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New leaders chosen for 2016-2017 school year.

LIFESTYLES | 10



Soprano dances on national TV.

SENIOR MAGAZINE



Seniors share their 'Toga Story' inside.



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Bidding farewell to Ms. Dini



SCHOOL SECRETARY TO RETIRE THIS YEAR

BY AmiNachiappan

"How do you make holy water? You boil the hell out of it!" This ASB Joke of the Day was delivered recently by principal's secretary Susan Dini, her upbeat and cheerful voice resonating throughout campus. Surrounding her at the microphone were eight smiling faces filled with laughter, ASB members thankful to have Dini by their side as their supervisor for daily morning announcements. "Everyone [at Saratoga High] has so much energy and dedication," Dini said. "Any time I see someone stretch themselves and succeed, it becomes a special memory."

>> **DINI** on pg. 4

FALCON // VIVIEN ZHANG

LYNBROOK CONTROVERSY

Girls protest FB appearance ratings

BY MichelleLee & KyleWang

"She's good enough... you're through... next step. And last step ... top 5 girls at lynbrook ... anyway u wanna rank," the message read. This message came from the cult-like initiation ceremony among a group of boys at nearby Lynbrook High School, part of an ongoing trend that has begun to spread nationally. (The date when the message was sent is unclear.) Last year, some boys at the school started creating secret Facebook groups that rank Lynbrook girls on their attractiveness on a scale from 1 to 10. To prove that they deserved to be part of a group, some boys were asked to send a picture of any girl who was rated at least a "7 out of 10" in terms of attractiveness to one of the group's administrators.

Yet in spite of the blatant

>> **LYNBROOK** on pg. 14

BUDGET

Following the money: How ASB began spending \$276K

BY AmithGalivanche & JasonZhao

At the beginning of the school year, ASB officers sent out a survey on the SHS Facebook page, looking for suggestions on how to spend the \$276,000 that had accumulated over the years. Since then, the ASB has been busy trying to put the money to good use.

In September, for instance, the ASB allotted \$5,000 to organizations through

a grant system shared via Google Forms. Limiting money distribution to equipment that would impact future students, ASB allotted money for a journalism printer, FBLA textbooks, and more.

"We picked the grant apps that would have effects accessible to all students," ASB secretary Spring Ma said.

Officers also discussed other major projects to take on. Roughly \$25,000 is being spent on a new scoreboard to be installed in a more visible area in the

football field. The new scoreboard can also display track competition times. Recently, a printer for full-color, high-quality posters was installed in the Activities Office for clubs, commissions and other school groups to use.

One of the most popular requests was lights for the outdoor basketball courts. According to principal Paul Robinson, the LED lights, estimated to cost around \$12,000, will be "low leveled" so nearby residents will not be impacted.

"After years of asking [administrators], people who want to play past sunset now finally can," senior varsity basketball player Jatin Mohanty said.

While these projects have been funded, there is still around \$100,000 in the account for next year and beyond.

"We hope that next year's ASB will continue to use the funds to help improve the school and the students that go here," ASB president Aakash Thumaty said. ♦

>> what'sinside

RECOGNITION Teacher of the year

English 11H and MAP teacher Natasha Ritchie is awarded teacher of the year. **pg. 5**

ELECTIONS Feeling the Bern

Guest writer Farbod Moghadam shares thoughts on Bernie Sanders' campaign. **pg. 8**

SPORTS Power rankings

Sports teams are ranked based upon the success of their seasons this past year. **pg. 16**

ACADEMICS

Grading scale to change for Class of 2020 and beyond

BY NeilRao

Plenty of SHS students worry that A-minus grades hurt their GPAs, but for the Class of 2020, this will no longer be an issue. Next year, incoming freshmen will be the first to experience a change in the grading scale.

After years of the current system, in which pluses and minuses change a student's GPA, the administration has decided to eliminate the pluses and minuses. Assistant principal Brian Safine said the change should alleviate pressure to achieve grade pluses.

For the Class of 2020, what would be an A minus, or a 3.67

out of 4.00 in the current scale, would be a 4.00.

This change will only affect the incoming freshmen and subsequent classes, not current classes.

With this change, there is potential for more than one valedictorian — a challenge the school will deal with when it arises. The Universities of California (UC) and many private colleges will recalculate the applicants' GPA according to each school's respective GPA scale.



Safine

"It's very important that students know that many colleges will do their own grade recalculation, and [students should] not only rely on the high school's calculation," Safine said. ♦

SPORTS



FALCON // ISABELLE YANG

Boys' volleyball defends CCS championship title

BY DerekChen & TrevorLeung

Led by unstoppable outside hitter Joel Schneidmiller, the Falcons boys' volleyball team started winning early this season and never stopped.

On May 17, they defended their Coast Central Sectionals (CCS) Division 2 title against

Leigh High with a 3-1 win in the finals, bringing their overall record to 30-6.

"It's great winning another championship for the school and showing people that Saratoga isn't just an academic school," said senior setter Chester Leung, who finished

>> **CCS** on pg. 19



District voters renew Measure A parcel tax

Voters have renewed the Measure A parcel tax that raises almost \$1 million annually for the Los Gatos-Saratoga High School District in a mail-in ballot.

The result was made public on May 3, with an overwhelming 70 percent passing the plan that extends an annual tax of \$49 per parcel.

Back in May of 2011, 73 percent of voters decided to pass the original Measure A parcel tax, which expired earlier this year. The aim of the tax is to provide the district the funds for top quality education.

According to district superintendent Bob Mistele, the renewal of the plan is estimated to bring in approximately \$900,000 per year to support improved math, science, technology and engineering courses and to reduce class sizes.

The tax renewal has been extended until 2025. ♦

— Pranao Ahuja

Juniors honored at annual awards ceremony

Fourteen juniors were honored by their teachers at the annual California Scholarship Federation (CSF) Award Ceremony breakfast on May 18.

The event took place during the collaboration period on Wednesday. Teachers nominated various students for awards in leadership, humanities and STEM fields.

These awards include the George Eastman Leadership Award, the Bausch and Lomb Honorary Science award, the Brown Book award and the California Mathematics Council certificate.

Among the nominees, junior William Hu was selected by physics teacher Kirk Davis to be honored with the Bausch and Lomb Honorary Science Award for high achievement and rigor in science classes.

"I felt accomplished," he said. "I was getting recognized for my work throughout the year." Hu said.

Junior Janie Oberhauser, who received both the NCTE Achievement in Writing and Wellesley College Book awards, was ultimately rewarded for following her own passions in creative writing.

"Writing for me is an escape from everyday stress for school and tests, and it's also a really fun creative outlet," Oberhauser said. "Writing for school in of itself is something I enjoy, but writing for pleasure in my free time is something I always look forward to."

Though only a few students have earned these awards, anyone has the potential to obtain them, given the effort and dedication.

"I think the only reason I earned the award over others is because of the time I put into my passions," Hu said. ♦

Award Winners

Bausch and Lomb Honorary Science Award: William Hu (presented by Kirk Davis)

Brown Book Award: Karissa Dong (presented by David Sabel, Natasha Ritchie)

California Mathematics Council Certificate: Yehchan Yoo (presented by PJ Yim)

Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony Award in Humanities and Social Sciences: Rachel Davey (presented Matt Torrens)

George Eastman Leadership Award: Eileen Toh (presented by Rebeca Marshburn, Alinna Satake)

Harvard Book Award: Anya Herne (presented by Natasha Ritchie)

MIT Leadership Award: Nicholas Sum (presented by Kristen Thomson)

Mount Holyoke College Book Award: Spring Ma (presented by Amy Keys)

NCTE Achievement Award in Writing: Kevin Chow, Janie Oberhauser (presented by Natasha Ritchie, Amy Keys)

Rensselaer Medal Winner: Katherine Sun (presented by Cheryl Lenz)

Smith College Book Award: Nicole Lin (presented by Amy Keys)

Wellesley College Book Award: Janie Oberhauser (presented by Amy Keys)

Williams College Book Award: Saya Sivaram (presented by Steve Troyer, Natasha Ritchie)

Xerox Award for Innovation and Information Technology: Shannon Chen (presented by Judi Heher)

— Roland Shen

>> picturethis



FALCON // VIVIEN ZHANG

SOARING CATAPULTS >> Junior McConnell Gou prepares to test his final project, a wooden trebuchet, for physics class on May 19 by launching a volley of water balloons at several teachers and staff.

SCHEDULE

School preps for rolling block

LUNCH TO BE FIVE MINUTES SHORTER

by Emily Chen

Despite concerns voiced by some parents and students earlier in the year, the 2016-2017 school year will have a rolling block schedule with each day starting at 8:15, 25 minutes later than in the current schedule, as well as a shortened lunch period.

So-called red days will include periods 1, 3, 5 and 7, while blue days will include periods 2, 4 and 6, and every day will include a 35-minute tutorial after the first class and a 35-minute lunch, 5 minutes shorter than the current one.

Following intense opposition by some parents to a

schedule recommended by a committee of teachers and parents in January, superintendent Bob Mistele decided to adopt Los Gatos High's rolling block schedule at SHS, but that schedule has been slightly modified so that both schools will start at 8:15 a.m., rather than the 8 a.m. start time Los Gatos High School had used previously.

In the past few months, some members in the community have expressed concern over the shortened lunch period.

According to principal Paul Robinson, there was ultimately no easy solution to this problem: to have a later start time, a major goal of the new schedule, lunch would have to be shorter if the school day's end time was to be relatively the same.

Keeping the community's concerns in mind, the administration will assess how well the schedule works for the upcoming year to see if there will be any potential improvements for the schedule in the future.

"Do we feel that there might be a possibility of changing something even in the future? Who knows. There's always that possibility," Robinson said. "While I know there was a huge amount of support for the first schedule that we proposed, that may be where we end up ultimately some day, but who knows."

Robinson thinks that this rolling block schedule will be successful and is optimistic about next year.

