

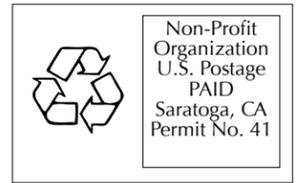
Goings-on while the world sleeps.



Financial advice from 'Big Short' guru.



Senior stars lead team, qualify for CCS.



THE saratogafalcon



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COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Are expensive universities worth the cost?

BY Caitlin Ju & Rachel Zhang

The cost of college tuition has risen astronomically in the past decade. Last year, tuition alone for Ivy League schools increased by an average of 3.76 percent, raising costs to as high as \$63,000 a year, according to Bloomberg. To put it into perspective, paying the four-year tuition of a prestigious Ivy like Columbia University can be likened to buying a 2016 Lexus GS 450h priced at \$63,080 a year for the next four years, or if a student doesn't quite reach a degree, driving the equivalent of four Lexus cars off a cliff.

Though the cost for some colleges can be considered absurd, others

>> COLLEGE on pg. 4

SPRING FLING ON THE SILVER SCREEN

>> SADIES on pg. 8

RALLY



FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA

SADIES



FALCON // HELEN CHEN

POWDERPUFF



TALISMAN // KARISHMA SHAH

SPIRIT DAYS



FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA

STUDENT HEALTH

Students open up about living with life-threatening allergies

BY Cassandra King & Austin Wang

Junior Rosa Castren felt panic surge through her.

A nearby student began to peel an orange in front of the drama room in an area marked "Citrus-free Zone." The pungent citrus floated to Castren's nose, and her throat began to close up. Her vision blurred, her

head grew light and each panting breath squeezed her lungs shut.

Even her inhaler was not enough to stop the sensation. Finally, she was forced to use her EpiPen, an autoinjector of adrenaline she injected into her thigh, and she was soon rushed to the emergency room to safely control her reaction. This happened only a month ago and

was not the first time she had gone through an extreme reaction.

Castren is one of dozens of students on campus with food allergies. These students must take precautions to avoid allergic reactions, but as was the case with Castren, other students often lack awareness and endanger them when they bring allergy-inducing foods like nuts

and citrus into areas that are supposed to be safe.

All her life, Castren has suffered from allergies to numerous foods: fruit, spices, oats, fish, nuts, pine and pollen — with the worst being citrus. The mere scent of peeled citrus sends her into anaphylactic shock, causing her to have difficulty breathing and to get dizzy and lightheaded. The condition

is so bad that she must wear a pollen filtering mask while venturing outside citrus-free rooms.

Classrooms are labeled citrus-free or nut-free if there are students with those allergies in the class. While she has encountered severe allergic reactions several times in the past, Cas-

>> ALLERGIES on pg. 5

ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR

Marshburn to return to San Antonio next year

BY Melissa Magner & Kelly Xiao

The job of an activities director isn't an easy one. It includes communicating with teachers, meeting with and managing student government, organizing club events and student activities, taking care of information that needs to be given to the school board and helping the Leadership class do its variety of tasks.

The job is currently held by Spanish teacher Rebecca Marshburn, but when the 2015-16 school year comes to



Marshburn

an end, she will return with her family to San Antonio, Texas, her home before moving to California mainly because, according to Marshburn, they don't have a lot of family in California and decided that after her father-in-law's passing in December, it was important to be around family.

Student leaders say losing Marshburn will be a huge loss.

"Words cannot describe how amazing she is," said senior clubs commissioner Meera Rachamalla. "She is incredibly hardworking and she

>> MARSHBURN on pg. 6

FACILITIES

Measure E bond to fund construction of new gym

BY Eric Sze & Alex Yang

When Measure E construction ends in a few years, sports teams and groups like winterguard will no longer have to compete for practice time in the Large and Small Gyms. Instead, they will be able to make use of a third gym, to be called the Fieldhouse.

The location for the building is not finalized, but one idea is to put it near the front parking lot and the tennis courts. It will be similar in size to the current Small Gym, principal Paul Robinson said.

The Fieldhouse's name helps define it as an alternative practice area.

One reason the location near the tennis courts makes sense, Robinson said, is that it is the only place where the school can fit the 70-foot by 100-foot building.

According to Robinson, the core of the current conflict lies in the overlap of activities that require gym space at the same time. The resulting crowded gym schedule leaves some sports practicing long after school and other groups not getting the time in a gym that they would like.

"At this time in the spring, we have basketball completing its season just as badminton and volleyball begin

>> MEASURE E on pg. 5

>> what's inside

RETIREMENT

Beloved janitor

John Sequeira says goodbye after 10 years at SHS. pg. 6

BELL SCHEDULE

Debate rages on

Students object to Falcon bell schedule news coverage. Editor responds. pg. 12

BEAUTY

Cosmetic procedure

Asian-American alumna discusses impact of double-eyelid surgery. pg. 19



Junior prom to be held at Hayes Mansion

On the afternoon of April 16, a crowd of students donning dresses and tuxedos will board buses at SHS, ready for junior prom at Hayes Mansion, a hotel resort in San Jose.

Within the hotel, students will find a large ballroom awaiting them. Desserts, pictures and various board and card games will be downstairs. Officers are also planning to set up a DIY candy bar.

The venue was booked a full year in advance by the Class of 2017's officers, who voted almost unanimously for the venue after viewing the "gorgeous" exterior of Hayes Mansion.

"Usually, we need to plan from a year prior in order to get the date we want because these venues fill up really fast with other events and weddings and such," junior class president Ellicia Chiu said.

Bids went on sale March 14 and are scheduled to last through April 1, with prices starting at \$135 with ASB and \$140 without. Prices will increase by \$10 each week. Students can enter for the chance to win a 50 percent discount on their prom bids by tagging their "promposal" on Facebook with the hashtag #shsjprom2016. The best promposal will be chosen by the junior class officers once the bid sales end.

Because the contest is so easy to enter, Chiu believes that all of the 275 to 300 students the class officers hope will attend prom will also enter the contest.

"I think I just really want everyone to have a good time," Chiu said. "I really hope for positive feedback because we've been working really hard on this."

—Emily Chen

New murals aim to raise school spirit

The School Site Council recently approved and helped pay for the addition of six new murals in the Large Gym: two large murals on each side with the school's slogan and four small murals above the bleachers. The large murals read, "It's great to be a Falcon," and each small mural has the name of the grade that sits in that bleacher section during rallies.

"We've been wanting to bring our gym to life with a new look for a while," principal Paul Robinson said.

The school hired artists from Kourtgraphinc, who designed the new gym floor during last year's summer break. Kourtgraphinc completed painting the new murals for the gym walls over February break.

ASB helped fund the new murals, contributing \$10,000 of the \$13,000 bill, after approving the School Site Council's proposal last fall. Additional decor for the four smaller murals to the gym was added to the initial price of two big murals, but ASB was able to handle the increase.

"With the support of our ASB, we feel our gym is really coming along," Robinson added.

Because so many students use the gym on a daily basis for a wide range of activities, the administration hopes the new murals will be a positive change.

"The new murals are amazing in that they are perfect for games and rallies in the big gym," junior Vincent Man said. "Not only do they fill the empty space, but they create such a spirited atmosphere."

—Gwynivere Hunger

falconfigures

COST OF JPPROM

Table with 2 columns: Item and Cost. Includes Venue (\$28,000), Bus (\$6,000), DJ (\$4,000), Photo (\$28-70), Tickets (\$290 per couple), Corsages & Boutonnieres (\$25-50), Dresses & Tuxedos (\$300-1000), Total (\$38,070), Total (\$1,340).

Source: Junior Class President Ellicia Chiu

—Eric Sze

picturethis



FALCON // SWEEYA RAJ

TUNING IN >> Junior Iris Lu and senior Aakash Thumaty (second and third from left) perform with two Redwood Middle School trumpet players at the MESH benefit concert on March 17.

MAP

Upperclassmen to travel to Wild West

by Alex Yang

With a twinkle in his eye, history teacher Matt Torrens recalls his trip with 20 juniors and seniors two years ago, and Green River.

The students will also visit several historic sites, such as Topaz War Relocation Center and the Green River ghost town.

He said that some of his most memorable moments from last year's trip were seeing the body of a decomposing baby elk and seeing the full skull and antlers of a mule deer that was killed by a mountain lion.

I take them and show them a variety of history, from dinosaurs to petroglyphs of Native Americans.



teacher Matt Torrens

From April 5-10, Torrens and 20 upperclassmen from the Media Arts Program (MAP) will be repeating this adventure in Salt Lake City and the surrounding towns. Torrens will be taking three chaperones: assistant principal Kerry Mohnike, guidance counselor Eileen Allen and parent Steve Metz along for the trip.

On the trip, students will hike, go on jeep rides, and look for animal bones, as well as picnic at scenic spots like Canyonlands National Park, Jailhouse Rock, Dead Horse Point

Although the trip, which costs \$1,400 per student, was offered to all junior and senior social studies classes, Torrens said that only MAP students signed up. He hopes that the biggest takeaway students will have from the trip is an appreciation for America's history, and a knowledge of the unset-

tle experience her older sister, Class of 2015 alumna Samie Davey, had on the trip a couple of years ago.

"My sister went on the trip and she loved it," Davey said. "Also, Mr. Torrens is awesome and I thought it would be fun to go on a trip with him as a tour guide."

DRAMA

'Pride and Prejudice' to perform at ITS

by Melissa Wagner

When director Sarah Thermond submitted a snippet from the 2015 fall play "Pride and Prejudice" to the California Play Marathon Contest last December, she wasn't sure whether they had a chance of being selected. So, when she learned three months later that the play had been one of three performances chosen, she said she was beyond "thrilled."

The cast is now guaranteed a half-hour performance of the play at Upland High School in Southern California on April 1. The performance is one of the main events of the International Thespian Society (ITS).

"We sort of unofficially judge how well we've done each year by whether or not any of our students got to perform or receive an award on the mainstage," Thermond said.

"The fact that we are guaranteed a half-hour performance [on the mainstage] before is a really exciting prospect."

This is also the first time during Thermond's tenure that the school has received this honor.

Although this contest is one of the events at the state conference the drama department attends every year, it is different from other competitions in that the drama department must apply for it beforehand.

"The competition is for a one-act play, which basically means it has to be under 30 minutes," Thermond said. "We send in DVD submissions to each of the three judges."

The judges then compare notes and choose three pieces to perform on the mainstage of the festival, an audience of roughly 1,000 people.

"We feel honored," junior

Lea Moustakas said. "Now, it's just a matter of getting back into our British accents after rehearsing with New York accents for 'Guys and Dolls' for so long."

In the meantime, the drama department is continuing to prepare for its upcoming spring musical "Guys and Dolls," which is set to perform in late April. The production appears to be in good shape: The cast has learned all the music for the show, with the exception of some tricky harmonies in two or three songs.

"We've staged the dances and songs, now, it's just a matter of putting it all together and getting confident, and adding tech," Thermond said.

Tech week begins April 15, and the show 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. ♦

FACULTY

Rodriguex elects to teach one more year

2016-17 WILL BE HIS 43RD YEAR

by Emily Chen & Caitlin Ju

Around the holiday season this year, doubt crept into Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguex's mind, and he was not so sure about his decision to retire at the same time Class of 2016 graduates. Rodriguex, who has taught in the district (mostly at SHS) for 42 years, said his plan for retirement just did not feel right anymore and has decided to stay at the school for at least one more year.

"I started full speed, 'Yes I'm going to retire, yes, I've told everybody, yes and yes and yes,'" he said. "And then I had a nightmare with those yeses. They were attacking me. Yes, yes, yes."

One of the major reasons Rodriguex decided to stay was so that he could

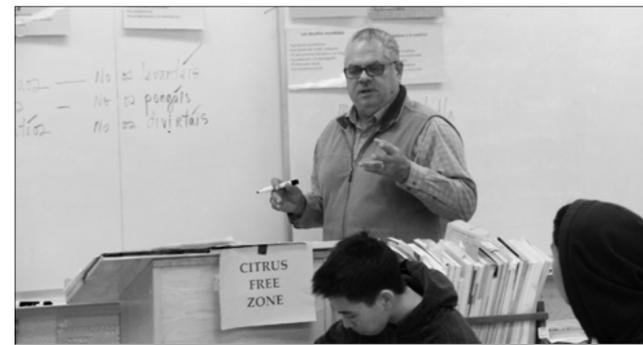
After telling the district that he doesn't plan to retire this year, Rodriguex was overjoyed by the response he's received, which included emails from parents, former students and current students.

"Some of the kids in 4 [Honors] are happy that I'm going to stay because change is difficult. They want to continue and all of the sudden [they're] like, 'OK, what's going to happen to me next year?'" Rodriguex said.

Junior Saya Sivaram, a Spanish 5 AP student, was among those who were excited to hear that he would return to teach for another year.

"He always tries to make his class fun and enjoyable for us, no stress," Sivaram said, "and if you go to him with a problem, he will acknowledge it and try to help you out."

With Rodriguex's decision to stay, the annual Spanish class trip to Cuernavaca, which he sees as an extremely positive experience for the students both in Mexico and here, will also remain.



FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA

Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguex teaches his Spanish 4 honors class verb tenses.

the language you're learning. It's very important that you see that, you see how these people think," Rodriguex said.

Senior Allen Li, a Spanish 5 AP student and Rodriguex's TA, has been on the Cuernavaca trip three times and has recognized his teacher's dedication to his job and care for his students.

"He treats you like his own family," Li said. "He expects the same from you, but in the end there is a level of respect between him and his students that you don't see a lot."

Though many have told him of the advantages of retirement, such as having more time to read or to take care of his garden, Rodriguex, who is 66, still derives joy from being in the classroom.

"I already make time to do all of those things that I like, so I don't want to be a full-time hiker [or] a full-time gardener," Rodriguex said.

When he does retire, Rodriguex hopes

to stay involved in education.

One way would be by teaching Spanish at a private school, as teachers who retire in the public school system have to take at least one year off before returning to work in a public school.

He would also seriously consider finding an organization that takes kids abroad and working as a tour leader for it, like his role in the trips to Cuernavaca.

In the end, he said missing the people he interacts with in his teaching job would be the hardest part of retirement, whether they be the students visiting from Cuernavaca or SHS Spanish students.

"I just love working with the student body here. You're all so respectful, so kind, and it just makes me feel very good. I appreciate it," Rodriguex said. "And it's not always roses, you know. It's not always happy times. But most of the times, it is, and that's powerful to me." ♦

I started full speed, 'Yes, I'm going to retire, yes, I've told everybody, yes and yes and yes.' And then I had a nightmare with those yeses. teacher Arnaldo Rodriguex

experience teaching with the new rolling block schedule.

"I just want to see what the process is like and try to maintain a good quality education and training in Spanish for students who take the class," said Rodriguex.

He is concerned about students' ability to learn the language with fewer times to practice per week.

tion for the time being.

"You know, I like to continue [the Cuernavaca trip] because I think that's important for our community and for

INTERNET OF THINGS

Tech club builds for the future with new projects

by Emily Chen & Katherine Sun

Under the control of freshman Daniel Bessonov, the quadcopter drone hovered, facing the club members as they posed for a picture on the bench of the math quad. With the tap of a finger on a smartphone, the phone-controlled camera attached to the drone captured the group photo.

This is just one example of the Internet of Things (IoT) Club meetings, which occur Mondays at lunch in adviser Meghan Pickett's room 105.

During meetings, the 20 members develop their own technology from basic components, such as motors and wires. The club was founded this year by its current co-presidents, Bessonov, sophomore Aayush Gupta and freshman Patrick Li, who plan out an assortment of projects for members to work on each week.

So far, members have built laser tripwires and games, instruments that

are controlled by a phone's flashlight, a joystick-controlled LED grid, a motor that can open combination locks in one second deemed "combo breaker" and gesture-controlled objects. Later in the year, the club hopes to work on projects that positively impact the school, hopefully involving NFC tags, which are sensors that communicate with other devices once in range.

"Unlike classes or other clubs, we build what we want to build, at a pace that we want to build at," Gupta said. "A project like the combo breaker would be shut down in any other classroom and too expensive for most clubs, so IoT club is really the only place [where] we can truly be creative."

IoT has been able to afford their materials for their various projects with funding from Micron Foundation, which agreed to sponsor the club after the officers caught the company's

interest in a conversation over email. "Sometimes we joke that we're almost like a startup: We meet in a garage to brainstorm ideas, sitting around a ping-pong table with electronics strewn all over the place in order to figure out how to conduct our next meetings," Gupta said.

The founders first met this past summer at the A-Star Computer Science Camp.

After finding out that they all attended Saratoga High, they began thinking about how they could create a tech club.

"We wanted to create a more applied version of a computer science club," Gupta said. "So, we took one of the hottest topics in tech today, the internet of things, and decided to play around with projects."

The Internet of Things is the idea that household appliances are connected to the internet and one another to make everyday life easier.

The founders took a bizarre but successful approach to attracting members.

Before their first meeting, they announced that they would randomly give out 50 Pearl Milk Teas, a popular drink on campus, and over 60 people showed up.

"We wanted to do something crazy that no other club had ever thought of doing to show how unique our club is," Gupta said. "It paid off, because although our initial investment was out of pocket, we quickly attracted enough members to establish a club with enough members to attract funding from Micron Foundation."

Gupta embraces having dedicated members in the club, and he and his fellow officers have a goal to finish a unique project and to "pass on the reins to equally passionate kids."

"We want to be able to impact anyone who wants experience building products of the future," Bessonov said. ♦



Gupta

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How much do UC Regents' Scholarships matter?

BY Divya Rallabandi & Navin Tiwary

The Regents' Scholarship is said to be one of the most distinguished scholarships that undergraduates can receive from the Universities of California, more commonly known as UCs. UC Berkeley gives 1.5 percent of students the scholarship each year.

Students must be either entering freshmen or transfer students, permanent residents or citizens or California Dream Act students and must have demonstrated strength in their academics in order to be considered as Regents' candidates. After receiving the candidacy, students go through an interview process with the scholarship committee and may choose to submit a teacher recommendation letter as well.

Those who receive the scholarship, which is merit-based, gain priority enrollment, a housing guarantee, a monetary reward of \$10,000 over four years, increased library privileges and potential involvement in research programs. Senior Amy Zhang, who got the scholarship at UC Berkeley and plans to major in Environmental Sciences, said the interview felt like a conversation.

"I like how the interviewer asked about real world applications of environmental sciences and how we can make the public more aware of [the problems]," Zhang said.

Zhang also said the scholarship will be extremely useful in her choice of choosing a college.

"I like how with the scholarship I get priority in choosing classes and the [priority] dorm assignment," Zhang

said. "I think UC Berkeley looks for students who want to make a difference in the world are willing to take the initiative to do so."

For Class of 2014 alumnus Akshay Madhani, who attends UC Berkeley as an electrical engineering/computer science (EECS) major and Regents' Scholar, the largest benefit is that he doesn't need to worry about getting the classes he wants because of priority enrollment.

With this advantage, Madhani also has the flexibility to select section times that he wants for his classes.

"I don't have to go to class before 10 a.m. because I can always select section times that aren't in the morning," Madhani said.

In the future, Madhani wishes to further take advantage of his scholarship by conducting individual research, since

Regents' Scholars can receive research stipends.

Class of 2014 alumnus Mostafa Rohaninejad, who also attends UC Berkeley as an EECS major and Regents' Scholar, said the scholarship is useful but does not directly change the college lifestyle of students.

"It really has no impact; it is not really a topic of conversation, and it is kind of [odd] to bring it up randomly," Rohaninejad said.

Among other things, Rohaninejad has found that it is not the scholarship money that is crucial to his life at college, but rather his scheduling and housing preferences.

"Overall, [the scholarship] is a great opportunity for students to have access to the best resources the UC has to offer," Rohaninejad said. ♦



Judgment Day: Acharya accepted to Emerson University

BY Claire Chou & Katherine Sun

On the bus ride back from the March 15 AP European History field trip, one of senior Saro Acharya's friends reassured him, "Just do it. Just check."

It had been a good day so far, spent in the Legion of Honor Museum. Acharya knew that the longer he waited to find out about whether he had been accepted to Emerson University, the longer the anticipation would build up, and the more disappointed he would be if he were rejected. He checked. And soon he was high-fiving his friend.

"That made me overwhelmingly happy," Acharya said. "I was just really excited and super relieved that I finally got into a college besides like a [California State University]."

Acharya has been accepted to Emerson University, San Francisco State University and the Pratt Institute. He was rejected by New York University, Loyola Marymount University, The University of Texas at Austin, Northwestern University, USC and UCLA, and waitlisted by Chapman University and UCSC.

Out of the colleges that have accepted

him, Acharya said he is leaning toward Emerson, since it is one of the top 10 film schools in the country and offers a "great" liberal arts education.

The main campus is located in Boston, but the school also has a campus right on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles.

Acharya had been hoping for an acceptance from USC, the top film school in the country, but knew that the competition to get in was overwhelming.

According to Acharya, only one student from the Media Arts Program has ever gotten into USC for film.

As he played the waiting game, just going to school and doing school work helped to take his mind off the "nervewracking" college decisions process. He avoided thinking about it whenever possible. He has thought, however, about what he would do after entering college. He wants to get involved in a broadcast program and perhaps even work on a school newspaper.

"I have always been interested in journalism and I'm in SHSTV, so it fits right into that area," he said. ♦

COLLEGE >>

continued from pg. 1

have been deemed a worthwhile investment.

Price vs. value

According to PayScale, an online salary information company, Harvey Mudd College ranks first in the "Best Value Colleges of 2015" list, with an average loan amount of \$21,000 and the highest 20-year net Return of Investment (ROI) of \$985,300.

The ROI is the difference between 20-Year median pay for a bachelor's graduate and the 24-Year median pay for a high school graduate minus the total four-year cost of the school. In other words, a Harvey Mudd graduate would have \$985,300 more in 20 years than a high school graduate who decided not to attend college and worked at a low-education, low-wage job.

Senior Jacky Lee, who was admitted early decision to Harvey Mudd for computer science and mathematics, thinks the college received the highest ranking because of its supportive faculty. Lee attributed the cost benefits of attending a prestigious liberal arts school like Harvey Mudd to its student-oriented learning environment.

"I thought that Harvey Mudd was the best in terms of preparing undergraduates for the future," Lee said. "The clinic program is excellent because it allows students to tackle real-world problems unlike some of the other schools where students do worthless busy work."

Following Harvey Mudd on the list are less prominent colleges such as Ste-

vens Institute of Technology, the Colorado School of Mines and Babson College in Massachusetts. Though not brand-name schools, these universities were reported to have a greater return investment than any of the Ivy Leagues. Princeton University is the first Ivy League university to appear at No. 9 on the list, Brown University is next at No. 15, and University of Pennsylvania (Penn) follows at No. 31.

Senior Jennifer Chen was accepted early decision to Penn as an undeclared major in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences. Though she said tuition was not a consideration in her decision to apply, she will be taking steps to cover the high tuition, mainly by saving money and taking out college loans. Though the hefty yearly sticker price of \$43,838 without room and board is not ideal, Chen hopes that the educational opportunities at Penn will be worth the cost.

The Universities of California (UC) offer affordable and quality education for California residents, but with increasing competition, not all qualified high schoolers can gain admission to the UC system. For the 2015-16 school year, UC tuition was \$12,240 across campuses.

Out-of-state and more obscure colleges, such as Berea College in Berea, Kentucky, with a tuition of \$870 and Brigham Young University, with a tuition of \$5,150, allow low-income students to receive a quality college education for less. Berea is ranked No. 67 in US News Report's top national liberal arts colleges, while Brigham is tied in No. 66 in US News Report's rankings of national colleges.

