



THE

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ALL PHOTOS BY GITIKA NALWA
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Where do we go from here?

HOW COMMUNITY FRACTURED OVER PROPOSED SCHEDULE

BY GitikaNalwa, KatherineSun & RachelZhang

Under one American flag, at the Feb. 2 district board meeting, sat a community divided over a bell schedule. Its divisions had roots in what many now believe was a flawed process.

Last spring, a Schedule Advisory Committee (SAC) was proposed to come up with a new bell schedule that would reduce student stress. Its job was far from easy: It had to minimize conflicts between extracurricular activities and classes, increase student access to teachers beyond class time and better align Saratoga High's bell schedule with Los Gatos's bell schedule so that teachers could instruct at both schools. Membership in the commit-

>> SCHEDULE on pg. 4

Pictured from left to right at the Feb. 2 board meeting: senior Marcus Emery, science teacher and SAC member Kristen Thomson, board vice president Cynthia Chang and superintendent Bob Mistlele.

CLASSES

New courses proposed for 2016-2017 year

BY PranavAhuja & AlexYang

The administration approved six possible additions to the growing course lineup for the 2016-17 school year in a series of meetings late last year and in early January.

These new classes are Engineering Design and Development, Sports Statistics, Toga Dance Fitness, Animated

Graphics and AP Studio Art.

Engineering Design and Development is the last of the line of four engineering classes, which have received new additions each year. The engineering program also consists of Introduction to Engineering, Principles of Engineering and Digital Electronics.

Sports Statistics will serve as a non-AP alternative to a statistics class. Toga dance fitness will feature many

types of dance for exercise, including Zumba, and will likely be taught by history teacher Kim Anzalone, a certified Zumba teacher outside of school. This class can be taken by students looking to fulfill their PE credit.

"I hope that it will become a popular PE elective — not to take away from any regular PE classes but to enrich the PE program at Toga," Anzalone said.

Another class being offered for the

first time next year is AP Studio Art. For this class, students will be allowed to further their interests in a more advanced class.

In addition to these new classes, the school is also trying to reinstate a few courses that were proposed before but did not receive enough signups to run. One of these classes is Weight Training

>> NEW CLASSES on pg. 5

>> what'sinside

■ VALEDICTORIAN

Academic honors

Seniors Celine Liang and Kristine Zhang named valedictorian and salutatorian. pg. 3

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■ THERAPY

Stigmas and Health

CASSY therapists provide insight into mental illness, which plagues Silicon Valley. pg. 18

CITY

Not so safe: human trafficking arrests expose ugly problem

BY FionaSequeira

Tacked onto the locked doors of two once-thriving Saratoga businesses by the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office, laminated neon signs read in imposing black font: CLOSED. NO TRESPASSING.

Although the city boasts multi-million dollar homes, chic boutiques and one of the lowest crime rates in America, a recent story illustrated that what lies beneath the surface here is not always as it seems.

This past November, the Law Enforcement Investigate Human Trafficking Task Force, comprising the Sheriff's Office, the District Attorney's Office and an agent from the FBI, arrested three business owners

who managed both TapaOlé Restaurant in Saratoga's Quito Village Shopping Center on Cox Avenue and Utopik Beauty Salon on Saratoga Sunnyvale Road.

The owners were arrested on allegations that they forced six Spanish nationals into indentured servitude at their businesses. According to prosecutor Paola Estanislao, who worked on the case, they were charged with three felony counts of human trafficking and one count of wage theft. Superior Court Judge Shelyna Brown set the bail for each owner at \$900,000.

Four years ago, the three owners recruited the workers

>> CRIME on pg. 19

BNB

Senior takes charge of ICAC and Toga Tamasha

BY JuliaMiller & NeeharThumathy

Tamasha, Saratoga's student-based competitive Bollywood dance team.

Even before starting high school, Mohan was a fan of the BnB showcase.

She became interested in BnB when she was in middle school. After seeing a performance with her family friends, she couldn't wait to be a part of the show when she became a freshman.

"I have always enjoyed listening to Bollywood songs, and I have been dancing since I was 6 years old," Mohan said. "I absolutely love to dance, and



Mohan

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Benefit fashion show to be huge

As in previous years, this year's annual Benefit Fashion Show on Feb. 27 will be held in the Large Gym and will boast several different themes, a silent auction and a grand finale. The event will raise money for the Silicon Valley Children's Fund, which helps foster youth become self-sustaining adults.

The show's all-senior commission, headed by senior Sabrina Clark, has been planning the show since the first week of school.

There are a total of 10 themes in the show: Prom, First Date, Winter Wonderland, Wild West, Country Club, Girls' Night Out, Athletic Wear, Toga Wear, Cultural and Boho.

One of the more complicated parts of preparation that the commission has faced is coaxing stores to lend clothes to the participating models. Because the show is non-profit, some stores are reluctant to help.

"It takes a while to get [the show] organized and find enough people willing to participate," senior Nina Harris said. "But usually once [the stores] realize how important the cause is, people are ready and willing to support us."

For Clark, the Benefit Fashion show is both a source of entertainment and a fun way to volunteer and give back.

"I really like how the community is brought together, and [how the show] is collaborative. We had over 230 students sign up this year, and it's really fun to put on a production while helping the community," Clark said.

— Michelle Lee

Jazz Cabaret returns and hasn't lost a step

The music department's Jazz Cabaret returned this year last Saturday in the Large Gym after being canceled last year due to scheduling issues.

As one of the major fundraising events for the music department, Jazz Cabaret raised about \$6,000, with a profit of about \$2,000, according to senior Isha Mangal.

The performance included both Jazz I and Jazz II classes, Redwood Middle School's Jazz band, as well as senior Max Rossip's band called Max and the Melodic Minors. The cabaret also featured professional group Sons of Jubal Swing Dance Band.

Various students also performed solos at the dance. Mangal performed her rendition of "At Last" by Etta James and senior Camille Bismonte performed "Skyfall" with the Jazz II. Senior Kevin Wu sang Frank Sinatra's "Come Fly with Me" while senior Nina Nelson performed a jazz version of Britney Spears's "Oops! ... I Did It Again."

Another performance at the cabaret were the Chamber choir and the Concert choir.

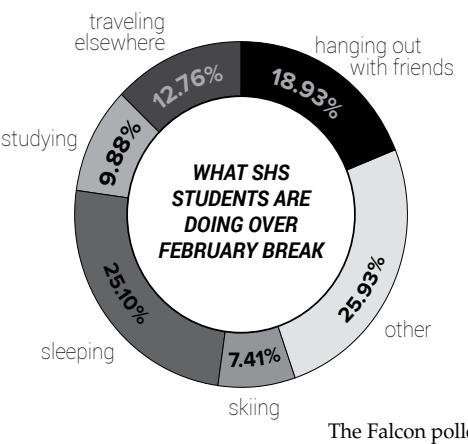
Junior Peter Vandevort said that the event was well-received by students and highly attended.

— Navin Tiwary

>> correction

In the Jan. 29 issue, the Falcon published an article titled "Community protests lead to bell schedule revision" that mistakenly accidentally omitted staff member Ronda Viera from a list of Saratoga representatives on the Schedule Advisory Committee.

>> falconfigures



>> picturethis



JAZZ CAB >> The Redwood Middle School Jazz Band performs during the Jazz Cabaret on Feb. 6. The event raised money for the music department and allowed the musicians to present their hard work.

BY HelenChen
& MelissaMagner

At first glance, this year's valedictorian and salutatorian are not so different from those of previous years: Both excel at what they do, and both are known by their peers for their stellar performances in science and math. But for the first time since 2008, both are female.

Senior Celine Liang is the valedictorian for the Class of 2016, while her friend Kristine Zhang is the salutatorian.

Liang has a total weighted GPA of 4.81 and took a total of 15 AP and Honors classes throughout her high school career.

Liang's guidance counselor, Eileen Allen, said her humble nature was exactly what she always admired about Liang. In addition, apart from Liang's strength in academics, her

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CLASS OF 2016

Valedictorian, salutatorian announced

ability to relate to people made her "even more exceptional" in Allen's mind.

"[Liang] is a brilliant young woman who is essentially competing on an internal level with STEM competitions," Allen said. "But what stands out the most is that she's so incredibly humble, unassuming and easy going."

Zhang, whose earned a weighted GPA of 4.77, also said that she did not expect to receive the title.

"I knew what my GPA was and I heard of past valedictorians' GPAs and they all seemed super high," Zhang said.

Like Liang, Zhang took a total of 15

AP and Honors classes, but never considered her GPA to be a "defining factor" of her high school career.

Through FBLA and scientific research — she was named a semifinalist in both the Siemens and Intel competitions this year — Zhang was able to "explore new subjects and meet new people" that gave direction to her passions.

"She's obviously a very diligent worker," AP Physics teacher Kirk Davis said. "She was always on top of things, and really understands the material as well."

For both girls, their natural curiosity and eagerness to learn likely helped their academic performance.

"I take classes because I find them interesting," Liang said. "So that's what helped me do well in them." ♦

EDUCATION

District hopes to renew Measure A parcel tax

BY FionaSequeira

66.7 percent majority.

In May 2011, 73 percent of voters in the Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District passed Measure A, an annual parcel tax of \$49 on each parcel of real estate designed to support the district's top-quality public education and protect students from state budget cuts.

This locally controlled source of funding, which cannot be taken by the state, is set to expire in the 2016-2017 school year. The school board is placing a measure to renew the parcel tax for five years on the ballot in May.

The broad purpose of Measure A, according to the district, is to "protect the local tradition of academic excellence."

Not every citizen in the district must pay the parcel tax: Senior citizen homeowners, aged 65 and older, can apply for exemption from the tax. As with the original measure, a Measure A renewal would include strict fiscal accountability provisions.

By law, all parcel tax funds are to be spent exclusively for educational improvements.

According to principal Paul Robinson, the parcel tax has been most useful in funding the school's staffing and ability to offer a wide range of courses.

The Parcel Tax Oversight Committee (PTOC) was established in May of 2012 to review expenditure reports and ensure parcel tax proceeds are spent for the purposes stipulated by the measure.

The PTOC, which comprises Shirley Cantu of the Senior Citizen Group, Roger Mason of the Chamber of Commerce, Terry Zaccone of the League of Women Voters, and community members Ste-

phen Beck, Mark Weiner, and Joanie Silberstein, presented their latest annual report to the Board of Trustees on Nov. 17. They found that Measure A funds for the 2014-2015 year were spent in accordance with the purposes of the parcel tax measure.

According to the PTOC's 2014-2015 Parcel Tax Expenditures Report, the total amount collected by the parcel tax was \$974,230. Approximately 2 percent of this amount went to covering the costs for administering the collections of the tax as well as reimbursements issued to senior property owners exempt from paying the parcel tax.

The emphasis for the 2014-2015 parcel tax was to improve core academic programs such as math, science and English, especially at the ninth grade level, by lowering class sizes and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers who are full time employees (FTE). The 2014-2015 parcel tax funded a total of 9.6 Certified Full Time Employee (FTE), 5.2 FTE at Los Gatos High and 4.4 FTE at Saratoga High. This included 4.2 FTE for ninth grade English and math teachers between the two high schools. Through Measure A, an additional 5.4 FTE were distributed among science, foreign lan-

guage and art teachers.

According to Robinson, some of the most vocal supporters of Measure A have recently withdrawn their efforts to renew the parcel tax because of their disapproval of the district's move to a new bell schedule.

"It's a shame that someone would hold the parcel tax hostage because they are philosophically opposed to change," Robinson said. "Ultimately, this hurts students and the desires they have to pursue learning in the future. I hope that by the time it comes to vote on the renewal, everyone would see the advantages that the parcel tax brings to our schools." ♦

>> THE bigidea

Renewing Measure A: Parcel Tax

What is the purpose?
The locally controlled source of funding is to help maintain low class sizes and academic programs started in 2011.

Who is affected by the Parcel Tax?
Every home owner in the district except senior citizen homeowners (65 years and older) has to pay the parcel tax.

What were the results of last year's Parcel Tax?
The parcel tax has improved academic programs especially at the ninth grade level by increasing the number of high qualified teachers.

MOCK TRIAL

Team splits early contests

BY GwynevereHunger
& CassandraKing



VandeVort

were able to get through it through strong teamwork," said junior Ian Fu, who plays the part of a bailiff. "I feel that we gained a lot of experience from this."

Since they do not find out who they are up against until closer to the competition date, the team feels more prepared by having four scrimmages under their belt, including one against Lynbrook. They have been able to learn from the other schools' arguments and practice their objections.

Several members attribute the confidence of the team to the several scrimmages, but all agree that having Mary McDonnell as an attorney coach has helped this year.

"We could not have asked for a better adviser than Mrs. McDonnell," Fu said. "Not only is she very confident but she also is extremely helpful."

After these first two competitions, in which the defense has lost one and won one, the prosecution team is looking forward to its matches, confident in its skills and teamwork.

"We are going to be assisting one another because that's what it's really all about; we are a team," said junior Peter VandeVort, who is a prosecution attorney.

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the matches on Feb. 9 against Los Altos, and another on Feb. 11. ♦

DRAMA

Rehearsal begins for 'Guys and Dolls'

BY MelissaMagner
& SayaSivaram

bers that Thermond is excited to showcase. The show takes place in the early 1950s in a neighborhood in New York, where a church group is unsuccessfully trying to set up a Mission. The residents, however, are more interested in the gambling ring of Nathan Detroit (played by junior Austin Villanueva).

But things go awry when Detroit, needing money to find a new space, makes a bet with his friend Sky Masterson (played by junior JT Hulme) in a desperate bid for bribe-money.

"Guys and Dolls" differs greatly from that past two musicals Thermond has directed. Unlike 'Les Miserables,' an operetta with no dialogue, and 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood,' which contained a play-within-a-play element, "Guys and Dolls" is more straightforward plot-wise, and contains the tra-

"Guys and Dolls" will be performed April 22 and 23 at 7:30 pm, April 24 at 2 pm, and April 29 and 30 at 7:30 pm. ♦

The musical, written by Frank Loesser, includes several catchy songs and dance num-

ditional mix of dialogue, songs and dances, according to Thermond.

The musical is more similar to the plays that the drama department has done recently, such as 'Pride and Prejudice' and 'Much Ado About Nothing,' so Thermond is confident that the actors are capable of performing it. Sophomore Christine Schultz, who plays the role of Irene, said that the fact that the show requires a lot of dancing makes it enjoyable to do, but also a bit more difficult than previous musicals, such as last year's "The Mystery of Edwin Drood."

"I can't wait to continue working with the students and for the cast to feel they are creating something great," Thermond said.

"Guys and Dolls" is a very beloved show," Thermond said. "It's one of the more classic and old-fashioned musicals, but people still see it as fun and modern because the humor is fast, snappy and timeless."

The musical, written by Frank Loesser, includes several catchy songs and dance num-

ty that comes with a numerical qualification will better demonstrate to colleges the expectations of students at SHS.

"We would like to communicate to colleges that our

most rigorous course load is the one we recommend students [take]," Safine said. "One number we are kicking around is 8 [total AP/Honors classes]."

For renewal, the parcel tax requires a

standardization of course loads.

The school's

guidance counselors

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SCHEDULE >>*continued from pg. 1*

tee was open to all: students, teachers and parents.

But the SAC received few applications, according to district superintendent Bob Mistele. Although the composition of the 26-member committee was varied, with representatives from both schools, it lacked any Chinese-American parent despite well over 25 percent of the school's student body being of Chinese heritage. Though there is nothing to suggest that Chinese-Americans parents were singled out for exclusion, some of these parents were upset they weren't included.

The protesting parents were unsatisfied, and the board's two Asian-American members, vice-president Cynthia Chang and Tseng, expressed support for the parents. Tseng voiced concern about the new schedule and asked for "a dialogue" between the administration and community members.

Mistele said he did not have the luxury to wait until February to make a decision, and that it is not the board's purview "to agree or disagree on staff schedules."

"Unless there is a will of the board," he said, "I plan to move forward with this recommendation."

When the board conducted an advisory vote on the schedule, its three non-Asian members voted in favor of the SAC schedule, and its two Asian-American members voted against it.

The Chinese-American parents had to wait for the SAC's formal recommendation for a chance to provide their input.

