



Heroes of each class' Homecoming festivities.



A peek into the Bay Area's evolving mixer culture.



Falcons on track to fourth consecutive league title.



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FOOTBALL

FALCONS HOPE FOR HC VICTORY

BY Allison Lin
& Summer Smith

As the school prepares for halftime festivities at tonight's game, including the crowning of the Homecoming king and queen, football players are hoping they can turn their season around against Los Altos.

Los Altos has an overall record of 2-3 this season, but they play in a less competitive conference than Saratoga, making the game a winnable one.

"Because Los Altos is in a separate conference, we are confident that we will be able to secure a victory to add to the Homecoming spirit," senior receiver Jackson Williams said.

The Falcons (1-4 overall, and 0-2 in league) have lost four straight games. Last Friday, the Falcons fell behind early to Los Gatos and never got back in the game, losing 41-21. They trailed 34-0 at

>> **FOOTBALL** on pg. 25

Once upon a time

CLASSES UNITE FOR HOMECOMING



BY Neil Rao

With Homecoming Week ending tomorrow with a dance in the Large Gym each class has worked hard to show off its class spirit and create

the best possible Quad Day performance.

After the reveal of each class's theme, based on the idea of "In a

>> **HC** on pg. 6

FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA



FALCON // ERIC SZE



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Teachers dance during teacher Quad Day on Monday. Juniors decorate their arch during Move-In weekend. Sophomore Allie Liddle and junior Will Liddle play balloon pop during the rally.

FALCON // ERIC SZE

SCIENCE

Costa Rica trip exceeds students' expectations

BY Frederick Kim

Gaining far more knowledge and experience than they had expected, 10 AP Environmental Science students, along with their teacher, Kristen Thomson, and Biology teacher Kristofer Orre, returned from a five-day turtle observing excursion to Tortuguero, Costa Rica, on Sept. 28.

The group received hands-on experience with the endangered green sea turtles inhabiting the beaches in that area,

learning more about field work and data collection along the way.

"At night, we went on these night patrols and we would count the eggs the turtles had laid," senior Michelle Shen said. "Basically, the data we collected will be used for research."

Although the students knew how to work in theoretical situations, they found that the seemingly easy tasks were harder than they looked.

"The time slot that we measured [the turtles] was when they were camouflag-

ing or covering their nests that they had built, so they used their flippers to send up massive torrents of sand," Shen said. "I got sand in my eyes and my mouth and under my shirt."

Costa Rican-born sisters, juniors Daviana Berkowitz-Sklar and Danielle Berkowitz-Sklar, said they originally decided to help Thomson plan the trip because they had previously worked with the organization before moving to California.

"[Daviana and I] had done many sim-

ilar projects while we were living there, so we already had a good connection with the reserves and all of the field assistants," Danielle said.

In the months leading up to the trip, Thomson handled trip logistics such as insurance, first aid, housing and recruiting interested students. Orre was the other chaperone.

Danielle said that the trip went better than she had hoped.

>> **SCIENCE** on pg. 6

ADMINISTRATION

25 years later, Mohnike still enjoys serving kids

BY Spring Ma
& Charin Park

Walking into assistant principal Kerry Mohnike's office, students are greeted by a tall brown bookshelf filled to the brim with student-signed screenplays, props from past English simulations and candid photos of Mohnike's 2011 drama classes — all mementos of her 25 years at Saratoga High.



Mohnike

"There's a whole bunch of crazy stuff on this bookshelf," said Mohnike, smiling. "Most people would have educational stuff because they're assistant principals, but for me, I just like to have things that remind me of what I love."

Although a lot seems to have changed during Mohnike's journey from journalism teacher to assistant principal — some of the quad's towering redwood trees were once mere saplings, and the students

>> **MOHNIKE** on pg. 19

FALL PLAY

'Pride and Prejudice' actors share production insights

BY Vibha Seshadri

After a long day of school, students in this year's fall play, "Pride and Prejudice," cannot wait to escape the stresses of school and enter the welcoming Thermond Drama Center for rehearsal. While some of these students are new to the program and others are veterans, all call drama home.

"Pride and Prejudice" centers around the protagonist Elizabeth Bennet, played by senior Emily Ludwig, who deals with Victorian society's standards for women in con-

duct and marriage. The play follows two couples: Fitzwilliam Darcy, played by junior JT Hulme and Elizabeth Bennet, and Charles Bingley, played by junior Zach Grob-Lipkis and Jane, played by junior Saya Sivaram. The show will be directed by drama teacher Sarah Thermond.

The show will premiere on Nov. 14 at 7:30 p.m., Nov. 15 at 2 p.m., as well as Nov. 20 and 21 at 7:30.

Freshman makes connections

Freshman Joan McCarthy

>> **PLAY** on pg. 6

>> what's inside

COLLEGE BOUND

Caroline Oliver

Follow her in this year-long series as she tackles college applications and pursues liberal arts. **pg. 4**

NEW PSAT

Too easy to ace?

Rigor of newly released standardized test may overwhelm juniors. **pg. 11**

LEADERSHIP

Social atmosphere

The administration discusses future plans to improve campus environment. **pg. 22**



Community commission hosts food drive

The Second Harvest Food Drive will continue at school until Oct. 23. The food drive seeks to help struggling families who do not have the means to provide a nice meal during Thanksgiving.

Students can donate canned foods to bins located behind the quad steps. The food will then be delivered to area households.

The community commission, led by head commissioners Isha Mangal and Deepthi Sampathkumar, is hosting this event with the Second Harvest Food Bank.

Last year, the event was cancelled due to a lack of planning. This year, the school had the bins ready on the third week of September and announced the event on Sept. 25 through SHSTV.

"We started planning events the entire summer and came up with a list of charities," Mangal said. "[The commission] voted to [work with] the Second Harvest Food Bank because we felt confident [about] the organization."

Although the initial reward for donating to the food drive was class points, the community commission has since decided to instead use a cash incentive in order to entice people to donate. The money will go to class funds that can eventually be used for Homecoming and dances.

"I really do care about this issue because [I believe] hunger is an important [problem] in our society and a lot of people suffer from this," Mangal said. "I'm hoping that people donate as much food as possible."

— Jay Kim

Cheer preps coach's leave with alumna

This December, the cheer team is expected to welcome a new member: the coach's newly born son.

Dominique Davidson, who has coached the cheer team since early 2015, will be starting a maternity leave on Dec. 17, after football season, and she will return on Feb. 1.

After having over four coaches come and leave them without staying for over 12 months in the last couple years, the girls are a bit nervous about what the team will do without her.

"We are really excited for Coach Dominique to have her baby," junior Taryn Frank said. "She seems ready about the new experience, but we are also concerned about who will take over as coach when she's gone."

This is a concern that the girls have had to deal with for several years. Last year, the team was without a coach for several months during basketball season; consequently, the senior cheerleaders took charge and created halftime routines and rally performances while administrative assistant Julia Peck or principal Paul Robinson supervised.

Furthermore, there will be no competition team this year. December to February is a major period of competition season that requires the presence of a coach.

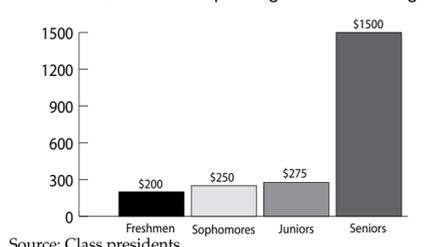
Nevertheless, the team will still cheer at basketball games throughout the season. This year, class of 2015 alumna Jessica Uong, a current San Jose State University freshman, plans on attending games to watch the team perform and give feedback, but she will be unable to attend practices.

"I commute to school every day, which means I'm still in 'Toga, so I'd be able to come to [the] games and watch [the cheer team]!" Uong said. "And of course I've become a Spartan, but no matter what I'll always be a Falcon, so I'd do anything to support [the cheer team]."

— Summer Smith

falconfigures

Class Decorations Spending for Homecoming



Source: Class presidents

— Roland Shen

picturethis



FALCON // SWEEYARAJ

DANCING DOLLS >> To prepare for their performance, the teachers practice their upbeat Homecoming dance routine in the quad on Oct. 8, choreographed by APUSH teacher Kim Anzalone.

CLUBS

Officers seek to recruit new members for the year

BY Roland Shen

Club officers' screams and yells echoed across the quad, each with their own distinct motto. Tables all around were cluttered with desserts, drinks, goodies, all in hopes of attracting new members.

On Friday, Sept. 25, more than 60 clubs filled the quad with hopes of recruiting new members for the upcoming school year.

After getting approval from ASB, many new clubs made their debut at this year's Club Day. These clubs include MIT

Launch Entrepreneurial, Game Design, Internet Of Things Sensors, Go, Glee, 3-D Printing, Science for Youth, Table Tennis, Super Smash Brothers, SCOPE and Ukulele.

The event proved to be beneficial for clubs to promote themselves particularly to freshmen and transfer students.

"As a new club, we did better than we thought we would," Game Design presi-

dent sophomore Kedar Abhyankar said. "We talked to a lot of students about the club and got 61 people to sign up."



Abhyankar

Some new students found the Club Day experience to be slightly chaotic at first, but later became convenient to them in their searches for new clubs to join.

"I signed up for around five clubs and I am not sure what clubs I am going to commit to," freshman Janelle Jin said. "I loved the energy of Club Day." ◆

FUNDRAISER

Sophomore helps Syrian refugees

BY Caitlyn Chen & Vibha Seshadri

According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 7.5 million Syrian children are currently in need of humanitarian aid.

While surfing the Internet, sophomore Shania Jafri came across this staggering statistic and was appalled that children just like her were lacking simple rights, such as education and proper housing.

To help, Jafri held a fundraiser on Sept. 23 selling root beer floats at the school to help Syrian refugees. Her friends, sophomores Sahana Sarin, Zona Liao, Sofia Chadwick and Charin Park, helped her to plan and execute the event.

Jafri decided to hold the fundraiser because she wanted to do her part to ensure that every child has the right to

education and other resources, just as she does.

"We wanted to donate specifically to children because they have so much potential," Jafri said.

"I can't show my hospitality to them, [so] the least I can do is just donate to them."



sophomore Shania Jafri

The Syrian Civil War has been raging since March 2011. As a result, more than 200,000 Syrians have died and 11 million more have been displaced in countries such as Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, according to the BBC.

"It's so unfortunate that these people have to be kicked out of their own homes because the war has torn apart families," Jafri said. Jafri and her friends hoped

to contribute at least \$200, an amount they were unsure they would even get close to raising. Two hundred dollars is enough to feed a Syrian child for six weeks. In the end, the girls raised around \$178, and were ecstatic that they came close to their \$200 goal.

The money raised will go to ASB, who will verify the funds and donate it to Save the Children.

"It's not much, but it's something," Jafri said. "Not many people here are raising awareness for Syrian refugees, so [I thought] why not I do it?"

Moreover, Jafri said that out of the millions of refugees trying to leave Syria, the United States is allowing 10,000 or so refugees. Jafri, appalled by the situation, wanted to help Syrian children in any way possible.

"I can't show my hospitality to them, [so] the least I can do is just donate to them," Jafri said. ◆

MUSIC

Marching band seniors bid fond farewells

BY Karissa Dong & Katherine Zhou

Linking elbows with his mother and twin sister, senior drum major Avi Arjavalingham was all smiles as he walked down the football field flanked on both sides by the waving flags of the Color Guard on the night of Oct. 2. Band directors Michael Boitz and Jonathan Pwu read Arjavalingham's favorite memory as the rest of the band, parents and other students cheered from the bleachers.

"The experience of Senior Night was pretty surreal, as four years of band have passed by really quickly," Arjavalingham said.

Arjavalingham said his band career has changed him for the better.

"[Band has] helped me grow from being like a meek kid to a more gregarious person," Arjavalingham said. "I'll definitely [miss] the family I've known all these years."

After the Senior Night ceremony finished, the entire band performed its show, "Quest," for the first time in uniform.

"It was exciting to perform alongside my friends who have been in band with me since fifth grade," said senior Nihar Agrawal, the leader of the flute section. "Band has been a great source for making memories with people that have become super close. [I'll miss] the spontaneous outings with my friends and eating way too many Sour Patch Kids."

For younger band members, this night was one to remember.

After playing for three years with the seniors, junior baritone Megan Fung was sad to think about seeing them go.

"[I'm going to miss] joking and messing around with them during band rehearsals and performing with them," Fung said.

Senior Night was one of the first performances of the season, and the band went on to perform at the Cupertino Tournament of Bands on Oct. 10. The brass section placed 1st and the percussion and woodwind sections both ranked 2nd for all bands.

They will also be participating in the Foothill Band Review in Pleasanton on Oct. 24 and the WBA Dublin Competition on Oct. 31 before heading to march in the Rose Bowl parade on Jan. 1. ◆



FALCON // SWEEYARAJ

Senior Ojas Malwankar and freshman Victor Chen perform "Quest" by Frank Sullivan for Senior Night on Oct. 2.

ORCHESTRA

New program to help underclassmen a true 'GEM'

BY Amith Galivanche

Freshmen who enter the school's award-winning music program may not always be quite up to par with the department's high standards. On the other hand, most upperclassmen have gone a long way toward mastering their craft.

Thanks to a program called the Great Ensemble of Musicians (GEM), these upperclassmen are now grooming younger musicians.

Founded by seniors Danny Gao and Daniel Eem, GEM aims to help underclassmen, especially freshmen, sharpen their skills in their respective instruments. The program has been a part of the school's orchestra and band since last spring.

The program operates with tutor-student lists being posted on Facebook each week, and during Tutorials, tutors go to various music rooms, meet their students there and begin practicing and working on whatever difficulties the student may have.

Gao, the concertmaster of Saratoga Strings, said that in addition to fostering improvement, the program aims to build closer relationships between older and younger students in the music program.

"I enjoy working with the freshmen and getting to know them," Gao said. "Especially because freshman orchestra is separate from upperclassmen orchestra, it really helps build a better music community."

In addition to the underclassmen who benefit from the program, Gao thinks

upperclassmen also learn and improve from the teaching they are doing.

The program is not mandatory in either band or orchestra, but students are encouraged to voluntarily sign up to teach or be taught.

"The current [upperclassmen] could've benefited a lot from [a program like GEM]."



senior Daniel Lee

Eem, section leader of the alto saxophones in the marching band, said that they saw that it was possible to start the program from observing another club

they were in, the Helping Hands Tutoring Club.

Once founded, the program became popular with many upperclassmen,

with 20-25 tutors teaching 40-50 students each week.

Senior violinist Daniel Lee said that he's happy to partake in the program because it benefits the freshmen.

"[The current upperclassmen] could've benefited a lot from [a program like GEM] if there was a program freshman year," Lee said.

Sophomore cellist Ian Kim joined the program this year and is ecstatic to be a part of training the freshmen.

"I am excited to work with freshmen and share my knowledge so that they can be even better than me," Kim said. Sophomores like Kim are the ones who will be continuing the program and help it to grow, leaving the founders feeling that it can only expand from here.

"I can only see this program becoming stronger and better in the future," Eem said. "There are so many great musicians and potential leaders within GEM right now, and I am confident that they will be able to take this program to new heights." ◆

RECITAL

Talented pianist wins competition, performs at Carnegie Hall

BY Neil Rao

When sophomore Vivian Luo gave a piano performance at the famed concert venue of Carnegie Hall in New York on the weekend of Sept. 26, she could feel the pressure of playing at a national level surging through her as she carefully pressed down on every key with just the right amount of force.

After playing the piano for over 10 years, Luo's hard work finally paid off as she was able to show her talent for the instrument in front of a group of over 500 professional musicians. Luo was selected to perform after winning the 2015 American Fine Arts Festival (AFAF) Competition.

On the day of the performance, Luo played a melodious piece, a Sonata by Scarlatti, which required months of practice to perfect.

"This piece was exceptionally difficult because it required each bar and line to be mastered which took thousands of tries," Luo said.

Luo was one of 197 pianists accepted to perform at Carnegie when she submitted an audition clip in the past summer. Out of thousands of other submissions,



Courtesy of VIVIAN LUO

Sophomore Vivian Luo plays the piece, Sonata in b minor K87 - by Scarlatti, at Carnegie Hall in front of 500 professional musicians on Sept. 26.

her performance was one that was exemplary enough to be selected by AFAF. To prepare, Luo followed a rigorous rehearsal schedule, where she consistently practiced for two or more hours on weekdays and up to four hours on weekends.

Luo said the experience was stressful because she had to prepare during the

school year while also balancing other extracurricular activities. Along with the workload of sophomore year, the hours she spent practicing often took away from important study time, and it became hard to balance education with music.

Throughout her performance, the other musicians also showed exception-

al skill and it was intimidating to watch and wait for her own turn, Luo said. Although she knew she had earned her place to play at Carnegie Hall, she still felt nervous when seeing others practice.

"I was also very nervous because we came in at midnight the day before the show and I was very tired," Luo said. "I also didn't prepare the day of [the performance], so I became frightened when it was my turn."

But stage fright is nothing new to her. She started playing the instrument at age 5, and from then on, her parents drove her to weekly lessons and occasional competitions.

In addition, Luo's talent extends the piano. She also enjoys playing the flute, her instrument for the school's marching band program.

Luo is looking to pursue piano playing through the rest of her high school career and potentially for the rest of her life.

"I might not continue piano for a professional career, [but] I know that I will always continue it as a hobby," Luo said. "Although it can be very time consuming, coming off the stage is the best feeling in the world." ◆

EVENTS

Senior class barbecue kicks off Homecoming

by Allison Lin & Summer Smith

Wiping dried paint off their foreheads and dusting off their jeans, Homecoming decorators cheered as they put the final touches into place at 6 p.m. last Sunday.

Stomachs growling after the 10-hour work day, the dozens of students cleaned up their paint buckets and rushed to join their families in the front of the school for fresh-off-the-grill food and thirst-quenching drinks.

The senior class officers and class parents hosted the first-ever Homecoming Barbecue to celebrate the end of Move-In Week-end and kick off Homecoming week, and as the students were transforming the Quad into "A Land Far, Far Away," senior parents were decorating the grassy area in the front of the school with Christmas lights, and tables with Halloween and Star Wars-themed centerpieces.

"[We hoped] celebrate the students' hard work over [the] weekend [and] at

the same time, bring in class revenue," senior class treasurer Michael Owyang said.

Food was catered by CB Hannegan's in Los Gatos. Menu options included three main courses: barbecue chicken, Italian sausage and vegetarian lasagna.

Side dishes were garlic bread, potato salad, vegetarian baked beans and green salad. Desserts and beverages were also provided by parent volunteers.

Over 170 tickets to the event were preordered; adults and students paid \$25 and children under the age of 12 paid \$12. All proceeds went to the senior class fund.

"The money we made from this event will be very helpful for prom and for replenishing the money spent on Homecoming," Owyang said.

Besides enjoying the gourmet food, parents and students also used the time to walk around the Quad and marvel at the decorations.

There were also raffle tickets, which were sold in packages of five tickets for



Parents converse at the senior class barbecue fundraiser, held outside the large gym on the evening of Oct. 11. The event raised a total of \$1,532 for the senior class fund.

three dollars, and ten tickets for five dollars. The winner of the Bose QuietComfort Acoustic Noise Canceling headphones, which have a retail value of \$300, will be announced today.

The senior class raised about \$1,500 from the event.

Senior class officers said they will hold more class bonding activities and fundraisers in the near future. ♦



Owyang

Social Justice Club president travels liberal arts route

by Spring Ma & Eileen Toth

Editor's note: This year, the Falcon will be following the trials and tribulations of the college application process. Caroline Oliver is the second of two seniors who will be profiled in this series. The other is Saro Acharya.

From her wild, orange hair to her ripped cut-off jeans and wine-red lipstick, senior Caroline Oliver seems to always radiate her quirky personality.

Oliver's charismatic traits are reflected in almost every aspect of her life, whether it is in her "bowing at the altar" obsession with Anthropologie, a clothing store that sells trendy and hipster outfits with unique patterns, or her desire to understand the depths of the human mind.

As president of the school's Social Justice Club, Oliver likes to discuss cutting-edge issues, but she is also involved in the school's orchestra as the head manager and the Fashion Club as secretary.

Like most seniors, Oliver is in the midst of tackling the college application process and has narrowed her focus to two subjects that she has always loved throughout high school: psychology and English.

Over the summer, Oliver honed in on her college list, which includes: Barnard, Boston College, Reed College, Vassar College, Brandeis, Georgetown, New York University, Northwestern, Santa Clara University, Wesleyan, University of Portland, University of Southern Cali-

fornia UC Berkeley and UC Santa Cruz.

Of these colleges, Oliver is applying early decision to Barnard College, a private women's liberal arts college affiliated with Columbia University in the heart of New York City. She thinks Barnard offers a warm and challenging community, and students there are given opportunities to "push [themselves] in a big city" and take classes at Columbia University.

"I like the idea of having a close community of women with a passion for women's education," Oliver said.

"As a firm feminist, I believe that we've taken huge strides, [but] there's something to be said for women who are advocating for other women."

Oliver first developed her interest in psychology from a Freudian psychoanalysis class at Brown University that she took over the summer before her sophomore year.

"We discussed a lot of society interactions [during class,] and though I disagreed with a lot of his beliefs, our discussions about psychology sparked my interest," Oliver said.

To expand her knowledge of the subject, she enrolled in an Introduction to Psychology class at Foothill College this past summer as well.

As for English, Oliver said that literature is something she has loved since childhood. She lists "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee as one of her childhood favorites, a classic that she has read

over five times because of Lee's ability to write from a child's perspective.

When she entered high school, Oliver found that she was always engaged in her English class discussions, and she was eager to do her English class's homework first, since it "never seemed like work" to her.

"When you invest time and effort into English, you can discover how people interpret things and how their thoughts may be different from yours," Oliver said. "English uses a part of your brain that you don't get to use every day."

Though Oliver said that she does not see herself going into a career where she would only need an English major, such as becoming a journalist or author, she considers college as the "last time [she] really [gets] to pursue something only for intellectual curiosity of the subject."

So far, Oliver said that the college application process has not been too stressful yet, as she started writing her essays early over summer. With her UC and Common Application finished, Oliver is now working on her supplemental essays for Barnard College.

For Oliver, writing essays has proved to be the most challenging part of the application process. While she said that filling in the generic personal information on the Common Application or UC Application does not "require much intellectual capacity," Oliver discovered that the more open-ended questions in the essays force her to reflect upon her individual qualities and experiences.

As Oliver completes her applications, constantly tweaking and perfecting her essays sentence by sentence, there have been times when the prospect of rejection has seemed daunting.

"There are just so many people applying [to schools that everyone loves]," Oliver said. "You have to do the math and realize that even if [you're] on the same level as other applicants, [there are still] external factors that you have no control over but will determine your future."

In addition to essay-writing over summer break, Oliver toured the East Coast schools to gain personal insight into the social scene and environment of colleges that sparked her interest.

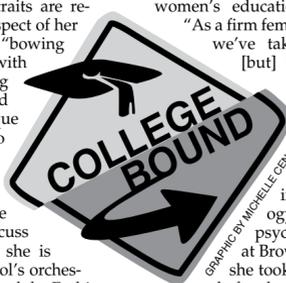
During these tours, Oliver realized her preference for the busy atmosphere of a "city by an ocean," where she has the option of "escaping school and being a person by [herself]." She also developed an interest in liberal arts colleges primarily on the East Coast, as they cultivate "nurturing intellectual communities that have different approaches to learning."

In her college applications this fall, Oliver will be displaying her variety of interests in not only her own college essays, but also her teacher recommendations, as she has chosen teachers who she believes will convey her skill set.

Oliver has entrusted History teacher Jerry Sheehy and English teacher Amy Keys to write her college recommendation letters.

Although Oliver considers it "more traditional" to submit letters from one STEM and one humanities teacher, she believes it is "more important to play to your skill set" and ask teachers that would "portray you the best."

"I'm more on the polar end, and not everyone is like me," Oliver said. "But since we're trying to sell ourselves [during college applications], I want Coca Cola's advertising team, not Pepsi's." ♦



ADMINISTRATION

Staff communicates about student stress through videos

by Jason Zhao

The school is often criticized for its pressure-cooker academic atmosphere and college-level workloads. As part of an effort to combat student competitiveness and stress, assistant principal Kerry Mohnike interviewed a select group of

students to hear their stories and learn what factors contributed most directly to their stress.

She recorded these dialogues in short videos, which were edited by teacher Tony Palma and later shared with teachers during a Sept. 30 collaboration.

"As teachers discuss and consider

ways that they can effect change, [we wanted] to interject the student perspective on the issue," Mohnike said.

Mohnike said she hoped the videos helped identify students' greatest sources of stress and ways that staff members can help alleviate stress.