To stay competitive, the University of Southern California (USC) reduces its expensive tuition of \$51,442 by awarding many of its undergraduates generous merit-based scholarships, a feature that attracts many to attend.

Class of 2015 alumnus Devin Zhao received a half-ride Presidential Scholar scholarship to USC for being a National Merit Scholar and said it "played a huge role in deciding between USC and a UC." He believes that the over \$50,000 cost is "entirely justified" by the quality of education a student can receive at USC.

Similarly, Class of 2015 alumna, Maya Ravichandran, who also attends USC for computer science, said the half-scholarship USC offered her was one of the biggest reasons she chose to attend.

"Regardless of how amazing a school is, the price will always be a factor in any decision. Tuition is going up in every school, and if there is way I can soften

the burden, I will take it," Ravichandran said. "But that also was not the only factor. I love the atmosphere at USC and the resources and people I've met are amazing. Pretty much everyone will offer help if you need it."

A priceless experience

English teacher Suzanne Herzman hopes all students find college a time of personal discovery and intellectual growth, just as she did as an undergrad at NYU (New York University), where she double majored in Art History and French. Herzman said that though NYU's tuition was pricey compared to other colleges, she easily paid the tuition through scholarships and a university job. Because a surplus of jobs was available in the economy during that time, Herzman had the freedom to explore majors she did not necessarily want to pursue a career in, but still left college with the skills and tools to succeed.

"I believe so strongly in that time to continue to learn how to think, to figure out who you are," Herzman said. "I know that's not practical. But if you learn how to learn, if you haven't figured out how to encounter and deal with the world, it doesn't matter [what] career you go into."

For many Saratoga students and families, the price of a college, no matter the prestige, still remains a factor in their decision, though faculty to student ratio, as well as return on investment, are also key determinants. Scholarships, whether need-based or merit-based, can always help, but colleges have a limited number to give out. In the end, families may ask themselves: Is the price of an Ivy League education worth four high-priced Lexuses? ♦



Chen

LEGAL ISSUES

Freshmen's 'Damn Daniel' Top 25 app taken down

BY Daphne Liu & Olivia Lu

Freshman Daniel Bessonov and Patrick Li usually develop apps for fun, but they never expected any of their apps to reach the Top 25 Games in the App Store, much less result in a possible lawsuit.

The app came about when they and sophomore Aayush Gupta were sitting in the library on Feb. 26, bouncing ideas off of each other for a new app. At the time, the "Damn Daniel" video featuring high school student Daniel Lara was taking the web by storm.

Lara had become a mini-celebrity, and Li and Bessonov saw an opportunity to take advantage of the situation. The two boys decided to make their own "Damn Daniel" button.

Bessonov and Li coded the app within a few hours, with the hopes of creating something similar to famous apps they've seen before. The result was the "Damn Daniel Button," which, whenever tapped, spoke in the voice of Lara's friend Josh Holz, famous for his high-pitched "Damn Daniel" phrase.

The app included the ability to switch the sound from "Damn Daniel" to "Damn Daniel, back at it again with the

white Vans," as well as a counter to keep track of the number of times the button was pressed. Each time the button was pressed, the user racked up points.

According to Bessonov, these points corresponded with colors of "Vans," according to how many times someone clicked the button. The so-called medals of achievement ranged from yellow Vans, obtained at 50 clicks, to white Vans, obtained at 10 thousand plus clicks. The app's top 100 players all had over 35,000 clicks.

A few days after they uploaded the app, however, Bessonov and Li were

contacted by Holz and Lara's lawyers. Because their app had used the original audio from the video uploaded by Holz, the lawyers told them they were using sounds that were copyrighted.

"The lawyers contacted us before the app had been on the Top Charts and tried to get us to take it down," Bessonov said. "They told us they still [had] legal basis to sue us because they trademarked the actual phrase."

day. "It's really hard to control what everyone does," Strawn said. "I understand it is our responsibility not [to] go near peanuts."

Junior Michelle Jiang has no food allergies herself, but some of her friends do suffer from them.

"A lot of people tend to just not care about the signs because they've never seen anything happen to someone, so they don't feel like it's that big of a deal," Jiang said.

Around campus, many teachers strongly warn students against eating citrus or nuts near their classes. Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguez, for instance, has hung seven "NO CITRUS" signs in his room.

"Is it 100 percent controllable? No, but I think we all do our best trying to remind students," Rodriguez said.

Spanish teacher Bret Yielding said the school has made significant progress in raising awareness about food allergies.

"Five to 10 years ago, I never saw any signs like 'Nut-free Zone' or 'Citrus-free Zone,'" Yielding said. "Now, you see them all over."

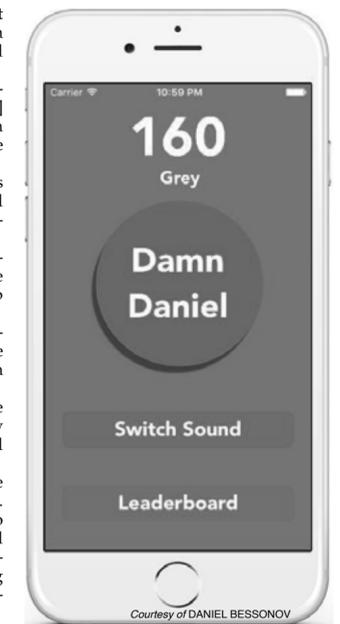
Students like Castren only hope that students will learn to pay better attention to the signs and save her from EpiPen injections and ambulance rides to the hospital. ♦



Bessonov



Li



Courtesy of DANIEL BESSONOV

ALLERGIES >>

continued from pg. 1

tren said each time the experience is "hard."

"[Allergic reactions] always harm my heart, and I have to go to the hospital because my heart gets irregular, and it's not safe," she said.

Besides placing signs in classrooms, the administration has also made sure there are safe zones around the Quad, such as the one near the drama room.

Nevertheless, many students walk right by the bright yellow "NO CITRUS" and bright pink "NO NUTS" signs on over 20 doors around campus, oblivious to these warnings. Because some students think of allergies as mere itchy throats or puffy lips, they often carry on eating what they please, unaware that the foods they eat could significantly endanger others, Castren said. But for students like Castren, negligence in obeying these signs can be the difference between life and death.

"Some people wouldn't understand that there could be very serious consequences, like ending up in the hospital," Castren said.

Teachers can also make errors when it comes to food allergies. Sophomore

Isabella Strawn, who has a severe nut allergy, remembers having to leave a room during a final exam because her teacher passed out peanut cookies beforehand.

"I would definitely appreciate it if in classrooms, [they] made more of an effort to say no nuts, no peanuts, no citrus, no whatever the allergy is," Strawn said. "I think that would be

There could be very serious consequences, like ending up in the hospital. junior Rosa Castren

great and really helpful because we should really be focusing on allergies. [Then I wouldn't have to think], 'Oh, if someone's eating peanuts, then what can I touch [and] what have they touched.'"

Regardless of what students and faculty do to avoid these allergic reactions, students with allergies usually find themselves having to walk into potentially dangerous situations every

entire period or after school.

And although the cafeteria is the only place where students are allowed to purchase food and beverages on campus, it

FACILITIES

State laws explain cafeteria's monopoly on food sales

BY Fiona Sequeira

Senior Felicia Hung, co-president of Interact Club, recently contemplated selling In-N-Out burgers during lunch to raise money for the club. She quickly remembered, though, that she would not be allowed to do so, as only the school cafeteria is allowed to sell food and beverages on campus at break and lunch.

Hung's predicament is not unusual. Several clubs on campus have sought to stake a claim on the lucrative lunch scene and sell food or drink for profit, but are prevented from doing so due to state laws that the school must abide by.

According to the California Department of Education's Competitive Foods

and Beverages policy, public school districts can approve non-cafeteria sales for up to four school days per year. The sales may take place at any time during the school day, but student organizations cannot prepare the food or beverages on campus or sell the same items that are sold by the food service program. On these four allocated days, non-student groups who choose to sell do not have to abide by these guidelines. As a result of this code, the school cafeteria has a virtual monopoly on food sales on campus.

Public school districts can approve non-cafeteria sales for up to four school days a year.

"We generally take advantage of [these four days] through our All School Bar-B-Q, Club Rush, and a few other times where we've had food trucks on campus for spirit

weeks like Spring Fling," principal Paul Robinson said.

Due to the rule, popular pearl milk tea fundraisers by class offices or clubs are restricted to specific times such as during seventh period or after school.

And although the cafeteria is the only place where students are allowed to purchase food and beverages on campus, it

MEASURE E >>

continued from pg. 1

theirs," Robinson said. "You then throw in winterguard's competitive season beginning along with dance team, and space becomes very difficult to schedule."

However, with other Measure E projects like the new music building in progress, construction for the new gym is far away, but could possibly begin in June of 2017, he said.

It was one of the original projects that parents, students and teachers asked for. Though nothing is finalized, Robinson estimated the cost of the facility to be about \$2.5 million.

Winterguard member Austin Shi agreed that another gym facility is much needed on campus.

"We have rehearsed more times in the library and other places than we have in our own gym," Shi said.

Shi also expressed some complaints that scheduling in the current gyms neglects winterguard and other non-sport activities.

"Personally, I don't have any hard feelings toward sports. They do an awesome job," Shi said. "It's just how facilities work out and how it's rather one-sided at times." ♦

has more lenient standards than most other schools in the area. Most of these schools are bound by the strict nutritional standards of the National School Lunch Program, a federal program that assists schools in providing lunches at reduced prices.

According to Cafeteria Food Manager Pam Carlino, the school opted for an exemption waiver from the program. Consequently, the cafeteria is not held to any federal rules about what it can or cannot sell.

"We still try to purchase low fat and whole wheat products whenever possible and avoid selling foods that wouldn't be backed by the national program, such as candy or soda," Carlino said. ♦

RETIREMENT

John the Janitor hangs up his suspenders

By Harshini Ramaswamy & Fiona Sequeira

For custodian John Sequeira, better known around campus as John the Janitor, today is bittersweet. After working for 10 years at the school as a night custodian mostly responsible for taking care of the Small and Large Gyms, he will retire, having turned 68 just last week.

Sequeira, who often sports his rainbow or smiley-faced patterned suspenders, said he will miss working at what he describes as a “family school” where everybody appreciates his help.

“Everybody respects me the way I am and the way I work,” Sequeira said. “This is what I love about working here.”

During his time at the school, Sequeira has grown especially close with the basketball teams. His shift normally started at 2 p.m., but during the basketball season he arrived on campus two hours earlier so he could finish working before the games and be there to support the team. Over time, the basketball players adopted him as their No. 1 fan.

“Because I’m working in the gym, and I love the basketball games, I started being involved with the teams,” Sequeira said. “They love me, so I do everything I can for them. The teams and the coach are really nice to me. I’m going to miss them the most — leaving them will be very tough.”

Girls’ varsity basketball coach Mike Davey said Sequeira has taken immense pride in his job from day one.

“I’ve always known how important the role of gym manager is, and in the past, we’ve had people who didn’t really care about their job,” Davey said. “I remember him walking in the door, and you could tell he cared about the way the gym was going to look and more importantly, cared about the people in the gym. He’s going to be missed for sure.”

Senior Joe Eschen, a starter for the boys’ varsity basketball team, has formed a strong bond with Sequeira.

“John’s a really close friend of mine,” Eschen said. “When I [was] shooting around in the gym, he always came in to help me out, rebounding for me and telling me what looked wrong with my

shot. It was touching to know he really cared and wanted me to succeed in my senior year as a basketball player.”

When girls’ varsity basketball made it to the CCS championship, Sequeira was a source of unwavering support.

“I felt great [for the team] because it is my last year and they make it all the way to CCS, No. 1 in CCS, it was a really good feeling,” Sequeira said.

Senior Eleni Spirakis, a member of the girls’ varsity basketball team, said Sequeira has enjoyed maintaining the gym and constantly supporting the players.

“He’d always come around and joke with us. I remember he would bring his trash picker-upper to the gym and start attacking our feet with it,” Spirakis said. “John always wanted to know how our games went, and him supporting us at the CCS championship game was pretty cool. I’m going to miss his smiling; he was always super nice and you could talk to him anytime.”

Like Spirakis, Davey also noted the janitor’s playful spirit, and the two would constantly joke around with each other in the gym. Sequeira would often sneak up behind Davey and pop the ball out his hand with a sly grin.

Eschen said he will especially miss

“With a lot of people, you say [‘how are you’] and then just walk by, but with John, it means something.”



girls’ basketball coach Mike Davey

his friend’s positivity. “John’s made me realize the value of hard work and how you don’t need to be recognized for a lot of things you do in life,” Eschen said. “He’s taught me not to complain, not to whine when things don’t go my way, to keep my head up. If I would start pouting, he’d always tell me it wasn’t worth my time and I’d play better if I got over it.”



TALISMAN // KEVIN COUCH

Janitor John Sequeira shakes hands with basketball coach Mike Davey at a boys’ varsity game against Homestead at home on Feb. 2. The team celebrated his retirement.

Davey added that Sequeira is a special person who truly cares for those around him.

“Every day we ask each other, ‘How are you doing today?’ and we actually care about how each other answers,” Davey said. “With a lot of people, you say that and then just walk by, but with John, it means something. If I was having a bad day he’d come over and give me a hug, and I’d do the same for him.”

Sequeira has spent his last few days on campus training the custodian who will take over. As he leaves, he’s had the opportunity to look back on his life and treasure the memories he’s made since arriving in America 43 years ago.

Sequeira grew up as one of 11 children working on his family’s farm on the Azores archipelago, an island cluster off of Portugal. At the age of 20, he was drafted to fight for his country in the Portuguese Colonial War in Angola, Africa. Sequeira completed his service in 1972, and at the age of 22, his sister brought him to the United States. He soon began a job reminiscent of his childhood, milking cows on a dairy farm. Sequeira worked mostly as a landscaper over the years before becoming

a janitor at SHS.

After obtaining his green card in 1974, Sequeira planned to live in the U.S. for 10 years and make enough money to return to Portugal. Meanwhile, he got married, fathered three children, and learned English. Deciding to stay in America permanently, he laid down some roots and settled in San Jose. Over the years, he also developed a love for gardening, which he uses as a way to unwind. In his free time, especially on Sundays, Sequeira enjoys tending to the more than 230 orchids that adorn his home.

In terms of his retirement plans, Sequeira said he is most excited to relax with his family.

“I want to play with my kids, my grandkids, my great grandkids, be around the family, and enjoy life,” Sequeira said. “Next year, I plan to go to my home in Portugal for a few months. I’m just going to visit, not go back. If I go back, I could live there like a king, but what am I going to do there if the kids are here?”

Even in retirement, Sequeira plans to continue attending home basketball games, the way he has since he began working at the school. “I feel sad because I’m leaving this place, but I’m happy about it, because I made it, I made it to retirement,” Sequeira said. ♦

MARSHBURN >>

continued from pg. 1

credibly hardworking and always does her best to stand up for the students.” Rachamalla also said that Marshburn is extremely humble in her work.

“She always the one in the background organizing everything,” Rachamalla said. “I cannot imagine how anyone can match her attitude and effort.”

In her three years here, Marshburn has made quite the impact. When Marshburn became activities director two years ago, she began making changes to the way clubs operated.

Such changes included ensuring that clubs turned in their club minutes, maintained at least 12 members per meeting and actively participated in activities like Club Day.

“I’d say that was my biggest contribution as activities director,” Marshburn said. “Although I think that a lot of students were not happy that we were checking in, I thought it was important to place rules so that what [club officers] were putting on their college applications is accurate.”

But next year, Marshburn’s range of jobs will be transferred to a different activities director who will also be in charge of the Leadership class.

“Before I leave, I’m trying to make

sure ASB is completely taken care of,” Marshburn said. “I want to make sure that all the programs the ASB officers and I have been working on are active and everything is ready for the next school year.”

One aspect Marshburn is working on is the introduction of a new “5 star system,” which allows ASB and administrators to scan student IDs in order to log student information. It acts like a tracking system that will be given to those that need information on the percentages of students who participate in school activities.

Marshburn also expects the Leadership class to change significantly. Currently, Leadership meets during Tuesdays and Thursdays lunch, but next year it will have a class period in the regular schedule. Although the period has yet to be determined, any student who wishes to apply will be able to do so soon. The class will expand to include class officers and commissioners.

Anyone who is running for ASB office or class officer will be placed in the [Leadership] class automatically, so if a student is not willing to be in a specific leadership period, they shouldn’t run, according to Marshburn.

The first set of elections for ASB offi-

cers began on March 24, and the election day will be on April 14. Immediately after, applications for class officers will be available and elections will be held on April 28. On April 27, applications for the Leadership class will open.

Even if students don’t win elections, they can still apply to be in the class and will be placed in a commission.

“For instance, if you want to be in Homecoming Commission, you would apply for the Leadership class and you’d put [Homecoming Commission] on

your application,” Marshburn said. “So, you’d still be going through the application and interview process.”

Students who do not want to specifically be part of commission will be able to apply and be a part of Leadership. More than just her work and changes to the school, Marshburn says she’ll miss the students the most.

“As a teacher, I get to interact with the students all the time, but working with them directly on activities has been a completely different experience,” Marshburn said. “It has been very rewarding to see how much fun they have and see the smiles on their faces. I’m going to miss them a lot.” ♦

European professional photographer has established her business in Saratoga

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MOCK TRIAL

Liu wins first-place award in art competition

By Gwynevere Hunger & Cassandra King

Most students never get the opportunity to have their work recognized beyond the classroom, but senior Katherine Liu is not most students.

Two pieces of artwork drawn by Liu are now framed and showcased at the Santa Clara County Office of Education. Both enabled Liu to first place in the Mock Trial Artwork Competition two years in a row. Liu’s current drawing that won the county competition was entered into the California State Mock Trial art competition and won second place.

Liu was recognized with her first-place art award at the mock trial awards ceremony on March 10 at the Santa Clara County Office. Seniors Nina Harris, Neeki Tahmassebi, Karthik Padmanabhan, Rhea Srivats, juniors Sarah Chang, Peter VandeVort and freshman Ashley Feng and Joan McCarthy also received the outstanding performance award for their work during the trials.

Liu said she is happy to have been honored two years in a row for something she loves doing. She has been drawing since elementary school and is currently in Art 4 Honors at school.

During her junior year, Liu looked for ways to get involved in the school

through art and was directed to the mock trial team by her counselor. Liu then contacted the team’s adviser, social studies teacher Matt Torrens, and was able to join the team for its competition season in last spring.

Liu has been the team’s sole sketch artist for the past two years, attending every competition with the team at the Santa Clara County Superior Court.

“I had no doubt that she would get first place after seeing what she drew each time and knowing how hard she worked to get to the level of art she is at now,” said freshman Michelle Vu, who is set to replace Liu when she graduates.

After winning the award last year, Liu attended drawing sessions the summer before senior year to improve her figure drawing skills.

“[The sessions] helped me a lot in drawing people for mock trial because they move around the courtroom so much,” Liu said.

As the mock trial sketch artist, Liu has also learned valuable information about the justice system. She is able to better understand the court proceedings and format when sitting on in the jury panel and drawing.

Although Liu still thinks there is room for improvement, specifically with her portrayal of her subjects’ emotions, she



Courtesy of KATHERINE LIU

Senior Katherine Liu drew the following for the Mock Trial Artwork Competition. Top: Senior Rhea Srivats and juniors Peter VandeVort and Jackie Han listen intently. Right: Jury members listen to the lawyers.



is content with her accomplishments.

“I’m happy that I won county again so that I could go to the state competition, which I missed last year. It was a second chance for me,” Liu said. ♦

INTRAMURAL

National March Madness fever sweeps student body

By Apoorv Kwatra

For the second year in a row, the Large Gym has been filled with basketball games to match the annual March Madness occurring throughout the nation in college basketball. The only difference is you do not have to be a 6’11”, 260-pound prodigy to participate in this tournament.

The 32-team tournament features teams of four going head-to-head in single elimination games, with the last team remaining receiving a \$50 Nike gift card. Each team can have a maximum of two players who play on a school basketball team.

Games occur at lunches and tutorials and are self-refereed (except for the finals). With each round eliminating half the remaining teams, more and

more students are coming to watch the increasingly competitive games. What started as a few low stakes games has turned into an important school-wide competition. The tournament is moving towards completion, but the date of its final game is still to be determined.

“Honestly, the gift card does not even matter,” said junior Kevin Couch, who is on the team Mo Buckets with seniors

Jack Xie and Gabriel Fong and sophomore Harrison Fong. “I just want to win the tournament for pride. I want to

show everyone what our team can do. I am confident we can go all the way and win it all.”

Couch will face a lot of challenges in order for his team to win the tournament.

“I just want to win the tournament for pride. I want to show everyone what our team can do.”
— junior Kevin Couch

“There are a lot of good teams in this tournament,” senior Jatin Mohanty of the team ‘95-’96 Bulls said. “A lot of teams that may be expected to lose early could go far in

the tournament. Still, I know my team has the talent to get first place.”

Despite the talent on many of the

teams, no win is guaranteed. After all, Cinderella teams are not just in the actual March Madness tournament.

“We may not be favored to go very far in this tournament,” junior Gautham Arunkumar of the team OG Freshman Team said. “But we do not need to be favored to win in order to actually win. We might as well be the underdog in every game; we can still go very far in the tournament.”

With each progressing round, the stakes get higher and the talent pool gets better. It looks like our very own March Madness tournament is rivaling the nationwide college basketball March Madness for the best March tournament in the country.

“This tournament has been a lot of fun,” Couch said. “I am looking forward to the rest of our games.” ♦

CLUBS

‘Pennies for Patients’ aids blood cancer research

By Nidhi Jain

Holding multiple basketball-sized boxes, junior Yehchan Yoo entered Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguez’s first-period classroom and set one down. The box read “Pennies for Patients,” and was one of many that were placed in first-period classrooms during the week of March 7.

Pennies for Patients is a nationwide campaign that works to benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society by collecting donations of small coins from millions of individuals.

Each year, the administration requests one club to be in charge of this campaign’s branch at this school, and this year, Committed to Community was chosen for the job.

The boxes were placed in classrooms by officers of Committed to Community. In order to motivate students to donate, the club decided to reward the highest-donating class with a free

breakfast from Rose Donuts and Cafe. The money for the breakfast will come from ASB.

Some teachers are seeing the campaign as an opportunity for some friendly competition among classes.

For example, when Yoo visited Rodriguez’s classroom, he noted that Rodriguez immediately placed a \$20 bill in the box in order to encourage students to donate. The student response was much greater when he said that if his class won, the donating competition would count for one of the three culture credits required in his Spanish classes.

“I really enjoy this [campaign] because I think it’s important to support and learn about these organizations,” Rodriguez said. “You never know when someone you love is going to be touched by this illness, and it’s nice to know that there are organizations that do things for families and people with leukemia.” ♦

MUSIC

Orchestra to tour Los Angeles

By Claire Chou & Angela Liu

Members of the Saratoga High School orchestra program will be touring Los Angeles at the beginning of spring break, from March 31 to April 3. This mini tour will be the biggest tour of the year for the group before the international tour to Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands in the summer of 2017. This trip is one of many mini-tours organized by the Music Department that occur every few years.

The trip to Los Angeles aims to help the students bond as a group outside of the classroom while broadening their musical experience through clinics and competitions.