The build-up

After five months of meetings, research and discussion that included consideration of recommendations by the National Institutes of Mental Health and the American Academy of Pediatrics, the SAC came to a unanimous agreement in early January.

Although the public release of SAC's proposed schedule for 2016-17 was scheduled for the board meeting of Jan. 12, the SAC shared its proposal with board members and teachers the preceding Friday.

Over that weekend, opposition to this proposal developed on a pre-existing WeChat group that communicates primarily in Chinese and has about 200 members from the Saratoga community — a small fraction of the Chinese-speaking population of the community. This chat group includes at least one board member: Katherine Tseng. Hundreds of messages were posted on this chat.

There was an urgent call to action, with the board meeting just a few days away.

The first board meeting

When the SAC's schedule was publicly released at the Jan. 12 board meeting, parents from the WeChat group who opposed it sought an opportunity to speak, with packets of typed talking points in hand.

One parent, waving a sheaf, came to the podium and declared that most in favor of the new schedule were unaware of the reduction in instructional minutes. "I asked [my son]," she said, "Do you realize your instruction time will be cut?" [And he replied,] "Oh, really? I didn't realize that."

The parents who opposed the SAC schedule felt their voices had not been heard and that the decision-making process had been opaque.

SAC members in the audience were stunned. It seemed to many, like music department chair Michael Boitz, that the protesting parents had been prepped and coached.

The WeChat parents voiced several concerns, but did not share all their concerns. Some were privately concerned that an 8:40 start time would interfere with their work schedule. Others believed that it would worsen student stress, since a late start would lead only to a later bedtime — and a later bedtime would cause greater stress. Another concern was that the bi-weekly schedule would impact students' after-school activities. Still others worried that

25-minute daily tutorials were too short to make up tests or labs, and would even be inadequate for a student to get help from a teacher.

The WeChat group's main public objection, however, was that the schedule's instructional minutes — according to their calculations, reduced from 60,350 to 54,825 — did not meet the state's requirement of 64,800 instructional minutes. The district disputes these parents' calculations.

The protesting parents were unsatisfied, and the board's two Asian-American members, vice-president Cynthia Chang and Tseng, expressed support for the parents. Tseng voiced concern about the new schedule and asked for "a dialogue" between the administration and community members.

Mistele said he did not have the luxury to wait until February to make a decision, and that it is not the board's purview "to agree or disagree on staff schedules."

"Unless there is a will of the board," he said, "I plan to move forward with this recommendation."

When the board conducted an advisory vote on the schedule, its three non-Asian members voted in favor of the SAC schedule, and its two Asian-American members voted against it.

The parents who opposed the SAC schedule were disappointed. They felt their voices had not been heard and that the decision-making process had been opaque. The SAC felt that the schedule it proposed, after months of unpaid labor, was unappreciated by a few vocal, misguided parents. Some parents continued to argue their case with teachers, accompanying them to their cars after the meeting. These teachers felt beleaguered.

But the dejected parents were not done.

The complaint

After the board meeting, the disappointed parents weighed their options. An email thread was formed among both Chinese and non-Chinese community members. They felt that Mistele had been dismissive of their and Tseng and Chang's concerns.

Some of the parents may have even considered legal action against the district. Boitz said a GoFundMe account was created for this purpose, an act he described as plain and simple "lunacy" by parents who were set "on winning" the bell schedule battle at all cost. The Falcon was unable to verify this account.

Some parents expressed their concerns about the SAC schedule's instructional minutes to the California Department of Education, according to emails shared with The Falcon.

One week later, this referral forced Mistele to reverse himself: As a compromise, he said Saratoga High would share the same schedule as Los Gatos next year.

While there was no lawsuit, people from Saratoga had contacted the California Department of Education, subjecting any schedule change to scrutiny at the state level," Mistele told The Falcon via email. "Such scrutiny could have resulted in delays and our losing our

created a student petition on Change.org, which had garnered over 800 signatures from teachers, students and parents as of Feb. 6.

Some teachers were supportive of the students' protests, with English teacher Ken Nguyen, math teacher P.J. Yim and Spanish teacher Bret Yeilding signing Vo's petition. It was widely perceived that the music department, headed by Boitz, refused to perform at the Electives Night on Jan. 25 in its own protest of the Los Gatos schedule. For his part, Boitz said his department's lack of participation was not a form of protest.

There was little point in performing because parents [are] most interested in the band schedule, which was unable to be finalized due to the sudden schedule changes," Boitz said.

While many of those who support the SAC schedule felt that a vocal minority thwarted the will of the majority, parents who oppose the SAC schedule think they are not in the minority. The district, they say, incorrectly assumes that community members who did not show up at the Jan. 12 meeting are in full support of the SAC schedule.

On Jan. 22, parents created an online petition with the slogan "Kids come first! Reject Saratoga High School New Schedule!" This petition had close to 700 supporters as of Feb. 6.

Few could have predicted the chaos his decision would leave in its wake.

No one knows for sure how much support either side has.

The great divide

Some students responded passionately over social media to Mistele's reversal on the bell schedule. A stream of red profile pictures, lined with either the words "Students for 'The Old-New'" or "I stand with the SAC" flooded student's Facebook pages. A Facebook group was created by junior Ryan Westman to keep students updated, while junior Max Vo

>> photoessay

Clockwise from top: Superintendent Bob Mistele sits beside assistant superintendent Carrie Bosco during the board meeting. Mistele said at the beginning of the meeting that his decision to adopt the LG bell schedule was a "compromise."

Katherine Tseng was one of the two board members to vote against the SAC schedule at the Jan. 12 meeting. She did not speak about the schedule at the Feb. 2 board meeting.

Parent Andrew Krcik rests after speaking at the Feb. 2 board meeting. He said it was not the decision to adopt the LG schedule that bothered him. It was the process.

Music department chair and SAC member Michael Boitz surveys the school board during the Feb. 2 meeting.

>> SACschedule**■ START TIME 8:40A.M.
Rolling block**

The later start time was proposed to distress students and help them be more alert during their morning classes.

■ 85-MINUTE CLASSES

The SAC schedule included eight periods, each 85 minutes long. Although students would not be allowed to take eight classes — which would defeat the SAC's purpose of reducing student stress — they could spread their classes over eight periods, which would provide the students greater flexibility.

>> LGschedule**■ START TIME 8:15A.M.
Rolling block**

The slightly earlier start time was intended to help working parents who drive their children to school reach work on time.

■ 90-MINUTE CLASSES

The slightly longer classes were proposed to meet the instructional minutes required by the California Department of Education.

>> SCHEDULE on pg. 5

continued from pg. 4

The Falcon obtained an email sent to the district by an Asian parent in which he said he was disheartened and ashamed of the recent actions taken by those who oppose the bell schedule, whom he described as "Asian Supremacists."

He said that he previously opposed the SAC bell schedule, but only because he fell victim to fear-mongering, and that now he truly believes that the SAC schedule would be best for students.

He also claimed that at least two board members were closely involved in fomenting the opposition to the SAC schedule at the Jan. 12 meeting. (The Falcon contacted Chang for comment; she declined to comment and said all board members were directing all media questions to Mistele.)

This Asian parent's largest concern, however, was not the bell schedule: It was that the district would group all Asians together and that he and his family would be treated as outcasts because they were of Asian heritage.

Chang added that everyone at the meeting had the students' "best interests" at heart. A teacher mumbled, "She's so full of [expletive]."

He was conciliatory, but he also insisted that if he had the opportunity to redo the process, he would do it the exact same way.

Chang added that everyone at the meeting had the students' "best interests" at heart. There were dissenting murmur.

A teacher mumbled, almost inaudibly, "She's so full of [expletive]." Then, seeing a Falcon reporter take notes, she quickly added, "Don't print that!"

As the floor opened to the public, Mistele said he had not yet heard back

be open to all students who want to take the course.

The administration is still working on finding teachers who could teach these new classes and who are also qualified to do so.

The plan would be to have existing teachers to teach the classes, but we don't know who will teach what at this point," Safine said.

The classes are also not guaranteed to run at this point, as there are other factors that the administration must consider. For one, there need to be enough signups during the students' course se-

lection process to reach the level of students per class that the school deems to be acceptable.

Nevertheless, Safine is enthusiastic about the current list and the possibilities it holds for students.

"I think our teachers continue to get pretty excited about finding options that students would enjoy such as Weight Training, Sign Language, Dance Fitness and a fourth year engineering course," Safine said. "It really shows the range of possible classes that students can sign up for because they all have different interests."

from the California Department of Education. Principal Paul Robinson said he would take into consideration all opinions offered. Chang, agitated, asked if Robinson was trying to "refine" the LG schedule. Robinson said there is a possibility of "slight changes."

During the meeting, parents, teachers and students voiced opposition to Mistele's switch to the LG schedule. One speaker who was heavily applauded, in spite of Chang's pleas for silence, was parent Andrew Krcik.

It wasn't the decision that bothered him, he said. It was the process.

"By listening to just a subset of the parents and not to all of the parents, I don't think it was fair," Krcik said. "If you are going to take parent input, take everybody's input. My input wasn't heard, and if they had taken input from all parents, there would have been a strong support for the first recommendation."

The head of the District's Teachers' Association, Los Gatos teacher Janis Rogers described how her view was similarly "discredited." She revealed how, after the meeting on Jan. 12, a few parents followed her to the parking lot and told her, "You don't know what it's like to be a parent!"

As a parent of children who have attended schools in the district, Rogers was stunned. She went on to say that the

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parents who opposed the SAC schedule may as well have been "bullying" the district.

Not everyone agreed.

"I don't see the bullying part," parent Elisa Chen responded. "I also attended the last board meeting at LG, and I think that at that time, people just applauded and raised their hands."

The Feb. 2 board meeting adjourned much more quietly than the previous one.

Where the community stands

The shouting has died, passions have subsided and the town is quiet.

Though Mistele has not yet finalized a bell schedule for 2016-17, there is a sense of finality in his silence. Students are asking teachers when the California Department of Education will respond, and teachers are telling students that it sometimes takes months.

It is unlikely that the district will adopt the SAC schedule, they say; teachers and students are reconciled to following the LG schedule next year.

Robinson is saddened by some of the comments made online and at board meetings. He is disheartened by the strong disagreements, but he remains optimistic, as is his nature.

He hopes the divisions will heal.

"Change is hard. Sometimes we don't realize how hard it is until you actually make the change," Robinson said. "I hope we can all set aside the personal interests that hinder us from moving forward." ♦

Reporting also done by Dorrie Tang

>> THE bigidea**Proposed New 2016-17 Classes****New STEM classes**

Engineering, Design and Development, Sports Statistics

New non-STEM classes

Toga Dance Fitness, Animated Graphics and AP Studio Art

Reinstated classes

Weight Training

GREEN COMMISSION**Proposal to install solar panels remains unsuccessful**

BY FionaSequeira
& EricSize

for solar panels would be the front parking lot, which receives the most sun exposure on campus.

The rooftops on the school's buildings do not have the right angle for mounted solar panels in the front parking lot remains unrealized and is unlikely to be reconsidered by the school board in the near future.

Green commission first approached then assistant principal Kevin Mount with the proposal for solar panels in 2011.

According to senior Meera Rachamallu, a member of the green commission, the commission has been unable to find support from the administration ever since Mount left the district last year.

Although Jane Marashian, assistant to superintendent Bob Mistele, has come to a few of the commission's meetings and suggested ideas, Rachamallu thinks solar panels now rank as a low priority.

"With the Measure E bond, we were hopeful that our proposal would move forward, but according to the school board members, solar panels barely made the list for consideration," Rachamallu said.

"It's upsetting that [the music department] was able to get a music building through its connections, but solar panels, which benefit the whole school rather than just one part of it, got overlooked."

The administration and green commission agree that the only viable place

what of a gamble on whether or not they'll pay off," Robinson said.

An energy audit conducted by Innovate Energy Services (IES) in 2011 compared the district's energy usage with the energy usage of neighboring districts. The results demonstrated that at 1,251 kilowatts/hour per student, the district's consumption was the highest of all schools involved in the study.

SBS was 25.2 percent above the average, and Los Gatos was 31.64 percent above the average. Since 2011, the school has tried to decrease this percentage, but does not see solar panels as a solution.

Robinson said that although the installation of solar panels is improbable in the near future, the school has been trying to use the Measure E funds to improve its energy efficiency in other

ATTENDANCE

Unwell or unprepared? Students call in 'sick'

by Eleanor Goh
& Michelle Koo

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"When students don't attend school, it not only hurts them academically, but moving forward, it's going to hurt the perception of our school," Thompson said.

According to Thompson, the school's current month-to-month attendance rate of 97.5 to 98.5 percent is below the 99 percent plus rate that the administration hopes for.

SPEECH AND DEBATE

Freshman discusses DI preparation techniques

by Amulya Vadakonda
& Kyle Wang

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Among them is freshman Bijan Naimi, who will compete in Varsity Dramatic Interpretation (DI). Naimi, who usually competes in Oratorical Interpretation (OI) as well, was unable to enter because the invitational did not offer OI as an event.

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"In speeches, [the message] can either be political or personal," Naimi said. "My DI is somewhat political. A lot of veterans who came home from

Vietnam were promised all these services, but the government never followed through. It's really sad to see this guy working at McDonalds [with] no friends, and he's going to die because of whatever happened to him in the past."

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DEMOCRACY MATTERS CLUB

Moghadam 'Feels the Bern,' exercises political voice

by Emily Chen
& Katherine Sun

"Guys, it's so important that you do this. We need Trump to be the Republican nominee so that we can ensure a sane leader wins the general election and controls the White House."

Written in reply to a Jan. 16 post on Donald Trump's official Facebook page, this comment has gathered over 1,600 likes and nearly a thousand replies. However, the sarcasm in senior Farbod Moghadam's comment has apparently been lost. (For the record, Moghadam stands firmly in the camp of Democratic Socialist Bernie Sanders.)

Moghadam has made other comments like this on public pages, starting discussions that he himself par-

icipates in for hours or over multiple days. On his own Facebook profile, he shares links or photos about the presidential election every few days, often adding in his personal thoughts and commentary.

"I genuinely enjoy not only debating but also educating people on politics so that they also can explore the field and fulfill their civic duties in the future as informed citizens," he said.

Outside of his online existence, Moghadam has had many opportunities to discuss some of these important issues with fellow students during meetings of Democracy Matters Club, of which he is a co-president along with seniors Aditya Chaudhry, Bita Naimi and

Meera Rachamallu. He has found that Democracy Matters provides him "a medium to express [himself] and engage with other students in a civilized manner." The club meets to discuss the latest political topics on Wednesday lunches in adviser Kirk Abe's room, 505. Each meeting focuses on a particular topic, which is often introduced through a short video.

"[The video] sparks discussion, and we have people from different sides of the political spectrum discuss their views," Moghadam said.

The officers guide the discussion, asking for members' ideas for ways to approach certain issues and opinions on various events, like the Or-

egon school shooting in October 2015, the Syrian refugees issue and climate change. Recently, the presidential race of 2016 has provided a variety of issues for the 20 members to discuss.

With the 2016 election well underway, the officers hope to put emphasis on providing their members with a way of learning about the candidates and their beliefs as well as about the importance of voting. Democracy Matters is in the midst of planning a voter registration drive, where the club will work with the school and the state government to set up a table for eligible seniors to register.

"I hope that members will realize that their voices really do count and that they should fulfill their civic duty by being involved in the political process," Moghadam said. ♦

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"I work on almost every component of the robot," Riaziat said. "My main job is to make sure the robot's base that can drive works, but I do design reviews for every component and work alongside others to create a comprehensive robot."

The robot the team is creating is meant to play the 2016 FIRST Robotics competition called Stronghold.

The game was announced early in the morning on Jan. 3. Riaziat and 10 members of the team got up at 7 a.m. and went to San Jose State to watch a livestream of the announcement.

As a senior and key mechanical designer, Riaziat is a jack of all trades, working on all aspects of this year's robot.

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For Naimi's other event OI, an

continued from pg. 1

nization that raises awareness about human trafficking and other social issues in South-Asian countries.

As captain of Toga Tamasha, Mohan has also been leading her team through early preparations for audition videos to perform at schools and events around the Bay Area.

The team participates in various BNB-like performances at other school such as Sapnay at Homestead High School.