During collaborations this semes-

ter, the teachers have started to lay the groundwork for addressing student stress issues.

"Obviously, there are factors that are beyond a teacher's control, but we all can think harder about our role in making the experience of school manageable," Mohnike said. ♦

DOWNTOWN SARATOGA

New cafe on Big Basin selling beverages, arts

by Frederick Kim

Sue's Gallery Cafe opened in downtown Saratoga on Oct. 14, selling coffee and tea in addition to ceramicware handmade by Sue Kang, co-owner of the cafe and aunt of junior Alex Kwon.

The cafe is located at 14665 Big Basin Way, right before the entrance to the mountains, far away from the traffic that clogs the intersection of Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road and Los Gatos-Saratoga Road.

"The location of [the] cafe actually used to be my own home," John Kang, husband of Sue Kang and co-owner, wrote in an email to the Falcon.

The cafe features unique handmade arts and crafts, made by Sue and her friends, that is displayed and used to serve food and drinks. Customers are able to buy and keep the ceramicware they like.

"Sue and I had a dream of opening a small gallery where we can showcase Sue's work," John Kang wrote. "Having

a cafe in the gallery was a natural extension for us since we wanted people to 'test drive' her work by using it."

There is unique desserts available such as "affogato or monaka ice cream," and latest music from the radio.

They hope the cafe will attract students looking for a place to do their homework, discuss school projects or sit and enjoy music.

"My two kids all graduated from SHS so I know how stressful the school life can be," he said. "I hope I can provide a 'mini retreat' from [their] busy life."

According to Alex Kwon, the cafe also has an upstairs study room for students to drink coffee and do homework.

Although there is already a fierce competition between downtown cafes, Alex remains hopeful that his aunt's cafe will appeal to customers.

"I hope that a lot of people start going there instead of going to mainstream [cafes]," Alex said.

Alex admits that the business may



Kwon



Barista Daniel Vu learns how to make latte art at a practice session at Sue's Gallery

struggle to bring crowds at first.

"Because it is located toward the end of Big Basin Way, it [will] probably [attract] people coming down the mountain rather than going toward the moun-

tains," Alex said.

Alex said that he is helping his aunt and uncle by advertising the cafe through social media and hopes to work there later after it opens. ♦

FALCON FOCUS

Freshman prodigy shoots for new heights, successes

by Charin Park

The Bay Area's annual middle-school Math League competition kicked off with an intense litany of No. 2 pencils scraping against paper. Then a rising sixth grader competing in her first math contest, freshman Catherine Wu was shaking in her shoes. Doubting that she did well, she left before the awards ceremony even started.

When the contest results were released, Wu was surprised to learn that she placed fourth within her grade level. Wu has competed in several national competitions since then.

"I used to be rather shy, but in math club and math class, I like to help others at what I am good at and learn from their strengths," Wu said.

Wu began learning math outside of school in third grade. She said math is "a moment of calm" in her life.

"All areas of math are connected. There are correlations between the most unexpected subjects," Wu said. "There is so much that we don't know that is waiting to be discovered."

Two years later, she entered the USA Junior Mathematical Olympiad, a contest for students in 10th grade or below

who qualify through the AMC 10 and AIME.

"Generally, you do worse when you're nervous [during competitions], so I try not to think about the results, [but] the problems themselves," Wu said. "As long as I prepared as well as I could and tried my best, it's OK if I mess up or make a silly mistake."

That same year, Wu competed at Math Prize for Girls. She scored fourth, and won the Youth Prize as the top scorer among girls in ninth grade and below.

"Especially considering I was competing against MOSP [Math Olympiad Summer Program] qualifiers, who are basically the top 50 [mathletes] of America and Canada, I had really only dared hope for honorable mention," Wu said.

This year, Wu plans to shoot for MOSP, an intensive summer program where the U.S. International Mathematical Olympiad team is chosen.

"Successes like the above contests were good motivation, but could-have-been-better results also taught me that there will always be people better than me, and there will always be more to learn," Wu said. ♦

COMPETITIONS

Liang, Wu rank in girls national math tournament

by Angela Lee

Senior Celine Liang placed fifth and freshman Catherine Wu placed seventh in the sixth annual Math Prize for Girls competition on Sept. 20. Their results showed that they are two of the top young female mathematicians in the nation.

The national competition, hosted by the Advantage Testing Foundation, took place at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and pitted them against other girls from all over the nation.

The participants were selected by the Advantage Testing Foundation. Once there, they completed a written test for approximately two and a half hours. Liang, who won the competition last year, said she was pleasantly surprised when she placed fifth this year because she did not think she did well on the test. She said that it was easy to

make mistakes.

"I went and did the best I could and just enjoyed the moment," Liang said.

Last year, Wu placed fourth in the competition.

Because the competition was harder this year, she said she was just hoping for an honorable mention. To her surprise, she placed even higher than what she hoped.

"It helps [girls interested in math] because it gives them a place where they can all meet each other. senior Celine Liang"

"I wasn't as nervous as I probably should [have been], but I didn't really know what I'd get," Wu said. "I was happy, I guess. I was sort of hoping that I would do better [though]."

Both Liang and Wu received \$1,250 cash prizes.

For Liang, the competition was all about bonding with other girls interested in math. She already knew most of her competitors from other contests she has participated in during high school.

"It helps [girls interested in math] because it gives them a place where they can all meet each other," Liang said. ♦

SCIENCE BOWL

Team selected, preparation for competition to start soon

by Charin Park & Neehar Thumaty

A new season of the school's Science Bowl kicked off with its first round of tryouts on Oct. 2.

Science Bowl captain senior Alex Li hopes the team will finally win Regionals and be able to participate in Nationals, as well as establish a "strong Science Bowl program so that Saratoga will be just as strong in the future."

The tryout process was discussed in an informational meeting on Sept. 28, and those interested were able to try the buzzer system.

On Oct. 2, potential team members

took a written exam after school in chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu's room. The top four scorers from each grade and the next top 12 cumulative scores proceeded to two buzzing rounds that took place on Oct. 7 and 9.

This year, Science Bowl will have A, B and C teams, with the A team guaranteed to compete at the prestigious Stanford Linear Accelerator Center's (SLAC) National Accelerator Labora-

tory on Feb. 6, Li said.

The team will wait until second semester to finalize the Team A roster to "motivate people to study and improve their skills in their own free time," Li said.

The B team has five members and might be able to compete at SLAC, Li said, while team C is a "training team" for underclassmen and will have five to 10 students.

Junior Nicholas Sum, Science Club competition coordinator and member of last year's B team, said that



Li

the team is hoping to improve with more structured practices.

"We should probably be studying more and working on buzzing skills," Sum said.

According to senior captain Jacky Lee, members are also striving to balance out their knowledge in each subject.

"Our team is strong in math, physics and chemistry, but we're lacking in biology, earth science and energy, so all three of the captains are taking AP [Biology] and AP [Environmental Science] to strengthen ourselves in those subjects," Lee said. ♦

PLAY >>

continued from pg. 1

plays Mrs. Forster, a friend of one of the Bennet sisters. Prior to "Pride and Prejudice," McCarthy has participated in two musicals while at Redwood Middle School, but he is finding the fall play to be much more exciting.

"High school productions are [more] fun and the people participating are a lot less cliquy and tighter knit," McCarthy said. "We also get [work] done more quickly, and we are doing more in rehearsal."

Starting from middle school, McCarthy became well acquainted with the school's drama department, thanks to many hours spent watching productions starring her two brothers, class of 2015 alumnus Jack, and current junior Raymond.

Because McCarthy is taking Drama 1 this year, she decided to join the play as well.

"It's really fun acting and hanging out with all my drama friends, especially because I usually don't see them that often during school," McCarthy said.

She feels that the upperclassmen friends she has made through the play have given her sound advice about what to expect in high school, as well as activities and programs she could get involved in at Saratoga High.

McCarthy said some of her favorite memories are of learning the dances in the fall play.

"Near the end of [the first dance] rehearsal, some of us started to lose focus, and when we started to run through the dances we all screwed up and were laughing at how badly we did," Mc-

Carthy said. "We're much better now, I promise."

Sophomore learns from freshman year
Once a newcomer to the drama department like McCarthy, sophomore Katie Sabel, now a veteran, plays Mrs. Reynolds, Darcy's housekeeper.

As a sophomore, Sabel said it is more difficult to balance her academic workload with play rehearsals.

"Drama has become my time to relax before having to go home and deal with projects and homework," Sabel said.

As a freshman, Sabel learned about "auditioning, expression, articulation and volume," and she has applied these skills while rehearsing for this year's fall play since her role requires a British accent. Moreover, Sabel said that she has learned much about 19th century Britain.

"'Pride and Prejudice' is definitely more culture oriented than the other plays I've done," Sabel said. We learned a lot about the people of the time and the dances and status, and how status relates to dialect. I was actually able to learn a lot about my character that way."

Sabel wishes she had more time to get to know the rest of the cast. Since rehearsals are extremely focused on running through scenes, Sabel says there is not much downtime for the cast.

"I think as we move into the McAfee [bonding will] get easier, because in the McAfee there's a definite backstage area that we'll all hang out in when we're not onstage," Sabel said.

Junior struggles with accent

Grob-Lipkis plays Charles Bingley, the wealthy and good-natured man who initially pursues and ends in a relationship with Jane Bennet. Grob-Lipkis is

enforce deadlines for their "Peter Pan" Quad Day and pushed all performers to work hard in the last few weeks, class representative Neythra Srinivasan said. They were able to carry out a full run-through of their Quad Day on Oct. 5, two weeks before Homecoming.

The juniors also distinguished themselves through their skit, which hoped to show that "Peter Pan" could be more than just a child's play.

"[We tried] to make as many people a part of [the] skit as possible," junior class representative Peter VandeVort said.

With a less-demanding course-load than upperclassmen, members of the Class of 2018 aimed to excel in their decorations and performance.

By bringing in talented artists such as Lillian Zeng, the creator of the mural in the math quad, the class sought to improve significantly in the decorations category for their theme "The Hundred Acre Wood" from Winnie-the-Pooh, said sophomore treasurer Nathan Chin.



FALCON // SWEEYA RAJ

Sophomore Hannah Yoon and senior Eoghan Walsh dance in a bonding exercise on Oct. 8

learning how to balance junior year with rehearsals.

Grob-Lipkis has rehearsals anywhere from three to four days a week, each for three hours long.

While rehearsing for the play, Grob-Lipkis especially enjoys listening to the multitude of witty comebacks, made by characters like Elizabeth and Darcy, but struggles to master the British accent.

"Most people are pretty good at [British accents], but I'm terrible with accents," Grob-Lipkis said.

Senior gains insight into intonation

Senior Neeki Tahmassebi plays Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth and Jane's mother, who spends the play trying to marry off her five daughters.

"My character [is] an extremely fun role to play," Tahmassebi said. "My tone of voice is high and squeaky, and I get to

push every one of my daughters to get married."

Tahmassebi said her character has showed her how language and tone can play a large role in characterization.

For instance, Tahmassebi has to make sure that when conversing to wealthy men, she delivers her lines with an intonation that matches the intensity of the man's wealth, since Mrs. Bennet's goal is to marry her daughters to rich men.

Through different roles and the drama elective, Tahmassebi said she has been transformed by the drama department these past four years. She said that the program has provided her an outlet to become an outspoken and outgoing person, compared to her freshman self.

"Being on stage gives me a sense of pride of being able to let go on stage and be the character and let that character come together," Tahmassebi said. ♦

HC >>

continued from pg. 1

a Land Far, Far Away," at Movie Night on Aug. 21, members of each class started on skits, dances and decorations.

For their final Quad Day, the seniors are looking to end their time high school careers with a performance to remember. With their "Star Wars" theme, seniors faced the challenge of transforming one of the world's most renowned blockbusters into a great performance and stunning decorations.

"The week before the theme was announced, [we] gathered people who were previously involved in decorations or had experience building," senior class representative Karen Chen said.

In fact, this year's senior class officers began discussing Homecoming plans last May after being elected, Chen said.

Similarly, juniors worked hard to

The sophomores also hoped to improve their dances from last year. With a new stunt dance, the sophomores hoped to impress a crowd looking for something special from the group, said choreographer sophomore Michael Xue.

Although the upperclassmen were well prepared for this year's Quad Day, the freshmen were at a disadvantage because their class officers were not elected until early September, giving them just over a month to prepare.

Although there were no ways for him to enforce rules, freshman President Rohan Verma and the class were pleased with their overall success.

"By the end, I really [hoped] to see a result that directly [mirrored] how much work we [put] in," Verma said.

But the Homecoming week festivities won't end with the seniors' performance today at lunch.

During halftime at the varsity football game tonight at 7 p.m. against Los Altos, the senior Homecoming king and queen

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Homecoming 2015
Friday 10/16
Senior "Star Wars" Quad Day @ lunch. Homecoming Court will eat dinner with the Homecoming commissioners, head dance commissioners and administration. Football plays against Los Altos @ 7 p.m. at home. Senior Homecoming king and queen will be announced, in addition to the results of class competitions.
Saturday 10/17
Homecoming Dance @ 8-11 p.m. in the Large Gym. The theme is "Far, Far Away" and each class will dress up according to their individual class themes. Tickets will be \$20 at the door.

will be announced along with the results of class competitions. The Homecoming dance will also take place tomorrow from 8-11 p.m. in the Large Gym. ♦

SCIENCE >>

continued from pg. 1

They not only learned more about turtle conservation and field work, but they also bonded more and taught their classmates about the culture in Costa Rica by exploring the town of Tortuguero.

"We learned something new every time and we gained new perspective on the behind the scene work that goes into getting data for the endangered species," Daviana said.

They also visited a local school in Tortuguero.

Shen also said that she got to try new foods and desserts. Her favorite activity was the group's visit to the La Paz Waterfall Gardens.

"[Mr. Orre] was kind of like our tour guide," Shen said. "He pointed out cool creatures and showed us around and shared a ton of stories."

Thomson also felt the trip went well. "We collected data that goes to ev-

>> THE bigidea

Costa Rica Field Trip
Overview
Ten AP Environmental Science students, their teacher Kristen Thomson and Biology teacher Kristofer Orre spent five days in Costa Rica from Sept. 28 to Oct. 2.
Purpose
While staying at the Tortuguero Sea Turtle Conservatory, the students learned more about the endangered species and gained field work experience.
Activities
The group visited La Paz Waterfalls and spent a night in San Jose. There, they met and shared stories with local students.

erybody in the world," Thomson said. "I think the connection the kids made with each other was more than I could ask for."

Orre and Thomson said they are hopeful that they will continue these types of trips in the future. ♦

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DANCE

Senior returns to floor for third season

By EileenToh

Eleven smiling and energetic girls, dressed in red-and-black tanks and dark leggings, took the floor during the first rally on Sept. 11.

Front and center stood senior Jenna Chen. Once Fifth Harmony's "Worth It" turned on, Chen unleashed her inner exuberant self, fiercely exaggerating each body roll and thrust, never missing a single beat. In response, students wildly cheered the girls on, their yells and roars blending into one frenzied blur.

"Dancing [with the team] at the rally was such an exhilarating experience," Chen said. "The school year has just begun to unravel, but I'm enjoying every second of it."

After taking time off from dancing during her junior year, Chen joined the team again this season. As one of the four dance team officers, Chen "cleans," or makes tweaks or adjustments to the team's routines and acts as another set of eyes for coach Kaitlyn Landeza.

Even though Chen has to help lead the other girls, perfect six routines throughout the season and commit to at least 13 hours of practice per week, she feels dance is worth the commitment and stress.

"I obviously do not get as much down time as I did before because of homework and college applications," Chen said. "But the things we get to do and

the places and people we get to perform for make it all the more exciting."

Chen's dance career began at the age of 4 when her mother placed Chen in a ballet class at Spark, a dance studio in Pleasanton.

"At first, dance felt like any other class I had to get through," Chen said. "I wasn't particularly interested in dancing, but after a while, I learned to like the classes and continued."

After taking ballet and technique classes, Chen began to learn hip hop and lyrical as a freshman. Having danced for nearly 13 years, Chen is familiar with "routines in all the dance genres down the spectrum."

To further pursue her passion for dancing, Chen joined the school dance team as a sophomore. The team was brought back by Class of 2015 alumni Madison Seagraves and Joy Tang after a five-year hiatus. But as the season progressed, then-coach Dinisha Nichols left the team before Homecoming week due to personal issues.

A second coach, Brittani Sua, stepped in and helped the team throughout their first competition season, but she left after the girls placed fourth in the small hip-hop division at the NorCal State Dance Championships last February.

After Sua quit, only Seagraves and Tang were left to lead the team.

"It was a rough experience for me," Chen said. "Adjusting to the different



FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA

Senior Jenna Chen (center) performs on Oct. 9 in the football game against Los Gatos.

coaches and not having someone that would continue to stay with us was difficult to deal with."

Due to the team's shaky first season and her busy schedule, Chen took a break from dancing during her junior year to focus more on academics. Even though she quit dancing at her studio because of the time commitment, she participated in several Homecoming dances and choreographed the finale dance routine for their "Nickelodeon"-themed Quad Day.

Throughout junior year, however, Chen started to miss dancing. Whenever she solved ACT practice tests or created works of art, she would "genuinely have times when [she] wished that [she] was

at a dance studio." Aside from college applications and art, Chen devotes most of her time to the dance team. Since dance is one of the few activities on her schedule, Chen wants to make sure that she and the rest of the team do their best at during competition season in January and at USA Nationals in Anaheim in March.

In the future, Chen wants to major in graphic design, but still plans to be involved in a college dance team or competitive dance club.

"Dance is and will always be something that is important in my life," Chen said. "I don't want to give it up again, and I plan to do my very best on the team this year before I graduate." ♦

SPEECH & DEBATE

Team shifts focus to public forum for recent tournaments

By VibhaSeshadri & RolandShen

Dozens of high schoolers, including 10 debaters from Saratoga High, crowded around a single sheet of paper taped against a wall at Gunn High School on Oct. 4. The wall contained the list of students who had qualified for the elimination rounds in a league tournament where students competed in Parliamentary and Public Forum debates.

Among the list of qualifiers, however, were no SHS competitors.

Going into the tournament, members of the debate team thought they had a chance of winning the competition. Its main competitors are Leland and Bellarmine High School, two of the strongest debate teams in the area.

Although there was a high number

of experienced public forum teams competing in the tournament, no Saratoga teams advanced above the preliminaries. Even with this disappointment, they said they gained a lot of experience and knowledge in the event.

"I learned a lot about the style of public forum debate," sophomore debater Varun Meduri said. "I now know that we have to prepare more for future tournaments because we only prepared for this [tournament] three days in advance."

During the weekend of Sept. 26, the school's varsity debate teams also participated in the Howard and Diana Nichols debate invitational hosted at The Harker School. Seniors Sweeya Raj and Nupur Maheshwari, the Public Forum captains, entered elimination rounds with a 5-1 record and reached the octofinals round before losing in a 2-1 decision.

The September public forum topic revolved around whether the U.S. federal government should pay reparations to African-Americans for the injustices done to their ancestors in slavery.

"It was stressful to come up with a con case because it could come across as racist," Raj said.

The team coaches, however, had prepared the team well with arguments. Raj said that coming up with contentions was fairly simple since professionals had trained the team well. Moreover, Maheshwari said that her and Raj's logic arguments strengthened their cases, allowing them to use minimal evidence.

Additionally, Raj said that the judges at the tournament were not exceptional. She said that the parent judges' lack of experiences took away from the debate aspect of the tournament.

"For the round that we lost in, there was one debater judge and two [parent judges]," Raj said. "The debater judge voted for us because we won the debate on the flow, but the parent judges didn't really understand what we were getting at, so they voted for the other team because they were better speakers."

Although they thought the judging was unfair, Raj and Maheshwari still did well in the tournament.

The rest of the debate team, however, did not proceed to elimination rounds. Most pairs out of the eight entered won three rounds and lost three rounds. Still, Raj believes the debate team can significantly improve with what they learned.

"I don't think the tournament was a learning experience as much as it was a clarification of [Raj] and I that we are solid debaters," Maheshwari said. ♦

HISTORY BOWL

Team starts journey to repeat as national champions

By AmithGalivanche & NeilRao

Pencils scratching and sighs of frustration echoed across history teacher Matt Torrens' classroom during tutorial on Sept. 30, as dozens of students sat taking a 60-question history test to qualify for the school's History Bowl team.

In consecutive years, the school's prodigious History Bowl team has made it to nationals in Washington, D.C., and last year the varsity team went on to win first place while the junior varsity team placed second.

This year the team consists of 15 members on varsity and 12 members on JV.

The team tried to keep the groups smaller this year as only four to six people compete at a time, according to

one of the team's captains, junior Bryant Chang. By having fewer participants, the team is hoping to have a few people specialize on certain topics so there will be more information at hand.

Last year the team was led by alumnus Bruce Lou, the No. 1 ranked history, U.S. and Quiz Bee player in the nation. The group this year is hoping to make a name for themselves.

"The only real way to make up for [this] great [loss] is to just practice harder and increase our individual efforts to overcome this problem," senior captain Daniel Eem said.

The team is especially looking to excel by attending more tournaments in the Quiz Bowl category.

"Studying Quiz Bowl creates the balance we need to keep up with the other [strong] History Bowl [teams] which

often times also have very strong Quiz Bowl teams," junior captain Mason Tian said. "The best teams have deep knowledge in history and also exposure to other subjects."

Although the team is newly formed, it is beginning a rigorous training schedule. The team will have mandatory weekly practices, constant repetition of

history packets and a belief that everyone will do his or her duty in contributing to the team, Eem said.

Despite losing the nation's best player, they think they can make a return to nationals and defend their title.

"We are not the only team that lost key players, so I guess we will see how we do this year," Tian said. ♦



Chang

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STAFF

Substitute teacher adjusts to new classes

By SweeyaRaj & FionaSequeira

Being a substitute teacher requires flexibility and improvisation.

These are the qualities teacher Scott Nelson has needed during his time at the school so far, adapting to whatever class he has been asked to teach.

In the first couple weeks of school, Nelson substituted for the French classes, even though he is not a fluent French speaker. He kept the classes afloat while the school sought a permanent and more qualified instructor.

On Sept. 16, Nelson replaced substitute teacher Erik Axelsson as the temporary Psychology and AP Government/Economics teacher while regular teacher Hana Chen is on maternity leave.

Even though Nelson's background is mainly in Psychology, he said that teaching Economics has been easy to adapt to.

"I've worked on campaigns, so I am well versed in Government," Nelson said. "Economics has to do with business, and having run a business, I can apply my knowledge to teaching."

Although Nelson has quickly adjusted to his new classes, he does not know

if he will be teaching Psychology and Economics for the full semester.

"I am versatile because I spent a lot of time in school, so I will go wherever I can be helpful to the school," Nelson said.

Like Nelson, students in his classes are adapting well to the change.

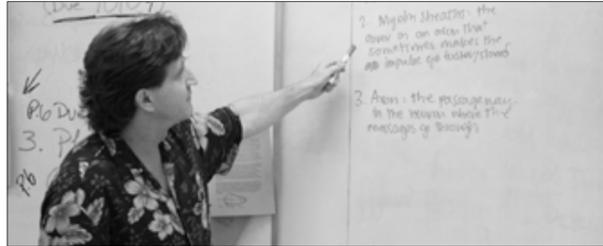
"Nelson made the transition easy by starting to teach right where Axelsson left off," said senior Shrey Desai, a student in Nelson's Economics class.

However, Desai also feels that the situation could have been handled better.

"It's frustrating to have a different teacher come in so far into the semester because we have to adapt to a different teaching style," Desai said.

Nelson was born and raised in San Jose and earned his bachelor's degree in Sociology from Santa Clara University in 1989. He earned his master's degree in Psychology at the University of Hawaii.

For 10 years, Nelson stayed in Hawaii and worked in the public school system as a counselor and a wrestling coach. While in Hawaii, Nelson, also operated his own commercial boating business and worked on the workboats at Honolulu Harbor.



FALCON // SWEEYARAJ

Substitute teacher Scott Nelson teaches psychology to his second period class.

According to Nelson, educators in Hawaii "just aren't paid enough," and he began working at a law firm to support his family. Eventually, Nelson, his wife and their son moved to France to be closer to his wife's family.

Recently, Nelson moved from France to the Bay Area to help care for his father, who has Alzheimer's disease. His wife and son are still in France, and he travels between the U.S. and France to visit his family every couple of months.

"They are waiting for me to be re-established," Nelson said. "My ultimate

goal is to get a permanent position in California that has health benefits. As soon as that happens, my wife and son will join me here."

Despite the changes he's gone through this semester, Nelson hopes to make the most of his opportunity.