During the tour, the group will participate in the Music Festival Competition at Fullerton College and attend a soundtrack session workshop inside Disneyland’s recording studio. They will also visit Disneyland, the Santa Monica beach and the Ahmanson Theatre in

Downtown Los Angeles — to watch the show “A Gentleman’s Guide to Love & Murder.”

“Even though we went [to Disneyland] in middle school, it’s always a fun experience,” freshman cellist Thomas Lim said. “A few days there never seems to be enough.”

Many students are looking forward to having a usually relaxing trip: The different orchestra groups will play the pieces that they performed for the California Music Educators Association (CMEA) earlier in March, so they will have little to worry about for the remainder of the trip.

For senior violinist Felicia Hung, the Disneyland trip is their very last tour with the program before graduation in May of this year.

“Going on a tour will be a great [way] to spend [my] time before I leave all my friends here,” Hung said. “Although driving down there will be a long 6-8 hours, it will just be great to bond with friends and orchestra buddies.” ♦



Lim

SPIRIT

Sadies Dance kicks off Spring Fling Week

BY DaphneLiu

With one goal in mind, members of the dance commission and Spring Fling commission arrived early in the afternoon of March 26 to set up for what they hoped would be a memorable "Partners in Crimes"-themed Sadie Hawkins Dance.

That night, the commission sold around 20 tickets at the door, adding up to a total of 138 attendees at the dance. Planning for the dance itself, however, started much earlier with the efforts of the head commissioners of the two commissions.

After the low attendance at last year's Sadies, the administration had originally cancelled the dance, taking it completely off the school calendar.

Displeased with its abandonment, head dance commissioner Danielle Berkowitz-Sklar and head Spring Fling commissioner Eileen Toh led a petition to give students one more shot to experience Sadies.

"We really felt we need [this] dance

because Sadies is the only second-semester dance that integrates all four grades," Berkowitz-Sklar said. "Not only is it a tradition, but it [is] also a perfect way to kick off Spirit Week."

According to sophomore Elicia Ye, who is a part of the dance commission, the administration told them the dance would only happen only if at least 100 tickets were sold by March 18.

After ticket sales were documented, ASB adviser Rebecca Marshburn told the commissions that they had only rallied up 96 tickets because some students didn't have their guest forms for their guests.

According to Marshburn, Sadies was only approved because principal Paul Robinson intervened and O.K.-ed the dance. With Robinson's approval, the commissions were able to continue to sell tickets and plan for the dance set for March 26.

Both commissions worked hard to meet deadlines and order decorations so that they arrived before the dance.

On the day of the dance, the two



ASB and commissioners pose at the Sadie Hawkins "Partners in Crime" dance on March 26.

commissions spent around six hours decorating the gym with movie posters, backdrops and lanterns to promote the theme of "Partners in Crime."

According to Toh, the overall turnout was great because many students came dressed in costumes. She was especially

happy that this year's dance wasn't just for couples but for groups of friends as well.

"It was worth it because we were able to bring back a dance that was originally taken away," Toh said. "It was just a great way to kick off Spring Fling." ♦

BOLLYWOOD

Tamasha dance team begins its traveling season

BY AnantRajeev & ArjunRamanathan

Even after Bombay in the Bay finished in mid-February, the school's Bollywood travel dance team, Tamasha, is continuing to perform in several shows this spring. Tamasha's lineup of 16 students performed its first show at the school's Dandia on March 12 hosted by the junior class and followed up with two performances at Lynbrook High School's Silsilay on March 26.

"It's good to know that for us, our year of dancing doesn't just end with

[BnB]," junior Karan Desai said. "The vibe never dies among these truly passionate members."

The team's first out-of-school performance at Silsilay was a successful start to its season, according to senior Naved Krishnamurthy.

"Our first show went really well because once we heard the crowd get really loud, we had more energy and we were more inclined to

perfect our moves," Krishnamurthy said.

Tamasha is also set to perform several shows in the next two weeks at Presentation's Deewane, Notre Dame and Bellarmine's Nazaara and Monta Vista's Tashan in April. After these, the dancers will have one week of rest before continuing with the last wave of shows. The

performances at Homestead High School's Sapnay and the school's talent show in late May. Tamasha's team members all share one thing in common, and that's the love of Indian dance. For the group of 16, the wild and exciting spirit of Bollywood dance is kept alive through representation of Saratoga at several other schools' shows across the Bay Area.

"I am beyond excited for the upcoming performances at other high schools," junior Mitali Shanbhag said. "Hopefully, we can inspire underclassmen to carry on Tamasha for many years to come." ♦

Tamasha's team members all share one thing in common, and that's the love of dance.

CLUBS

Miles for Smiles raises funds for cleft-lip surgeries

BY AngelaLiu

Early in the morning on March 19, runners lined up on the track at Saratoga High to run laps and raise funds for Smile Train, a nonprofit organization that provides resources to doctors to provide free cleft repair surgery for children in developing countries.

Participating students had a choice of paying \$10 to attend the event or pledging a certain amount per lap they run during the event.

Students who participated received an hour of community service for every \$50 they raise in donations.

"It's kind of like a Jogathon," junior club leader Maya Prasad said, "[except] for every \$250 raised, surgeries can be provided for the children in third World Countries."

Last year the club raised \$10,000 in total, \$700 of which came from the event itself, and helped 40 children receive free cleft-repair surgeries.

This year, the club hopes to raise

\$15,000 to pay for 60 surgeries and is well on its way to reaching that goal, having raised \$820 from the event and \$8,000 in total.

"We plan on raising money by emailing the people we know and asking them if they would like to donate and making others generally aware of our cause," Prasad said. "For next year, I plan on making it more publicized so that the run is not only aimed towards the Saratoga community, but also nearby cities as well so that we gain more participants and more donations."

The event itself was intended to be five miles and most people had a good time, even if they weren't runners.

"[I] felt really good, physically from running and emotionally from giving a little back to people," senior Katie McLaughlin said. "I wouldn't say I gave the most money or was the most involved with the event, but it was fun to be there and see how many awesome people would show up early on a Saturday to give back to people they don't even know." ♦

DANCE TEAM

Falcons place highly at Anaheim Nationals

BY GwynevereHunger

After placing second, eighth and 11th at Nationals last year, the dance team worked to improve its final results in the annual United Spirit Association (USA) Dance Nationals in Anaheim.

From March 17-21, the team's 11 members took the stage in four group dances and two solo dances at the Anaheim Convention Center. The Falcon dance team did better in both the Jazz and Hip-Hop categories but came short compared to last year in Lyrical.

The dance team competed in X-Small Lyrical Dance, Medium Jazz Dance and Small Lyrical in the Open Division after scoring below 84.9 at the regional USA Competitions, and Medium Hip-Hop in the Championship Division after scoring above 85 at regional USA Competitions. Senior officers Jenna Chen and Chloe Koon also competed solo dances in the Super Dancer and Champion Dancer events, respectively.

At the end of the three-day competition, the Falcons scored 87.67 in X-Small Lyrical dance, placing fourth out of 16 teams; 79.33 in Medium Jazz, placing seventh out of 13 teams; 78.67 in Small Lyrical, placing 13th out of 17 teams and 80 in Medium Hip-Hop, placing 17th out of 21 teams.

"I am proud of what they accomplished this weekend," coach Kaitlyn

Landeza said. "They were up against very tough competition, and I hold them to high standards."

According to Landeza, the team was under more pressure than last year's team to place well as they faced more competitors in each category than last year.

Before Nationals, the team attended three regional USA competitions at Homestead, Bella Vista and Monta Vista and was able to get direct feedback recorded on tapes from each judge after each competition. The team's four officers — Chen, Koon, Li and Hsuan — then changed the dances based on the critiques.

Accompanied by attendance secretary Julia Peck and Landeza on the trip, the team was able to make accommodations based off of last year's Nationals trip such as changing hotels and staying for an extra night. The team was able to have a team dinner on its first night in Los Angeles on March 17 at Goofy's Kitchen in Disneyland. After the competition, the team also managed to spend three days at Disneyland and California Adventures Park.

"I really enjoyed not just going to Disneyland, but also competing all of our dances for the last time and seeing the results. I know that we tried our best in Anaheim," freshman Alexandra Li said. ♦

opinion

saratogafalcon.org/opinion

Not so empowering: Sadie Hawkins a sexist dance

BY NidhiJain

Girls can be ASB presidents. Girls can be club officers. Girls can be valedictorians. Girls can be CCS champions.

Yet, for some reason, we still find the need to define a single dance for which it is deemed "normal" for the girl to ask a boy.

Because it suggests that a female taking dominance in terms of a social dance is atypical, the idea of Sadies emphasizes outdated gender norms and has insufficient backing to be included in a modern, egalitarian society.

In fact, the very origin of this dance is actually quite sexist. Sadie Hawkins was a character in a comic strip by Al Capp set in a fictional mountain village in Kentucky. Because Sadie was extremely ugly, she couldn't land herself a husband. Desperate to prevent his daughter from becoming an old spinster, Sadie's father called for a race of all the eligible bachelors in town.

When Sadie "caught" a man, he was legally bound to marry her. Sadie was able to take advantage of just one day in the year and choose a man she'd like to marry.

Every other day of the year, it was only the man who enjoyed the power to ask someone out. Thus, Sadie Hawkins' Day was born as a way to "empower" women to feel as if they had enough relevance to ask a man to a dance.

Although this day may have been "empowering" for women in the past, when there was still the social stigma of girls needing to wait for a boy to ap-

proach them, it is now almost insulting, implying that girls are usually "not allowed" to ask guys out and thus "not allowed" to be an equal figure in a relationship.

Considering the fact that Bay Area schools place such a large emphasis on closing the gender gap in STEM fields, it is surprising and disappointing that some students continue to support such a dance where the sexist implications are obvious.

The idea of any sort of labels regarding who should be asking whom simply emphasizes traditional and frankly archaic gender norms.

Having a specific day to which the girls ask boys is no different than having a specific day on which girls can go to work or write code or sit in a calculus class. It is simply ridiculous, as girls can take these actions any day they would like and do not need a specific allocated day when they are "allowed" to do so.

Some individuals may compare the Sadies dance to programs like Girls Who Code, stating that if Sadies has sexist implications, then these programs do as well.

However, it is important to understand that Sadies implies that in general, girls can't ask boys out, whereas a program like Girls Who Code implies that for some reason, girls simply don't code despite having the intellectual ability to.

For some girls, the idea of Sadies scares them from even considering asking a boy to other social dances. In their minds, if there needs to be a certain occasion where girls can ask others, then

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girls should technically not be doing so for other dances.

Often times, this could discourage the girl from going to the dance in its entirety.

And yet, despite its sexist implications, Sadies has ample support from the student body. When the administration considered canceling the Sadies dance this year, several students spoke out and pushed ASB and Leadership to host this dance.

In no way do the negative implications of Sadies suggest that students who do go to this dance are supporters of sexist beliefs.

Rather, as long as students make sure that they are not giving into this belief that only boys can be the ones asking, there is no harm in attending the dance and enjoying oneself.

Already, the Dance and Spring Fling commissions have been making an effort to advertise the dance as one for friends rather than one to which girls must ask boys.

It is likely, however, that students do not necessarily support the idea of Sadies, as it has become fairly common for girls to ask boys to dances, but rather the idea of a social dance where students can come together and enjoy themselves.

Thus, instead of a Sadies dance, we should work to host a neutral, implication-free social gathering to which individuals can ask whomever they would like, regardless of their gender.

A dance labeled "Spring Spirit Dance" as opposed to Sadies would bring the best of both worlds: an enjoyable night for students without the sexist social implications. ♦

Raising the CA smoking age from 18 to 21 an ill-advised move

BY FionaSequeira

Destroying your lungs may soon become more difficult in the Golden State.

On March 3, the California Senate voted to raise the legal age for purchasing and using tobacco and electronic cigarettes from 18 to 21. The legislation has already passed the state Assembly, but has yet to be signed into law by Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown.

This bill would not only raise the age limit, but also begin to regulate electronic cigarettes in the same manner as tobacco products, increase smoking-free areas, and allow counties to levy taxes on cigarettes higher than the current 87 cent per pack state tax — all measures designed to curtail the number of smokers statewide.

Yet this paternalistic move is a misguided one. Although supporters of the bill portray themselves as valiant crusaders saving a vast number of young adults from exposure to King Nicotine, they neglect to paint the equally compelling picture of individual rights bent on creating a "father knows best" society.

The government seems to have forgotten one of the core principles of the collective United States conscience: Individuals have the right to do as they please so long as their chosen course of action does not interfere with another individual's pursuit of happiness (for example, that is why we have valid laws preventing smoking in a restaurant).

Consider this. At the age of 18, citizens enter that magical stage of life called adulthood, and with this rite of passage one gains a number of notable rights, as well as more serious penalties. Adults can register to vote, sign legally binding contracts, have consensual sex with another adult, join the military, and do just about any legal activity aside from buying alcohol (why the age for alcohol is 21 is a whole other debate).

Yet every individual ought to have the power to harm his lungs if he or she so chooses. But since most citizens don't

have this desire, most reasonable people ages 18-21 won't become full-fledged nicotine addicts if they're aware of the realities of addiction.

Nevertheless, laws are important guidelines that can help citizens lead responsible lives.

By no means am I entertaining the idea that middle schoolers should be able to pop into the nearest Safeway and pick up a pack of cigarettes — there absolutely should be a law banning smoking until 18.

Laws should also require tobacco companies to honestly label their drugs with the precise effects they will have on users, so

If the proposed legislation were passed, it would set a frightening precedent, and leave one to wonder where exactly the bureaucratic babysitting ends.

further from the truth. It is simple psychology: Once the government starts playing at grandfather, it will only make its citizens want the "forbidden fruit" all the more.

Yes, citizens will probably have to work harder to attain cigarettes, but these efforts will only fuel underground black markets and spikes in crime rates. Meanwhile, illegal drug suppliers will laugh their way to the bank, amazed that lawmakers supply the predicament from which they can profit.

And the government will sit there stupefied, having learned nothing from the era of Prohibition, when alcohol was banned in the United States.

What resulted was thousands of deaths from poisonous alcohol, the greatest period of crime in the country's history, and a persisting disdain for the laws of the United States.

If you remain unconvinced, simply check on the status of the nation's bans on such drugs as marijuana, cocaine and heroin. Working splendidly? I think not.

Ultimately, the smoking age ought to stay at 18. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), smoking causes around 480,000 annual deaths in the United States.

Meanwhile, approximately 610,000 Americans die from heart disease each year, and around 29.1 million Americans have diabetes.

Although both heart disease and diabetes are linked to sugar, the government has not placed an age restriction of 21 or banned fatty foods and extra-large soft drinks.

In the same way the government cannot ban sugar for adults simply because it is harmful to one's health, it should be careful not to go down a road that leads to banning smoking — otherwise, it threatens to bulldoze its way into the arena of personal choice with disastrous consequences for all. ♦

Facebook update forces users behind emotional shield

BY Katherine Sun

When I want to express something in person, I open my mouth, and lo and behold, words come out. I'm thankful that I don't react by choosing between preset emotions: Shall I show my frustration with a red face and furrowed brows, or should I let a tear escape my eye?

Facebook seems to think differently. With its new "reactions," an extension of the "like" button that includes emoticons such as "love" and "wow," Facebook is dictating the information we consume and restricting what meaningful interactions we make. Reactions are conducive to anything but authentic "social media."

In theory, Facebook rearranges our news feeds based on our "likes" and clicks to prioritize content that interests us. That's fine. But the beauty of sorting posts by likes is that anything we feel strongly enough to react to — whether with laughter, sadness or frustration — stays high on our feed.

With the new reactions, Facebook might choose to show me more "haha" posts than "angry" posts, making decisions for how I'm going to feel even if I don't want to feel that way. Facebook could move "sad" or "angry" posts lower down in my feed, even if I find more intellectual satisfaction in the problems an "angry" post describes than the cute photo a "love" post contains.

Facebook has not yet modified its algorithm to distinguish between different reactions and modify users' newsfeeds or ads accordingly. According to Facebook product manager Sammi Krug, however, the company will do so eventually.

Take the "sadness" reaction, for instance. One of Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg's goals for reactions had been to increase "empathy."

When a friend goes through loss or a difficult time, we may be tempted to click the "sadness" button.

Words spoken in person or a personal message are best of all, but the simple comment "I'm sorry for your loss" still shows effort because it is personalized by each commenter. Surely that feels more genuine than a bright yellow sad face with a tear.

Worse, with the new reactions, people may be less inclined to leave thoughtful comments. Intelligent discourse helps to keep Facebook from feeling mindless.

Consider the "anger" reaction. Instead of being able to mindlessly click the "anger" button, people would most certainly benefit from thinking about how they really feel.

Facebook has always claimed that it does not want to spread negativity; however, the "anger" button, which gives people an easy way out of explaining why they dislike something, does just that.

In short, the new emoticons are likely to become emotional shields that prevent users from tapping into a meaningful spectrum of emotions, ultimately undermining the quality of online communications.

Given that Facebook is the world's largest social network and that we spend so much time on it, these reactions are a problem to be taken seriously. They make it too easy to go "wow" when we should be saying something thoughtful instead. ♦



facebook reactions

GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

This aside, though, the reactions present a more serious problem than filtering posts by emotion.

By simply offering emoticons, they offer an easy way out of more meaningful human interactions, worsening the already limited emotional scope of these online exchanges.

But words of comfort will always mean more than any emoticon. A comment usually differs from others on the same post and is attached to the commenter who can individually express sympathy, whereas an emoticon is grouped with others and only reflects the effortless click of a button.

>> togatalks

Are the new Facebook reactions necessary?

"Pointless. Honestly, no one really cares what you are feeling at the moment."



junior Emma Kovac

"It's the same thing as commenting with emojis. You don't need to make a separate part."



freshman Max Lisovsky

"It's necessary because I feel a lot of things and I want to be able to express them."



sophomore Laura Bhurji

Prison reforms: Obama takes steps in the right direction

BY Austin Wang

U.S. nationalism is primarily built upon our ideals of life, liberty and property, but today we no longer lead the world in life expectancy, perceived liberty or economic freedom. However, with over 2 million prisoners and more prisons than colleges, we do lead the world in incarceration rates by a shamefully wide margin.

Incarceration is a cyclical condition, as released prisoners are left without homes or jobs and often turn back to crime to make ends meet. And this cycle is only perpetuated by prejudice against former criminals.

A recent CNN report said that employment and callback rates decreased by almost 50 percent for those with criminal records, and a 2014 study from the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that in 2005, 68 percent of all released U.S. prisoners were arrested for a new crime within three years of their release.

Breaking out of this cycle of imprisonment is imperative for inmates and their families as well as the U.S. In 2015, a White House study found that, with the \$80 billion, the U.S. spends annually to maintain its prisons, the U.S. could double the salary of all high school teachers, provide universal preschool for every 3- to 4-year-old child and eliminate the tuition for every public university.

Noteworthy is that this year, the Obama administration has been taking steps to overhaul the criminal justice system and lower incarceration rates.

Over last fall, around 6,000 inmates imprisoned for minor drug offenses were released due to a recent overhaul

of sentence guidelines regarding non-violent crimes that the Obama administration approved.

President Obama also pardoned 46 criminals who were sentenced to extended terms for the possession of drugs, though he received over 1,000 applications that he largely ignored.

So while Obama has pardoned more criminals than the previous four presidents combined, he could do far more.

Although these changes barely make a dent in the population of over a million criminals imprisoned for nonviolent drug possession-related crimes, they highlight Obama's admirable intention to reform our prison system.

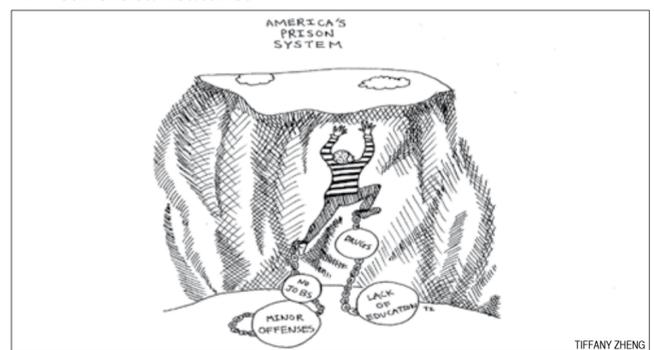
Beyond just freeing inmates, Obama has been trying to improve their lives after release by helping them find employment. Prisoners who were convicted for petty crimes, such as possession of marijuana, deserve a second chance once released from prison.

On Nov. 2, Obama announced several new measures to reintegrate former criminals into society. These measures included programs to help former criminals receive education grants and housing assistance as well as programs to teach criminals various skills to help them outside of prison.

Obama also announced a measure, known as the "ban the box" plan, that prevents employers from obtaining criminal records until late in the application process. This plan gives ex-cons a shot at presenting their resume to an employer before being judged and turned away because of their criminal record.

Many people with criminal records deserve a second chance, especially

>> candidcaricatures



TIFFANY ZHENG

those imprisoned for nonviolent crimes. What most fail to understand is that prisoners are often raised in poverty and are unable to ever receive a full education, leaving them with many missed opportunities.

Once given an opportunity to learn, prisoners prove to be just as talented as those in prestigious colleges. For example, on Oct. 8, a debate team comprising five prisoners from the Eastern New York Correctional Facility, beat the Harvard debate team, proving that prisoners are filled with untapped potential.

Once criminals are released from prison, they should no longer be outcast and shunned. They deserve the same opportunities that many of us take for granted and should be encouraged to seek employment.

The Obama administration has taken

strides in the right direction, but can make an even greater impact on the criminal justice system before Obama's term is over. Obama should focus more on reintegrating non-violent criminals as they deserve a second chance in society more than those who have committed murder or rape.

Laws that lower minimum sentence requirements for petty crimes should be overturned, many more people wrongly sentenced in the war on drugs should be pardoned and more laws should be passed to educate and help at-risk children in high-crime neighborhoods.

The Obama administration has started the right path toward reforming the criminal justice system, and with a few more measures, America may once again be known as the home of the free and a place for second chances. ♦

Race passivity no longer an option

>> candidcaricatures



TIFFANY ZHENG

Would we stand idly by if a black man was shot by a white police officer in front of us? Of course not, but it seems that is exactly what we are doing now.

There is a growing divide in the country. On one side are those who are passionate about the issue of racism and are willing to change it; on the other are those who simply wish to stand back and let whatever happens happen.

Unfortunately, the careless bystander attitude of the latter group is not much better than one that is blatantly racist. Despite our lofty claims that we hope to see a world of equality, what many of us actually exhibit is "dismissive racism" — that is, a passive reaction to racist happenings and denial that certain events are race-driven.

For instance, there is rarely discussion in our community of events surrounding the race relations in America, such as the shooting of nine parishioners at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, the removal of the Confederate flag from the South Carolina statehouse, the shooting of Michael Brown or the recent neglect of an overwhelmingly black community by a white governor in Flint, Mich.

Similarly, police brutality is not much of a topic of discussion in the classroom until junior year, when students in English 11 Honors have options to read Ta-Nehisi Coates' "Between the World and Me," or Toni Morrison's "Beloved." Coates's novel confronts the vulnerability of blacks to the establishment and the recent deaths of blacks like Michael Brown and Eric Garner at the hands of white police officers.

"Beloved" examines post-Civil War America and the psychological and physical impact slavery had on its victims and their descendants. These works should be introduced earlier in the English curriculum starting freshman year, as they are a good start to opening students' eyes to the reality of systemic racism in America.

