The upper field, softball field and the walkway to the tennis courts and football field are currently closed for the construction.

"The district refuses to listen. All our complaints fall on deaf ears," Spirakis wrote in the letter to the Los Gatos Weekly. "We have actively expressed our dislike for the plan, but the district continues to tell us that they will waste the money whether we like it or not."

According to Robinson, the school has contacted other schools that have already made the switch to turf.

The administration discovered that most schools that did not turf the whole softball field went back to do so because having a combination of surfaces was inconvenient.

"I was surprised by the letter, because I'm happy to sit down and speak with any stu-

dent or team about any issue," Robinson said. "Not one softball player ever said a word to me about the field."

The team also expressed concerns about whether lights would be installed for evening or night games.

"Lights will be installed, but we won't play many night games," Robinson said. "The lights give us the ability to practice a little later when multiple sports have to use the fields."

With construction irreversible at this point, only time will tell how the players react to the turf when they begin to play on it next spring.

"I appreciate their thoughts and ideas, but [the softball team] came very late in the process," said Robinson. "I have to look out for what's best for the future of our teams and school. While there might be disagreement with my decision from some, I still have to do what I believe is in the best interest of our school." ♦

**T**here is no evidence that [turf] will save water or reduce maintenance, as the district claims.



senior Eleni Spirakis

GUIDANCE >>>

continued from pg. 1

updated divisions based on last names will not apply for current seniors, although they will share the same benefits in terms of being paired with an administrator.

"Anytime a student comes to the office, any one of two people will be able to connect with them, giving them the support they need," Safine said.

Safine hopes that by assigning each student to a specific administrator, the administrator will be more aware of a each student's needs or strengths. As a result, students and the educators in the office will form stronger connections.

In addition, during college application season, the burden of writing letters of recommendations will be more evenly

distributed between guidance counselors and administrators.

Safine said they hope the guidance counselor-administrator team will further personalize the office support system.

In cases involving more than one student, the administrators will form a "tag-team," collaborating with all the students and administrators involved.

Although this collaboration may require more work, Safine is confident that their efforts will pay off in the long run. The change has already had an impact on many students, including junior Mitali Shanbhag.

"I definitely support this change in the sense that along with being more connected with members of the staffing department, students also have the opportunity of [seeking] advice from two different [people]," Shanbhag said. ♦

**As a result, students and the educators in the office will form stronger connections.**



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COURSES

# New electives add creative options

by David Fan

The school's budding musicians and writers now have two more classes that allow them to improve their skills.

Modular Guitar Study, taught by Anthony Lanzino, allows experienced guitarists to hone their skills and also gives students who have never touched a guitar to learn basic playing skills. Lanzino has separated the class into three levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced, which is why the class is called Modular Guitar Study.

Over the year-long course, students will learn how to play at least five songs and eventually perform in a year-end concert.

Each level requires the student to incorporate different types of skills. For instance, a beginner will play only the chords of the song, while an advanced student will play the "difficult arpeggiated parts of the song," Lanzino said.

Since there are 28 students in the class, Lanzino said the most daunting part of his class for him is maintaining all skill levels.

"The challenge in a class that has multiple skill levels is how to meet the needs

of each person," Lanzino said. "I'm figuring out ways to try not to bore the advanced player and not to overwhelm the new player."

Lanzino hopes to expand the Modular Guitar Study to have each level be its own separate period so that he will be able to spend more time on each skill level and provide guitars for every student.

For now, students have to bring their own guitars. Senior Corrine Bryan, an intermediate level player, agreed that separate classes would be ideal.

"Smaller class sizes would make the class better since it is a little bit tough to have one on one with the teacher to learn faster," Bryan said.

Creative Writing, an English elective taught by Sarah Thermond, requires students to write stories based on different types of fiction, such as personal narrative, poetry and script writing.

Along with those stories, students will also learn about vocabulary and character development across the whole school year.

Students also write in their journals, which include open-ended free write prompts, notes on lectures and specific



Anthony Lanzino plays guitar for his students, who copy him based on his instructions.

exercises. She said these journals will help them with their creativity.

So far, Thermond has seen a dramatic increase in students' interest since course scheduling at the end of last year.

"We have added new students every day for the first two weeks," Thermond said. "We had to go over week one's curriculum again."

With 20 students, she believes that this class will become a challenging community where students can expand their writing skills.

"[This class] has a really nice environment," senior Diane Katchour said. "The teacher is really friendly and really enthusiastic about the class and so are all the students." ♦

COMMUNITY

# Saratoga residents protest cell tower construction

By Amith Galivanche & Jihau Yu

A plan to construct a Verizon Wireless cellular tower on the roof of the Saratoga Presbyterian Church has triggered protest from locals, who believe that such a tower raises health and safety concerns.

The Saratoga City Council approved Verizon's plan to build five cellular towers in a 4-1 vote this past June. Three of the towers will be on Prospect Road, one is on Douglas Lane and the last one is near Saratoga High.

Because of the protests, construction has yet to begin.

Hao Zheng, a Saratoga resident with children soon entering high school, started a petition on iPetitions this summer against the towers. He claimed that the towers are unnecessary and the risks outweigh the improved cell phone service. The petition has since garnered over 270 signatures.

The petitioners' main concern is the city's approval would change the church

into an "eligible facility." This means that other wireless carriers can legally build additional cellular towers there without extensive reviews by the city.

Besides the possibility of more towers, Zheng is also worried about the potential hazards. He explained that the radio frequency emissions from the tower may cause serious health problems.

"The effect of exposing children to electromagnetic radiation is not well studied," Zheng said. "We may not know the magnitude of the long-term risks until 20 years later."

Petitioners are also concerned about the 25 Kilowatt generator and 132-gallon fuel tank that will be backup power to the tower, as they are highly flammable.

Since the construction was passed under so-called co-location laws, the petition also addresses the definition of co-location by the federal government. Co-location refers to the legal placement of an antenna on an existing structure for communications purposes and allows cellular towers to be built under

co-location laws. The petitioners believe that the city is interpreting this clause too liberally in approving Verizon's construction.

Zheng said he disagrees with the interpretation of the law because Verizon already offers the best coverage in the area. Since co-location laws only apply to the improvement of communications, Zheng believes that the law does not apply here since the existing coverage is adequate already.

However, Edwin Ordenez, Saratoga's city community director, argues that the current site should be considered a co-location site because the antennas will be placed on top of an existing utility. Ordenez said that the current utility poles are located above high voltage lines which are 30 feet in the air.

Ultimately, Zheng and his supporters hope to revise the city's guidelines on co-location to prevent future building.

Councilmember Rishi Kumar has not taken any direct action preventing the Herriman Avenue tower from being

built, but, according to the San Jose Mercury News, was the only council member who voted against the Prospect towers during the Aug. 19 council meeting.

"New cell phone towers may be necessary [in the future]," Kumar said. "But it is important to establish a framework of how we make changes in Saratoga."

Like the petitioners, Kumar believes that the ultimate solution is to update the city's guidelines on cell towers.

"Saratoga's wireless communication towers and antennas ordinance needs to be updated," Kumar said.

On the other hand, principal Paul Robinson said he is not as concerned about the tower installations.

"The environmental study notified us on what was going on and what it will look like and it wasn't concerning to me," Robinson said.

Robinson added that the proposed cell tower will be built far away from where students will be.

A public appeal is scheduled for Sept. 16 at City Hall at 7 p.m. ♦

SPEECH AND DEBATE

# National competition a rewarding event for alumni

By Vibha Seshadri & Roland Shen

2015 graduates Anjali Manghnani, Deepti Kannan and Sudeep Raj traveled to Dallas from June 14-19 and lived the dream of every serious speech and debater: competing in the national tournament.

Manghnani participated in Original Oratory, Kannan in Lincoln Douglas Debate and Raj in World's Parliamentary. While Manghnani and Kannan did not qualify for elimination rounds, Raj made it to double ocfinals, the first elimination round, with a team of selected parliamentary debate members on the California Forensics League. He earned a spot on the team due to his own high ranking in the league.

Despite the intensity of the tournament, Manghnani said that it was an amazing experience.

"We met teams from all across the country and even internationally, and it was an honor to compete with the best of the best," Manghnani said. "But competition was definitely tough. I think everyone on our team could attest to how difficult each round was."

Kannan, now a freshman at Stanford University, said that her high school experience on the team was "transformative," but she is ready to explore something new in college since college debate is incredibly time consuming.

"I will use the public speaking skills I gained from this activity in my future endeavors though," Kannan said.

Newcomers welcomed to the team

On the other hand, as a new season of speech and debate begins, new competitors began practicing on Aug. 23 at a speech and debate retreat at the high school. Adviser Chris Harris and parent

committee president Sunder Raj organized the event in order to ease freshmen into the program and prepare for the upcoming season.

"Although [the freshmen] have only competed at a middle school level before, they seem very prepared for the more competitive [nature] of high school debate," Harris said.

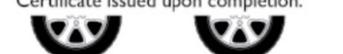
Returning speech and debaters attended the retreat as well. For them, the retreat was both a review and a practice for the upcoming season.

"I'm excited to learn more about debate this year, and I think the camp has gotten me even more excited for the first tournament," sophomore debater Ayush Aggarwal said. ♦

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ASSEMBLY >>

continued from pg. 1

bullying statistics.

The athletes include Yasutoko, professional skateboarder Nolan Munroe and professional BMX riders Zach Newman, Trevor Meyer and Jimmy Walker. All five athletes have won gold, silver or bronze medals at the renowned X Games, a world-level competition that focuses on professional extreme sports.

"Although the assembly was unorthodox in comparison to the other assemblies we have had in the past, ASA put on a show that was a lot more interactive," junior Mitali Shanbhag said. "The stunts really caught my attention."

While the athletes performed dangerous tricks on the ramp, the emcee commented on the athlete's career records and achievements. At some point, he began to throw in a few statistics about bullying. Though the statistics were alarming and informative, some students were

too distracted by the show-stopping moves and tricks being done on the ramp. "The whole concept of the assembly was really cool, but the facts about bullying seemed really forced," senior

Josh Dey said. "Overall, it was really fun and informative, but it could've been better if the bullying segments were weaved in better."

Senior Karen Chen wished the athletes had spoken more. "If the athletes had told us about their experiences, it would be more relevant," Chen said. ♦

ASA put on a show that was a lot more interactive with the students junior Mitali Shanbhag



Rollerblader Eito Yasutoko performs a 10-foot mid-air trick amidst a cheering crowd.

FRENCH >>

continued from pg. 1

and demanded she stay.

Although Carbone returned to Scotts Valley, Saade stayed to teach the French classes during the second week of school. Shortly after at the end of the second week, she too left, opting for a full-time position in the Campbell Union High School District.

"There's a teacher shortage in California, and I think we're really seeing that in this situation," Robinson said. "We're actually looking at credentialed folks who have been academic French tutors to come on board and team up with students in the French classes."

Current French students are disconcerted by the succession of teachers in the first few weeks of school and are hoping for more stability.

"Everyone is confused about what the future holds for the French program and for us students," senior Darby Williams, a French 5 AP student, said. "We're excited to learn French and it's unfortunate that we don't have a teacher to help us."

According to Robinson, 100 students signed up for French this year, and 35 students are enrolled in French 1. These numbers are far smaller than those of Spanish and Chinese.

Kim Bergkamp, who taught levels 1 and 3, left for a full-time position at Los Gatos High School, where the French program is growing. Lizundia, who taught levels 2, 4 Honors, and 5 AP, decided to teach French at Gunn High School, which is closer to her home and has a robust French program.

"Both Madame Lizundia and I love our students and the program at SHS," Bergkamp said. "We fought hard for support of our program, but we were not given any guarantee that the French classes would survive the next couple of years. We talked a lot about it, and with heavy hearts, we had to look ahead."

Thirty-eight students are currently enrolled in the newly combined first period 4 Honors/5 AP class. Many of these students are frustrated by the lack of organization and believe that the current structure is detrimental to their progress in the language.

"We are not doing much in French class right now, so it's a waste of time," junior George Wang said. "With two teachers, this structure would have worked out pretty well, but with one teacher managing both classes, especially with the size of the 4H/5AP

class, it's hard to get the same kind of attention from the teacher." Senior Yena Jeong, who is a 5 AP student, echoes Wang's sentiment. "I just don't think that it makes sense," Jeong said. "We're a huge class, and I believe we should be split up because there are not enough resources to

teach both classes in one time period. I can tell that [the administration] is trying, but I feel like we are being shuffled around right now."

In addition to the 4H/5 AP combination, French 2 (12 students) and French 3 (14 students) have been combined into one class this year due to a shortage of students. Despite the less than ideal circumstances, students are trying to see the positive side in the situation.

"It's upsetting that [Mr. Nelson] doesn't speak French, but he's doing his best," French 3 student freshman Khara Berkowitz-Sklar said. "He's teaching us aspects of French culture because he used to live in France."

According to Robinson, the future of the French program depends on the level of student interest.

"If students are iffy about their commitment to French, then it doesn't make a lot of sense for [the program] to continue on," Robinson said. "We may see that we phase French classes out over time, but I don't believe that will happen. I believe we'll find the right combination to get us through the year and then find the right person who can really revive this program." ♦

Everyone is confused about what the future holds for the French program. senior Darby Williams



Assistant principal Brian Thompson arranges his meetings for the day on a spreadsheet.

is a lot of the culture that I was building at BHS is already here at Saratoga."

With the alphabetical distribution of students for the administration introduced this year, Thompson hopes to foster a more personal connection with students.

"[At BHS,] I was responsible for everything on a macro level," Thompson said. "[But here at SHS,] it's more of a micro level where I get to take a chunk of the school to focus on and work one-on-one with."

Thompson said he is particularly excited to work with around 300 students in his H-M alphabetical split, in comparison to the 1,500 students he oversaw at BHS. He looks forward to getting to know their families and working with students for courses, colleges and any problems they may encounter.

Initially, Thompson said his interest in teaching and administration stemmed from his experiences at Gunderson High School and San Jose State University.

As a student who was "a little bit disengaged," Thompson felt that his high school experience was often missing adults who were passionate about working with students. "[My experiences] inspired me to become a teacher because I wanted to make a positive impact on my kids," Thompson said. "I always remember wanting for every student to walk into my classroom and think that it was the class that got them to school and had them wanting to be here, and that they knew it was going to be a great day and they were going to have a great experience."

Nevertheless, Thompson still cher-

ished his high school experiences. As a baseball player and a student involved in leadership, Thompson said "being involved was and still is a big part of [his] mindset."

"What drew me to SHS the most was becoming a part of the community," Thompson said. "[Many of the kids here at SHS] grew up across the street as little ones and now they're here as big kids. This whole mentality builds community, and I hope a person walking on campus will be made to feel a part of this community as well."

Working with Young every day during staff meetings and conferences, Thompson said he is grateful for the opportunity to engage in pursuits that they both care so much about. Furthermore, Young and Thompson are able to "con-

tinue the conversation about school" not only at work, but also at home.

According to principal Paul Robinson, Thompson has already become a valuable part of the SHS administration team, someone who "brings a new perspective to [SHS] because he's not as home grown."

"I got to know Mr. Thompson as the principal of Branham High School, and I always thought it would be great to have him as part of the administration team," Robinson said. "Many folks would see moving from a principal at one school to vice principal at another as a demotion, but he looked at it as an opportunity."

Though he has just begun to work at SHS, Thompson said he already feels a part of the Falcon family. ♦

SHS COMMISSIONS EXAMINED

HOMECOMING/SPRING FLING



Head: Eileen Toh (11) Commissioners: Jenna Chen (12), Yuna Kim (11), Zoe Liao (12), Ashley Nguyen (11), Megana Sarpipella (11)

Purpose: To select the overall theme and oversee the festivities of Homecoming and to organize Spring Fling week and Powderpuff activities.