"I try to bring my real-life stories to class because it's easier for students to recall something on a test if they have some sort of life story to connect to the topic," Nelson said. "My priority is that [students] are getting the best education." ♦

TECHNOLOGY

Juniors start girl-only after-school coding program

By AmiNachiappan

Junior Shannon Chen and her team of two other girls sat at the edge of their seats at the Microsoft headquarters this past July as they made the final touches to Brouze, their online database of tutors designed for high schoolers.

Reflecting on two weeks of work on their functional database, they felt proud knowing that they could use their coding knowledge to build a website from scratch.

"Making the final touches knowing that we would not see each other again was bittersweet, but the entire experience working together as a team was so rewarding," Chen said.

Chen, along with junior Nidhi Jain, attended a seven-week summer program, Girls Who Code, at the Microsoft headquarters in Mountain View this past summer. Jain was inspired to explore coding because her dad is a software engineer and her brother, class of 2012 alum Vineet Jain, is studying computer science and engineering at Berkeley.

"They kind of forced me and pushed in the computer science direction," Jain said. "Luckily, I actually ended up liking coding since you get to think of new ways to solve problems."

Both girls began pursuing coding when they took AP Computer Science

last year as sophomores. In the class, Chen enjoyed many of the projects, including building an Android app.

"Those projects helped me understand that coding is a powerful tool that is capable to build many wonderful things," Chen said.

During the Microsoft program, the

girls toured tech companies such as Facebook and Google, an experience that Chen found "eye-opening and exciting." At these coding havens, technology leaders such as Mike Schroepfer, the chief technology officer of Facebook, and Kevin Systrom, the co-founder of Instagram, spoke to the girls about their experiences.

During the trip to Facebook, they got a chance to meet with Schroepfer, who emphasized the importance of focusing on improving a product rather than worrying about the success it will bring. At the end of the discussion, the girls got to ask him questions. Jain, who was fascinated by his speech, raised her hand.

"I could have got some really inspiring advice, but instead, I asked him, 'Do

you perhaps know Mark Zuckerberg?' which is probably the dumbest thing I've ever done," Jain said. "I was a little embarrassed since he said that they sit right next to each other."

Schroepfer's speech, the advice that the girls gained from the speakers and the full immersion in coding that the program enhanced

Chen's knowledge in coding, teaching her different coding languages such as C, Python and Java and algorithms that extended what she had learned in AP Computer Science.

At the program, a Girls Who Code staff member approached Chen and Jain about starting a club at Saratoga. Since much of the organization's money comes from publicity, the program ensures that the students have information on how to start clubs at their own schools.

Not only does the organization provide information about possible instructors, but it also offers a monthly curriculum. The girls spoke to new computer science teacher Judi Heher about being their adviser and using her room to host.

"We got really lucky with our teacher adviser, and [Heher] is really excited about it too!" Jain said.

Under Heher's guidance, Chen and Jain plan on teaching students various coding languages, similar to the types they learned over the summer.

"The coding languages that we will teach [students] will be less intense since it's not that advanced, but we plan on teaching multiple projects," Jain said.

According to Chen, projects in the curriculum revolve around a monthly schedule, and at the end of the year, girls in the club will have the chance to build their own project. Their club will be an after-school program instead of an on-campus club.

In order to allow middle school girls as well as high schoolers to join their club, they plan on having afternoon sessions once or twice a week.

"Because this is kind of a 'nerdy girl' [program], I hope girls won't be scared to try it out," Jain said.

They are still in the process of trying to make an official program. The girls met with Heher on Sept. 28 and hope to start the club by the end of October.

"I hope the club inspires girls to realize how coding is a skill they can use to change the world," Chen said. "I want the club to provide them with the coding knowledge they need to build things." ♦

NEWSPAPER

Falcon staff members gain knowledge from journalism conference

By DeepthiSampathkumar

Eleven staff members of the Falcon were among the hundreds of student journalists hustling through the halls of Palo Alto High School's massive journalism building on Sept. 26, in the direction of their respective presentations during the second annual NorCal Media Conference.

The conference was sponsored by the Journalism Education Association of Northern

California. The JEANC also held various competitions at the conference. The Falcon won the award for "Best in the West" in the categories of tabloid-size newspaper and Online News Website.

The conference included 45-minute presentations that ranged from round table discussions for the editors-in-chief to tips and tricks on using Adobe Photoshop for staff members.

Presentations were delivered by primarily journalism advisers

and veteran student journalists.

For example, one section of the conference was called "Covering the Valley Fire." In this presentation, San Jose Mercury News Reporter Julia Prodis Sulek talked to students about the most effective ways to interview. She related the presentation to her own experience in covering the story of family who lost their home to fire.

Other sections covered different aspects of newspaper

such as marketing and advertising. The presenters urged students to use social media as a medium to communicate and to report for effective stories.

Falcon editor-in-chief Gitika Nalwa found the editor-in-chief presentation, which was led by three of the four Falcon editors-in-chief, successful.

"There were kids from Gunn, Monta Vista, and Paly. I got to talk to the editor-in-chief of Monta Vista's newspaper, El Estoque. Our newspapers [are

really similar], but we can learn a lot from them in terms of website management," Nalwa said.

Nalwa noted that the editor-in-chief round table was particularly successful as the students were able to provide advice from various perspectives.

"It's nice to talk to people with the same interests, people who really get the newspaper process and can offer tips and tricks to help us with issues we might have in our respective staffs," Nalwa said. ♦

Stop the in-between when it comes to grading

FULL TRANSITION FROM AERIES TO CANVAS NEEDED TO AVOID CONFUSION

By ElizabethLee

After I was bombarded with texts exclaiming that my math quiz score had been updated, I logged onto Canvas and immediately clicked on the grades tab. It wasn't until I saw "no grade" that I realized my math grades were in fact on Aeries. Annoyed, I opened a new tab and typed in my Aeries username and password to view my updated grade.

Constantly having to check for my grades between Canvas and Aeries is bothersome, especially when many teachers are already using Canvas for everything except grading and marking attendance. To prevent further inconveniences, teachers should fully transition to Canvas starting next semester.

This school year, the administration has asked teachers to begin the transition from keeping grades on Aeries to Canvas. Starting next school year, teachers will all be expected to use Canvas as the new grade portal. Although Aeries is convenient for students

since it displays the grades and assignments for each class on one page, many teachers dislike this old platform.

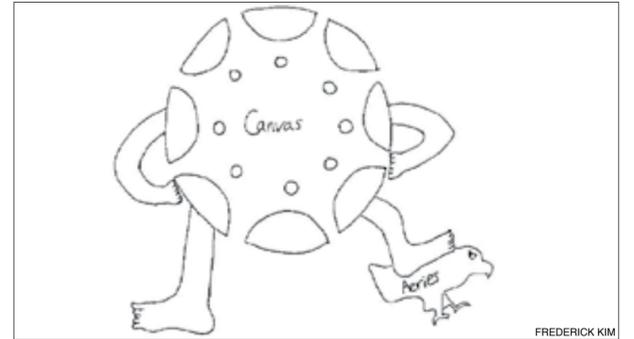
Canvas, the learning management system introduced last year, functions as an all-in-one tool for grading and displaying assignments and enrolled classes. With its user-friendly and straightforward interface, this system is sure to be popular with both students and teachers once all teachers have fully transitioned.

For some teachers, a lack of training with the new system is what prevents them from transitioning. With some adequate training provided by the school, all teachers should become fully capable of using the new platform.

Being a student who constantly checks for updates in all my classes, I find it to be a hassle to have to use multiple websites to get the information I need. Eventually, I get too lazy to write down all the assignments in my planner and decide to figure the work out later. With the calendar feature in Canvas, I can easily view all my assignments, ex-

I find it to be a hassle to have to use multiple websites to get the information I need.

>> candidcaricatures



FREDERICK KIM

ams and projects and their respective due dates.

In addition, the site's discussion feature allows me to submit homework without writing down a single word on paper. Canvas also allows students to predict their scores on assignments and see how these scores will affect their overall grades. This addition will be es-

pecially useful during finals week, when I will be frantically calculating the lowest possible score I can get on my exams to earn the grades I want.

With Canvas' many features, I am confident that once every teacher begins using the new system, many will agree that Canvas is the better platform for grading. ♦

Sending teens to adult prison detrimental, unneeded

By ClaireRhee

Besides being attacked or drowning in the depths of the ocean, prison has always been one of my fears. Scenes on TV shows depicting inmate life — from the orange jumpsuits to the metal bars — hammer home the point that prison is not a desirable place.

For adult criminals, this intense facility is their "home" until their sentences end. Youth offenders convicted of serious crimes, such as murder, assault or robbery, are often also sentenced to these adult facilities.

Adult prison robs these teenagers of the opportunity to work their way back to making good decisions through rehabil-

itation and therapy. These facilities should be for adults only.

According to the National Institute of Justice, the human brain completes development at roughly age 25. One of the last areas to fully develop is the prefrontal cortex, which regulates decision-making and logic.

Thus, 15-year-olds may have adult-like bodies, but they do not have adult brains. With eight more years of cognitive development ahead of them, they are more likely to take risks and make poor decisions (which is why crime peaks in the late teens and declines thereafter). Those who condemn juveniles to a life

sentence do not consider these children's potential for reform in the future.

Although lack of brain development only partially explains teenage crime, it is still

Adult prison robs these teenagers of the opportunity to work their way to making good decisions through rehabilitation and therapy.

important to consider during the criminal justice process.

Since teenagers and children are still maturing, they will be more easily influenced by adult

prison. Surrounded by negative and hostile adult prisoners, some offenders may become hardened into a career criminal or face other risks.

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Bulletin, youths who transfer to the adult system are often at a greater risk of suicidal behavior since they are more likely to spend time in isolation in an adult facility. They are also more susceptible to psychological diseases such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) since the conditions in adult prisons are too harsh for juveniles.

Of course, juvenile offenders

still must face consequences for their crimes. To accommodate this, those who commit a crime serious enough should stay contained in separate juvenile facilities, isolated from non-serious youth offenders. Separate facilities for different levels of crime will be beneficial to the inmates, allowing the rehab and other activities to shape around their needs.

Combining adults and youth in one prison unit does not help juveniles along their path to recovery; it just slows them down. Just think: these teenagers may have engaged in criminal activities, but if there is any hope for reform, they need mental support in a proper environment. ♦

Students should strive to befriend office staff earlier

By CaitlynChen

The office might as well be a foreign country for many of us as we go through high school. It's inhabited by seemingly all-powerful administrators, secretaries and other workers whose names we probably don't know and guidance counselors who we go to only under duress.

The excuse that students often make is that they don't have time to squeeze in an appointment with their counselors. They spend all their tutorials so immersed in homework that going to see their counselors is never a top priority.

Other students don't see the point in going to talk to their counselors. They think, "If I'm not having mental breakdowns or academic issues, why do I need to see my counselor?"

It is only when college applications creep up on them at the start of senior year that they regret not making connections with their counselors earlier.

Recently, the school made changes to help students create better relations with guidance counselors and administrators.

With the new arrangement, students are paired with an administrator in addition to their guidance counselor, meaning students have one more personal contact than in the past.

see their newly assigned administrator.

The four administrators (assistant principals Kerry Mohnikke, Brian Safine and Brian Thompson as well as principal Paul Robinson) are doing their best to offer students more help, but many more students need to take advantage of the situation.

While students are only assigned to one guidance counselor and one administrator, office staff members have hundreds of students to be in charge of.

Ultimately, that means it's the student's responsibility to take the initiative and go see their designated administrator or guidance counselor.

Here's an idea a lot more of us could do: Every semester (or even more often) pull five minutes from tutorial and drop by your counselor's office to update them on what you're up to.

That way, they have a better sense of what you're involved in and what kind

Your guidance counselor should generally be your first point of contact for anything you need.



counselor Monique Young

Now that students have two outlets to seek help from, it should be easier to create deeper connections with the office staff. But unfortunately, in a poll of 149 students, 114 said they hadn't gone to

minutes from tutorial and drop by your counselor's office to update them on what you're up to.

That way, they have a better sense of what you're involved in and what kind

THE saratoga falcon >>

FOURTH PERIOD

STAFF POLICY

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

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

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New, stricter club policy beneficial

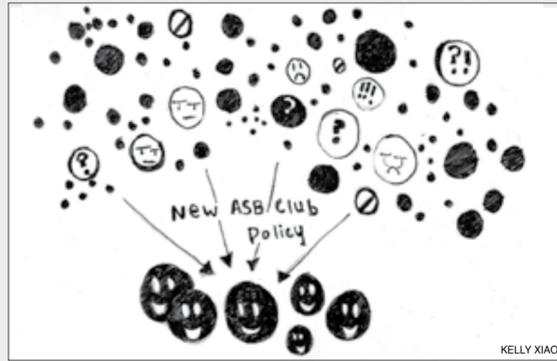
Most of us are familiar with the scene: Students pour into a classroom during lunch to attend a club meeting. Instead of finding a seat, they gravitate to some free pizza, fighting for the best piece. For the rest of the lunch period, the students and club officers socialize while a video plays in the background, their backs to the projector screen. The lunch bell rings, and the "club meeting" is over without the substance of club having been discussed at all.

Last year, the school boasted approximately 70 clubs — many of which were inactive or indifferent. In order to create a vibrant club atmosphere, the ASB now wisely requires clubs to have at least 12 members present at every meeting. Clubs that fail to do so on three separate occasions will be cut.

These changes can encourage the creation of clubs students will be truly invested in: something no amount of "looking the other way" has accomplished.

In the past, some clubs' only members have been the club founders and their friends. They fail to attract others interested in the general topic or theme of the club. This precludes genuine club development, and denies engaged students an enriching club experience.

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KELLY XIAO

To reduce the number of clubs that have uncommitted members, ASB now asks that students proposing clubs receive 20 signatures from committed club members, not just students who "support the idea." These guidelines force students to see if their clubs would even be successful, because if no students would be dedicated to coming, then why create the club?

By making club culture about passion, not numbers, the school will

have more legitimate clubs to join. The "12-person rule" and monthly ASB officer clubs visits ensure that club officers are making a genuine effort to have vital clubs.

Moreover, by providing more outlets for pursuing interests such as business, photography or politics at the school, this obsession with numbers may actually decrease.

The new club policy is a step in the right direction to bettering club culture and providing students with niches where they can share their passions with others.

If ASB can continue creating or enforcing rules which provoke genuine club development, such as prescribing how many time throughout the year clubs must have participated in or sponsored activities that are pertinent to the club's purpose, club culture at the school will be more vibrant. ♦

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editors-in-Chief Ashley Chen, Ariel Liu

Opinion Editor Kelly Xiao

Reporter Vibha Seshadri



The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 26-3 in support of the editorial.

GMOs raise unproven fears

BY Neehar Thumath

ABC's hit show "Jimmy Kimmel Live" did a bit last year about genetically modified organisms (GMOs), which have been a topic of controversy, even though most products that consumers buy are GMOs.

The show interviewed people at a local farmer's market and asked why some individuals avoided GMOs only to ask them what GMOs stood for after their response. The responses were revealing. While nearly all the individuals openly denounced GMOs with conviction, most of them could not even answer when asked what GMO stood for.

While this sample may be just a few Americans, the resounding lack of education about GMOs has led to completely unwarranted disapproval of GMOs.

First off, let us describe what a genetically modified organism actually is. Too often, an image of a radioactive mutant sent to destroy all life on earth comes to mind. But in actuality, a GMO is any organism whose genetic material has been altered using genetic engineering techniques, such as the insertion, deletion or modification of nucleotides, the subunits of genes. Most GMOs on the market are modified crops that are available in markets and groceries stores. They are also used in animal feed for livestock, which people eventually consume.

According to the Huffington Post, corn is the No. 1 crop grown in the U.S.,

and nearly all of it — 88 percent — is genetically modified.

This modification is for good reason too, as genetically modified corn can be more resistant to changes in the environment and pesky insects.

In addition, GMOs are Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved. With the FDA's government funding and years of experience, its approval has been a definitive sign of the safety of a substance in the past.

Furthermore, Forbes has reported positive associations from GMO studies done by, Animal Science geneticist Alison Van Eenennaam and research assistant Amy E. Young of UC Davis has yielded an unequivocal conclusion.

After reviewing 29 years of livestock productivity and health data from both before and after the introduction of genetically engineered animal feed and over 100 billion animals for field data, Eenennaam and Young found that genetically modified feed is safe and nutritionally equivalent to non-GMO feed. There has been no indication of any unusual trends in the health of animals since 1996 when GMO crops were first harvested.

GMOs have gotten a bad rep over the years, possibly through Hollywood or just the general apprehension of the public. These fears are completely unsubstantiated. Rather, GMOs represent a scientific breakthrough that has been used to help benefit millions of people around the world, nothing less. ♦

GMOs represent a scientific breakthrough that has been used to help benefit millions of people around the world.

'Second-tier' colleges not necessarily inferior to elites

BY Oksana Trifonova

Harvard. Stanford. Princeton. Yale. MIT. It almost sounds like a chant. Many students dream of getting into these colleges because of their stellar research programs, faculty attention, but most importantly, prestige. No wonder that the competition for admission to these schools is more cut-throat than ever.

With students at a school like Saratoga focusing so much on selectivity, equally excellent colleges don't stand a chance of being ranked among these top five, even when they offer an education that is just as high quality or maybe even better for the individual. Sometimes, people have never even heard of these schools.

When I first told my mom about Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, she crinkled her nose. "Where's that?" she asked. She'd never heard of the school, much less its amazing political and language studies programs.

Even though I've been making a conscious effort to try to branch out to more schools, the process is difficult: My relatives overseas are impressed by names like Yale and Princeton, not the University of Wisconsin or the University of Oregon.

Liberal arts colleges, which don't get as much attention as they should, comprise half of my list, mainly because they're small. I don't want to be just another face in the crowd. Individual attention and a close relationship with professors are at the top of my list of priorities, no matter where I go.

From the start, it's obvious that the Forbes ranking is unconventional to say the least. Stanford is listed as No. 3 and liberal arts college Williams is No. 1, while Harvard, the university often considered as the best in the world, lags behind in sixth place.

The Forbes list includes in its rating methodology information on different campus cultures, student satisfaction, post-graduate success, student debt, graduation rates and academic success, while ignoring acceptance rates in the rankings.

While no one denies that the top-name colleges offer wonderful opportunities, applicants — even the smartest, most ambitious ones — should have a few good alternatives in mind.

Additionally, the ranking of schools should not be the only thing considered when applying. A student with 4.0-plus GPA and 2400 score on the SAT who plays the oboe may not get accepted to Yale, simply because it might already have too many top-student oboe players.

The social scene is another important factor. A college isn't only a place to study, but a new home for the next four years; the academic life inevitably spills over into the social one. Several alumni I keep in touch with suggest that at some schools, the environment is overly competitive or elitist and not very fun places to live for four years.

Sure, Harvard, Stanford, MIT, Princeton and Yale offer a stellar education for most students, but an applicant's sights should extend far beyond them and other elite schools. ♦

Juniors, the new PSAT will disappoint

BY Kevin Chow

October means standardized testing. Who cares that October is National Sausage Month or even Halloween — for many students, it's all about SATs and PSAT.

Following the revamped March 2016 SAT, College Board has also redesigned the PSAT to mirror the new SAT.

And to make a long story short, for all the time I've spent preparing for standardized testing, the newly released PSAT practice test was a letdown.

(Note: My experiences should not influence your study habits.)

This year, the PSAT will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 24. This date is important

to juniors because the top one percent of the highest scorers in each state become National Merit Semifinalists, who are given scholarships to select UCs and private universities.

As a National Merit Semifinalist hopeful and standardized testing enthusiast, I began prepping as soon as I could get my hands on an updated PSAT practice test. Perhaps this new PSAT could be yet another standardized test worthy of obsession.

The College Board website claims that the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section "asks you to interpret, synthesize and use evidence found in a wide range of sources."

Using my own evidence-based reading skills, I managed to synthesize my own interpretation: adding in a graph at the end of the reading passage is not what I would call "a wide range of sources."

So maybe I'm just a sore loser, but now I don't feel so smart for sacrificing my summers to prep for the old SAT.

The questions were watered-down versions of previous SAT and PSAT questions. No longer were there extended reasoning questions, which historically have been the most difficult.

Many of the questions come in pairs.

The first part tests literal comprehension; the second part requires that the student simply report the line number in which the answer was found — essentially free points.

Also, there was no obscure

vocabulary to memorize; all the vocab questions came with the context of a passage.

Math seemed more or less the same, with its logic-based word problems and lack of technical math skill beyond trigonometry.

What I do commend in this new test is the updated writing section, which has changed from editing individual, unrelated sentences to editing complete passages.

Even better is that there's no more penalty for guessing.

If it's not clear already, I'm an SAT/PSAT purist.

According to the College Board website, the best way to prepare for the new tests is to "take challenging courses, do your homework, prepare for tests and quizzes [and] ask and answer lots of questions."

Contrast this with the infinite vocab cards and endless practice tests many who have taken the current SAT are familiar with. It's kind of funny.

With the new PSAT, studying is probably much easier.

And maybe this is beneficial, but for every other Saratoga High student who spent many summers stuck in SAT prep classes, this is a letdown for years of hell.

>> candid caricatures



CAITLYN CHEN

And it's clear that a prevailing reason for the College Board to change the SAT and PSAT is to compete with the ACT, which has been rising in popularity.

The new SAT is supposedly realigned with Common Core, which has been criticized as too one-size-fits-all. It's a sad trend that policies like Common Core champion a set of revamped standards that rarely turn out well in practice.

So maybe I'm just a sore loser, but now I don't feel so smart for sacrificing my summers to prep for the old SAT. The new PSAT, and so then probably the new SAT as well, has become too straightforward for that type of studying. Besides, most people know that National Merit Semifinalists only get scholarships to USC.

I guess October still means SATs and PSAT, but maybe I'll just switch to studying for the ACT. ♦

Schools ought to implement later start times

BY Katherine Zhou

Most teenagers are living in chronic sleep deprivation. According to Nationwide Children's Hospital, the average teen gets between 7 and 7 1/4 hours of sleep, while they need between 9 and 9 1/2 hours.

Although administrators can do little to prevent students from packing their schedules with tough classes and time-consuming extracurriculars, one way they can help them get more sleep is by starting school later.

Because teenagers come to school so early in the morning, they are forced to go against their internal biological clocks to stay awake. Dr. Max Van Gilder, a pediatrician, told Child Mind Institute that there have been multiple studies indicating that students are not fully functional until 9 a.m. Even though 43 percent of schools start before 8 a.m., at that hour the teenage body is still producing melatonin, a hormone that controls sleep cycles, which forces students to want to sleep. In fact, Dr. Mark Mahowald, medical director of the Sleep Forensics Association, told Education World that forcing students to wake up around 6 or 7 a.m. is comparable to asking adults to wake up at 3 or 4 a.m.

The National Institute of Health and the American Lung Association of New England cite early school start times as a main cause of sleep deprivation. Since 1994, numerous sleep experts and physicians, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), have been advising schools to delay morning classes until after 8:30 a.m.

In a study conducted by Dr. Mary A. Carskadon, the behavior of students who transitioned from a 8:25 a.m. to 7:20 a.m. start time was recorded. Carskadon found that the students' bedtime did not change, averaging around 10:40 p.m. None of the students adjusted well, and

none slept more than eight and a quarter hours on school nights. Carskadon explained that by creating earlier school start times, schools expect students to simply go to bed earlier to make up for the sleep lost — a nearly impossible task to ask of a teenager who has many activities and homework.

In fact, a Brookings Institute Report even estimated that later high school start times create a lifetime earnings gain of \$17,500 per student.

There have been many success stories of schools changing to later start times. A 2007 study led by Holy Cross psychology professor Amy Wolfson compared two New England middle school with different start times, 7:15 a.m. and 8:37 a.m.

The results showed similar success. Wahlstrom, the middle school with the 8:37 start time, found that attendance rates improved, enrollment remained

the same or increased, grades showed slight improvement and students' reported bedtimes did not change while they got one more vital hour of sleep on school nights.

According to StartSchoolLater.net, communities have seen reduced tardiness, sleeping in class and car crash rates, as well as improved attendance, graduation rates and standardized test scores after lowering their school start times.

Sleep deprivation is associated with obesity, migraines and immune system disruption as well as other health risk behaviors including smoking, drinking, drug abuse, fighting, physical inactivity, depression and suicidal tendencies. Sleep-deprived students participate in more violent and property crime than other teens.

As members of a committee look at a new schedule for next year, their school should look seriously at starting school later, at least past 8 a.m., to ensure that their students are functioning at the best of their ability. By letting students sleep more, their lives will be improved. ♦

Forcing students to wake up around 6 or 7 a.m. is comparable to asking adults to wake up at 3 or 4 a.m.