"It's really good that the school is willing to take this very bold step," he said. ♦

SPEECH AND DEBATE

Team restores leadership system

by Divya Rallabandi & Kyle Wang

The speech and debate team is returning to a leadership structure that was more successful in encouraging a greater turnout. On May 9, Coach Christopher Harris chose the students who will fill the leadership positions for the 2016-2017 school year.

Sophomore Divya Rallabandi will serve as president, sophomores Ayush Aggarwal and Sathvik Koneru as policy debate captains, sophomores Karthik Ramachandran and Arun Ramakrishna as public forum debate captains, sophomores Varun Meduri and Gaurav Mohan as parliamentary debate captains and sophomores Austin Wang and junior Siavash Yaghoobi as Lincoln-Douglas debate captains.

Until earlier this school year, the team used its event

captains for leadership. One or two seasoned competitors provided coaching and guidance to younger, less experienced underclassmen.

The problem was that practice hours often depended on each captain's schedules. As the school year progressed, coordinating practices grew increasingly difficult, and in September, Coach Chris Harris decided to try a different approach.

"The coaching staff strives to remain flexible with the demands, concerns and expectations of a constantly evolving student body," Harris said.

At the beginning of this season, he introduced a new leadership system in which students could develop and fulfill those roles as long as he approved each application. Some students applied for positions such as "administrative manager" without thoroughly



Aggarwal

CLUBS

DECA members qualify for MTDM in TN

by Nidhi Jain & Saya Sivaram

Juniors Kylash Krishnamurthy, Naman Sajwan and Siavash Yaghoobi waited with bated breath as the announcer walked to the center of the stage.

In less than a minute, the announcer would say their names as some of the top eight students competing in their team

event internationally.

Five students competed in the International Career Development Conference (ICDC) in Nashville, Tenn., as part of the business club DECA on April 23-26.

Along with Krishnamurthy, Sajwan and Yaghoobi, sophomores Elora Pradhan and Mervi Tan qualified for ICDC after placing fourth at the state con-

ference for Marketing Communications Team Decision Making (MTDM).

SMG is an online competition allowing ICDC qualifiers three months to prepare an 11-page paper about an investment project as well as a 15-minute presentation.

In MTDM, competitors prepare a 10-minute speech for 30 minutes after studying a case.

"The speeches are usually judged by different marketing executives, sometimes the ones from the case study," Tan said.

The students spent quality time with each other and exploring the hotel.

"We really didn't know anyone else outside of the Saratoga group, so we ended up spending a lot of time together," Tan said. ♦

FALCON FOCUS: MICHAEL OKUNO

Senior accepted by Marine Corps band

by Ami Nachiappan

Senior clarinet player Michael Okuno, then a sophomore, was unsure of what to pursue as a college major. He seriously considered joining the military since it offered him paid schooling and the chance to pursue music.

"Music is something that I love with a passion, but I didn't necessarily see it as a feasible career," Okuno said. "That's something the military offers: the ability to make a career out of music."

Seizing this opportunity, Okuno committed to the Delayed Entry Program, a year-long program that includes a 13-week boot camp and trains Marines to play in a U.S. Marine Corps band. His parents were initially apprehensive, if the military would provide a secure job for a young adult.

"Thankfully, my parents are

not the type to pass judgment," Okuno said. "When I showed them the opportunities I would receive with performing, they were really intrigued."

To apply for the program, Okuno went through a two-stage process. In early November, he sent a digital copy of him playing the clarinet, and within a month, Okuno was called back for the second round of auditions. After sight-reading and performing excerpts of marches and scales, Okuno received

positive feedback. "Most people have to re-audition for stage 3, but at the end of my performance, the MTA told me that I had made it," Okuno said. "If I wasn't driving home with a friend, I would have been screaming in the car. It was really exciting."

After receiving basic com-

bat training, Okuno will be required to attend the Armed Forces School of Music in Virginia for 30 weeks. He will then attend full paid military training and receive educational benefits.

Afterward, Okuno plans to join one of multiple Marine Corps field bands. Depending on the band he is in, Okuno may perform at ceremonies, funerals and flag raising.

Each 40-member band not only performs within the country but also travels internationally to serve as musical ambassadors.

Okuno is excited for the chance to do what he loves while serving his country.

"I get to travel around the world, get some of the best training in the world and get paid the entire time," Okuno said. "Whatever I choose to learn, I'm presented with tons of opportunities." ♦



Okuno

POST-AP ACTIVITIES

REPORTING BY MICHELLE LEE & AMI NACHIAPPAN

AP Spanish students make a telenovela, or soap opera, dancing and singing an original song.



ARNALDO RODRIGUEZ

"For seniors, it's the last bonding opportunity, and it's fun to see dance styles."



BOB KUCER

AP Chemistry students tie-dye in class.

"It's my attempt to bring art to a subject that doesn't allow much creativity. You can pick the colors you want to play with without being afraid of explosions."

In AP Calculus AB students do a line-stitching project, sewing tangent lines.



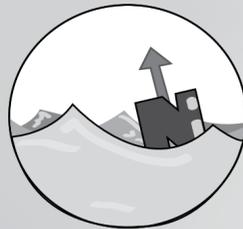
MEGHAN PICKETT

"It's just a nice and quiet thing to do for the last week of school. Last year we decided to try this and it turned out beautiful."

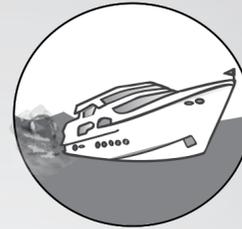
GRAPHICS BY SPRING MA AND ERIC SZE

Denouncing Plastic in Oceans

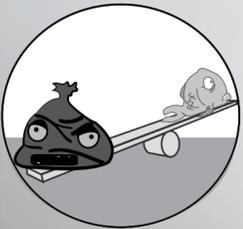
On average, bottled water consumes around 2000x more energy than tap water, which is tested to a higher safety.



In the North Pacific Ocean, there is 46x more plastic than plankton.



The weight of plastic littered in oceans each year is to 19.1x more than the Titanic's weight.



Discarded plastic will outweigh fish in the world ocean's by 2050.



240,000 plastic bags are used in the world every 10 seconds.

Music directors Jow and Pwu to move on

By Michelle Koo

Parents and pancakes filled the quad on May 1 as Redwood Middle School band director Jonathan Jow and SHS band director Jonathan Pwu quieted their ensemble of students and raised their arms to get set. The concert bands and orchestras of the middle and high school played their bittersweet final pieces for their final Pancake breakfast with two long-appreciated instructors.

As the 2015-2016 year comes to a close, two of the community's most beloved music teachers, both alumni of the schools, will be leaving their positions, starting their new chapters outside of their current schools.

Growing up in Saratoga, both teachers said they have considered this community their home, and teaching here holds a special place in their hearts.

Pwu's departing after four years

During his four years as director here, Pwu helped lead the marching band to its first participation in the Bands of America Regional Competition and witnessed the band place first this past season. He was also a key figure in taking the band to the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in 2012.

Pwu feels it is a "fitting time" to leave SHS because of the milestones the music program has completed, most significantly, participating in the Tournament of Roses Parade this past season. He said it was time to venture out of his comfort zone.

"There's a big part of me that wants to go out and experience living someplace else [and] fully invest myself in another

setting," Pwu said.

Pwu is unsure what his next job will be, but he intends to travel to Australia and New Zealand with his family for two weeks and to visit the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand by himself. His schedule is flexible, but the earliest he will return is December.

"When I get back, we'll see what happens and what jobs are available," Pwu said.

He has gained respect for his ability to coordinate with student leaders, design staff, drill writers, music arrangers and rehearsal facilitators for all departments of the music program. He has dedicated himself to the school, making his departure a difficult transition for the program and his colleague, Michael Boitz.

"Mr. Pwu, out of everybody in our department, catches us a lot," Boitz said. "He is a safety net. He's the grounded [and] calm personality in the department. He has held the reins in the marching band program, which is probably 80 percent administrative [and] 20 percent actual teaching of the students."

Even as he plans his departure, Pwu has already registered the marching band and color guard in all of their competitions for the 2016-2017 school year.

Boitz recently announced that Jason Shuan, another SHS grad who graduated from Northwestern University, will take over Pwu's position. After gaining his teaching credential, this next year will be his first time as a music director.

For Pwu, his time spent here at the school is a treasured memory.

"Teaching SHS students has been one of the most rewarding and fulfilling ex-



Redwood Middle School music director Jonathan Jow and Saratoga High music teachers Jonathan Pwu and Michael Boitz pose at the annual Pancake Breakfast on May 1.

periences I've had, and I will definitely miss each and every student's unique personalities," Pwu said.

Jow leaves Redwood after 10 years

As SHS makes preparations for Pwu's departure, Redwood Middle School is also bidding goodbye to its longtime band director.

Jow has worked at Redwood since 2006, starting off as a teaching assistant. He began by helping with the paperwork and working "behind-the-scenes" with the music program. He became the official director in 2009 and currently oversees two music exploratory classes for the sixth graders, along with the five levels of orchestra, the marching band, the color guard, jazz band, choir, band sectionals and percussion sectionals.

He said he is ready to expand his experiences, but his passion for teaching students at Redwood made the decision difficult. He compares this departure to leaving for college, as he doesn't "necessarily know if [he is] making the right choice, [but] it's just the next thing to do in order to grow as a person."

Next year, Jow will be teaching 3rd and 5th graders at all three of the Saratoga elementary schools and plans to "spread [himself] as a teacher some more" by visiting Redwood and SHS frequently.

"As a teacher, I was ready to try something new, try something different and challenge myself because that's what ultimately for me keeps me motivated to grow no longer as a student, but as a professional," Jow said. ♦

SAFETY

Accidents underscore dangers of teen driving

By Roland Shen

Heading back to school after an off-campus lunch in January 2015, junior Kailas Shekar steered his car with the radio blasting and focused on getting back to school on time. His six friends – two were crammed in the trunk – gorged on Taco Bell nachos as Shekar wove through traffic.