Goals: "Our problems last year stemmed from a lack of communication between us and ASB. To prevent this from happening again, we are working more with other commissions and the ASB Head Commissioner so that we are informed of every detail in Homecoming and Spring Fling," head commissioner Eileen Toh said.

Events: Homecoming Quad Days, Spring Fling spirit week.

COMMUNITY

Head: Isha Mangal (12), Deepthi Sampathkumar (12) Commissioners: Jennifer Chen (12), Raina Kolluri (11), Ingrid Pan (12), Kirthana Ramesh (11), Shreya Sheel (12)

Purpose: To plan and publicize all community events that the school is involved in and to fundraise during the year and donate the money to a charity at the end of each semester.

Goal: "We really wanted to focus on a theme for the entire year in order to impact more people. We were thinking in the ranges of spreading positivity by trying to get students to connect with each other, and with the community outside of SHS," head commissioner Isha Mangal said.

Events: Blood Drives, Senior Citizens Day, Bone Marrow Drives



FALCON // JADE BISHT

DANCE



Head: Danielle Berkowitz-Sklar (11) Commissioners: Helen Chen (12), William Chen (11), Michelle Handoko (12), Sanah Shah (12), Supriya Singh (12), Lillian Zeng (10)

Purpose: To publicize, price, decorate and choose venues for open school dances and to work with the Homecoming/Spring Fling Commission and ASB when needed.

Goal: "This year, we hope to raise spirit and student involvement by getting more people to attend dances. We want to improve decorations and add new features that will make the dances more appealing. For example, winter formal is going to take place outside of school," head commissioner Danielle Berkowitz-Sklar said.

Events: Homecoming Dance and Winter Formal

RALLY

Head: Isa Berardo (12) Commissioners: Allison Borch (10), Nolan Chao (11), Emma Kovac (11), Zhan Ng (12), Arnab Pawar (12), Michael Schillage (12), Kylie Stokes (12), Albe Tremblay (12)

Purpose: To host rallies in the school gym to promote school spirit. Planning begins at least several weeks before each rally.

Goal: "Our vision for this year's rallies is to really focus on creating unity within the school. Class competition is full of spirit but [at] the end of the day, we are all one team, and we are trying to focus on unification here at SHS," head commissioner Isa Berardo said.

Events: Four rallies, two per semester



FALCON // DEEPTHI SAMPATHKUMAR

SPIRIT/ATHLETICS



Head: Nicole Prowse (12) and Anne Rollinson (12) Commissioners: Yu Karen Asai (12), Hannah Leonard (11), Erin Norris (12)

Purpose: To raise school spirit by decorating the quad, selling Saratoga merchandise and organizing events such as rally tailgates.

Goal: "We plan to publicize each event we hold more thoroughly. We are going to be providing tattoos and face paint at home football games and we are working on creating even more events to get students out and supporting their school," head commissioner Nicole Prowse said.

Events: Rally Tailgates, spirit week, event coordinated with the Special Olympics

BENEFIT

Head: Sabrina Clark (12) Commissioners: Nina Harris (12), Nellie Jalalian (12), Nicole Prowse (12), Jace Welton (12), Darby Williams (12)

Purpose: To prepare for the Benefit Fashion Show that donates its proceeds to notable charities and features students modeling clothing.

Goal: "We hope to produce another successful show this year and also bring the school together to fight for a common cause. I hope to have the same, if not more support this year. We also hope to land more committed sponsors and make sure everything runs smoothly," head commissioner Sabrina Clark said.

Events: Benefit Fashion Show on Feb. 27, 2016.



FALCON // LAUREN LOUIE

NEW STUDENT

Head: Felicia Hung (12) Commissioners: Caitlin Ju (11), Puja Maheshwari (11), Nandita Mohan (12), Kanika Vora (11), Tiffany Zheng (12)

Purpose: To plan activities for students new to the district, such as the New Student BBQ, and periodically check in with students to ease their transition into Saratoga High.

Goal: "This year, I hope for the entire commission to stay active and assist the new students until the very last day of second semester. Last year, we never brought the new students together again, so this year, I want to have a small food social second semester to check in with the new students and allow them to meet other students as well," head commissioner Felicia Hung said.

Events: New Student BBQ, free lunch days



TALISMAN // KEVIN COUCH

ELECTIONS



Head: Ariel Liu (12) Commissioners: Michelle Huang (12), Manna Okada (12), Jennifer Veis (12)

Purpose: To publicize the electronic voting system and report results for all elections and to work in conjunction with ASB and Homecoming Commission to ensure that the election process works smoothly.

Goals: "This year, our main goal is to make sure people are informed and want to participate in elections. In addition, I hope that each elections runs smoothly without technical difficulties, since we have switched to electronic voting," head commissioner Ariel Liu said.

Events: Freshman class office, Homecoming, ASB election, class office election

GREEN

Head: Michelle Shen (12) Commissioners: Anu Arjavalngam (12), Nidhi Jain (11), Jayee Malwankar (12), Anya Srivats (10), Shaunak Vaidya (10)

Purpose: To work to make the school more environmentally friendly by brainstorming and implementing energy saving alternatives.

Goal: "Since our projects, such as adding solar panels to the front parking lot or switching the school to more efficient light bulbs, are really big and far-reaching, we often have to work several years on them. We also have some short-term goals this year, such as putting up signs of recyclable items next to the bins and building a drought-tolerant garden of native plants," head commissioner Michelle Shen said.

Events: Earth Day activities



FALCON // SWEEYA RAJ

# Facebook no longer the top social app

BY Claire Rhee

Facebook is no longer among the social media sites that everyone is obsessed with. If you asked someone years ago if they found Facebook useful, the answer would almost always be "yes"; today, the answer might not be such a unanimous one.

Facebook is becoming too busy with never-ending notifications and unrelated posts to the user, causing it to develop into a useless site.

When Facebook was first launched in 2004, it served multiple purposes. People could connect with others, share fun family trips and message their friends. That was what Facebook was meant for, but now, these features aren't as useful.

Since then, the number of people who use Facebook has increased exponentially, reaching 968 million daily users in June 2015. Yet the amount of activity on Facebook does not match the number of users on the site; Facebook's many users do not do much. They might scroll

through their feed, like a couple posts and be done for the day. People are simply not using Facebook as much anymore.

Part of the reason is that many people, especially teenagers, have other platforms to share photos and other content on, such as Instagram and Snapchat.

The very content of Facebook also begs for improvement. A typical news feed is littered with irrelevant, trivial notifications. Many posts are from strangers, and only show up because friends of friends liked them. As a result, users often have to scroll through unimportant content, such as ads, to reach what they really want to see.

It would be much more reasonable if the news feed was restricted to what a user's friends posts. Posts from unknown people can pop up on a feed, which causes a large number of uninteresting notifications.

When the notifications do not apply to the user as much, they become almost useless.

Many posts are from strangers, and only show up because friends of friends liked them.

>> candidcaricatures



Granted, teenagers still use Facebook to create groups and message each other. Facebook can be very helpful in that sense, since it allows hundreds of people to communicate easily.

Still, those same groups could be made through email or regular text mes-

sages. If Facebook wants to remain useful to users, it needs to do something new that will grab the attention of all the users in the 21st century.

Facebook is falling behind and is also proving to have more negative effects than positive. ♦

# Movie directors need a strong dose of feminism

BY Oksana Trifonova

I sigh as I look at the new "Mission Impossible" release poster. In front of an urban backdrop, Tom Cruise looks very professional as he crouches with a gun in his hands. Right behind him is a woman in a cleavage-baring tank top, looking huskily at the camera with a sly smile.

This cliché portrayal of a woman as arm candy foreshadows an overused character development. She will likely be either a damsel in distress or a femme fatale. Either way, she is a sex object for males to use at their whim.

This is a great waste of a potentially interesting figure. She could be the brains of the operation or the mastermind behind an attack or an investigation, such as Vittoria Vetra from the movie "Angels and Demons."

In addition to her work as a scientist at CERN, Vetra helps locate kidnapped cardinals by determining their locations using and rescue them using pagan symbolism.

When the "action movie girl" is reduced to the character trudging behind everyone else and falling on rocks because of her 8-inch heels — as Claire is in

"Jurassic World" — the character loses its very purpose.

I've seen the same problem in horror movies — why is it always the girl who hears a scary noise, acts irrationally and ends up possessed or killed?

Just once, I'd like to see the girl in a horror movie act logically and take precautions. This would make the movie more interesting and scary, because the viewer knows that she died in spite of her intelligence and common sense, not because of a lack of it.

Instead of the same movies that include cliché portrayals of women, I want

to see more films that showcase unconventional views of women. One example is the recent release "Trainwreck," where Amy Schumer, an outspoken feminist and anti-fat shaming advocate, plays a promiscuous magazine editor who doesn't believe in monogamy — a role usually reserved for males. This "player" stereotype with a spin made me laugh throughout the movie.

Hopefully next time, I won't sigh when looking at a movie poster, but admire Tom Cruise standing next to, instead of in front of, his lead woman, both with guns in their hands. ♦

>> togatalks

**Do you believe that sexism still exists in Hollywood?**

"You do not see many women who play strong leads because characters rely on males."

junior Kelsey Kinoshita

"Women are more scrutinized than men, making it hard for them to progress in the movie industry."

sophomore Surya Murthy

"There's significantly fewer women directors and executives than men working those roles."

senior Saro Acharya

# BuzzFeed studios should not extend to Hollywood

BY Shreya Tumu

BuzzFeed has been my pre-bedtime entertainment for the past two years, and I don't know what I would do without its endless random videos and posts. But what I most respect about BuzzFeed is its boldness in creating inspirational, light-hearted videos often promoting gender and racial equality.

So when BuzzFeed announced that it was going to launch their own Hollywood studio, I had mixed feelings.

What if going mainstream would force BuzzFeed to alter its content to cater to Hollywood audiences and abandon making the inspirational videos, promoting gender and racial equality, I admire?

BuzzFeed is expanding across multiple directions — including renaming its

digital-video division BuzzFeed Motion Pictures, produced by Hollywood.

In launching its own Hollywood studio, BuzzFeed enlisted the help of

producer Michael Shamborg from "Django Unchained" and "Contagion" and actor-comedian Jordan Peele of Comedy Central's "Key & Peele."

The problem is that these advisers may be persuaded to do things only their fan bases like, because that's what they have been conditioned to do in the Hollywood bubble.

For example, two of BuzzFeed's recent videos, "Women Transform Into

Drag Kings" and "The Try Guys Try Drag For The First Time" have mixed reviews in the YouTube comment section.

The new advisers might be influenced by the negative comments into limiting the number of videos that may be deemed controversial.

Another issue is that Ze Frank,

who leads the Hollywood division, also plans on hiring actors, who might appear in more videos than BuzzFeed's already solid video team of actors and writers.

I enjoy watching the ethnically diverse and genuine actors who appear on BuzzFeed, such as Michelle Karre, Eugene Lee Yang and Daysha Edevi; I do not see the need for generic Hollywood actors to replace them.

While there are benefits in BuzzFeed going to Hollywood, such as larger revenue and wider audiences, BuzzFeed lovers like me still worry about the new development.

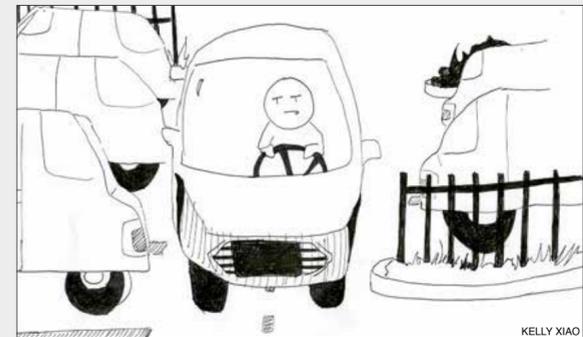
I don't want videos about my favorite topics, such as female empowerment and young adult controversies, to vanish. I also don't want to see my favorite actors disappear from YouTube.

I just hope that BuzzFeed's new Hollywood launch doesn't diminish the very qualities that made the site so popular in the first place: humor, diversity, and authenticity. ♦

I do not want videos about gender and racial equality to vanish, nor do I want to see my favorite actors and actress disappear from YouTube.

# Stop complaining and just park

>> candidcaricatures



It's 7:50 a.m. Upon pulling into the senior parking lot, one senior is faced with a terrible sight: Every parking space, including the junior lot, is filled. He has a single option.

Located at the far edge of the school campus near the tennis courts, the former sophomore lot bodes of a long trek to the front of the school. Reluctantly, this is where he parks.

Lack of parking is a problem that some students encounter, but on a normal school day, there is always space to park a car. The problem is in which parking lot will students park.

Traditionally, the middle lot at the front of school is split into two sections: the senior lot and the junior lot.

To complicate matters, one row of senior parking was converted into staff parking due to Measure E construction. Now, seniors and juniors are forced to negotiate between the parking spaces that remain.

One solution is to move juniors to the former sophomore parking lot, since sophomores are no longer allowed to purchase parking permits.

Restricting parking access for

sophomores, while unfortunate for the sophomores, certainly benefits upperclassmen and staff members who now have more parking spaces.

Either way, the basic system of parking permits works well, and the administration has no reason to change a policy that is both efficient and popular just for temporary con-

struction complications.

Most local high schools use a permit system similar SHS's, and that's the fairest way of allocating student parking without charging the \$200 (or more) per space that some schools do.

Perhaps a better way to deal with lack of parking is to reduce the number of cars that have to park.

In our small community, it isn't hard to find someone with whom to carpool, which on a large scale, will greatly reduce traffic and greenhouse gases.

In the end, it's not up to the administration to completely change the parking system, though they could help sort out the junior/senior issues.

And to those who end up having to park in the farther lot, at least you're getting some more exercise. ♦

## Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editors-in-chief  
Ashley Chen  
Ariel Liu

Opinion Editor  
Kelly Xiao

Reporter  
Kevin Chow



The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 28-5 in support of the editorial.

# Students should not treat their schedules as just rough drafts

BY Sweeya Raj

During the first week of school, the office is filled with students trying to switch their schedules. Dropping, switching and adding classes are all a part of the back-to-school chaos. It seems, though, that many students view their initial class schedules as mere rough drafts.

When students decide on what classes to take in the spring, many decisions are made with the mindset that they can sign up for difficult classes and just drop them later if the workload seems overwhelming.

Thus, eager students fill their schedule with an abundance of AP and Honors classes, reassuring themselves and their parents by saying that they can drop whatever is too hard. What these students don't realize is that doing so inconveniences both them and the guidance counselors.

The best solution is for students to actually sign up for the classes they intend to take. These students often fail to take into account the time and effort that goes into planning students' schedules for the school year.

There is, of course, room for change, but it is not always possible to switch or add classes due to scheduling conflicts.

In addition, students have very little time to decide if they want to switch out of an AP or Honors class into a college preparatory class and may make inaccurate judgments.

Students may realize after the two-week limit that the AP class requires more time and effort than they originally thought, only to find that it is too late to switch out into the regular class.

Teachers are also negatively affected by the students' constant movement in and out of classes.

Class rosters are subject to constant change until at least the second week of school, and teachers are forced to catch new students up to speed. This only inconveniences everyone involved since students also have to do extra work to get caught up.

Seating charts have to be altered as students who dropped the class leave empty desks, and teachers have to alter the information usually reserved for the first day of school again and again to accommodate other students who are added to the class.

Thus, schedule changes should be considered as a last resort to prevent chaos in the first two weeks of school.

Counselors and teachers are here to help students make the best decisions about their schedules based on what they can handle, so students should not sign up for classes they know will overwhelm them just because they can drop them later.

Ignoring counselor advice usually results in having to change schedules anyway, so why not just follow guidance's counsel from the start?