Just because the majority of us here in Saratoga are not black, Hispanic or Muslim does not mean we are excused from pay-

ing attention to the obstruction of equality the corrupt justice system and racist comments of presidential candidates, such as Donald Trump, pose. We must point out the flaws of his arguments and speak out about our disagreement. If we choose to care only about those issues that directly affect us and leave those that do not for others to decide on, then how can we expect others to care about problems that affect us when the tables turn?

Asian Americans are as vulnerable to racism as blacks are now. In fact, Chris Rock's distasteful joke about child labor and the three Asian children playing the part of accountants on stage at the Oscars demonstrates that even the "model minority" is not exempt from racism today.

One simply needs to consider the quote from Protestant pastor Martin Niemöller, who spent the last seven years of Nazi rule in concentration camps, to see this point: "First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade

Unionists, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me — and there was no one left to speak for me."

Far too often, the only mention of race outside the classroom is in reference to affirmative action or stereotypes: the typical "Asian-American math nerd." That culture of insulation needs to change, and involvement in political activist clubs, such as Democracy Matters Club, or the voting process are great starting points to increase awareness and discussion. Participants in these clubs would be better informed as to candidates' stances on important race-related issues, such as police brutality and immigration.

Those of us who are Asian Americans cannot ignore what is going on around us, all the while being glad the events have not yet impacted us. We have to wake up and condemn those acts of evil before it is too late, because though they may not seem to matter now, they will very soon. ♦

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editors-in-chief
Gitika Nalwa
Dorrie Tang

Opinion Editor
Fiona Sequeira

Reporter
Caitlin Ju



The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 30-0 in support of the editorial.

Shifting attitude toward addiction reveals racism

BY Saya Sivaram

Crack cocaine first descended upon the U.S. in the 1980s, wreaking havoc on the black population and leading to an epidemic of fatal addictions.

Everywhere, images of emaciated bodies and crying, malnourished "crack babies" sprung up. Almost always, the people were black, and their eyes seemed lifeless and dull, their lips cracked and expressions desperate. Inner cities were plagued by gangs and violence, devastation and poverty pervading the streets. Tales of beaten children and bloody gang standoffs seemed to grace the front of every newspaper.

The black community was seen as a lawless, thuggish group who deserved the consequences of their drug use, and incarceration rates of African-American males spiked. Black males were seen as the new "super predator," characterized by sagging pants and bandanas.

The black community received minimal assistance or sympathy for this dire situation, but instead were condemned and alienated, with 40,900 individuals put behind bars for drug-related offenses in 1982 alone, according to The Sentencing Project. Almost 30 years later, we are again seeing the destruction

caused by drug addiction, mostly heroin and other opioids, with drug deaths affecting 15 of every thousand people, according to The New York Times. Yet this outbreak is predominantly among young white adults. And in a remarkable turn, the national attitude toward drug use has completely shifted.

Many presidential candidates have opened up about struggles in their own families, including Republican front-runner, Ted Cruz. During a speech in New Hampshire, Cruz told a rapt audience about the death of his sister, who had struggled with addiction. He then called for more community support for those afflicted with drug problems.

Former GOP candidate Carly Fiorina spoke about her stepdaughter who passed away from a drug overdose. Jeb Bush revealed the story of his daughter and proposed a drug control bill, and Hillary Clinton has unveiled a \$10 million plan to combat drug addiction.

Why didn't this response occur 30 years ago when the black population was decimated by an earlier drug plague? It is heartening to see the community embrace addicts and promise compassion, but it is also a bittersweet reminder of the racial inequality that still exists throughout the U.S. ♦



BELL SCHEDULE DEBATE

RAGES ON

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

FALCON BELL SCHEDULE COVERAGE CRINGE-WORTHY

Dear Falcon,

In the [Feb. 12 issue] of the newspaper, the highly anticipated cover story regarding the schedule debacle was finally published. As seniors who were frustrated by the schedule change and active in the student movement to bring back the "Old-New" schedule, we were very much looking forward to a formal statement presenting the students' perspective on the topic. Unfortunately, we feel that the Falcon's piece mischaracterized and undermined much of what the student movement represents and that it missed the mark in providing an unbiased insight on what has occurred.

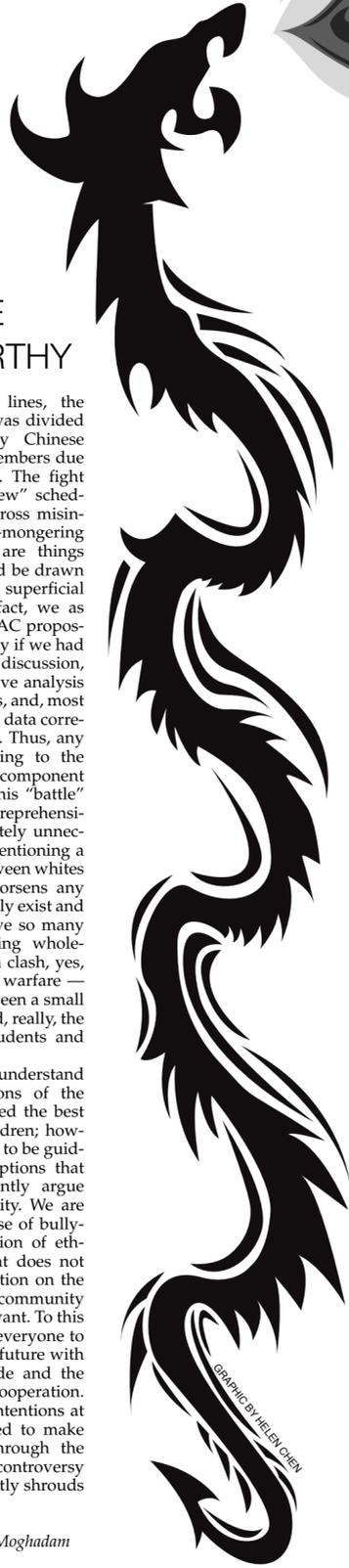
While the article is framed as a summarization of the timeline of events, it features scathing comments that frankly made us and many of our peers cringe as we reluctantly continued reading. These comments established a derisive, attacking tone, unlike the optimistic and evidence-based frame of mind most students have desired to project. Simply put, some statements were made that were almost accusatory towards the Asian American community, and, as a consequence, offensive to the collective, race-blind student body. While we are sure this is not intentional and we do not mean to disparage the authors in any way, the message that came across was one that seemingly stooped to a very low level and could serve to divide our community further rather than bring us together around the honorable agenda of advancing the education of current and future SHS students — precisely what we have all tried to avoid.

First off, it is wrong to suggest that all Asians were integral in the pushback against the schedule, as is implied when identifying the parents primarily on the basis of their ethnicity. Similarly, it is false to claim that the parents' background had anything to do with their malignant behavior, and that,

along these same lines the board's sympathy was divided between exclusively Chinese and non-Chinese members due to some racial bias. The fight against the "Old-New" schedule was based on gross misinformation and fear-mongering tactics, and those are things that attention should be drawn to rather than the superficial theme of race. In fact, we as proponents of the SAC proposal would win handily if we had a purely fact-based discussion, as intuitive qualitative analysis by students, teachers, and, most objectively, scientific data correlate with our stance. Thus, any conclusions pertaining to the existence of a racial component being involved in this "battle" is not only morally reprehensible but also completely unnecessary. Moreover, mentioning a "cultural clash" between whites and Asians only worsens any tensions that currently exist and feeds into a narrative so many of us are combatting wholeheartedly. There is a clash, yes, but there is no race warfare — only a standoff between a small group of parents and, really, the vast majority of students and SHS faculty.

Personally, we understand the basic motivations of the parents: they pursued the best interest of their children; however, they happened to be guided by some assumptions that we would vehemently argue are contrary to reality. We are ashamed by their use of bullying and their mention of ethnic divides, but that does not excuse reciprocal action on the part of the student community by making race relevant. To this end, we encourage everyone to look forward to the future with an accepting attitude and the ultimate goal of cooperation. We all have noble intentions at heart — we just need to make sure that shows through the horrendous mist of controversy and hate that currently shrouds our conversation.

— seniors Farbod Moghadam and Giulia Corno



THE EDITOR RESPONDS

STUDENTS SEE WHAT THEY WANT TO IN FALCON ARTICLE

Dear Farbod Moghadam and Giulia Corno,

Thank you for taking the time to read our "highly-anticipated cover story," even if "reluctantly," and then taking the time to write to us. Unfortunately, I disagree with you on several counts.

First, a news story is neither a perspective nor an op-ed: It is a narrative of the facts surrounding a newsworthy event. Its purpose is to inform, rather than to sway opinion. It is then unreasonable of you to expect that our news story would be "a formal statement presenting the students' perspective," even if such a unified perspective existed, or to expect that our news story would have an "agenda" other than to inform, even if such an "agenda" were "honorable."

Second, our news story was not about any "student movement," if one may describe student petitions and Facebook groups as that, but rather about the sequence of events that led the district to abandon the SAC bell schedule — a decision many students were eager to know more about, perhaps even you.

Third, we made every effort to be balanced and fair. We reached out to the SAC, the administration, the board, teachers, students and parents — especially to the parents of the WeChat group — and gave each an opportunity to point us to facts and factors it considered important, which we then included in our coverage under our constraints of time and space.

Fourth, you are factually incorrect in several instances. You claim that we "suggest that all Asians" opposed the SAC schedule, when what we say is that only a "small fraction" of the Chinese-speaking members of our community are on the WeChat group, and that not even this entire group opposed the SAC schedule. You are also wrong to suggest that we ascribe "racial bias" to the board by pointing out that its two Chinese-American members voted one way and its three other

members voted the other way; not to point this out would have been a disservice to our readers.

If we regret anything in our story it is that we did not emphasize in it that even though the most vocal opposition to the SAC schedule was from the WeChat group, support for and against the SAC schedule was not restricted to any single community. However, you would notice that we mentioned that "an email thread was formed among both Chinese and non-Chinese community members" who opposed the SAC schedule and that "no one knows for sure how much support either side has."

Remarkably, whereas we describe parents who opposed the SAC bell schedule as having "felt their voices had not been heard and that the decision-making process had been opaque," you describe them as indulging in "malignant behavior" and "bullying," and contributing to a "mist of" "hate." Then, if anything should make anyone "cringe," it is what the cracks in your political correctness reveal about how you view these parents.

Sadly, in the end, our news story has been a Rorschach Test for you: You have seen in it what you have chosen to see while failing to identify any factual error in our reporting, or to support your opinion that our coverage was biased. You also appear upset that the article does not reflect your "agenda" — which you assert is shared by many students — even though the purpose of a news story is not to provide a platform to any "agenda," but to report facts.

Perhaps it is the accepted bias of news media, with the New York Times at one extreme and Fox News at the other, that has led you to believe that it is the role of journalism to "shroud" "perspective" as news.

I am afraid this is a role the Falcon cannot and will not accept.

— Gitika Nalwa
Editor-in-Chief

Senior masters art of dodging tickets

By Fiona Sequeira

The Saratoga-Cupertino area is not exactly known for its nightlife. But around 1 a.m. on the Sunday morning following winter formal, I found myself driving home from Donut Wheel on North De Anza Boulevard, where a few of my friends and I had headed after the dance for a midnight snack.

Perhaps spurred on by my sugar high and the enticingly empty city streets, I proclaimed to my date, senior Farbod Moghadam, who was in the passenger seat, "Let's be spontaneous!" and stepped on the gas pedal, watching the speedometer rise to a casual 65 mph in a 40 mph zone. Approximately 10 seconds — seriously, 10 seconds! — later, my heart sank as I heard the high-pitched whir of police sirens behind me and had to pull over.

In the rearview mirror, I watched with dread as a thick set officer whose bristly mustache rivaled that of Einstein approached me. I unrolled the window and awaited the worst.

"Ma'am, I'm going to have to ask to see your vehicle license and registration. Please step out of the car. What was the last beverage you consumed?"

"Uh ... milk."

The cop's accusatory expression softened with slight amusement, but his expression quickly changed when I accidentally triggered the car alarm. Seriously, I thought. This is really not

helping your case.

The officer glared. In my defense, I had just started driving my bright yellow '02 VW bug, and wasn't exactly sure what each combination of controls on my keys did.

After I managed to quell the alarm, the cop asked me to perform a series of tests to ensure that I was not in fact intoxicated. Even though I was not inebriated in the slightest, I felt panic rising in my chest.

What if I stumbled on any of the tests and caused undue suspicion? I was determined to pass with flying colors and convince the cop I was no wild child.

First, I had to follow his finger up, down and sideways with my eyes. Simple enough. Next, I had to approximate 30 full seconds in my head while the cop timed me. I began counting — one alligator, two alligator, three alligator ... but somewhere around 16 I got distract-

ed, lost count and panicked.

How long had it been? What if I gravely miscalculated and took too long? This was it. I was going to jail. My parents were seriously going to disown me for this. Alas, when I called time, the cop nodded in approval.

I sighed in relief. The universe was on my side.

Finally, I had to recite part of the alphabet backwards. That's when I really started to worry — truthfully, I wasn't sure that even in my very sober state I could complete a task that I thought only happened in TV shows. I decided to break down the 26 letters into sets of triples, and began: "Z-Y-X, W-V-U, T-S-R, Q-P-O ..." I was on a roll.

Inside my car, Farbod was struggling to suppress his laughter. But he was also a bit scared; he was 17 and thus technically out past Cupertino's midnight curfew. The penalty for that? Being escorted home in a police car. Awkward.

After I proved I was sober, the cop's attitude toward me shifted

considerably and we engaged in friendly banter. Fortunately, because I am 18, I was not accountable for the city curfew. But the verdict still lingered: Ticket or no ticket?

"Do you even know how fast you were going? And your lights weren't even on!"

"The speeding, I can't really explain. I was just feeling it," I began. "But I just started driving this car and don't really know how to work the lights."

"Do you think you deserve a ticket?"

"Yes. I was speeding and should have known better."

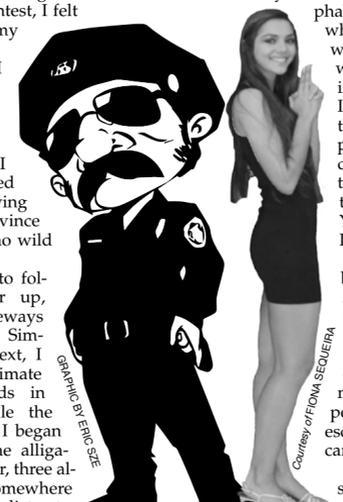
I braced myself for the worst. My parents would not be pleased about my very expensive evening. But I knew I was in the wrong.

"Honest. I like that," he said, pausing as he played with the ends of his scraggly mustache. "I think I'll let you go this time. But be careful out there."

My heart soared. I felt like I could have been in one of my favorite episodes of CBS show *How I Met Your Mother*, where each of the characters successfully talks his or her way out of a ticket.

As I got into my car to drive away (Farbod was laughing at me all the while), I was proud of myself. I had reached a milestone of adulthood. More exciting than the fact that I was accountable for my actions was the fact that I successfully dodged my first ticket.

And that, my friends, is how you do it: Just be honest. ♦



THE DO'S & DON'TS OF PROM

A night of gorgeous gowns, many photos and unforgettable memories, prom is a day idealized by many as a picture-perfect experience. Given that it is easy to begin fretting about prom long before the date arrives, I, having had a flawless Junior Prom (see Prom-O-Drama), have come up with a list of do's and don'ts to save you from your pre-prom angst.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>DO...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... plan in advance how you will get ready for the big night. It is important not to ignore the specifics: when, where and how. Doing so might result in getting scalded by a curling iron the day of, or arriving for pictures two hours after they begin. ... learn how to pin a boutonniere, girls. Given that the pins used are sharp enough to pierce ears, keeping the flower in place will ensure that your date won't be bleeding the entire night due to an accident. ... try your best to color match as closely as possible with your date, guys. Teal and turquoise might be "close enough" in other circumstances, but it's better to go the extra step at prom than to have people ask you if you're color blind. | <p>DON'T...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... expect your date to be ready to go when you are. In situations where there is a serious case of miscommunication, you may find that your date is still finishing math homework when you show up at his or her house. ... be embarrassed by your lack of dancing abilities: Most people don't know what they're doing either. And if you really can't bring yourself to "hit the Quan," there are always other things to do! ... feel obligated to stay with your date for the entire night (or even go to the dance with one, for that matter). Prom is one of the few occasions in which you will be with the majority of your class in an off-campus setting. Cherish it. |
|---|--|

— By Helen Chen

Rector 'flips' after speech and debate team's prank

By Daphne Liu

The plan was simple. Get a teacher to unlock his room, then create complete chaos.

The speech and debate team's two-year tradition to pull an April Fool's prank on English teacher and former speech and debate coach Erick Rector was born in 2013, when the team hatched a plan to flip the desks in his classroom upside down.

To begin, Class of 2015 alumna Anjali Manghnani suggested in the team's Facebook group chat that they sabotage Rector's room. Manghnani was close to her coach and would frequently pull small pranks on him, but she had never attempted anything of this magnitude.

"Daily, it [used to be] things like stealing his chair or hiding his keys, but [this] April Fool's Day tradition was always pretty interesting," Manghnani said.

This particular prank was fairly elaborate. Manghnani and several upperclassmen met a few nights before the prank to discuss their plan of attack, and on the day of the prank, they led more than 20 accomplices into battle.

Right after the lunch bell rang, the team asked English teacher Carolyn Bohls to unlock Rector's room and distract him on his way to the cafeteria during lunch.

Once in the classroom, the team had less than five minutes to turn all the desks over and leave Rector's room before he arrived to his desk.

They finished on time, and about 10 minutes later, their shocked coach chuckled uncertainly as he entered his classroom. The team, which had been hiding around the science wing, emerged and exploded in giggles, unabashedly proud of its glorious prank.

Since lunchtime was almost over, Rector was unable to clean up before third period, so he made his third-period class do it. Little did Rector know

“I thought, ‘Oh my god. How am I going to get these back inside the classroom?’”
teacher Erick Rector

that the fun was not over: The team would strike again the following year.

On April 1, 2014, the team found Bohls again to unlock Rector's door during lunch. They rushed in to gather all his desks and bring them outside, and then barricaded Rector from the room.

Part of the team dragged his couch off to the side of the English wing, facing the back parking lot, while most of the team created a pyramid of desks in front of his classroom.

Upon seeing his team's handiwork, Rector was agnostic.

"I thought, 'Oh my god. How am I going to get these back inside the classroom?'" Rector said. "And then it was, 'I'm not going to do it, who's going to do it for me?'" I had some students [get the couch] back for me."

Manghnani said the pranks the team played on Rector were all in good fun.

"It's always just a way to remind Mr. Rector that we appreciate him and to mess around with our favorite coach," Manghnani said. ♦

March 31, 2016

12 AM.



VANESSA BAHK

...I eat

FALCON // GWYNEVERE HUNGER

Around midnight on weeknights, when the homework load is heavy and the stress unrelenting, you will find senior Vanessa Bahk satiating her never-ending sweet tooth at the Sno-Crave Tea House in Cupertino. She says all the studying makes her hungry.

On these late-night trips, Bahk usually orders a strawberry crepe or a boba drink, or crafts what she deems the "perfect hot pot." A hot pot is an East Asian stew that often includes meat, vegetables, mushrooms and seafood. Upon receiving her hot-pot order, Bahk removes all the vegetables except the corn. She then adds about five spoons of the spicy sauces sitting on the table, and proceeds to eat the meat first in order to get the golden meat-to-broth ratio.

But for Bahk, the appeal of Sno-Crave lies in more than its food: She loves how the Taiwanese teahouse invites customers to play a few old-school games, like marbles and Jenga, while they wait.

"I played Jenga once and took out a wooden block square from the bottom and made the entire tower fall down," Bahk said. "Just my luck — this happened [at] the same time that my hot pot was coming out, so I had Jenga pieces literally floating on the top of my soup that I had to get out with chopsticks." ♦

Reporting by Gwynevere Hunger

12:30 AM.



ARIAN RAJE

...I debate

FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA

At the Santa Clara University Invitational debate tournament two years ago, then seventh-grader Arian Raj and his debate partner Roshan Verma could hardly keep their eyes open during the final round of their event, Public Forum Debate. It was supposed to have started at 8 p.m., but started at 12:30 a.m. due to tournament delays.

"I ended up nearly falling asleep during the round and completely forgot about two of our opponents' arguments," now-freshman Raj said. "Thankfully, both our opponents and our judges were really tired too, so they understood why we were blanking out randomly during the debate."

Raje is no stranger to late-night debates: He has had to stay past midnight at several tournaments this year, such as the Berkeley Invitational and the Arizona State University Invitational.

"Despite late hours at tournaments, the experience of speech and debate is worth it," Raj said.

"While there, you make tons of friends and gain an experience you can get almost nowhere else. You learn more from the people you're competing with and the friends that you make than any one practice can give you." ♦

Reporting by Nupur Maheshwari

2 AM.

"Well, the fridge broke, so I had to eat everything," Joey from "Friends" explains.

Junior Meghana Kaza bursts out laughing, pauses the video and replays the scene another 10 times. It's past midnight on a weeknight, but for Kaza, the night is still young.

An insomniac since the age of 2, Kaza has difficulty sleeping until 4 a.m. To kill time and distract herself from her hectic junior-year life, which is filled with grueling classes like AP Physics and AP Computer Science, she turns to "Friends" as a relaxing pastime.

"What do I enjoy? Matt LeBlanc, that's what I enjoy. I love when Joey tries to speak French," Kaza said. "It's really funny because I know LeBlanc is completely flu-

ent in French, and I know French, so it's hilarious when he tries to 'My name is ...' and ends up saying 'All the fruit.'"

Even though Kaza only started watching the series one month ago, she has watched every single episode at least once. She especially loves quoting Chandler, as she relates to his sarcasm "on a spiritual level, and they're all so childish and their comebacks are relevant even today."

Kaza enjoys the break from her busy life that the show brings her, even nearly 15 years after the franchise ended.

"Having this outlet means that I can relieve pent-up stress and just laugh," she said. ♦

Reporting by Stephen Ding



MEGHANA KAZA

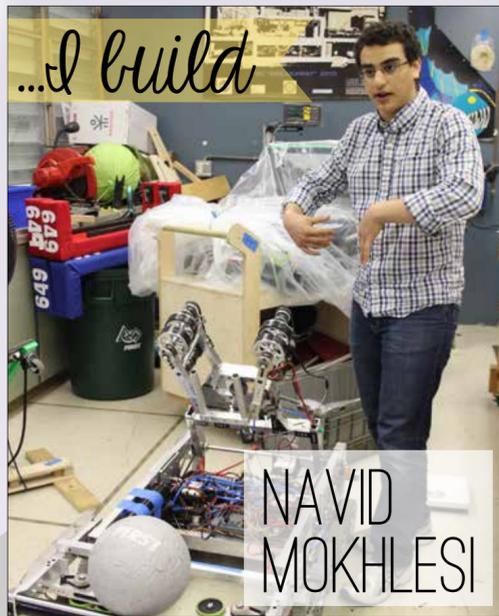
...I watch TV

Courtesy of MEGHANA KAZA

While the world sleeps...

REPORTERS SEEK OUT NIGHT OWLS AND EARLY BIRDS

1 AM.



...I build

NAVID MOKHLESI

FALCON // NUPUR MAHESHWARI

"To me, robotics is the only sport I can think of where every participant can go pro. It's a direct investment towards your future that gives you a grasp of what people actually do for a living, while checking off all the boxes like teamwork, dedication, leadership and balance, or a lack thereof," hardware head Navid Mokhlesi said. "I say lack thereof because Robotics tends to take up all my time in the six weeks of build season we are given to design and build the robot, but it's the six weeks I look forward to most in the year." ♦

Reporting by Nupur Maheshwari

6:15 AM.