As he approached the intersection between Saratoga Sunnyvale Road and Herriman Avenue, he focused only on the green light ahead, never slowing down from 40 mph in a 25 mph zone. With one hand on the wheel, he hastily swerved to the left, veering out of control. Muffled shouts filled Shekar's ears as his car flipped onto its side, just a few feet away from campus.

"I was speeding because I thought it was pretty fun to do so, and it's exhilarating, [and] you feel good," Shekar said.

Yet this brief moment of exhilaration came at a high price. His friend junior Samet Ghirmikar, who sat in the back-seat, suffered a concussion, while juniors Kedar Tallak and Kurt Bench, who were in the trunk, sustained cuts and bruises around their bodies.

They were lucky to have come away

so lightly. It was a life-changing moment for Shekar.

"A lot of teens take [driving laws] for granted. I know I took them for granted," Shekar said.

Teens, of course, aren't always so lucky when it comes to driving. In 2000, two Saratoga High girls – the driver, Eleanor Patrick, 16, and a passenger, Nicola Rooke, 15 – were killed when the Volkswagen Beetle they were riding in crashed into a power pole on Fruitvale Avenue.

Officers said the accident was caused by a loss in control of the wheel while speeding.

Now, a bench near the track is dedicated to the girls, also acting as a reminder of the constant dangers when teens are behind the wheel.

Recently, the dangers of driving were underscored with the tragic accident that took the life of Prospect High senior Nilay Sanghi, whose car crashed into a tree along Highway 35 on May 7. In California, drivers within their first 12 months of licensure are not allowed to transport passengers under the age of 20. All passengers in a vehicle are also required to wear seat belts, and the number of passengers in any vehicle must not exceed

the number of available seat belts.

Over 240,000 teens were injured and over 2,163 died due to various teen driving accidents in the U.S. in 2013, according to the Center of Disease Control. Of these drivers, 56 percent of them were not wearing seat belts.

In this accident, Shekar broke three laws: he exceeded the given speed limit, overloaded his car of five-person capacity and only had his license for two months. Shekar is currently on driving probation for one year; his parents also enforced their own restrictions on him, including not being allowed to drive for the rest of high school. Since then, he has learned to have greater respect for these laws that keep people, drivers and pedestrians alike, safe.

Many students, who have not been cited or been involved in a scarring accident, still take driving laws lightly. One upperclassman who spoke to The Falcon under the condition of anonymity said these laws are not very important to him.

"I chose to take friends off before [having my license for a year] because I wanted to feel like an adult in front of them," he said. "After getting my license, I just decided to go because this specific law isn't really enforced and no-

body really ever gets caught for breaking it."

He also said he frequently speeds and knows of many people who do the same because none of them have gotten caught before.

Sheriff's deputy Chad Garton, the school's resource officer, said that while there has been an increase in citations written to teenagers for violating their provisional license agreements, there has also been a decrease in speeding violations.

"[Teens] think it is cool [to ignore these laws], and they are unaware of what they are doing [due to a] lack of experience," Garton said. "[But] these laws are in place in order to save lives."

Ghirmikar, a passenger in Shekar's car, reminds other teen drivers that even though one person cannot control the road entirely, people have to do their part in keeping the road safe. Ghirmikar, now a licensed driver, realizes that it is impossible to tell if he is about to get in a car for the last time.

"Honestly, I don't remember much about the accident anymore," Ghirmikar said. "I was so freaked out, and it has definitely driven me away from the appeal of breaking these laws." ♦

AWARD

Ritchie honored as district's teacher of the year

By Karissa Dong & Eileen Toh

English teacher Natasha Ritchie's classroom, decorated with posters showcasing scenes from books such as "The Great Gatsby" and "The Things They Carried," has become a second home for her students over the past 10 years. Ritchie's enthusiastic smile greets her junior students as they enter her room, looking forward to the day's discussion centered around the literature they're studying.

As a result of her efforts, Ritchie was recently named the district teacher of the year for 2016-2017. She was nominated for the award by fellow teachers.

In mid-April, teachers from the Media Arts Program and Ritchie's fifth-period

English 11 Honors class congratulated Ritchie by surprising her in her classroom and having senior Nina Nelson, one of Ritchie's former students, sing "Stand By You" by Rachel Platten.

"I definitely cried my eyes out. It was very thoughtful and sweet," Ritchie said. "The award itself was a huge honor, but to learn about it that way was really cool, and there still is some shock."

Ritchie began to teach in 2003 at Scotts Valley High School, later switching to SHS in the fall of 2005 as an English 9 and 12 teacher.

She teaches English 11 Honors and English 11 MAP classes.

In her teenage years, she loved animals and was interested in becoming a

veterinarian or biologist, but she later chose to teach high school literature after eliminating possible careers in politics and law.

"I didn't want to teach at a university because I felt like the professors were often very separated from students," Ritchie said. "After working as a TA in college, I found out that my super nerdy passion of reading and writing could actually be a job, and it's weird because I have exactly the perfect job for me."

This "jigsaw, jagged path" of choosing a career has led Ritchie to have conversations about inspiring literature with her students.

In particular, she loves teaching and

supporting young adults, as well as knowing that her job matters and helps the community.

"I can't think of anyone more deserving of this award," senior Isa Berardo said. "[Ritchie's] love for her students shines through in everything she does; [she's] someone to look up to. Her door is always open and she is always there if you need someone to talk to."

While teaching humanities, Ritchie enjoys keeping her teaching fresh by using recent articles she finds on Facebook or in The New Yorker.

"What's so great about the curriculum is that I loved being a student, and you can basically continue to learn as a teacher," Ritchie said. "It's really nurturing and rewarding in your mind to get to do something that makes you think." ♦



Ritchie

DEPARTING STAFF

GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

History and MAP teacher Matt Torrens and history teacher Josh Keyes at Monticello High instruct attendees of the Wild West trip.



Courtesy of JENNIFER CHEN

Torrens to take on activities director position next year

By Eleanor Goh

With Spanish teacher Rebecca Marshburn returning to San Antonio, Texas, next year to be closer to relatives after three years at the school, history teacher Matt Torrens has been hired to be the new activities director for next year.

"There were other great candidates," principal Paul Robinson said, "but Mr. Torrens brings a great love for students and staff that is rare. He's the complete package, and we're very fortunate and excited about the work he's about to do."

On top of teaching two classes of US History MAP and the new Leadership class, Torrens will help coordinate activities, such as Speak Up for Change week in January and student body elections.

However, since Torrens already had so much on his hands, he will stop teaching World Geography to make more time for Leadership.

"In my teaching career, I've taught three new classes, [but] the difference here is that [Leadership] isn't my class," Torrens said. "It's the students.

Student input is going to be critical."

According to Marshburn, the duties of the activities director require a lot of after-school time, especially away from home and family.

However, she believes that Torrens is perfect for the job because he has always been willing to dedicate his time to help the school out.

"I think he's just going to do great," Marshburn said. "He's here on campus all the time. He is great with the students and he will be able to help them grow as individuals."

Torrens has already begun his job as activities director by starting to visit different Winter Formal venues with next year's ASB officers, and he looks forward to continue to work with the students.

"It's really exciting for me, as I have invested so much into this school over the last 16 years I've been here," Torrens said. "I have spent more time with students outside of class than just about any other teacher I know, and [as a parent], I understand the challenges of going to school at SHS and hope to find other ways to celebrate our experience here." ♦

DINI >>

continued from pg. 1

Dini, 66, decided to retire, she said, because she "felt the time was right."

Before pursuing a career in education, Dini worked at the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, but quit after one year since she "hated working in cubicles."

In 1997, she became a clerical substitute for the San Jose Unified School District, working at Lincoln and Pioneer High Schools for six years each.

"I wanted to do something that I felt mattered, and I found [that] my 'passion'

in life was working with young people, specifically with high schoolers," Dini said.

Dini would like to continue working with younger children, as her plans for post-retirement include spending more time with her grandchildren.

She will also be teaching drama and musical choreography at Achiever Christian, a private elementary school in San Jose.

Dini has always been involved with performing arts, having danced for over 60 years.

After closing down her own dance studio years ago since it interfered with family time, Dini joined the San Jose Light opera and has performed in its

company shows.

She will play Goulda in the company's production of "Fiddler on the Roof" this fall.

Her musical talents have led her to receive awards for her choreography of various musicals, including "42nd Street."

She has choreographed high school musicals at Leland, Pioneer and Willow Glen, and Saratoga High's production of "Guys and Dolls" this year.

In order to remain connected to the school, she will return to choreograph the spring musical next year.

"I think that everyone should experience some type of performing arts to be a well-rounded individual," Dini said.

"I hope that people continue to do something they are passionate about and remain happy."

Starting in June, the school will start looking for a replacement for Dini to ensure that the final decision will be made by August.

The office administration will conduct interviews, but the ultimate decision will be principal Paul Robinson's. Because Robinson has worked so closely with Dini for the past four years, he feels she "will be tough to replace."

"I will definitely miss all of the laughter and kind words she has for [people] who walk in the [office] doors," Robinson said. "She brightens the room every time she enters it and is a very loving and positive person." ♦

"I wanted to do something that I felt mattered, and I found that [in] working with young people."

principal's secretary Susan Dini



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GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

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Student elections crucial but devalued

In spite of all the buzz generated by the 2016 Presidential Elections among high school students, Saratoga High School's annual ASB elections passed quietly this spring. And for the second year in a row, only about half of the students bothered to vote.

Many have blamed low voter turnout on ASB's shift to an online voting system, which was first implemented during the 2014-2015 school year.

But these critics fail to see the bigger picture: If students cared about the results of the elections and their student government, they would take the 2 minutes it takes to vote.

On the other hand, online voting may lead to better results; for the most part, only genuinely interested students will vote.