Solving scalping issue is artists' duty, not government's

BY Amith Galivanche

At the Taylor Swift concert at Levi's Stadium on Aug. 15, countless fans cheered on the singer and sang along to her songs, buying merchandise and proclaiming it to be one of the best days of their life. Unfortunately, even for a lower-end nosebleed ticket originally going for \$50, fans were forced to shell out as much as \$200.

Online ticket sellers such as StubHub buy obscene quantities of high-demand tickets

when they are at market price, only to resell them to eager concertgoers months later for a grossly large profit. While many see business model as immoral, banning it would violate free enterprise. The government should not intervene in private business; instead, event managers and artists should take steps to make this kind of scalping impossible.

Since ticket scalping's negative connotation comes from

the unfair profit that scalpers enjoy, the only way to put an end to it is to make the system

The only [solution] is to make the system so that scalpers cannot resell tickets for a profit.

Most artists prefer that their

fans can attend their shows, and discourage anyone who makes this difficult. To end scalping, artists could sell the tickets themselves, digitally.

For example, in 2012, comedian Louis CK sold tickets to a show in this manner, and the result was a 96 percent decrease in scalping.

CK's selling method made it so that people could resell their tickets, but software tracked if they tried to increase the price. If someone did attempt to make a profit on the

tickets, CK had the right to cancel the ticket and refund their money at the original price.

This way, scalpers had no reason to buy such large quantities of tickets, since they wouldn't be able to make a profit.

At the end of the day, ticket sales are just business transactions, and in a business transaction, the only decision making should be between the customer and the seller, and it's OK for one of the sides to cut out the middle man. ♦

Election reveals underlying racism in U.S.

BY Karissa Dong

Recent national events — particularly the disconcerting reality of Donald Trump's racially charged presidency campaign — have spurred the race conversation anew.

They raise the question of the current state of race relations in America: How progressive, really, is the 21st century United States?

In the political domain, Trump and Dr. Ben Carson rank as the top two Republican candidates, according to a Sept. 30 NBC poll. The polling numbers reveal that Trump has 21 percent of Republican voters, and Carson trails him at 20 percent.

Evidently, neither candidate is a minor player in this presidential race. It's important, now, to examine their stances on race relations.

Trump, notorious for his inexcusably racist rhetoric, unapologetically calls for the deportation of all illegal Mexican immigrants.

He claims that these immigrants are all "rapists, bringing crime and drugs" and continues to say that he "doesn't have a racist bone in his body" — and, miraculously enough, millions of people take his word for it.

Furthermore, Carson stated during an NBC interview on Sept. 20 that he believes the president's faith matters and "absolutely would not agree with a

Muslim in charge of this nation." There seems to be a pathetic pattern among conservatives to muddle the concept of separation of church and state, as if it's a particularly perplexing Constitutional clause.

Do Americans truly understand how ridiculously appalling the success of these candidates is? These are the leading GOP statesmen in the 21st century, and among the millions who have rallied to their names, not one eye blinks when they unabashedly attack ethnic and religious minorities as if it's totally acceptable, morally permissible behavior.

Frankly, I'm more than a bit alarmed. It's easy to dismiss Trump as a buffoon that nobody actually takes seriously — but reading into his numbers of support, this demagogue has clearly raised a considerable cult of ignorant right-wing fanatics who endorse his shamelessly racist state policy.

In fact, white supremacist organizations like the neo-Nazi news site, The Daily Stormer, have publicly declared their support for Trump.

Michael Hill, leader of Alabama-based white supremacist secessionist group, the League of the South, "loves to see somebody like Trump come along" and fights against the "cultural genocide of white Americans," according to the Huffington Post.

There is no doubt that Trump appeals

>> candidcaricatures



to a racist vein in America. And it's become apparent that this vein flows in the blood of millions of Americans.

And Carson is hardly any better — besides his willful disregard for the fact that the American government is a secular body, he essentially encourages Islamophobia in America.

It's an issue of deliberate discrimination that should be addressed by the potential leaders of this country, certainly not promoted.

A Sept. 29 New York Times article re-

vealed that, of several hundred Republican voters polled in North Carolina, 72 percent would object to a Muslim president and 40 percent think Islam should be illegal.

And the questions I'm dying to ask are numerous — whatever happened to education, the teaching of history and upholding of moral values? If there have ever been ugly signs of a country in rapid deterioration, 21st century America seems to display an unhealthy large number of them. ♦

Kim Davis: religious chauvinist, not freedom fighter

BY Karissa Dong

After spending five nights in jail for denying marriage licenses to same-sex couples in Rowan County, Ky., clerk Kim Davis was released on Sept. 8 and quickly swept up by an approving, roaring crowd of religious conservatives hoisting white crosses and signs insulting the Supreme Court for "incarcerating Christians."

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, a presidential candidate, stood by her side on the podium and embraced her as a champion, a "martyr" for the cause of institutionalizing and justifying homophobic bigotry on the grounds of religious belief. Texas Sen.

Ted Cruz, another GOP presidential candidate among the attendees, emphatically placed his right hand over his heart in a gesture of support, while fellow candidate Rick Santorum absurdly claimed Davis to be

somehow worthy of comparison to revered civil rights leader Martin Luther King in a baffling Sept. 11 interview. Amazingly, she was even whisked in to meet Pope Francis in private on Sept. 30.

None of these reactions were remotely appropriate for the situation.

To begin with, Davis crossed an ethical and professional line when she allowed her personal stand on gay marriage to conflict with her government-appointed job.

Imprisonment was the only remaining legal option after she obstinately upheld her stance against issuing marriage licenses to both homosexual and heterosexual couples alike (as her job and the Constitution rightly demanded of her).

She refused to recognize the implications of "separation of church and state" in the Constitution as well as the fact that,

in secular 21st century America, nobody's God has a place in state affairs.

Santorum then told the News Network Examiner that the Supreme Court "abuses its power by forcing Christians to

If, say, a clerk refused marriage licenses to black couples because doing so "conflicted with her conscience," the outrage would be swift and severe. But ironically enough, it seems that people are willing to condone homophobia if there exist religious premises behind such deliberate discrimination. These religious excuses have deepened an impenetrable "castle moat" — protecting bigots like Davis and, essentially, licensing them to do as they will.

To what extent are we going to accommodate the problematic agenda of religious conservatives like Davis? Is her bigotry, for which religion is "responsible," somehow justifiable simply by virtue of her professing her Christian beliefs?

It's hardly a legitimate excuse. While I'm well aware of (and happily support) the concept of religious freedom,

worship cannot arbitrarily supersede Constitutional law or meddle in state proceedings. Beyond that, no essential characteristic differentiates the case for LGBTQ rights from that of racial equality. Were racism backed by some religious principle, it seems as if Santorum and his allies would attack the state for "urging the pious to accept racial equality" and have a desire to reinstate racial stratification.

Worship simply cannot be used to make an exception out of Davis' case. There is absolutely no way that, opposing both Constitutional rulings and the moral conscience of the Supreme Court, she can possibly justify in denying gay couples the right to marry.

Truly, it's people like Kim Davis who hold us back from healing the wounds of those communities that have been wronged by centuries of inhumanity and intolerance. ♦

accept same-sex marriage" — which is about as valid as the objection of racists to the 14th Amendment in 1868, which "so tragically" compelled them to put aside their passionate travails for a racially segregated America to make way for civil equality. There is no morally-relevant difference between the two.

going to accommodate the problematic agenda of religious conservatives like Davis? Is her bigotry, for which religion is "responsible," somehow justifiable simply by virtue of her professing her Christian beliefs?

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New AI Barbie may undermine children's development

BY Jason Zhao

With the hit of a button, electricity surged through the lifeless body and the figure creaked to life. But the figure was not Frankenstein — it was the new Barbie doll.

Hello Barbie, the new artificial intelligence doll created by the company Mattel, is designed to listen attentively to a child's questions and ask intimate questions in hopes of helping with moral dilemmas.

Though many childhood dreams of talking to toys become reality with Hello Barbie, hidden dangers abound with the artificial intelligence of the doll uses.

One prominent feature of Hello Barbie is that it is able to remember conver-

sations and draw upon that information at a later time. This is made possible by a hidden microphone that transmits everything the speaker says to a server.

It also means that anything a child confides in the doll will be recorded in a database.

Though Mattel claims that all conversations with Hello Barbie will be kept private, the company's databases can still be hacked and the information leaked, as has happened with prominent companies like Target and Home Depot.

Another feature that Hello Barbie brings is its life-like qualities. To adults, the doll may just be a talking piece of plastic, but to children, it may seem like a genuinely close friend.

These synthetic relations can even tri-

umph over real relationships, since Hello Barbie will never talk back or argue with the child.

The child may view the doll as the perfect friend and see few reasons to make relationships with others.

Peter Kahn, a professor of psychology at the University of Washington who studies human-robot interaction, told the New York Times that he worries about a "domination model" relationship in which the child makes all the demands and receives all the rewards but feels no responsibility to the robot. This could lead to bad habits and the formation of the wrong mindset.

Because of the limits of artificial intelligence, Hello Barbie's interactions and lines only go so far and cannot match

what a human mind can do. Hello Barbie's responses are based on determining key words from the speaker's words and picking a response.

Given the rudimentary state of artificial intelligence, there are moments when the Barbie doll is oblivious to the message the speaker is trying to send, whereas a human could have easily interpreted the message.

Though Mattel created the new doll with good intentions, Hello Barbie may do more harm than good.

The easy solution: Let Barbie be the inanimate doll she has always been. Children will be healthier if they can use their own imaginations rather than interacting with gimmicky fads like Hello Barbie. ♦

CREAM freezes neighboring Icebox competition

BY Sweeya Raj & Deepthi Sampathkumar

Just one mile away from each other on Stevens Creek Boulevard, CREAM and Icebox both serve ice cream sandwiches and are popular attractions for hungry high school students. We decided to figure out which dessert place is the better one.

Walking into CREAM, which is located along Stevens Creek opposite the Cupertino Plaza, we were greeted by smiling employees who helped us through the process of customizing our sandwiches, whose prices ranged from \$2.99 to \$3.50.

The place is spacious, and the walls are decorated with fun sayings such as "It turns out you can buy happiness" and "Cookies rule everything around me."

We decided to pick a cookie from its eight classic cookie flavors and an ice cream flavor from its large assortment of 21 different ice creams, in addition to a topping.

Its cookies range from the classic chocolate chip to Carnival cookies (cookies with M&Ms). Ice cream flavors include Rocky Road, Green Tea, Strawberry Cheesecake and Cup of Joe, a coffee-flavored ice cream.

The options were endless and delicious, so it was hard to choose.

We got two sandwiches: one with chocolate chip cookies and Rocky Road ice cream, covered in M&Ms, one topped with Snickerdoodle cookies and chocolate ice cream. Each cookie is \$2.99.

The sandwiches themselves were enjoyable, although difficult to eat due to their size.

The perfectly soft and gooey warm cookies combined with the cold ice cream were refreshing and sweet.

We found it hard to get through the whole sandwich without spilling all over ourselves.

Icebox, located just a few blocks down on Stevens Creek Boulevard, was not as welcoming.

The store itself is small and feels crowded

because multiple chairs and tables are so close together.

It has only a few decorations and the place lacks atmosphere.

Making it worse was that only one person was working there at the time, so our orders took several minutes to come out.

While Icebox has a more exotic choice of macarons instead of cookies topping its sandwiches, its portion sizes are much smaller.

Even so, the prices are higher at Icebox.

An ice cream sandwich at CREAM



CREAM	Icebox
(OUT OF FIVE)	(OUT OF FIVE)
Where: 19501 Stevens Creek Blvd	Where: 19929 Stevens Creek Blvd
Reporter's favorite: Chocolate chip cookie with Rocky Road ice cream topped with M&Ms	Reporter's favorite: Vanilla macaron with black marble raspberry ice cream
Price range: Around \$3-\$4	Price range: Around \$3.50-\$4.50

is \$2.99, while a smaller and less satisfying version of the relatively the same dessert is \$3.50 at Icebox.

If you want good service and a delectable icy and sweet treat for your money, we'd recommend going to

CREAM over Icebox.

Its ice cream will leave you refreshed and wanting more. CREAM's ice cream sandwiches are perfect for anyone with a sweet tooth, and we highly recommend them. ♦

STYLE FILES — FALL FASHION ACROSS CAMPUS



- Brandy Melville Shirt: \$20
- Nordstrom jacket: \$40
- Abercrombie and Fitch skirt: \$50
- Aldo shoes: \$100

Total Cost: \$210
Autumn Zuleeg, 9



- American Needle custom cap: \$40
- Custom white shirt: \$10
- Levis jeans: \$50
- Sperry's shoes: \$90

Total Cost: \$190
Yoon Kim, 10



- Amazon: \$25
- Vans AV Covinas: \$40
- Mainland Stance socks: \$12
- Vans Chima Shoes: \$65

Total Cost: \$142
Nathan Ching, 11



- Urban Outfitters crop top: \$30
- Gap cardigan: \$30
- Nordstrom jeans: \$75
- Topshop shoes: \$80

Total Cost: \$215
Caroline Oliver, 12

"I like clothes that accentuate my natural features. I'm tall, so usually I wear things that make me look taller [such as skinny jeans or skirts]."

"I draw SJSS on basically everything I own, but the meaning of SJSS is a secret."

"For this specific set of clothes, my goal was to celebrate my Asian heritage in a comical way with a mix of west-coast vibe."

"I like using structure of garment to emphasize what I like about my body and I'll throw in interesting patterns or colors to make my outfit interesting."

October 16, 2015



BEHIND THE SCENES OF HOMECOMING WEEK

A JOURNEY INTO
A LAND FAR,
FAR AWAY

THE EXPERIMENTER: Freshman class president won't 'go home,' leads Homecoming with alumni advice

by Amith Galivanche

Bright green T-shirts, thundering cheering and green pompoms made a clear presence in one corner of the gym. Even though their officers had only been elected a week before, this year's freshmen were well prepared for the first rally on Sept. 11. A big reason for their readiness was the work being done by freshman class president Roshan Verma.



Verma

ship class last year and decided to take initiative in the freshman Homecoming process.

"Planning was complicated because people really couldn't enforce deadlines because there wasn't any real power [before our class officers got elected,] but our grade was really good about getting ahead," Verma said.

Verma also credits the enthusiasm of the freshmen to their Homecoming theme, "The Lost City of Atlantis," which he and his classmates agreed was better than most previous freshman themes.

Due to the early start in planning, Verma said that people stepped up, including the head of decorations and freshman class representative

Cameron Lin, scriptwriters freshman class vice president Deyshna Pai and freshman Joan McCarthy and several choreographers including freshmen Lydia Payne, Max Zhuk, Ferennie Liu, Miya Uenaka and Alex Ruemmler.

Verma said he hopes to take advantage of the class spirit that the freshmen showed at the first rally to encourage involvement in Homecoming decorations and Quad Day.

In particular, Verma said he is thankful for the help of their class advisers, choir teacher Andrew Ford and attendance secretary Julia Peck. Ford said that although he and Peck have assisted the freshmen, they seem to know what they're doing.

"Even before they had a president or a vice president, they were coming to us and talking

about Homecoming and class shirts," Ford said. "They were super organized coming in."

According to Ford, the freshman class officers designed, ordered and delivered class T-shirts to roughly half the class in one week, an incredible feat.

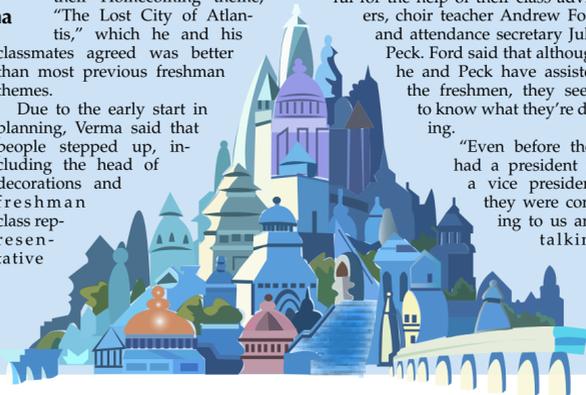
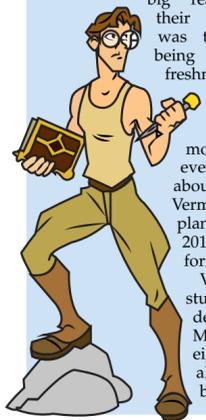
In addition to establishing his class' reputation in terms of class spirit, Verma has extensive knowledge of Quad Days, despite being a freshman.

Thanks to his older sisters, class of 2013 alumna Sanjna Verma and class of 2014 alumna Sachi Verma, who participated in Homecoming while in high school, Verma said that he has known about Homecoming long before entering high school.

Verma has also received helpful advice from experienced ASB members such as junior treasurer Mitali Shanbhag and senior head commissioner Luke Salin, who have organized past Homecoming performances as class presidents before.

While advising them and watching them through their preparations, Ford said that he noticed something different about this freshman class.

"I can't explain it," said Ford. "They are just an extremely rare and unique group of students." ♦



SCRIPT GURU: Sophomore uses drama experience in Quad Day

by Julia Miller

Script in hand, sophomore Katie Sabel walked into the first Homecoming skit practice in mid-September. The sounds of people rehearsing their lines filled the Mrs. Voorhees's Spanish classroom, each new voice blurring into the last in a happy cacophony.

Sabel sat down and opened up the script to the first page, ready to endure the challenge of making the tale of Winnie-the-Pooh into a successful Homecoming performance.

This year, the sophomore class was assigned to tackle the whimsical fantasies of Winnie-the-Pooh's "Hundred Acre Wood." The sophomore class officers invited Sabel to their team as the main

scriptwriter, a responsibility she happily accepted.

"I love writing. Currently, I'm working on a script for our State Thespian Organization, which is a young screenwriters' festival down in Southern California," Sabel said. "I was writing for that and thinking, 'Why wouldn't I want to get involved [in Homecoming?]'"

Sabel began by researching past episodes of "Winnie-the-Pooh" for inspiration.

At first, she struggled to tie a story about woodland creatures to high school life, but Sabel eventually discovered the episode that the Homecoming show would be based on,

"The Great Honey Pot Robbery."

The sophomore quad day on Oct. 14 was set to feature characters like Piglet, Pooh, Eeyore, Christopher Robin, Owl, Rabbit and Tigger.

In the story, antagonists Woozle and Heffalump, played by sophomores Ketki Palande and Ayush Aggarwal, try to steal honey from Pooh, played by Will Turpin, and his friends, Tigger, Eeyore, and Christopher Robin, played by sophomores Raquel Boales, Shen and Connor Reyes.

Sabel and her fellow scriptwriter, Reyes, worked together to write the script, playing to each other's strengths.

According to Sabel, Reyes incorporated the "good, juicy stuff" like the

"burning [other] classes" through jokes, while Sabel made sure a diversity of characters were included in the story.

"I gave the characters their own personalities, and I think [that will] help the actors see that personality and really roll with it, and work and strengthen their own characters," Sabel said.

In the end, despite all the bumps Sabel encountered along the way, she hoped she was able to successfully capture the essence of Hundred Acre Woods. ♦



Sabel



DANCING QUEEN: Junior guides dancers through choreography

by Eileen Toh



Even though it can be stressful sometimes, it is really cool to see the people in your grade learning, doing and having fun with your choreography and to entertain others who are watching," Li said.

Li first started dancing at the Pacific Ballet Academy in Mountain View when she was 6. Since then, she has dabbled in other styles such as jazz, hip-hop, and lyrical.

As of now, Li continues to pursue her passion for dance as an officer of the school dance team and acts as a leader and motivator for the other girls. She also acts as "another set of eyes when it comes to seeing if certain moves or changes work," SHS dance team coach Kaitlyn Landeza said.

Junior Yuna Kim, who is in the all-girls' dance, praised Li's thoughtfulness toward the dancers.

"If you don't know a certain move, you

simply raise your hand, call out her name and just ask for help," Kim said. "She is always smiling and goes for that extra mile, whether it is changing the choreography or making time for the people who couldn't come to previous practices."

For example, Li posted videos on Facebook for those who could not make the rehearsals. At most practices, however, only half of the dancers showed up, most of whom either did not have enough time to practice with the tutorials or were not able to execute the difficult choreography correctly, Li said.

"It can be a bit frustrating sometimes, especially when some people don't listen to you during the practice

have to raise your voice to get their attention," Li said. "It's also hard to choreograph because I don't know which moves are too hard for them to learn."

Li also overworked and injured her knee during dance team and Quad Day dance practices. To prevent any further injury on her legs, she bound them with black and pink strips of kinesiology tape.

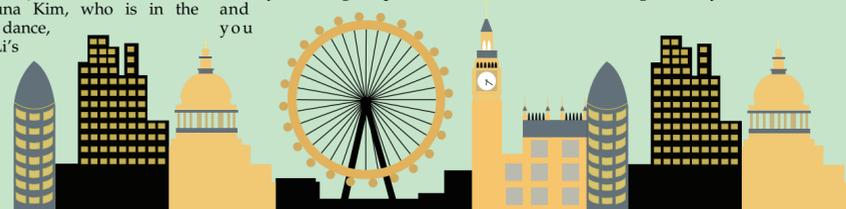
When the girls had to learn the last part of their dance, she taught junior Chih-Hsuan Hsu, another dance team officer, the routine beforehand so that she could help Li lead the practice.

Nevertheless, Li said that the main highlight of Quad Day is seeing the audience enjoying the performances, which makes her realize that all of the time and effort she spent was worthwhile.

"I always hope that the dances will meet or even exceed people's expectations, and that everyone participating in these dances had a fun time and will want to do it again next year," Li said. ♦



Li



DECORATIONS WHIZ: Senior leads with robotics background

by Vibha Seshadri

Homecoming themes were announced on Aug. 21 at Movie Night, and senior Homecoming decorations began the very next day. Twenty seniors crowded into senior Marcus Emery's home, conversing about how to make the most of their allocated space: two hallways and the quad steps.

With this year's iconic "Star Wars" Homecoming theme, there was no doubt the decorations had to be unforgettable. That's when senior Kabir Manghnani, well-known engineering novice eager to join the preparations.

Manghnani is known around campus as the president of the M-SET robotics team with a knack for all things technical. This year, he decided to put his expertise to use by helping build the senior Homecoming decorations.

"I was kind of all over the place," Manghnani said. "I worked on the general plan for Homecoming

[decorations and] cutting parts for the arch."

In many previous years, the centerpiece, or senior archway, was likely more guesswork than science, Manghnani said. In hopes of building a more stable structure, he designed this year's senior archway using a Computer Aided Design (CAD) on his laptop.

Manghnani's CAD simulates the building of the archway on his computer, where he can easily refine the model. The CAD also tells him the angles, heights, widths and other measurements needed to create the real-life structure.

"We still [had] to build it, but all the angles [were] planned out,"

Manghnani said.

While Manghnani used his engineering expertise, he learned about the visual side of Homecoming decorations.

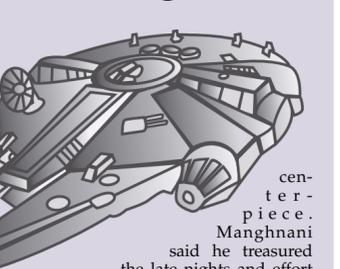
"In robotics, you don't worry about how easy something will be to paint. You kind of just do it, and it works," he said. "If you need to make it look good, you figure that out later. But a lot of [Homecoming decorations] is color-based."

As a result, Manghnani and his team relied heavily on Spanish teacher and class adviser Arnaldo Rodriguez's expertise from decades of experience with Homecoming decorations.

For instance, Rodriguez suggested that the centerpiece team add color, since the seniors will be taking their class photo for the yearbook there. Additionally, he told Manghnani and the rest of the centerpiece team to add the posters that hang off of it.

"He knows what he's talking about, and he knows what looks good," Manghnani said.

Manghnani and seniors Jonathan Hess, Brian Menard, Michael Fukuda, Miles Chaffin and Darby Williams worked together to build the



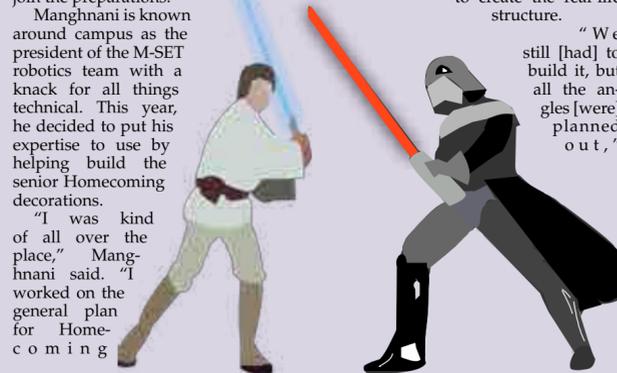
centerpiece. Manghnani

he treasured the late nights and effort they placed into the project.