When the sun has yet to peak over the Santa Cruz Mountains and darkness still swallows Highway 17, three of the thousands of commuters on the road are Suzanne Herzman, Amy Keys and Natasha Ritchie. These teaching and carpool partners use the time to relax but also discuss upcoming lessons and issues they're dealing with at school.

The three English 11 Honors teachers all live on the west side of Santa Cruz and formed a carpool out of convenience several years ago.

"We save a little mileage and it's good for the environment; it's one instead of three cars on the road," Ritchie said.

The drive each morning can be anywhere from 35 minutes to an hour and a half in bad traffic, so in order to make it to the school on time, they try to be on the road around 6:15. The trio often stops to grab coffee on the way and uses the long commute to get some of their school work and collective course discussions done.

"It's super productive. It is a roaming teachers' lounge, we get stuff done. We get a lot of stuff done," Herzman said. ♦

Reporting by Hannah Payne



ENGLISH 11 H TEACHERS

...We carpool

Courtesy of AMY KEYS

6 AM.



ISA BERARDO

...I prep rallies

FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA

Performing in front of hundreds of students, the rally commission rouses wild laughter with pun-filled jokes. Each movement and each line has been practiced over and over again, up to just that morning. As tutorial ends and the crowd clears out, senior rally commissioner Isa Berardo is usually hit with a wave of exhaustion. Her fatigue is the result of practicing and planning from 6 p.m. to around 10:30 p.m. the night before, and from 6 a.m. to 9:25 a.m. the morning of the rally.

"I love putting on rallies and being able to contribute to the spirit and energy at Saratoga," Berardo said. "Having to wake up early isn't something I groan about; it's all part of being on the commission and doing what we do."

To prepare for each rally, she works with the rest of the rally commission every Tuesday in the weeks leading up to the event, as well as every day the week of. The commission then goes through two final runs the day before and the day of the rally.

Berardo joined the commission near the end of her freshman year after she was inspired by "how fun all the commissioners looked doing [the rally]." In her three years as part of the commission, she has played roles such as Willy Wonka, an avatar and Darth Vader.

"I think rally has a bright future at Saratoga, and I would like to leave it that way at the end of the year," Berardo said. ♦

Reporting by Stephen Ding

7 AM.



SURYA MURTHY

...I row

Courtesy of SURYA MURTHY

It's 7 a.m. and the sun climbs slowly over the San Francisco Bay, where sophomore Surya Murthy is about to start practice. For the past two years, Murthy has spent her weekend mornings in Redwood City, rowing with her team: the Los Gatos Rowing Club. There are 28 athletes on the team, three of whom attend Saratoga.

For her, the great team dynamics are what keep her coming back to the sport. In recent times, the rowers have been journeying to Redwood City because of the water shortage at the Lexington Reservoir. She describes these early-morning expeditions to the bay as simply "gorgeous" — often serene, but not always.

One practice, Murthy said, was particularly rattling. The weatherman had predicted heavy rain that morning, and a double rainbow jutted over the waterway amidst dark and tumultuous skies.

"Just as our coach took a photo of us, it started to rain like cats and dogs. It was crazy windy, and we were all miserable," Murthy said. "When we went to row back into the dock, the wind died down suddenly, the skies were clear and the water was calm. Our coach said we could probably do one more lap, but then we got hit by another storm."

By the time the four-hour practice had concluded and the boats were back at land, the team was wet and cheerless.

"Honestly, we could've jumped in the water for the same effect." ♦

Reporting by Hannah Payne



By: Caitlin Ju and Harshini Ramaswamy

Three students — Sarah Traina, Diana Alvarado Isguerra and Savannah Green — talked to Falcon reporters about how they got their start in the entertainment business. Traina began hair modeling with her first photoshoot in October this fall. Following her first fashion show at only 2 years old, Isguerra has continued to model quinceañera dresses. Green was cast on a TV show on a Filipino channel in middle school.

SARAH TRAINA, 11 (HAIR MODEL)

Q: What is one of your most memorable experiences modeling?

A: [At] the first photo shoot, the one I did in October, there was a really famous photographer: Gary Lyons. We got along very well. He thought I was a lot older than I really was, so he was talking about moving me to L.A. and giving me a model roommate and doing shoots in L.A., but when he figured out I was only 16 at the time, he was like ‘OK, maybe not, but you should definitely get an agent and look more into it.’ It sounded very affirming for my first photoshoot.

Q: So do you think you will do it in the future then?

A: I really hope so. I’ve done a couple [of] shoots since then — all hair modeling — but my hair is kind of dead now. I’m hoping to transition into more commercial modeling, but with school and acting and everything else I do, [modeling] is probably going to be more of a summer thing.

• • •

DIANA ALVARADO ISGUERRA, 12 (DRESS MODEL)

Q: How did you get into modeling?

A: There [was] this academy for little girls who wanted to get into modeling, so the owner of [the] modeling [academy] told my mom and me [as] we were shopping, ‘Oh I have this academy for little girls who might want try that.’ At first I was super confused, and he said [I could] think about it. Then I went home with my mom and we told my dad. It was a few weeks later, and we were like ‘OK, let’s give it a try.’

• • •

SAVANNAH GREEN, 12 (ACTRESS)

Q: How did you get the acting role and what was your role?

A: My first fashion show. I used to be extremely shy. I went on the runway, and there were so many people and lights in my face. I was in shock, like, ‘Wait, I can’t do this.’ I was [thinking], ‘What am I going to do?’ I was super nervous, but then when I looked at the [audience] and they were all super happy and clapping, I went down. That’s when I realized I really liked it. I could totally see myself continuing with this.

• • •

SAVANNAH GREEN, 12 (ACTRESS)

Q: How did you get the acting role and what was your role?

A: I did plays when I was younger, from kindergarten through seventh grade. Once I was in middle school, I started doing them outside of school and taking occasional lessons on the side. Then, one of the directors that had worked with me many times before became a casting director for this new TV show [on the Filipino channel]. When they sent out the first casting call, they did not get the diversity they wanted, so they started recruiting specific people. The director recruited my friend and [me], and that’s how it got started.

Q: What was the experience on the show like?

A: For the first season, I was a background character, and then for the second season, I became the main character’s best friend. The experience was really interesting, but also very fun. I went to an actual TV set often after school for hours to film episodes.

Q: Do you think you will do it again at some point?

A: I do not plan to go back. It was fun while it lasted but I chose sports over acting and for me, that was the right choice.

• • •

ALL GRAPHICS BY ERIC SZE

No Netflix, and still chill

REPORTER REJECTS ENTERTAINMENT NORMS

wango tango



Kyle Wang

When I first saw my invitation to the “NETFLIX AND CHILL” Facebook event, I was confused for a couple of reasons. One, I had no idea what “Netflix and chill” meant, so I had to look that up on Urban Dictionary (I won’t say any more about that). And two, I don’t have a Netflix account.

No, I’m not an 80-year-old Neo-Luddite who believes technology will ultimately cause the apocalypse; I just don’t feel like a Netflix subscription will be worth my money — not when it takes me 20 seconds to download Popcorn Time and find a show on its website. It isn’t legal, strictly speaking, but it works.

I don’t have a Netflix account, and I’m chill with it. For one, the \$7.99-a-month subscription cost is steep, especially if I’m going to pay for a limited selection of often mediocre TV shows and movies (Netflix even excludes “Game of Thrones” and “The Wire” from its streaming services).

To be fair, Netflix does have some gems: “House of Cards,” “Daredevil,” “Master of None” and “Jessica Jones” are all fantastic, binge-worthy shows, from what I’ve heard. But here’s the problem: If I (or

my parents) were to pay for a Netflix streaming subscription, I would feel obliged to watch every good show and movie on Netflix, from “Attack on Titan” to “Mr. Bean’s Holiday.” A compulsive need to watch all critically acclaimed shows just to make sure my parents were getting their money’s worth would consume me.

And I can’t even begin to imagine what it would be like to live with my mom after she’d finished watching five seasons of “Scandal.” Dinner and long car rides would grow even more unbearable (and awkward) if all she could talk about was what sort of foolish and



raunchy trouble Olivia Pope had gotten herself into in Episode 5 of Season 3.

Sooner or later my parents and I would realize that Netflix doesn’t have every good show that exists (“Key and Peele,” “Downton Abbey,” etc). But by then we’d be so engrossed in “Master of None” that we’d be virtually helpless to do anything about it. We’d be so absorbed in our binge watching that all the rationale for cutting off our subscription would

fly out the window — all we’d care about is the next season’s release date.

In essence, nearly all my friends who have Netflix accounts are wholly addicted to them, and I can see why. It’s hard not to fall into some of its shows, and even harder not to watch its filler content while waiting for the release of a show’s next season.

In fact, Netflix seems to be designed for chronic binge-watching. Entire seasons of TV shows are released all at once, instead of episode-by-episode. So instead of waiting patiently for the premiere of episode two of my favorite show (and probably doing some homework to kill time until then), I’d just watch the whole show in one afternoon. I wouldn’t do my homework or study for my Trig test when I’d have seven seasons of “30 Rock” to watch.

So, I’ve come to a conclusion for myself: I can’t have a Netflix, for my own good. The moment I get a Netflix is the moment I cede control over my free will and turn into a couch potato, even more so than I already am. So, for now, I’ll stick with whatever pirated shows I can find on YouTube and the shady back corners of the interwebs. Sure, I might get a few angry emails from my Internet Service Provider, but at least I’ll have time to do my homework.

To paraphrase “House of Cards”: how quickly poor grades are forgotten in the shadow of Netflix. ♦

‘Breaking Bad’ spinoff wows

By Anant Rajeev

On Sept. 29, 2013, fans of the AMC Original Series “Breaking Bad,” produced by Vince Gilligan, witnessed the very last episode of a show that had captured worldwide attention for five years. For many, it was sad to see such a captivating show come to a close.

But fans of the show can breathe again: Gilligan is back.

His new AMC show “Better Call Saul” is a spin-off/prequel to “Breaking Bad” and follows the life of Saul Goodman, one of the main characters in the original series. Saul (Bob Odenkirk), whose real name in the show is James McGill, works as a criminal lawyer dealing with many different situations, reprising the same role as in “Breaking Bad.”

In “Better Call Saul,” Gilligan replicates the style that viewers were introduced to in “Breaking Bad.” His marked use of expanded metaphors and slow-paced storytelling style that made him one of the most acclaimed producers of all time continue to do so.

“Better Call Saul” has already amassed more than 7 million viewers in only its first season, and for good reason: It

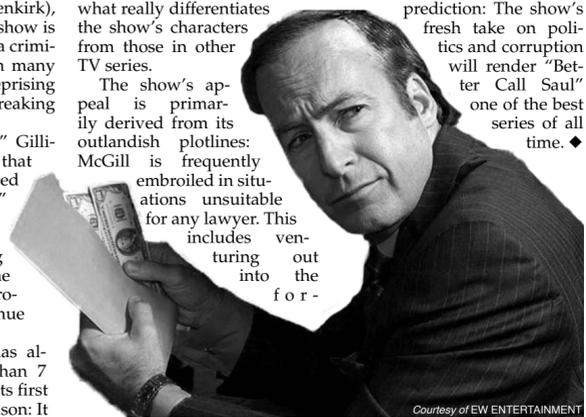
tells a thrilling tale about fugitives and political corruption. McGill, focused on the financial portion of law, gets himself into lots of trouble by getting kidnapped, running from the police, and getting into business with several con men.

McGill is not your average lawyer. His backstory includes having a “bogus” law degree from the University of American Samoa and a childhood spent living with his much older brother and attorney, Charles McGill, who suffers from a severe form of agoraphobia. This sort of bizarre background is what really differentiates the show’s characters from those in other TV series.

The show’s appeal is primarily derived from its outlandish plotlines: McGill is frequently embroiled in situations unsuitable for any lawyer. This includes venturing out into the world of

est in the middle of the night to search for missing people and being dragged out into the desert with South American cartel members to negotiate a deal.

The booming new AMC series is a peek into a world of law that is rarely seen on TV, and Gilligan manages to once again craft a story around political corruption, a controversial and increasingly relevant topic. The show is set to relive the legacy of “Breaking Bad.” Those who doubted the new series would live up to its precursor will be delighted to find out how wrong they were. My prediction: The show’s fresh take on politics and corruption will render “Better Call Saul” one of the best series of all time. ♦



Courtesy of EW ENTERTAINMENT

#FREE KESHA movement gains momentum

POP SINGER’S ASSAULT CASE BRINGS ATTENTION TO RAPE CULTURE

By Eric Sze

Those closely following the music industry might have noticed an artist missing from the top 100 — one who experienced high success in 2012, but also a traumatizing event that 1 in 5 women experience in their lifetime.

This artist is none other than pop star Kesha, and in 2005, she experienced sexual assault at the hands of her producer, Dr. Luke.

While she coped with the situation for years, things came to a head after Kesha filed a sexual assault and battery lawsuit against Dr. Luke in 2014.

As sexual battery cases take a long time to resolve, Kesha’s attorney filed a preliminary injunction motion in Oct. 2015, which would permit her to be released from her contract with Sony immediately.

Had the preliminary injunction been granted, she would have been allowed to record albums without Luke and get her career back on track after a four-year hiatus.

However, to the shock of many, myself included, New York Justice Shirley Komreich didn’t grant the motion, forcing Kesha to continue working with her purported abuser.

Fans and celebrities, including Lady Gaga and Ariana Grande, have taken to Twitter to express their outrage over the ruling with the hashtag #FreeKesha.

Dr. Luke’s abuse of Kesha has gone on for years. Following the incident, she was told repeatedly by Dr. Luke to “lose weight” and that she was a “fat [expletive] refrigerator.” She consequently started eating less and less, eventually developing an eating disorder.

This took such a huge toll on her health that she was forced to check into

a rehab center. Doctors at Kesha’s rehab facility in 2014 said that continued contract with Dr. Luke could be life-threatening to her. She was suffering from bulimia nervosa, a type of eating disorder, and her blood pressure and sodium levels were comparable to those of

could still continue to record under Dr. Luke’s label, but without his physical involvement.

But this is simply unreasonable, and doesn’t solve Kesha’s problem. It’s like being in a house where the electricity and water is controlled by someone who abused you, or being in a car while your abuser controls the accelerator, brake and steering wheel. She can’t possibly feel safe in that kind of environment.



GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

All this leads into a bigger problem involving the courtrooms. It’s extremely difficult to convince courts of rape, especially in Kesha’s case, since the assault happened 10 years ago.

Bruises and Bodily fluids wash away. That, coupled with the fact that sexual assault is one of the most underreported crimes in the nation makes it difficult to convince the judges when victims do step forward against their attacker.

patients who experienced a heart attack or stroke.

After Kesha filed her lawsuit, Dr. Luke filed a counterclaim. He didn’t mention any case of sexual assault, but hinted that by breaking her contract, she wouldn’t be following her contract with Sony, the company to which she was beholden at the time, as well as the company behind Dr. Luke’s label, Kemosabe Records.

Along with Sony, Dr. Luke denies the allegations, and claims that Kesha is only accusing him to get out of her contract.

Sony has also argued that Kesha

injuries heal. Rapes are rarely convicted, it’s a pretty clear indication that something is wrong with today’s society.

However, there’s still light at the end of this tunnel, because the judge only ruled against the preliminary injunction. There is definitely still a chance for Kesha to get out of her contract with Dr. Luke, and although the light might appear dim, I will always and forever ride with Kesha.

There has been debate about California’s statute of limitations law being applied to sexual assault cases, since it would require plaintiffs to bring up the

assault within two years rather than 10 years. The statute of limitations law in its essence means that plaintiffs must file a lawsuit within two years of alleged breach oral contracts.

Although this could be applied to sexual assault cases, like Kesha’s, and might be helpful for bringing up evidence during cases, it could possibly pressure victims to speak out against something that they aren’t comfortable talking about — especially since today’s society often shuns sexual assault victims.

Phrases like “You were asking for it,” “Don’t drink too much,” and “Don’t dress so sexy,” aren’t uncommonly said to victims.

And yet, the court still ruled against Kesha, essentially sending a horrible message to rape victims: that in order to convince a court of rape, they need to strap a camera to their head and make sure that they record the assault while it’s happening.

This isn’t just a theme that occurs in pop culture, but also a theme that occurs over and over again in college, where studies according to the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center have shown that 1 in 4 college women are sexual assault victims.

When sexual assault occurs so frequently and the assaulters are rarely convicted, it’s a pretty clear indication that something is wrong with today’s society.

However, there’s still light at the end of this tunnel, because the judge only ruled against the preliminary injunction. There is definitely still a chance for Kesha to get out of her contract with Dr. Luke, and although the light might appear dim, I will always and forever ride with Kesha.

Pop needs its Warrior. ♦

Artists address politics through performance

tamales and sun



Katherine Sun and Amulya Vadlakonda

Kendrick Lamar walked out on stage in chains, one man in a line of limping inmates. The metal links rattled as he wrapped his hands around the microphone, his brow furrowed in concentration.

The sharp snap of the snare drum made the audience flinch, as if they had felt the impact from a gunshot. Lamar’s quiet strength swelled to an unbridled passion as he sang, “What you want, you a house, you a car? Forty acres and a mule, a piano, a guitar?”

Lamar lit up the stage during his performance at this year’s Grammys on Feb. 16, not only with his flaming backdrop but also with his powerful, pointed message in his song “Alright,” which has become an anthem for the #BlackLivesMatter movement.

After his performance, it was especially easy to see why he deserved the Grammys he won that night. Lamar’s performance reflects how the music industry is increasingly returning to its fundamentals: a platform to express original ideas, and often social commentary.

In the past, this has been reflected in works such as the 1985 charity single “We Are the World,” which famous mu-

sicians like Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie recorded together to bring attention to African famine relief.

Now, pieces from musicians like Lamar, Beyoncé, Macklemore, Mary Lambert and Lady Gaga are creating discourse on topics that have meaning to these artists.

Beyoncé, who had not put out new music in nearly a year, came out with “Formation” two days before the Super Bowl and performed the piece at the halftime show.

She unabashedly tells her critics in the song, “I like my baby hair with baby hair and afros, I like my negro nose with Jackson Five nostrils.” Still, there have been petitions to #BoycottBeyoncé that criticize her for singing about a controversial topic, the Black Lives Matter movement, at the national football game.

Others criticized her costumes for the black leather and black berets that paid homage to the Black Panthers, a revolutionary black nationalist organization and influential civil rights group that was also vilified by mainstream media and connected to illegal activities.

As the video of Beyoncé’s performance started circulating on the Internet, even more people denounced her video as anti-feminist, as her videos “excluded” white women.

Macklemore, who is no stranger to criticism, especially as a white rapper in the music industry, wanted to examine white privilege and his own choices in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement. In his work with Ryan Lewis on “White Privilege II,” featuring poet and singer Jamila Woods, Macklemore



Courtesy of TRIBUTE MEDIA

Kendrick Lamar takes the Grammys stage to perform “Alright,” an ode to black power.

presented his ideas with raw honesty in a conversation about race.

“Am I in the outside looking in, or am I in the inside looking out? Is it my place to give my two cents, or should I stand on the side and shut my mouth for justice? No peace,” Macklemore raps in his song.

In an interview with “Rolling Stone” before the song’s release, the two artists correctly predicted that they would receive criticism from black and white listeners alike.

Especially given that Macklemore and Ryan Lewis benefit from the issue of white privilege that they address in the song, they had to repeatedly ask

themselves what their intentions were in making the song.

In the end, their willingness to tackle uncomfortable questions in the music — “Are you marching for freedom, or when it’s convenient?” — also called upon other people to ask those same questions. Their readiness to speak their mind amidst criticism is a testament to their will, and the conversation they’ve generated is a testament to the power of music. Music has always united people under the same ideologies. By provoking social change, these musicians are realizing the weight of their accessible medium and completely, yet unapologetically using it to its full potential. ♦



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Beauty is in the eye of the beholder

ALUMNA MORE CONFIDENT AFTER UNDERGOING DOUBLE-EYELID SURGERY

BY Fiona Sequeira

Editors' note: We have used the pseudonym of Linda to protect the identity of the main source of this story.

Linda lay rigid on the operating table, the stark gray room illuminated by the garish glow of two overhead panels of fluorescent lights. Although her eyelids were covered in numbing cream, Linda winced as her surgeon injected a potent anesthetic into the base of her left eyelid. After a few minutes, a dull, lingering pain replaced the sharp sting inflicted by the needle. Linda tried to relax. In just an hour and a half, she would have bigger eyes to last her a lifetime.

"I was awake the entire time," Linda said. "The surgery didn't hurt, but I could feel everything that was happening, so it was really unnerving."

Linda, a Class of 2015 alumna, underwent a blepharoplasty procedure, more commonly known as a double-eyelid surgery, last year in Taiwan, where she spent a semester off before attending university.

Blepharoplasty is a cosmetic surgery that creates the palpebral fold, or the upper eyelid crease a few millimeters above the lash line, that gives the appearance of larger eyes. Those who have this crease are said to have a "double eyelid," while those whose eyelids naturally lack the crease are said to have "monolids."

"My mom wanted me to get my eyes done ever since I was born," Linda said. "When she brought up the question again before I turned 18, which is how old you have to be to get the surgery, I spent a lot of time thinking and ultimately decided to go through with it."

Linda, a Korean American, said her motivation for the operation did not arise from a desire to emulate a Western aesthetic standard, pointing out that big eyes are universally appealing.

"I didn't get the surgery to fit in, but I just felt that double eyelids make a person look more alive and that I would look better with them," Linda said. "The examples set by Korea made me more comfortable in making my decision."

The heart of the industry

According to the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, the United States still leads the globe in the annual number of plastic surgeries, but South Korea has boasted the highest rate of operations per capita in the world since 2009.

In 2014 alone, nearly a million operations were performed there — the equivalent of about 20 procedures per 1,000 people.

And those are just the surgeries that were recorded; statistics in this loosely regulated industry are far from exact. Many patients, like Linda, whose procedure was done by a surgeon recommended to her by her mother's friend, visit private doctors who often do not keep official records.

The heart of the global plastic surgery industry is in Seoul, South Korea. Seoul's high-end Gangnam district, dubbed the "Improvement Quarter" by the plastic surgery community, is home to more than 500 aesthetic centers packed within a square mile.

According to one report by the BBC, between one-fifth and one-third of

DOUBLE-EYELID SURGERY

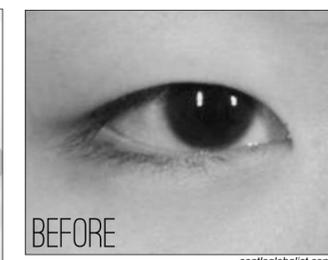
in 2014, nearly **1 MILLION** operations were carried out in S. Korea

SEOUL'S Gangnam District is home to more than 500 aesthetic centers packed within a square mile

\$2,874 Average cost of double eyelid surgery

Men comprise 15-20% of the market

GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE



Above: Blepharoplasty, commonly known as the double-eyelid surgery, creates the upper eyelid crease a few millimeters above the lash line that gives the appearance of larger eyes. The "BEFORE" image features a single eyelid, and the "AFTER" image features the double eyelid.

women in Seoul have had at least one operation. But it's not just women. Men comprise 15 to 20 percent of the market, including former South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun, who underwent the double-eyelid surgery while in office.