Looking back on first semester, Mohan said balancing her academic responsibilities with BNB preparation was "extremely hard."

Two years later, at the end of her junior year, Mohan felt that "it was only natural to run for president after the years of work and experience."

This year, the BNB performance will be held Feb. 12 and 13. Students from all grades perform variety of dances and singing acts, which are tied together with a skit featuring the ICAC officers. The goal of BNB is to expose students to Indian culture and raise money for Indian charities.

This year's production supports Maitri, a non-profit orga-



Senior Sanam Mohan (left), then a junior, performs in BNB 2015 with alumna Anshika Maheshwari (right).

spent all of break choreographing, holding practices and meeting with the other officers, including co-president senior Anant Rajeev.

Mohan said that she planned her schedule in such a manner that allowed her to complete all applications by winter break.

With no travel plans, she

After she leaves Saratoga High and BNB behind, Mohan said she will miss dancing with friends from elementary school while raising money for a good cause, along with constructing the proper choreography needed to make a successful perfor-

mance.

"Performing a dance that you can be proud of at the end of everything is a feeling that is indescribable," Mohan said. "It is even more satisfying to see everyone share that same pride and enjoyment." ♦

CULTURE

Muslim American students defend religion, reject attacks

By Caitlyn Chen
& Elizabeth Lee

The Sinai affiliate of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) killed 24 soldiers, six police officers and 14 civilians during coordinated bombing attacks in January 2015 in Egypt, according to International Business Times (IBT). Last December, 14 people were killed and 22 were seriously injured in a terrorist attack in San Bernardino, said to be inspired by ISIS as well.

Sophomore Shania Jafri, a dedicated Muslim Pakistani-American, who has grown up in Saratoga, said that she has been greatly affected by these and other world events.

"Ever since the Paris attacks and San Bernardino shooting, hatred for Muslims has definitely increased," Jafri said.

According to the HuffingtonPost, hate crimes against Muslim Americans have tripled since the attacks in Paris on Nov. 13, and the terror attack in San Bernardo.



Jafri



Elzeiny

and other races and religions just to get a vote," Jafri said.

In December, Trump called for surveillance against mosques and said Muslims should not be allowed to enter the country — at least temporarily.

"ISIS members are not Muslim, because nowhere in the Quran [does it say] to kill innocent individuals for pleasure or [simply] because they aren't Muslims," Jafri said.

"Nowhere in Islam does it say to rape women because they follow a different religion. It's disgusting."

Jafri said that Islam's image is being further distorted by presidential candidates like Donald Trump.

"Trump just wants to feel superior, which is ironic because he has gone so low to make appalling statements about not only Muslims, but also Mexicans,

Elzeiny and Jafri are proud of their religion because it sets them apart in terms of their lifestyles and morals.

"My hijab makes me feel different among the crowd and it represents who I am," Jafri said. "It makes me happy

when people approach me and ask about my religion and my hijab because they actually want to know the reason behind it, instead of assuming."

The hijab is worn to represent modesty, one of the many important concepts of Islam, Jafri said. In addition to wearing a scarf, both Jafri and Elzeiny follow the practice of always wearing long pants and long-sleeve shirts.

Besides their outwards appearance, their Islamic faith influences how they perceive the outside world.

"I see the things I have versus what everybody else is like. I have a bed, 10 toes and 10 fingers," Elzeiny said. "[Some] take it for granted, but as for me, I think of it more as a blessing."

In addition to these everyday practices, Jafri has been able to gain knowledge regarding her religion and her personal life through speeches at a local mosque.

"There are countless things Islam has taught me [about becoming] a better person, [including] patience, awareness of others and trust," Jafri said. ♦

SENIORS

Class of 2016 faces uncertainty with deferral decisions

By Saya Sivaram

The end of first semester marks a tumultuous time for many seniors as many colleges render verdicts on early admissions. By mid-February, the sting of rejections and the triumph of acceptances have worn off, and most have shifted their focus to the remainder of the semester. For some seniors, however, colleges have trapped them in the seemingly endless maze of a deferral.

Deferrals occur when a student's early application is cycled back into regular decision to be reconsidered. It is not a rejection, but it is still far from an acceptance, and many students consider it to be the "purgatory" of college decisions.

"I guess the best thing I did was think of a deferral as a rejection because then I no longer had it in the back of my mind bothering me," said senior Kanaai Shah, who was one of hundreds of students deferred from the prestigious University of Pennsylvania this year. "I feel like I won't feel as bad if a rejection comes and

I'll be elated if an acceptance comes."

Schools often have different deferral policies — some defer all those who are not accepted early, others defer the vast majority of early applicants, but most defer only those students they consider to be truly viable candidates.

In the 2014-15 school year, UPenn deferred 886 of 4,526 students from the early-decision round, and then accepted 97 of those deferred during the regular decision round, according to UPenn's admissions website. Dartmouth deferred 600 students out of the 1,800 who applied early, and later accepted only 150 of those deferred. MIT accepted 248

of the 4,535 students deferred. Each school is unique in terms of its guidelines for deferrals, but many of them use the same reasoning when deciding whom to defer. Christopher Guttentag, dean of undergraduate admission at Duke University, explained the subjective nature of deferrals during an interview with the New York Times.

"I think that it's to be expected, especially seeing as students have taken to applying early to a lot of very exclusive schools," guidance counselor Alina Satake said. "A lot of our seniors were disappointed by their results, especially from the University of Michigan."

Some students were close to being admitted, with a lot of appealing qualities, but there was something — some 'soft spot' in the application — that kept the admissions committee from saying 'yes,' Guttentag said.

Allowing these students to add to

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appealing qualities, but there was something — some 'soft spot' in the application — that kept the admissions committee from saying 'yes,' Guttentag said.

"Apply widely, that's all I can say," Satake said. "That way, you can find that acceptance and go to the school that's a good fit for you." ♦

Mock funerals not the answer to Silicon Valley suicides

BY Eleanor Goh
& Olivia Lu

Mock funerals, or classes in which participants lie down in a coffin while fully alive, are South Korea's attempt to diminish its increasing suicide rate, currently at an average of 40 suicides per day.

The mock funerals imitate an actual funeral as closely as possible — "the deceased" have their portraits taken, are dressed in white robes and are told to write farewell letters to their loved ones.

Then, they watch videos of people who are suffering and proceed to lay in their coffins for as short as 10 minutes to as long as one hour.

The process is meant to allow its participants, often those contemplating suicide, to experience "death" while reflecting on their past. While in the coffin, they are supposed to discover a newfound appreciation for life, and at the end of their stay in the coffin, the supervisor says to them, "Now you know what death looks like. You are alive. Fight for Korea."

While participants have claimed that a mock funeral has instantly helped them appreciate life, the effects of the simulation seem to be short term at best.

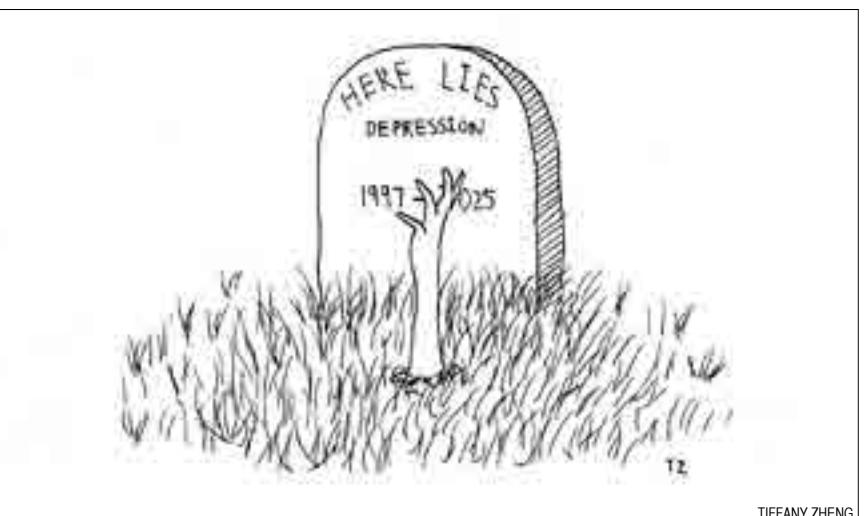
Although participants may vow to change their outlooks on life after a quick and shocking experience like a mock funeral, "solutions" such as these do not address the real root of the problem or offer long-term treatments for depression.

People like Cho Yong-tae, who was quoted on BBC, say that people realized they should live a new kind of life upon emerging from the casket, but there has yet to be a success story in which a patient confirms that his or her depression

is well supported, as the original purpose of holding mock funerals was to promote funeral services. Free mock funerals were first held in 2012 by Hyowon Healing Center in Seoul to promote visibility — over 15,000 people ranging from young teens to the elderly attended out of curiosity for what death was like. Since Hyowon's success, other companies such as Beautiful Life have competed to lure people into participating in mock funerals, capitalizing on their curiosity or mental illness for a corporate profit.

The idea of reaching out to those suffering from depression and other mental illnesses should not be made into a competitive industry to benefit these companies. Instead, the mock funeral's

>> candidcaricatures



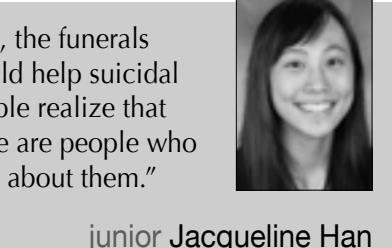
TIFFANY ZHENG

country fear "the prospect of becoming another Palo Alto, where outsize stress on teenage students is believed to have contributed to two clusters of suicides in the last six years," according to The New York Times. High schoolers here in the Valley are faced with the pressures of school, getting into college, extracurriculars and more, often ending up with anxiety or depression.

But instead of adopting South Korea's mock funeral as a hasty remedy for depression in Silicon Valley, the best first step to dealing with recent suicides is to encourage individuals to get the long-term professional help they need — for instance, by visiting a licensed psychologist or therapist. By realizing that depression is not something that individuals can simply "get over" with quick-fixes like mock funerals, we can take an important step toward reducing misinformation about difficult problems like mental illness and depression. ♦

>> togatalks

Are "mock funerals" a helpful suicide prevention tool?



junior Jacqueline Han

"Yes, the funerals would help suicidal people realize that there are people who care about them."

senior Karishma Shah

"If done convincingly, they would teach people to cherish life, because it is easy to lose our loved ones."

junior Kai Donez

"I doubt that the appreciation for life would last long afterwards. They aren't the sole solution to suicides."

U.S. must limit Islamophobia in antiterrorist response

BY Derek Chen
& Kyle Wang

citizens. And replacing that fear with tolerance will be an important battle in the next several decades.

The recent rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, commonly known as ISIS, as well as the Western antiterrorist response, has only fueled Islamophobia in America.

The extremist group is notorious for using bombings and videos of beheadings to spread fear among Westerners.

Yet in his response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, at a time when fears of so-called "radical Islam" ran high across the United States, he managed to say something that struck a chord with many Americans of all backgrounds.

He declared that "the enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists and evildoers that supports them."

Nearly a decade later, many citizens

seem to have forgotten the tolerance President Bush exhorted in the weeks following 9/11. GOP presidential candidates such as Donald Trump and Ted Cruz have maintained their popularity in spite of their ridiculous proposals to ban all Muslim travel to the U.S. Islamophobia has wrongfully taken hold of the hearts of many American

for their actions.

Although most Muslims are peaceful individuals, the unfortunate truth is that fundamentalists can always take a holy text, be it the Qur'an or the Bible, and use a literal interpretation of that ideology to vindicate terrible crimes against humanity.

And whenever that happens, the U.S. government must make it clear that it is waging a war not against the ideology itself but rather against the individual who propagates that ideology. Stating that the U.S. is at war with religion would directly contradict the spirit of the First Amendment, which permits the free exercise of any and every strain of moderate — even radical — religion.

The truth is that politicians must focus on combating the individuals who use ideology to justify their heinous acts, not on waging a battle against a religion per se. The spiritual fight should be left to the hundreds, if not thousands of ordinary Muslims citizens and clerics who have already denounced ISIS fundamentalism.

By differentiating religious doctrine from military policy, politicians can pave the way for a more tolerant America, one that will also be safer in the long run. ♦

THIRD PERIOD
STAFF POLICY

The Saratoga Falcon is published 12 times per year by the Advanced Journalism classes of Saratoga High School, 20300 Herriman Ave., Saratoga, CA 95070. Views expressed in *The Saratoga Falcon* are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the administration, faculty or school district.

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

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Lower stress — but not standards

>> candidcaricatures



TIFFANY ZHENG

Recently, David Aderhold, superintendent of the high-achieving West Windsor-Plainsboro school district in New Jersey, which is 10 minutes from Princeton University, sent a letter to the district's parents calling for an end to the overwhelming academic stress in the community. Without a solution, he said in the letter, "We face the prospect of becoming another Palo Alto."

Palo Alto, well known as the home of Stanford University, has become a little too well known for its alarmingly high student suicide rate, a trend that is often attributed to academic, parental and peer stress. Sadly, the city has become associated with what a high pressure environment can do to students and what other schools should avoid.

But while it seems that too much academic pressure has become an issue that has been well brought to light, the ways in which schools are attempting to lower the intensity of this stress are not always correct. Lowering school standards is avoiding not solving the issue.

In Aderhold's district, 120 middle and high school students were recommended for mental health assessments and 40 were hospitalized — not a far cry from the situation of top schools in the Valley.

Aderhold's letter calls attention to the seemingly paradoxical problem that Saratoga High has also struggled with in trying to change its culture over the last few years: maximizing student well-being without compromising academic excellence.

Take some of Aderhold's rigid changes, for example. They include no-homework nights and an end to high school finals. However, these reforms hurt students' educational development, as homework is a necessary part of the learning process, helping students assess their progress and prepare for tests. No-homework nights are a weak solution to a larger underlying problem.

Our school should avoid this heavy-handed approach. For instance, SHS should not limit students on the number of APs a student can take. Recently, the administration has discussed changing the number of AP/Honors classes a

student must take for their counselor to mark "yes" on college application forms to indicate whether or not that student has taken the most rigorous course load available. A reform such as this one does not prevent student stress; it simply adjusts the overall standard.

Specifically in Saratoga, immigrant parents, often coming from cut-throat educational systems in countries such as China and India, seem to demand academic rigor more than any other parents. No college is prestigious enough to justify complete suffering of their children in high school. Education systems in the U.S. are far different from the ones in other countries, and parents need to adjust their expectations accordingly.

In reality, it is virtually impossible for the school to specify a level of academic rigor that can serve as a challenging yet realistic goal for all students. Given the proper guidance, students ultimately hold the responsibility of knowing what is best for themselves and to thus make healthy decisions. ♦

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editors-in-Chief
GitiKa Nalwa
Dorrie Tang
Opinion Editor
Fiona Sequeira
Reporters
Nidhi Jain
Caitlin Ju

The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 27-3 in support of the editorial.



UC system should not count CS as math credit

By Nidhi Jain
& Alex Yang

Recently, the University of California (UC) has been pressured by a coalition of state politicians, high school teachers and technology leaders to count AP Computer Science toward the system's required math credits. A petition for the policy on Change.org has already garnered 16,019 supporters.

For some, the reasoning behind counting the computer science class as "advanced math" is that its classification as an elective does not provide enough of an incentive to make enough students want to sign up for it. The goal of the change would be to encourage more students to take the class.

And if the goal is to promote the subject of computer science as a whole, there are better ways to achieve this than watering down the UC math requirement for all applicants.

Unless a computer science course builds on basic mathematical concepts learned in algebra and geometry courses, it will be classified as an elective.

Professor Ralph Aldredge, the leader of the UC Board of Admissions, said that AP Computer Science is "too heavy on coding" and "simply not mathematical enough to count as math."

Additionally, for some students, a computer science class may seem like an easy way to avoid a challenging math class such as statistics, leading them away from an important part of their high school education.

Currently, the UCs require admitted students to take four years of high school math.

Despite the uproar from petition

supporters, the committee's steadfast resistance to any sweeping changes is the right move.

In fact, according to the UC Office of the President, only 11 of the more than 1,500 classes offered this year in California high schools meet the rigorous requirements needed to be considered a math course.