"There [was] an amazing vibrancy to the core team building the major elements — synergy is the best way I can describe it," Manghnani said. "We constantly [tossed] jokes around, [struggled] to find things as it got darker and darker [and made] fun of each other's 'incompetence.' We've got a brilliant team and we've set out to be pretty damn good by comparison."

Williams, the senior class vice president, said that Manghnani has helped make the decoration process much less chaotic.

"He organized all the people that wanted to work on decorations into groups," Williams said. "[Manghnani] is one of the most hardworking people I know, so it [was] has been great to have him working on Homecoming this year." ♦





ALL GRAPHICS BY MAYA PRASAD

'The Italian Job': Stealing gold 34 years later

BY Claire Rhee

Red, blue and white flash across the TV screen. Three miniature cars weave in and out of traffic lanes as they speed through the crowded streets of Italy. Tires screech against pavement as the drivers spin their steering wheels wildly, trying to avoid their enemies' cars.

From sewer car chases to stolen bricks of gold, the 1969 original and 2003 remake of the film "The Italian Job" share key scenes through the same general storyline. However, due to the additions of new roles and non-stop action, the 2003 version is the better movie.

In both movies, a group of trained robbers work together to steal an unbelievably large amount of gold bricks that reside in a house and under the watch of the police in Italy.

In the 1969 version, directed by Peter Collinson, Charlie Croker (Michael Caine) joins forces with Mr. Bridger (Noël Coward) to pull off the heist.

Thirty-four years later, F. Gary Gray directed the movie's remake. Charlie Croker is now played by Mark Wahlberg and John Bridger by Donald Sutherland.

Stella Bridger (Charlize Theron), John Bridger's daughter, becomes a key team member.

The two versions differ greatly in Croker's motivation for stealing the gold. Whereas Croker used to simply want money, the 2003 Croker plans the robbery to help Stella avenge her father's death by stealing from Steve Frazzelli (Edward Norton).

Frazzelli was previously a part of Croker's team, but he turned on them, took their gold and shot John Bridger. Thus, Croker's team begins targeting Frazzelli.

This intriguing plot change made me move to the edge of my seat as I felt the intensity and tension build when Stella focuses on trying to crack open the safe minutes before Frazzelli's men come crashing into the tunnel.

Despite differences, an iconic similarity between the two films is the sewer car chase. In the new film, the characters escape their enemy through the underground pass in three Mini Coopers. The cars drive so fast that when I blinked, they were already dispersed around on the screen.

In the 2003 film, Croker's team is also

much smaller. He only works with a well-rounded team of four individuals.

In the original movie, he has about 15 men. Theron does not disappoint in her portrayal of Stella, who contributes to a sassier, fiercer environment. In the 1969 movie, the men smoke and talk business during relaxed, non-action scenes, while in the 2003 version, Theron makes hilarious comebacks when her team members attempt to flirt with her.

Another member in Croker's team is John Bridger, who is killed near the beginning only in the 2003 version, a scene completely uncalled for. Even though he is present in only the first few minutes of the movie, I became attached to his character.

Furthermore, the 2003 version includes more comedic lines, which is always a plus. I can't enjoy a movie unless I laugh at least twice. Also, because the core team includes fewer people, I was able to



connect

with each character. In contrast, I felt inundated by the number of English men while watching the 1969 version.

The second version follows a creative plot line, brings in new characters and has twice as much action. The remake of "The Italian Job" is indisputably superior. ♦

>> THE bigidea

Pros
The new movie has less main characters, but makes better use of their role. Additionally, there is a strong female presence in the new movie.

Cons
The sudden death of John Bridger was unexpected since he had such a huge presence in the beginning of the film.

The slipper doesn't quite fit the new 'Cinderella'

BY Elizabeth Lee

"And they lived happily ever after." Though it's a cliché, I cherished this ending as a little girl.

When I watched Cinderella for the first time as an 8-year-old, it instantly became one of my all-time favorite movies. So when I heard last March that a new version of "Cinderella" starring Lily James was premiering, I knew I had to watch it.

But to my surprise, after watching the new movie, I found few major differences. The one major difference was that the 1950 film is an animated cartoon and the 2015 remake has live actors, but other than that, virtually nothing else significant has changed.

Except this: The 2015 film is worse. For instance, Cinderella's mice sidekicks Jaq and Gus, two of my favorite characters in the original, are hardly entertaining in live-action. They don't talk, the fairy godmother doesn't sing, and the grumpy fat cat, Lucifer, doesn't exist in the new "Cinderella" — all disappointments.

In fact, the fairy godmother seemed to be a completely new character. I was used to seeing a plump fairy godmother in a flowy blue cloak; instead, I was surprised by an angel-like princess. But this princess in a sparkly, white gown doesn't even say her famous line, "Bibbity-Bobbity-Boo." How could a proper "Cinderella" movie exclude this key line?

In general, the animated portrayals of these characters capture more emotion and personality. The actresses portraying Drizella (Holiday Grainger) and Anastasia (Sophie McShera) don't depict their characters as well. The ani-

mated characters, with their exaggerated facial expressions and their voices, were able to convey their sass in a much more entertaining way.

Still, the new film did have its merits. One example: The costumes were stunning. Cinderella's blue dress alone has 10,000 Swarovski crystals, more than 270 yards of fabric and 3 miles of hems — a dress truly fit for a princess.

Also, the new "Cinderella" is more realistic. By having Cinderella and the prince meet more than once in the remake, the filmmakers successfully show their love is made more practical and believable. We all know couples generally do not fall in love and marry after one meeting.

Lily James, who portrayed Cinderella, also speaks in a wonderful British accent throughout the remake. As a complete sucker for accents, this was definitely a plus for me.

While the live-action "Cinderella" made more sense in terms of portraying reality, it lacks originality and character. If I had to choose between the two, it'll surely be the 1950 version. Plus, who doesn't like watching a throwback Disney movie? ♦

>> THE bigidea

Pros
The new "Cinderella" has an exquisite wardrobe. The new "Cinderella" is more realistic.

Cons
The live action movie gets rid of many iconic characters and alters the personalities of those which remain in the movie, such as the fairy godmother.

'Footloose' boogies its way to a better remake

BY Julia Miller

A big smile spread across my face as thundering music began to blast from my living room speakers.

The critically acclaimed blockbuster "Footloose" has danced its way into American hearts and is seen as a timeless classic.

Starring Kevin Bacon and Lori Singer, the famous 1984 drama follows Chicago rebel Ren McCormick (Kevin Bacon) after his move from the small, highly religious Midwestern town of Bomont. McCormick soon finds out that the town forbids public dancing, which local residents liken to substance abuse. McCormick, appalled, battles the town reverend (John Lithgow) and his council to throw a senior prom.

Although the plot of film remains the same, the remake constantly refers to comical trends that occurred 35 years ago. Fads of the 1980s, like high-waisted jeans and big, frizzy hair, appear frequently in the film.

The 2011 film stars Julianne Hough and Kenny Wormald, who sport some iconic outfits from the 1984 original. Director Craig Brewer also includes the memorable songs from the original soundtrack, which is one of the most important aspects of "Footloose."

The new movie also makes better use of dramatic music by incorporating smooth guitars and electronic keyboards, into the more critical scenes of the movie. Even though there are still the famous groovy jams from the eighties in the 2011 soundtrack, directors of the new film

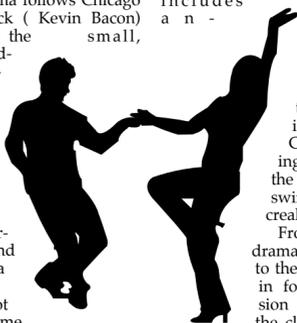
were able to make covers of the songs by popular artists today.

The music sets the mood, giving the scene a sense of direction. It contributes a sense of foreshadowing for what is about to happen. The original movie, however, has a lack of a theatrical presence to play along with it.

One of the more memorable scenes from the 1984 "Footloose" includes a n - ger-driven dance routine in an abandoned warehouse.

Brewer also used colors and shadows to provide a dramatic montage for McCormick's breathtaking moves throughout the warehouse's many swinging ropes and creaking pillars.

From the integration of dramatic music and colors, to the radical improvement in footage, the 2011 version of "Footloose" tops the classic 1984 cinema by a landslide. The brilliance of the remake will be quite hard to beat for any future directors who choose to take on this timeless story. ♦



>> THE bigidea

Pros
The new movie makes proper use of dramatic music and lighting in the key scenes of the film.

Cons
The new movie still refers to fads that occurred decades ago, such as hair and clothing trends.

A cappella trends in college, not Saratoga

BY Neil Rao & Shreya Tumu

Ever since the debut of the hit show "Glee" in 2009 and the blockbuster film "Pitch Perfect" in 2012, a cappella-style singing has been expanding. Music groups like "Pentatonix" and Oxford's University "Out of the Blue" are leading this trend through their original songs and unique music videos.

Schools like University of Pennsylvania and New York University have thriving a cappella programs where people of different cultures come together to add their own twist to the music. Senior Talia Clement thinks a cappella is popular because of its versatile styles and ability to be personalized through performance. Clement also said that each singer can apply his or her own style to any song because there is no beat.

Despite the increasing popularity of the genre, the school's a cappella club has struggled in recent years.

"The club just seemed to die out eventually [because] of lack of communication among club leaders," former member senior Sanam Mohan said. "The club hasn't had much participation since then."

Class of 2015 graduate and former a cappella club president Deepti Kannan attributed the club's struggles to a lack of commitment from the club's members as well as, admittedly, its leaders.

Because of these reasons, the club does not exist any more.

"Although we started out very enthusiastic about recruiting people, that momentum just didn't sustain throughout the year when each of us got busier and busier with other activities," Kannan said. "Just like with anything, if you want something to succeed, you need to prioritize it, and none of us did that."

The club is unlikely to start again, Mohan said.

Although the school struggled in succeeding with its a cappella club, many colleges and outside organizations have prospering a cappella groups.

Alumnus Nikhil Goel, now a sophomore at Stanford, said that there are 10 a cappella groups in his college. Goel is a member of Raagapella, an all-male group that performs South Asian and Western fusion music in over 10 languages. Recently all of Stanford's a cappella groups showcased their talents at the annual O-Show, in hopes of attracting "shower singers" to audition for their groups.

"Being on Raagapella is amazing," Goel said. "We've sung in Los Angeles, New York, New Haven and Arizona. We have a great time together at practices and whenever we meet up."

Raagapella takes anywhere from six to 10 hours per week, depending on whether there is a performance, Goel said.



Courtesy of STANFORD SANSKRITI

Stanford Raagapella at Rhythms 2015: Alumnus Nikhil Goel stands third from the left.

Despite the intense time commitment, Raagapella does not participate in competitions.

"There is too much focus on non-musical things such as choreography and popularity [in competitions], which aren't reasons why many of us joined the group," Goel said. "We like to focus on the music, making it as unique as possible."

Goel believes acapella will continue to garner a substantial participation in the future because of its defining quality: the lack of instruments means anybody can do it at almost any time.

"I just enjoy being a part of this continuous wall of sound whose constituent parts are comprised of the voices of people I love spending time with," Goel said. ♦

'The Visit': Creepy grandparent duo provides thrill

BY Oksana Trifonova & Kelly Xiao

When we sat down in the movie theater, we were at a loss as to where the "horror" aspect of "The Visit" would come from; the trailers that had so intrigued us were a blend of mystery and creepiness. Most featured a set of weird senile grandparents — particularly a grandma who crawls on all fours and scratches walls at night.

In "The Visit," two siblings Becca and Tyler, played by Olivia DeJonge and Ed Oxenbould, stay at their estranged grandparents' house for the first time. As their "visit" drags on, they become frightened by the old couple's creepy behavior.

We initially assumed that the grandma was possessed by a demon, or some cheesy horror movie cliché like that, but as the movie progressed,

we found that "The Visit" defied nearly all our expectations in a spectacularly non-ghostly manner.

It's rare for a horror movie to incorporate humorous elements, but director M. Night Shyamalan managed to do so without turning "The Visit" into a comedy. We found ourselves laughing and shrieking from one scene to the next, especially when one of the characters, Tyler, decided to say celebrity names instead of swearing. We couldn't help but snort when he screamed "Carrie Underwood" upon finding a shed filled with bloody adult diapers.

If anything, this movie lures people into a sense of comedic safety, only to thoroughly frighten them 30 seconds later, making at least one of us scream — it was Kelly.

That's not to say that "The Visit" isn't actually a horror movie; it still

contains all of the necessary elements of the traditional movie, only enhanced with extra components of mystery and humor.

The documentary filming style zooms in on the children's point of view.

The camera shakiness and sloppy self-recording limited the point of view to only one character. While irritating at first, this stylistic choice heightened our fear during the horror scenes, as it made the story seem more realistic and action-packed.

The plot of "The Visit" did not limit itself to only horror. It included a legitimate back story and a poignant family dynamic: the protagonists were trying to reconcile their mother with their grandparents after a past disagreement, while dealing with their hurt and anger at their father leaving them a few years ago.

The real gem of this movie is the twist at the end.

Throughout the entire film, the viewers are kept in the dark about the overarching mystery of what exactly is going on with the grandparents. When the answer comes, it's truly frightening in an unexpected way.

The opening scary scenes left matters to the viewers' imaginations, but when the real cause of the grandparents' strange behavior was revealed, we realized that the real explanation surpassed ours in how realistic it is. Needless to say, we walked out of the theater shaky and unnerved.

Not only does "The Visit" succeed as a horror movie, it also manages to incorporate the best of family drama, comedy and mystery. For that alone, we give "The Visit" our full approval and guarantee that it will give you your money's worth. ♦

Kanye West's presidency would ultimately ruin America

mayoncé



Maya Prasad

As the singers Taylor Swift, Nicki Minaj and Kendrick Lamar performed during the Video Music Awards (VMAs) on Aug. 30, I didn't expect anything out of the ordinary to occur. But everything changed when rapper Kanye West stepped onto the stage. I couldn't help but cringe in anticipation of him saying or doing something ridiculous.

I wasn't disappointed. As soon as his lips formed the words "I have decided in 2020 to run for president of the United States," I felt tempted to dive for my laptop and book an immediate flight to Canada.

This a presidential election determining the future of America, not some Homecoming court election.

West is unqualified to wield presi-

dential power, considering his penchant for drugs and alcohol as well as his tendency to let his emotions affect his actions.

His stance on self-confidence is always clear in lyrics such as "believe in your flyness and conquer your shyness." Of course, if there is one thing that we know, it is that Kanye truly and unconditionally loves Kanye, and lacks respect for basically anything else.

His iconic interruption of Taylor Swift's award speech in the 2009 VMAs is a perfect example: He grabbed Swift's microphone from her, and announced that he thought Beyoncé should have won her award, although he did politely assure Swift, "Imma let you finish." Various legendary retellings of the incident have occurred, but at the moment, all I can imagine is West interrupting the president of Iran to say: "Yo, Ali, imma let you finish, but the United

States has one of the best nuclear programs in the world." That wouldn't be great for foreign policy.

West's inability to filter his thoughts and actions could throw the U.S. into the center of international conflicts and form rifts with other nations. I'd bet that West could even do the impossible — beat Donald Trump at making the most ridiculous statements humankind has ever witnessed. Judging by his past statements, calling George Bush racist and comparing himself to a war veteran, the self-proclaimed musical "scholar" has a penchant for the outrageous and radical.

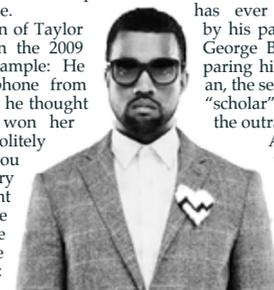
Additionally, if West were elected, Kim Kardashian would become the First Lady. This unfortunate marriage between American government and reality TV would even further warp

the media's portrayal of politics and might lead to unfortunate leaks of classified information.

Imagine the White House becoming a reality show with Kim Kardashian as the First Lady, Khloe Kardashian as the Secretary of State, and Caitlyn Jenner as the vice president. While I would watch it, just for entertainment purposes, it wouldn't bode well for the country itself.

Most importantly, West is unqualified for the presidency because he is unable to comprehend and analyze complex problems. He constantly complains about controversial topics like abortion, while never finding solutions to them. One wonders if he could even find a country like North Korea on a map, much less navigate the difficult negotiations with that benighted country.

When West continued to speak of his future presidential bid during the VMAs, I tried to imagine what a new life in Canada might be like. Contemplating a Donald Trump presidency is bad enough; a West presidency could be even worse. ♦



Kanye West

Seniors plan to pursue artistic majors

By Angela Lee & Katherine Zhou

Senior Katherine Liu, then 11 years old, passed by a row of fluttering flags and ambled into a lofty glass building. Liu vividly remembers her surreal experience at the United Nations headquarters. She had won second place in the U.N.'s Environment Program International Children's Painting Competition (UNEP) as well as a free trip to its headquarters in New York.



Liu

Liu has been passionate about art for as long as she can remember, but she only began to seriously invest time in art after winning the UNEP competition. She has been practicing art since elementary school and has participated in the school program throughout high school.

"[Since the UNEP competition], I realized that art can have a message," Liu said.

Additionally, she serves as president for ArtiCSN, a volunteer group that helps special needs children learn to draw. She is considering applying as an art major at Brown University, Yale and Carnegie Mellon.

"[Art is the] one thing I think I'm pretty good at, so I have a lot to show for it," Liu said. "To be able to impact many people [with art] — that's my goal."

Like Liu, senior Aditya Vempaty is contemplating an arts major, but in his case, he is considering film. He said he became interested in film after watching

the works of directors like George Lucas, Robert Zemeckis and Joss Whedon at a young age.

Vempaty's interest in film developed further when he joined the Media Arts Program (MAP) during his sophomore year.

"Before joining MAP, I'd always been a strong writer and creative thinker," Vempaty said. "My peers and teachers recognized that I had a talent for film, which I discovered through MAP projects."

After the completion of his first film project, Vempaty said he felt proud of his product because he had put a lot of effort and creativity into it.

"My first film project was about a musician who lives in a dystopian world where entertainment and intellectual stimulation are banned," Vempaty said, "and has to elicit this society to appreciate the arts and stand up to an oppressive leader."

He said that the moment his teachers and peers recognized his talent, his life changed.

"I'd never really thought I was good at anything or a talented individual in any way," Vempaty said. "I instantly recognized film was something that was of genuine interest to me and made me feel compelled to keep doing it."

Vempaty's experience with film include producing Saratoga High TEDx's final video and serving on MAP's leadership team. Vempaty also interned at Lucasfilm and Warner Brothers Inter-



Courtesy of KATHERINE LIU

Above is part of senior Katherine Liu's oil painting, which is titled "The Classroom."

active this past summer in San Francisco, which gave him a glimpse into the stresses and rewards of a film career.

At Warner Brothers, he worked in a team that explored experimental media, specifically design of mobile games. The group's mission was to come up with a strong narrative for the game they were designing. The project required him to experiment with new technical skills and software like Final Draft, Maya and Photoshop.

Thanks to his experiences at the internship and in the MAP program, Vempaty has rooted his passion for filmmaking. He will be applying to the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts and Dodge

College of Film and Media Arts, hoping to pursue a major in film production or screenwriting.

His parents have also been understanding and supportive of his creative endeavors.

"I'm Indian, so [people expect me] to pursue a STEM major," Vempaty said. "I've received a lot of backlash from relatives who warn me of the dangers of 'deviating from the path,' to what they perceive is success."

But Vempaty said as he showed more interest and commitment in film, his parents started to support him more.

"They realized that I was serious about it," Vempaty said. "They stand behind me now, and are content with me doing what I love." ♦

THE FACES BEHIND THE PLANNER ART

GRAPHIC BY KATHERINE ZHOU



Stephanie Law, senior

Q: What was the general idea behind this picture?

A: The funny thing is I [was] actually not very clear [on] what I was trying to portray, but subconsciously, it made sense to me. In my drawing, the veins of one hand sprout through the skin as roots reaching toward the hand reaching back. Sometimes, I end up interpreting it differently each time I look at it. But basically, I wanted to show how human connection was a sort of a "tree of life."

Q: Where did your interest in art come from?

A: I got interested in art because of my older sister, [class of 2005 alumna] Sophia Law. Ever since I was little, I remember going with my mom to drop off my sister to art class, and she would bring home what I thought were amazing pieces of art. I wanted to draw amazing pictures like she did. I started taking art lessons when I was about 6 years old; since high school started, I've been taking art classes at the school.

Q: What kind of qualities does being an artist give you?

A: Obviously, Saratoga High is very focused on STEM subjects now, and I'm glad that I have something I can do that makes me "smart" in a different way. I feel like art does require a sort of intelligence that is overlooked by a lot of people. Being an artist also makes me stand out of the crowd. It [has] made me more detail-oriented and more skilled when doing projects that requires a more controlled set of hands.

Nafisa Hussain, sophomore

Q: How did you make the picture and what's special about it?

A: I thought creating this was pretty hard because I had to sketch it out and then transfer it to a larger sheet, which made it difficult to keep everything in proportion. I also had to use crayon, which wasn't easy to blend. It includes a lot of different techniques, including shading and blending for the background, and using a knife to create different effects and textures on the scales and back of the fish.

Q: Why do you like drawing?

A: I think drawing is calming and soothing, and it gets whatever is on your mind on [to the] paper. It's kind of like a stress reliever, so whenever I take a break from doing homework or studying for tests, I just start doodling. I also really like that there are so many different kinds of mediums to mix and work together with. Something that's really important to me is that there are never any mistakes in art. When you mess up, you can always turn it into something else.

Q: Where did your interest in art come from?

A: I became interested in art because my mom did art too, and I wanted to follow her. She didn't teach me, but I liked to draw alongside her. I sort of picked up art on my own when I started looking up pictures on Google and tried to copy them with pencil. Then in third grade, I joined an art class just to learn other mediums like watercolor and acrylic.

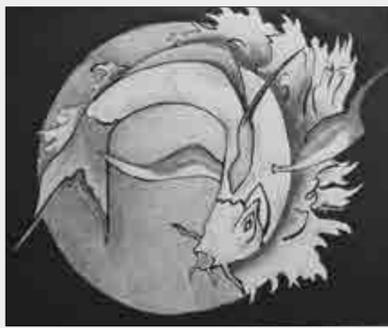
Q: Why aren't you taking art anymore?

A: My other two electives are AP Computer Science and Spanish 2. If I had space for a third elective, I would have taken art.



Courtesy of STEPHANIE LAW

This picture was drawn by senior Stephanie Law, currently in Art 4 Honors. This is an oil pastel painting that was made last year second semester when she took Art 3 with teacher Diana Vanry. This was part of a "tree of life" assignment, where all students had to depict what the "tree of life" meant to them by using symbols thought of by themselves or inspired by different cultures.



FALCON // DEEPTHI SAMPATHKUMAR

The picture above was drawn by sophomore Nafisa Hussain during second semester last year. She is not taking an art elective at the moment, but was in Art 1 last year. This piece of artwork includes different media such as watercolor, crayon and ink.

— reporting by Vivien Zheng

October 16, 2015

MOHNIKE >>

continued from pg. 1

who donned corduroy overalls have long graduated and now have their own kids — Mohnike said that the ingrained aspects of the Saratoga High community have remained the same.

"The population demographics have changed and the college pressures have intensified, but the community loved and still loves SHS," Mohnike said.

When asked about the aspect of the school that has kept her here for 25 years, Mohnike responded that "of course, it's the students" without hesitation.

"The energy and individualism of the students keep me young at heart," Mohnike said. "A quick trip somewhere outside of Saratoga always reminds me that we work in a beautiful, supportive and intellectually stimulating place."

Twenty-two years of classroom legacy

Although initially hired as a journalism and English teacher in 1991, Mohnike taught humanities courses during her first years, including every level of English except the AP English courses.

When she first arrived, the school impressed her as a place where students

learn "not only how to read, but also how to read between the lines" and understand the text on a deeper level.

Mohnike said she was warmly welcomed by the teaching staff, and she often discussed teaching strategies with former English department chair Genevieve Palace, longtime English teacher Catherine Head and others in the department.

In addition, many of the school's founding individuals such as Benny Pierce, former P.E. teacher and football coach, were still on campus when Mohnike arrived.

"[When I first started,] the school was old, but not that old, in that the peo-

ple who founded the school were still around," Mohnike said. "I really felt like I was connected to something that was building tradition but also [already] had tradition."

When current journalism adviser Mike Tyler was hired in 1996, Mohnike transitioned to teaching English full time. During her time in room 002, Mohnike taught drama teacher Sarah Thermond, guidance counselors Eileen Allen and Alinna Satake, music teacher Jonathan Pwu, attendance secretary Mandy Armes and many other current staff members.