In the past, students may very well have voted for candidates based on popularity instead of merit, or simply ticked off the names that they recognized on the paper ballot.

In other words, election results could have been skewed by the very students who have stopped voting today.

This isn't to say that the current elections process is immune to student biases and opinions. Popularity and recognition still play a major role in deciding the outcomes of elections — it's no secret that members of ASB and class office have almost always already served before in school leadership.

Some times the elections seem almost ceremonial. Students generally win because their names are recognizable, either because they've already served on ASB or because they have more friends.

Not convinced? This year, fewer than half of the students who voted even bothered to listen to the candidates' speeches. At 30 seconds, the speeches are short, but can still be enough to swing an election.

Thirty seconds provides enough time for a candidate to say 75 words — more than

enough to establish a pitch and make a first impression. The fact that students refuse to take those 30 seconds and listen before they vote says a great deal about the current state of SHS politics.

Admittedly, it's ridiculous to expect high schoolers to care enough about school elections so as to make responsible and mature decisions.

Like everybody else who cares about voting, they are subject to whims and biases. And there's no magical formula to teach educated, objective voting.

Nevertheless, if all teachers dedicated time in class for students to watch the campaign videos, students might at least be forced to be more aware of the ongoing student elections, even if they

cannot be forced to vote.

Ultimately, students must understand that when they cast their votes, they are voting for much more than a single candidate or individual. They are voting for the people who will help plan the events that could become some of the formative experiences of adolescence — Homecoming, rallies, prom — the list goes on.

Choosing not to vote and then blaming ASB for the school's problems is akin to choosing not to water a plant and blaming it for dying two weeks later.

In other words, it's not up to ASB or the administration but rather to the students themselves to realize that the fate of their high school years is very much in their own hands. ♦

If students cared about the results of the elections and their student government, they would take the two minutes to vote.

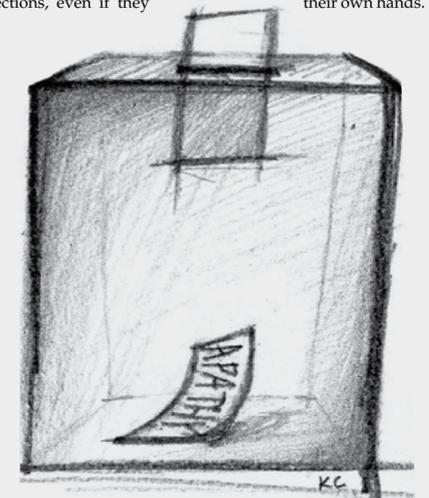
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The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 37-1 in support of the editorial.



KEVIN CHOW

Black Lives Matter needs to 'stop yelling'

BY Derek Chen

Since the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the 2012 shooting death of Trayvon Martin, the ideological group Black Lives Matter has been actively battling the systematic oppression of black people in the United States while spreading messages of empowerment across the world through social media.

Black Lives Matter has greatly impacted the black community and its social justice movement over the past few years, as acts of police brutality and racial discrimination have consistently made national headlines due to the protests that surround them. However, the organization will never be able to bring about great social change if it does not structure itself in a manner that allows for capable revolutionaries to institute the changes they seek.

This seems to be what President Obama sought to address when mentioning Black Lives Matter during a youth town hall meeting at the Royal Horticultural Halls in London on April 23.

During the meeting, Obama praised the organization for actively bringing critical issues to light, but he went on to critique the movement and offer some advice.

"Once you've highlighted an issue ... and people are ready to sit down with you, then you can't just keep on yelling at them," Obama said. "You then have a responsibility to prepare an agenda, and occasionally to take half a loaf that will advance the gains that you seek, understanding that ... this is what is achievable at this moment."

Unsurprisingly, these statements were met with criticism and disapproval. Some activists, such as journalist Zeeshan Aleem, have argued that since reform hinges on momentum, there is no reason for Black Lives Matter to "stop yelling." Others declare the social injustices inflicted upon the community are too emotionally damaging to warrant their restraint.

Obama's statements seem to be constructive criticism taken out of context, with many news sources publishing misleading headlines centered only on his

"stop yelling" comment. As a former community organizer in the poor neighborhoods of Chicago, Obama draws from experience and recognizes the necessity of leadership as well as the avoidance of excessive emotional investment.

Most of the criticism directed at Black Lives Matter focuses on the moral justification of the movement and its methods of protest. Discussion regarding the group, especially across social media, often revolves around whether or not African-Americans and other marginalized groups are oppressed to the degree to which they claim. As a result, few consider one of the group's greatest weaknesses — a lack of political organization.

Founded by Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi and Alicia Garza, there is no hierarchy within Black Lives Matter, as complete egalitarianism is favored. Although the focus on marginalized groups within the organization is admirable, operating through a direct democracy in order to favor a group-

based movement rather than a system based on leadership proves sluggish and ineffective.

Additionally, the group's dedication to "fostering an intergenerational and communal network free from ageism" furthers its reputation as an accepting community, but sacrifices unity and makes narrow-minded disregard for the guiding principles of the movement inevitable. By giving young, impressionable people the same power as more experienced activists, social change is difficult to come by.

Perhaps Black Lives Matter should model itself after the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Instrumental to the peace and equality movements of the time, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a charismatic leader who could represent and lead a unified people.

Black Lives Matter would be able to effect a much greater change if it shifted its organizational structure, allowing for intellectuals to take on leadership roles. Obama was offering the organization necessary advice, calling for its members to run for office. If a more orderly approach to the problems that plague the black community is adapted, the calls of the oppressed can be more efficiently voiced. ♦



GRAPHIC BY CHARIN PARK

Yale blunders in keeping Calhoun College name

By Karissa Dong

Nineteenth century statesman John C. Calhoun, best known as South Carolina's pro-slavery champion, is perhaps one of the America's most controversial figures. His name has become synonymous with Southern secession, the Confederacy and America's heinous institution of slavery. Yet, in spite of criticism from the Yale's student body, Yale University president Peter Salovey announced on April 28 that the name of the residential college called Calhoun would remain.

In his email addressed to the Yale community, Salovey decided that "removing Calhoun's name obscures the legacy of slavery rather than addressing it" and "masks this past, downplaying the lasting effects of slavery and substituting a false and misleading narrative."

But the Yale administration has failed to understand that keeping Calhoun — essentially extending an honorary gesture toward the man who best symbolized white supremacy — is neither an examination of history nor appropriate.

Regardless of whether Salovey and other administrators judged scholarly value in retaining Calhoun, the fact is that John C. Calhoun continues to be paid more honor than he deserves. The system of naming institutions after historical figures is meant to be honorific. For the same reason that several places in South Africa have been renamed to remove Apartheid leaders — Verwoerdburg, named after "architect of Apartheid" Hendrik Verwoerd, was changed to Centurion in 1994 — Calhoun does not belong on a residential college.

Moreover, contrary to Salovey's claim, naming a residence hall after Calhoun does absolutely nothing to engage with the legacy of slavery. There are numerous other ap-

proaches available for students and faculty to discuss history in context; especially at a university as resourceful as Yale, such academic options are not lacking.

Indeed, maintaining Calhoun is a slap in the face for students seeking to examine the scars of slavery. His symbolic name hoists a Confederate flag on campus; just as celebrating emblems of the Confederacy "for educational purposes" is both unnecessary and inappropriate, keeping Calhoun is extremely problematic.

So for students and faculty determined to make this country a better place, why does the Yale administration still reserve tokens of honor for men who represent racist and backward ideas?

The name of Calhoun residential college does not enhance student understanding of America's most vile institution; instead, it condemns the 400 or so Yale undergraduates every year since 1933 — including, undoubtedly, students of African American heritage — to live under a roof whose name celebrates one of America's most vehement upholders of slavery.

To declare that this issue is not personal is to dismiss the concern, discomfort and hurt of thousands of individual students who pass through the doors of Calhoun College.

Salovey wrote in his email that "retaining the name forces us to learn anew and confront one of the most disturbing aspects of Yale's and our nation's past," but he failed to realize that there are more acceptable and less acceptable ways of doing so. Calhoun College falls deep into the latter category.

Yet, for all of the Yale administration's ad- manance on behalf

of keeping Calhoun, administrators are not suffering from a dearth of innovative ideas. Salovey proposed "an art installation [on Calhoun College grounds] that will confront Calhoun's ideas" — a project that, unlike the preservation of his name, actually interacts with history on an insightful level.

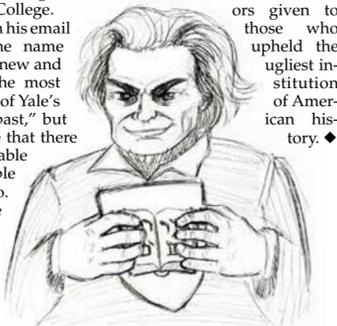
Furthermore, the call to re-name Calhoun is not a demand to erase the ugly parts of history, but a mature request to end the celebration of historical figures who represent abominable values.

America's educational institutions are responsible for the proper instruction and care of its students. When Yale made its decision to keep Calhoun College, the administration failed both standards.

But looking beyond, the concern and compassionate dedication of Yale's student body are perhaps the most promising consequences of this decision. Yale's decree marks a disappointing setback in the record of student activism — but the cause is far from over.

Great change begins on college campuses, university lawns and high school classrooms. As awareness and understandings change between generations, it's only a matter of time before schools like Yale

disavow the honors given to those who upheld the ugliest institution of American history. ♦



JESSY LIU

Early finals facilitate AP prep

By Amulya Vadlakonda

During the first two weeks of May, many students walked around campus with their noses buried in their Barron's or Princeton Review Advanced Placement (AP) review books, frantically trying to cram in as much last-minute studying as they could. They had been preparing for the exams ever since the first day they walked into their AP classes, but it never seemed like enough.

The purpose of AP classes is to prepare students for exams that have the potential to exempt them from introductory level courses in college. The 3-hour exam at the end of the course is the College Board's representation of a student's proficiency in that subject.