"The classic surgeries in Korea are the double eyelid surgery, the jaw line-thinning procedure and the nose lift," Linda said. "Koreans really like the look of having a slim face with big doll eyes."

A lifetime investment

In an interview with Tech Insider, Dr. Hang-Seok Choi, a plastic surgeon and director at JK Plastic Surgery, one of South Korea's leading cosmetic centers, explained that double-eyelid surgery is by far the most popular operation there.

"I didn't get the surgery to fit in, but I just felt that double eyelids make a person look more alive." alumna Linda

"Unlike Westerners, many [East] Asians have monolids, which can make them look fatigued," Choi said. "Some see the double lid as a sign of beauty, though others argue it comes from an idealization of Western norms."

Choi said the surgery is also a popular procedure because it requires a shorter recovery time and is cheaper than other operations.

According to Linda, double-eyelid surgeries in Asia are often performed for a third of their cost in the United States. Linda's total procedure, which included a double-eyelid surgery and an inner eye corner lift, cost around \$2,300, with just the double-eyelid portion costing \$1,515.

During the two weeks following the operation, Linda focused on recovery. To subdue the pain and reduce the swelling for the first few days, Linda al-

ternated between placing a warm bag of water and an ice compress over her eyes. "[My eyelids] were really swollen for the first couple of days, but they only hurt for the first night," Linda said. "I had to take painkillers on the first night, but after that I was OK."

Instructed not to allow water to touch her sensitive eye area, Linda had to carefully wash her face with a towel and frequently visit the salon to have her hair washed. After two weeks, her stitches were removed. To aid the healing process, Linda's doctor prescribed an antibiotic ointment to be applied twice daily to the scarring area. According to Linda, it took around six months for the eyelid swelling to completely subside.

Going into the operation, Linda was aware of how lengthy the recovery process would be, but she felt the procedure was worthwhile because it was a lifetime investment.

"Since I was leaving Taiwan shortly after the surgery, I took a picture about a month following the procedure and sent it to the doctor to update him on my progress," Linda said. "After about two months, I looked normal, but there was still some swelling on the centers of my eyelids. As of now, I'm no longer using the ointment, and there's only a small mark left."

Achieving a confident look

Although Linda's experience was positive, surgical operations are not without their risks.

According to the Korean Consumer Agency, one third of plastic surgery patients in South Korea were dissatisfied with their results, and 17 percent suffered negative side effects.

For blepharoplasties, the possible complications include eye infection, noticeable scarring, a temporary inability to completely close one's eyelids, malaligned eyelids or even permanent vision loss from retrobulbar hemorrhage.

In rare instances, patients can die from anaesthesia-related accidents during the operation.

Despite the risks, one reason Linda believes plastic surgery is so central to the Asian culture is that in many Asian countries, people are packed closely to-

gether, allowing images in the media to wield considerable influence.

For example, around half of South Korea's population lives in Seoul, the city with the sixth highest population density in the world. In a society where people are constantly bombarded with images of Korean stars, many of whom have had plastic surgery done to look more "perfect," it is unsurprising that a typical high school graduation gift for a Korean teenager is either a nose job or a double-eyelid surgery.

At her initial consultation, Linda paged through the "Look Book" of testimonials featuring photographs of former patients. In the "before" pictures, downcast women with drooping eyes, low-bridged noses and unshapely jaw lines stared blankly back at her. In her after pictures, these same women smiled broadly, showing off their new facial structures. The captions below their transformations showcased statements like, "This is why celebrities are confident without makeup."

"Looking through the pictures, I noticed a huge difference in the before and after shots," Linda said. "The sharp contrast helped me make my decision."

For those who wish to create the appearance of double eyelids or to even out their eyelids without surgery, sophomore Angela Lee suggests double-eyelid tape. Lee applies "D-UP Wonder Eyelid" tape, which costs around \$12 per pack, in order to "even out" her eyelids.

"I already have double eyelids, but one of my eyelid creases is lower than the other, so to achieve a more symmetric look, I put double-eyelid tape on my right eye to raise the crease," Lee said. "With practice it has become easy, fast and effective for me."

Ultimately, there are different options available for people to achieve the look they desire. Linda is happy with her operation, which she reiterates was not a rejection of her heritage, but a way to fulfill her own ideals of beauty.

"I definitely liked the surgery, and I would recommend it to people considering it," Linda said. "I'm certainly more confident. My monolids never bothered me that much, but I do like how my eyes look right now a lot more." ♦



BY GitikaNalwa

When I first saw Ascension Arechiga, crouched on my roof, he was squinting warily at an approaching El Niño storm. On seeing me, he smiled warmly, but his smile belied a tumult I could not imagine.

Ascension — an allusion to the assumption of Jesus into Heaven — had been nailing clay tiles onto my roof that late January afternoon, as he had done onto countless others in the San Francisco Bay for over three decades. Descending slowly, he introduced himself as Shan.

I wanted Shan's perspective on the current political upheaval in which many non-whites are being told by some descendants of European immigrants to go back to "where they came from." Newspapers are rife with opinions on this so-called nativism, but such opinions are invariably of the "intellectual elite." I wanted the opinion of a native. Shan is part Cherokee and part Hispanic: His mom was born in New Mexico to a Cherokee mother, and his dad in Texas to Spanish parents; of his mom's dad's heritage, he's unsure.

We met at a coffee shop that day, and in a follow-up, a few days later, under the unfinished roof of my house. Our town's natty coffee shop made Shan uncomfortable.

The early years

A baby boomer, Shan was born in 1957 in Southern California. He was the 11th of 13 siblings in a devout Catholic family. He grew up in Long Beach during a time of rapid change: Cities were flattening farms, tractors overtaking horse-driven plows, air conditioning becoming commonplace and the country cooling off briefly between the Korean and Vietnam Wars. It was a new era: Buildings were growing taller and the people becoming more polite, but also less kind. Those were simpler times, Shan said. If a child wanted to eat something, he would "look around and grab apples and oranges [off trees], [or] get a slingshot and shoot a wild chicken."

Until the age of 7, Shan went to St. Patrick's school in Long Beach, where "believe it or not," he "wore a tie."

The young Shan was a troublemaker, described by one of his teachers as the meanest and wildest boy. He fought at school often, and when he wasn't in class, his brothers would put him in a ring and make money off his brawls. A punch here, one there: That was normal. That was how they used "to play."

"In the beginning," Shan said, "there were no rules."

A heritage of tears

But there was a different, more vicious kind of lawlessness 50, 100 years

earlier. Shan remembers watching documentaries on his television set at home that described how Native Americans were raped and pushed out of their lands by whites, sometimes backed by the government, but even if not, with little consequence. He began to ask questions of his grandmother. Where did her Cherokee family come from? Why did "the settlers" come here? Was it really that bad back then?

She would cry uncontrollably. "She said that it was not like that," Shan said. "It was worse."

In 1897, oil was discovered in Osage County, Okla. By the 1920s, the Osage Indians, who were given headrights to the oil production royalties by the U.S. government, were one of the wealthiest groups in the nation. Whites quickly flocked to the area, seeking to secure oil-rich land for themselves, even if they had to kill Indians to do it. And they did.

Of the 60-plus murdered in the Osage Indian murders of the early 1920s, several were Shan's ancestors. But his grandmother, then 9 years old, escaped the massacre — only because she was taken in by nuns from the Catholic Church.

"I got a little sick," Shan said, "[hearing] how they always beat us. On this land, the only problem has been with the [settlers] ... those guys that came in the beginning on wagons ... those are the main devils."

I thought of the Donner Party. Shan is not a member of any of the three federally recognized Cherokee tribes at his grandmother's request. I asked him why.

"Imagine," he said quietly. "Some idiot comes and kills your family. You're gonna ask for money? She was so hurt ... Imagine you have brothers and sisters, your father — [you] haven't seen them since you were [9]. It's a huge thing to understand."

Shan told me I'm a "young kid," he an "old man." There are some things I cannot understand.

'A big pain in my heart'

Shan's peripatetic childhood took him from Long Beach to his father's



Ascension Arechiga poses while working on a house on Mallory Court in Saratoga. He is part-Cherokee and part-Hispanic. His maternal grandmother's Cherokee family was killed by whites for its oil-rich land in Okla. — in the Osage Indian murders of the 1920s.

into violence.

It happened outside the classroom, but on campus. Shan, who speaks English, Portuguese and Spanish, was conversing in Spanish when a German-American teacher told him to stop speaking Spanish.

The teacher then hit Shan with a ruler. Shan attacked him in response.

"We always got in trouble with the Europeans ... There was a big pain in my heart," Shan said. "And I almost killed him."

Shan was sentenced to six months in a juvenile detention center for the attack and had a \$4,000 bail, which his father paid readily. But when Shan returned from the detention center, his mother "was waiting with a whip." She was furious with him for attacking the teacher, but then "leaving the job unfinished": Next time, she said, "kill him." But by then the school district had relocated the

teacher. Shan believes the school feared that Shan might indeed hurt the teacher or worse.

White privilege

After high school, Shan attended Oakland's Laney College, a community college, where he earned credentials in drawing and in the electrical trade — because he "wasn't a cattle man" like the rest of his family. He then became a licensed contractor. Finding a job after college, however, proved far more difficult than gaining credentials. Irish and blacks got the best blue-collar work back then, Shan said: Blacks monopolized the docks and the Irish the roofing trade. Even though he was "starving," he didn't start battling for survival until after he had gotten married and had his first child.

The young Shan was a troublemaker; the older one a survivor.

Shan eventually found steady work in the 1980s as a roofer at Livermore Labs, where he ended up making \$37 an hour: "good money." Ironically, he landed the job only because he spoke and wrote Spanish fluently in addition to being fluent in English: They needed someone to communicate with their increasingly Spanish-speaking crew. The company that hired him was owned by a

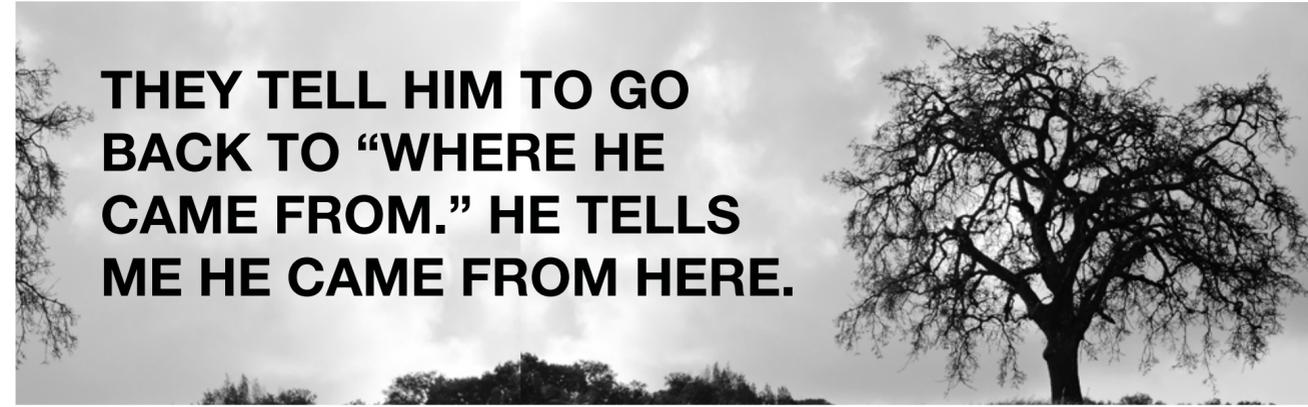
Pictured: Donner Party member William Foster killed the party's two Native American guides, Luis and Salvador, for food.



Courtesy of GOOGLE IMAGES

"On this land, the only problem has been with the [settlers]," Shan said. "Those guys that came in the beginning on wagons ... those are the main devils."

ranch in Mexico when he was 7, then to New Mexico, then to Texas, and for a short while even to Spain. He eventually returned to California to finish high school — to the only place you go "if you want to be somebody." But he came north, to Oakland, instead of to Long Beach. Shan does not care to share much about his time in high school: only a single incident of racial tension that spilled



Hispanic who had assumed an Anglican name. Even at this job, however, Shan faced racism. He told me of a day when a white coworker called him over.

"He said, 'Shan, you know I'm better than you? You know my family's better than your family? My kids are better than your kids?'"

Shan said that those were "strategies they used to intimidate" non-whites. "Everybody from Europe. Everybody."

America was run by whites back then — from the CEOs to the secretaries — and non-whites were relegated to menial jobs, Shan said. Even if you were ill-educated, but were fair-skinned and had blue eyes, you could get a desk job.

But those "like you, dark-skinned," Shan told me, would "have to go and clean up. That was normal back then."

'Morning in America'

Although racism was widespread in the '80s, in Shan's view it was not as systemic as it is nowadays.

Shan was effusive in his praise of President Ronald Reagan for his amnesty program that legalized millions of undocumented workers.

"I'm a little traitor," Shan smiled, referring to his admiration for a Republican president despite his being a Democrat.

Reagan — whose famous reelection ad was titled "Morning in America" — reduced Russia to a second-tier world power and "made the United States number one," Shan said.

"He was the greatest. Not racist. One of those guys I will have in my mind till I die. He was a holy soul. Unique."

I asked Shan whom he had voted for in recent presidential elections. Shan said he preferred Bush to Kerry, Hillary Clinton to Obama and Obama to Romney. Shan became a supporter of George W. Bush only after he deposed Saddam Hussein. Of the current political candidates, Shan favors Sen. Bernie Sanders, who he says will keep his promises, unlike President Obama.

"It's hard for [Obama] to understand our needs," Shan said. "[He] just lied to get in power. Did most of the talking, talking, [but] never did what he said. He said he was going to give immigration papers to everybody. Never. Second time, same thing. So that means he's a joke." He's not a man of his word.

Power, prejudice and profit

The current government prevents overt discrimination in some respects: A man can't tell a Sikh person to get off the street, Shan said, alluding to my Sikh heritage.

However, discrimination by the police remains widespread, and the system nowadays is one of prejudice, power and profit.

"Last year," Shan said, "I got stopped seven times by the police. Why? Racist. 100 percent. One time, they handcuffed me, searched me and stuff because I told them [they were] stupid. I hadn't done anything. Who has caused more problems, them or I?"

Shan looked at me and paused: "Even you guys."

He said he was pulled over once by a police officer of Indian heritage, and another time by a black officer, who hoped Shan would not have a license so that the officer could generate revenue for his department by fining Shan.

"The law is no longer a law," Shan said. "[Police] don't even know what [the] law means, but they carry the gun and they can shoot you. [However, they] only confront me with some kind of uniform or gun ... the goddamn enemy. Person to person, nobody [dare] touch me."

Shan's hostility toward whites and the police shocked me. It was the first time I had met someone with such a deep-seated grievance against "the sys-

tem" — a grievance of the type I had first glimpsed in Toni Morrison's "Beloved."

The police are motivated not only by prejudice nowadays, Shan said, but also by the greed of collecting fines, especially when the economy is bad — a greed similar to that which once afflicted the white men who murdered Shan's ancestors, a greed that leaves Shan "wordless."

White men then were empowered by bullets and Bibles, like they "were god or something" — no different than how police and priests abuse their power today. Shan described how even as a devout Catholic he resents the Vatican for turning a blind eye to priests who have raped children.

Shan's first thought: The woman assumed that because he was Hispanic and scruffy, he could not afford his meal.

"I pulled out money, [but] she said, 'No, no, I pay for you,'" Shan said. "I didn't think I liked her, but [then I thought], 'Maybe she's a holy soul, [or just a] nice lady.'"

Another woman in line told Shan that the white lady must have "liked him."

But "then another guy said, 'No, you look homeless,'" Shan laughed. "Everybody says something." Everybody has an opinion.

I asked Shan if he thought things would improve as America became more diverse. The US Census Bureau reports that by 2043, "no group will make up a majority." Shan said the more the

are coming to America while "bringing drugs ... crimes and their rapists" or was to chide anyone (as Trump did [Jeb Bush] for speaking Spanish in the United States, only Hispanics would be upset.

"But now, it's not only the Mexicans that answer," Shan said. "It's everybody."

In response to Trump, even Nikki Haley, the Republican governor of South Carolina who is of Indian Sikh heritage, implored Americans not to "follow the siren call of the angriest voices."

"Who are they, [the whites, to deport anyone]?" Shan said. "Nobody. They are the worst illegals on this land. That's why I say good luck. Why don't [they leave] first?"

Trump should go back to "where he came from."

Shan is settled in his views, but doesn't think he is intolerant. Most humans beings, he told me, are monkeys. If they see a person smoke, they smoke. If they see a person scratch his head, they follow. Muslims might pray to Allah, Shan said. That's their choice.

"Some people believe in Jesus, some people believe in elephants, some people believe in Buddha. Who cares?" he said. "I say, 'OK, that's you. I don't criticize.'"

'We are all Americans now'

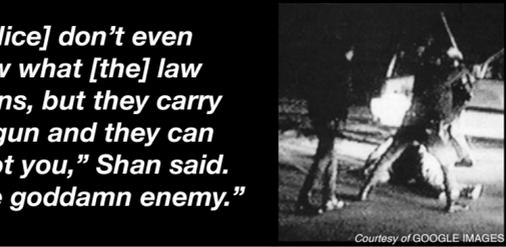
Shan's parting advice to me was to live my life with a mind of my own, and not to be jaded by his views. He told me that the discrimination and hardship he has faced have depended on the state of the economy and on the city where he was, and are not "everyday."

"This land has been kind of a mess," Shan said. "But at the same time, it's the best place for you."

He told me that his two adult children, one of each gender, laugh when he tries to tell them about their Cherokee heritage. They tell him, "We are all Americans now."

The second interview was complete, and Shan's day was over. He packed up his equipment and we exited the construction site through its green chain-link fence. He walked to his Toyota pickup, as I ducked into my dad's dented Mercedes. Shan made a U-turn before glancing up from the wheel. Then he waved to me, and I to him. And so we diverged. ♦

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"[Police] don't even know what [the] law means, but they carry the gun and they can shoot you," Shan said. "The goddamn enemy."

Courtesy of GOOGLE IMAGES

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A cauldron of cultures

Shan told me that even these days, whites call him "all kinds of names," most often a "beaner" — an ethnic slur that mocks Hispanics for their bean-rich cuisine.

But Shan said that is nothing. Several weeks ago, a white woman paid for his meal at Panda Express, leaving him baffled.

Trump should go back to "where he came from," Shan said.



Shan favors Sen. Bernie Sanders for president, who he says will keep his promises, unlike President Obama.

China and Taiwan: students discuss divide

by Caitlin Ju & Olivia Lu

The year was 1949. After decades of civil war and Japanese occupation, China was in economic ruin, giving Chinese Communist leader Mao Zedong and his party the perfect situation to take over China. Mao's followers seized land from the rich and imprisoned any they saw as enemies of the state.

Among those who suffered at the hands of this revolution were the maternal great-grandparents of junior Joyce Lai. Since they owned a sizable amount of land, the Red Guards forced her family onto the streets. No one would take her family in, because they were afraid the same would happen to them.

Forced to hide in a stable with pigs and horses in the cold winter, the couple froze to death. In the meantime, Lai's grandparents escaped to Taiwan, but the rest of her mother's family was left behind in China and forbidden to visit them.

The relationship between China and Taiwan has been tense since the Nationalist Kuomintang leaders of the Republic of China lost the civil war to the Communists and fled to Taiwan in 1949, governing the country under martial law, and Nationalist Chiang Kai-shek declared his government represented all of China. Opinions continue to differ on whether Taiwan is an independent country and even on

whether there is a distinction between being Taiwanese and Chinese. Those who believe there is a difference point to Taiwan's distinctive language, food, government, and education.

Under pressure from the Chinese government, the U.S. does not officially support Taiwan's independence. The United Nations also does not recognize Taiwan as a nation and therefore does not accept it into the organization.

Many first-generation immigrants from Taiwan claim their native country is an independent state, while those from mainland China disagree.

"My mom's dream growing up was to be some kind of president and take over China," junior Amy Chiang said. "And that was her dream all throughout elementary school, so [Taiwan] must have had some kind of propaganda or influence."

Even though their parents tend to be the ones with more radical beliefs, some SHS students still stereotype Taiwanese and Chinese people. For instance, junior Ziting Yu, a Chinese-American, recalls that in sophomore year in Chinese class, she felt that Taiwanese students judged her for her

Chinese accent and believed they were more Americanized than she is.

Having had a different experience, senior John Zhou, a Chinese citizen who is studying in the U.S., said, "I think Taiwanese people are more kind and more detailed, and they speak very softly."

Such judgments do not affect Zhou's attitude toward Taiwanese people.

"Chinese people want to be friends with Taiwanese [people]. There are things we can learn [from them], and we want to build a better relationship between each other," Zhou said. "It's [a] pretty common [mindset]. I'm in a Chinese group [with] all the ESL Chinese

students. I know they are willing to be friends with all Taiwanese people. We're not racist."

The root of this clash, it seems, then, has always been politics. The recent Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) victory in Taiwan showed growing favor for Taiwanese independence. Lai, the student whose grandparents fled to Taiwan, sees the DPP win as advantageous for the country as it moves in the direction of a more self-sufficient economy.

"[The DPP government] is a step in the right direction," Lai said. "If [Taiwan] can rely less on China, [its people] can more confidently recognize themselves as 'Taiwanese' rather than 'Chinese.'"

Recently, there has been controversy over the nationalism of Tzuyu, a 16-year-old Taiwanese singer in the Korean Pop group "Twice." After she was seen waving a Taiwanese flag on TV, she was accused of being a pro-Taiwanese independence activist and was forced to apologize on camera.

"[Tzuyu] definitely shouldn't be forced to identify with a culture..." Lai said. "We see oppression everywhere and we're against it, so why would we be OK with China oppressing a Taiwanese person?"

Yu also believes that the Chinese people, who are unaccustomed to having identity or admit they are Chinese, overreacted home and did not understand the consequences of her action.

Zhou said that though Taiwan and China have been separated for several decades, they still share a similar culture and language, thus making the divide unnecessary.

"We used to be the same country and live on the same land. We shouldn't be judging each other. We should be more accepting," he said. "We can be friends with white people, black people, all the races... [Taiwanese and Chinese people] share the same skin color. We should just be friends." ♦

I think Taiwanese people are more kind and more detailed, and they speak very softly.

senior John Zhou

LET'S TALK ABOUT CULTURE

South Indian and proud

by Amulya Vadlakonda

You've watched Priyanka Chopra shine as the new face of "Quantico," the hit ABC drama about the lives of FBI recruits, and chuckled at Parminder Nagra's antics in the heartwarming 2002 movie "Bend It Like Beckham." You've seen the henna designs, and perhaps even attended the Dandias.

But all this you've experienced is a purely North Indian representation of Indian culture. It is a representation to which I, a Telugu-speaking American in a South Indian family originating from Hyderabad, India, simply cannot relate.

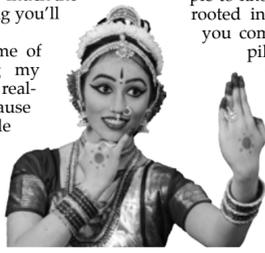
So, when people ask me about my background, based on their limited exposure to Indian culture, it is easier to joke about my real South Indian culture than to reveal it.

"You dance?" people ask. "You must do Bhangra! That's the dance where you jump around a lot, right?"

"No, I am a Kuchipudi dancer," I tell them. The blank stares that I get in response are routine by now.

"We move our necks from side to side. It's pretty much the most Indian thing you'll ever see," I joke.