Mohnike said she became so connected with her students that they seemed "like [her] own kids." One of Thermond's favorite memories from high school occurred when the students in Mohnike's English 11 Honors class tried Hester Prynne from Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter" in a mock court hearing.

Thermond said she always arrived to the lively classroom wondering what Mohnike "had up her sleeve" for the day's lesson.

According to Thermond, Mohnike always managed to "rein [her students] in and get students to speak up without making [the atmosphere] awkward," a skill Thermond now aspires to achieve as an English teacher.

Even after Mohnike assumed an administrative role at Saratoga High, she still valued teaching as the "highest calling." To this day, Mohnike still establishes the same student connections that she treasured when she gets the "lucky chance" to talk to students that approach her.

Transitioning to assistant principal

A day in the life of an assistant principal starts early when the occasional teacher, stuck in traffic, leaves students standing idly outside their empty classrooms. Mohnike often steps in for these teachers before conquering a daily downpour of meetings, parent phone

"The energy and individualism of the students keeps me young at heart." assistant principal Kerry Mohnike



FALCON // JADE BISHT

Assistant principal Kerry Mohnike delivers a speech introducing attendance secretary Mandy Armes during a Speak Up for Change assembly in 2014.

calls, classroom visits and student events.

Mohnike assimilated to this hectic schedule in 2012 when she was promoted to the role of assistant principal. Aligning with the work of her predecessor, former assistant principal Karen Hyde, Mohnike took over the role of activities director in addition to overseeing the special education department.

As activities director, Mohnike applied her approach of "letting students make events and activities their own" to a wide spectrum of student activities. From co-founding the MAP program with History teacher Mike Davey in 2009, to supervising the first Speak up for Change week in 2013, to initiating the Facebook photography page "Humans of Saratoga High" in 2014, Mohnike was and still is involved in programs on every corner of campus.

When the school secured funding to hire Spanish teacher Rebeca Marshall as the full-time activities director in 2014, Mohnike was able to focus her efforts on other parts of the school, including planning the "complex puzzle" of the school's current and future goals with her fellow administrators.

The diversity of her job often keeps Mohnike at school long into the evening. Nevertheless, Mohnike said she loves every workday. From sports events to problem-solving with parents and stu-

dents, her work keeps her on her toes.

"If I didn't love [working with] young people and school, this would be horrible, right?" said Mohnike, chuckling.

Mohnike said she will never forget the 25 classes of students she has watched grow up and become "professionals in their own field." From attending countless drama performances by 2012 alumna Jay Lee to hearing band members such as 2015 alumna Joonwon Lee play clarinet, Mohnike said she cherishes opportunities to see students achieve "not only academically, but with extracurricular activities at a high level."

For Mohnike, going to student performances is similar to "watching professionals do their thing," but she says getting to "do it for free, and see kids do great things all day long" is the highlight of her days.

Mohnike's 25 years at the school have been an inspiring ride for teachers and students alike: from fostering school spirit to planting the roots of MAP program, Mohnike has left a permanent mark on the school's culture. Her signature orange hair, square glasses and cherished legacy will roam Saratoga High's halls for many years in the future.

"I'm not going anywhere," Mohnike said. "If you ever have the chance to float in and out of classrooms to see what a stellar education the students are receiving, you'd never want to leave." ♦

ACT increases in popularity

By Miles Albert & Claire Rhee

High school students have long favored the SAT college entrance exam for its lack of a science section and focus on literature, according to the New York Times. But in recent years, a different standardized test has won the attention of many college-bound students.

The number of students who took the ACT exceeded the number of those who took the SAT for the first time in 2012, by a margin of 1,500 students, according to a story in the Washington Post.

At the same time, College Board is redesigning the SAT to align with the new Common Core standards. The new test will be administered starting in March 2016.

The revised SAT will be scored out of 1,600 points. The essay is now optional, in which students will be required to analyze documents, compared to using evidence from their own opinions and logic.

Various changes in the new

SAT can be advantageous for students. For example, they will not penalize students for guessing, whereas before, students lost an additional one-fourth of a point for guessing incorrectly. The number of answer choices is also now four instead of five.

Still, not all students are excited about the change.

"I don't think it's a good idea to be the guinea pigs for the new SAT," junior Anna Zhou said. "We're the first people to try it out."

This thinking has discouraged many students from waiting to try the new SAT. Many have been trying to take the current version of the SAT to avoid any surprises.

"I am feeling slightly overwhelmed since it's changing, so I'm put under pressure to do well on my first few tries [on the current SAT]," junior Samana Shah said.

While students like Shah are studying for the October, November and January SAT exams, others, like junior Kai Donez, are choosing to wait to take the redesigned SAT.

"I'm feeling fine about [the change,] and I do feel somewhat prepared because the College Board, in conjunction with Khan Academy, has released some prep for it," Donez said.

Even with the remarking of the SAT, the ACT remains a popular option.

"It seems to have a more solid and organized format than the SAT," said sophomore Mya Pai, who is planning to take the ACT next year.

The FLEX College Prep, one of many local standardized testing tutoring businesses, advises that students should avoid the new SAT because of the lack of preparation curriculum. FLEX said that the current preparation materials only give "a cursory sense of what the test will be like."

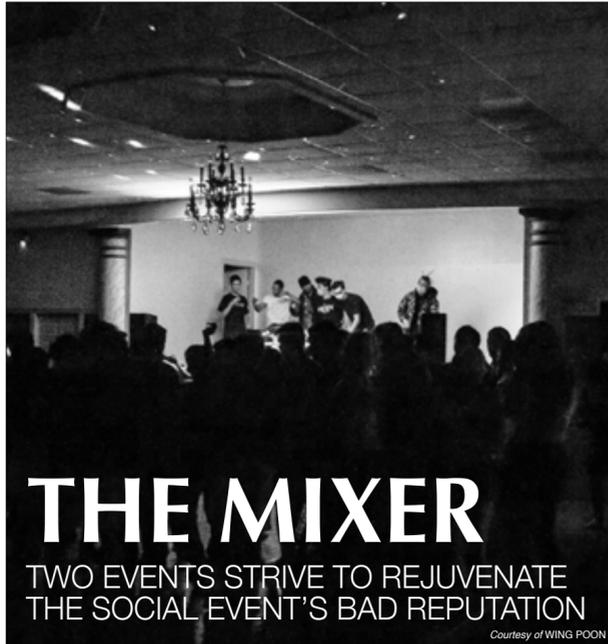
Despite the apparently beneficial changes made in the new SAT, for now, the shortage in preparation material gives him a strong reason to avoid it.

"I can know what to expect much better with [the ACT] than I would with the SAT," Pai said. ♦

NEW SAT Full Score: 1600	CURRENT SAT Full Score: 2400	ACT Full Score: 36
<p>3.0 HRS mandatory</p> <p>SECTION: READING & LANG. 65 MIN. 25 QUESTIONS WRITING 55 MIN. 1 SHORT CHOICE, 10 MULT. CHOICE MATH 55 MIN. 20 MULT. CHOICE, 10 GRID-IN</p>	<p>3.8 HRS mandatory</p> <p>SECTION: READING 65 MIN. 20 MULT. CHOICE SCIENCE 65 MIN. 20 MULT. CHOICE MATH 65 MIN. 20 MULT. CHOICE, 10 GRID-IN ENGLISH 55 MIN. 10 MULT. CHOICE, 10 GRID-IN</p>	<p>2.9 HRS mandatory</p> <p>SECTION: ENGLISH 45 MIN. 75 SS & RE. 10 MULT. CHOICE MATH 45 MIN. 20 MULT. CHOICE, 10 GRID-IN SCIENCE 45 MIN. 10 MULT. CHOICE, 10 GRID-IN & RES</p>
<p>NEW SAT IS LESS VOCABULARY BASED THAN THE CURRENT SAT</p> <p>NEW SAT HAS 2 MATH SECTIONS: 1 WITH A CALCULATOR AND 1 WITHOUT</p> <p>CRITICAL READING SECTION IS COMBINED WITH THE ENGLISH SECTION, REDUCING HIGHEST SCORE TO 800</p> <p>LESS STUDY MATERIAL THAN CURRENT SAT</p>	<p>CURRENT SAT HAS A MANDATORY ESSAY</p> <p>CURRENT SAT'S ENGLISH SECTIONS ARE HEAVILY BASED ON VOCABULARY</p> <p>BROKEN DOWN INTO 10 SHORT SECTIONS-ALTERNATES BETWEEN DIFFERENT SUBJECTS</p> <p>QUESTION PENALTY—0.25 FOR EVERY QUESTION ANSWERED INCORRECTLY</p>	<p>ACT HAS A SCIENCE SECTION-REQUIRES THE ABILITY TO READ GRAPHS & CHARTS</p> <p>LITTLE TIME AVAILABLE TO COMPLETE SECTIONS</p> <p>QUESTIONS ARE MORE STRAIGHTFORWARD AS COMPARED TO THE SAT</p> <p>ENGLISH SECTION IS MORE GRAMMAR BASED COMPARED TO THE SAT</p>
<p>the new SAT does not penalize for guessing</p>	<p>the current SAT does penalize for guessing</p>	<p>the ACT does not penalize for guessing</p>

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GRAPHIC BY ERIC SEZE



THE MIXER

TWO EVENTS STRIVE TO REJUVENATE THE SOCIAL EVENT'S BAD REPUTATION

Courtesy of WING POON

Students crowd around the performers at the Function Junction R-ixer on Aug. 21.

BY Angela Lee & Shreya Tumu

Upbeat electronic music pulses through a dimly lit room with flashing neon lights. Teenagers dance and scream, but the music drowns out their voices. Hundreds of students from different schools mingle with one another. This is the atmosphere at a typical mixer, a type of music-based party and social event designed to unite high school students at rentable event venues, such as community centers. Hosts often use social media to promote their own events, such as using Facebook's event feature and inviting their Facebook friends. According to senior Ai Marie Asai, mixers help friends from different neighborhoods bond. "You dress up and get ready together or hang out before [the mixer,] so you get close with people you want to," Asai said. However, mixers have sometimes

earned a bad reputation because of the frequent cases of both alcohol and drug abuse, Asai said. For example, at a Winter Beats mixer held last Dec. 4, 800 people crowded into the SFV Lodge in Mountain View, a venue designed for 200. During the event, an attendee overdosed on ecstasy and fainted. "Some girl passed out on Molly (a slang term for the drug)," said junior Julius Woods, who went to the event. "I think her heartbeat stopped, and it felt like she was out for 10 minutes." The incident at Winter Beats is an example of the poor conduct that occurs during mixers, Woods said. Although alcohol and drugs were officially banned, many partygoers went to the event already high or drunk, he said. Because mixers prohibit alcohol and drugs, most attendees indulge in alcohol and drugs before going. After the student collapsed from drug overdose, the

event closed down. After hearing about the Winter Beats incident, senior Ishan Sharma from Cupertino High and senior Raaghav Minocha from Lynbrook High tried to emphasize safety at a new event they hosted, Summer Vibes. They wanted their mixer to be a place where "students can go to be high school [kids] and have fun without the supervision of parents or school principals," Sharma said. Sharma and Minocha spent \$1,000 to hire security guards in hopes of preventing illegal activities. Numerous San Jose Police officers patrolled the Chinese Performing Artists of America Arts Center during the Aug. 8 event. The investment paid off because no known illicit incidents occurred, Sharma said. One officer called it the "safest event he's ever hosted," and many of the attendees agreed.

Junior Caroline Li, who went to the Summer Vibes mixer, recalled that security searched the guests for illegal objects and checked student IDs. Li said she enjoyed this mixer because she felt it was "much safer than other mixers." Although ticket sales were low for the Summer Vibes mixer, and the duo only earned only \$300, Sharma and Minocha achieved their goal of "establishing a brand and a dependable service for high schoolers to recognize next time they're looking for a night to unwind and dance."

The hosts said the Summer Vibes mixer was a trouble-free event that contradicted the stereotype of drug-and alcohol-infested mixers, which the hosts hoped could set a new precedent. More recently, another Cupertino stu-

performers playing electronic dance music.

"I've seen a surge in popularity for raves," Poon said. "It was logical for me to promote this event with a rave feel. We brought in eight different performers to create an atmosphere more appreciative of their music."

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute student Krish Chadhani, part of the music duo LUVKUSH that performed at the R-ixer, recalled it as a fun relaxing night, where students could take a break from their stresses.

"We performed four songs for the crowd," Chadhani said. "It was a great night. The only drawback was all the back-to-school dances on the same day, which took away from our attendance." A concern of the R-ixer was the wide age range and safety.

"I can tell you that the host was delegating security jobs to high school students, and they had very few peace officers," Sharma said of the event. "And of course, college students are a recipe for disaster."

Chadhani, however, remembered the R-ixer as an event with few problems.

"There was no trouble at the dance," Chadhani said.

According to Chadhani, the host invited college students to the event because Chadhani himself and his brother are college students, and their friends wanted to attend and watch them perform.

Despite doubts about the event, the R-ixer turned out to be a great success, Chadhani said.

"The idea for this event was to make it like a rave dance, mixer and concert, and it was exactly that," Chadhani said.

Hosts and attendees said both the Summer Vibes Mixer and R-ixer went smoothly, unlike the Winter Beats Mixer.

With their recent successes, hosts like Sharma, Minocha and Poon hope the reputation of mixers is changing.

"I plan on improving our events to make Function Junction Events a respected brand," Poon said. "We plan on another event in December with all the bugs worked out." Asai says that mixers have allowed her to meet people from different schools and get closer to her Saratoga High friends.

"It's like when you go to [the] Kickoff Dance or if you're new to school," said Asai. "It's a fun experience." ♦

It's like when you go to [the] Kickoff Dance or if you're new to school. It's a fun experience.



senior Ai Marie Asai

dent, senior Wing Poon, hosted his own R-ixer on Aug. 21. A R-ixer, Poon said, is a mixer with elements of a rave — a large dance party featuring performances by DJs and live

different schools and get closer to her Saratoga High friends. "It's like when you go to [the] Kickoff Dance or if you're new to school," said Asai. "It's a fun experience." ♦

Students opt for summer prep to preview classes

BY Jay Kim & Katherine Zhou

Each spring, hundreds of students confidently pack their schedules with numerous AP and Honors classes in the following year. For many of the students, the idea of spending time at a beach or on vacation during the summer is just a dream. Instead, they're in classrooms to prepare for difficult classes in the coming year. These students take summer courses at places such as the Harker School, Archbishop Mitty High School and Ivy-Max, or they opt to hire private tutors. Among those taking this rigorous academic path this past summer was sophomore Ayush Aggarwal, who studied for Chemistry Honors with a private tutor. This trend of taking class material in advance is fairly common, in a recent poll conducted by the Falcon, 50 percent of students took summer courses in preparation for Chemistry Honors alone.

2015 alumnus Anshul Aggarwal, had prepared for Chemistry Honors over the summer as well. Ayush thinks some AP and Honors teachers tend to go over the material faster during the school year because of the number of students who are already familiar with the material. But he said that students who are prepared can "easily manage the load." On the other hand, PJ Yim, who is teaching Trigonometry/Pre-Calculus Honors (TPCH) and AP Calculus BC this year, said that students don't necessarily benefit from preparing with tutors or teachers outside of school, who often teach a different curriculum. Yim said that he does not see a significant correlation of students doing better during the school year by taking classes over the summer. "I can see some cases where [taking summer classes] could be helpful," Yim said, "but having that habit is not good for you because you will have to learn how to study by yourself." Added Yim: "If you need help in

Honors, you shouldn't be in [the class]," Yim said. "I think Honors [classes] should be a place where students push the boundaries and learn. If you're spending hours just to keep up, the course is not right for you." Some students said that their summer courses have not effectively prepared them for the school year. Sophomore Chris Lee, who previewed Chemistry Honors and TPCB last summer, found that the classes were not as helpful as he had hoped. Though Lee said his summer Chem-

istry class has helped him become familiar with the material beforehand, he thinks that the brief overview of Trigonometry he received has not been as beneficial. This year, the teachers changed the course pacing so that students would learn Pre-Calculus in the first semester and Trigonometry in the second. Lee also felt that his parents' encouragement was the main reason he enrolled in these summer courses, and if he had a choice, he would not sign up for them. "Going into sophomore year," Lee said, "I think you should enjoy your summer as much as possible because in the next years, you will be really busy with the SAT. I think that people should be more focused on relaxing." ♦

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GRAPHIC BY MAYA PRASAD

BY Caitlyn Chen

When former Media Arts teacher Cathy Leather told her fourth-period Media Arts class to separate into groups one day last year, the students eagerly strayed from their assigned seats. According to senior Gerui Sheng, most of the white students congregated on one side of the room, while the Asians gathered on the other side.

Inside the classroom, there had never been any blatant racial tension, but it was obvious that given a choice, those of the same race chose — consciously or not — to stay together. And as often happens, Sheng said students had "self-segregated."

Sheng's observations about a racial divide in the community resembles those of 2014 alumnus Samuel Liu, now a sophomore at Harvard University. Liu wrote an article this past summer for Caixin Media Company Limited, a Beijing-based media group. The article was later published on Slate.com, even though Liu originally wrote it for Caixin and had "no idea" that his writing was being published on an American website.

In this article, Liu wrote that "the culture [at Saratoga High] had split soundlessly into two separate circles, each involved in its own activities and contemptuous of the other."

As of Sept. 30, the article had 5,200 shares on Facebook, as its racial topic has stirred conversation throughout the Bay Area.

In his article, Liu described those on either side of the divide as being contemptuous of each other. In a recent interview, though, he softened his perspective on the issue, qualifying what he meant. "I guess it's an antagonism of a different sort — apathy, a word I think may be the root of many issues in Saratoga," Liu said.

Responding to Liu's article, alumna Deepti Kannan, a 2015 graduate who now attends Stanford University, said

I know so many groups who have similar outlooks that have little to do with their ethnic background. alumna Anna Sabel

a racial divide is apparent at Saratoga High but is in no way "contemptuous."

"To some extent, that divide could be observed with a cursory glance around the quad," Kannan said. "You would see some Asians only hanging out with Asians and some whites only hanging out with whites."

The divide, she explained, can be explained by a basic principle of chemistry: People, like molecules, tend to stick to their own kind. In a school that's 55.6 percent Asian and 31.3

percent white as of 2013-2014, Kannan said that demographics don't define friend groups or classroom atmosphere. "Most kids at Saratoga are pretty accepting of who you are, regardless of ethnicity," Kannan said.

Similarly, class of 2015 alumna Anna Sabel attributed the racial divide not to

cultural backgrounds, but rather to academic and social mindsets.

"I know so many diverse groups of friends who have similar outlooks that have so little to do with their ethnic background," Sabel said.

Freshman Justin Chao said that parenting style is not analogous to race. Chao, whose mother is white and father is Asian, often finds himself in a mix of both races, both ethnically and socially. Chao "doesn't see much of a barrier" between races on campus, since he has friends of both races.

Perhaps the differences in opinion on the white-Asian divide are a result of personal choice, Chao said. Do students choose to let instinct push them toward people of the same race?

In order to bridge the instinctual racial gap, Liu said part of the answer is "starting the conversation." Liu commended SHS administrators and teachers for beginning to take a look at issues of race.

"Socializing with people unlike you is so necessary and beneficial in the real world that our primal discomfort really can't take precedence," Liu said. "What is natural isn't always what is right." ♦

Chinese speaker finds support in ELD classroom

Editor's note: All quotes are translated from Mandarin to English.

BY Caitlyn Chen

Sitting in an Algebra 2 classroom, sophomore Sida Ren turned over the paper with shaking hands. Flipping through the pages, he saw a disheartening word problem.

The words on the sheet stared back at him. He searched frantically for familiar words or some key phrases to help him get started, but all he saw was gibberish. "I couldn't understand anything," Ren said.

This past summer, Ren moved from Shenzhen, China, to Saratoga and has been trying to learn English ever since.

In his eighth grade year, Ren moved to Saratoga and attended Redwood Middle School for one semester. But because of VISA issues, he had to return to China. When Ren came back to Saratoga this summer, he realized that he had forgotten almost all the English he learned in eighth grade.

After the first Algebra 2 test of the semester, Ren left his classroom feeling defeated. At home, with his tutor by his side translating, the concepts were not difficult.

After all, he had already learned them at his previous school, Shen Da Fu Junior High School in Shenzhen. But in the classroom, he couldn't solve the same problems because of the language barrier.

Ren was equally dumbfounded when confronted with World History textbook readings.

"When I was in China, we studied World History for a whole year," Ren said. "But now that I have to learn it in

English, it's much more difficult."

For the most part, he knows the facts of World History from his classes in China, he said. But when asked to answer open-ended questions, and he doesn't know how to analyze the evidence. He was stumped in a subject he once felt confident in.

Somehow both his Algebra 2 and World History grades had become a reflection of his English ability.

"Most people only have to learn math or Chemistry or World History, but in addition to those subjects, I also have to learn [basic] English," Ren said. "It's twice as hard."

At the start of the school year, Ren was overwhelmed by both the amount of schoolwork he faced and the English he was expected to already know.

When he came home after school, he opened his textbooks, pulled up Google Translate and began translating each word from English to Chinese. After half an hour, he ended up with a butchered translation of a single paragraph.

Frustrated, he gave up and went to school the next morning without his homework completed. Each day, the homework piled on as Ren fell further and further behind.

"It's hard because everyone here grew up knowing English grammar and vocabulary," Ren said. "It's their instinct, but my instinct is Chinese."

Luckily, in his English Language Development (ELD) class, ELD and Chinese teacher Sara Tseng and his fellow classmates guide him through World History readings and complicated word problems. Overseeing his progress, Tseng said Ren tries "really hard," and she believes that if he continues to work hard, his English will improve.



FALCON // ARIEL LIU

Sophomore Sida Ren works on English homework for ELD class in fifth period on Oct. 9.

"[Ren's] always positive. He's optimistic," Tseng said. "He never gives up." During ELD class, Tseng said she encourages students to practice having conversations in English in hopes that they will be more able to communicate with their teachers. Despite this, Ren said he still finds it difficult to participate in class.

"I hardly raise my hand," Ren said. "I don't know how to make my thoughts into words. Instead of embarrassing myself, I just stay quiet."

Although Ren might be characterized as soft-spoken in his other classes, Tseng said that he's actually quite talkative.

"If you were to ask teachers on campus, most of them would say that these students don't talk much," Tseng said. "But when they walk into my classroom, they act differently."

According to Tseng, even though other teachers and students might not see it this way, in reality, the ELD students

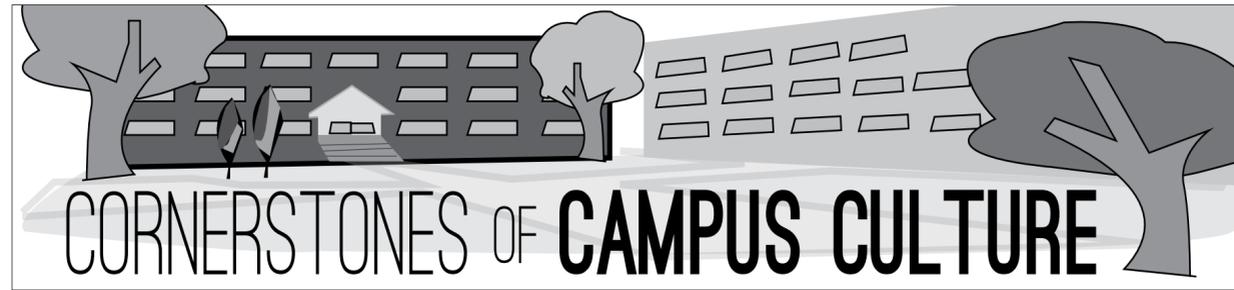
are sociable and act like any other high schooler on campus. Tseng said that they feel comfortable in her classroom, because they share the room with people in the same situation as they're in.

Out of his seven classes, ELD is where Ren said he feels the most comfortable. According to Ren, not only has the class helped him improve his English, but it has also allowed him to find a core group of friends.

"Because they are in the same situation as me, they are the only ones who understand me," Ren said. "[They] understand the difficulty in learning another language and the frustration that comes along with it."

Even though Ren finds himself in a difficult situation every day, he is confident that with the help of Tseng and his peers, he will improve.

"I know that there will come a day in the future when I can speak English fluently," Ren said. ♦



GRAPHIC BY KATHERINE ZHOU

ASB, Leadership strive for unity among students

By Miles Albert & Elizabeth Lee

By using social media and organizing school-wide events, this year's ASB and Leadership class are trying to improve the school's atmosphere and create a greater sense of unity.

To start, the ASB officers created the Saratoga High School 2015-2016 Facebook group to share news with all students and get student input. Last month, the ASB officers released a poll asking the students how they want to see ASB's funds spent. "We want to help better the school by using the funds for school improvements," said senior Aakash Thumaty, the ASB president. "In addition, we want to satisfy the students by listening directly to what they want."