Students need to put more thought into the classes they sign up for. Not only will putting time into choosing classes guarantee students a spot in the classes they want, it will also help avoid the stress of a busy, difficult schedule.

Of course, they should change their schedules if they are unable to handle their workloads, but it is best if they do not intentionally sign up for a schedule they are pretty sure they will have to change later on. ♦

# Target toy controversy emphasizes gender issues

BY Isabelle Yang

Despite recent efforts by the feminist movement to end unnecessary use of gender labels, the boy-girl divide still exists in the marketing world.

Recently, Akron, Ohio, mother Abi Betchel criticized Target on Twitter for having one aisle for "building sets" and another for "girls' building sets." Her commentary brought attention to the common but problematic technique of labeling gender-neutral products.

Target may believe that this tactic will boost sales by creating a female sub-market for toys; it might genuinely feel that doing so "creates convenience for shoppers," but in reality, it is simply walling off boys from girls by making a specialized, "feminine" product.

According to Rebecca Bigler, a developmental psychology professor at the University of Texas, Austin, "gender roles play a huge part in the development of both sexes." By contributing to this divide, Target has continued to the every day sexism in life.

In recent studies that observe the early onset effects of gender labeling, Bigler points out how easily gender roles can influence children through development of gender stereotypes. This seemingly trivial matter eventually leads to certain problems such as creating gender roles that make certain personalities seem limited to one gender or another.

With each gender-splitting toy label and with each daily perpetuation of gender issues, the marketing world only hinders progress made in gender equality.

Until changes are made to even the smallest level, gender equality is a dream that will never be realized. What is even more troubling about the Target controversy is the number of people claiming that "it doesn't matter" when it actually does.

Although Target has failed to admit its culpability, it has removed the offensive tag "girls' building sets" after receiving complaints from netizens.

Labeling toys by gender means that girls may never get the chance to play with an action figure or toy cars, or that boys will never be able proudly play with the newest Barbies.

The question Target should ask itself is whether it wants to give itself a legacy as the retail company that supported the ridiculous and unnecessary usage of gender labeling. ♦

>> bigidea

## Target toys further gender divide

What is the Target toy controversy?

Recently Target has caused outrage among customers by using gender exclusive labels such as "Girl Building Sets."

Why does it matter and what does it mean in larger view of things?

Though gender-specific toy signs don't seem to be a serious matter, they actually assign gender roles very early on, which furthers gender stereotypes and sexism.

What should be done?

Target has reported that it will use gender-neutral signs like "Building Sets" rather than "Girl Building Sets" so children aren't assigned to certain toys.

# Competitive schools are worth the pressure

By EileenTob

With a passing rate of 91 percent on AP exams, Saratoga High School is ranked 27th in California and known for its ability to send a high percentage of its graduates to prestigious colleges.

But as students graduate each year, they sometimes ask themselves questions like: Was it worth it? Would they want their own children to attend such an ultra competitive school?

Before I answer those questions (which, admittedly, is a bit biased as I have just started junior year), I will say what I consider to be the potential downsides of Saratoga.

One obvious drawback is that as college acceptance rates have decreased, some students (and their parents) have developed a dog-eat-dog mentality when it comes to doing well in school.

Some kids begin taking the most difficult classes possible as early as in fifth grade, when a select number of them take math placement tests in order to skip to Pre-Algebra.

Many of those who did not make the cut later took summer-long Geometry courses to take Algebra 2 Honors as freshmen.

With this prevalent mentality on campus, the stress cultivated by the academic competition often affects most students' lives negatively.

For example, when I have taken difficult tests, I sometimes hear rumors afterwards about someone who cheated and already knew all of the answers.

Likewise, normal lunchtime conversations usually center on upcoming tests or the need to finish an assignment.

Saratoga is not alone in this stress. According to a poll conducted by USA Today, 27 percent of teenagers across the country said that they experience "extreme stress" during the school year, whereas only 13 percent are stressed in the summer.

And 34 percent expect stress levels to increase with each coming year.

Stress, at more extreme levels, can also lead to anxiety and depression.

Like many students, I have had to deal with frequent panic attacks and a near-constant lack of sleep while in high school.

I must admit, however, that not all students have dealt with the same experiences that I have in the past; many students may be more dedicated to extracurriculars and athletics.

Even the highest-achieving students in academics may not feel as much stress as other students and walk through the hallways with constant smiles on their faces.

Having dealt with Saratoga High's academic rigor, my older sister, a Class of 2012 alumna, was able to make a smooth transition to college, as do the majority of alumni.

And for that very reason, despite the academic stress that Saratoga High students frequently grapple with, the overall experience still has many strong points.

For one, the teachers and staff members are incredibly caring.

They understand students' stress and motivation to do well, so they aid students whenever possible, whether that be during tutorials or after school.

The school also has dozens of programs and clubs that are tailored to students' specific interests.

For example, a student interested in filmmaking can sign up for the Media Arts Program (MAP), or a student who excels in science or programming can join Science Bowl or App Development Club.

School spirit also serves as an outlet for students.

For example, spirit events

>> candidcaricatures



such as Homecoming week or rallies help preserve students' mental health.

So, the ultimate question is: Would I send my children to Saratoga High School? My answer is yes.

Though prevalent academic stress has its downsides, the competition prepares students.

Rarely do I ever hear of a Saratoga graduate struggling in the years beyond high school.

And although I sometimes resent the immense competition and academic stress on campus, it seems that these four years in Saratoga make us smarter, tougher and more prepared for what lies ahead. ♦

# Balance of essays needed

By FrederickKim

By the time most students reach high school, they know the feeling of wanting to sleep earlier but are unable to because of essay deadlines.

In general, writing essays can be compared to swallowing medicine: necessary but unpleasant.

Whether in-class or take-home, each type of essay has its purpose. With at-home essays comes great pressure, because having more time and resources means being graded more harshly.

At the same time, the more stressful in-class essay prevents procrastination and pushes students to think and process their thoughts faster.

Though students may prefer one over the other, in truth, both types are necessary.

The more common option, the take-home essay, is preferred by most students.

The guidelines for the take-home essay generously allow writers days rather than minutes to write and assign whole novels rather than excerpts.

A big drawback associated with take-home essays is procrastination.

When given huge chunks of time, many students tend to leave everything to the last minute (hence the painful late-night writing sessions).

The consequence is that procrastinators fail to reach the higher standards listed on rubrics and endure extreme stress.

For other students, take-home essays may still be the best option.

They can pace themselves appropriately and have the freedom to perfect each sentence at their leisure.

For people who are hardcore procrastinators, however, in-class essays may be the better option.

Of course, the in-class essay can seem stressful because students must rush to finish in time while maintaining their quality of writing.

However, in-class essays are usually graded with a lighter pen, which allows room for some mistakes.

The time constraint with in-class essays can also be helpful when there is too much homework for other classes.

By finishing essays in class, it ensures less homework.

According to English teacher Ken Nguyen, in-class essays force students to practice "on-demand thinking," which will be necessary later on in college.

Furthermore, in-class essays allow the teacher to see the student's individual work.

In contrast, students at home can get help from siblings, parents or tutors.

Yet, at-home essays are also necessary so students can gain a well-rounded background in writing.

Nguyen states that out-of-class essays "are generally reserved for assignments or topics that are more far-ranging and require more research and deep analysis."

When all these components are drawn together, it becomes apparent that though students may have their individual preferences, both types of essays are necessary.

Overall, only a balance between in-class essays and at-home essays can ensure that students will receive sufficient practice in all kinds of essay writing. ♦

**Only a balance between in-class essays and at-home essays can ensure that students will receive a sufficient practice in all kinds of essay writing.**



**Caitlyn Jenner: a true heroine**

When Olympian Bruce Jenner announced he was embracing his true identity as Caitlyn last June, social media exploded, many praising her for her courage. By contrast, some Facebook users posted pictures of U.S. soldiers and Caitlyn Jenner side by side, denying that there was any hint of heroism from her transition.

Soldiers bravely sacrifice themselves for their country and Jenner bravely faces discrimination; it's unfair to compare the bravery of a soldier and a role model because of how different their situations are.

— Julia Miller

**Watch out for Deez Nuts**

The popularity of "Deez Nuts," a 15-year-old boy from Iowa registered as a third-party presidential candidate, questions the credibility of election polls. The faux candidate polled at 9 percent in North Carolina and 8 percent in Iowa, behind Trump and presumed Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton.

Though I'd hope that people wouldn't vote Deez Nuts for the 2016 election, I wonder: Do election polls accurately depict the public's opinion, or do they just highlight momentary viral sensations, like Trump, because the public wants to see how far it goes?

— Miles Albert

**Clinton isn't just a female!**

There's no one who annoys me more than a woman who likes Hillary Clinton only because she is female. These women support the stereotype of women as simple-minded and undermine the feminist cause. I confess that I used to be one of them. Then I did research into her policies and ideas. Now I can proudly say that I will likely vote for her not because of her gender, but because of her work for immigration reform and her plans to help the middle class.

In Cyrus' case, self-glorifying publicity stunts have already paid off in entertainment. And for Trump: he's proving it works in politics, too.

— Shreya Tumu

**Trump is like Miley Cyrus**

After swinging in on a wrecking ball of sexually explicit controversy in 2013, Cyrus then claimed her first No. 1 hit on the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 later that same year.

Like Cyrus, Donald Trump excels at drawing attention. For Trump, his wrecking ball takes the form of immigration policy and creative insults. Trump and Cyrus are similar. Both are entertaining and both remain relevant, be it in the ratings or the polls.

In Cyrus' case, self-glorifying publicity stunts have already paid off in entertainment. And for Trump: he's proving it works in politics, too.

— Kevin Chow

# Can you survive a varsity cheerleading practice?

## JZ and Neeyonce

Neehar Thumaty and Jason Zhao

We weren't really sure what to expect when we were pressured by Falcon staff members to attend a varsity cheerleading practice. Our initial feelings were a cross between relief, as we were getting a break from academic stress of junior year, and apprehension, as we were bound to embarrass ourselves.

Thankfully, it turned out better than we expected.

As we arrived at practice on Aug. 27 in the Dance Room, a small mirrored space right next to the Small Gym, we nervously waited outside the door until senior cheerleader and fellow staff member Summer Smith walked out to greet us.

As we joined in on the cheerleaders' stretching, we'd be lying if we said we weren't intimidated to be the only boys among the nine girls there that day.

After warming up, we attempted to gracefully perform various acrobatics such as toe touches, pike jumps and herkie (split) jumps.

The key word here is "attempted." Cheerleaders Savanah Nguyen and Dallas Morganstern helped us improve our form by showing us exactly what body position we were supposed to be in: Move your hand higher, point your toes,

arms straight. They showed no mercy.

After acrobatics, we moved onto practicing cheers. The cheers seemed a lot easier than jumps, so we were feeling pretty confident at the start. In reality, the cheers were the most challenging part of the practice.

Although they appeared fairly straightforward, they were much easier said than done. Literally.

It wasn't difficult for us to memorize the various chants such as "defense, do it, you gotta get get get to it," but we had to perform each of the various movements to meet rigid standards. When we combined the words and movements, we became offbeat and failed to remember the correct order of the words.

As practice progressed, we slowly improved in our attempts to perform the cheers. When we reviewed all the cheers at the end of the day, we have to say — we could have passed off as actual cheerleaders.

In the last 30 minutes of practice, just when we thought we were off the hook, we moved on to stunting.

Stunting was just as, if not more, difficult than we had imagined. We needed to synchronize our movements in order to lift senior flyer Cayla Zelanis into the air so she wouldn't lose her balance. Because we are different heights, we struggled to align our hands and make a stable platform.

After somewhat successfully boosting Zelanis into the air, we then attempted our next challenge: trying to perform



ALL PHOTOS BY ISABELLE YANG

Reporters Neehar Thumaty and Jason Zhao perform cheerleading moves such as the basket with the varsity cheerleading team.

a basket by launching junior flyer Savanah Nguyen into the air.

Once Nguyen was air bound, time slowed down as we positioned ourselves to catch her, interlocking our arms for extra support.

We are proud to say that Nguyen landed softly on her toes without breaking anything.

To end practice, we had a "break," where we put our hands together and shouted an enthusiastic cheer. The cheerleaders decided to honor us by shouting "Jason and Neehar!" for the break, a defining moment in our high school careers.

By the end of the two-hour practice, we thought we had learned a lot about the art of cheerleading. However, this feeling soon disappeared when Smith told us we had learned fewer than a fourth of the cheers, and the ones we had learned were far from perfect. We hadn't even scratched the surface of all we would need to know to become actual cheerleaders.

Cheerleading may not seem to be the most physical sport from the outside, but in reality, it is quite straining on the body and mind. Believe us: If you want to gain respect for cheerleading, go and join them for a practice. ♦

# Poki Bowl, I choose you

REPORTER ENJOYS HAWAIIAN POKE CUISINE

By VivienZhang

Poki Bowl, located off Almaden Expressway in San Jose, takes a spin on traditional Hawaiian cuisine. This Instagram-worthy restaurant serves delectable varieties of poke, a dish featuring raw fish.

Poki Bowl was relatively easy to find; a long line of hungry families and excited friends stretched outside into many neighboring stores such as Almaden Donut and Subway. Even though Poki Bowl opened two months ago, I had to wait for a long 20 minutes just to get inside.

After finally escaping the scorching sun and entering the air-conditioned interior, I noticed that the long line outside was due to the small space being flooded with customers.

In the restaurant, servers scooping varieties of raw fish into customers' bowls stood behind a counter. It was similar to the service at Panda Express or Chipotle.

The system allows customers to choose either a large bowl for \$10.95 or a regular bowl for \$9.50 with a base of rice or salad. This is relatively cheap; many other places sell poke for around \$15.

From then on, it's a mix and match. After choosing the base, I was offered an assortment of fresh fish to pick from: spicy tuna, salmon, octopus, shrimp, and yellowtail. After the mix of raw fish, I was offered miso and mayo sauces with different spice levels and a variety of toppings including avocado, crab meat,

green onions, sesame seeds, wasabi and ginger. I was pleasantly surprised that the servers offered generous portions: more than enough for a single person.

I ordered a small bowl with a base of sushi rice with salmon, yellowtail and shrimp with a mild mayo sauce, a miso sauce, cucumbers, crab meat and avocado. The combination of savory fish, creamy avocado and crunchy cucumbers was very satisfying, although the sauce was a bit spicy and overwhelming.

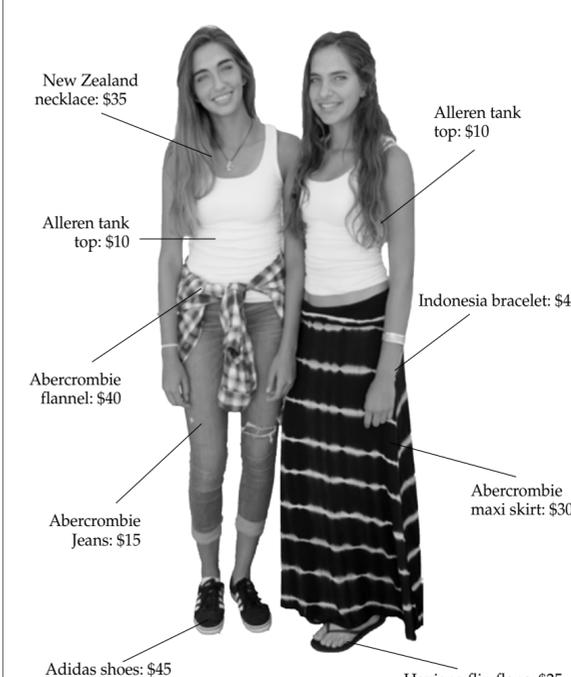
Although I didn't mind the shop's small interior, it was irritatingly noisy. People were constantly talking over each other, and I had to constantly repeat my order. Other than the noise, the customer service was superb.