Keeping this purpose in mind, it makes the most sense

to have a cumulative final in the class before the AP exam so that students are ready for the College Board exam.

Other preparation methods simply do not provide students with the same quality of review. The classroom is the most similar setting to the real AP exam environment, so it simulates the best practice mindset. Taking a practice test while sitting in a familiar environment, for instance, simply gives students a warped perception of comfort during the test.

A final also offsets the imbalanced emphasis that is given to other aspects of the class. For instance, in one math class I took, the test category is worth 90 percent of the overall grade in the class in second semester, because the final category has been taken out. Since there are only five unit tests over the

course of the semester, each test is worth nearly 20 percent of the student's overall grade, which is nearly the weight of a final in other courses. While this can be likened to a college course, the system is not comparable to other AP classes in the school, or even in the area.

When the final is explicitly a part of the overall grade for the class, it makes students take the test more seriously. Some students complain about undue stress during AP testing, but the test material on the final is the same on the AP test, so all the work that goes into studying for the final translates into results on the AP exam.

Students may, of course, chase the perfect AP practice book, but they often don't get the best practice that comes straight out of the classroom: a cumulative final. ♦



GRAPHIC BY SAYA SIVARAM

Editor's note: Farbod Moghadam is an active participant in the Sanders campaign.

In recent weeks, there have been deafening calls for Sen. Bernie Sanders to drop out of the race for the Democratic presidential nomination. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton closes in on the 2,383 delegates needed to win the nomination, it seems that his chances at victory are slim to none, but an outright nomination is not the sole motivation behind a candidacy.

The truth is that the Democratic Party is trying to quell any remnants of Bernie's "political revolution," as it has been doing from the start of the campaign. Starting in the low single digits in nationwide polling, Bernie slowly brought people from all walks of life together. Progressives, Independents and youth formed a diverse coalition, rallying around a platform of correcting an economy rigged in favor of the wealthy, which is upheld by a corrupt campaign finance system.

Furthermore, Bernie would lead us toward a clean energy future with investments in alternative energy and provide health care and a free college education to Americans as a right, not a privilege. He would reform a discriminatory and, frankly, broken criminal justice system.

Lastly, he would grant women the equality they have lacked in the workplace while protecting their reproductive rights.

Though Bernie is unlikely to win the nomination or the presidency, he has won in other regards.

For many of those supporting Sen. Sanders, the goal is not party unity, but rather party reform. Without this kind of reform in the Democratic Party, it will continue to represent special interests and silence the voices of the grassroots with the existence of superdelegates and a steady flow of money to establishment candidates. Such an institution would not be worth upholding.

Though Bernie is unlikely to win the nomination or the presidency, he has won in other regards. Without a Super PAC, he has raised \$200

million to take on his primary opponents, making use of millions of small donations averaging \$27 each. In a day and age when big money interests buy out politicians, such a feat is unprecedented.

He has engaged millennials in the political process, bringing one of the most politically inactive demographics out of the shadow.

Starting in the low single digits in nationwide polling, the Senator slowly brought people from all walks of life together.

With this new interest in politics, our generation of youth will make educated choices in the future and hopefully bring rise to a new tradition of high voter turnout in the United States, where only 40 percent of eligible citizens vote in off-year elections and 60 percent in presidential elections, including a disappointing 20 percent of millennials.

These victories are a point of incredible pride for devoted Sanders supporters like me, as they reflect what we acknowledge — the Bernie campaign is not about the man, but the idea.

We, as soldiers of the Progressive cause, will stay in this race to make sure this idea lives on, regardless of who the Democratic nominee may be. We will fight against the powerful special interests and the political establishment within the constraints of one of its two corrupt parties.

We will not compromise on our ideals, nor will we fall along partisan lines, as so many want us to do. We will introduce Progressive candidates to run for every position, in every municipal, state, and federal race.

The result of this election, no matter which way it swings, cannot diminish this movement; it will only serve to energize us into a succession of future victories, when demographics will grow more favorable and the political revolution will only gain traction.

The continuation of this campaign ensures continued discourse around the core principles of Bernie's platform, allowing the American public to gain insight into their nation's politics.

Attempt to stop the revolution at your own peril. ♦

Reporters flop with their pickup lines

dumb & dumber

Ryan Kim and Kyle Wang

We consider ourselves masters of flirtation. If the population of our school were bees, we would be the honey — if that honey also had great hair. Ever since elementary school we have been swarmed by romantically interested individuals asking for answers to math homework.

So, naturally, when the Falcon's Lifestyles editors challenged us to start conversations with pickup lines, we happily obliged.

Ryan: My effort started off well enough. I assumed an air of confidence and walked up to sophomore Michelle Lee and said, while pinching my shirt, "You know what material this is? Boyfriend material," sly wink included. She gave me a judgmental look, walked past me and headed to her next class.

I decided to try again, this time with sophomore Allyson Chang. "Know what's on the menu? Me-n-u," I said, performing my signature finger-snapping technique. She proceeded to stare at me in confusion.

Not receiving my desired response,

I began to bombard her with other pick-up lines: "You may fall from the sky, you may fall from a tree, but the best way to fall is to fall in love with me."

She began to laugh, barely restraining herself from a fit of giggles. If humor were the intended effect of my pickup lines, it worked brilliantly.

I'm not saying that I can't come up with my own pick-up lines to dazzle girls with my obvious charm and intellect. I'm just saying that these stupid pickup lines that I discovered online were pretty useless.

Kyle: I apologize in advance if Ryan and I sound even remotely salty. One of the pickup lines I found was, "Sorry, but you owe me a drink. Because when I looked at you, I dropped mine." I was going to use it until I realized that, knowing my sassy reputation, it would probably come across as more of an insult than a compliment.

Instead, I tried that classic pickup line about Tennessee: "Are you from Tennessee? Because you're the only ten-I-see."

I approached a freshman and tried to start a conversation with him by popping the natural question.

He said no and walked away.

I will admit that I was tempted to reply, "Because you look like a hillbilly," but I'm not that type of person.

>> THEbigidea

Their "best" pickup lines

Ryan:

"You know what material this is? Boyfriend material." "You may fall from the sky, you may fall from a tree, but the best way to fall is to fall in love with me."

Kyle:

"Sorry, but you owe me a drink. Because when I looked at you, I dropped mine." "Are you from Tennessee? Because you're the only ten-I-see."

Facebook messages flopped, too. I sent junior Bala Balasubramanian the line, "Yo, you owe me a drink. Cause I spilled mine when I saw you." I had never spoken to him in my entire life and had only seen him once or twice, but nonetheless I hoped at least something interesting would happen. He saw the message and didn't respond.

I felt awkward after a point, so I pinned the blame on Ryan for sending those messages. Later, I picked a flower from the quad, hoping to woo Spanish teacher Bret Yeilding with my charm.

When I walked into his class, he greeted me with a glare and a flat, unenthusiastic, "Minus 20 points." I put

on my best smile and said, "You are like a beautiful flower" and placed the flower on his desk.

He burst out laughing, and I walked out before he could answer.

Conclusion:

Maybe it's just us, but we've seen plenty of YouTube videos where these pickup lines actually work. All we got were disgusted and worried stares.

After a certain point, we grew desperate enough to try approaching a pigeon. To our disappointment, it stared at us blankly and then hopped away.

That one moment sums up our feelings about this whole experience. ♦

What can you purchase with \$20 and an hour?

REPORTER GOES ON MAKEUP SHOPPING SPREE

angelic angela

Angela Lee

Thrifting through a plethora of fabrics, scanning Sephora's neat rows of makeup products or even gazing down an aisle of snacks at Safeway — I love it all. So when my Lifestyles Editors challenged me to buy whatever I wanted with \$20 within an hour, I laughed and thought to myself,

"This will be easy." Turns out, the task was simply easier said than done.

With a crisp \$20 bill snatched between my fingertips, I envisioned all the items I could purchase — which amounted to barely anything.

Usually, I would save my money for months and then spend it all at once on a whole day of shopping at the mall. Now that I only had \$20 and an hour, I felt comparably limited.

Nevertheless, I walked into CVS with an open mind. New spring makeup launches had arrived at the drugstore, and I was curious to test them out. I made a beeline towards the NYX makeup display.

After staring at the shelf for what seemed like an hour, I eventually plucked out a NYX Lip Lingerie Liquid

Lipstick in the shade Push Up. I first ruled out the brown lipsticks, since brown did not match my clothes.

However, I couldn't decide between the similar muted pink shades of Lace Detail and Push Up. Because there was no logical way to decide, I used the childhood method of eenie-meenie-miney-mo to decide which color I should buy.

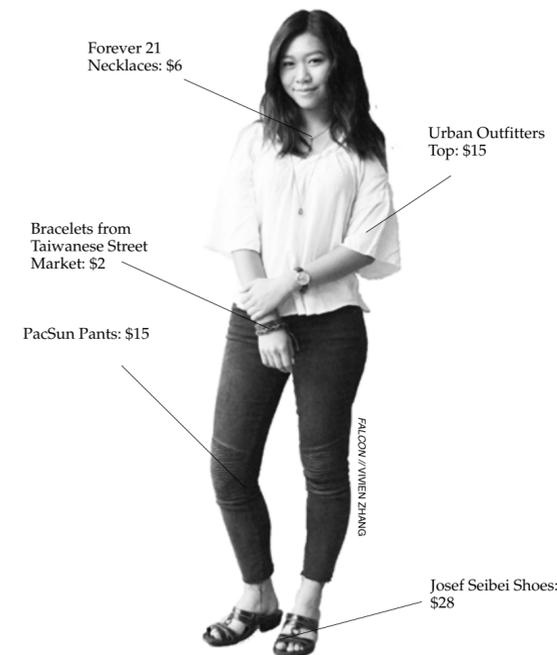
My finger landed on Push Up. I liked its dusty rose color and was also interested in trying liquid lipsticks, as they were newer products on the market. I turned the transparent tube over to check the price; it was \$6.99. Breathing a sigh of relief, I clasped it in my palm and side stepped to the Milani display.