In addition to allowing students to give their opinions, ASB vice president Nihar Agrawal said the Facebook group has also helped publicize school events such as the Senior Homecoming Barbecue fundraiser on Oct. 11.

ASB officers have also started posting meeting minutes on the Facebook group to promote transparency.

While ASB's focus this year is to get more student input, Leadership wants to create a more friendly student culture to promote school unity and re-

lieve student stress, said Ingrid Pan, one of the leaders of the group.

She added that breaking out of comfort zones and pursuing passions will be the driving messages in the annual Speak Up For Change Week, which is scheduled for Martin Luther King Jr. week in January.

"A problem [that the event will address] is not doing things because you love what you do, but because you're doing it for the grade or because of pressure," Pan said. "We hope to get students to find their passion."

Last year, at the Speak Up for Change assembly, students raised their hands to acknowledge similar struggles. Senior Nina Nelson, also head of Leadership, said that this year, the assembly will have a similar activity called "Challenge Day."

Nelson added that Leadership's overarching motto this year are "one team, one dream" and "strength in numbers."

These mottos are promoting the fact that students are not alone, she explained. According to Nelson, students are "caved in on their own academic goals" and that they do not know the similar challenges that others may face.

"Our goal is for students to not feel so alone and inwardly stressed," Nelson said. "We want to help people get through it together." ♦

Busy, busy all the time

MARSHBURN BALANCES TEACHING AND STUDENT EVENTS AS ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR

By Deepthi Sampathkumar & Roland Shen

Activities director and Spanish teacher Rebeca Marshburn waves at students as she drives down the hallway in a golf cart. She stops at her classroom, room 806, and heads to her desk. On this day, she's greeted by budget forms for the school-wide Second Harvest food drive.

Marshburn's job as the school's activities director revolves around working with ASB, the Leadership class, class officers, clubs and commissions.

Every school day, Marshburn wakes up at 5:30 a.m. to get herself and her three children ready for school, before she arrives to teach first-period Spanish.

She meets with Leadership students every Tuesday and Thursday at lunch; on Monday, she meets with ASB to discuss plans for the year.

Students involved in these activities see the contributions she makes to their success.

"We honestly wouldn't be able to do follow through with any of our ambitious plans without her guidance throughout the whole process," ASB treasurer Mitali Shanbhag said.

In total, Marshburn usually spends nearly nine hours



FALCON // KEVIN CHOW

Activities director and Spanish teacher Rebeca Marshburn emails class officers about Homecoming move-in details on Oct. 9.

at school most days before she heads home.

At the end of her day, she has her own homework to do as well. Marshburn is pursuing a second master's degree in education at Concordia University. Every night, she needs to keep up with her course content without sacrificing her contribution to Saratoga High.

"It is busy at times, but it's all about finding the right balance between everything I am involved with," Marshburn said. "Sometimes I need to tell myself to stop for the day and pick it up tomorrow."

Marshburn became activities director last year, prepared by her extensive involvement with nonprofit organizations.

In 2007, she and her husband raised \$20,000 for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. A few years later, she founded a nonprofit called Words for Smiles in her then-home of San Antonio, Texas, to provide computers for hospitalized pediatric oncology patients.

Although a large portion of her job involves activities, she still loves both teaching Spanish and working with student activities, and believes that doing both is the perfect balance for her.

"Working with the Leadership and ASB commissions has been really enjoyable and rewarding, and I look forward working with students in the years to come," Marshburn said. ♦

Administration promotes friendlier school atmosphere

By Neehar Thumaty

What does "Strength in Numbers" mean?

Most people see it as another catchphrase tagged onto the end of principal Paul Robinson's Week at a Glance emails. It's written like this: STRENGTH IN NUMBERS! — a sort of rallying cry before he concludes with "It's Great to be a Falcon."

"It can stand for achieving more as a team than as an individual," Robinson said. "If we have an event like Stop Hunger Now, 10 people can put together about 1,000 meals in an hour. It's all of us working together."

Championing this slogan, teachers and staff have been trying to create a more friendly and campus, a mission that is now in full swing.

Various programs and activities have been implemented. Among other efforts, the ad-

ministration has scheduled in-home parent-teacher conferences, teacher collaborations to reduce student stress and the annual Speak Up for Change Week in January.

According to assistant principal Kerry Mohnike, starting this year, a few teachers will go to students' houses to talk to their parents about their children's personal successes.

Robinson wrote in his weekly newsletter during conferences, teacher pairs will visit a family "for brief interviews around the educational journeys of our parents and how that affects and guides families as their students navigate the high school years."

Parents can volunteer to participate in these conferences, and the administration hopes

these conferences will help the staff learn more about students' lives to make their time at school easier.

To further engage teachers

“When we make these connections, we build a net for each other.”

assistant principal Kerry Mohnike

in bettering the school environment, Mohnike said that the school has been using its staff development and collaboration time to address the issue of student stress.

For example, the administra-

tion has brought in workshops called Five Dimensions and Engaged Teaching, which instruct teachers on how to create an interactive classroom. These workshops are sponsored by Passage Works, a nonprofit that aims to provide teachers "with innovative practices and principles that integrate social, emotional and academic learning."

According to Mohnike, the lessons from these workshops will facilitate better communication between students and staff to create a more comfortable learning environment.

The administration also hopes to tackle student stress with Speak Up for Change Week.

Mohnike was one of the organizers of last year's Speak Up for Change Week, which had

the goal of making the school atmosphere more comfortable for all students. Last year, ASB officers and members of the Leadership class worked to schedule a school-wide carnival and find motivational speakers for the assembly.

Mohnike also said the administration has planned small-scale activities such as the Falcon Feather Initiative, which is already in action. Students who do a positive act are given a sticker that has a falcon's feather on it.

Mohnike hopes this program will promote positive acts among students, she said, thus strengthening student-to-student relationships.

"When we make these connections, we build a net for each other, and the more connections we make, the stronger this net is and so then we can support each other," Mohnike said. ♦

>> TheStats

2nd place

Senior cross country runner Stephen Law placed second in the Lynbrook meet on Sept. 29 with a time of 10:32 for the 2.1-mile race. "Since there are no big meets coming up, coach and I decided that it wouldn't hurt to give it my all," Law said. "I'm pretty excited for this season and what I can do at some really big races."

203 yards

Senior wide receiver Vinny Faylor had 203 receiving yards on 10 receptions in a 42-35 overtime loss to Palo Alto on Oct. 2. "I felt great about how I played," Faylor said. "Knowing I got the most yards for my team was an awesome feeling."

7 goals

Senior boys' water polo star Graham Schmelzer scored seven goals in the 16-12 victory against Harker on Oct. 8. "This was a huge victory against one of the top teams in our league," Schmelzer said. "Although we didn't play our best, we ended up on top, and that's what matters."

WHO'S HOT

Girls' tennis

The Falcons have suffered only one loss to Monta Vista in the De Anza League as the girls seek to claim their third consecutive league championship. "We've been successful because the team is really close and works together," senior No. 1 singles player Shaya Nikfar said. "We can win league and make another run into CCS."

WHO'S NOT

Girls' water polo

The team currently has a league record of 1-5. "It was a little hard starting the season with a pretty new group of girls, but we've come a long way and things are really looking good," junior Kanika Vora said.

>> TheRANKINGS

- 1 ^ Boys' Water Polo (8-0)
- 2 ^ Field Hockey (9-1-1)
- 3 v Girls' Tennis (6-1)
- 4 = Girls' Volleyball (9-9)
- 5 v Girls' Golf (4-4)
- 6 = Football (1-4)
- 7 = Girls' Water Polo (1-6)

Boales finds freedom in water

SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMER BREAKS BARRIERS

By Charin Park

One of sophomore Raquel Boales' earliest memories is of sitting in a wheelchair as she was rolled into her kindergarten classroom. She was encased in an enormous, hot-pink body cast. Her left arm hung limp at her shoulder. She was 5.

Raquel was born with Erb's palsy, a brachial plexus injury caused by damage to the nerves and tissue in her left shoulder. Usually a result of birth trauma, the condition means weakness and loss of motion in the affected arm or shoulder.

Around one to two infants are diagnosed with it for every 1,000 live births, but over half recover in a couple months, either naturally, or through surgery and physical therapy. Raquel is among the remaining percent who suffer permanent damage from Erb's palsy.



Courtesy of RAQUEL BOALES

Sophomore Raquel Boales teaches disabled children to swim in a "try-it" session during her trip to Taipei, Taiwan, for a synchronized swimming exhibition last summer.

progressive cast four years later. But even after the bandages came off in 2009, her arm and shoulder were still vulnerable to permanent damage, so her doctor limited Raquel to water sports.

Discovering synchronized swimming

Raquel said the restrictions "sparked [her] will to try something [new]." So at age 9, Raquel and her mom spotted a flyer about "water ballet," or synchronized swimming, and Mrs. Boales made sure to enroll Raquel on a team.

Having practiced ballet a year before her surgery, Raquel was thrilled to start the new sport.

"Being the girly girl I was at the time, I practically died with excitement," Raquel said.

Her parents enrolled her into her first synchronized swim team, the San Jose Angelfish. When they talked to the coach about Raquel's Erb's palsy, they were surprised to find that the coach saw no barriers. The coach told Raquel to jump in the pool and "go for it."

Raquel was excited at the prospect of synchronized swimming, though the first couple of weeks were especially difficult. The palsy in her left arm made it difficult for her to stay on the surface and keep up with the team.

"I honestly hated [swimming] at first

— here I was, 9 years old and barely functioning as well as everyone else," said Raquel. "Girls would ask me about what [was] wrong with my arm, and trying to explain it over and over to people really became a hassle."

But despite the problems she ran into at first, Raquel says her parents continuously encouraged her to stick with it.

"People would think that's something you shouldn't do to your child when they're struggling, but for me, it worked perfectly," Raquel said. "Sure, I had my limitations, and they knew that, but they pushed me to try harder and be someone I would have never thought I would be today."

Now in her seventh season of synchronized swimming, Raquel says that she feels at home in the water.

"I feel like a different person; gravity isn't there to pull me down, and the water helps with that," Raquel said. "I have a full range of motion on both arms and shoulders, which is something I don't have outside of the water."

Raquel has come a long way from her first few weeks of synchro. As a member of the Santa Clara Aquamaids, Raquel is now nationally

>> BOALES on pg. 25

FIFA corruption disappoints soccer fans

By Jay Kim

Unlike the World Cups over the past century that have been held during the summer, the 2022 World Cup in Qatar will be held in the winter, since Qatar's extreme summer weather can reach up to 122 degrees Fahrenheit.

This rescheduling conflicts with the wintertime UEFA Champions League and Europa League, two of the biggest club soccer competitions, and all the domestic leagues — Italy's Serie A, Spain's La Liga, England's Premier League and more.

Scheduling the World Cup in the winter is a ridiculous idea. First of all, Sepp Blatter, the 79-year-old former president of FIFA who is facing possible criminal charges over corruption, chose to break the tradition of 85 years of summertime World Cups. Furthermore, it is inconvenient for fans all over the world, who will be at school and work during matches.

But this is just one more scandal among FIFA's well-established history of countless questionable activities.

FIFA has long had a poor reputation. When South Africa was selected to host

the World Cup over Egypt and Morocco in 2004, the media began questioning the process of selecting host countries. Later, it was revealed that large-scale bribery had occurred, and some FIFA officials came out vastly richer.

During the process of proving the corruption of this organization, it was revealed that FIFA, a "non-profit organization," has over a billion dollars in its bank.

Skepticism of FIFA's legitimacy peaked when the organization announced that Qatar would host the 2022 World Cup. Qatar's lack of infrastructure and its atrocious treatment of immigrant workers who are building the structures make it completely unfit to host the World Cup. Beyond that, the World Cup final will be played in a city that is not even built yet.

According to the International Trade Union Confederation, about 4,000 workers will die from construction-related accidents and exhaustion before the event even begins.

But this issue regarding human rights is only a portion of a bigger corruption of the organization. FIFA has earned approximately \$5.7 billion in the last four

years. Meanwhile, Blatter has cunningly evaded police investigation for over a decade, but he has lost the respect of fans across the globe when the organization's lobbying processes regarding the World Cup bid have come to light. As a result, numerous FIFA officials and sponsors have been insisting on Blatter's resignation for years.

This massive problem involves almost every part of FIFA — several officials have resigned or been arrested, and FIFA's secretary general Jérôme Valcke has been accused of selling the World Cup tickets on the black market for exorbitant markups as well as embezzlement.

Blatter did eventually resign from his position of the head of the organization. However, with Blatter continuously backtracking on previous statements, it's adding confusion in the soccer community.

If Blatter and his fellow officials have any desire to uphold the decency of FIFA, they should all turn over the organization to new leadership. Until FIFA is completely reorganized with morally upright officials, the corruption will only escalate and bring shame to "the beautiful game." ♦

CREW

Junior finds a niche in Los Gatos Rowing Club

by Harshini Ramaswamy & Navin Tiwary

A year ago, junior Hannah Payne struggled to find an extracurricular activity she could participate in. She had already tried doing musical theater, playing the guitar and singing. Stage fright forced her to quit, and eventually, she found a different direction thanks to a friend who introduced her to the sport of rowing. It was a decision that changed her life.

Rowing, a demanding sport otherwise known as crew, can be done competitively or recreationally. The sport of rowing was first recognized in 1430 B.C. in Egypt, finally reaching the U.S. in 1852, when the first competition was held between Harvard University and Yale University. Since then, rowing has become popular in the Bay Area.

Payne, now a member of the Los Gatos Rowing Club, has been training at the Lexington Reservoir in Los Gatos for more than a year. Payne and her teammates practice for five to six days a week, working two and a half hours on weekdays and three and a half hours on weekends.

"Practice is really difficult and physically demanding," Payne said. "I'm [always] tired or sore during the week. The most difficult parts of rowing is the conditioning, which includes working out on the erg machines and requires all the muscles in your body."

A typical practice includes CrossFit-like workouts, combinations of different types of training including cardio or ab workouts. For example, the team runs long distances to build endurance and leg muscles, uses ergometer machines that simulate rowing and rows in the reservoir doing drills.

Competitions, also known as regattas, occur a couple of times a month and last anywhere from one to three days. Races are often held out of town and sometimes outside of the state, meaning the team travels to places like Boston, San Diego, Long Beach and Sacramento. According to Payne, traveling to tournaments is enjoyable but tiring. It also provides the perfect opportunity for team bonding and a chance to compete with rowers from all over. There are two different race lengths, the 5,000 meter, which is raced in the fall, and the 2,000 meter, which is raced in the spring.

"Winning is one of the best feelings in the world," said Payne. "Last year my boat made finals at regionals in Sacramento. In the past my club has frequently placed at nationals and has gained a good reputation for performing well at races."

Payne and her teammates normally race in the "eight," an eight-person boat with one captain, or coxswain, who steers the boat.

"Rowers don't really have positions or roles, besides the coxswain," Payne



Courtesy of HANNAH PAYNE

Junior Hannah Payne and her team paddle at a race in Rancho Cordova, Sacramento.

said. "We all are expected to put in the same amount of time, work and dedication."

To keep the boat balanced, rowers must work together and be in sync. Harmony and respect between rowers and coxswains is the key to victory, she said.

The Los Gatos club Payne belongs to competes in the southwest region, one of the top two areas in the nation for junior rowing. The club faces many competitors boasting recent national championships.

Payne is now starting to think about doing the sport in college. Most colleges in the U.S. have close to 20 positions among their teams that need to be

filled. Despite the tough requirements needed to make a college crew team, Payne hopes she can find a spot.

"Rowers are supposed to be tall, and I'm pretty short, which definitely increases the difficulty," said Payne. She said she is looking at the University of Washington and San Diego for their strong programs.

As well as being a brutally competitive and fun sport that pushes people past their limits, rowing also affects the athletes' whole lives.

"Rowing has changed me a lot as a person," Payne said. "I've learned about discipline and fitness and working together as a team, an important skill needed for life." ♦



Yes: It's harder than you think

Ok-sans



Oksana Trifonova

When people watch golf on TV, they usually only notice the part where a bunch of overweight, middle-aged men stand around watching a white ball roll toward a hole in the ground. The ball goes in, and there are congratulatory back slaps all around.

What seems to be a lazy, easy-to-play sport is actually the hardest sport I've ever played.

My misconceptions of golf as an easy sport withered right before my eyes when, on the first day of my freshman year tryouts for the school team, I swung at a ball and completely missed. I tried again. And again. And again. Every time, the thin club's face would just skim by the surface of the ball.

Finally, I managed to touch only the corner, sending the tiny sphere running across the ground. I was beaten by the ball.

To improve, I decided to start one-on-one lessons.

Apparently, there's a whole science to hitting the ball. Each club has a different angle and different amount of "roughness" on its face. The way you hold the club has to hit both the ball and the ground simultaneously, never

in front, which is called "chanking" and won't get the ball very far, or only hitting the ball on the edge of its surface, which is called "slicing."

The ball may go straight up into the air, causing humiliation and awkward laughs all around. Just a few centimeters can be the difference between a perfect drive and a ground-shot.

While golf isn't associated with the typical athletic qualities necessary to succeed in many other sports, such as speed or strength, the calculation, precision and practice involved are integral parts of the game — just as they are for sports like basketball and soccer. This requires a lot of patience, a huge reason many people don't succeed in golf — they lose their cool.

Golfers are often accused of being lazy and strolling between shots. We do stroll, but with a 30-pound bag on our backs under the sweltering 100-degree sun or in freezing rain. Not to mention you actually have to climb the terrain to get to wherever your ball landed, because, as a student, you're very rarely allowed to use golf carts. The result is not only a bunch of thorns stuck in your clothes or a bad case of poison ivy, but an incredible workout of your muscles, similar to that achieved during hiking.

If you can survive a day of golf without any injury and exhaustion, I will congratulate you and allow you to say the words, "Golf isn't that hard. It's not a sport."

Until then, I don't want to hear it. ♦

No: It's not athletically rigorous

Yangsta is Gangsta



Isabelle Yang

Most people wouldn't consider chess as sport. It's definitely a challenging mental game, but for me, there is no way that it qualifies as a true sport since it involves no physical element.

Likewise, golf involves little athletic rigor compared to most actual sports. Golf only allows for the burning of at most 360 calories per hour, and that's without the use of a golf cart.

But according to my parents, who basically live in Golfsmith and take years off their lives watching the Professional Golf Association tour, golf is a mental game as well as an athletic pursuit.

While golf requires skilled physical coordination, golf's actual physical exertion is on par with walking.

As a result, professionals participate up until they're 50 or older. This age is incredibly old in comparison to that of other low-contact sports such as tennis, where athletes' ages usually range from 18 to 35.

The average peak age for most sports is around 26, yet an astonishing 33 percent of active professional golf players are over the age of 35.

Renowned golfer Tiger Woods, 39, is struggling with injuries now, but he still

hopes to return to his previous form in his 40s.

By contrast, how many 39-year-old basketball players are aspiring to perform at the level they played at when they were 25?

Perhaps the best evidence that golf isn't a real sport is professional golfer John Daly. At age 49, he is notorious for chain-smoking during competitions and being abnormally overweight as well as his struggles with drugs and alcohol off the course.

Even so, in a long PGA career, he has won many tournaments and made millions of dollars. An athlete in no other sport could enjoy this level of success with such a sad body and so many horrible habits.

Clearly, if you can smoke and drink while still playing at the highest level, the "sport" you're playing clearly doesn't meet the rigorous physical demands that "sport" entails. Sadly, golf is soon to be an Olympic sport for the first time since 1912.

If the calories burned from playing the "sport" is the result of walking short distances and carrying clubs, you cannot be playing a sport. If you can fracture two left tibias and continue to play and win the "sport's" largest national competition as Woods did in the 2008 US Open, you are definitely not playing a sport.

The bottom line: If you think golf is a sport and golfers are athletes, you are either wrong, or you are a golfer. ♦

FOOTBALL >>

continued from pg. 1

at the end of the second quarter.

Playing from behind the whole game and trying to catch up, junior quarterback Will Liddle threw three interceptions.

The Wildcats managed to score five touchdowns in the first two quarters. In the third quarter, senior wide receiver

Vinny Faylor scored a touchdown on a pass from Liddle, as did junior running back Kian Ghelichkhani.

Faylor managed to score his

second touchdown in the fourth quarter on another pass from Liddle.

"Although we made mistakes in the first half and everyone was rattled, the second half taught us what we can do when we are willing to fight, follow what we have been taught and trust each other to do our jobs,"

Patil said. The Los Gatos made it tougher for the Falcons to make it to CCS. On Oct. 2, the team played at Palo Alto, suffering a heartbreaking 42-35 loss in double overtime. Last year, the Falcons defeated Palo Alto in the last game of the regular

“The second half taught us what we can do when we are willing to fight... and trust each other.”
senior Shay Patil



FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA

The Falcon offense lines up against the Los Gatos Wildcats after halftime in the rival match on Oct. 9.

season to make it to CCS, and the team was hoping to come through with another big win this year.

"Even though Palo Alto looked good, we were really positive about our chances

to win the game," said senior captain Adam Camp. "Our offense came out strong, but our defense couldn't stop a play we usually have no trouble defending, strong side power." Each quarter, the Falcons

and Vikings both scored one touchdown. In the first overtime, both teams also scored one touchdown each, tying the score at 35. In the second overtime, the Vikings scored a crucial touchdown and won. ♦

BOALES >>

continued from pg. 23

ranked and globally recognized as the first U.S. synchronized swimmer with a disability to compete in the Canadian Espoir National Synchronized Swimming Championships, where she placed first in her solo for both figures and routine in the June 2014.

Raquel described the experience as an "iconic moment and the start of a new beginning."

"It was such a thrill to swim in front of so many people on Canadian televi-

sion," Raquel said. "Like everyone else, I was super freaked out, but my adrenaline kicked in and I just went for it. I'm glad I did — when I heard [my score] on the announcement, I looked at my coach and my parents and we all started crying."

Raquel and her mother have also created Synchronized Swimming Athletes with Disabilities (AWD), an international advocacy and information group that helps people with disabilities who are interested in synchronized swimming. They are also pushing to introduce synchronized swimming as a Paralympic Sport.

As a representative of the organi-

zation, Raquel traveled to Taiwan last summer for a synchronized swimming exhibition.

There, she performed a routine to the song "A Little Party Never Killed Nobody," from the movie "The Great Gatsby," and taught disabled children how to swim at a "try-it" session in Taipei.

Raquel says that even though synchronized swimming is not a contact sport, it still involves a lot of muscle work, and since it is a water sport, synchronized swimmers "don't have gravity pushing them down" during practice, which makes it ideal for people with disabilities.

Until recently, Raquel had never met

another synchronized swimmer who shared her disability, but in the first week of October Raquel was coaching synchronized swimming as a part of an AWD outreach effort and met a new girl her age who also had Erb's palsy.

"It felt so natural. It was almost normal to me as if nothing was wrong," Raquel said. "I focused more on her ability instead of the disability."

Raquel hopes that other athletes with disabilities "stay positive and never give up on what they want to do."

In the future, she hopes that the AWD can be their "voice and also [help] create more opportunities for them to succeed." ♦

GIRLS' TENNIS

Falcons sweep NCS teams in Battle of the Bay

by Allison Lin

Shaking off a disappointing result in the Golden State tournament at Stanford that took place three weeks earlier, the members of girls' tennis team regained their winning ways at the second annual Battle of the Bay tournament on Oct. 2-3.

Forty of the best high school teams in California entered the tournament and were grouped into two opposing groups. On the Central Coast Section (CCS) side, teams came from the South Bay, Salinas Valley and Peninsula. On the Northern Coast Section (NCS), teams were from the North Bay, East Bay and San Joaquin Valley.

At the end of the tournament, the total number of wins claimed by every team on each side were totaled up, and the Central Coast Section teams had the most total wins over Northern Coast Section. Saratoga, along with the other CCS schools, took home towels with "Champions" spelled across the top in bright letters.

Saratoga, Monta Vista and Los Altos were just a few of several hosting sites for this large tournament. Every team donned its school colors and proudly chanted its cheers on the morning of the first day of the tournament.

Saratoga's first opponent was Piedmont High School from Oakland. The Falcons had faced this team during one of last season's tournaments and beaten them easily.

With a strong lineup of doubles players and determined singles players, the Falcons clutched another seemingly effortless win over the Highlanders, 5-2. All three doubles pairs won in less than an hour.

The Falcon's second opponent of the day was Redwood High School. The Giants, from Larkspur in Marin County, presented a stronger lineup than Piedmont did, but the Falcons did not allow that to disrupt their confidence. Once again, the Falcons walked onto the courts with poise and focus. Junior No. 2 singles player Caitlin Ju lost a close first set 7-5, but fought to come back and win 6-1 in the second set and steal the win 10-8 in a split-set tiebreaker. All doubles pairs won in two sets.