Poki Bowl also offers a small variety of drinks and a sweet selection of Moven's macaron ice cream sandwiches, including their most popular flavor, dark chocolate sea salt.

Unfortunately, after receiving our order, my family and I realized that we had to take our lunch to-go. The cramped restaurant had no tables inside and minimal seating outside, which was already occupied on a busy Saturday afternoon.

Poki Bowl is a great place for seafood and raw fish lovers; it comes at a reasonable price with generous servings. Despite the 20-minute drive and painfully long wait, I was exposed to a whole new world of Hawaiian cuisine — one that I would love to return to in the future. ♦

# STYLE FILES



Danielle's total cost: \$145

Daviana's total cost: \$110

Danielle and Daviana Berkowitz-Sklar, 11

September 11, 2015

# Back when I was a...

Students and teachers reflect on their high school years and give advice to current students.

## FRESHMAN

## SOPHOMORE

## JUNIOR

## SENIOR



FALCON // DEEPTHI SAMPATHKUMAR



TALISMAN // NAVEED RIAZIAT



FALCON // JADE BISHT



Courtesy of LUKE SALIN

**Q:** What was your biggest takeaway from freshman year?

**A:** Ironically it was freshman year when I learned "self-care." Unlike how I usually lavished myself with bath bombs and extra ice cream, self-care consisted of learning how to give myself space and "love myself."

— sophomore Isabelle Yang

**Q:** What would you say to your freshman-year self?



**A:** Participate in more activities. Don't just sign up, but be active. I signed up for many clubs during club day, but only went to one club meeting regularly.

— sophomore Frederick Kim

Don't worry, you always get better looking. You start out ugly, and you get better looking every year of high school.

— science teacher Lisa Cochrum

**Q:** How did your freshman year expectations compare to your actual experiences?

**A:** I was really frightened beginning freshman year, because I had heard that the seniors would "trash can" the freshmen at lunch, supposedly pick up the freshman trash can and drop them [in a big silver trash can in the quad] at lunch in front of everybody. I was completely frightened of that. However, on the first day (we didn't have LINK crew but something similar to it) the senior that lead our group around for the tour and everything was so nice and completely shattered my stereotype of what I thought the seniors were going to be like. And so she ended up living on the street behind me and gave me a ride to school every day. We became really good friends, and we're still friends today.

— English teacher Meg Battey



GRAPHIC BY MAYA PRASAD



GRAPHIC BY MAYA PRASAD

**Q:** What would you like to tell your current SHS students?



**A:** Stop doing homework for the teacher, but start doing it for yourself. You should read whatever textbook you have because you want to gain something out of it, rather than get through the pages. The sooner you do that, the sooner you get to enjoy education more and the purpose more.

— English teacher Amy Keys

**Q:** What will you always remember from sophomore year?

**A:** Because Ms. Cahatol's classroom is in the back of the school, I was late almost every day when I was on crutches, so she gave me an excuse. A few days later, however, I started coming in the classroom late with group of people. Junior Jackie Han was next to me for "support," junior Raymond McCarthy was there to clear the road for me, and junior Kainoa Giomi helped me lift my "heavy" backpack. It was really funny because every time we entered the classroom, Mrs. Cahatol would yell, "OH COME ON" and the whole class would burst into laughter. Of course, after a few times of being yelled at by Mrs. Cahatol, we started arriving to class on time.

— junior Jenny Qian

**Q:** Tell us about your favorite memory from high school.

**A:** I was a part of the Science Olympiad team; we played with chemicals to learn about their properties. We got to ransack our chemistry teacher's storage room, which is, by the way, not legal anymore. We went to the storage room, picked out what we thought was interesting, did several tests to see their characteristics.

— Chemistry teacher Janny Cahatol



Courtesy of JANNY CAHATOL



GRAPHIC BY ANGELA LEE

**Q:** What is your biggest takeaway from junior year?



Courtesy of KEVIN YANG

**A:** During junior year I got my license and drove my friends everywhere (sorry, I broke the one-year law). Even when we all had school work, extracurriculars and standardized tests to do, my friends and I always took the time to grab lunch or just chill at someone's house. I definitely made and solidified a lot of friendships last year, and actually thought this year was the best.

— senior Andrew Jiang

**Q:** Do you have any advice for current juniors at SHS?

**A:** Participate in Homecoming. My favorite memory of last school year, if not of all four years, was Quad Day. Homecoming prep took my mind off junior year stress, and I really bonded with my class.

— senior Miles Albert

You're going to be doing something twenty years from now and be laughing at yourself for getting all stressed out during junior year. Life's not a sprint — don't get too upset about one year of your life.

— Physics teacher Kirk Davis

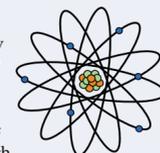
**Q:** What was your favorite class?

**A:** AP Physics with [Kirk] Davis was my favorite class. Although I fell asleep in the majority of lectures, I always woke up in time for the best part — the demos. Davis did many cool things such as climbing on the roof and dropping water bottles filled with water, having us sit on a bed of sharp needles and catching an egg with a blanket.

— senior Andrew Jiang



TALISMAN // KRISTEN NAKAHIRA



GRAPHIC BY MAYA PRASAD

**Q:** What is a valuable piece of advice that you wish you had heard and applied to senior year?



GRAPHIC BY KATHERINE ZHOU

**A:** I wish I would have known to [apply] early admission to some of my schools. That could have saved me from applying to more colleges. Thinking back, I also probably didn't need to apply to nine colleges. I might have listed a few too many safety schools, and there were also some schools that I did not have that much interest in. It would have saved me from writing a lot more essays.

— alumnus Josh Pi

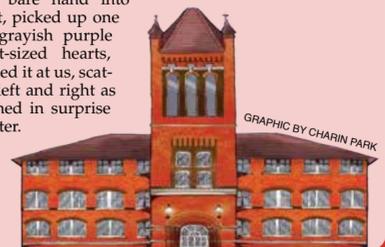
**Q:** Describe your favorite high school memory.

**A:** All of my favorite memories centered around the interactions I had with teachers rather than my peers. There was Mr. Richard Hicklin, our freshman biology teacher — who taught us all to about the local birds and who one day brought out a bucket of sheep hearts for us to dissect, an occasion all the more memorable because as he was casually delivering his instructions, he came to a sudden stop and in one quick and nonchalant motion, he reached down with one bare hand into the bucket, picked up one of those grayish purple grape-fruit-sized hearts, and chucked it at us, scattering us left and right as we screamed in surprise and laughter.

— English teacher Ken Nguyen



Courtesy of KEN NGUYEN



GRAPHIC BY CHARIN PARK

# Junior spends summer immersed within intense collegiate musical environment

by Maya Prasad & Katherine Zhou

For years, junior Esha Krishnamoorthy has dreamed of being a music sensation, singing before large audiences who chant her name over and over again.

In order to experience a taste of life as a musician, Krishnamoorthy enrolled in the Five Weeks Performance Program at the Berklee College of Music in Boston this past summer.

The intensive program started on July 11 and ended on Aug. 15. In order to have the “full college experience,” she decided to live on a college campus and take college classes. She also wanted to learn more about the fundamentals in music.

In her classes, she studied everything from ear training, also called musicianship, to song writing. In addition, she was able to attend clinics where visiting artists, such as Berklee alumni, shared their knowledge of the music industry.

“My favorite class in the program was musicianship,” Krishnamoorthy said. “Musicianship refers to ear training and getting better on rhythm and solfege reading skills [a method used to teach pitch and sight singing]. My teacher was

so fun and taught my class how to sing ‘Billie Jean’ by Michael Jackson entirely in solfege syllables.”

The program helped students learn musical versatility. For example, for one project, each musician was placed in an ensemble where they learned how to work with different types of musicians.

In this ensemble, Krishnamoorthy worked with guitarists, bassists, drummers and singers from different countries to create a cohesive performance.

Additionally, Krishnamoorthy met many well-known artists. Singers such as Charlie Puth and Livingston Taylor visited the students, performed and gave them advice about what they should expect as a professional music artist.

“I had been feeling very self-critical of my music and was seriously doubting myself, but after [Puth and Taylor’s] clinic, I walked out of the auditorium with a little more confidence,” Krishnamoorthy said.

Although enthusiastic about attending the camp, Krishnamoorthy came away feeling somewhat disappointed.

One letdown was her living situation. “I had never had a roommate before this experience and after, I don’t think

**In addition, she was able to attend clinics where visiting artists, such as Berklee alumni, shared their knowledge of the music industry.**



Courtesy of ESHA KRISHNAMOORTHY

**Junior Esha Krishnamoorthy poses with her ensemble after performing for her teacher. The ensemble was comprised of musically talented students from around the world.**

I ever want to have a roommate ever again,” she said. “Enough said.”

However, her greatest struggle was with her severe homesickness.

Being 2,704 miles away from her family, Krishnamoorthy struggled to find her place in the college summer course. She describes herself as a “family-based” person, and she said without them she was scared, alone and felt “empty.”

“I don’t know if I would do this program again,” Krishnamoorthy said. “Maybe if my family decided to come with me to Boston, or if Berklee implemented new courses, I would.” ♦

for weeks, missing home and my family like crazy,” Krishnamoorthy said.

In hindsight, Krishnamoorthy said she wishes the camp were less repetitive.

Instead, Krishnamoorthy said she would have liked to study more theory-related topics, such as chord progressions, in greater depth.

“I don’t know if I would do this program again,” Krishnamoorthy said. “Maybe if my family decided to come with me to Boston, or if Berklee implemented new courses, I would.” ♦

## Sophomore performs as backup dancer in film

by Caitlyn Chen

As “Night and Day” by Param Gill began booming through the Stockton Soccer Complex, sophomore Ishana Narayanan felt the spirited bass of the song synchronize with her own heartbeat. Almost instinctively, she flashed a wide smile at the rolling cameras and began performing intricate Bollywood dance movements to the sound of the uplifting melody.

Narayanan and her traveling dance troupe from the Max Dance Company arrived in downtown Stockton on June 28 to participate as backup dancers in the Bollywood film “Warrior Savitri,” which will premiere in India in October.

Two weeks before filming day, Max Dance Company received an e-mail, inviting its dancers to perform in one number of the movie.

Narayanan’s dance troupe has performed at many local events and showcases in the past, but she said the dancers had never been offered this kind of opportunity before. When their dance teacher told them about the offer, Narayanan and her troupe were all extremely excited to participate.

“We all looked at each other and smiled, thinking, ‘this is going to be awesome,’” Narayanan said.

A week before filming day, Narayanan’s dance company received a video of the choreography they were instructed to learn. From then until filming day, Narayanan and her troupe spent nine hours at the dance studio, learning and perfecting the routine. By the time they arrived on

set, the dancers were all confident with the complicated moves. On the film set, the dancers were instructed to perform the routine whenever the music played.

“When the music came on, we would just start dancing,” Narayanan said. “It was kind of like freeze dance!”

Over the course of the eight-hour filming day, they took over 65 shots for a dance that was only 4 minutes long. After hearing the words “action and cut” more than a hundred times, Narayanan realized how much time and effort actors and dancers put into each shot and just how exhausting filming can be.

“By the end of the day, we were worn out,” Narayanan said. “I just fell on the grass and sat there for a while.”

The experience made her feel immersed in the dance industry for the first time in her life.

Dancing alongside her dance troupe allowed Narayanan to develop lasting relationships with her dance mates, as well as to gain exposure to film. But she doesn’t see herself in Hollywood — or Bollywood — in the future.

“I don’t think I can handle the spotlight,” Narayanan said. “With all that pressure, it’s physically and mentally taxing.”

Even if Narayanan doesn’t pursue dance as a career, she hopes that dance will remain a part of her life.

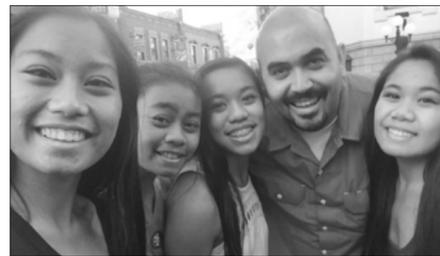
“Every time I dance, I feel like I can express anything that I am feeling,” Narayanan said. “It gives me freedom, and I can’t see my life without it.” ♦



Narayanan

## Brushes with fame

STUDENTS MEET CELEBRITIES OVER SUMMER



**At first, we didn’t really notice who he was. But people started screaming that it was Noel Gugliemi, and we ran towards his direction. I asked if my sisters and I could take a photo with him. He was actually very sweet!**

- Senior Gabby Fontanilla

Courtesy of GABBY FONTANILLA

**For our 16th birthdays, our moms surprised us with this gift. We had a meet and greet scheduled with [Hunter Hayes]. It was really cool though because there was only about 20 people in the room, and he came to everyone’s table and talked for a good 15 minutes.**

- Junior Tina Miller



Courtesy of TINA MILLER



**[The Greek Frozen yogurt shop] looked way more crowded than usual, and when I walked inside I immediately saw Kylie Jenner and her friend there too. I was trying to find a place to sit, but the place was packed, so the only open seat was at Kylie’s table. She noticed me looking around and offered a seat at her table. So I sat down and we chatted for a bit.**

- Senior Bitia Naimi

Courtesy of BITIA NAIMI

# Humorous Schumer rocks Hollywood

Da Deepster



Deepthi Sampathkumar

As I walked up the theater steps on my way to watch “Trainwreck,” I was unbelievably excited to watch my favorite athlete of all time, LeBron James, act in a movie. At that point, I didn’t even know who Amy Schumer was. Little did I know that two hours and five minutes later, I would leave the theater fascinated by her bizarre yet intriguing character.

At 5-foot-7 and 155 pounds, Schumer did not strike me as a glamorous actress. Throughout the movie “Trainwreck,” she donned minimal makeup, wore simple clothes and portrayed an outright obnoxious and man-abhorring character like herself.

She does not fit the typical description of a “blonde beauty,” but she has managed to garner acclaim from people. So what is it that sets Schumer apart from other actresses?

For me, it’s her unique style of comedy. Instead of making fun of others, she

cracks jokes about herself. She’s able to talk about physical “flaws,” which allows viewers to connect with her on a different level. If she can openly talk about her insecurities, why can’t they? Through her caustic humor, Schumer cuts through awkwardness and taboo nature of sex, weight gain and beauty.

Recently, Schumer published an article in Cosmopolitan called “How to be Confident like Amy Schumer.” She adopts a unique approach as she addresses her childhood struggles with the concept of true beauty. Schumer doesn’t talk about being bullied and over-comeing obstacles the way

a typical advice column writer would. Rather, she talks about her mother’s coddling and her realization that she needed to free herself from her mother’s gushing compliments to achieve real, lasting confidence.

“I am a hot-blooded fighter and I am fearless,” said Schumer in her Glamour interview. Following the success with her movie, Schumer has been invited to appear at numerous shows and events, including “The Jimmy Kimmel Show” and even at her old high school.

“I learned that I have a resting scowl face, and that I have an ‘at risk’ chin,” said Schumer while sitting at “The Ellen Degeneres Show.” The crowd roared

into laughter as Schumer depicted herself at a Lakers game.

Her ability to define characteristics in a candid and sardonic way made it easy to relate to her; she presented her flaws in a relatable and frank way, making it so easy for people to relate and accept their own flaws. She rocks her true self.

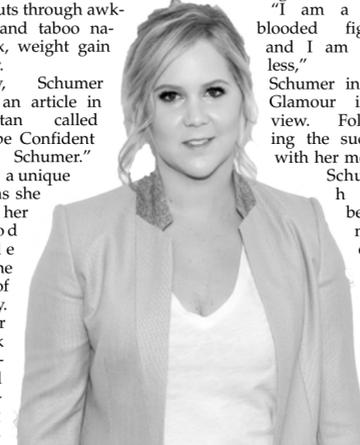
As a confident woman in the movie industry, Schumer sets an example for others.