A peachy pink blush caught my eye immediately. I picked up the Milani Baked Blush in Luminoso mindlessly. Because it was \$9.29, I had around \$3 left, which I saved to pay for tax.

Although I did not get to spend a lot of money on my shopping spree, I almost felt relieved. Shopping with \$20 was stressful because of its limits, but it also felt like a breath of fresh air compared to my day-long shopping sprees.

Despite my habit of continuously splurging, I exited CVS with satisfaction, two new beauty products and that good things could come in small packages — two small items could make my day as much as bags overflowing with clothes. ♦

STYLE FILES



Forever 21 Necklaces: \$6

Urban Outfitters Top: \$15

Bracelets from Taiwanese Street Market: \$2

PacSun Pants: \$15

Josef Seibe Shoes: \$28

Editor's Note: Some of these items are from Poshmark, a fashion trading site.

Total cost: \$66
Katrina Sung, 10

May 26, 2016

Sightless in Saratoga: Actress performs show without glasses, learns to trust cast

saya-nara

Saya Sivaram

For years, I didn't know what stage fright was. I could stand backstage, hearing the chatter of hundreds of people, or stand on stage with the audience's eyes on me alone, all without feeling the slightest nudge of anxiety or fear.

That changed with this year's fall play "Pride and Prejudice." Some of my drama friends said this shock was because I was assuming a dramatic role that was very different than my customary histrionics, but in reality, it was probably because I

was doing the show blind.

Let me clarify: In order to correct my extremely bad vision, I always wear a retro pair of tortoise shell glasses. "Pride and Prejudice" is set in the 1800s. So, I had two options: create a clear anachronism in the production — the modern-looking glasses — or sacrifice my vision for two hours.

And, before you ask, contacts were not an option. I have no interest in sticking plastic into my eyes. I'm scared that they will get lost and never come out and that I'll develop a disease and grow some weird fungus and start seeing everything in various shades of green and — you get what I mean.

And so I spent the entire duration of the fall play seeing only vague blobs of color.

I learned to differentiate each person based on their overall color scheme — my romantic interest (Zach Grob-Lipkis) was a leprechaun-y green, my sister (Emily Ludwig) was a pale yellow, etc.

However, I wasn't the only one who needed to make changes in my acting.

The entire cast learned how to keep me from walking into walls and falling off the stage by gently directing my in the right direction and putting glow-in-the-dark tape on sharp corners. I had to place all of my trust into the people around me and hope that they didn't inadvertently kill me.

For some, this may have been an easy feat, but I do not trust easily. However, after the first rehearsal, when I walked into a table, knocked

over a plant and nearly fell off the side of the stage, I realized I was helpless without the guidance of my castmates.

It was truly a transformative experience, having to put all of my well-being and safety in the hands of others.

Even though I would rather not repeat this experience, it did create a sense of trust and closeness with my cast that I do not feel with many other people.

By the end of the show, we were a well-oiled machine, and any fear that I had of messing up and embarrassing myself had disappeared. I was finally able to enjoy being on stage doing what I love.

I learned to be OK with not having control and trust that others would guide me where I needed to go. ♦

Behind closed doors: Unlocked hotel room leads to traumatizing incident

not kev jumba

Kyle Wang

I should have locked the door, in retrospect, or at least put up a sign saying: "Please knock before entering." Sliding beneath the blankets on my bed wouldn't have hurt either. It could have been worse, yes, but it was already pretty bad, at least how it happened. Possibly illegal, too, considering that I wasn't really wearing anything except for my boxers.

Sorry — let me start from the beginning.

It was April 24, and we were in Washington, D.C., for the National History Bowl competition. I had

woken up late in the morning, along with sophomores Neil Rao, Roy Shannon and Tristan Xiao. History teacher Matt Torrens was taking us touring today — it was, after all, the second to last day of History Bowl competitions. We weren't in play-offs, so we could enjoy our last day in the city before we returned home.

What I ate for breakfast that day doesn't matter; what does matter is the smell of stale urine inside the D.C. Metro — a smell that somehow found its way onto my hands.

I don't know how it happened. I just remember panicking for the next hour or so, as I tried to find a bathroom, where I could wash off the smell from my hands.

I didn't really realize how bad things could have been until we were halfway back to the hotel. What if the smell had seeped into my shirt? What if I had literally sat

down in a pool of urine and been too oblivious to notice?

I mean, for all I knew, I smelled like a (very attractive) walking porta-potty. I had to get these clothes off.

Once Neil, Tristan and I reached the sanctity of our hotel room, I disrobed immediately, keeping my boxers on, of course, but otherwise nothing. Everything else had to go in the laundry.

I lay there in bed, clad only in my boxers, not realizing exactly how dangerous the situation was. None of us did. We were too busy comparing the size of our biceps to notice that the door was still unlocked and ever-so-slightly ajar.

And then she walked in.

(For my nonexistent dignity, I will only refer to her as "she.")

Neil almost fell out of his bed laughing; Tristan involuntarily

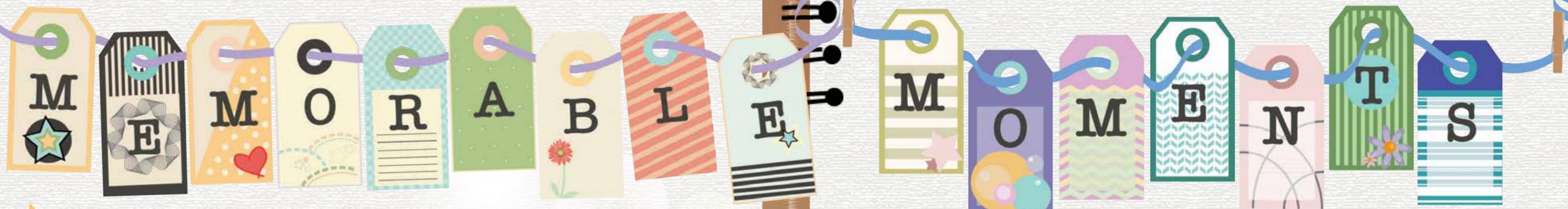
spasmed like a possessed monkey. As for me? I think I swore out loud and then said something along the lines of "please leave I'm only wearing my boxers." I'm 90 percent sure she also roasted me for being stupid enough to have left the door open, while I lay there in the sunlight, stripped bare of my dignity.

There's no deep truth to learn here except "don't be an idiot" and "always knock before entering." I did not leave from this experience a stronger man, nor did I emerge from the depths of my humiliation with my pride untouched.

But on the bright side, she only saw me for two glorious, traumatizing seconds.

Looking back, it's all about perspective. I can be the ultimate slob or a future Calvin Klein Model.

Either way, I'll learn to close the door next time. ♦



On air: Sophomore dances on national TV

cait the great

Caitlyn Chen

When I was in sixth grade, one of the yearbook staffers at Redwood Middle School asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. On first instinct, I replied, "I want to be on TV one day."

As I grew older and started taking more programming classes instead of participating in school musicals, I realized that being a TV star might not be my lifelong goal. Still, every time I saw a dancer on "The Ellen Show" or "Dancing with the Stars," I wondered what it would feel like to be in their place.

But while in New York City during spring break, I became the dancer I always envied when I got the chance to dance on the set of "Live! With Kelly and Michael."

On the day of the live show, my mom woke the rest of my family up at 6 a.m. to go to the filming studio because even though she had gotten priority seating tickets online, she wanted to be the first in line. "Who knows? Maybe we'll get to see Kelly arrive in a limo!" she said.

We didn't. But after waiting two hours in freezing New York temperatures, we did get into the show.

Soon after we were seated, the show producer asked for "trivia dancer volunteers." To be honest, I hadn't watched much of the show prior to this, but when I heard they were looking for a dancer, I raised my hand.

Once the producer picked me, I ran to the stage and we all started dancing. After a while of nervous shuffling, I ran out of moves, so I pulled out the classic high kick and double-pirouette that I learned in my 10 years of dance training. When the audience members saw I had a few tricks in my pocket, a few of them started cheering me on as I proceeded to do some more stylistic choreography (more like whipping and dabbing).

When the music stopped, the producer asked the audience to vote by cheering for their favorite dancer. I don't know if it was because I was the only Asian 15-year-old in a sea of white middle-aged women or because I had some cool tricks, but I got the job: I would take the coveted po-

sition of "daily trivia dancer" for one minute on national television.

I was shuffled backstage by one of the employees who told me what I would be doing. But honestly, while she was giving me these instructions, all I could think about was if singer Charlie Puth was behind one of these dressing room doors.

But before I could ask to get my autograph from Charlie, I was told to go onto the stage to wait for my screening time.

My heart raced as Kelly walked onto the other stage and I couldn't help but think that I could mess up and fall flat on my face. But when the cameraman positioned a camera in front of me and began rolling, I smiled and danced.

With the spotlight and stage all to myself, I felt as if everybody had eyes on me. And in that moment, I became what I have once dreamed of becoming — a TV star.

Before I knew it, my 20 seconds were over, and I was pulled back to reality as the screen transitioned to commercial.

During this short break, I was handed a selfie stick and was told to

"dance with it" by one of the stage managers. I had never watched the show, so I didn't know I was actually supposed to press the button and show the selfie view.

But because I didn't press the button on the selfie stick, instead of getting selfie footage, they got a wide shot of me holding the stick while doing high kicks. The show quickly faded my shot to hide my ridiculous, unbalanced dancing. But like they all say, "The show must go on."

When the camera started rolling again, I began doing some of my overly dramatic lyrical moves to Charlie Puth's "One Call Away," dancing through another 7-seconds.

And just like that, it was over. I breathed a sigh of relief as my heart rate resumed a steadier pace, and then returned to my seat where my older sister and parents congratulated me on my television debut.