And if the goal is to promote the subject of computer science as a whole, there are better ways to achieve this than watering down the UC math requirement for all applicants.

For example, UC could consider requiring just students who declare a major in computer science or engineering to have taken at least one computer science course while in high school.

Although a background in computer science is important for jobs in the tech industry, it is not required for all jobs. Future authors and diplomats don't need to learn programming languages to operate their work computer.

And contrary to the backlash and accusations that the UC system is receiving for its decision, it in no way means to undermine the importance of computer science by rejecting the petition.

Students who have a passion for the subject still have the ability to take the computer science class as an elective.

Ultimately, the UCs shouldn't have to cave into a request that will cater only to part of the student body and also undermines vital standards. ♦

CS does not significantly advance students' mathematical preparation for college.

In most college math classes, these

Resentment toward wealthy misdirected

BY Tiffany Zheng

to join?

In the beginning of 2014, Silicon Valley venture capitalist Tom Perkins wrote a letter to The Wall Street Journal declaring that the discrimination directed at the rich is comparable to the Nazi persecution of the Jews during World War II. He argued that the expansion of wage inequality in America breeds a culture of bias against the wealthy, establishing a sort of "progressive war on the American 1 percent." Although the bulk of Perkins' argument is highly flawed and one-sided, there is some truth to the presence of bias against the rich.

Success-shaming may sound ridiculous at first, but its position as a widespread epidemic in the U.S. is becoming increasingly evident. The left-wing crowd is quick to excuse the efforts of "anti-wealth and capitalism" vigilante groups like "Bank Bosses Are Criminals." This group claimed responsibility for the vandalization of ex-banker Sir Fred Goodwin's Edinburg estate in 2009. In a followup email, the group stated, "We are angry that rich people, like him, are paying themselves a huge amount of money, and living in luxury, while ordinary people are made unemployed, destitute and homeless. This is a crime. Bank bosses should be jailed." There are too many examples of liberal "bullies" hiding behind the veil of "equality" or "fairness."

Last year, Atherton, a town around 40 minutes from Saratoga with the highest average income in America according to Bloomberg, faced the wrath of the 99 percent. The Atherton Police Department reported over nine properties vandalized with the message, "F*** the 1 percent." Why are people attacking the wealthy, a class that they likely aspire



ing appearances at various "millionaires marches" protests that center around confronting the wealthy.

Many believe that the most poor members of society are most harmed by capitalism. In reality, it is the middle class that suffers most. Members of this overlooked class are treated by the establishment as elite despite their relative lack of money.

However, no economic group is to blame for the plight of the middle class: neither the crooked, money-shuffling Wall Street brokers, nor the fraudulent "welfare queens." Only the corrupt establishment, which encourages such groups to engage in corruption at the expense of the middle class, is worthy of protest and disgust.

The 99 percent shouldn't be channeling its rage at the wealthy, but at politicians who create a system that disadvantages them.

The truth is that political power rests in the hands of the



99 percent, and that this power has remained untapped for many years. In the process of wealth-shaming, America's largest group has neglected to vote: Voter turnout rates now fall under 60 percent. The 99 percent has also continued to support corrupt, election-buying politicians (think Pennsylvania's former governor, Tom Corbett, who got \$1.7 million from oil companies), while ridiculing those who don't fit the sleazy senator mold.

Just consider how Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders, a man of the people and one of the few leading candidates to truly represent interests of the 99 percent, hasn't been taken seriously by the public until now.

America needs to stop blaming the rich for problems created by fraudulent and underhanded politicians. The game is rigged. Don't blame the wealthy for playing. Blame the gamemakers, and vote them out of office. ♦

Ex-private school students gain unfair advantage

BY Kyle Wang

mathematics isn't necessarily a worthwhile investment. For these students, it could be cheaper to hire a tutor or a coach instead of sending them to a private school that can cost up to \$38,000 per year.

And realistically, why would this special talent justify sending a student to an entirely different school, separated from their "ordinary" peers? Wouldn't it be more beneficial for a student's holistic development if he or she were exposed to individuals from a variety of backgrounds?

Furthermore, the switch belies the inherent logic parents use to justify sending a student to private schools. Since these students want access to the benefits of private schools, such as smaller class sizes and more elective options, switching students back to the public school system for high school — a time when numbers such as teacher-to-student ratios and elective choices matter the most — makes no sense whatsoever.

Ostensibly, yes. But just because it is legal to send a student who attended a private middle school back to the public school system doesn't mean that it's fair, or even sensible for that matter.

That means all students should have the option to take some type of written and oral exam before skipping to a more advanced language course; the same goes for mathematics and every other course where this option is available to private school students.

Moreover, teachers' recommendations of which courses students should take need to be given more weight by students and their parents.

Implementing these changes will take time and effort, but they are necessary to

limit the unfairness of the current system; no one student should have an advantage over another simply because his or her parents paid the money to send him or her to a private school.

To clarify, none of this means that private schools are bad or unjustified, per se, or that individual students and parents might not have valid personal reasons (financial, etc.) for transferring back to a public high school.

But on balance, the practice of sending students to private middle schools only to have them transfer back to a public high school can be unfair to both a student's peers who lack the same academic options as well as the student himself.

The transition from middle to high school is often challenging for many students; a student who leaves behind all his or her middle school friends and enters a completely foreign environment will find that transition difficult, even at an inclusive, welcoming school such as Saratoga High.

These social dynamics should factor into any decision to move a child from one school to another, even if academic options are the primary reason for a switch. After all, no student or parent should choose a school unless that school benefits a student's overall well-being.

And frankly, that's what should matter most to 10-year-olds — whether or not they'll be able to take more AP classes in high school should be, at best, a secondary concern. ♦

Sleepless in Saratoga

TIGER PARENTING THWARTS
ORIGINALLY PROPOSED BELL SCHEDULE

By Gitika Nalwa

Our sleepy Silicon-Valley community recently exploded over the school's attempt to change its bell schedule. The district proposed that school start 50 minutes later and periods be 10 minutes shorter — 85 minutes instead of 95 — so that students might get more sleep. This proposal split our community.

Tempers flared, a board meeting became rancorous, insults flew, petitions were circulated and battle lines drawn. Upon first learning of the proposal, a group of "Asian" parents organized itself against

What the district must ask itself is not what some parents want, but what all students need. And more than anything else, we need sleep.

distilled a recipe for success. Both books disparage non-Mormon white culture; Chua is Chinese American and her husband Jewish American.

The protesting parents, who are a fraction of those on the chat, argued against the new schedule at a board meeting. Upon failing to prevail, some of these parents threatened legal action against the district and some complained to the California Department of Education that the new schedule would not meet the state's requirement for "instructional minutes" — a contention the district disputes.

Even so, the district buckled, and proposed a compromise: a schedule identical to that of Los Gatos High School, where school starts 25 minutes later and classes are 90 minutes.

But now, parents, teachers and students in favor of the originally proposed schedule are clamoring to have it adopted instead. The district is stuck between the two warring factions.

I, a senior whose schooling has been solely in the district, am left speechless by the tone and direction of the debate.

First, I want to be clear that even though the conflict is widely viewed as a battle of wills between "white" and "Asian" adults, many Chinese American parents support the originally proposed schedule and not all white and other-ethnicity parents support it. We just don't know the numbers on any side.

That said, the source of the conflict appears to be rooted in a particular strain of so-called tiger parenting.

Tiger parenting means different things to different people. To many white parents, it means a high degree of parental involvement in children's academic performance — involvement of the type that is routine in most Asian families, whether Chinese or non-Chinese.

But as described by its most famous advocate, Yale professor Amy Chua, tiger parenting is more than that: It demands unbounded deprivation of children of their rest and recreation toward the single-minded pursuit of their success. And it is this notion of parenting that is in conflict with the notion that sleep should take precedence over "instructional minutes."

Notably, Steven Chu is like every other of the several Chinese Americans who have won the Nobel Prize in that he too did not attend an "elite" American school for his undergraduate education.

Plausible reasons for why tiger-parented kids with an "elite" undergraduate education are not more successful is that they are insufferable and culturally insular, but Occam's Razor suggests a more direct reason: Tiger parenting as advocated by Chua is a fraud. It is an effort to convince college admissions committees that kids are what they are not.

Consider Chua, who went to school not far from here. Her dad was a professor at UC Berkeley and so one would expect she would have attended high school with other children of Berkeley's faculty — with kids who had the same socioeconomic background as her and whose parents were comparably educated — but instead she attended an underprivileged school, where she was the valedictorian.

Or consider kids who spend six hours a day practicing the violin even after it is clear that they neither enjoy it nor are the most talented at it, or kids who take advanced classes ahead of their peers to get a leg up on them, or kids who succeed in advanced classes only through tutors or in private schools — strategies that are all part of a wider phenomenon that professor Steven Pinker of Harvard has aptly described in "The Trouble with Harvard," published in The New Republic, as

Why should our school district bow to the tiger-parenting demands of the vocal minority?

One reasonable measure of success is upward mobility, and by this measure Hispanics, whom no one imagines to be tiger-parented, are the most successful — as argued by Jennifer Lee in "Don't Tell Amy Chua: Mexicans Are the Most Successful Immigrants," published in Time.

A second measure of success is per capita income — a measure by which Indian Americans are doing the best — but this measure is known to more than anything reflect the socioeconomic and educational background of parents.

A third measure of success is reaching the pinnacle of one's chosen profession, and there is nothing to point to the success of Chua's tiger-parenting methods by this measure either.

Then, the principal argument in favor of Chua's tiger-parenting approach appears to center on the large number of "Asians" admitted to "elite" undergraduate schools — Amy Chua and her two kids went to Harvard. But even if tiger parenting is one way to gain undergraduate admission into an "elite" school, merely being so admitted does not guarantee greater success in life than otherwise.

Consider the well-known Chinese-American Chu brothers — Steven, Gilbert and Morgan. Steven, who went to the University of Rochester as an undergraduate, is on the faculty of Stanford and a Nobel Prize winner; Gilbert, who went to Princeton, is also on the faculty

of Stanford; and Morgan, who went to UCLA after dropping out of high school, is a leading patent-litigation lawyer who has won billions in judgments.

Minority? What the district must ask itself is not what some parents want, but what all students need. And more than anything else, we need sleep.

And this is precisely the conclusion a 26-member committee reached after months of diligence. I have had my fair share of complaints about the administration — mainly over its emphasis on upgrading sports facilities over classrooms — but I'm dumbfounded that a vociferous group of parents has subverted widespread student and teacher sentiment supported by the administration that school be shorter and start later.

I simply do not believe that a majority of parents in our school district of any ethnicity are stuck in a mind frame of the type, "I used to get up at 4 in the morning and cross three rivers to get to school; so, why can't you do without sleep?"

And to those counting "instructional minutes" and threatening to sue, to paraphrase Oscar Wilde, you may know the price of everything, but the value of nothing. Consider that my peers and I often dozed off while being "instructed" in our junior year — not because we are slackers, but because we are not.

Further consider that there is no "instruction" any teacher can provide that cannot be better provided by a good book or online. But what books and the Internet cannot replace are the teacher who inspires students — of which I've been lucky to have a few — and such teachers would surely be more effective over 85 minutes with alert students, than over 90 minutes with low-energy students.

In the end, I urge the school to revert to the schedule it originally proposed and start school 50 minutes later. There is only one downside to it I can see, and that downside can be addressed easily. If school were to start 50 minutes later, how are some parents supposed to make it to work on time? To address this hardship, what the school could do is introduce a zeroth self-study period that begins at 7:50 — a period whose supervision the school could rotate among teachers.

And to parents who still insist that "instructional minutes" are more important than sleep, ask yourself: Whatever happened to the many a tiger-parented kid you know who went on to a so-called elite school? She most likely became a cog in the wheel, perhaps even a very big cog: But did she ever get to run the wheel, or invent one? Everybody wants to know which college a child attended, but few wonder what happened to the child after that. And that's what matters.

That, and a good night's rest.♦

Given that America is still the fountainhead of creativity despite its declining economic dominance of the world, why should we adopt foreign educational mores? Why should the school bow to the tiger-parenting demands of the vocal

minority? That, and a good night's rest.♦



GRAPHIC BY HELEN CHEN

IN THE NAME OF Love

GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

Editor's Note: The Falcon asked students to submit the names of people they would like to anonymously send a valentine to. For more reactions, please visit www.saratogafalcon.org.



"What a pleasant surprise, thank you!"
— Sharon Fong



"I'm really surprised. I would have never expected this. Ever."
— Ian Kim (10)



"I'm a little in shock and I want to know who paid you to do this."
— Katrina Cogliore (11)



"[I'm going to] eat them. In my room. Watching Netflix. Not the rose — I'll give that to my mom."
— Kay Jeweler (9)



"[I feel] really special and loved. I love you!"
— Nihar Agarwal (12)

Reporting done by Saya Sivaram and Harshini Ramaswamy.

SPANISH TEACHER BRET YEILDING

I took a date to San Francisco. I'd never been there before, but I ended up finding the place we were going to and we had a really great time. It came time to come home, [but] I got my car stuck on a bunch of Uni Track and I couldn't get my car out [from the parking lot]. At least 10 people had to help me get my car out on the road. And then, I got a flat tire. [I started] to change the tire and it started to rain. I got the tire off and then I realized I couldn't get the car high enough to put in a new tire so I had to put back the old tire [back] on. My date had to get up early the next morning so she was not happy with me.♦

HISTORY TEACHER KIRK ABE

On the day that I met my wife, I was ballboying for a tennis tournament, and Jimmy Connors was playing. Apparently I didn't throw the ball fast enough to him, and he thought that I was staring at my wife, who was ballgirling and was not my wife at the time. He called me out in the middle of the match and actually made a joke out of it.♦

REPORTING DONE BY NIDHI JAIN AND MICHELLE LEE

History of Love 101

TEACHERS RECOUNT MEMORABLE DATES

GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

AP COMPUTER SCIENCE TEACHER JUDI HEHER

I had been asked out a few days before Valentine's Day. I went to work on Valentine's day morning, and there was a rose on my desk. I spent all day trying to figure out who had given me this rose, and I didn't really figure it out.

A few days later, my husband — who wasn't my husband at the time — was taking me on our first date. We went to Santa Cruz, and he parked at the Wharf and we had lunch there and then went over to the Boardwalk and rode on several rides.

We went back to his place and had dinner and watched a movie. It was at that time that he admitted that he got me the rose and six weeks later he proposed. In September, we will have been together for 30 years.♦

AP CHEMISTRY TEACHER BOB KUCER

The worst date was a blind date — of course back when I was maybe 19 or 20 — [when] one of my college tennis buddies invited me to a party. His girlfriend had a sister, so that's [who] I was going [with]. Actually, I'm kind of a shy, quiet person, so blind dates are the most terrifying thing for me. We were just sitting next to each other silently the whole time.

At one point, the girl leaned over and said, "Penny for your thoughts?" All I could think of was that I [didn't] have anything I want to talk about. That was the worst — I didn't have anything at all to say. Looking back at it now I can see how dull I must have been for her to be stuck with. There wasn't anything inspiring about the date.♦

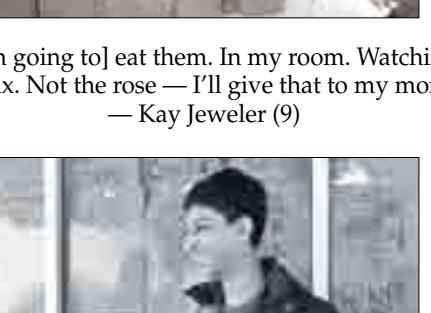
STYLE FILES — COUPLES EDITION

Seniors Zhan Ng and Erin Norris picked out each other's outfits for a day.



Norris: I wanted to be nice so he would possibly pick out something nice for me, but I didn't want to be too nice. So I just picked out something I've never seen him wear.

Ng: No, no, let's just be really real here. She thought this shirt made me look flamboyant, but you know what? I like this shirt. She was wrong, it looks good, and she picked these pants out because she thought they would look bad, but it turns out, they fit, they match, they look good.



"[I'm going to] eat them. In my room. Watching Netflix. Not the rose — I'll give that to my mom."
— Kay Jeweler (9)



"[I feel] really special and loved. I love you!"
— Nihar Agarwal (12)

Ng: I got nice compliments from my friends and family so hah sucks on you, I wasn't as nice. Who wears a dress with jeans? I look like Pablo Escobar.