Her manner and success demonstrate that the physical characteristics associated with traditional glamour are concepts of the past, and that women of any shape and size can shine this star-studded industry.

With her microphone in hand, Schumer just started to take off, spreading her personality throughout Hollywood.

Schumer teaches that whether you’re a composed, delicate girl or the typical definition of a trainwreck. Like her you must learn to rock with what you have, even if you’re a trainwreck. ♦

**She does not fit the typical description of a “blonde beauty,” but she has managed to garner acclaim from people.**



Amy Schumer

## Appreciation or appropriation: Which one is it?

by Angela Lee

Reality TV star Kylie Jenner, age 18, sparked an outrage by posting an Instagram picture four weeks ago of herself in cornrows, a hairstyle some black women wear to manage textured hair. While this hairstyle has garnered praise for being “edgy” and “innovative,” it has also called attention to the difference between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation.

Cultural appropriation is the adoption and exploitation of an element of minority, whereas cultural appreciation involves an understanding and respect for the culture.

For black people, cornrows are not merely fashion statements. Not only do these protective styles keep textured hair neat and healthy, they play a big role in black identity, according to Michaela Angela Davis, a black image activist.

“We hold all this stuff in our hair. It is a repository of our history, of our heroes, of our happiness. It’s how we identify,” Davis said in a Refinery 29 article.

Therefore, many non-black celebrities who have sported this hairstyle have been criticized for cultural appropriation.

For instance, actress Amanda Stenberg, age 16, called out Jenner for wearing cornrows in her Instagram selfie. Stenberg commented on Jenner’s appropriation of black features and her reluctance to speak about black issues like police brutality.

Most students agree with Stenberg that wearing cornrows or other black hairstyles as a non-black person is cultural appropriation.

“White people who wear cornrows are lauded as being edgy, while no one will call a black person beautiful for wearing his or her hair in the same style,” junior Julie Cai said. “It cannot be written off as ‘appreciation’ of another culture if it is being treated as a costume.”

**White people who wear cornrows are lauded as edgy, while no one will call a black person beautiful for wearing her hair in the same style.**

junior Julie Cai

Other students agree to some extent that non-black people should not be wearing black hairstyles, but for different reasons.

“As long as the people wearing black hairstyles are not doing it just to make fun of black people, it should be fine,” sophomore Charles Qi said.

Many, however, view these hairstyles as a way to channel creativity. Freshman Joan McCarthy argues that hairstyles should be available to everyone regardless of race, and those who

wear historically black hairstyles are only expressing their appreciation for black culture.

“There might be stereotypical white hairstyles but that doesn’t mean we’re not going to allow people of other cultures to also enjoy our hairstyles,” McCarthy said.

Regardless of whatever side people take, the line between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation is hard to distinguish.

Many other parts of minority cultures are popular in American society, such as Native American headdresses, Aztec print, henna and Bollywood dance. In order to prevent cultural appropriation, students have educated themselves about cultural activities they participate in.

Junior Aarya Mecwan said that when non-Indians participate in Bombay in the Bay, “wear henna, or do garba, they do it because they want to have fun with their friends. But it’s important to know the background of what they’re doing because ... every culture that we adopt from is important and relevant.” ♦

## New ‘Star Wars’ movie and attractions excite fans

by David Fan

Throughout the world of movies, George Lucas’s “Star Wars” films have been critically acclaimed for revolutionizing the sci-fi genre. But after six successful movies, Lucas felt it was time to move on from “Star Wars,” selling the franchise to Disney for \$4.05 billion in October 2012.

Now after 10 years without a “Star Wars” movie, junior Alex Hunt, an avid “Star Wars” fan, is eager to see the new movie that will be released this December.

Hunt said that he believes the new movie will be a decent successor to the original movies, but will probably not live up to its predecessor.

“[Lucas film] ended the last episode with a definitive

ending, making the dark side leaderless and the good side the victor,” Hunt said. “But with the new movie, the directors are basically building off a movie plot that is already done.”

Nevertheless, Hunt said that the new “Star Wars” movie could still be great, adding that Disney is not a bad choice for producing the new “Star Wars” film since the studio has a history of making narrative films.

Hunt also likes that “Star Wars” Land, a new attraction coming to Disneyland and Disney World in 2019, will bring back a form of “Star Wars” for longtime fans as well as introduce new

people, especially kids, to the franchise.

So far, Disney has only planned one ride for “Star Wars” Land: a virtual Millennium Falcon ride. The Millennium Falcon was a vehicle used in “Star Wars” Episodes IV-VI.

With all the ideas “Star Wars” already has, Hunt believes that Disney will not have any problems creating exciting and memorable rides for visitors to partake in.

“Star Wars” Land makes me even more excited about the new “Star Wars” movie,” Hunt said.

Junior Steve Lai, another “Star Wars” aficionado, also said that the new movie will be a fine addition to the long-run-

ning franchise.

At first, Lai was disappointed that Disney was going to make the new “Star Wars” movie since he did not want any other company to create the “Star Wars” films except Lucasfilm.

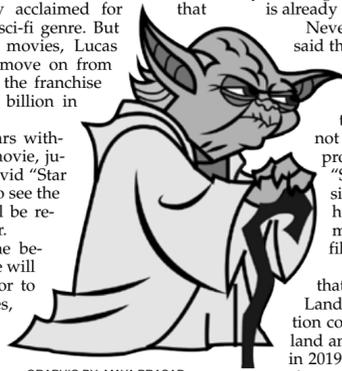
But as Disney released trailers of the new movie, Lai felt more confident in Disney creating the “Star Wars” film because some parts of the trailer, like the special effects, caught his eye.

Lai also said that Disney has not botched up another franchise

it bought, Marvel, yet, which is another reason he feels Disney can succeed in making a worthy “Star Wars” movie.

“I enjoyed those Marvel movies, so I hope that they can do the same for the ‘Star Wars’ movie,” Lai said. ♦

**With all the ideas “Star Wars” already has, Hunt believes that Disney will not have any problems creating exciting and memorable rides for visitors to partake in.**



GRAPHIC BY MAYA PRASAD



# Taylor Swift teaches us her 'Style'

## Ardent Swifties

Allison Lin & Summer Smith

Everyone knew we were trouble when we walked in. Wearing black leather, bronze eyeshadow and bright lipstick, we strode into Levi's Stadium, ready to "shake it off."

Surrounded by 50,000 Swifties on the night of Aug. 15, we waited as our hearts raced while we eagerly waited for Taylor Swift to appear on stage. After swaying the sound of Shawn Mendes' soothing voice and sipping cherry sodas while Vance Joy serenaded the crowd, we grew restless and chanted with the rest of the stadium for Swift to appear on stage.

Most of the crowd consisted of high school girls and couples. Many mothers brought their young daughters, who in turn wore homemade concert shirts and held sparkly posters. There were also a lot of adults and tech company employees who spent most of their time drinking at the bars and lounging in the suites.

Chattering excitedly, everyone in the crowd wore a wristband that had been placed at each seat upon arrival. The mysterious accessory heightened the audience's excitement as they waited discover its purpose.

All of a sudden, each light blackened, and we held our breaths in the darkness.

A few seconds later, every inch in the stadium flashed in unison as each audience members' concert wristband lit up, flashing in sync to the opening beats of Swift's hit, "Welcome to New York." We eagerly scanned the stage, searching for the star.

Right on cue, Swift appeared as if rising from an unknown world, dancing onto the stage and greeting the ear shattering crowd with an enthusiastic, "Welcome to the 1989 World Tour, Santa Clara, California!"

Decked out in a sparkly silver jacket and purple shades, Swift belted out the catchy lyrics as her troupe of male backup dancers performed acrobatic flips and hip hop moves behind her. As we jumped up and down, our electrifying screams and out of tune singing were instantaneously drowned in the roar of the crowd.

But her music wasn't all that enthralled us. The night was filled with surprises that put us all on the edges of our seats — figuratively and literally — since no one sat down during the entire concert.

Our first surprise came in the form of "Black Magic." In town for their performance at the Teen Choice Awards, the girl band from the United Kingdom, Little Mix, joined Swift for a strut down the catwalk, singing their new chart-topping single.

After Swift gave us some heartfelt relationship advice on friendships and romances, we received our second surprise of the night. Joan Baez and Julia



Taylor Swift takes a moment to interact with her fans as she pauses from her singing.

Roberts joined Swift on stage to walk down the stage arm in arm while Swift sang another hit, "Style."

Although it did seem a tad out of place for an Oscar-winning actress to make an appearance at a pop concert to just walk down the stage once and then leave, it was a unique experience to be so close to Roberts.

Swift proceeded to sing a couple more songs from her 1989 album and a few songs from previous albums. She sent the audience back down memory lane when she sang "Love Story," one of our favorite songs from middle school.

Before singing this song, she gave us a short backstory about her songwriting process and the inspiration behind this song.

As the concert came to a close, crowd members piled out of their seats and into the parking lot and merchandise stores, still sporting their white wristbands. Instead of following Swift's rhythm like they had earlier, the wristbands lit up in different colors when tapped. A constant reminder of the exciting night we spent dressed in all black, our wristbands still sit in our rooms, lighting up our memories of an unforgettable night. ♦

## Minaj impresses SHS fans

By Neehar Thumaty

Police barricades circled the Concord Pavilion Center. Inside, thousands of concert-goers created a near-tangible atmosphere of anticipation and excitement. Their eyes were completely fixed on the stage; a mere glimpse of the performers caused the crowd to erupt into applause and cheers.

This was the scene on Aug. 14, as hip hop and rap artists Nicki Minaj, Meek Mill and Rae Sremmurd performed as part of Minaj's PinkPrint Tour.

Senior Beaudine de Roos, an avid Minaj fan, said the concert lived up to her expectations.

"She stands for independence for women, and I love it," de Roos said. "She teaches us that 'we don't need no man.'"

Senior Sanah Shah, who also attended the concert, said she was pleasantly surprised at Minaj's performance — despite having low expectations beforehand because Minaj's "vulgar" rap is "not really [Shah's] taste in music."

Shah especially enjoyed the parts of the performance when Minaj appeared on stage in a hot pink, sang songs relating to her personal struggles, specifically those involving her relationships and what it was like to be cheated on by her boyfriend of several years.

She told men about how they should always treat women respectfully and urged women to be just

as strong as men if not stronger. She kept reiterating that just as how she is the "queen of rap," every individual woman has the ability to be the queen of something.

Ultimately, the speech led up to her description of her new relationship with Meek Mill.

Shah was also surprised that Minaj came off of the stage to personally comfort a fan who had been pepper sprayed by security. However, Shah said she did not enjoy Mill's rap performance, characterizing it as the type of "trashy" performance that dissuades her from listening to that subgenre of rap music often.

"[Minaj] is an amazing rapper both in speed and harmony, whereas [Mill] was slurring and was even booed by members of the audience," Shah said.

Prior to the concert, Mill's notoriety increased as his controversial feud with renowned rap artist, Drake, escalated.

Mill published a tweet questioning the originality of Drake's verses after Drake failed to publicly promote Mill's new album, on which he was featured, "Dreams are Worth More than Money."

Shah said she felt that Mill did not live up to the hype that arose from his album being positioned at No. 1 on the US Billboard 200 list and that the audience was simply there for Minaj.

"I'm not the biggest fan of Minaj, but I thought she put up on a vibrant and exciting show," Shah said. "She won me over, and I will definitely check out some more of her music." ♦

September 11, 2015

# Ecuador visit reveals cultural contrasts

## COUNSELOR, THREE SENIORS GO ON SERVICE TRIP

By Allison Lin

Senior Aakash Thumaty is the president of the ASB, a self-proclaimed tech geek and a known practical joker. His friend Spencer Yen, also a senior, is known for his prowess in programming and his skill as a volleyball player. Senior Isa Berardo is a skilled soccer player and dedicated rally commissioner.

All three, along with guidance counselor Eileen Allen, traveled to a small village in Ecuador for a 10-day service trip organized by Me to We, a subgroup of the Free the Children charity. Assistant principal Kerry Mohnike won the overseas excursion in a raffle last February at "We Day," a youth empowerment event held at the SAP Center.

Mohnike was unable to go due to family commitments, so Allen offered to take her place. The remaining two spots were open to current juniors at the time. Berardo and Yen were the only two students who applied for those spots. Thumaty was already guaranteed a spot, as he was the one who told Mohnike to enter the raffle.

Upon arrival, the group was brought to Bella Vista, a secluded village along the Napo River with a population of 200. Accommodated in Free the Children's private lodge nestled in the Amazon forest, the crew settled into cabins next to local civilians.

"The first few days, I stayed pretty quiet," Yen said. "Everything seemed sort of gimmicky and cheesy, especially when we were handed journals to help us 'discover' ourselves and the world."

But as the group began to interact at meal times, Yen got to know the other volunteers better. Speaking broken Spanish and using hand gestures, Yen was able to communicate with the locals.

The crew was informed about the service project: to dig a trench to provide a clean water system for the Bella Vista community, which consists mainly of

farming families. Volunteers were also instructed in how to transport cinder blocks, clear rocks and plant water pipes at specified locations in the rainforest.

Each morning, the volunteer crew took a canoe upstream 25 minutes to the trench, which stretched several kilometers deep into the forest.

"The digging got monotonous at times, so we would hold digging competitions to make it more interesting," Yen said.

The weather conditions fluctuated greatly, according to Yen. One minute, it would be blistering hot; the next minute, there would be a torrential downpour and his boots were filled to the brim with rainwater.

Thumaty called the work grueling but rewarding. He remembers how one day when he was working in the village, he suddenly felt tired and thirsty after digging for several hours. After Thumaty sat down to catch his breath, a 3-year-old girl approached him with a small canteen filled with water. Thumaty thanked her graciously but quickly remembered the little girl had a scarce supply of food, let alone clean drinking water for herself.

"She offered me what little amount she had to thank me for helping, which opened my eyes to the tremendous impact I was making by simply lending a hand," Thumaty said.

Fortunately, clean drinking water will be accessible to 34 homes in around six months.

Thinking back on the trip, Berardo said she will long remember the interactions she shared with the women in the communities. Weaving colorful bracelets and shaping ornaments from twine stripped from stalks and seeds gathered from plants, Berardo recalls seeing how proud the women were to have a source of income.

Allen attributed the refreshing vibe of the trip to the lack of cell phone and Internet access while in the rainforest.

"I walked outside to our common area each night and it made me so happy to see all of the students playing cards and talking together," Allen said.

Yen recalls being tricked by Thumaty



Guidance counselor Eileen Allen and the students pose after a day of digging trenches.

into eating a black pepper, one of the spiciest peppers in existence. Believing the pepper was sweet, Yen casually popped one into his mouth and "straight up died." He sat down for half an hour, unable to function or talk, while the local children mocked him by eating several of the peppers like candy.

Even worse, Yen remembers the inadequate plumbing system at the lodge.

"One of the guys staying in my cabin clogged the toilet several times, and each time we would have to go get a neighboring villager to help us unclog the toilet, who always groaned, 'Señor! Toilet? Again?'" Yen said.

Another afternoon, Berardo's jungle guide found grubs, large white larvae. The ones the guide found were the size of "really thick worms," Berardo said.

The locals explained that the grubs are a common snack. Hearing this and receiving a dare from a local, Berardo snatched one up and popped it into her mouth.

"I just figured how lame it would be if I had come home and said I had the opportunity to eat a live grub and didn't take it," Berardo said.

She recalls that the weirdest part was the texture. The grub was "extremely chewy and wriggly," and she had to bite the head off first, otherwise the grub would bite her.

In another instance, Allen's worst ex-

perience from the trip was her encounter with a massive flying bug.