"[Senior Allison Lin] and I maintained a high level of energy from the very first point to the final game-winning shot," said senior No. 2 doubles player Meera Rachamalla. "Not only did we encourage each other through every point, but we also constantly cheered on our teammates on the neighboring courts."

The girls left the courts undefeated at 6 p.m. Exactly 12 hours later, they woke up for day two of the tournament. Arriving at their designated site in Los Altos, the singles girls chewed on bagels and sipped orange juice while the doubles players warmed up their serves.

The third opponent for the Falcons in this tournament was San Ramon High School. This team had a losing record from the very start of the tournament, and the Falcons took care of business quickly and won once again.

Danielle Berkowitz-Sklar and her twin sister Daviana also won 6-2, 6-0. No. 3 doubles pair sophomore Elizabeth Lee and junior Emma Kovac grasped a 6-3, 6-0 win. This match was Kovac's first varsity game.



FALCON // SWEEYA RAJ

Senior No. 2 doubles player Allison Lin prepares for a forehand against Palo Alto on Oct. 8.

Moving on to the final face-off of this tournament, the Falcons came face-to-face with an old enemy, Buchanan High School from Fresno.

Two years ago, the Falcons and the Buccaneers played a tight match in the semi-finals of the Peach Tree Tournament in Fresno. The Falcons had a lead, but the Buccaneers managed to steal a hard-fought win against Saratoga. The veterans players on the Falcon team two years ago were eager for retribution.

Every doubles pair from Buchanan was strong and well-trained. Rachamalla recalled feeling surprised at how hard they were able to hit each shot and serve. Nevertheless, all three doubles pairs fought for every point and grabbed three wins. The singles players also battled their opponents with every bit of strength left in their bodies. Ju won 6-3,

6-2, and junior No. 4 singles player Kelly Hsu won 6-4, 6-0.

"I am really happy with the consistency and skill that my players showed in this tournament," head coach Florin Marica said. "Coaches from all over California was congratulating me on how strong, sportsmanlike and determined the Saratoga players are."

The girls look to face the remaining schools in the league before heading to CCS. The main schools on the Falcons' radar are Monta Vista on Oct. 15, Los Gatos on Oct. 22 and Homestead on Oct. 27. These teams have the strongest lineups out of the De Anza league schools.

As long as the Falcons keep winning — their league record stood at 7-1 as of Oct. 9 — they will claim the league championship title for the fourth year in a row. ♦

BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY

New coach boosts team chemistry, morale

BY David Fan & Ami Nachiappan

With a smile on his face and his 4-year-old daughter on his shoulders, new boys' cross country coach Scott Bang is easy to spot as he cheers on his athletes during workouts around the track.

Bang replaced former coach Dan Ambrico and JV coach Peter Jordan after both stepped down to pursue other interests.

Girls' cross country head coach Danny Moon, who has been friends and teammates with Bang on the same running club for 20 years, asked if Bang would be interested in being the head coach for the boys' cross country team.

"I had a meeting with [athletic director Tim] Lugo the next day, and he put on a good sales job for me so I accepted the job," Bang said. "This all happened the Friday right before school started."

Prior to coaching here, Bang was an assistant coach for cross country and track at Los Gatos from 1998 to 2004. He has also coached post-collegiate individual runners for both cross country and marathon races.

Bang grew up in Minnesota, where he started running at age 11. After competing in middle and high school track and cross country, he ran at St. Olaf Col-

lege in Northfield, Minn., a Division III school. In college, he ran the 800m and 1500m in track, with personal bests of 2:01 and 4:11 minutes, respectively. His times qualified him for the All-Conference in the 4x800m relay team in his sophomore year.

Bang continues to run all ranges of distances, from 400m sprints to marathons. He has run the Boston Marathon twice with a personal record of two hours and 51 minutes.

Bang's experience in running has helped his coaching.

According to senior Matthew Peterson, a top runner for the team, Bang has structured workouts to help them reach the state competition. Before each meet, Bang sets specific goals for individuals, such as proper form when running downhill or endurance while running hills.

"I try to look at my main goal for the team, which is to just keep improving so the boys can peak at the right time — the end of the season," Bang said. "Mental toughness is key at big meets, so I'm continuing to focus on that in workouts, as well as running as a team and helping one another out."

The boys' cross country team placed fifth out of 13 teams at the Lynbrook meet on Sept. 29. The team will compete



Coach Scott Bang and the JV team prepare for the for then 3.1 mile Baylands meet on Oct. 20.

at Baylands Park, a 3.1-mile course, on Oct. 20 and at Lynbrook on Oct. 29.

The team won't have a chance to qualify for the state meet until the CCS meet is held in El Toro Park on Nov. 14, but senior Stephen Law said the team is starting to show potential to make it to the state meet. Other top finishers for the Lynbrook race were Peterson with a time of 10:53 and sophomore Amit Nag, who finished at 11:03.

Adding to the camaraderie, Bang of-fifth out of 13 teams at the Lynbrook meet on Sept. 29. The team will compete

Bang] runs with us," junior Austin Cai said. "It's as if he's in the same shoes as we are."

Bang continues to run and compete on post-collegiate corporate track teams and his local running club, the West Valley Joggers and Striders, based in Saratoga.

"Running helps me stay healthy in mind, body and spirit, and I simply love the competition that it allows a person to do at any age or ability," Bang said. "I love running, and I'm not sure where I would be without it in my life." ♦

GIRLS' WATER POLO

Players hope to improve after consecutive losses

BY Charin Park & Jenny Qian

As a new season unfolds, the girls' water polo team is still trying to come together as a rebuilding team.

With new coach Courtney Crase and five new players, the girls have been trying to build a stronger defense and shoot more offensively. As of Oct. 9, the girls are 1-6 in the upper De Anza league.

The Falcons battled against Mountain View on Oct. 8, and lost 9-2. Falling behind early, the team struggled to catch up, said junior driver Jessy Liu. Toward

the end, the girls were able to shut down Mountain View's offense.

On Oct. 6, the girls celebrated their first win of the season against Lynbrook 4-3 in overtime.

Knowing that Lynbrook was a more even match compared to their other opponents, the Falcons were determined to win, said Liu.

With an effective defense and clear communication, the girls were able to hold Lynbrook back. Senior driver Jace Welton and junior driver Sophie Sellers both scored a goal each. Junior driver Kailyn Koerber scored the overtime goal

that led to the team's win. "Not only as individuals, but the team worked together a lot better on defense," Liu said. "Even though it was a tight game and we went to overtime, everyone was able to throw away their nerves and win the game."

The Falcons lost 9-2 on Oct. 1 in an away game at Los Altos, but this loss helped give the girls a sense of what they needed to work on. Following their loss against Los Altos, the Falcons played a better game against Palo Alto on Sept. 29, but they still lost 11-5. "We have been fighting hard and put-

ting in a lot of work to improve," Welton said. "We have an amazing team dynamic — we're a support system for each other."

The Falcons played against Gunn on Sept. 22, losing 14-1. The girls knew Gunn was one of the better league teams and were expecting a tough game.

As the season progresses, the Falcons are working to strengthen their offense and shooting. The team is using them as a learning experience to improve.

"We put in the work and encourage each other. We all love playing together no matter what," Welton said. ♦

FIELD HOCKEY

Falcons rank second after losing to league leader Los Gatos

BY Julia Miller & Vibha Seshadri

Even though they have only 11 players, the field hockey team has been thriving this year in the De Anza League with a record of 4-1 as of Oct. 9.

Because of the small roster size, team members have been fulfilling different positions, and so far, the dynamic has been successful.

Their only league loss came at Los Gatos on Oct. 8 by the score of 5-1. Junior right forward Kelsey Kinoshita scored the team's single goal with an assist by center forward Tina Miller.

Miller, a team captain, attributed part of the loss to Los Gatos's bumpy and hole-filled field, something the girls were not used to.

According to Miller, the bumpy field allowed Los Gatos' hits to move past their opponents efficiently, and reach their forwards.

After Los Gatos scored the first goal in the first half, the Falcons had a tough time getting back on their game, and were not able to pass the way they usually do.

Senior center midfielder Erin Norris, one of the team's captains, said that junior right inside midfielder Emily Chen

and junior left inside midfielder Hannah Leonard controlled the center well in the high pressure game by stopping the ball effectively and passing as a way of controlling the ball in their area.

In the end, as the second half came to a close, Miller, assisted by Kinoshita, scored the single goal in the last five minutes.

"[By the second half,] we broke down our steps and tried not to come in with any fouls," Norris said.

Additionally, Monta Vista's defense was strong, and although the girls had many chances to score, they were not able to finish as their stick to stick passing was not up to par, Norris said.

As a result, Monta Vista was able to intercept many of the girls' passes.

The team played Gilroy on Oct. 2, a team they lost to in CCS quarterfinals last season. This time, however, the girls won 3-0. Clark scored one goal with an assist from Leonard.

Miller scored another with an assist from Norris during a short corner. Senior left forward Corinne Bryan scored one as well.

Throughout the game, the team had successful corners and interceptions

from the midfielders and backs.

According to Norris, junior right winger Rachel Davey had great crosses on the field, while junior back Maxine Parr had many stops and hits to the forwards.

The team played Lynbrook on Oct. 1 and won 12-0. Miller scored six goals, Bryan and Clark both scored two goals and Kinoshita and Chen both scored one.

According to Miller, Norris helped carry the game in center field. But overall, the entire team stepped up. Although the girls were up 7-0 at halftime, they looked to use their lead and time to their advantage by gaining experience playing in different positions.

During this game, Miller saw improvements in ball handling as well. The team consistently moved the ball across the back field, which allowed members more open space.

Additionally, their short corners, a hit taken from the corner of the field to advantage the offensive team with a goal, were going to completion.

Before the successful game against Lynbrook, the Falcons also faced Prospect on Sept. 29, winning 5-0. Miller scored two goals, while Leonard, Clark and Kinoshita each scored one goal. ♦

It was great having fans at our game; it really kept the energy high for us on the field.



junior Tina Miller

"As a team, we learned the feeling of losing and how much it sucks," Miller said. "We also now know how to adjust our game for the next time we play them."

The team beat Monta Vista 1-0 at home on Oct. 6. Norris said that the girls did not play to their best abilities because of the tight officiating by the referees.

BOYS' WATER POLO

Lee, Schmelzer lead team to league victories

BY Andrew Jiang & Neil Rao

After entering the league with a racing start to the season, the boys' water polo team is No. 1 in the El Camino League with a 9-0 record. Because only the top team in the El Camino League is expected to advance to CCS, the Falcons hope to continue their winning ways.

They beat Harker 16-12 on Oct. 8. After a close 11-10 battle on Sept. 17 in which the Falcons ended up on top, both teams came into the game ready to play.

The action started with a close first quarter with the Falcons leading 4-3. Picking up the pace, the Falcons led 11-7 by the third quarter.

Seniors Mason Lee and Graham Schmelzer broke away on multiple counterattacks, with Lee drawing three ejections and Schmelzer scoring seven goals. Senior Noah Quanrud made several shots, scoring three goals in total. Senior hole set Davis Robertson and

sophomore Ilan Cheraki each added two goals, and senior Andrew Jiang and junior William Lew both scored once.

The boys beat Lynbrook 11-5 on Oct. 6. They dominated early on, leading 4-0 after the first quarter and 8-1 at half. After this win, the Falcons had played and defeated every team in their league.

Robertson led the team with three goals. Lee, Schmelzer and Quanrud each added two, and juniors Armin Agha-Ebrahim and David Nguyen both scored once.

"This was the first time we played Lynbrook [in a league game] in two years, so we weren't very familiar with them," Lee said. "We just came out hard and ended up on top."

Lee led the Falcons with six goals in their 14-6 win against Cupertino on Oct. 1. They led 8-2 at half, but they were outscored 4-2 in the third quarter.

Concentrating on defense, the team shutdown Cupertino in the fourth while scoring four goals.



Senior Graham Schmelzer plays shutdown defense against Lynbrook on Oct. 6.

The Falcons also beat Homestead, their top rival in the league, 9-5 on Sept. 29. After dominating the first half 6-2, the players focused on playing shutdown defense and keeping their lead. Schmelzer started with five goals.

"Everyone stepped up and performed at their best, resulting in a crucial win,"

Schmelzer said. "We really came together as team."

Due to printing deadlines, the Oct. 13 game against Fremont and Oct. 15 game against Milpitas could not be covered. The Falcons face Homestead away on Oct. 20 in hopes of securing their No. 1 standing in the El Camino League. ♦

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

Players remain determined despite coach's leave

BY Elizabeth Lee & Claire Rhee

In recent weeks, the volleyball team has been coping with a trying situation: Head coach Brad Frederickson has taken time off to support his son, 2004 SHS graduate Erik Frederickson, after he was involved in a serious car crash on the way home from a San Francisco 49ers opening game on the night of Sept. 14.

The girls on the team have tried to stay strong and fight hard, dedicating each match to their supportive and compassionate coach.

In Frederickson's absence, assistant coach Steve Chiou, father of senior setter and captain Nicole Chiou, is temporarily running the team since it is not clear when or if Frederickson will return.

The team has begun its league sea-

son with a record of 0-5. They played against Los Altos on Oct. 8, losing 3-1, scoring 25-12, 25-14, a win of 25-23, then another loss of 25-18. The Falcons also faced Palo Alto on Oct. 6, losing in three sets. They lost 25-10, 25-23 and 25-21.

They also played Mountain View on Oct. 1, losing in three sets with scores 25-15, 25-20 and 25-17. During the Mountain View game, junior libero Julia Vita said the girls played fairly well, but because of small hitting and passing errors, they couldn't complete the victory.

"Being able to stick with [Mountain View] is good but we need to fix the little errors going forward," Vita said.

Since they had played against Mountain View at a previous tournament on

Sept. 26, Chiou said one of their accomplishments for this match was shutting down one of their strongest hitters, an improvement from the last game.

The girls also played a tough match against rival Los Gatos on Sept. 29, losing in three sets. The girls lost 25-23, 25-11 and 25-12.

"The beginning didn't start out well considering the fact that [Los Gatos] was six points ahead," said senior outside hitter Amanda Meserve. "But we fought hard and I think we had a few simple mistakes, such as not communicating on a couple of the plays."

Although the Falcons lost, there were many standout players on the court, including Chiou, who played even though she was battling a cold. Sophomore de-

fensive specialist Dasha Gousseva said that Chiou worked for every point.

"It has been different and a little emotional to be playing without [Coach Frederickson] on the sideline, since he has been my coach for the past three years," Chiou said.

Along with working hard, Vita said Chiou and she have the most saves during games. She also said that Meserve and senior opposite hitter Eleni Spirakis score most of the hits.

Freshman middle blocker Katie Hulme, enjoys being part of such a collaborative team who works extremely well together.

"The team is really supportive, and we're like a family," Hulme said.

Due to printing deadlines, the games against Homestead on Oct. 13 and Gunn on Oct. 15 could not be covered. ♦



Vita

GIRLS' GOLF

Falcons go through losses

BY Oksana Trifonova

As the season progresses, the Falcons have already faced some of their toughest league opponents. Even though they've been playing well, they have suffered consecutive losses to leave their record at 5-5 as of Oct. 8.

The team fell to league opponent Los Gatos High on Oct. 6 222-225 at La Rinconada Golf Course. While the Falcons usually beat Monta Vista High by at least 20 or 30 points, during a match at home on Oct. 5 the win was by a small margin: 235-237.

The Falcons played Gunn High school on Sept. 29 at the Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course and lost 197-210. The best player for that match was freshman Janelle Jin, also the No. 1 player on the team, with a score of 35 for nine holes.

"I am really proud of how we are

playing as a team," senior Ankitha Sarvesh said.

Against Lynbrook at the Deep Cliff Golf Course on Sept. 24, the girls achieved the best scores so far this season — but so did the Lynbrook team. The results were close, but Lynbrook won 161-166.

"Our match with Lynbrook was rough because both teams played really well, but Lynbrook had one girl who shot an amazing round of five under and that's why they won," junior Anya Herne said.

During the home match at the Saratoga Country Club against Palo Alto on Sept. 22, the Falcons lost 208-222. Shooting a 42, Jin tied with Sarvesh for the team's best score.

The team is hoping to come back strong in an upcoming match against Lynbrook and Gunn on Oct. 19. ♦

Our match with Lynbrook was rough because both teams played really well.



junior Anya Herne

GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

Injuries sideline runners

CHEN, MCGHEE AND PICKARD ALL OUT FOR LYNBROOK AND CRYSTAL SPRINGS

BY David Fan & Ami Nachiappan

Sophomore Allison Borch began to sprint the last 100m at the Crystal Springs meet on Oct. 6 as she led the Falcons to the finish line. She finished with a time of 22:45 on the 2.95-mile course.

"I fell at the beginning of the race because I had slipped on the gravel, but I think I did pretty well overall," Borch said. "But, I definitely want to work more on attacking the hills so I can pass more people."

Closely following Borch was senior Ashley Chen, who finished with a time of 22:46, and sophomore Lillian Zeng, who came in at 22:53.

The Falcons ran the flat 2.1-mile Lynbrook course a second time on Sept. 29.

Zeng placed first for the Falcons with a personal best of 14:02, a vast improvement of over one minute.

"During the race, I was really

determined not to do as badly [as I did in the previous meet]," Zeng said. "I was frustrated at the finish line. I was so close to breaking 14 minutes."

Both Chen and Borch were close behind, running times of 14:09 and 14:20, respectively.

Though the team ran much better, placing seventh, than the last time they ran the course on Sept. 8, they lost a few key athletes.

The Falcons' top runner, freshman Sasha Pickard, pulled out of the race midway due to a shin injury.

Sophomore Chloe McGhee, a key addition to the team, did not compete due to a prior injury from a soccer tournament.

Senior Kimberly Chen also did not race because she was not feeling well and had a minor hamstring injury.

Though McGhee and Pickard have been taking a few weeks off from running to heal their injuries, they both plan to race at the 3.1-mile course at Baylands Park on Oct. 20, the final SCVAL meet of the season.

The Falcons will also compete at Lynbrook High for the third time on Oct. 29.

They will compete at Crystal Springs for a second time on Nov. 3 for the De Anza League meet. ♦

>> snapshots



FALCON // SWEEYA RAJ



FALCON // SWEEYA RAJ



FALCON // SWEEYA RAJ



FALCON // SWEEYA RAJ

Junior Chris Metz passes the ball to a teammate during a water polo game on Oct. 6 against Lynbrook.

Technology Club officers Julie Cai and Gaya Chattarjee recruit new members during Club Day on Sept. 25.

Freshmen Hannah Yoon and Link Crew members gather in the quad on Sept. 25 for the ice cream social.

Junior Julie Cai and sophomore Solomon Bailey practice a couples dance during drama class.

buzzworthy >> Snapchat selfie lenses go viral

BY Roland Shen

As the 100 million daily Snapchat users around the world scrolled through their ongoing lists of stories last month, pictures and videos of people with sphere-like, shimmering eyes and rainbows pouring out of their mouths cluttered the screens of millions of smartphones. With Snapchat's Sept. 15 update, the company added new lenses to its ever-expanding catalog of photo editing features.

By holding down on the phone's screen in selfie mode, the user is now able to add creative effects such as an older version of oneself and bubbly eyes with tears pouring out to his or her face.

New lenses are rotated daily to keep the feature always fun and interesting for all.

Since the update, funky images of Snapchat users barfing rainbows and

wearing vampire teeth have filled the Internet.

People even tried the new lenses on politicians during the last Republican debate on Sept. 16, creating videos of candidates such as Donald Trump and Ted Cruz that instantly went viral.

The new feature has also proved a hit among Snapchat users at the school.

"The new filters are great because I can do anything in the world with them," sophomore Akhil Marimuthu said. "Once, I made rainbows come out of my ears, and my friends thought that was really funny."

Though the feature is hot among Snapchat users, the update does not

work for many Android devices, upsetting many Snapchat users.

A movement began on the app's page on Google Play, where Snapchat users are giving the app a one-star rating until the new lenses are available for Android devices.

"The new filters are great because I can do anything in the world with them."
sophomore Akhil Marimuthu

"It's a disappointment that the new feature doesn't work on my Galaxy S6," sophomore Ayush Aggarwal said. "I have always dreamed of throwing up rainbows. Snapchat took

that dream away from me." In addition to the new lenses, Snapchat gave its users the option to purchase replays.

For 99 cents, users can purchase three replays, giving them the ability to view a past Snapchat again.



However, this addition of replays has sparked controversy among the app's many users.

"While it does finally generate some revenue for Snapchat, it defeats the purpose of using Snapchat to send temporary pictures," senior Alex Li said.

Though the new update added the filters that are hailed as a top feature of Snapchat, the second addition of replays just isn't as popular.

"Even though I can't throw up rainbows just yet, the update seems overall really awesome to use," Aggarwal said. "Once they get the update out for Android, I know that I'll be sending dozens of snaps with the new filters." ♦

Back to India: exploring my roots

SOPHOMORE'S TRIP TO ANCESTRAL VILLAGE ENLIGHTENS

amyth: a legend



Amith Galivanche

"This is the village way, hey!"

Those are words from a song by You-Tuber Wilbur Sargunraj, who documented a trip to his ancestral village and wrote a song about it. Inspired by his experience I was ready to take on whatever my ancestral pilgrimage threw my way.

This past July, my family visited India for the first time since 2006. Because most of our extended family lives somewhere in North America, we never really felt the need to make the 20-hour plane ride that many of my Indian-American friends suffer through every summer.

Both my parents were born and raised in the city of Hyderabad in the south central region of the country. However, my father's parents come from a small village about 150 miles away called Manthani, which has a modest population of 17,000. My mother and I had never visited there before. My father hadn't been back since 1983.

We started the four-hour ride from the hotel early morning. As soon as we

entered the rice paddy outskirts of the village, we saw two men herding water buffalo on the main road, which dispelled every statement I had ever heard about the urbanization of Indian villages.

After we had made our way out of the buffalo traffic, my parents and I went down to the river, where we were to perform the "Godavari Pushkaralu" ceremony. In this ritual all three of us took a dip in the river to bless future generations and honor the past.

Standing knee-deep in the river water, I noticed the different uses of the river. The villagers used it to bathe, of course, but they also washed their clothes and motorcycles in it and even allowed the buffalo and cows to cool off in it.

It was a textbook South Indian village. If this place had progressed so much, yet I still found it so quaint, I couldn't help but wonder what it looked like when my grandfather grew up here more than 80 years ago.

We spent the night in my dad's cousin's apartment, which was located in a more developed region of Manthani. It was luxurious compared to other village housing with a pleasant absence of wall lizards and an air conditioner offering relief from the tropical heat and humidity.

Heavily jet-lagged and having slept

for nearly 20 hours, I dragged myself out of bed at 8 p.m., which felt like early morning, and we began to visit my dad's cousins, some of whom he had not seen in over 30 years.

Although it had been decades since they had last met, one of them told my dad to take down his number and to call him if we ever needed anything, any time of day.

As we went from home to home, I noticed cows and wild boars casually walking the streets. These animals seemed to have assimilated into village society, as the residents were not trying to avoid them.

We spent almost two days in Manthani, but I gained so much perspective in those 40 hours. People in Manthani can find so much joy just in seeing family, no matter how distant. Their homes may not look like the Buckingham Palace, but they, too, have been passed down and proudly cared for by countless generations.

Although I type this story from the comforts of my comparatively large home in Saratoga, I will never forget my experiences in my ancestral village, where cows and pigs casually roam the streets, where people drive on roads and wade in the rivers alongside buffalo — and where the people lack big homes but have big hearts. ♦

>> topten

STAGES OF THE ALL-NIGHTER

- 10 p.m.: **Procrastination.** What is homework but a few simple pages of reading? Continue browsing on YouTube.
- 11 p.m.: **Self-admonishment.** That reading essays might actually take a while.
- 12 a.m.: **The sense of doom.** "Oh God, why didn't I start sooner?"
- 1 a.m.: **Temptation.** The bed beckons to you. Soft pillows and clean sheets... a fantasy.
- 2 a.m.: **Contemplation.** So what is the average GPA of admitted Stanford applicants again?
- 3 a.m.: **Let's get down to business.** Take a sip of water, play "motivating" music, do some pushups, pep talks, whatever you need.
- 4 a.m.: **Work machine.** Sometimes you amaze even yourself. Too bad you didn't do this earlier.
- 5 a.m.: **Early retirement.** Sometimes you amaze even yourself.
- 6 a.m.: **Pass out and repent.** Is that drool on your textbook? What happened?
- 7 a.m.: **Reflect.** Yeah, it probably wasn't worth it.

>>Kelly Xiao