I left the studio that day feeling excited because I danced on national TV, accomplished because I fulfilled my childhood dream and a tiny bit disappointed because I never got that darn autograph from Charlie.

Nevertheless, even after "Live! With Kelly and Michael" show fades from everyone's memory, I will never forget the time — 30 seconds to be exact — I fulfilled my sixth-grade dream on it. ♦

Put a ring on it: Dedicated Warriors fan takes picture with championship ring

curry lover

Julia Miller

Excitement surged through me as I stepped out of my car. The Oracle Arena's colossal glass windows glittered in the Sunday afternoon sunshine. It was May 1, the first game between the Golden State Warriors and Portland Trail Blazers in the semi-finals of the NBA Playoffs.

To me, obtaining these Playoff tickets was something out of a storybook, something I never imagined I'd get to do. Since I have been raised in front of the blaring Warriors games on TV and have attended games at the Oracle Arena since I was 9, there is nothing my dad and I are more passionate about than rooting for the Warriors. Little did I know that my day would get even better.

Walking into the stadium, I had no idea how my dream evening at

Oracle Arena would turn out. My dad and I were ushered into the VIP club area, and our row-10 seats were waiting just down the hallway.

But I hadn't come to this Warriors game just to relish in those seats and upscale lounge; I had a mission to get my jersey signed by the man himself, MVP guard Stephen Curry, who was in street clothes still recovering from a knee injury sustained in the opening series versus Houston.

Throughout the game, I scurried down to the floor three times to approach Curry, each attempt resulting in failure. At one point, with 30 seconds left in the game, I was only 10 feet from him. As Curry began to exit the arena, however, the security guards politely told me to leave.

When the golden yellow confetti erupting from the arena's ceiling after another major Warriors win, I stood up with my dad, tears brimming my eyes. It was only while watching Curry exit the building that I came to this unfortunate realization: Sheer determi-

nation was not enough for him to sign my jersey.

However, things quickly turned around. My dad and I were given the opportunity to exit Oracle Arena through the same hallway that the team members walk through every day. It was a surreal moment, one that I will never forget.

Walking down the hallway I had only seen on TV, I made sure to pose in front of everything, from wallpapers to plaques, as my dad snapped dozens of pictures.

We came across one hallway plastered with old Warriors logos. I was standing in front of them, waiting for my dad to take the picture, when a hand grasped my shoulder.

Sporting a black blazer with a "Strength with Numbers" Warriors T-shirt underneath, a tall man with glasses stopped in the hallway. I was surprised and confused as I stared at the stranger with his laminated VIP pass dangling around his neck.

"You should hold this for your picture," he said. Quickly, he dug around in his pocket and pulled out a large ring with the Warriors

emblem clearly outlined on its surface, sparkling beneath the hallway lights.

"No way," I whispered through my gaping mouth, my eyes growing wide.

There, between his fingers, was the Golden State Warriors 2014-2015 Championship ring.

"Here, you can hold it," he said.

"It's got 240 diamonds." I grasped the heavy ring and placed it on my forefinger. I turned my hand side to side, watching the diamonds glisten.

After taking pictures of the ring, handing it back and shaking his hand, the man introduced himself as Mark Stevens, a part owner of the Warriors.

Of course, being the person I am, I blurted out the question of whether or not he knew Stephen Curry. He said yes, and that was enough to put a smile on my face.

Although I didn't achieve my goal of meeting Curry that day, meeting someone who knew him — and holding the championship ring — was a thrill. I can't wait to go back. ♦

EXPERIENCES YOU'LL NEVER FORGET



Cheaper by three fourths of a dozen

family matters

Amith Galivanche and Amulya Vadlakonda



Strength in numbers. This applies to many things: the Warriors, Saratoga High, the U.S. Military and — Our family.

To be fair, we did look like a small army while marching down to the theater entrance when we went to go see “The Jungle Book.”

The poor, unassuming cashier nearly popped a blood vessel as his eyes bugged out when all 19 of us invaded the theater.

We were armed with our buckets of popcorn, bags of Sour Patch Kids and matching blue raspberry Icees.

When he finally asked for our tickets, Amulya’s dad handed him the full roll. They tumbled down like a scroll, hitting the floor along with the man’s jaw. It was literally like something out of a comic book.

We held our laughters as he hunched his shoulders and asked, “How many adults in the party?”

There couldn’t be a more accurate description. Our huge, rollicking, crazy, totally awesome and lovable “party” is comprised of our two common grandparents, plus several others who we refer to as “grandmother” or “grandfather”; four adult siblings, two sisters and two brothers; their spouses; and us, nine cousins whose ages range from 9 to 22. As we said before, it’s like a small army.

Which, understandably, is sometimes cause for some really interesting moments.

Like that one time all 19 of us went on a cruise to Mexico. In those five short days, each of us ate our weight in lava cake.

And on the day trip tour around a not-so-exciting Baja, California, town, we had each other to stay entertained, even as the tour guide tried to bilk

excitement over sights like gas stations and grocery stores.

Sure, there’s the occasional spat, but it’s usually over whose turn it is to choose what movie to watch. To be fair, the movie-choosing process has proved successful since the days of VHS tapes.

Not much has changed since then; we are still as close as we have ever been.

For example, when the oldest child in a normal family leaves for college, he or she might have one or two siblings that feel the absence.

But when our oldest cousin, Class of 2012 alum Anoop Galivanche, left for UCLA, he had left not only one younger brother, but also seven cousins behind.

We all FaceTime him for every birthday celebration and anniversary party; with only 52 weekends in a year, we’re pretty much partying all the time.

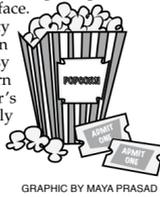
And when he and our other cousin, Class of 2014 Notre Dame High School alumna Keerthi Vedantam, come home for breaks, we’re pretty sure that we infuriate the neighbors and violate the town noise limit with our screams of joy.

Galivanche-Vadlakonda-Vedantam clan has all the crucial iparts to be a successful sitcom or at least a reality-TV show.

There are the nine cousins who know each other as well as siblings would; the four sets of parents; our sweet grandmother, who provided each of us with constant companionship during our earliest days and continues to keep our hearts full of love and our stomachs full of home-cooked meals; and our grandfather, who has a stash of wisdom (and chocolate) just for us grandkids.

So when the cashier counted our tickets and we passed the entrance of the theater, we all let out a huge laugh at the shock on the man’s face.

We earned plenty of dirty looks when we got too noisy swapping popcorn buckets. In another’s eyes, our family structure may be too much. But we wouldn’t have it any other way. ♦



GRAPHIC BY MAYA PRASAD

‘Surviving the Sivarams’: Saratoga’s new reality TV family

saya’s on fiya

Saya Sivaram



What do you get when you put a mechanical engineer, a physicist, a speech pathologist, a policy maker and a normal person in one room? My family. That’s what you get. The Sivaram Family. We should honestly just take over for the Kardashians. “Surviving the Sivarams,” on every Wednesday at 8/7 central.”

Let me back up and give you a bit of exposition. My family is composed of radically different people, all living under one roof and wreaking havoc on each other. I’ll introduce you to

everyone and show you what I mean.

I’ll start with my dad, or Jabba the Hutt as my siblings and I have coined him. Dad is a traditional

nerdy engineer with an affinity for bad puns and a weirdly accurate knowledge of American history. His pastimes include reading, hiking, making various types of tofu and making fun of his children.

Next up is Mom, sometimes referred to as Ranj. Mom wears the pants in the house. She’s the matriarch of the family, more or less, holding us together and keeping us alive.

She’s a “cool mom,” meaning that she’s friends with all of my friends and attempts to use modern lingo in her everyday conversation. Mom is unnaturally strong, both literally and figuratively. A gym enthusiast, my mother could take me down with her pinky finger (which is likely more muscular than my entire arm). She’s also the most steadfast, strong woman that I know, and it takes a lot

to keep this family under control.

The oldest kid in the family is Varun, my big brother, and arguably the most famous Sivaram in Saratoga. His academic pursuits are well known and don’t require much explanation. (Suffice to say he is Rhodes Scholar who got his PhD. in physics at age 23.) Varun is the tamer of the siblings. He likes to snuggle, is a questionable cook and likes the actress Priyanka Chopra too much. Despite being 27 and now living in Washington, D.C., he is still the most protected and coddled child mostly because he’s just so endearing and slightly clueless.

My sister, Uttara, age 22, is the coolest person in the family. The most socially competent, she’s been coaching my brother and me on

social etiquette for years. Uttara has a razor sharp wit that is often aimed at me and my brother. She is also one of the smartest people I know.

While her brilliance isn’t flashy or at all, she is one of the best writers I’ve ever known, and her prowess in economics is extremely impressive. Honestly, we think of Uttara as our protector. She’s the first to scare away any of Varun’s girlfriends who she sees as bad for him. For example, one of Varun’s ex-girlfriends, Maxine, ate dinner with us. She had some poorly waxed eyebrows, leading to my sister coining the nickname “Waxine.” Maxine broke up with Varun the next day.

Lastly, we come to the baby of the family, me. I’ve grown up in this crazy family and learned so many different ways to live. We had each other’s back through every mistake. My family is amazing and I love them; honestly, we could start our own circus. The Kardashians have nothing on us. ♦

The Sivaram family. We should honestly just take over for the Kardashians.

Disturbing ‘Challenges’ perpetuate negative body image

BY Caitlin Ju

A girl poses in front of the mirror, holding her breath and sucking in her stomach. In her left hand, she holds a piece of printer paper vertically in front of her stomach, and with her right hand, she snaps a photo.

The picture shows that the 8-inch paper is slightly wider than her waist — success.

This girl is one of hundreds participating in the A4 Waist Challenge, which began in February on Weibo, a popular Chinese blogging site. The challenge has set the new standard of skinny: to have waists thinner than the width of the paper.