Allen is terrified of spiders and bugs; unfortunately, the Amazon has tarantulas on the ceiling and bug nets hung in every corner.

"The worst possible thing is if a bug gets into your cabin," Yen said. "One night, I woke up to crazy screaming and instantaneously thought someone had been murdered."

The blood-curling scream was followed by loud banging noises coming from Allen's cabin.

Running in the direction of the noise, Yen stopped in his tracks as an enormous bug zoomed out through the cabin door. It looked like a "little black blimp with eyes."

Despite the crazy incidents, fluctuating weather and back-breaking work, Allen and the students praised the trip as a life-changing experience.

Yen said his impression of so-called service trips where a volunteer pays a large sum of money to go to a third-world country has changed.

"Sometimes the cliché things to do are right," Yen said. "Getting out of the close-knit Saratoga bubble of elite summer programs and internships to see a new place and be welcomed in a diverse group of people was the best possible experience I could have ever imagined from this service trip in Ecuador." ♦



The entrance arch at Outside Lands was composed of decorative windmills and colors.

## Outside Lands creates bonds

By Caitlyn Chen

As senior Zhan Ng strolled across Golden Gate Park, heavy bass accompanying an intricate melody caught his attention. He began bobbing his head to the soft rock music, immersing himself into a crowd of fans, while humming along to "Keep Going" by the Revivalists on a summer evening.

Ng bought a \$135 one-day pass for Outside Lands Music and Arts Festival on Aug. 7. Outside Lands is an outdoor music festival that includes more than 60 musical acts from around the world performing for roughly 50,000 people in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. This year's lineup included popular artists and bands such as Sam Smith, Kendrick Lamar and Mumford and Sons.

When Ng arrived at the festival, he was amazed by the impressive variety of musicians.

Although Ng originally came to see an indie rock band called Glass Animals, he ended up liking four or five other performances by artists he had never heard before.

"I never knew I wanted to listen to

The Revivalists," Ng said. "But I stopped by to listen, and thought, man, this is the best."

As opposed to a solo concert, Outside Lands exposes a whole spectrum of music artists to its attendees, from pop legends like Elton John to garage rock bands like The Black Keys.

"These music festivals are a great way to see bands that you wouldn't necessarily have a chance to see alone," said senior Ankitha Sarvesh, who also attended the festival.

As impressive as the lineup was, it was the people who made Outside Lands such an amazing experience for Ng.

Ng, who considers himself to be an outgoing person, occasionally strikes up conversations with strangers. Ng said that when he talks to them, they seem reluctant to converse. But at Outside Lands, he could strike up a random conversation with a stranger, and it would be a great moment.

"Everyone's together, everyone's open to anything," Ng said. "For music, for arts or for food, Outside Lands is a community." ♦

## Senior interns at Zynga, helps develop new app

By Elizabeth Lee

His eyes fixated on his Mac screen, senior Spencer Yen quickly types another line of code.

It was the fifth week of his summer internship at Zynga, a social game company that has created many popular apps including Farmville and Words With Friends.

As the co-president of the Application Developer's Club and the creator of 12 different apps, senior Spencer Yen used his extensive experience as a computer programmer to code a game from scratch last summer.

As a Zynga intern, Yen spent nine weeks meeting with game designers, discussing new ideas and coding with his co-worker in the coding language Objective-C to produce the most user-friendly game.

Last February, Yen contacted Mark Pincus, the founder of Zynga, in search of any open positions at Pincus's most recent startup, Superlabs.

In 2014, Pincus stepped down as CEO of Zynga to execute the projects and ideas he had been contemplating during his term.

Originally, Yen had planned to intern at Superlabs, until Pincus decided to re-

turn to Zynga last April. With the news of Pincus's return as CEO of Zynga, Yen transferred from Superlabs to Zynga and teamed up with another intern, a junior in college, to build a new game for the company.

"It was awesome [interning at Zynga] because the app we created is guaran-

**“To know that I wrote the code and helped build an app from scratch is cool.**

senior Spencer Yen

teed to be a huge hit, since other Zynga games like Draw Something had over a million users," Yen said. "To know that I wrote the code and helped build an app from scratch that will reach this many users is cool."

Despite minor bugs within a few of the app's features, Yen successfully coded a game that he calls "a twist on Draw Something." The app, Draw Something

for Messenger, will be released in the Apple and Android App Store next month.

"The internship was a good experience since I was able to write high quality code," Yen said. "Plus, it was really fun with lots of perks — three free meals a day and lots of arcade games like ping pong and foosball."

Yen's love for computer science first began in the eighth grade, when Yen decided that he wanted to create his own app that would become popular in smartphone app stores. His hard work and persistence eventually paid off when he successfully coded his very first game, Wack, at a two-week iD tech camp he took over the summer before ninth grade.

"When I created my first app, which was a simple Whack-a-Mole game, I felt pretty excited," Yen said. "It received [around] 2,000 downloads and it was cool to have something I made on the App Store that my friends and family could download."

Since then, Yen has been actively coding and attending different conferences including the Apple Worldwide Developers Conference last June in San Francisco.

Besides conferences, Yen also attends

hackathons, where coders collaborate and build different products and apps, such as LAHacks, HackTECH and Hack the North.

"Hackathons are a great and fun place for people to meet others with similar interests and spend 36 hours with no sleep to build something amazing," said senior Aakash Thumaty, who often attends hackathons with Yen.

Yen said that although there was no particular person who inspired him to begin his computer science career; rather, living in Silicon Valley and seeing startups, tech giants and other successful teenagers inspired him.

In the future, he plans to continue coding and building projects. He hopes that one day he will be able to successfully create at least one hit.

Yen said that the best way to become a skilled coder is to keep on building, whether it's an iPhone or Android game or a website. To further improve his coding skills, Yen may work at Zynga again part-time next semester, but will also explore other opportunities.

"The best way to learn quickly is to start a project," Yen said. "Don't just watch tutorials and videos or read books, but think of an idea and just launch right into building it." ♦

# SUMMERTIME



## Sophomore volunteers as teacher in Taiwan

by Caitlyn Chen

High-pitched voices filled the small classroom of Zhong He Middle School in New Taipei City, Taiwan, as 15 fifth-grade students barged into the door at 9 a.m. on a day in July, setting down their backpacks and metal canteen water bottles.

Pulling out plastic name tags from their pockets, they hung them around their necks, chatting in fluent Mandarin as they eagerly grabbed seats in scattered wooden desks.

Sophomore Andrew Zheng stood at the front of the classroom and clapped his hands twice. A hush fell among the students, and they all turned to face Zheng with earnest smiles.

This past summer, Zheng participated in a program organized by the Wisdom Culture and Education Organization, which organizes a Chinese school, annual summer camps and volunteer opportunities for students.

When he heard about Wisdom's volunteer opportunity to teach underprivileged children in New Taipei City, Taiwan, Zheng was eager to sign up.

Zheng and a group of 90 other Bay Area high schoolers arrived in New Taipei City on July 13. Over the course of two weeks, Zheng taught the incoming fifth-graders a series of lessons, exposing them to the English language.

"I knew if we only taught them English, they would get bored," Zheng said. "So instead, we taught them elements of American culture, like cooking, which gave our lesson plans variety."

In his cooking class, Zheng taught his students how to make typical American

food — pancakes, eggs and cookies. Before he used any of the ingredients in his cooking class, he would say their names in English and have his students repeat the ingredient back to him.

Besides cooking, Zheng also taught them simple biology, U.S. history and arts and crafts.

With the variety of lessons, students remained engaged in class and also were exposed them to other topics in American culture.

Zheng's lessons went on daily until 4 p.m., when the children returned home. After teaching an eight-hour class, Zheng had 30 minutes of leisure time before he began to plan lessons for the next day.

On most days, Zheng said he and the other teachers stayed up until 11 p.m. planning.

Because he spent quality time with his students every day, Zheng discovered that their lifestyles differed greatly from his own.

Zheng said some of his students' families were impoverished, while other students were orphans.

And although the students attended school during the year, many of them were stuck at the bottom of their class because they could not receive much help from their parents or guardians.

"Since these children don't have the same opportunities we do [in Saratoga], I did my best to provide them with the best education possible," Zheng said.

Through this summer teaching experience, Zheng felt as though he learned just as much as his students. Although the students called him "lao shi," or teacher, he saw the students as his own teachers.

"I'm still a student as well," Zheng said. "I'm still learning how to teach,



Sophomore Andrew Zheng and his fellow teacher prep the children for their final skit.

how to understand children, and of course, I'm also still learning Chinese."

Zheng said because he is still a young student, he feels like he has a special relationship with the children in a way that adults cannot.

"Students understand other students," Zheng said. "I could see where they were struggling and help them in ways that have helped me in the past."

Zheng had a special connection with one student in particular, 10-year-old James.

According to Zheng, James appeared outwardly innocent, but in truth, he was a huge troublemaker.

Because James was at the top of the class, he would often get bored. As a result, he would talk out of turn or play pranks on other students.

"In a way, I could see myself in James," Zheng said.

Zheng recounts that by the end of the first week, James was the only student that had found Zheng's weak point: his ticklishness.

The next week, just as class was resuming, James snuck up behind Zheng and began tickling him while Zheng was taking attendance. Before Zheng could say another word, a mob of students came rushing toward Zheng and began tickling him.

The prank meant little learning occurred for the next hour as they settled down.

On the final day of the summer program, the students performed a skit in front of the entire school. Zheng led his students in a dramatic production of "Star Wars."

As he watched his students perform, he could see that his teaching had made a drastic impact on their linguistic skills. The students had all memorized their lines fluently, and their English had vastly improved from the first day.

"This experience is one that I will never forget," Zheng said. "The skills that both my students and I have picked up from each other will be retained throughout our lives." ♦

## Shah constructs greenhouses for Gilroy residents

by Julia Miller

After a 40-minute regular commute this past summer, senior Partha Shah stepped out of his car to the foggy Gilroy landscape, ready once again to build greenhouses.

After collecting the needed materials, Shah and his three teammates began where they had left off the day before, busily working to complete the progressing buildings that would soon be a site for brighter futures in Gilroy's low-income community.

Shah was part of a program called Valley Verde, a nonprofit organization in Santa Clara County that helps communities grow their own produce.

For this project, Shah worked with three other volunteers to complete the construction of six greenhouses for a

poorer neighborhood in Gilroy.

Over the summer, Shah said he worked for the organization three days a week, from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., for around two to three weeks. The program also helped them get the seeds they needed to grow their own crops in the greenhouses, Shah said.

Never having done a project like this before, Shah was interested in the idea of constructing the greenhouses and getting volunteer hours just before summer had ended.

Shah was referred to Valley Verde through his mother's workplace, PayPal, and he asked if he could join their team.

While building the greenhouses, Shah and his fellow volunteers had to

keep in mind the budget that was set by Valley Verde. In order to design the six greenhouses, they could only spend as much as they were allowed to along with certain materials to build with.

"We wanted to keep each greenhouse under \$500, so we had the basic design which we modeled," Shah said. "They bought wood and PVC parts and some other components to build them all."

Over the duration of the project, Shah was able to apply himself to the production with abilities he had been taught by teachers from Saratoga High, and through courses and extracurricular activities he had taken in the past.

Shah used 3-D modeling he learned

in Introduction to Engineering and knowledge he absorbed from participating in the school Robotics program in his sophomore year when he put the houses together.

Shah said the experience helped him form new relationships with the people he worked with as well.

Shah became friends with the director who runs the company and the man who designs the greenhouses.

By applying skills learned from school in a practical environment, Shah said that the summer stint was eye-opening for him.

"Although I learned all the skills to build these houses in school, I wasn't really doing anything with them," Shah said. "It's much more meaningful to apply yourself and help others rather than just solely focus on school." ♦



Shah

# SERVICE

GRAPHIC BY ANGELA LEE

## Stanford health efforts aid Guatemalan village

by Karissa Dong

Off the southeastern shore of Guatemala's glittering Lake Atitlán, said to be one of the most beautiful lakes in the world, the small town of San Lucas Tolimán is blessed with a magnificent view: striking blue waters, azure skies and the distant shape of the dormant volcano Tolimán just south of town.

But behind this breathtaking Latin American landscape stands an impoverished indigenous community of Highland Mayan peoples, still tasting the bitter repercussions of a country once strife with civil war. Malnourishment lurks in the corner of every overcrowded household, and for children, the hope of education remains bleak.

Here, senior Nina Harris spent six weeks of her summer working with Stanford's Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and its health program by professor Dr. Paul Wise.

In the surrounding rural villages that volunteered to take part in this research project, each child was weighed every two months. If the child was judged to be second-degree or third-degree malnourished, they received the protein supplement inapacarina, Harris said.

A great deal of discussion was involved, Harris added, as to which children should get the supplement, especially since the program relies on limited grants from Stanford.

"You have to make these decisions very wisely," Harris said. "It's a hard

choice to make. Do you try and catch somebody before they fall behind the second-degree malnourished line, or do you let them fall before you help them?"

For the last two weeks, several Stanford professors joined the research crew. Equipped with her proficiency in Spanish, Harris served as a translator during medical interviews.

Although the health promoter program had already established a hospital in the area, many people were not using it. Thorough investigation revealed that, more often than not, access to the hospital was limited by extreme poverty.

"If it cost five quetzales, which is less than a dollar, to get someone to the hospital, most people would not be able to afford it," Harris said. "So we came up with ideas to make health care [more readily available]. We put medicine cabinets [in the communities] so that they would have access to stronger meds without having to go to the hospital."

Harris also taught English classes in the community thrice a week. In this region, where education is nearly obsolete, people who have completed third grade are considered lucky. Her students ranged from ages 15 to 48.

"I loved getting to help them learn," Harris said. "I'm really proud of [my students] and miss them all a lot, but I also personally learned a lot about what it's like to be 17 in another country."

With her budding interest in photography, Harris spent her free time capturing images of the native community.



Senior Nina Harris laughs with Angel Julajuj, her host father during the research trip.

"The people in Guatemala are incredibly beautiful, and I love the way they capture," Harris said.

Harris also brought a photo printer with her, enabling her to give physical copies of portraits to families.

"Most of [the people in San Lucas] have never seen a photo before, let alone have one for themselves," she said. "I had a lot of mothers start crying because they were so happy to have a picture of their child. I also learned a lot about perspective, both literally and figuratively,

since there's only so much you can see in [the frame] of a photograph."

During her stay, Harris lived with a host family, which consisted of a father named Angel, his six children and several of his grandchildren. Other relatives also shared the house complex.

"The way families interact [in Guatemala] is colossally different from anything I've ever seen," Harris said. "People don't think of their extended families as an extended part. It's just much more community-based." ♦

## Bellathur brothers teach robotics to children in India

by Vibha Seshadri

As senior Adithya Bellathur and his younger brother, freshman Akhilesh Bellathur, looked on, in a classroom in Bangalore, India, 15 children crowded around a small obstacle course to watch a challenge involving a robot they had built and coded.

The robot successfully picked up two small objects, then made a sharp 90-degree turn, picking up a dumbbell-like object. A young boy whispered in anticipation as the robot landed in the finish zone: a square sectioned off by a thin strip of black duct tape.

As the two brothers supervised the challenge, they stole a quick glance at the students and smiled.

This past summer, Adithya and Akhilesh conducted six robotics workshops in Bangalore, India, at four charity schools and a hostel for children whose parents are serving life sentences in prison. Students ranged from fifth-graders to 11th-graders.

Adithya began his robotics career in the eighth grade and became an avid member of the school's M-SET club. He was inspired to bring his dream of creating a robotics workshop to life in the summer of 2014 by the organization, "For Inspiration and Recognition in Science and Technology" (FIRST). FIRST hosts robotics competitions and emphasizes spreading a passion for STEM to underprivileged children. Akhilesh, on

the other hand, found inspiration from his brother and wanted to help him carry out his goals.