After a lifetime of gently mocking my heritage, I've realized that because so many people are unfamiliar with South Indian customs and traditions, I want to introduce them in the least painful way possible.



Junior Amulya Vadlakonda performs at her Kuchipudi Rangapravesam, a South Indian dance recital, last July.

I can see how I underestimate the willingness and capacity of others to understand me. It is simple for me to tell people that I am a different Indian than who they think I am. But my dismissive attitude toward my own culture is the path of least resistance.

The truth is, I've never felt offended at the lack of representation of South Indians in mainstream media. But that is not to say that this deficiency is right. You likely know what a samosa is, but do you know what an idli is?

Probably not. I don't fault you. The round rice cakes aren't as well known as samosas because they belong to a part of Indian culture that is not as outwardly appreciated.

We South Indians are a proud people. We have enough love for our own culture that we don't need others' approval. However, coming from a girl who grew up wanting an Indian role model in mainstream media, we might not need recognition, but we definitely want it. I want people to ask me about my culture, and I want to answer them truthfully — not jokingly. I want people to know that my culture is deeply rooted in my religion, Hinduism. If you come to my house, I will happily explain to you that I have a statue of Ganesha, the elephant-god, in front of my house because in my religion, it is good luck.

I want people to know that Dandia and Bombay in the Bay are only part of the complex and magnificent mix of cultures in India. But most of all, I want people to know that I love being South Indian. ♦

We asked students of our multicultural community these two questions: One, which American of your culture are you most proud of, and two, which American of your culture are you most ashamed of? We did not define "culture" for the students, as we wanted them to interpret it as they saw fit.

Interviewing by Melissa Magner, Gitika Nalwa and Dorrie Tang

Solomon Bailey, 10

Bailey: That's hard. I've only been living here for four years.

Nalwa: OK, which person of your culture are you most proud of?

Bailey: I think culture is the people, like how you celebrate things, how you help each other out in times of need. I'm proud of the Ethiopian emperor Tewodros. He fought for Ethiopia when the Italians were trying to invade Ethiopia. He was the guy who defended and defeated them and stopped them from conquering the country.

Bailey: I'm ashamed of Haile Selassie. He was an Ethiopian emperor who had a lion pet. When there was a drought in Ethiopia and people were starving, he was traveling all over the world, not caring about the people.

Kristine Zhang, 12

Zhang: Can I just be the person who talks about how it's difficult to define a culture because we all have a very broad heritage?

Nalwa: Oh my god, you're disgusting. Sure, if you want.

Zhang: ... because I actually cannot think of anybody. Can you give me any examples of famous Chinese people? I'm assuming that if you're going to pick someone from your culture that you are proud of, it's someone who has done something from a humanitarian

standpoint...usually. And I just can't think of anybody off the top of my mind who is Chinese and specializes in humanitarian work...

I'm proud of Feng Zhang. He's the scientist who was the pioneer behind this new gene editing technology, so he's a pretty interesting guy in terms of technological aspects, but he's not very purely altruistically interesting.

I can say without a doubt that Gitika is the person from my culture at Saratoga High School that I am the most ashamed of.

Magner: Same. (laughter)

Zhang: Can you please put that in the article?

Nalwa: It's supposed to be serious. **Zhang:** Gitika, you think your improperness is a joke? ... (laughter, pauses to think of a legitimate answer) Just because we are in the same culture doesn't mean I am responsible for their actions. That's racist. Kant said you can only be responsible for yourself; therefore, the only person who I have the right to be ashamed of is me.

Brendan Ney, 12

Ney: I'm proud of Martin Luther King Jr. because he showed the power of nonviolent means to effect great change. I'm ashamed of Trump because he appeals to the xenophobic and racist tendencies of some Americans.

Summer Smith, 12

Smith: The "most proud of" could be Bill Gates, I guess, but I don't know why I would be proud of Bill Gates. I think he's doing a lot to help others through his own success. Most ashamed of? It's hard to name one person. I feel like everyone who has a lot of money who doesn't do anything necessarily good with it — and I mean if they're not spending it, I guess that's fine, but if they're spending it on things that aren't beneficial to other people... ♦

Cultural Q&A

SHS father Michael J. Burry looks forward as his fame from 'Big Short' begins to fade

BY Trevor Leung & Fiona Sequeira

Upon its release in late 2015, "The Big Short," a biographical comedy-drama film based on Michael Lewis's book of the same name, garnered immediate attention for documenting the 2008 stock market crash. The main plot line follows the real-life story of Dr. Michael J. Burry, father of freshman Nick Burry and a hedge fund manager who was among the first to recognize the gravity of the impending market collapse.

"In 2005, I knew it was very stressful for him," Nick said. "I was quite young, so I didn't understand most of it. It's still a very complex topic that I don't fully understand."

In terms of how the movie portrayed him as a character and the crisis as a whole, Dr. Burry feels that the "The Big Short" was fairly accurate.

"Movies by their nature can only make a few points, and Adam McKay, the writer and director, did a terrific job making the few points he and the studio felt were important," Burry said. "I would say there is a lot more to the story, but for the movie to be successful, it could not go there."

Burry was especially impressed with Christian Bale's performance, especially given that just before filming for "The Big Short" began, Bale tore ligaments in his knee, an injury that caused him intense pain even while walking.

"Christian is a dedicated professional for whom I have tremendous respect," Burry said. "It was remarkable how he acted through the pain. I certainly cannot complain — he did a great job."

Burry's favorite part of the movie was the scene where Brad Pitt's character, based on real-life banker Ben Hockett, sits in a British pub at the height of the collapse, unwinding the trade to great profit while the bartender rants about evil bankers in the background.

"That trade was as much about the exit as the entry, and the exit I felt was a great puzzle," Burry said. "I had to find a new approach when the time came. That approach was heavy in esoterica that would never look good on film. [Brad Pitt's] scene only scratches the surface, but it had good entertainment value. I found it funny."

An omen came true

The week before Thanksgiving, Burry and Nick attended the movie premiere together in New York. The two walked the red carpet side by side, watched the movie, and then attended the after party. For Nick, the experience has been "like a roller-coaster ride."

"I've gotten a lot of exposure from it. It's a little different," Nick said. "It's kind of weird to have people going, 'There's a movie about your dad!' but overall, it isn't too crazy."

Nick noted that while he enjoyed the movie, it didn't paint a comprehensive picture of his father, who, like many brilliant people, has Asperger's Syndrome, a high-functioning form of autism that causes difficulty in social situations.

"At first, I didn't know who was going to play my dad, so I thought it was going to be a small minor film, but it actually turned out to be a big production," Nick said. "I thought the movie was pretty good, although [the producers] went a little Rain Man on my dad — he's not as exaggerated as the movie made him out to be."

While Dr. Burry has enjoyed being a big part of "The Big Short" franchise, he is ready to return to normalcy.

"I'm relieved the movie is ending its run in theaters, and that this chapter is closing."



Top: Actor Christian Bale (top left), who plays Dr. Michael J. Burry, and three other actors are featured in the official movie poster for 'The Big Short.'

Left: Michael Burry (left), freshman Nick Burry (second from left) and two other members of their family attend the New York premiere of the film, held at the Ziegfeld Theatre on Nov. 23.

Courtesy of HUMANS OF SARATOGA HIGH

Burry attended Santa Teresa High School in San Jose and then attended UCLA, where he pursued pre-med studies and a degree in economics. He graduated from the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and began his residency in neurology at Stanford Hospital and Clinics. When he had time, he worked on his side hobby: financial investing.

After three years, Burry left the Stanford Hospital to found his own private investment firm in Cupertino, Scion Asset Management, LLC. Burry ran this hedge fund from 2000 to 2008, when he closed it to focus on his personal investments. In 2005, Burry discovered that the U.S. housing market was built on the unstable foundation of high-risk subprime loans in danger of defaulting. Chancing more than \$1 billion of his investors' money on credit default swaps, he bet against the housing market and produced 489 percent in profits when the market collapsed.

"Prevailing wisdom does not think in terms of credit-driven asset inflations and their dangers, but I do," Burry said. "In 2003, lenders started issuing new types of teaser-rate mortgages that had low initial payments and allowed borrowers to obtain larger mortgages, even if interest rates were increasing and household income was not growing."

Burry called this phenomenon, which spurred on home price appreciation at rates far above household income growth, "credit extension by instrument." This created a bubble within the housing market wherein fraudulent

speculators could jump in and banks could sell these new mortgages.

"Common sense told me that borrowers would take a superficially good deal for themselves, so I watched the lenders," Burry said. "Since many lenders booked profits when they sold them to Wall Street, lenders stopped checking excess credit risk at the door, which, ironically, is their only real job."

This "game" centered around volume — the more mortgages extended, the more profit, regardless of the quality of the borrower. Lenders made what Burry called "NINJA" (no income, no job or assets) mortgages, since they did not retain any personal risk by offering toxic teaser mortgages to less-qualified borrowers.

Burry's "aha" moment regarding the inevitable crisis occurred when he recognized a fundamental shift in the housing market — that it had devolved from a "virtuous" cycle to a "vicious" spiral. In the virtuous cycle, the majority of job and consumption growth during the 2000s was tied to the secure housing industry, but by 2005, the rise of toxic NINJA mortgages propagated a shift to the vicious spiral. Although in hindsight Burry's insightful predictions may now

seem obvious, he was ridiculed for his forecasts at the time.

"There was a lot of frustration and sadness — I was aware all along that people would lose jobs in unprecedented fashion, that lives would be ruined," Burry said. "It was like predicting a plane crash, then being forced to watch. Even as 2008 started, it was like slow motion. The complacency was maddening. I wanted to shake our leaders and say 'Wake up!', but I was a nobody. Then they did all these rash, rushed things."

While Burry does not believe that there is a purely fiscal policy that could have prevented the 2008 crash, he points out that the national debt is currently growing much faster than the gross domestic product (GDP) — an unsustainable path. He thinks fiscal policies should refrain from adding to debt and help stimulate productive private sector investment. He believes normal business cycles are preferable in the long run to federal policies that aim to prolong economic booms.

"Government spending should be redirected away from federal bureaucracies and toward our transportation, electricity and especially water infrastructure and security," Burry said. "I believe next-generation nuclear power is the clearest path to a green and secure energy future."

Looking to the next generation

According to Burry, there is once again complacency in the markets. He said that last year, \$20 trillion worth of exchange-traded index funds (ETFs) traded, which is more than the gross domestic product (GDP) of the entire United States — an inequality reminiscent of 2007, when the \$62 trillion worth of credit derivatives were worth more than the GDP of the entire world.

"The long bull market has put a lot of people at ease about stocks and bonds, much like people were at ease about housing and mortgage bonds prior to the global financial crisis," Burry said. "It's hard to argue against, but it was hard to argue against the dream of homeownership back in 2005 as well."

Ultimately, however, Burry is hopeful for the future. Burry cites one of his favorite speeches: the 1974 Nobel Prize lecture wherein economists Gunnar Myrdal and Friedrich August von Hayek asserted that economics is not an exact science to which scientific procedures can be applied. Burry says the world mistakenly views economics through this faulty frame of reference.

"The powers that be in the fields of economics and finance argue forcefully, but all their straw men cannot hide what their advice has wrought in the real world," Burry said. "I have some hope though that in time, today's economics will be seen as yesterday's folly."

When asked what advice he would give to young people to avoid being victimized by the next big financial crisis, Burry was hopeful.

"Each young adult has the ability to stand apart from the crowd. The next 10-15 years are an epic chance for every high school student," Burry said. "Setbacks [like the financial crisis] are an opportunity to be creative. Opportunities may be most acute at the intersection of disciplines, and rarely will those opportunities present themselves from the vantage point of a crowd." ♦

It was like predicting a plane crash, then being forced to watch. I wanted to shake our leaders and say, 'Wake up!'

doctor Michael J. Burry

TRACK AND FIELD

Individuals shine as team struggles for wins

By Caitlin Ju & Fiona Sequeira

Her foot in position and her eyes on the mark that she knew she had to reach in a certain number of strides, sophomore Valerie Yang was prepared to take first in her favorite event, the long jump.

Yang ended up winning both the long jump and triple jump at an away meet against Cupertino on March 15, with jumps of 14-10.50 and 30-09.50 feet, respectively.

Though Yang performed well, the Falcons suffered a tough loss 2-0 at the Cupertino meet, losing 146-107. However, certain star runners were able to show well for the team.

Senior Stephen Law placed first in the 1600 meters with a time of 4:45.80 minutes and second in the 800 meters with a time of 2:12.12 minutes.

Unable to break his personal

record (PR) of 4:40 minutes for the mile, Law cited the presence of strong wind on the back stretch.

"There was too much wind and I was too far ahead of everyone else to have someone to pace off," Law said. "I felt that the [Cupertino] guys were too slow during the first few meters, so I just led the pack and stayed there the whole time."

Yet just four days later, at the optional Dublin Distance Fiesta track meet on March 19 at Dublin High School, Law broke his mile PR, running an impressive 4:37 minutes. Law's ultimate goal for his last track season is to break 4:25 minutes.

Senior Vincent Faylor also shone brightly for the team on an otherwise gloomy day. Faylor dominated the boys' hurdles races, placing first in the 110 meter hurdles with a time of 15.95 seconds and first in the 300 meter hurdles with a time

of 43.29 seconds.

On the girls' side, Cupertino found an edge in star sprinter senior Jade Harrison, who plans to run Division-1 track at University of Michigan this fall. She sailed to first place in the 100, 200 and 400 meters.

Besides Harrison's performance, the girls persevered and were victorious in other events. Freshman Sasha Pickard won first in the 800 meters with a time of 2:35.70 minutes, and sophomore Chloe McGee placed first in the 300m hurdles with a time of 48.51 seconds.

As the season progresses, with meets nearly every week, the team hopes to have runners represent the school at the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League (SCVAL) championship and Central Coast Sectionals (CCS), but will require more collective commitment to get there.

"We don't have that many people competing in each event,



FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA

Freshman Sehig Dhindsa runs the mile during a track meet on March 24.

so it's just been really hard for us to notch points," Yang said. "We've also had a problem with people not showing up. Last practice, there were around 80 people missing."

Law noted similar problems regarding team dedication.

"I think we all just need to work harder. A lot of people still skip practices, and we just

can't have that if we want to win," Law said.

At a home meet on March 24 against Mountain View, the Falcons also suffered a loss, bringing their record to 1-2. ♦

Due to printing deadlines, The Falcon was unable to cover the home meet against Santa Clara on March 31.

Harold & Kumar



Apoorv Kwatra & Trevor Leung

Everyone loves a good Cinderella story. Fortunately, this year's NCAA March Madness tournament has provided more than enough of those.

The annual men's college basketball tournament that everyone stops to watch is nearing completion, and it is as exciting as it has ever been.

With bracket busters upon bracket busters, the 2016 NCAA March Madness tournament has featured almost as many upsets as expected results, leading to one of the most unexpected advances in college basketball history.

No. 15-seeded Middle Tennessee defeated No. 2-seeded Michigan State 90-81 in a thriller; No. 11-seeded Wichita

State shocked No. 6-seeded Arizona 65-55; No. 12-seeded Yale avoided a No. 5-seeded Baylor comeback to hold on 79-75; No. 5-seeded Indiana held off one of the most talented players in all of college basketball, Jamal Murray, to surprise No. 4-seeded Kentucky by a score of 73-67 and make it into the Sweet Sixteen.

After the first round, not a single perfect bracket out of 13.02 million total entries in the whole world remained in ESPN's NCAA March Madness Tournament Challenge.

All the aforementioned upsets have contributed to this surprising statistic, with literally nobody predicting all 32 first round games correctly. With the Final Four and National Cham-

pionship game remaining, there is far more excitement to come.

All four No. 1 seeds still remained in the Sweet Sixteen, a feat that definitely does not always occur. It was quite feasible that they could play each other in the Final Four and the Championship, lead-

ing to some of the most talented games ever played in college basketball.

Unfortunately, or maybe even fortunately, upsets occurred, leading to lower seeds making the Final Four.

Despite the top heavy nature of the bracket this year, many Cinderella teams have made it very far in the tournament. Gonzaga (seeded No. 11) played Syracuse (seeded No. 10) in the Sweet Sixteen, ensuring that at least one team seeded No. 10 or higher will make the Elite Eight. Once in the Elite Eight, anything can happen. After all, in 1985, Villanova won the entire tournament as an No. 8 seed.

No. 8 seed. Gonzaga and Syracuse certainly have reasons to be optimistic about their future in the tournament. Also, Notre Dame (seeded No. 6) and Wisconsin (seeded No. 7) faced off in the Elite Eight. This year's tournament is just aching for upsets.

While the four No. 1 seeds, Kansas, Oregon, North Carolina, and Virginia,

were favored to win it all, only the Tar Heels survived to the Final Four. With the Sweet Sixteen and Elite Eight completed, even more exciting games have await. No. 10-seeded Syracuse surprised everyone and made the Final Four, with their 13 regular season losses tied for the most losses for any Final Four team in NCAA March Madness history. Syracuse will face UNC on Saturday and try to continue their Cinderella story.

No. 2-seeded Villanova will square off against No. 2-seeded Oklahoma the same day. The NCAA Championship Game is now guaranteed to have one No. 2 seed and either a No. 1 seed in UNC or a No. 10 seed in Syracuse. If Syracuse were to win its next two games, the team would become the lowest seeded team to ever win the championship.

This year's NCAA March Madness tournament has provided upsets, bracket busters, Cinderella team and loads of fun. All of this proves once again why NCAA men's basketball is the best tournament in all of sports. ♦



GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

With the Final Four and the National Championship game remaining, there is far more excitement to come.

New sophomore the 'Seoul' of baseball team

By Amith Galivanche & Jay Kim

In PE teacher Yuko Aoki's fourth-period class during a mile run, one boy speeds past the others, finishing minutes before anyone else.

During weight training, he is able to properly lift nearly 30 pounds more than the standard. While he may seem like little more than a very athletic individual, sophomore Daniel Ryu is also one of the best high school baseball players in South Korea — and now he is set to make his contribution to the school's varsity team.

Due to his father's job transfer, Ryu moved to the United States last semester. He is still learning to speak English, but he is quickly making his abilities known on the baseball diamond. (The interview for this story was conducted in Korean and translated into English.)

"[Daniel has] definitely been a great addition to the team.

We're down a few outfielders right now due to injury and he's really stepped up to fill void," said pitcher Tyler Yoshihara, a team co-captain. Ryu was on the track to become a professional baseball player in Korea. He was recruited by Sunrin Internet High School, famous for its elite track since middle school, when he was chosen to represent Korea in an international competition. Ryu and his junior high national team claimed second place in the Cal Ripken Junior World Series, a renowned international competition with countries from all around the world such as Korea, Japan and the Dominican Republic.

Most notably, according to Ryu, his team won the Golden Lion Flag National High School Baseball Championship, which is one of the biggest competitions for Korean high schools nationwide. Ryu has been on an elite track since middle school, when he was chosen to represent Korea in an international competition. Ryu and his junior high national team claimed second place in the Cal Ripken Junior World Series, a renowned international competition with countries from all around the world such as Korea, Japan and the Dominican Republic.

In Korea, according to Ryu, student athletes practice so rigorously that most players have to skip most of school. The practices begin right after lunch and can last until 11 p.m., making it

The degree of Ryu's skill was further emphasized when he won a Golden Glove award for his skills in center field.

In a game during the Cal Ripken Junior World Series, the team defeated an American team by 12 runs. Ryu was surprised how the other team's coaches responded to the loss.

"In Korea, if you lose a match or make an error with that big of a gap, you would be criticized and punished by your coaches," Ryu said. "What I found surprising was how forgiving and inclusive American baseball is."

These memories of American players contributed to Ryu's decision to move to America with his family rather than staying and pursuing a career as a baseball player in Korea.

In Korea, according to Ryu, student athletes practice so rigorously that most players have to skip most of school. The practices begin right after lunch and can last until 11 p.m., making it



Courtesy of DANIEL RYU

Sophomore Daniel Ryu prepares to hit during a home game on March 18.

difficult for student athletes to study or lead a conventional high school lifestyle.

According to Ryu, giving up on academics to become a professional baseball player is a risky choice for any student.

With this situation in mind, Ryu has become highly motivated to put his best effort into his school work. Although he has only been in the United States for a few months and

speaks limited English, Ryu already has ambitious goals.

He is aiming to continue baseball until college and hopes to be drafted by a professional team, while majoring on sports-related subjects like sports marketing or sports medicine.

"Playing baseball in the United States is totally different for me," Ryu said. "I wish I get to take my experience and utilize it to help the team." ♦

Senior passes asthma test, will play tennis at Navy

By Aditya Chaudhry & Amith Galivanche

Senior Karthik Padmanabhan will head to Annapolis, Md., after graduation to play tennis for the United States Naval Academy.

Despite a successful end to his story, his path to play tennis for a division college was not easy.

Starting in September, Padmanabhan had to actively pursue the Navy's and NCAA's requirements to play tennis in college.

This process was not without its hurdles. According to Padmanabhan, the most difficult part was passing the Naval Academy's physical fitness test. With a child hood history of asthma, Padma-

nabhan was unsure he would make the academy.

"I had asthma as a child and the Naval Academy found that on my record despite me outgrowing those symptoms," Padmanabhan said. "In order to get in, the college had me come in to do a breathing test where they hooked me up to a machine and simulated the asthma symptoms to see how I responded."

Having played the sport since age 5, Padmanabhan said it has become a huge part of his upbringing and it has allowed him to form strong and lasting friendships throughout all the years.

"Tennis takes up most of my sched-

ule, and for the last five years or so, I had a tennis tournament almost every weekend, so I ended up with out a lot of time to spend with my school friends," Padmanabhan said. "As a result, I grew extremely close with my tennis friends, and they are still probably my closest friends."

When he was 10, Padmanabhan watched as his older sister, Mika Padmanabhan, a 2010 alumna, then a senior, looked at colleges where she would play tennis.

He realized then that he wanted to follow in his sister's footsteps and continue playing the sport competitively in college.

At the end of Padmanabhan's sopho-

more year, the coach for the Naval Academy's tennis team reached out to him, and Padmanabhan stayed in touch with him throughout the course of his junior year.

After his official visit to the Naval Academy from Oct. 1-4, meeting the tennis players on the team, getting the chance to hit with them and observing the quality of student life, he knew he had made his decision, verbally committing to the Naval Academy only the following week.

"Overall, it was a great decision," Padmanabhan said. "I get to play Division I tennis for four years, receive an education from one of the best engineering schools in the country and I get to serve my country after. In every way, it worked out really well." ♦



Padmanabhan

SOFTBALL

Girls begin tough transition to new field

By Olivia Lu & Nupur Maheshwari

As the softball season starts, the players have been to take on other teams, in addition to a larger problem — the school's new field.

The delay in finishing the field's construction and various problems with the new design have caused conflicts with the team's practice schedule.

"[The construction workers] just finished the dugouts and we already had to cancel games because they didn't finish," senior first baseman Savannah Green said. "It makes it difficult having both JV and varsity practice because we only have one of the batting cages."

In addition to the dugouts, the pitcher's circle was built too small but was temporarily fixed by cutting out an extra portion of the turf near the front.

According to second baseman Stephanie Hayes, the delay has impacted the team by pushing back games, making the physical aspect of softball a lot more strenuous on their bodies.

Along with the hardships with the renovation of the field, the girls are off to a shaky start.