Zhan Ng, 12
Erin Norris, 12

Norris: I thought I did really well. But when I saw my outfit I felt kind of embarrassed. I looked like I was in middle school — definitely nothing I would wear to school.

February 12, 2016

PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS SARATOGA EDITION

THE NOMINEES

85°C CAFE



WILDWOOD PARK



JAKE'S OF SARATOGA



GONG CHA

BEST HANGOUT PLACE: WESTGATE

BY MichelleKoo

After its recent renovations, Westgate Mall has become a social hub, complete with a fair selection of shops and eateries that appeal to consumers of all ages and tastes.

The larger retail stores like Target, Ross and Nike are places for entertaining endeavors and remain the anchor stores of the mall.

From brand-name products to the generics, you and your

friends can find all you need.

Among the array of 85 stores at Westgate Mall, Gong Cha, a tea and coffee cafe, is especially popular.

Its quick service and spacious seating arrangement contribute to the perfect atmosphere for sharing nice conversations and valuable time with friends.

"Since here are so many small stores to go to, it's more fun to go with friends," Vu said. "It's less about shopping but more about exploring with [friends] and making weird but fun memories." ♦

stressed and are better able to enjoy their outing.

For sophomore Michelle Vu, the simplistic layout and assortment of shops are what she treasures most about spending time there.

"Since here are so many small stores to go to, it's more fun to go with friends," Vu said. "It's less about shopping but more about exploring with [friends] and making weird but fun memories." ♦

**THE NOMINEES**

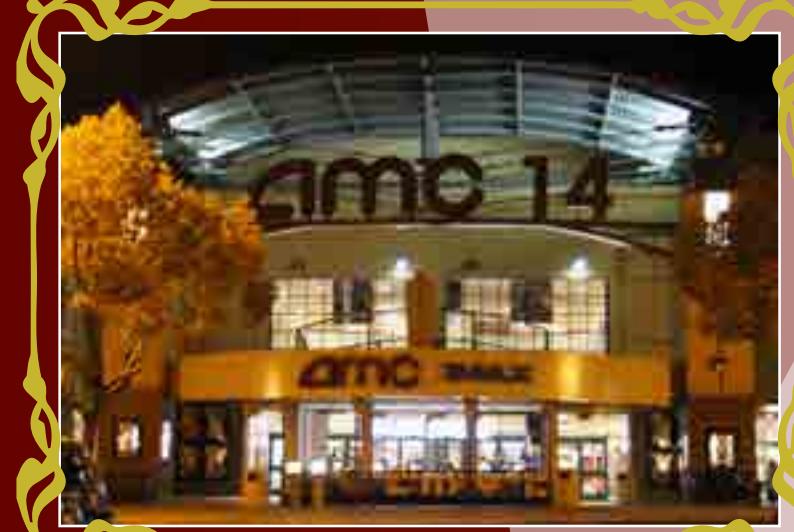
SKYLINE VIEW POINT



SANBORN COUNTY PARK



VILLA MONTALVO

**BEST DATE DESTINATION: AMC 14**

BY AdityaChaudhry

While it may seem like a thing of the past, the movies remains the best place for a romantic evening. AMC 14 is the No. 1 place for students to go on a date because of its variety of movie choices as well as its proximity to many eateries.

At AMC, currently the best romantic comedy playing is the "The Choice," the best comedy is "Ride Along 2," and the best action drama is "The Revenant." All these movies can make the next few hours special and intimate.

As a sophomore I found it was convenient to go to and really enjoyed watching a movie and picking up some food to eat while talking," senior Naveed Riazat said.

Located in El Paseo de Saratoga shopping complex, the theater is close enough to Saratoga homes to make it accessible to couples of any grade level.

And there is a variety of snack to explore, such as the Baskin Robbins adjacent to the theater or the Jamba Juice nearby in the plaza.

As a great place to spend a relaxing, fun few hours, AMC 14 is in a prime location that offers only the best for a date. ♦

**BEST EATERY: SARATOGA BAGELS**

BY NavinTiwary

Upon entering Saratoga Bagels, customers are greeted by the wonderful aroma of baked goods waiting to be devoured and the great selection of bagels and sandwiches visible through the glass.

Some of the shop's best-selling items include the Asiago cheese bagel, the Jalapeno bagel and the chocolate bagel priced between \$4-6. Saratoga Bagels provides

a quick and delicious meal, especially to students looking for a nearby lunch place off-campus: The establishment is located on Saratoga Sunnyvale Road, just past Safeway.

The portions are big enough to keep to be filling, the bread is fresh-made, there is a variety of items to choose from and the prices are fairly low.

A typical order of a ham and cheese sandwich costs about \$6. The service is also fairly quick given the number of students that line up during lunchtime. ♦

IN LIGHT OF THE AWARDS SHOW SEASON, STUDENTS VOTED FOR THEIR FAVORITE PLACES

THE NOMINEES

SARATOGA LIBRARY



SUE'S GALLERY AND CAFE



BIG BASIN CAFE

THE NOMINEES

FLORENTINE TRATTORIA



VILLAGE BURGER BAR



BLUE ROCK SHOOT

San Francisco: a city of hidden gems

By Eleanor Goh
& Michelle Koo

What comes to mind when we say, "San Francisco"? Perhaps it's the Golden Gate Bridge, or Chinatown, or Fisherman's Wharf. Perhaps it's Alcatraz or Union Square. But the city has more to offer than just these popular locations. And being adventurous reporters, we decided to explore some lesser known, yet incredibly quirky destinations for ourselves.

Before going anywhere, we did some online research and found that in the Presidio, an area located just south of the Golden Gate Bridge, there exists a fountain built in honor of the greatest Jedi Master: Yoda.

Though we expected a striking monument that captured all his 900 years of glory, we found ourselves asking a security guard to enter the parking lot of some private office buildings. As we walked inside the buildings, there he was, sitting inside a courtyard in the complex, an unfitting place for such a legendary creature.

Yoda was life-size; he reigned over the bounty of coins that was scattered at his feet, probably by people hoping to gain the favor of the Force.

We later found out we had entered unknowingly into the Letterman Digital Arts Center (LDAC), the headquarters of Lucasfilm in San Francisco. The studio is popularly known for its creation of the Star Wars series and the Indiana Jones franchise. It's also one of the leading production sites for computer animation and special effects. The lobby, which is home to many other Star Wars characters, is open to visitors on Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Life-size statues of Darth Vader, Boba Fett and a stormtrooper tower over visitors while mini-figurines of C3PO, R2D2 and Darth Maul sit on a bookshelf. Displayed in a glass case is Luke Skywalker's original lightsaber for all to admire. Nestled inside the peaceful Presidio National Park, the LDAC



Top left: 16th Avenue Mosaic
Stairs, a colorful photo opportunity just south of the beautiful Golden Gate Park.

Top right: The hidden Yoda fountain in the Letterman Digital Arts Center pays tribute to Lucasfilm's most famous movie franchise.



Bottom left: The Camera Obscura and Holograph Collection, housed as a giant camera

is a 23-acre campus that was once a military base. It also boasts an area of lush grass with statues honoring the pioneers of modern movie-making. Eadweard James Muybridge, known as the Father of the Cinema and the inventor of the motion-picture technique, poses with his zoopraxiscope, a device that displays pictures in rapid succession.

Along with Muybridge stands the inventor of the television, Philo Farnsworth, holding his own invention of the image dissector in one hand and a roll of patents in the other.

After thoroughly enjoying Lucasfilm's campus, we ventured westward towards Lands End, where we found an antique building, housing the Camera

Obscura and Holograph Collection.

Built in 1946 by Floyd Jennings, this compact light blue museum is actually a giant camera that constantly reflects a live, 360-degree image of Ocean Beach. There is a \$5 general admission fee, and a \$2 fee for seniors 65 years or older and children 12 years or younger.

The design of the wooden hut is based on a drawing by Leonardo Da Vinci and is the only remaining structure left of the world famous Playland, a seaside amusement park that closed in 1972.

There is a rotating mirror on the top of the building that continuously captures a magnified image of the beach and reflects it onto a blank bowl-shaped plate inside.

"The reason they built this was to

bring people to the area because this was the earliest form of photography; there was nothing else. This was it," ticket seller Robert Tachetto said.

The museum also boasts colorful holograms of everything from butterflies to creepy hands mounted on the walls.

As we moved from side to side, the hologram of a man changed expressions and the hand disappeared and reappeared, a both disturbing and mesmerizing display. The interior was dimmed so viewers could get optimal viewing of the holograms and of the plate.

We were at first uncertain that our visit had paid off, but after understanding how the camera worked and observing the holograms, we concluded that our time there was well-spent and left satisfied with discovering this unique treasure. Our final destination was a short 15-minute drive away from the Camera.

Located south of the Golden Gate Park, the 16th Avenue Mosaic Stairs, a colorful series of 163 steps, can actually be quite a workout to climb. But in the midst of painful thighs and sore calves lies a beautiful showcase of imagination and community.

Hundreds upon thousands of tiles depict themes ranging from the galaxy and the stars to aquatic life, and artistic succulent arrangements line the side of the steps. Over 220 nearby residents supplied painted tiles and 300 helped to put them together, finishing the project in 2004.

Looking up from the bottom of the steps, it is evident that the masterpiece embodies the heart and soul of San Francisco, much like all the rest of the sights we visited.

After five hours adventuring, we came to a conclusion: The culture of a city doesn't rest solely in its major landmarks. San Francisco has surprises in the most remote locations, all of which contribute to the ambience of the city. So the next time you go to San Francisco, remember that the city is more bizarre than you think — the surprises never end, if you are willing to go look for them. ♦

Lack of diversity again taints the Oscars

By Caitlin Ju

Will Leonardo DiCaprio finally win an Oscar on Feb. 28?

That was my main concern until I saw the list of the Oscar nominations on Jan. 14 and noticed — yet once again — an obvious absence of diversity: Only white actors were nominated for Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actor and Best Supporting Actress.

In Saratoga, students recognize that racial diversity, a topic often raised by colleges, is important.

Racial diversity brings new ideas and attitudes, as well as a range of experiences. But in Hollywood, the recognition of the significance of diversity is a different story.

This year's Oscar nomination seemed to indicate the 6,028-member Academy did not learn anything from last year's lack of diversity in nominations.

Where are the nominations for "Straight Outta Compton" as Best Picture, Will Smith for "Concussion" as Best Actor, or Idris Elba for "Beasts of No Nation" as Best Actor?

It seems like the Academy did not even notice last year's "Oscarsowhite" backlash and instead decided to make little effort to improve its nomination pool to match the diversity of the films, actors and audience.

None of the names of the nominated all-white actors are unfamiliar, as many are the biggest stars whom

awards shows adore. Cate Blanchett and Jennifer Lawrence, for instance, are frequently nominated and Academy favorites.

Lawrence won Best Actress in 2013 and was nominated in 2011 and 2014. Blanchett has won Best Actress in 2005 and 2014, and was even nominated in one year for both Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress.

Essentially, this year is an exact replay of last year, only worse, as the Academy failed to learn anything.

In light of the lack of diversity, actress Jada Pinkett Smith, Will Smith's wife, and filmmaker Spike Lee have said they won't attend the Oscars.

Lee said that the Oscar ceremony is a time to broadcast the best of the best, and the message it sends with its nominations is that blacks can't act.

This year's Oscar nomination seemed to indicate the 6,028-member Academy did not learn anything from last year's lack of diversity in nominations.

Oscars head Cheryl Boone Isaacs af-

ter hearing of Lee and Smith's refusal

to attend the Oscars took a step in the right direction when she announced the Academy's membership of women and diverse members would double by 2020 and a global campaign to identify and recruit new diverse members. But maybe this is too little, too late.

True, the Oscars scandal does not represent a large instance of discrimination, but neither is it insignificant.

OSCAR SNUBS
2016 EDITION

BEST PICTURE:
'STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON'

BEST ACTOR:
MICHAEL B. JORDAN, 'CREED'

BEST DIRECTOR:
RYAN COOGLER, 'CREED'

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR:
IDRIS ELBA, 'BEASTS OF NO NATION'

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS:
ODEPERO OYUDE, 'THE BIG SHORT'

GRAPHIC BY SAYA SIVARAM

ter to the area because this was the earliest form of photography; there was nothing else. This was it," ticket seller Robert Tachetto said.

The museum also boasts colorful holograms of everything from butterflies to creepy hands mounted on the walls.

As we moved from side to side, the hologram of a man changed expressions and the hand disappeared and reappeared, a both disturbing and mesmerizing display. The interior was dimmed so viewers could get optimal viewing of the holograms and of the plate.

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Sophomore actress tries hand at directing

By Emily Chen

Having been born in London and growing up in Kew, England, she remembers writing, directing and starring in shows for adults as a child.

She also took part in the shows put on by her montessori school, an education system that avoids using formal instruction to promote the development of children's interests.

Her immersion into the tight-knit theater crowd provided her with a warm and welcoming environment while she "was going through a bit of a rough

"Overall, that first show was more of a test trial to see if I have any skills with directing at all, and I like to think that I do," Berardo said.

To her, the biggest difference between directing and acting is the weight of the responsibility that comes with each role.

While actors primarily focus on their individual parts, directors must keep the entire show in order.

"It's just very stressful with show days just because you never know what's going to happen," Berardo said. "Anything can go wrong, and I always just have to be ready to just fix it."

But leading a production also comes with its perks, as the play as a whole becomes more meaningful — both through Berardo's interpretation of the play and through the hard work she puts into the final product.

Watching her production come together during rehearsals gives Berardo a sense of pride.

"They're all doing it sort of just for me and my stage manager," Berardo said. "It's always sort of fun to watch this thing that has happened because of me."

She hopes to progressively work on longer shows with larger casts, and she would like to try directing the play "A Servant of Two Masters," before she graduates.

Still, even simply acting with the GIFT organization provides Berardo with a deep sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.

"The feeling of bringing joy and art to people who can't regularly experience it [is] just so incredible," Berardo said. ♦

KARDASHIAN Q&A
with senior Meera Rachamallu
meet the girl who has watched 110 Kardashian episodes

Q If you were to choose between Kim Kardashian's butt and Kylie Jenner's lips, which would you choose?
a Kylie Jenner's lips, of course.

Q Plan a romantic date with Kylie Jenner — what would you do?
a I would stay in and bake cookies or make dinner with her because we both love cooking. And then we would have a "Keeping Up with the Kardashians" marathon!

Q If you were to become Kim Kardashian, what is the first thing that you would do?
a Take a selfie and post it on Instagram for everyone to see.

Q How big do you think Kim Kardashian's butt is?
a Like two of my butts put together for each butt side by side and front to back ... so like eight of my butts.

Q Choose a new Kardashian couple that you ship.
a Kendall Jenner and Justin Bieber

Q What would you do to become a Kardashian?
a I wouldn't want to be a Kardashian because their lives seem so stressful; I could not imagine having a life [as] scrutinized [as] theirs. In other words, I would definitely not go to the extent that they went to. [Kim's sex tape] to get to their level of fame.

Q What's your favorite season of "Keeping Up with the Kardashians"?
a Season 6, because it includes Kim Kardashian's marriage to Kris Humphries.

Q Do you have a favorite episode?
a Season 5, Episode 10. Kim, Kourtney and Khloe argue the entire episode about their clothing boutique. D-A-S-H, about a new business deal, and it is quite humorous.

Q How would you break the Internet?
a I'd show it my transcript.

by Gwynevere Hunger

VIDEO PHOTO SQUARE PANO

features >>



by Caitlin Ju
& Amulya Vadlakonda

Every Friday, senior Ellie Lee sits in the same chair in the now familiar CASSY office. What began as uncertainty about continuing softball, a sport she had loved for years, soon spiraled into academic stress, arguments with her parents and relationship issues. This room has seen her through all that pain.

Lee made the decision to use therapy as a resource to help her, despite the "therapy culture" that stigmatizes help for dealing with these issues. She began going her sophomore year, "a peaceful, mellow time in [her] life." But as stresses of junior year kept piling on, Lee felt she needed more help.

"Suddenly expectations are like fire," Lee said. "[Junior year], I was experiencing a lot of issues with depression. [I didn't feel like] I had someone that I could trust so much."