Adithya began executing logistics for the program by reaching out to the community close to his grandmother's house two months before a trip to India in 2014. That summer, he was able to teach at two schools and a few children that lived in his grandmother's apartment complex.

Through his first workshops in 2014, Adithya was able to find ways to perfect his lesson plans.

After one year of experience, Adithya expanded his workshops to more schools and hostels in the community, teaching approximately 90 students this past summer. He began writing the lesson plans for these workshops last May and continued adapting them throughout his time in India.

Adithya centered the workshop around the Lego Mindstorms EV3 kit and created his own equipment, such as an obstacle course, for the robots to com-

pete on. He used this equipment at each workshop he taught at.

These workshops lasted two to three days and included 15 to 20 students. The brothers each supervised a team of students.

Although many of the children he taught were underprivileged, Adithya found that students were not hindered by the complexity of the robots.

"I often had to create new lessons on the spot because the kids all learned much faster than I expected," Adithya said. "They finished tasks that took my

friends and me weeks to complete in less than an hour."

Adithya partially credits the students' success to the flexibility of robotics. In fact, he said his favorite aspect of robotics is observing how people use their own style and creativity to answer the same question in multiple ways.

During the weeks they were both teaching, the brothers spent their mornings charging the laptops and robots be-

fore leaving to teach. After collaborating with administration at the schools, they would set up the classroom, teach new concepts about coding or robotics and converse with the students before returning home at 6 p.m.

For the brothers, nothing compared to the enthusiasm the students had for the challenges they competed in.

"Just seeing their eyes light up when they succeeded in doing something new to them was by far the best part of the whole experience," Adithya said.

Adithya attributes the success of the workshops to Akhilesh's constant support. He said they would not have run as smoothly as they did without him.

"My brother was my partner-in-crime and was crucial in making the workshop work," Adithya said.

Akhilesh's presence gave Adithya more flexibility in teaching by watching over the kids and teaching segments of the workshops. Akhilesh was amazed by the students' work ethic. He noticed that the students were motivated to work harder after hitting road blocks.

When running into errors in code, the students would run tests countless times without giving up.

Either way, when it was time to compete with the robots, the children supported each other.

"No matter if they won or lost, the team would jump for joy, cheer and start giving each other high-fives," Akhilesh said. ♦

"My brother [Akhilesh] was my partner-in-crime and was crucial in making the workshop work."



senior Adithya Bellathur

# Liddle prepares for second year as quarterback

by Allison Lin & Summer Smith

As a mere sophomore last year, Will Liddle took on the pressure-packed role as the team's starting quarterback. One year later, he's prepared to have an even better season.

Liddle said he did not start to focus on football until his freshman year of high school.

His only previous experience with football had been a year of Pop Warner when he was 8 years old.

"I was the chubby little kid on the offensive line," Liddle said. "I occasionally played some flag football after that, but that was really it."

As the quarterback, Liddle is not required to put in as much work as the offensive line and wide receivers in terms of physical training.

"Everyone makes the joke that the quarterback is the pretty boy who doesn't do anything but throw the ball," Liddle said.

This, however, is not the case, as Liddle pushes himself constantly to improve and tries to be a team leader.

When receivers get tired, Liddle said he takes it upon himself to hype them up. He pushes his teammates on the field but knows how tough their jobs are.

Head coach Tim Lugo commended Liddle for his leadership and admitted

he puts a lot of pressure on Liddle during practices.

"He's learning to be a leader at his position and that can be hard at times because I'm pretty tough on him," Lugo said.

Lugo saw talent in Liddle during his freshman year, so at the beginning of sophomore year, he moved him up to varsity to compete for the starting quarterback position. He displayed a high potential that won him the job.

Having thrown 17 touchdowns last season, Liddle looks to improve his decisions while cutting down on interceptions.

Liddle sees the team going far this year because of Lugo's coaching and the team's strong desire to win. The team also depends heavily on Liddle.

"Honestly, I had no idea [Liddle] would turn out as good as he has been this soon," Lugo said.

Lugo said Liddle has been a big contributor to the overall improvement of the team.

According to Liddle, both the offensive and defensive side of the team are incorporating new plays. The defense is also employing an entirely new strategy this year as well.

These changes have largely been to compensate for losing a few key players. The team lost safety Ken Wu and cornerback Joey Medeiros to graduation.



Junior starting quarterback Will Liddle catches the snap during practice this August. The team had been preparing for their first game against Hillsdale taking place on Sept. 4.

Filling their shoes this season are senior Vincent Kung at safety and junior Nolan Chao at cornerback.

The six sophomores who started last season are now experienced juniors who are ready to lead and make big contributions.

"Our offensive line is pretty stacked and our wide receiver team is quite good," Liddle said. "Both sides could

use more work, but I am really happy to see the progress we've made since the beginning of summer training."

Further into the season, Liddle hopes to face longtime rivals Los Gatos and Milpitas with a strong, united front.

"I am also looking forward to playing the tough teams this year because I am confident that our players are ready for anybody," Liddle said. ♦

# Field hockey players participate in recruitment camps

by Julia Miller & Vibha Seshadri

Over the summer, six varsity field hockey players — juniors Tina Miller, Hannah Leonard, Maxine Parr and Rachel Davey, and seniors Erin Norris and Sabrina Clark — attended field hockey college recruitment camps in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Miller, Leonard and Davey traveled to a boarding school in Deerfield, Mass., for a four-day camp directed by a former Boston College field hockey coach. Several coaches from other schools also came to observe the athletes.

During the camp, they participated in

three sessions, each devoted to a different aspect of the sport. The first was for skill improvement, the second for game play and the third for competing in a tournament with other players.

"Not only did we work on our skills and fitness over the summer, but now we're ready for this season," Miller said.

But Miller faced challenges when the girls were taught difficult new techniques, struggling to perfect them.

"There [were] struggles throughout, even if you knew how to do it, it's a part of learning," Miller explained. "We were taught some new skills and they're definitely going to be helpful for this coming season."

Meanwhile, Parr, Clark and Norris flew to Hartford, Conn., to attend a similar four-day program. Unlike the camp in Massachusetts, this program was invitation-based. According to Norris, more than 100 college coaches observed the players.

Norris and Clark also said that the camp helped the three girls grow closer as teammates.

"We had a great time bonding in the dorms and staying up all night together," Clark said.

Norris also got the chance to meet many girls from the East Coast at the camp. In addition to lasting friendships, she felt that learning from the other

players gave her a new perspective on the game itself.

"We were all split up into teams so I was with girls I had never played with before," Norris said. "It was difficult trying to play with these girls because they played differently than me, but I adjusted quickly."

Like Norris, Clark said her favorite part of the camps were the games they were assigned to each day.

"I wasn't used to the humidity, and we even played in pouring rain and the next day, scorching heat," Clark said. "I love playing so my favorite part was just being in the games and learning new styles of play." ♦

# Senior commits to play for UC San Diego soccer team

by Sweeya Raj & Vibha Seshadri

A passion for soccer that began when senior Lauren Plesse was 4 years old recently resulted in an athletic scholarship in the sport to UC San Diego.

Even as many seniors were in the midst of procrastinating on their college applications this past summer, Plesse received notice from coaches there that she has been invited to play on the team's Division II soccer team. Plesse announced the news on July 19 via Facebook.

Like many kids, Plesse began playing recreational soccer with American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO). At age 8, she joined a club team and has since played on teams such as Santa Clara Sporting and De Anza Force.

She played varsity soccer at SHS during her freshman and sophomore years, and she will play this year as well. She plays outside winger and center forward.

In addition to the three to four days of scheduled club soccer practice and matches, Plesse conditions on her own at least two to three days a week.

"I've gotten a good work ethic through soccer, because I know I have to eat certain things, I know I need to hydrate and stay in shape and do whatever I need to do to be the best I can be for a bigger event," Plesse said.

Plesse began her journey to college recruitment

between eighth and ninth grade by participating in the Elite Clubs National League's showcases, which college coaches are invited to attend.

"It's a tournament, but there's no winner," Plesse said. "You just go and play games in front of college coaches [and hope to impress]."

To get the attention of some coaches, Plesse would email them with a blurb about herself, her playing schedule, her grade point average and her coach's

phone number in case the college coach needed a point of contact.

During junior year, Plesse started to call coaches to take a more active step in the recruitment process.

While Plesse's top two choices were UCSD and California Polytechnic State University, she also talked to a few other schools.

"Playing soccer in the rain and the snow isn't really for me, so even if they did reach out, I would let them know that I wasn't really looking

to go there," Plesse said.

When Plesse got an offer from UCSD, she was ecstatic.

"I just love playing [soccer]," Plesse said. "When you beat someone on a dribble, it's just a very rewarding feeling. And when you score a goal, know-

ing that you did that for yourself, your team, your coach and whoever else is there [is amazing]."

As an athlete at UCSD, Plesse will get first priority in scheduling classes and will have to schedule her classes around practices which take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on a daily basis. She will also have access to academic tutors who were athletes before.

"[The] girls on the team [also] help, because they have taken the classes before, and they're upperclassmen so they can help [show] you how everything works," Plesse said.

Currently, Plesse's commitment is verbal and she has sent the UCSD admissions office her transcripts; however, she still needs to complete the UC applications. Plesse said that her commitment will be official in January or February, depending when she signs the contract.

Plesse said playing soccer at SHS has been a great chance to meet upperclassmen and make friends, and she is excited for a similar experience at UCSD.

"I am looking forward to the camaraderie and the friendships I'll build," Plesse said. ♦



**I am looking forward to the camaraderie and the friendships I'll build [on the team].**

senior Lauren Plesse

CROSS COUNTRY

# Freshman runner sets speedy pace

BY Ami Nachiappan

Freshman Sasha Pickard, then an eighth-grader at Redwood Middle School, caught a glimpse of the finish line peeking through the trees as she pushed through the last straightaway during the Santa Clara County meet at Montgomery Hill Park last October. While placing first in the 2.06-mile race, with a time of 13:49, she crossed the finish line with a wide smile on her face.

"I was covered in sweat and barely able to breathe, but I was so happy I finished," Pickard said. "When I think back to the course, to the points [where] I almost gave up, where I almost dropped back, I smile because I'm proud that I persevered through it all."

Pickard, who was ranked fourth among California middle school runners in the 1600m and fifth in the 800m, has always had a passion for running. She started her running career at age seven in her hometown of Austin, Texas, where she joined the track and field team. Back then, she ran the 100m, 200m and 400m dashes at the regional and state levels.

Through soccer training, she effectively built her stamina, which helped her in longer races.

"Running for 80 minutes during a soccer game, with only one break in between, certainly requires you to keep moving," she said. "That comes in handy in races, since you need to be able to catch your breath while keeping a pace."

As Pickard grew as a runner, she switched to running the 1600m at age 10 because she enjoyed long distance running on inclines and slopes rather than flat tracks.

"[Cross country] races are longer and way more interesting to run because you don't know where the finish line is, so there are a lot of different strategies deployed by different runners," she said.

Not only has running helped Pickard physically, it has also shaped who she is today by teaching her perseverance and determination.

"After the second lap in a [track meet] or after a big hill in a race, I just couldn't drop out," she said. "I had to keep going to finish the race. If I was going to finish, I might as well give it my all."

Since moving to California in 2013, Pickard has placed first in every cross country meet she has competed in, besides winning the county races for middle school girls in

seventh and eighth grade.

In track, she qualified for both the West Valley Athletic League meet and the Santa Clara Counties meet in the 100m, 800m and 1600m, achieving personal records for all three.

At league finals, she ranked fifth in the 100m with a time of 13.8 seconds. In the 800m and 1600m races, she placed third and second, running respective times of 2:26 and 5:22.

At the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Regionals, she placed first in both the



Freshman Sasha Pickard begins her run at cross country practice. Since she was seven years old, running has allowed Pickard to escape from the world and to push her limits.

800m and 1500m. She qualified for AAU Nationals in Iowa, but was unable to compete because she fractured her wrist the week before.

"The doctor told me I had to stop training for about a week, which was devastating," Pickard said. "After three weeks, I convinced my doctor to give me a removable cast instead of a hard and heavy one so I could start getting back in shape for the upcoming season."

She is also listed on the Cross Country Express website as one of the top high school freshmen in the state. Pickard attributes her success to support from her coaches, teammates and family. Her family helps encourage her both at practice and at meets.

As a marathon and half Ironman runner, Pickard's mother, Jeni Pickard, teaches her about form and breathing techniques.

Her father, Griffin Pickard, always cheers her on at races and calls out split times. Pickard's 13-year-old sister, Ellie, even runs with her.

Pickard hopes to improve her times by the end of high school so she can go to a Division I school for running.

She said she would love to run track and cross country in college and try marathons, triathlons and perhaps an Ironman someday.

This cross country season, Pickard wants to get faster mile split times and learn from fellow teammates by training hard. She would like to run under 12 minutes in 2-mile races and break her current mile time of 5:22.

"Running to me is an escape from the world, with only me, the trails and the sound of my feet against the pavement," Pickard said. "Once I start, I just can't stop." ♦

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# fall sports 2015



GRAPHIC BY ANGELA LEE

## FOOTBALL: TEAM HOPES TO OVERCOME HAVING JUST 30 PLAYERS

**Head coach:** Tim Lugo  
**2014-2015 record:** 5-5 regular season, 0-1 playoffs  
**2014-2015 recap:** The team was able to band together to achieve their goal for the season by making CCS.  
**Key Additions:** sophomore offensive lineman Allie Liddle, sophomore linebacker Ryan Caviani, junior cornerback Nolan Chao  
**Key Matchups:** Los Gatos, Milpitas, Wilcox  
**Star players:** Senior safety Vincent Kung, senior lineman Adam Camp, junior wide receiver/linebacker Kian Ghelichkhani  
**Key Losses (graduated athletes):** Ken Wu, Joey Medeiros  
**League:** SCVAL De Anza Division (upper league)

"It's always [the goal] to make CCS playoffs."  
 With starting quarterback junior Will Liddle back again, the Falcons are ready to aim for a successful season, and after winning their first game against Hillsdale 22-7 on Sept. 4, the team's morale continues to increase.  
 The road to CCS is long and difficult in the upper league of the De Anza Division, but the players think they can beat any opponent. Although the team is the smallest in the league with only 30 players, which is especially difficult in a contact sport, they have made CCS two of the last three seasons.  
 "As a senior, I hope to have a group of players who are willing to give it their all to make the goal of going to CCS a reality," senior wide receiver Vinny Taylor said.

The team will face Santa Clara High School tonight at 7 p.m.

— Allison Lin and Summer Smith



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA

Junior Will Liddle drops back to pass in a game versus Los Gatos last November.

The football team shares one dream this season: making CCS again. "Our goals and expectations here never change," head coach Tim Lugo said.