Playing away at rival Los Gatos on March 25, the team lost 1-0. The Falcons, after the heartbreaking loss, dropped to second to last in the De Anza League,

with their record at 2-2. Junior shortstop Rachel Davey led the team with two hits, and senior captain Eleni Spirakis and Hayes added hits as well. Spirakis put in a strong pitching performance in allowing only one run.

The team also lost its first game against Monta Vista 6-1 on March 16, but won its games against Prospect 4-3 on March 21 and Wilcox 1-0 on March 23.

"We have been focusing on communication and hitting," Green said. "[Our] weaknesses are just from the fact that we have only been a full team for one week so far because of basketball."

The team believes that its strengths tie in with not losing too many players due to graduation. Hoping that the adjust to the field comes easier, the team makes do with its current situation.

The team must keep certain things in mind games on turf as opposed to dirt fields, such as sliding distance and blocking techniques for catchers. The team has gone over these adjustments, however, making the transitions between playing at home and away "doable, just difficult," Hayes said. ♦

Due to printing deadlines, The Falcon was unable to cover the game against Los Altos at home on March 28 and the away game against Milpitas on April 1.

Hayes

BOYS' GOLF

Final four matches to test players

By Apoorv Kwatra & Trevor Leung

After a 182-176 win against Monta Vista on March 16 at Deep Cliff Golf Course (par 30), the Falcons have a 6-1 record and are preparing for their final four games of the regular season, including two against Los Gatos.

In their match against Monta Vista, all of the players played bogey-golf (39) or better. According to No. 1 player senior Lucas Peng, every one was striking the ball well and keeping it in play.

"Almost everyone hit shots that stayed in-bounds throughout the match," Peng said. "So we were able to save a lot of strokes by not taking penalties."

During practice, coach Dave Gragnola has been setting up competitions like horse races, wherein pairs of players play against each other to simulate the pressure-filled atmosphere during actual matches so they can continue keeping up the consistency shown in their match against Monta Vista.

"The competitive factor is also there when we play the [practice] games, so

we will feel more confident to hit good solid shots," No. 4 player junior Nathan Shang said.

The team will face one of their most challenging opponents, Los Gatos on April 11-at Saratoga Country Club and La Rinconada Country Club (par 34) on April 12. The games are two of the team's last four matches, so Shang finds practice competitions to be important.

"When we play Los Gatos, we need everyone to be on their best game," Shang said. Sophomore Charles Qi, who plays the No. 9 position, thinks the team will make CCS, but won't go far without improvement.

"It was nice to see the work we put in during practice pay off in games like the one against Monta Vista [on March 16]," Qi said. "But I think that our team can still play at a higher level and compete against the other skilled teams in CCS." ♦

Due to printing deadlines, the match against Wilcox and Santa Clara on March 28 could not be covered in the print edition. To see full coverage of the match, go to saratogafalcon.org.



Shang

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL

Schneidmiller's kills spark 8-game winning streak

By Helen Chen

With a 10-2 overall record and 4-1 league record as March 28, the Falcons are currently ranked second for SCVAL and third in CCS, positions they hope to maintain for the rest of the season.

"I think we can do pretty well in leagues and hopefully make it to CCS," senior co-captain and setter Chester Leung said.

Junior Joel Schneidmiller is playing at a level that surpasses his performance from last year's season. Despite having fewer kills per game this year, Schneidmiller has nearly doubled his blocks this season with 45 so far compared to only 25 last year. He has also improved his serves, and has already had 129 aces.

Since the team's two losses at the beginning of the season, the Falcons have had an eight-game winning streak.

They beat Los Altos, the No. 4 team in the league, 3-2 on March 25 at home.

"The game was super close at the entire way through," said senior co-captain Spencer Yen. "We stopped making errors in the game by starting to block and

shutting down their top hitters." On March 23, the team beat Lynbrook 3-2 away. The team also beat Homestead 3-1 on March 16 after losing to the Mustangs the week before.

Schneidmiller had outstanding games, getting 32 kills against Lynbrook High School and 38 kills against Homestead. Now that the team is on roll, the Falcons are beginning to reach their potential.

"Our early losses during the season were games that we should have won," Leung said. "I think our recent wins definitely attest to that."

After beating Mountain View 3-1 on March 11, the team dominated in a tournament on the March 12, winning 2-0 in all four of its games against King's Academy, Mitty, Leland and Leigh, giving the players confidence as the season progresses.

"Other players stepped up like [seniors Thumaty] playing libero, [Alex Li] playing hitter opposite and [Spencer Yen] moving out to outside," Leung said. "We have a good team and we definitely have a shot at CCS." ♦

BOYS' TENNIS

Players move past loss to Monta Vista

BY Ryan Kim
& Alex Yang

The boys' tennis team has started the season with a 6-1 record and is looking to position itself for a high seed in CCS.

The only loss was to Monta Vista on March 24, which ended with the score 4-3. In a previous match on March 2, the Falcons won 6-1, largely because the Matadors' No. 1 singles player Amit Batta was missing.

"This time the match was going to be a lot tougher because having [Batta] in the lineup shifts their line up down," senior No. 1 singles player Karthik Padmanabhan said. "Going into the match, we knew we had to win one of the doubles in order to get the win."

Padmanabhan said that going into the match, the team was confident that it could get three singles wins and pull out a doubles win for the overall victory.

The match started off well, with No. 2 singles Kailas Shekar, No. 3 singles Dean



Junior No. 2 singles Kailas Shekar returns the serve against his opponent on March 2.

Stratakos, No. 4 singles Jihau Yu and No. 2 doubles Nikhil Mehta and Tristan Xiao all winning their first sets.

After the three singles players won their matches, the overall score was tied at 3-3, the last match coming down to

that of Mehta and Xiao. After winning the first set 7-5, though, the doubles pair lost the second set, leaving the end result to the third and last set. They ended up losing the decisive last set 6-2.

"They fought hard and played really

well up to the end," Padmanabhan said. "It was just unfortunate that they could not clutch out the win for the team."

Before the loss to Monta Vista, the Falcons managed to beat Homestead 4-3 on March 17, meeting their expectations.

"I felt we came into the match a little overconfident and too relaxed, and as a result, all of us did not play well," Padmanabhan said. "[Homestead] came to play, as they quickly took the lead."

Still, even after Homestead raced out to an early lead, the Falcons fought back and won.

The Falcons also managed to defeat Palo Alto 6-1 on March 15.

"This season is going pretty well so far, with the exception of the one loss against Monta Vista. I have high hopes for this season and I think we can really do well," Padmanabhan said. ♦

Due to printing deadline, The Falcon was not able to report on the March 29 match against Lynbrook.

BOYS' LACROSSE

New coach puts emphasis on character

BY Aditya Chaudhry
& Tiffany Zheng

Last year, the boys' lacrosse team was one of the most feared teams to go against, but not because of their skill or prowess, as they suffered more defeats than victories. Instead, it was due to their actions on and off the field that could be deemed unsportsmanlike.

"Last year we were very disorderly and the worst team to play because of our rudeness," senior forward Quincy Owyang said.

This season, however, the boys are aiming to be better competitors not only in the way they play, but the way they act. Under the guidance of new head coach C.J. Toy, the boys are improving to become fierce — but also sportsmanlike — competitors on the field.

"We are playing better this season as a team," Owyang said. "We aren't back to the level of play that we had three to four years ago, but you can see a notice-

able difference between this season and last season."

Under Toy, the Falcons are becoming to get more as a team. The boys on the team are responding to his more structured approach to coaching.

"Coach Toy has been great at spotting our weaknesses and making sure we go over them and learn from them," Owyang said.

According to Owyang, the team spends a lot of time trying to get along with each other and making sure its members have good teamwork.

"[Toy] has done a really good job in practices," Owyang said. "Although we do less conditioning in practice, the

coach makes sure we work well on the field and are physical enough to win games."

The Falcons have opened up its season with a record of 2-3. Although they are still far from being a top team, the boys have kept many of their losses close and feel proud to have improved this much from last season.

The Falcons beat Newark Memorial High School on March 10 with a score of 14-9. They also had two close losses, losing 16-10 to Aptos on March 15, and 11-9 to Sequoia on March 1. Junior Aidan Peck leads in scoring during games while juniors Orion Milazzo and Tavon Naddaf switch out as goalies.

On March 17, the Falcons beat the Leland Chargers 13-4. With a good showing at the game, the team advanced to become the fourth-ranked team in their league.

"We played much better this game than before," Owyang said. "We still have a lot to improve on in the future as we didn't play to our full potential."

The next game brought them back to earth. They traveled to Los Gatos on March 22 and were trounced 18-3. Looking forward, the Falcons realize the improvements they need to undertake to improve to the next level.

"We are finding each other's faults and are trying to work around it so that we can play to the best of our abilities the remainder of the season," Owyang said. ♦

Due to printing deadline, The Falcon was not able to report on the March 29 match against Mountain View and the March 31 home game against Gunn.

GIRLS' LACROSSE

Though young, Falcons gain impressive wins

BY Shazia Gupta
& Harshini Ramaswamy

With the loss of key players from last year's team to graduation, including Christina Crolla, Christina Chin, Bridget Olsen, Sophia Ajaneer and Varina Jammula, the girls on the lacrosse team are in a full rebuilding mode, and so far, their efforts are paying off.

Having new sophomores as well as new head coaches, the girls are striving to ensure this season will be just as successful as last year's CCS run.

"At the beginning of the season when you start off with a new team, it's not the easiest thing, you have to get used to working with your teammates and working together," said coach Emilie Noyola, previously the 2014-2015 season JV coach.

Most recently, they won a tough match against the Los Altos Eagles on March 25.

The girls began the game by scoring the first goal and maintained a strong

lead throughout the game by scoring off offensive plays and transition. Attack players senior Talia Clement, Maya Kumar and sophomore Laura Bhurji had three goals apiece, and senior goalie Ma-lia Oreglia had seven saves.

"I think [winning against Los Gatos] is what we need in order to get the team going," said coach Meghan Abcede, who was also previously the 2014-2015 season JV coach. "Especially with [the game] being the

first home game, getting that morale was very important."

With more practice and team bonding, Clement feels that the team will be able to overcome their lack of experience to be competitive this season.

"We lost 14 returning players and alumni this year," said Clement. "But we have very athletic and skilled sophomore players, as well as some really great offensive plays and situations, so learning how to execute those effectively will really benefit us!"

According to both coaches, the team is beginning to gel as the season goes on. Many of the underclassmen girls are stepping up in practice and on the field during games taking key positions.

"Coaching the girls here at saratoga has been awesome, they're all really hardworking, really dedicated to coming out here and improving each and every day," said Abcede. "Their sportsmanship on and off the field is something you can't always find with other teams and I think that makes them really unique." ♦

Due to printing deadlines, The Falcon was unable to cover the home game against Pioneer on March 30.

BASEBALL

Key players help turn tide after early losses

BY Ryan Kim
& Alex Yang

With an early record of 7-4, the baseball team is starting off the season strong. Coming off of a successful 17-14 season last year, the team hopes to improve and make a deep run in CCS.

Last week, the Falcons played back-to-back games against traditional powerhouse Wilcox. On their home field on March 25, they won 4-2. Two days earlier, they traveled to Wilcox and lost 6-5.

Keying the win on March 25 was a home run from senior Michael Schillage in the second

inning.

With ace Tyler Yoshihara throwing a shutout, the Falcons grabbed a 2-0 victory against Cupertino during a home game on March 18, and another victory at a non-league contest in a 5-4 comeback against Del Mar on March 19.

Del Mar opened up the game scoring four runs in the first three innings and limiting the Falcons to nothing more than a few base hits. The boys scored its first two runs in the sixth inning and managed to pull off the upset scoring the three runs needed to win the game.

The early part of March was

not as kind to the Falcons. They suffered a crushing 14-0 defeat against the Milpitas on March 12. This lopsided loss followed their 7-5 victory against the Trojans on March 9. The results were mostly set in stone during the third inning when Milpitas scored 10 runs. The team lost also 6-1 against Cupertino an away game on March 16.

However, the Falcons got revenge on Cupertino on March 17 with a shutout 2-0 home victory.

The Falcons are performing better at home than away. Yoshihara said that home field advantage is real for the team.



Senior Tyler Yoshihara midswing in a game against Del Mar on March 18.

With a good start and a long road ahead of the team, Yoshihara is confident that the team will pick up more steam and charge forward.

"[We] are beginning to be able to slow the game down and make plays," Yoshihara said. "We hope the upward trend continues." ♦

SWIMMING

Star swimmers advance into CCS, CIFC

BY Emily Chen

The swimming team hasn't obtained great results in the team category, but individual stars are continuing to shine.

The team fell to Gunn on March 24, with varsity boys losing 117-53 and varsity girls losing 90-82, and Palo Alto on March 18 at home, with varsity boys losing 117-53 and varsity girls losing 104-65. "Palo Alto is one of the top teams in the league, so [our defeat] wasn't unexpected," Yang said.

And while the team may have lost the

meet, a handful of swimmers qualified for CCS in their events.

Standout senior Jack Xie placed first in the 100-yard Butterfly event with a time of 51:30 seconds and the boys' 100-yard breaststroke event with a time of 57:81 seconds, making California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Consideration State cuts for both events.

He and seniors Rahul Cheenyil and Jonathan Fung and freshman Nick Bury placed second in the boys' 200-yard Medley with a time of 1:43:59. In the boys' 200-yard freestyle relay, the team of

Xie, Cheenyil and seniors Arnab Pawar and Harrison Yang placed second with a time of 1:32:56. Both relay groups made CCS cut times.

In the girls' team, freshman Madeline Stuart placed first in the 200-yard freestyle with a time of 1:58:88 and second 500-yard with a time of 5:21:99 freestyle, qualifying for CCS in both events. Sophomore Jeanette Khowong won and made CCS cuts in the 200-yard IM event with a time of 2:14:50 seconds and the 100-yard backstroke event with a time of 1:01:33.

The girls' 200-yard Medley Relay

team of Khowong, junior Stefanie Ting, sophomore Colina Guan and freshman Lei Otsuka, the girls' 200-yard freestyle relay team of Stuart, Ting, junior Anna Zhou and freshman Ashley Feng and the girls' 400-yard freestyle relay team of Feng, Khowong, Stuart and Zhou all made CCS cuts.

"Having this many make it so far is a pretty good start," Yang said. ♦

Due to printing deadlines, The Falcon could not cover the team's meet at Homestead on March 31.

BADMINTON

Team defeats powerhouse Lynbrook after years of losses

BY Arjun Ramanathan
& Alex Yang

Cheers thundered in the Large Gym on March 22 as the Falcons finally beat Lynbrook at home after years of futility against their rival.

The final score was 16-14, and the victory was a key part of a recent three-game winning streak, bringing their league record to 3-2 as of March 24.

"We've been pushed down countless times by Lynbrook and [I am] so glad to see that we were able to overcome this curse," assistant coach Chris Do said.

Do said that players have patched up their weak points this season.

"Our girls has been a huge weakness over the last three years, but is a lot stronger this year," Do said. "That was a key factor for beating Lynbrook."

In the other two big wins in the win-streak, the team had to bounce back from a difficult start.

On March 24, the Falcons won 16-14 against Wilcox despite missing their star player, No. 1 singles player sophomore Stephen Ding, who was playing at the Junior International Trials. The team's game against Gunn on March 15 was the turning point of the early season after the Falcons lost to Cupertino and Monta Vista early in the season. The Falcons bounced back in this crucial third match to win 16-14 against a top-tier team.

At first, the match looked grim, as many players struggled to win, and the score was neck-to-neck with the rival Titans. However, No. 1 boys' doubles players Partha Shah and Josh Li were able to clinch the close match with their win. Shah said that the duo's hopes for making it in CCS were high this year.

"Last year my partner and I placed second in league finals but did not do well in CCS," Shah said. "I really hope to change that as we both have been training this off season."

Adding on top of the doubles' win, Ding swept his boys' singles match, winning the first two matches of his best-of-three game with ending scores of 21-14 and 21-19. No. 2 boys' singles freshman Nicholas Zhang's performance was also instrumental in the win against Gunn.

After a disappointing season last year, the team has tied the number of wins it has gotten this year with the total number of wins it got last year. With re-invigorated members, it hopes to make a run for the top spot in the league.

On March 26, some members of the varsity team went northward to Newark to play at the Newark Memorial High School tournament, one of the many tournaments in which singles players and doubles teams can earn points individually and rank by themselves.

"Tournaments are lots of fun because it's an opportunity to play more schools and teams," senior doubles player Karen Chen said. Despite the stiff competition, Chen and her partner junior Jason Zhao, who play together as the No. 2 mixed doubles for the school's varsity team, earned their way into a fourth place.

According to Chen, the duo lost their first match and were moved to the consolation bracket. Over the next few matches, however, they advanced into fourth place at the tournament.

"I trusted that Jason would play his best," Chen said. "I didn't want to think too much about if we would win anything, but I was confident that Jason and I had the potential to go far." ♦

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Senior Partha Shah returns a serve during the badminton match against Lynbrook on March 22. The Falcons won 16-14.

Senior Erin Norris pushes the ball down the field during the lacrosse game at home on March 23. The Falcons won 13-11.

Junior Yianna Spirakis hits the ball at the softball game against Wilcox on March 23. The Falcons won 1-0.

Sophomores Robert Scott (left) and Jack Isacke (right) lick Nutella off a glass pane during the rally on March 25.

buzzworthy >> Shaking hands with Mr. Sorkin

SENIOR TOLD TO 'GO TO HELL' BY AWARD-WINNING WRITER

BY Melissa Magner

It was, perhaps, senior Marcus Emery's favorite moment during a film festival earlier this month when producer, playwright and screenwriter Aaron Sorkin told him to "go to hell" in playful disbelief. Emery had just admitted that his animation, which won the award for best sound design at the Westflix Film festival, was the product of a completely self-taught passion.

The festival showcases the best films made by students in California. The two-day event was held March 18-19 in Hollywood and featured 15 films from 13 different programs. There were around 300 submissions, and Emery was one of the 15 selected



films in the invited finalists. Sorkin was the guest speaker on the first day and hosted a question and answer session on the second day, which was when Emery got the chance to talk to him.

"He told me that my work 'needed to be seen by the right people,' and he even gave me his assistant's email," Emery said. "I don't exactly know what that means, but it sounds promising."

Most of the films, according to Emery, were made by students who attend high schools in Southern California that are well known for their art and film programs.

"[The films] were honestly some of the best I've ever seen from high school students," Emery said. "It was incredible what some of these kids were able to do, and it was an honor to be placed

among them."

Emery's film, however, "Dooble: The Small Winged Quail," which originally started out as a test product and later evolved into a short about a small bird who courageously figures out a way to fly even with his small wings, was done entirely independent of school with no help from outside programs or teachers.

"I think it's pretty unusual that [the films] are done independent of school," Emery said.

Sorkin thought so, too, saying he was "extremely impressed" with Emery's work.

"Sorkin was a really nice guy to talk with, and I was blown away with his reaction [to my film]," Emery said. "I'm very thankful to have gotten this opportunity."



Courtesy of MARCUS EMERY

Senior Marcus Emery poses at the Westflix Film Festival, where he met Aaron Sorkin.

And yet, still more good news was to come as on March 25, when Emery discovered that he had been accepted to University of Southern California's school of cinematic arts, which he applied to under animation and digital arts. The program accepts a total of only 15 people globally per year.

"I'm honestly still in shock," Emery said. "[This is] a miracle." ♦

Shadenfreude: why I laugh at your pain

spiffy
tiffy

Tiffany Zheng



Am I cruel? No. Am I sadistic? Probably not. Do I regularly experience schadenfreude? Definitely.

For those unfamiliar with schadenfreude, it is a German term used to describe the impulse to derive joy from other people's misery. A rough German to English translation from would give you the phrase "malicious joy."

Now I know what you're thinking. You would never find sick pleasure from someone else's pain. You're a good person living in a utopian universe, right? Newsflash: A good number of people are messed up.

Take a social outing of mine as a prime example of human inhumanity. Over the summer, I went to Golfland with a couple of my friends. One friend, in particular, was being especially clumsy, resulting in a glorious collapse onto the turf. Her eyes widened as her knees buckled and within a few seconds, the damage was done. Her plummet was dramatic and harrowing, much like my grade drop during junior year.

My mouth opened on instinct, the human side of me struggling to spit out the support that friendship demands, when I astonished myself with my own loud

grating laughter. Am I a bad friend? Sure, I'll take that title. Am I still in stitches over her face, a kaleidoscope of agony and confusion? Oh, most definitely. Did I experience a wave of undeniable guilt? Yep. I'm still a human being, all right?

The concept of schadenfreude is unfairly bashed in society. People who regularly experience it are labeled as "sick," perpetuating the idea that this incredibly human response is shameful. Schadenfreude should be accompanied with an appropriate amount of guilt, but don't beat yourself up for laughing at a Vine of a twerking girl falling down a flight of stairs. Slapstick comedy is good in moderation, but it's important to recognize that it does border on sadism.

Now, don't worry, it's not all bad. Sometimes, it gives you the opportunity to appreciate what karma serves up to some scum of the earth. For example, the notorious ex-CEO of Turing Pharmaceuticals Martin Shkreli, who raised the price of a life-saving drug from \$13.50 to \$750, was recently charged with securities fraud.

In that moment, I heartily embraced schadenfreude, which allowed me to appreciate this gem of karma. When GOP candidate and America's favorite imbecile Donald Trump was attacked by America's symbol, a bald eagle, did I praise a higher being for blessing the human race with this event? I'm sure you can guess.

Schadenfreude, honestly, is a way of living. Haven't you ever laughed a viral

video of a person falling off a roof? Or of a video of a cat being scared by a cucumber? Pain is a staple of humor. Yet a part what makes these viral YouTube clips so funny is that the video cuts off after the incident. We remain detached because we don't get to view the impending hospital visit.

Perhaps it's the fact that I don't personally know some of the people I laugh at. I experienced guilt when laughing at the blunder of a friend, but when witnessing a video of a skateboarder failing to successfully complete an absurd stunt, the guilty conscience was nowhere to be found. There's a human detachment component that must accompany schadenfreude.

Understanding the severity of certain trauma affects the amount of cackling I produce. I've had friends who have pretended to be more injured than they actually are just to watch my laughter erupt into cries of panic. Life is short and laughter has a calming effect. We can't be crying all the time, no matter how emotionally mature we are.

If you're the clumsy freak who seems to only catch items with his or her face, don't be embarrassed by the laughter. It's not that they truly enjoy seeing you in pain: Giggles are simply a natural product of the human brain's complexity, immaturity and need to entertain itself. So if you're like me and are a posterchild for schadenfreude, never fear. You're probably not going to hell — at least not for this all-too-human tendency. ♦

>> topten

PLANS FOR SPRING BREAK

- 10 **Explore new rap music.** Reach your pinnacle of swag with Kanye West's "Life of Pablo."
- 9 **Cry yourself to sleep.** Is this different from any typical school day?
- 8 **Skip town.** Walk away from your problems, worries and (if you're a senior) rejection letters.
- 7 **Scope out summer internships.** There's nothing more fun than substituting summer fun for working a 9-to-5 job.
- 6 **Produce some music.** If "Panda" can go viral, maybe you can be another success story.
- 5 **Pig out.** When the going gets tough, burgers and fries are here to save you.
- 4 **Travel to an exotic resort.** I'd advise taking "A Pill in Ibiza."
- 3 **Visit colleges.** The admitted student reception will never know you were waitlisted.
- 2 **Start working out.** Shed the weight; prom is almost here.
- 1 **Go outside and enjoy nature.** You decide whether we're joking or not.

>> Arjun Ramanathan
and Anant Rajeev