After being recommended to CASSY her sophomore year by guidance counselor Frances Saiki, Lee said that she had better resources to deal with her stresses.

"I have a really good relationship with my parents, but there are certain things that I just can't talk to them about," Lee said. "The same goes for my friends. But my therapist is someone I can tell anything to, and she would know how to work through these issues."

All of the therapy sessions are directed by the patient: The conversation goes where the patient wants it to go.

Even so, Lee's sessions did not serve as a cure-all.

Even after a year of

therapy, she struggled with issues of self-harm.

"[Self-harm] is way more common than people think," Lee said. "It's easy to cut yourself where people won't see. And I think everyone looks for escape."

Lee first thought self-harm was "really beneath [her]," something she would never consider. But as her stress built up, she felt increasingly "stuck," and she turned to hurting herself as a way to relieve the stress she felt.

She initially did not discuss the issue of self-harm with her therapist, out of fear that her therapist would be obligated to tell her parents. But she realized that her therapist was under no such obligation as long as her therapist believed that Lee was no danger to herself or to other people.

"When you're in a place of such extreme pressure and when you just feel stuck like that, you don't see what's wrong with [self-harm] in the given moment," Lee said. "And then once you take a step back, you realize the pain is never alleviated by tearing yourself down."

Wang said that there is always a different perspective to gain from therapy. "We're not trying to tell you what's best for you. We know that; we trust you know that," she said. "We're trying to give you support, a different perspective."

Having worked at the school for three years, Wang attributes the difficulty many students have asking for help to the intellectual environment.

"At Saratoga, we have a lot of bright people, and you can figure out a math problem," Wang said. "With mental health, you can't outsmart emotions."

According to a 2014-2015 report, the most common reason for students coming into therapy was academic stress. Among other reasons were anxiety and depression symptoms and trouble communicating with parents. Many times students ignore the symptoms or distract themselves, believing they will feel better on their own.

"You're not better," Wang said. "[Those emotions will] come back when we least expect it or least need it to."

Many people think that unless there is a very serious problem, therapy is unnecessary, but Cousens said it can provide the same effect as going to a doctor.

by Caitlin Ju
& Amulya Vadlakonda

The three hardest things to say are 'I love you,' 'I'm sorry,' and 'Help me.' 'Help me' is up there for a reason," CASSY therapist Jessica Wang said.

CASSY therapists Kim Cousens and Wang are two of the four counselors on campus who help students overcome that difficult step of seeking help and hope to break the stigma surrounding therapy and mental health.

Wang originally thought she did not need therapy, but resolved to try it after she decided to become a therapist. It was then she realized from the other side of the couch, as a patient, how impactful therapy could be.

"I got so much more personally," Wang said. "[My therapist was] someone who would give a different opinion. I didn't have to worry about pleasing her or what she thought."

Wang said that there is always a different perspective to gain from therapy.

"We're not trying to tell you what's best for you. We know that; we trust



Cousens



Wang



"If you need a surgery, no one doubts you need medical help. Even if you just have nagging pain, you go get help, because you think the doctor can help even though it's not serious," she said.

Another misconception is that therapists do not have their own problems. But Cousens said that like everyone else, she has to deal with family issues. She notes awareness of her struggle has been key to keeping her own problems out of the way when she helps others.

CASSY therapists ask their patients if they have any thoughts of self-harm because CASSY's main priority is to keep teens safe. This safety clause requires them to speak to the police if they feel that there is suspected abuse in the student's home environment or that a student is a threat to themselves or others.

Most students who are having thoughts about wanting to die really don't want to die. They want something to change and get relief," Cousens said. "Usually if they're really worried [about themselves], they'll talk about [their problems] even at the risk of knowing I'm going to share."

Once students agree to meetings, parents are contacted about the student coming in and reminded that therapy sessions are confidential. CASSY's confidentiality clause requires parents to be aware that their child is seeing a therapist, but the talks stay private.

In recent years, the school has started student-run events, such as Speak up for Change week, which highlight issues like mental health.

"Exposing more people to the idea of seeking treatment and looking at symptoms brings awareness," Wang said.

Since therapy is voluntary, Wang also thinks the school has done its best to let family members and students know where CASSY is and what it does.

Ultimately, Wang finds her job extremely rewarding.

"To be able to let somebody know at that age that is struggling that [this] is normal, is extremely rewarding for me," Wang said. "Talking to clients the first day they come in versus at the end [of therapy] is really an amazing thing. They are living the progress." ♦

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from Spain and housed them in the cockroach-infested sheds at the back of their San Jose home. The owners promised the workers monthly salaries of \$3,000 to \$5,000 and a rent-free living situation. According to Estanislao, the owners soon had their workers in "debt bondage," beginning to demand a \$500 per month rent from their workers while simultaneously paying them menial, if any, wages for 60-hour work weeks.

In July, one of the victims reported the situation to law enforcement, prompting the task force's investigation. The victims are now under the care of the South Bay Coalition to End Human Trafficking (SBCEHT), a consortium of nonprofit organizations that offers aftercare services to victims including counseling, housing and legal assistance.

The reality of trafficking in the Bay
Human trafficking is modern-day form of slavery, the full scope of which includes commercial sex slavery, forced labor, domestic servitude and consumer choices that impact exploitative child labor practices overseas.

A report by the California Alliance to Combat Trafficking and Slavery in 2007 outlines why California is a top destination for human traffickers. The state's major harbors and airports, rising economy and large immigrant population make it especially vulnerable to human trafficking.

According to Ben Field, executive officer of the South Bay Labor Council, labor trafficking is one of the most pressing problems facing the Bay Area, and it is often hidden in plain sight. In an interview with The Mercury News, Field said that employers often take advantage of undocumented immigrants and use the threat of deportation to avoid paying them legal wages.

One myth that prevails is that human trafficking consists primarily of commercial sex trafficking. In reality, commercial sex trafficking is more visible and thus easier to report. But labor trafficking is more prevalent, with individual workers hidden in homes and small businesses, as seen in the recent Saratoga case.

According to Brian Wo, co-founder of the Bay Area Anti-Trafficking Coalition (BAATC), a non-profit organization that connects local anti-trafficking groups, there are two primary reasons trafficking is an underground issue.

"Here in America, we like to keep our dirty laundry hidden and not deal with uncomfortable situations of injustice," Wo said. "[And] although human trafficking has always been going on, the legislation surrounding trafficking is relatively new, so people are still learning about what it is and how to deal with it."

For example, numerous media reports have indicated that the Super Bowl is one of the biggest human trafficking events in the country. Although there is no data to back up this suspicion, many believe that with such a large influx of people arriving in an area in a short period of time, employees work long hours that they often aren't compensated for, especially in the hospitality and restaurant industries.

In intervention, trained specialists reach out to current victims of human trafficking.

"These people might not be ready to leave their situation, but interventionists can provide a range of services for them and help them know that there's a way out when they're ready," Wo said.

The tricky aspect of intervention is that there are several barriers that prevent victims from seeking assistance. Ac-



GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE



Courtesy of BRIAN WO



Courtesy of CHRONICLE

Top: Brian Wo (left) helped organize a one day bus tour to connect first hand with the crucial and diverse work of human trafficking prevention in the Bay Area.

Bottom: Volunteers from the Bay Area Anti-Trafficking Coalition spread awareness of human trafficking at the Levi's Stadium in May 2015.

cording to the SBCEHT, traffickers often psychologically victimize their workers, making them afraid of the outside world and convincing their victims not to trust anyone but the traffickers. Other barriers that prevent victims from getting help include fear of retaliation from their trafficker, lack of trust of law enforcement, especially from undocumented workers who fear deportation, language barriers for those whose first language is not English, and lack of knowledge about the rights and services available.

Beyond intervention, most anti-trafficking organizations in the Bay Area emphasize prevention. Organizations such as BAATC stress spreading the word through social media campaigns, community fundraisers or educational events such as film screenings.

"The more that you discuss human trafficking with your friends, the more eyes and ears will be open for suspicious situations, improving the local capacity to respond," Wo said. "The police can't be everywhere, so the more often people are alert and can spot red flags, the more we can report it."

SHS Interact Club contributed to the preventative cause by dedicating the month of January to an anti-trafficking campaign. On Jan. 11, National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, Interact members marked a red X on the back of their hand and posted photos on social media to join the #EndIt movement against human trafficking. They fundraised for businesses that employ trafficking survivors, such as iSanctuary, which provides holistic care for survivors and empowers them through jewelry-making.

Members also watched a 31-minute documentary called "At the End of Slavery" that revealed the truth about trafficking in the Philippines, India, Cambodia and the U.S. On Jan. 17, Interact hosted an Art Gala where all proceeds went directly to the cause.

"Our project has honestly opened my eyes to the horrors of trafficking," said senior Felicia Hung, the co-president of Interact. "I have never really thought about [trafficking] before, but now I'll be trying to spread awareness and hopefully help end it myself."

Ultimately, Wo is hopeful that through efforts such as these, human trafficking will end in the Bay Area, and said that the more people are exposed to its realities, the harder it will be to keep it in the shadows.

"Fighting human trafficking is really about caring for the unseen and speaking up for the weary," Wo said. "It's a continued process of education — the first step toward solving any issue is understanding it."

Victims of human trafficking are urged to call the National Human Trafficking Hotline (1-888-3737-888). Anyone with information regarding other cases in Santa Clara County can call the task force (408-918-4960).

Fighting human trafficking is really about caring for the unseen and speaking up for the weary.

activist Brian Wo



>> togatalks

Why do you think trafficking is a hidden issue?

"In a perverse way, it helps us consumers. People are willing to benefit from cheap labor."

senior Rishi Veerapaneni

"This isn't discussed by mainstream media, so there is no way it can come to our attention."

senior Farbod Moghadam

"[Human trafficking] is like slavery. It's regressing back to what we strived to eliminate."

sophomore Tiffany Huang



February 12, 2016



FREEDOM FROM FEAR

BY Cassi King
& Kyle Wang

In the middle of a cramped fisherman's boat, barely more than 10 feet long, a teenage girl made her treacherous journey from Vietnam to Thailand with hopes of starting a new life. Senior Nicholas Lai's mother, Tuyen, left her home and family on a cloudy, moonless night in 1979.

But what was supposed to be a two-day journey stretched to a week, becoming an escape riddled with fierce storms and fearsome pirates.

In 1975, Tuyen's birthplace in South Vietnam was overtaken by Communists from the North, marking the end of freedom for those who did not support the regime. In 1979, she was one of almost 800,000 Vietnamese who dared to escape.

Tuyen, the only daughter of two teachers, valued education, but was provided little education in Vietnam. A higher education was awarded only to Communist families. She decided that her best option was to escape Vietnam and head for the U.S.

"My life changed overnight," Tuyen said, reflecting on her decision to leave everything she called home behind.

Her parents, who were open-minded enough to support her decision, asked her older brother to go with her for protection. He agreed, and their parents paid 20 gold pieces for their voyage.

A small skiff took Tuyen and her



Courtesy of TUYEN LAI



Courtesy of TUYEN LAI

Top: Tuyen Lai (right) sits next to her high school history teacher, who let Lai and her brother live with him during her first year in America.

Right: Lai (right) stands next to her brother before her high school graduation ceremony, where she was named the salutatorian of her class.

risked everything I had just to have a chance at a higher education."

A week later, their boat arrived at a Thailand refugee camp. The camp was isolated and overcrowded but located near a beach, and she said, "not too bad."

"I enjoyed the time going to the beach and swimming," Tuyen said. "Being young, I wasn't too worried about it."

The refugees were given two hours each morning to visit a local flea market, where they could buy food and converse with the locals until they were taken back. Tuyen spent most of her time inside the camp trying to learn English but with little success.

"Initially [the other students] were looking down [at us] like 'who are these barbarians,' but it turns out we always beat them in class, especially in math and science, so we started to gain their respect," Tuyen said.

Tuyen spent most of her time inside the camp trying to learn English but with little success.

She went to Texas A&M and majored in engineering, but the grants and scholarships were not enough to fund her education. She worked at fast food restaurants to support herself.

"I came from the bottom, penniless coming to this country, so I did anything you could think of that was dirty work," she said. "Cleaning bathrooms, cleaning kitchens, washing dishes — I did it all."

During her third year of college, things started looking up after she got an engineering summer internship in Dallas with TRW, a defense company.

"I survived. I felt better, [and] life was getting better," said Tuyen, smiling.

It was not until after she had graduated college and married that her parents and three younger brothers could join her and her brother in America. Tuyen and her brother had worked for 10 years to raise enough money to sponsor her family's trip, but by then, Tuyen's new life was secure.

"When I got to the U.S., Tuyen said, 'the most difficult part was the isolation.'

At first, Tuyen lived in the predominantly Caucasian city of Tyler, Texas. She and her brother were some of the only Asians in the town of 5,000. Her limited English hindered her from making friends and expressing herself in school.

"It was lonely," she said. "Nobody

understood me and that feeling was difficult. Every word in an English or history book I practically had to look up in the dictionary because I didn't understand."

However, she found help in her history teacher, who noticed Tuyen's difficulty with English. He arranged for her to live with his family, and her brother with a friend of his, to immerse her in English and so she could not speak Vietnamese with her brother. In this way, Tuyen said she was able to learn English quickly, mastering it in a year.

Slowly but surely, Tuyen overcame her difficulties with English, eventually becoming the salutatorian.

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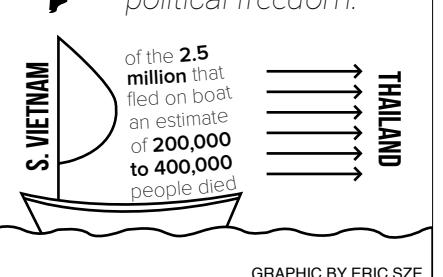
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"It was lonely," she said. "Nobody

said to myself, 'If I can escape from this difficulty, if I can escape from this boat, then I will not waste a single minute of my life.' parent Tuyen Lai

BIG IDEA ↳ communist takeover

South Vietnam was overtaken by the Communists from the North in 1975, marking the end of political freedom.



GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

Soon after the storm ended, a group of local fishermen-turned-pirates spotted their damaged, sinking boat and forced them off. The refugees were lined up and searched for valuables. Afterwards, the pirates boarded their ship to continue looking for gold. They threatened the refugees but did not physically harm them, even providing steamed fish, white rice and supplies.

Tuyen stood on the edge of the ship, staring into the ocean. She could feel an unwavering resolve forming inside of her.

"I said to myself, 'If I can escape from this difficulty, if I can escape from this boat, then I will not waste a single minute of my life,'" Tuyen said. "I had to make my life worthwhile because I

zines as donations to the camp library. Tuyen devoured the books but understood little of what she read.

Eventually, she was able to contact a distant cousin in Texas, whose church sponsored her and her brother's trip to America. Although Tuyen was thankful to be out of Vietnam and experiencing newfound opportunities, her struggles were far from over.

"When I got to the U.S., Tuyen said, 'the most difficult part was the isolation.'

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February 12, 2016

BEHIND BARBED WIRE: SENIOR'S GRANDPARENTS SURVIVED HOLOCAUST

BY Helen Chen
& Eleanor Goh

"You cannot tell me it was worth it for my family to die."

Senior Nina Harris made this comment during a heated discussion in AP Language and Composition. A classmate had pointed out that some good came out of the Holocaust, arguing that Jews face less discrimination today.

Harris' retort to her classmate's "borderline anti-Semitic" comment was more than just a reaction to something from a history book. It was personal.

Her grandparents on her mother's side, both of whom had been teenagers at the time, survived the Holocaust, though the rest of their family was murdered. Though her grandparents passed away before she was born, Harris is "actively aware" of their experiences and cares deeply about her family's past, a journey she is able to narrate with detail.

Prior to World War II, Harris's grandfather, whose first name was Henry, and her great-grandfather had been living in Berlin, Germany. In the days leading up to Kristallnacht ("The Night of Broken Glass"), the first Nazi attack on Jews that occurred in November 1938, Harris's great-grandfather could feel "something bad was happening." Just days before the attack, he followed his instinct and left for America with his son.

The Holocaust's effects have been long-lasting for Harris's family. Knowing her little sister had died, Zina had trouble readjusting after the war. For Harris's mother, it meant that she was under more restrictions growing up.