## CROSS COUNTRY: TALENTED INDIVIDUALS BOLSTER TEAM

**Head coaches:** Danny Moon and Scott Bang  
**2014-2015 season record:** N/A  
**2014-2015 recap:** The girls' team placed fourth in the CCS meet at Toro Park, just missing the cutoff to go to the state meet. The boys' team ranked second in CCS and 15th in Division III at the state meet in Fresno.  
**Key Additions:** sophomore Chloe McGhee and freshmen Peter Owens, David Berkowitz-Sklar, Sasha Pickard

**Star athletes:** seniors Stephen Law, Matthew Peterson, Ashley Chen, junior Nicholas Sum, sophomores Amit Nag, Allison Borch, Chloe McGhee, Lillian Zeng and freshman Sasha Pickard  
**Key Matchups:** League Finals at Crystal Springs on Nov. 3  
**Key Losses (graduated athletes):** Steven Sum, Andrew Harter, Rohith Krishna, Carolyn Qi, Christine Schlosarek and Valerie Lensch  
**League:** Division III

After the boys' team made it to the state meet last fall, athletes on the girls' and boys' teams are back to training at a high level.  
 Girls' coach Danny Moon said the team will have more speed workouts on the track this year. Due to the huge size of girls' team this year, they will be "working together as a complete team" to improve throughout the season.  
 On the other hand, the boys' team is striving to incorporate both distance

and hill runs into their weekly schedule.  
 "Coach [Scott] Bang really knows his stuff, so I have a lot of confidence in him and the team this year," senior Stephen Law said. ♦



Law

— David Fan and Ami Nachiappan

## BOYS' WATER POLO: DREAMS SET ON WINNING THE LEAGUE

**Head coach:** Courtney Crase  
**2014-2015 season record:** 1-11  
**2014-2015 recap:** The team struggled after moving to the SCVAL De Anza League, finishing sixth in the league.  
**Star players:** seniors Mason Lee and Graham Schmelzer and contributions from seniors Andrew Jiang, Noah Quanrud and hole set Davis Robertson.  
**Key Matchup:** Homestead  
**Key Losses (graduated athletes):** Senior goalie Connor Peebles  
**League:** SCVAL League El Camino Division

boys' water polo team expects this season to go much better. With 12 returning players, the Falcons hope to win the El Camino Division and qualify for CCS.  
 The team will rely on star players seniors Mason Lee and Graham Schmelzer and contributions from seniors Andrew Jiang, Noah Quanrud and hole set Davis Robertson.  
 "The team makes it easy to lead because we have essentially the same team [as last year] and really good team chemistry," Lee said.  
 With the graduation of goalie Connor Peebles, junior goalie Christopher Metz is expected to step up.

Additionally, the team now has weight lifting workouts three times a week with science teacher and strength and conditioning coach Kristopher Orre in order to increase strength and mobility. In the pool, coach Courtney Crase wants players to focus on legs, body position and shooting.  
 "It's reassuring to know that we are one of the best teams in the league, but we can't blow off hard work," Crase said. "Dedication, commitment, individual development, preparation and team morale will be key for a successful season." ♦

— Andrew Jiang and Neil Rao



FALCON // SWEEYA RAJ

Senior Mason Lee passes the ball in a non-league game versus Half Moon Bay.

After struggling in the upper league and moving down to the less competitive SCVAL El Camino Division, the

## GIRLS' WATER POLO: NEW COACH, HIGH HOPES

**Head coach:** Courtney Crase  
**2014-2015 season record:** 7-5  
**2014-2015 recap:** The team placed fourth in the De Anza League and competed in CCS quarterfinals.  
**Key Additions:** freshmen Alyssa Whitman and Sarah Doudi  
**Key Matchups:** Palo Alto, Los Gatos, Gunn  
**Star players:** seniors Alexa Frieberg, Haley Rositano, Jace Welton  
**Key Losses (graduated athletes):** Puck de Roos, Amanda Moriarty, Mackenzie Rosenthal, Madison Gress

have to adjust to a new coach as well as the loss of several key senior players.  
 "We have seven returning varsity players, which is a very small team," junior driver Jessy Liu said. "But it is a good base to work off of and we're just hoping to move people up from JV."  
 New coach Courtney Crase, who has five years of experience coaching girls' water polo, will coach both JV and varsity teams this year.  
 "It's going to be pretty difficult this year," Crase said. "The boys and girls are in different divisions, so they play

different schools."  
 Despite the odds, Crase and the team are looking forward to the upcoming season.  
 "Although Coach Crase has never been our coach before, I have heard great things about her coaching style," junior Kanika Vora said. "So far, we are just working together as a team in training to prepare for our games. I'm looking forward to having a great season." ♦

— Charin Park and Jenny Qian

## GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL: UPPER LEAGUE TO PRESENT CHALLENGES

**Head coach:** Brad Frederickson  
**2014-2015 season record:** 8-3  
**2014-2015 recap:** The team won the El Camino League Division B championships and reached CCS quarterfinals.  
**Key Matchups:** Los Gatos, Lynbrook, Cupertino  
**Key Losses (graduated athletes):** Sara Parden, Catherine Tang, Alex Ferrari, Madison Beine, and Rebecca Lee  
**Star players:** junior Julia Vita, seniors Jennifer Chen, Amanda Meserve, Nicole Chiou, Eleni Spirakis  
**League:** Santa Clara Valley, De Anza League

After a season of hard work last year, the girls' varsity volleyball team won the Division B championships in the El Camino League.  
 The team qualified for the CCS

quarterfinals, but unfortunately lost to Sacred Heart Cathedral, the number one seed.  
 Despite losing five key players to graduation, the girls are willing to work even harder to do well, as they have moved up to the A league.  
 "This season's definitely going to be tough because we moved up to the A league which has a lot of good teams, but I think that even if we don't do well, it'll be a good development year for us," said junior Julia Vita, a key returning player.  
 With many underclassmen players, the team is looking forward to working towards everyone's full potential and growing together as a group.  
 "This year's team has a lot of potential because there are a lot of younger and well-rounded players," senior Jennifer Chen said. "From the practices,



FALCON // LAUREN LOUIE

Senior Nicole Chiou sets up alumna Sara Parden in a game against Mountain View.

it's apparent that we work really well together."  
 Determined and confident about their game, the girls are ready to take

on their key rivals, Lynbrook and Los Gatos, and ace their way to the top. ♦  
 — Elizabeth Lee and Claire Rhee

## FIELD HOCKEY: LOW IN NUMBERS, STRONG IN DRIVE

**Head coach:** Lifon Huynh  
**2014-2015 season record:** 11-2  
**2014-2015 recap:** The girls excelled their regular season and qualified for CCS. They competed in CCS quarterfinals against Leland, but lost and placed third in their division.  
**Key additions:** junior Sophie Parr  
**Key matchups:** Los Gatos, Los Altos  
**Star players:** junior Tina Miller and seniors Anne Rollison, Sabrina Clark,

Erin Norris  
**Key losses:** Christina Crolla, Bianca Oliveri, Abby Foss  
**League:** Santa Clara Valley Athletic League, De Anza Division

Since only five new players have joined the team and seven have graduated, the girls currently have a shortage of players.  
 Still, freshman Valentina Araya

said, "We're probably going to be playing one man down, but we're hoping the JV team keeps going throughout the whole season."  
 Varsity, on the other hand, appears to be entering the season strong. Six varsity players attended camps across the country over the summer and believe that with their new skills and team chemistry, this season will be a successful one. Their main concern is

the amount of work the girls will have to do since there are not enough substitutes.  
 "We don't have a lot of subs this year, so we have to be more in shape," Norris said. "But we are mostly all returning varsity players, and [we] are already really close, so we have really great team dynamic."  
 — Julia Miller and Vibha Seshadri

## GIRLS' TENNIS: PLAYERS LOOK TO CLAIM THIRD CONSECUTIVE LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP

**Head coach:** Florin Marica  
**Assistant Coach:** Jonathan Chui  
**2014-2015 league record:** 20-0  
**2014-2015 recap:** The team won the De Anza league championship, but lost in the semifinals of CCS to Menlo.  
**Key Additions:** Junior twins Daniella Daviana Berkowitz-Sklar  
**Key Matchups:** Los Altos  
**Star players:** junior singles player Caitlin Ju, senior singles player Shaya Nikfar  
**Key losses (graduated athletes):** Smita Sabada and Arathi Sabada  
**League:** De Anza League

The team looks to regain footing after losing six starting players from the previous season. The junior and senior veteran players are leading the team both on and off the court.  
 "We have won the league championship for the past two years," junior doubles player Kelly Hsu said. "This

year, we want to three-peat and go all the way in CCS."  
 The girls suffered a disappointing CCS semifinal loss to Menlo High School last season.  
 The Bears managed to snatch the victory by a single point in the tie-breaker match, stealing the team's spot in the finals.  
 "The chemistry in the team is a lot better this year," senior Shaya Nikfar said. "I am excited to be part of this great group of players."  
 This season, the Falcons are pumped and ready to soar through the league season and fight their way up the CCS ladder.  
 "I am confident in the lineup this year," head coach Florin Marica said. "I have experienced juniors and seniors bringing the team together and hopefully leading us to a CCS victory."  
 — Allison Lin



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA

Senior singles player Shaya Nikfar hits a backhand against Los Altos last Sept. 16.

## GIRLS' GOLF: NEW PLAYERS STRENGTHEN TEAM

**Head coach:** David Gragnola  
**2014-2015 season record:** 7-5  
**2014-2015 recap:** Senior star player Carrie Chen advanced to CCS, but the team as a whole did not make it to CCS and placed fourth at league finals.  
**Key Matchups:** Los Gatos, Gunn, Palo Alto  
**Star players:** freshman Janelle Jin, sophomore Sarah Lo

**Key Losses (graduated athletes):** Vivian Roan  
**League:** Santa Clara League

As the school year begins, the golf players start practice at the Saratoga Country Club.  
 The new team is without Vivian Roan, last year's top player, but now boasts of freshman Janelle Jin, who leads the team with the top score of

124 shots for the qualifying round of 27 holes.  
 Jin is excited for the upcoming rounds and feels reassured by the team's cohesiveness.  
 "I don't quite know what the standard is, but either way, I am just glad to be playing with the team," Jin said. "The team made me feel really welcome when I joined the team this year, and I feel like the team is very close."

With the top players having especially strong scores, coach David Gragnola expects this season to be stronger than the last.  
 He predicts that the team will place first or second in its league, a vast improvement from fourth place last year.  
 "This may be the most talented team we have ever had," Gragnola said. ♦  
 — Oksana Trifonova

>> snapshots



FALCON // SWEEYA RAJ



FALCON // SWEEYA RAJ



FALCON // ISABELLE YANG



FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA

Senior Ankitha Sarvesh performs at her solo voice recital at the McAfee Center on Aug. 23.

Two parent volunteers prepare burgers before the school-wide BBQ on Aug. 21.

Construction workers continue working on installing new turf on the upper field.

Principal Paul Robinson delivers a message during Back to School night on Aug. 27.

**buzzworthy** >> Talent show helps unify community

BY Neil Rao

The Saratoga Cares Foundation hosted the town's fourth annual "Saratoga Has Talent" on Aug. 22. Held at the Joan Pisani Community Center, the event fundraised for the local senior center.

Young and old alike competed to win a variety of prizes, such as money, trophies, and most importantly, to show off their talents.

Eight-year-old Venice Lauren Barbiran won the 12 and under category for her performance of the Tony award winning song "City Lights," and classical singer Ken Cioffi won the general category for his rendition of "Because We Believe."

"The overall goal was community building and creating a fun evening for the community to intermingle, [have] a little fun and [work] toward a big cause for the senior center," Saratoga Cares

founder Rishi Kumar said.

This year, Saratoga Has Talent had 11 contestants in the five through 12 age

Recently, Kumar said Saratoga Cares has expanded to a group of SHS students to help run the program.

**"The talent show was a great way to help the local senior center while also earning a good amount of volunteer hours."**



junior Suraj Mididaddi

group and 15 in the 13 and over. One of the performers was senior Isha Mangal, who placed third in her category with a singing performance.

"The talent show was a great way to help the local senior center fundraiser while also earning a good amount of volunteer hours," junior Suraj Mididaddi said.

The talent show not only helps donate money to a worthy cause but inspires young adults to follow their passions, said principal Paul Robinson, who again helped judge the event.

"As educators, we get caught up with what goes on inside the classroom," Robinson said. "In truth, there's so much else that students do that bring them

such passion and joy away from when they are learning."



The proceeds from the talent show have quickly been integrated into the senior center's annual events and renovations.

During the last two talent shows, the Saratoga Cares Foundation was able to raise over \$10,000 for the center.

However, in its first year, was able to break \$19,000. This year, Kumar estimates that the organization raised around \$10,000 with more than 266 people attending.

"Though this is only our fourth year, we will continue to hold this event to help support such an amazing cause," Kumar said. "We hope to continue to fundraise for the senior center and most importantly bring the community together." ♦

*Seven rejections, one mission, one girl*

SOPHOMORE UPLOADS APP, GEORECIPE, TO THE APP STORE

cait the great

Caitlyn Chen



I blinked twice, as if that would somehow make the little red dot disappear.

Rejected. For the sixth time. Banging my forehead on my laptop keyboard, I let out a cry of pure frustration. This is what a whole summer of squinting into a screen of code had led to.

Ever think about what goes into getting an app approved by the App Store? It isn't a Jetpack Joyride.

This summer, I spent seven weeks at Make School Summer Academy in Sunnyvale, where students learn how to design, code and ship their own original iOS app. With the help of the instructors at Make School, I programmed an app called GeoRecipe that allows users to explore recipes on a map, specifically placed on the location where the food originated from. For example, if you search up Brittany, France, on the map of my app, you'll see my sister's homemade dark chocolate macaron recipe, because Brittany is where macarons originated.

But before I could create the next big

thing, my app had to be approved by the App Store.

Getting an app approved, I learned, was a bit like writing a story for the Falcon. Your work is sent back and forth in an "edit-revise" cycle until the person on the other end is happy with the product. I was working on my sixth "revise" and was confident that this was the final bug.

As I moped around complaining about how my email account had been flooded by Apple rejection letters, my friends gave me sympathetic looks and gently patted me on the back, telling me that I still had one day left to fix the bugs.

But I wasn't about to let the last 24 hours at Make School escape me, like the bugs in my code had.

I headed back to my laptop, and entranced myself in code mode. Fix, run, crash. Fix, run, crash. But to my disappointment, both my code and my mind were trapped in an infinite loop.

I was so close that I could almost see my cupcake icon next to Flappy Bird on the App Store. But after two hours of trying what seemed like every single possibility, my code would still not run. I stood up, stomped to the door and walked outside the tech center to get some fresh air.

"What am I gonna do ... Think, Caitlyn, think!" I murmured to myself as I paced back and forth across the patio.

Suddenly, I had an epiphany. I raced

back inside, dove straight to my laptop, and changed one line of code in the for-loop of my query. Then, I ran it.

For the first time in three hours, the code ran perfectly. Teeming with excitement, I changed the version number on my project from 1.6 to 1.7, and began the process to submit to the App Store for the seventh time.

For the next 12 hours, I sat in front of my laptop, repeatedly clicking the refresh button. But every time, the same little yellow dot with the "Waiting For Review" label would appear, until I was so tired that I fell asleep with my head on my keyboard.

When I woke up the next day, which was also coincidentally the Make School graduation day, I wiped the drool off my keyboard and dragged my mouse to the refresh button. As I strained to see through my crusted eyelids, for the first time, a little green dot appeared in my view: approved. I sprang up from my seat, and began doing the Snoopy happy dance in my room.

And though the excitement soon receded, every time I saw someone download or use my app, which is now available on the App Store for free, I relived my spark of initial pride. Whether it was my sister uploading her macaron recipe or watching a friend navigate its interface, those moments made my long struggle for approval worth it. ♦

>> topten

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

- 10 **Go back to school shopping.** That last Costco backpack doesn't look at all like your classmate's.
- 9 **Say hi to all your teachers.** Remember: they're writing your rec letters.
- 8 **Find your perfect match.** Spend your time on college match websites.
- 7 **Make new friends.** You need someone to ask for homework.
- 6 **Get a locker.** The lost and found doesn't count.
- 5 **Procrastinate on first week's homework.** Blame it all on the teachers.
- 4 **Calculate your grades.** Will you be eligible for the Ivies?
- 3 **Look at how many APs you're taking.** Proceed to question your life choices.
- 2 **Stay social.** Keep a Facebook tab open at all times on your computer so you can click back between your school and social life.
- 1 **Don't worry.** Thanksgiving break is almost here!

>> Oksana Trifonova