Harris said that although her mother lived in Beverly Hills, her grandmother was "strict," but not in the way many Saratoga students often view the word.

"Instead of it being like 'Oh, you can't go out; I need you to get perfect grades,' it was 'Oh, you can't go out because I'm scared that if you're gone for too long, you're going to get shot,'" Harris said.

Harris's mother had to be home before it got dark, and Harris said her

grandmother would often succumb to her PTSD.

"[My grandma] was scared all the time," Harris said. "My grandma was a very, very, very anxious person — that would be the nicest way of saying it, [but] it was understandable. She was never trusting and kept to herself, and was definitely a bit mentally ill."

Now a third-generation Holocaust survivor, Harris is very involved in the Jewish community. She has gone to a Jewish summer camp, Camp Tawonga, since she was 8 and attended a Jewish school up until high school.

Harris remembers celebrating Yom HaShoah, a day commemorating the Holocaust. Each year, her old school would be filled with yellow roses.

"Yizkor is a word in Hebrew that means 'to remember,'" Harris said. "That's the spoken word of the Holocaust, and the idea is to remember that that's the way to prevent something from happening again."

Harris believes that being Jewish means more to her than others who are technically Jewish but do not have a personal connection to the Holocaust.

"People like me who are so affected by it and whose families are affected by it still find the Holocaust a very important event, and we all know a lot about it," Harris said.

She has still encountered instances in which ignorant people made insensitive, borderline anti-Semitic jokes.

Still, she feels that it does not come from a negative place and can be fixed with learning.

Although the Holocaust was one of the largest genocides, Harris knows it is not the only one. Even so, she hopes that awareness of its atrocities will prevent future pogroms.

"We need to know what the Holocaust is, what happened, how people survived and why people [did] not survive," Harris said. "There's a reason my [grandmother's] entire family died; very few people can talk about one event that killed their whole family."

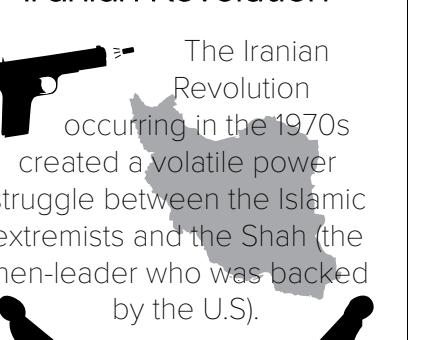
The Holocaust has inflicted Harris with a maturity beyond her years. She thinks sometimes of what it would be like to confront death, to have her family confront death, and realizes how much she would sacrifice if she ever had to choose between herself and her loved ones. At just 17, she knows she would do anything for them.

"I would die for my family," Harris said. "I would die so my sister could live." ♦

BIG IDEA ↳ The Holocaust



BIG IDEA ↳ Iranian Revolution



BOMBS RAIN DOWN: IRANIAN REFUGEE LEARNS FROM ADVERSITY

BY Nidhi Jain
& Sayra Sivaram

Shirin Goodarzi, 10-years-old at the time and too nervous to breathe, crouched down to the ground, her head resting on top of her praying hands. It was 1980, and the town of Abadan just south of Iran was under bombardment. She squeezed her eyes, letting the hot tears stream down her face, as a bomb shook the ground and left nothing but the ringing of explosions.

After each bomb struck, Goodarzi breathed a sigh of relief at the sight of her still standing house. The next morning, a few friends did not come to school and never returned.

Shirin, mother of junior Aryana Goodarzi, successfully escaped from Iran during the Iran-Iraq war, when Tehran, the capital, was in a state of panic.

Goodarzi came from a well-educated family. They supported the regime in Iran and enjoyed a western lifestyle, but in 1980, when Goodarzi was only 10, her life dramatically changed. A war between Iran and Iraq had begun, and neighborhoods across Iran faced bombardment. From her hometown, women and children were forced to evacuate, but the men stayed to help the soldiers.

"If your scarf was a little bit above your hairline, the patrols would come to you, pull it down and literally staple it into your head," Goodarzi said.

This constant fear reigned in Tehran, and Goodarzi's mother had to quit her job as the principal of a co-ed school.

"We left, thinking [the bombing] was going to last a couple days, but that was 1980, and I've never been back," Goodarzi said.

"We had parties, and you had to adjust the music so that patrols wouldn't hear it," Goodarzi said. "If they heard music or saw drinks, you would go to jail. You were always afraid."

Whichever city she fled to, it fell victim to bombing as well. Eventually, Goodarzi, her brother and her mother found refuge in Tehran.

"We didn't hear from my dad for 40 days, so we didn't know if he was dead or alive," Goodarzi said. "Finally, we heard from him, and thank God he was all right."

In Tehran, her parents had to rebuild



Courtesy of SHIRIN GOODARZI

Shirin Goodarzi (second from right) poses with daughter, junior Aryana Goodarzi (second from left), and other relatives for a family portrait after Christmas dinner in 2015.

they lives from scratch. Although they were safely living in Tehran, the emotional distress of their escape followed them. Tehran, although not falling victim to bombings, had its downsides: A new regime enforced Islamic law, ridng Iran of western freedoms.

"Finally, the [Turkish] ambassador actually stamped my passport and gave me the VISA. Everybody was shocked; we were just so happy," Shireen said.

Goodarzi's family settled in New York, where they needed to restart their lives. Goodarzi struggled to adjust to the language barrier in her new school.

"I would be up until 2 or 3 in the morning with a dictionary next to me, and I had to look up every word to understand what I was reading," Goodarzi said.

Although Goodarzi will never be able to forget her past, she will remember the lessons she learned.

"Everything happens for a reason in life, and you can't feel sorry for yourself," Goodarzi said. "Always know that somebody's got it harder. You have to stay grateful but strive for more. Don't be so focused on what you have to accomplish that you forget what you have to give."

Curry has revolutionized basketball



Apoorv Kwatra and Trevor Leung

The former Golden State Warriors coach, Mark Jackson, has made a claim a few weeks ago that many people are starting to agree with: "to a degree, [Stephen Curry] has hurt the game."

Jackson said Curry's shooting dominance has caused emerging basketball players to focus too much on the 3-point shot, leading to them ignoring the other aspects of the game.

If anything, Curry is improving the league by causing players to realize that the 3-point shot has been extremely underutilized and undervalued.

He believes that young students of the game are trying to emulate Curry and are focusing on the wrong parts of basketball. He argues that students are trying to hit ridiculous three pointers that cost wins instead of focusing on the basics.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

This season, the NBA average 3-point percentage is 35.2 percent, which is up from 28 percent when the 3-point line was introduced, in the 1979-80 season.

This percentage is bound to increase even more in coming years as more players follow Curry's steps and improve their shooting.

Considering this, it would not be a bad thing at all if basketball players see Curry's game as an idealistic way to play basketball.

Whatever Curry has been doing is clearly working. The Warriors are ahead of any other team in the NBA, having achieved a record of 45-4 as of Feb. 4, and are on pace to shatter the best record of all time, 72-10, that was set by Michael Jordan and the 1995-96 Chicago Bulls.

If anything, Curry is improving the league by causing players to realize that the 3-point shot has been extremely underutilized and undervalued.

Additionally, if young players view Curry as a basketball idol and try to replicate his game, they will become well-rounded basketball players like Curry rather than the one-dimensional

shooters.

Curry's overall shooting percentage, which includes two pointers, is 51.1 percent. With a 68.2 percent true shooting percentage — a shooting percentage that takes into account the different weights of free throws, two-pointers and three-pointers — Curry easily leads the league.

With a record high player efficiency rating of 32.20, ridiculous shooting percentages and a complete game that no team has been able to stop completely, basketball players around the country should try to emulate Curry.

After all, anyone who does so successfully would only be improving the NBA. Stephen Curry is not ruining the game of basketball; he is transforming it. It is time for other players to catch up and become a player much like Curry. ♦



GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

Seniors go gaga as volunteers at Super Bowl

STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO SEE STARS WHILE HANDING OUT RALLY TOWELS

By Apoorv Kwatra

It may seem like handing out towels is a mundane job, but handing out towels at Super Bowl 50 is just a little different, especially since it meant getting to rub shoulders with die hard football fans and famous celebrities.

Super Bowl 50, the largest sporting event in America, took place in our own "backyard" on Feb. 7. With over 70,000 people in attendance and the average ticket price hovering around \$3,000, it was the most exclusive and extreme sporting party the Bay has ever seen.

Senior Sandeep Suresh spent all of last Sunday morning and afternoon at the Super Bowl, offering rally towels to Carolina Panthers fans outside the stadium in the "Game Day Plaza".

"A lot of it was just interacting with the people and trying to make them even more excited to be there," Suresh said. "It was interesting because I also got to be super close to some people I used to only see on TV and thought I would ever be able to meet in person."

Suresh was not the only student who got to experience the Super Bowl from the inside; senior Deepthi Sampathkumar was also there. Sampathkumar volunteered at the Gameday Plaza, where she handed out rally towels at the Denver Broncos rally area and got to "interact with a lot of Broncos fans." Later they got to go inside the stadium and continue their work helping fans and making sure everyone was excited.

"We had to be really friendly to all the fans," Sampathkumar said. "We

needed to know where things were or direct people to the correct person who would know that information."

The day started at 6 a.m. Carpooling to Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, the two seniors applied months before to get the volunteer spots and had to be 18 by the time the superbowl came around.

But it was not a simple process: They both had to train for three hours the Saturday before the big game to make sure they understood their roles and the ins and outs of the stadium and the area they

.

Both seniors thoroughly enjoyed the experience. "The experience was pretty amazing because I've never been part of that big of an atmosphere before. Everyone was really happy to be there and that made serving the even more fun for me," Suresh said. "I even got to see Lady Gaga and Stephen Curry before the game."

time," Sampathkumar. "As I reached the crowd, one fan told me Lady Gaga walked by. I was shocked."

After 15 minutes, Lady Gaga, who sang the national anthem, returned to take a photo with a mannequin and that was when Sampathkumar got the courage to go up and meet her.

"It was super cool meeting Lady Gaga," Sampathkumar said. "My volunteer partner and I were super awkward but we got to make some small talk with her."

On top of seeing many celebrities such as Dee Murthy and Kevin Durant, Sampathkumar had many memorable experiences during her volunteer experience at the Superbowl.

Out of the experiences that stood out to Sampathkumar was getting the chance to meet and see various celebrities.

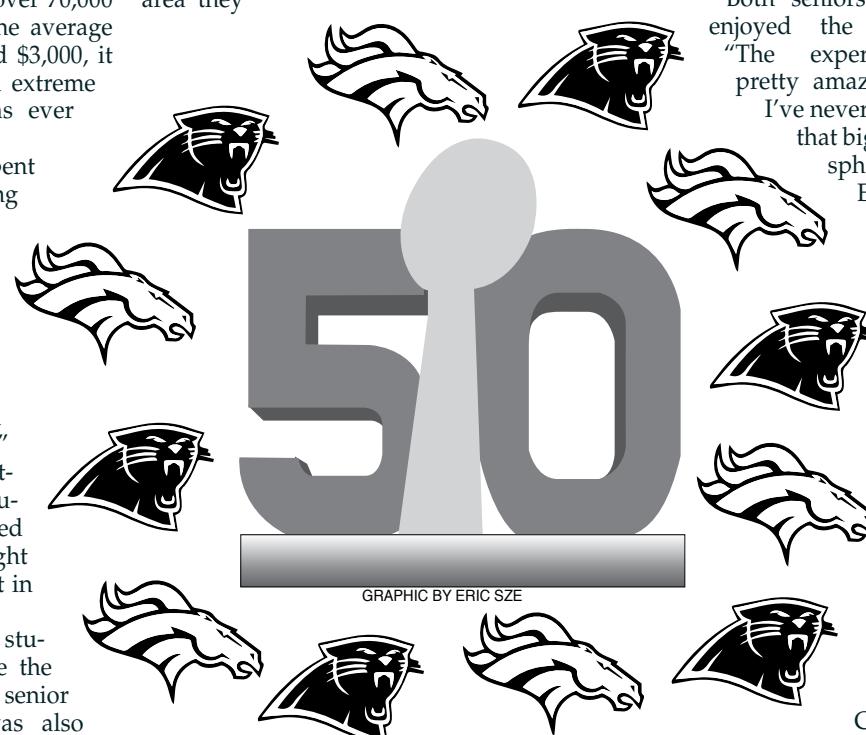
"At the end of one of my breaks, my section of fans were screaming and I thought they were taking a photo because those happened all the

time," Sampathkumar.

According to Sampathkumar, the training taught the volunteers five key points, but the most important was to initiate contact.

"We had to be really friendly to all

the fans," Sampathkumar said. "We



GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

would be working.

According to Sampathkumar, the training taught the volunteers five key points, but the most important was to initiate contact.

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the fans," Sampathkumar said. "We

The process to work such a large

SPRING SPORTS

GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

BASEBALL



Yoshihara

Coach: Adam Varteressian
Last year record: 17-13
Key additions: Freshmen Quinn Dozier, Nathan Peng and Robert Scott
Key athletes: Seniors Cole Petters, Michael Schillage and Tyler Yoshihara; junior Kainoa Giomi
Key losses: Alumnus Evan Lindeman and Joey Medeiros

Prognosis: Even though it's a tough league, the team hopes to get into CCS and win League Championships, continuing their reigning championship title from two years ago. "We've been competitive [as a team] the last few years and finishing first in League and being top 10 in CCS is an expectation," Varteressian said.

BOYS' TRACK



Mehta

Coach: Archie Ljepava
Last year record: 1-4
Key athletes: Senior distance runner Matt Peterson; junior hurdler Eric Wang; sophomore sprinter Jaijit Singh and sprinter Clifford Yin
Key losses: Alumni Andrew Harder and Steven Sum

Prognosis: The team would like to move up to the De Anza division and also have more CCS qualifying athletes, despite losing the two top runners on the distance team. "It's going to be a lot more intense, especially for the sprinting team," junior sprinter Ruchir Mehta said. "I expect we'll be running hard and scoring [well]."

BOYS' LACROSSE

Coach: C.J. Toy
Last year record: 4-8
Key athletes: Senior Quincy Owyang; junior Aiden Peck
Key losses: Alumnus Connor Peebles
Prognosis: With a developing team, the boys' lacrosse players are hoping for a season that sees a significant improvement from the previous one. "Last year we were very disorderly and the worst team to play in our league because of or rudeness and unsportsmanlike conduct," senior forward Quincy Owyang said. "We are hoping for a better season with [an] improved attitude and for a better performance compared to last year." The boys want to capitalize on the training they had last year and make a more mature team that is able to win games and put them in a position to do well in the future.

BOYS' SWIMMING



Yang

Coach: Christian Bonner
Last year record: 1-5
Key Athletes: Seniors Rahul Cheeniyil, Mason Lee, Graham Schmelzer, Jack Xie and Harrison Yang; junior Nathan Ching
Key Additions: Freshman Nick Burry
Key Losses: Alumni Andre Baluni and Winston Vo

Prognosis: The team's goal is to make CCS and make the team's performance much better at the beginning of the season and keeping that streak alive till the end. "This year we're just trying to hopefully stay healthy so we can do our best at all our meets and try to have a better season than last year," Yang said.

SOFTBALL



Green

Coach: Chris Smith
Last Year record: 4-8
Key Athletes: First base Savannah Green, second base Stephanie Hayes, right field Ellie Lee, senior pitcher Eleni Spirakis; junior shortstop Rachel Davey
Key additions: Sophomores Kate Bossi, Chance Gaskin, Eryn Lee

Key matches: Los Gatos and Wilcox
Key losses: Alumna Analisa Ruff
Prognosis: The softball team is looking forward to potentially making CCS. "I'm excited because it's a core group and we've been playing with [one] another for so long. It won't take long for us to bond again," Green said.

GIRLS' SWIMMING

Coach: Kristen Thomson
Last year record: 1-5
Key Athletes: Juniors Jane Oberhauser, Stefanie Ting, Anna Zhou
Key Additions: Freshmen Ashley Feng, Lei Otsuka
Key Losses: Alumni Yayla Sezginer
Prognosis: This season, the team looks improve with more players on the team.

BOYS' TENNIS



FALCON // SWEEYA RAJ

Coach: Jason Cardoso
Last year record: 25-12
Key Athletes: Seniors Alex Li, Chester Leung and Spencer Yen; junior Joel Schneidmiller
Key Additions: Senior Aakash Thumathy and junior Vincent Man
Key Losses: Alumni Michael Cole, Stephen Peng, James Freeman and Alex Holz

Prognosis: Because of its stellar performance last year, the team has moved up into the more competitive De Anza League, where competition will be tougher. "Though the playing field seems pretty even, I think we can compete to be in the upper echelon of teams again this year even though we're playing in a better league," Leung said. "The goal is to make CCS and hopefully we can have a repeat of last year's success."

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL



FALCON // SWEEYA RAJ

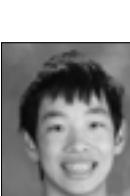
Coach: Florin Marica
Key Athletes: Seniors Karthik Padmanabhan and Jihau Yu; junior Kailas Shekar
Key Losses: Alumnus Neel Bedekar and junior Andre Xiao
Key matchup: Monta Vista, Menlo

Prognosis: The team has to cope with the loss of several players by working harder to ensure a spot in CCS. The team must build up the younger players and reformat the team's lineup too.

GIRLS' LACROSSE

Coaches: Meghan Noyola and Emily Abcede
Last Years Record: 6-8
Key Athletes: Seniors Erin Norris and Talia Clement; juniors Julia Vita and Sophia Crolla
Key Additions: Junior Emma Kovac; sophomore Nayoung Kim
Key Losses: Alumni Christina Crolla, Christina Chin, Bridget Olsen, Sophia Ajane, Varna Jammula
Key Additions: With new coaches and only a handful of varsity players remaining from last year, the team will be facing ups and downs this season. The team is expected to pull up many of the younger players from the JV team. Though the road to victory will be tough during league, the Falcons are hopeful that its newest additions will bring versatility and skill to the field to help them be more successful in the coming year.

BOYS' GOLF

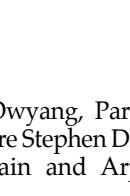


Peng

Coach: Dave Gragnola (head), Micah Hall (assistant)
Last year record: 9-2
Key Matchup: Los Gatos
Key returning athletes: Seniors Lucas and Miles Peng; junior Nathan Shang
Key losses: Alumni Robby Gragnola, Lukas Petterson, Noah Jung, and Arman Vaziri
Key Addition: Freshman William Liu

Prognosis: Even though the team lost top players to graduation, Peng said the Falcon golfers are still capable of making a strong run. "I think we can surpass expectations by making it into CCS and advancing past the first round," Peng said.

BADMINTON



Gunn and Monta Vista

Coach: Charley Situ, Chris Do
Last year record: 3-7
Key Players: Seniors Michael Owyang, Partha Shah; junior Spring Ma; sophomore Stephen Ding
Key Addition: Seniors Neel Jain and Arjun Ramanathan
Key Matchups: Gunn and Monta Vista
Key losses: Alumni Max Chang, Kevin Lian and Junna Shimokawa
Prognosis: Several losses of graduated seniors may make success a challenge for the badminton team this season. However, Shah said that although the losses may affect the team, hard training may be able to save the team this year. "I am still hopeful we will do well this season as I know many people that have gotten much better from training this offseason," Shah said.

GIRLS' TRACK

Coach: Archie Ljepava (head), Scott Bang (boys'/girls' distance)
Key Players: Senior sprinter Kimberly Chen; sophomore hurdler Chloe McGhee
Key additions: Junior sprinter Celine Bellegrada; freshman distance runner Isabella Tan
Key matchups: Wilcox
Prognosis: The team would like to have more members make it to the league finals and have more CCS qualifying athletes. "Though it is hard to tell so far, I see more going on to SCVALs," Bellegrada said. "The coaches are working hard to place people in the right events for them."

BOYS' SOCCER

Key loss to Los Altos put boys out of CCS

BY Michelle Lee
& Anant Rajeev

The boys' soccer team fell 1-0 to Los Altos in a heartbreaking matchup on Feb. 3 in a game that all but knocked the Falcons out of CCS contention.

The boys have led a strong campaign this season, but with the loss to Los Altos, the team is unlikely to gain enough playoff points in their upcoming games to make a CCS run.

The team began its league season with a 3-1 record, losing away at Monta Vista 5-1 on Jan. 6 but bouncing back with a 9-1 home on Jan. 9 win against Milpitas.

Afterwards, however, the team suffered setbacks with a 5-3 loss away at Los Altos on Jan. 13 and a 2-2 draw at home against Lynbrook on Jan. 20.

These were games in which players thought they could easily have picked up the playoff points needed.

The team picked up crucial points

away at Wilcox on Jan. 22, when they came out with a 4-3 win. The Falcons were up 3-0 when Wilcox came back to tie the game 3-3, only for junior Kevin Yu to score a vital fourth goal with minutes remaining.

However, the team has struggled with sickness and injury at many points in the season, and was without defender Eric Baer and sophomore winger Jack Isacke for its first few games this season.

Later, starting attacking midfielder senior Matthew van den Berg injured his leg during a game against Cupertino on Jan. 26 and was knocked out of play for the rest of the season.

The team closed out the first half of the season with a comprehensive 4-0 home win against Cupertino on Jan. 26.

After the first half of the season, Yu led the league scoring list with 12 goals.

"Players such as [Yu] have helped the team a lot as they contribute by scoring each year."



FALCON // SWEEYA RAJ

Senior defender Romteam Masoumi dribbles the ball in the loss against Los Altos on Feb. 3.

crucial goals to win matches. He has been our top scorer for two years running and has truly helped us along the way to success," sophomore Neil Rao said.

The team will unlikely be advancing to CCS playoffs, they have proven to printing deadlines the game against Wilcox today and the game against Cupertino High School on Feb. 13 could not be covered. ♦

GIRLS' SOCCER

Falcons make the cut for CCS, hope for deep run

BY Fiona Sequeira

After defeating rival Los Gatos 3-0 on Jan. 25, the girls' soccer team has maintained its upward momentum. With a 4-3-2 record, the Falcons stand in third place in the tough De Anza league and are likely to make CCS.

At an away game against Homestead on Jan. 27, the girls notched a 3-0 victory. After Homestead conceded a handball outside the box in the first half, senior fullback Kaitlyn Chen's direct kick deflected off Homestead's wall and into the net's lower left corner for the girls' first goal.

Near the end of the first half, senior forward Kimberly Chen crossed the ball to senior center midfielder Lauren Maia.



Maia

Maia, whose finished her chance, making the score 2-0. Kimberly drew a foul in the penalty box at the close of the second half of the game, and Kaitlyn calmly placed her penalty kick in the lower right corner, sealing the game with a third goal.

"Homestead can be an unpredictable team, and it got a bit scary in the second half when they lingered around our goal for a while," Kaitlyn said. "But we pulled through and got the shutout; beating Homestead was really important for us."

At home on Jan. 29, the Falcons won 1-0 against Milpitas. Early in the second half, senior fullback Lauren Maia crossed the ball to sophomore center midfielder Daphne Liu, whose shot bounced off the goalkeeper. Kimberly pounced on the rebound and buried the ball into the back of the net.

"We were unable to maintain possession well in the first half, but I'm happy I was able to capitalize on my chance and score," Kimberly said.

Head coach Ben Maxwell is proud of the fighting spirit the players have shown for one another on the field, an "attitude of togetherness" that the team has continued from its undefeated preseason.

"Going to CCS would be incredible and would surpass our preseason ambitions," Maxwell said. "We have put ourselves in a great position, and not losing in our remaining games to the teams around us, like Santa Clara and Los Gatos, should get us into CCS."

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the games against Palo Alto and Santa Clara on Feb. 10 and Feb. 12, respectively. ♦

WRESTLING

Team raises funds to help improve quality of program

BY Aditya Chaudry

With a record of 2-3, the wrestling team is looking to improve key underclassmen and its program while sending top wrestlers onto CCS.

The team faced Los Altos at home on Feb. 2, losing 54-16 during the Falcon's senior night. Senior wrestler Adam Camp, the only senior on the varsity team, found a moment of peace in the middle of an aggressive match.

"For my senior night match it was about having fun; wrestling is a sport that is a repetitive grind and I just wanted to let loose," Camp said.

The team also suffered losses to Homestead on Jan. 28 and to Milpitas on Jan. 21.

"The losses were kind of hard since we almost got ahead of Homestead ... [and lost] in a wide margin to Milpitas," Camp said. Camp, however, is looking forward down the line into SCVAL playoffs and a run at winning the CCS title in the 220-pound division.

"To prep for CCS, I am in the wrestling room for three hours a day trying

to better my technique," Camp said. "Because I have a background in football the strength and speed come easily but wrestling is a very unique sport where learning the technique is crucial."

Despite having only 15 wrestlers last year, the team is using the season to grow and establish a presence on the campus by increasing the athletes on the team up to 17.

"We are a young team with a lot of first year wrestlers and are looking forward to improving as the year goes on."

senior Adam Camp



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>> snapshots



FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA



FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA



FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA



FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA

Senior Gabriel Fong takes a freethrow during the warmup before the basketball game on Feb. 5. The Falcons lost 47-44.

Students line up to feast on the variety of snacks offered at the Jazz Cabaret event on Feb. 6.

A group of junior girls practice their Bombay in the Bay dance in preparation for the show on Feb. 12 and 13.

Principal Paul Robinson addresses a group of students, teachers, and parents at the board meeting on Feb. 2.

buzzworthy >> Seniors embark on new frontiers

BY Gwynevere Hunger
& Anant Rajeev

For many seniors, second semester is a time of pure bliss. Free time abounds, pressure dissolves and college applications are a distant memory. However, some continue to make a productive use of their time by seeking out opportunities before heading to college in the fall.

Senior Shaya Nikfar is one such example. For her last semester in high school, she decided to take up a job helping at varsity tennis coach Florin Marica's private clinics, which take place at the school's tennis courts. Nikfar used to attend the clinics.

"The summer before my senior year, I had to decide if I truly wanted to pursue tennis on a higher level," Nikfar said. "But many of the college curriculum and academics that I am applying to will take up a majority of my time in college and not allow me to play a sport."

Still, wanting to continue her passion, she took on the job after hearing Marica's announcement about it at the varsity tennis team's year-end banquet. For two hours every other day, Nikfar drills young tennis players on movements, conditioning and coordination. Nikfar feels that it was only because she is a second-semester senior that she was able to accept the job. Without the stress-

es of school, Nikfar is happy to get paid for an activity that she loves.

"My favorite part is when I show the kids what their tennis movements should be like, and they look toward my actions as their inspiration," Nikfar said.

Whereas Nikfar has found her second-semester footing in a sport, senior Yu Karen Asai is seeking to allot her extra time to her academics by taking classes outside of school.

In December, Asai was accepted Early Decision to California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo. Asai saw which General Education courses she would have to complete to major in Biology and decided to get a head start

on these requirements by taking English 1A at West Valley College each Tuesday night.

"I think that it is always best to know the teacher face to face, so I choose in-person classes over online classes," Asai said. "The college class is longer than high school classes but it is only one time a week!"

Asai hopes to use this class to skip GE requirements at Cal Poly and become more focused on studying biology.

"It was really nice to keep in mind what college I was going to for second semester. This way, I'm able to use the extra free time wisely," Asai said. ♦



Ponderings of a practical gal in AP Lang

BY Gitika Nalwa

Grab a cup of tea, if you will. I'm the type to ramble. On this wet, unabashedly ordinary day, I must write to you of equally ordinary things: the humdrum and yet unsettling moments I've endured these past few months in AP Language and Composition, AP Lang for short. At our best, we in AP Lang are intellectually curious, analytically gifted, avant-garde savants. We frequently challenge establishment dogma, battle the minions of the system and deride flawed logic. But at our worst, we are pig-headed, pedantic, self-assured, cynical, pseudo intellectuals driven by our craving to impress.

A prominent theme in AP Lang, I have found, is the appreciation of the unknowable: the vaguer, the broader, the better. My classmates often ask: "What is love? What is time? What is existence?" — all questions reminiscent of the clichéd oh-so-deep tree-falls-in-the-forest scenario. A newfound favorite of theirs is "soulful," a grandiose mask for a nebulous notion. Such chicanery disgusts me. But that is not to say I am above it.

Early last semester, owing to a particularly grim newspaper deadline night and an impending AP Physics lab report, I was unable to complete an assigned AP Lang reading.

The day we were to discuss this reading, after only three hours of sleep, I stumbled into class, and plopped my backpack on my desk. Upon my arrival, my spirited classmate (let's call her

Amy) ever so endearingly accosted me, as is her custom.

"There are two camps," she proclaimed. "Those who completely agree with the reading, and those who completely disagree. Which camp are you?"

Well, as I'd not done the reading, I didn't want to commit to either side. But even if I had read the assignment, certainty and absolutism I've learned are sure paths to embarrassment.

"I somewhat agree, somewhat disagree," I told Amy, furrowing my brow in mock earnestness. "Is there a camp for that?" I grinned.

Amy was speechless. For about half-an-hour, I basked in my complacency and fraudulence. But then I began to wonder, "Why did my statement go unchallenged?" Perhaps, Amy didn't have the time to confront me. Or perhaps, she hadn't done the reading herself.

AP Lang is neither the art of intellectual fraudulence, nor an art devoid of it. It is not that we, its pupils, submit illogical opinions, which we far too often do, but that due to time constraints, the idiocy of our opinions often goes unscrutinized, if not completely undetected.

Still, every so often, we in AP Lang encounter perceptive insights from our peers and readings. And though I can appreciate these authentic, well-thought-out philosophical arguments, I sometimes wonder how much value such arguments have in the practical world. Does it matter if you perceive a table as chestnut brown and I as mahogany, as Bertrand Russell explores?



GRAPHIC BY HELEN CHEN

Does it affect me that the past and the future are both in a "hiding place," as St. Augustine posits? Such arguments are neither useful nor practical, but they are also not foolish — which is admirable given the inane propositions that sometimes run amok in AP Lang.

Indeed, several philosophers have the annoying habit of proposing theories to justify their own deviancy. Take Sigmund Freud, for instance, whose Oedipus Complex theory is most aptly described as the salacious ponderings of a sex addict. Freud seemingly takes his urge to sleep with his mom and universalizes it. But as much as you'd like to believe it, Sigmund, we're not in the same boat. In fact, I'm frantically rowing away from you. Despite my light-hearted jabs, however, I must admit that philosophy is not simply a sport for talentless timewasters. In truth, philosophy is CrossFit for the brain — no less than the P.E. I put off until my senior year is claimed to be for my body.

After reluctantly lapping up establishment propaganda for years, I'm relieved to discover I'm not alone in my skepticism: Philosophers have questioned establishment dogma since at least Socrates. Philosophy cultivates our fallow minds, exposing us to occasional brilliance in piles of cow dung, nurturing in us seeds of discovery. It undermines the status quo. It encourages our baffled "beings" to reflect and to introspect: to reject rigid recipes and instead concoct new brews for the mind.

Philosophy to me, my dear friend, is of great consequence: It prompts in me ponderings over a cup of tea on an unabashedly ordinary evening, and makes me wonder. ♦

♥ ♥ >> topten ♥ ♥

WAYS TO SPEND VALENTINE'S DAY

- 10 **Alone.** R Kelly's greatest hits and two tubs of Chunky Monkey should be a perfect combination.
- 9 **Online Dating.** Desperation calls for 100 "swipe rights" on Tinder.
- 8 **Watch a sappy romance movie.** Oh, wherefore art thou Romeo?.
- 7 **Blast your favorite love song to your special someone.** Buy a speaker and get a copy of "Careless Whisper" for free!
- 6 **Have a night out with your friends.** "I promise you, we're single by choice!"
- 5 **Take a romantic trip to paradise.** Somalia, here we come!
- 4 **Listen to Drake's "Take Care" album.** Cry if you need to, but I can't stay to watch you.
- 3 **Take your significant other skiing.** Black diamonds for the red hearts.
- 2 **Plan dates that will never happen.** "Let's DEFINITELY hang out this break!"
- 1 **Fall in love at Bombay in the Bay.** You'll never know you loved chocolate this much!

>> Arjun Ramanathan