Every few months, there seems to be a new body image challenge online, reminding us that despite the strides we have made in body positivity, there remains much to be done before all body types are accepted and everyone feels confident in his or her own skin.

Teenagers often view and participate in these detrimental Internet challenges, only increasing the effect social media has on body image. The constant exposure to body ideals has taken a toll.

According to the women empowerment organization Heart of Leadership, up to 12 percent of teenage boys are using unproven supplements and steroids, 13 percent of girls ages 15-17 have an eating disorder and 90 percent of high school junior and senior girls say they diet regularly.

Students at Saratoga High are among those extremely susceptible to the challenges’ effects and have recognized the lasting impact of these social media challenges. Junior Daviana Berkowitz Sklar called the A4 Waist challenge “ridiculous.”

“It promotes body standards that are unrealistic for most people,” Berkowitz Sklar said. “It just contributes to negative body image and unhealthy habits.”

The unhealthy ideal perpetuated by these challenges has surely contributed to teens’ unhappiness about body image. Heart of Leadership reported that more than 90 percent of girls between the ages of 15 and 17 want to “change at least one aspect of their physical appearance, with body weight ranking the highest.”

Though it is perfectly normal to want to change physical appearance, many of these teenage girls are seeking to attain the “media ideal of thinness,” a standard only met by less than 5 percent of the female population, according to Health Trek.

Several other negative body image fads have been circulating the Internet with similarly damaging effects and messages.

The “belly button challenge,” extremely popular in the summer of 2015, involved people wrapping their arm behind their back and around to touch their belly buttons.

Those who could touch their belly buttons were deemed skinny enough, though flexible people with long arms

could more easily touch their belly buttons.

The dangerous culture of body shaming continued from the A4 Waist Challenge to another challenge known as “iPhone 6 knees” in early April, most common in China. Women place iPhones on their knees, and if they are able to cover their knees with their iPhones, according to the challenge, it proves their legs are “skinny.”

Despite this negativity in social media, efforts have been made to change body standards.

Fashion blogger GabiFresh started the viral #Fatkini movement in 2012 that called for women of all sizes to post their selfies in bathing suits. Influential celebrities like Demi Lovato, Tyra Banks and Adele posted about their stretch marks and personal struggles with self-image and eating disorders.

Lady Gaga has used her platform to launch her Body Revolution Movement

and vocalize her struggles with bulimia and anorexia. Additionally, plus-size models frequent runways, and in February, for the first time in 50 years, a plus-size model — Ashley Graham — graced the cover of Sports Illustrated Swimsuit. Despite the progress in body positive campaigns, the social media challenges remain consistently popular. Instead of ignoring these challenges as mere fads, we have to take it upon ourselves to openly discourage body image ideals that are practically impossible and unhealthy to attain.

Individuals may continue to create these silly challenges, but through celebrity and educational discouragement and more realistic advertisements, we can give people the tools to not internalize these challenges.

Only then can we be one step closer to acceptance of all body types, even if their waists aren’t as skinny as a sheet of paper. ♦

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school scope >> Econ teacher recounts years as soldier, glazier

BY Charin Park

Pyeongtaek, South Korea, 1980: government and economics teacher Todd Dwyer was working as a military intelligence analyst and was stationed at Camp Humphreys, a tiny facility by the coast. He was going for a morning run around its perimeter, when a pair of jet planes roared over his head.

Two U.S. F-4 Phantoms flew unusually low over the surrounding rice fields, afterburners blazing behind them.

Disguised as a fishing boat, a North Korean spy vessel was approached by a South Korean patrol boat. The spy boat, about to be searched, opened fire and tried to escape.

“They scrambled the jets to try to sink it,” Dwyer said. “It happened during a time when North Korea was digging huge tunnels underneath the demilitarized zone from North to South.”

Today, photographs of Dwyer’s experience in the army hang in his classroom, along with his extensive collections of Coca-Cola bottles and vintage movie posters.

Dwyer said he didn’t really want to serve in the military, but after flunking out of high school in the middle of junior year, he says the military was the best available option to him. His first posting in 1978 was to the Assistant Chiefs of Staff, G2, Division Intelligence, Directorate of Security at Fort Lewis, Wash., now known as Joint Base Lewis-McChord. He spent most of his time completing deployment training and war game exercises.

“In the military, you are taught that failure is not an option, and so you practice a lot,” Dwyer said. “When things don’t go as planned, you have to be field-expedient and improvise. You have to think on your feet, make it work.”

In the fall of 1979, Dwyer was in the 9th infantry division when the American Embassy in Tehran was overrun.

The American government had just sent a couple squadrons of F-15 aircrafts to Iran, and after the outbreak of the Iranian Revolution, he and his colleagues were called to headquarters, also known as the “head shed.” The U.S. contemplated dropping one or two Ranger Battalions into Iran to destroy the F-15s and rescue the hostages.

“It was after the Shah of Iran was ousted and Ayatollah Khomeini came to power,” Dwyer said. “The U.S. was looking at its military options. Iran shares a common border with Russia. We didn’t want that technology in the hands of the Soviet Union, and we wanted to get our people out.”

Fifty-four Americans hostages, including the CIA agent station chief for the Middle East, were held captive at the Embassy. Dwyer spent three days at the head shed typing out military scenarios.

“Our satellite technology was not that good in 1979, and we couldn’t see through cloud cover,” said Dwyer. “We were afraid that if we carpet-bombed the F-15s, we wouldn’t be sure if Soviet Special Forces would be there, dismantling those F15s and sending them back to Mos-



Courtesy of TODD DWYER



FALCON // KYLE WANG

Top: World geography and government and economics teacher Todd Dwyer teaches his fourth period econ class about supply and demand curves. Left: Dwyer poses for the camera while on duty in Yakima, Wash. in 1979. He served for three years in the military, joining after flunking out of high school.

cow, so nothing happened.”

After he was honorably discharged in 1981, Dwyer worked in construction as a glazier for the cladding service Walters and Wolf, where he installed heavy glass panels on and in mid-rise and high-rise buildings.

He said his prime motivation for being a glazier was the money. In the 1980s, a journeyman glazier was paid “great money with great benefits and a great pension,” but it was “hard work — dirty work, dangerous work, labor intensive work.”

“The Walters & Wolf way was to do things right the first time, every time, so there wouldn’t be any trouble,” Dw-

yer said. “Don’t miss work. Ever. If you’re on time, you’re late, and if you can’t get to work on time, don’t even show up — the boss will flunk you.”

Dwyer eventually went back to school at age 28, enrolling at De Anza College, where he virtually did all of his lower division work in four years.

He then transferred to University of California, Davis, where he double-majored in history and international relations.

“Not many teachers had an impact on me before I got into college — certainly none of my high school teachers inspired me,” Dwyer said. “But [at De Anza and at Davis], I had some

pretty amazing professors.”

As a teacher, Dwyer says his favorite part of teaching is receiving emails from his former students.

“I enjoy hearing back from students at university exclaiming how much of the material they recognize in their economics classes, how much of it is ‘review’ for them. That’s reassuring,” he said.

Dwyer has taught at the school for 18 years. After asking him whether he had any regrets about becoming a teacher, Dwyer chuckled.

“Yes,” he joked. “I was supposed to do arbitrage for Goldman Sachs and live in the Hamptons.” ♦

Cochrum accepts all, nurtures inclusive classroom environment

BY Amith Galivanche & Austin Wang

A few years ago, one of science teacher Lisa Cochrum’s students approached her in April with shocking news — he would be moving to Denver for the remainder of the school year. His father, Mike Nolan, the former coach of the San Francisco 49ers, had been hired by the Denver Broncos to become the team’s new defensive coordinator.

Cochrum, who said she “really could care less” that her student’s father was a professional football coach, urged him to stay for the remainder of the semester.

“To rip you out eight weeks before the school ends? That’s just stupid,” she had said. Her students tried their best to retain their laughter; some of the boys were about to fall out of their chairs. Few could believe that Cochrum — a Bay Area native — didn’t recognize the name of the 49ers’ former head coach.

Cochrum has always been able to accept students — and treat them equally — regardless of their backgrounds. She first experienced this sense of being accepted as a student herself at Palo Alto High. As a teenager, Cochrum and her mother, a single parent, were able to buy a house in Palo Alto by what she called a “miracle.” Despite her struggles, Cochrum was still treated the same as the other students at her school, something that to this day, Cochrum is grateful for.

Nevertheless, going to Palo Alto

High, coupled with her Attention Deficit Disorder, meant she felt intense academic pressures — the same stresses that many of her students face today.

“There was a ton of competition, which was really damaging for my psyche and my self-worth; I just came out really demoralized,” she said.

Wanting to free herself from the constricted environment she felt during high school, Cochrum started to work in 1992 as a student teacher at an elementary school in San Leandro following her graduation from Westmont College in Santa Barbara.

The environment at the school on the outskirts of Oakland was a far cry from the wealthy suburb where she had grown up. By the end of the year, three of her eighth graders were pregnant, and many boys in her class had older siblings who were in gangs.

Most of her students, she said, fell into two general camps: either they cared dearly about their education and focused on absorbing the lessons, or they just wanted “another blow-up lab.”

A master teacher at the school, a teacher who assists student teachers, offered to take Cochrum under his wing.

But, when her adviser’s wife became pregnant three months into Cochrum’s position as a student teacher, Cochrum was on her own.

“Things would happen in the classroom and I would think, ‘I could

have this all under control,’” Cochrum said. “[At other times], I would think, ‘Oh my God, I’m totally doomed and am going to die when he leaves.’”

Once, when an eighth grader refused to take his seat in class, Cochrum followed teacher protocol and repeatedly asked the student to take his seat. As he remained standing, Cochrum moved closer to him while pointing her finger

“I came ready to hack the pressures in this school, and that attitude has served me well.”

science teacher Lisa Cochrum



close to his face, threatening to send him to the vice principal.

“After the student sat down, I thought to myself, ‘I’m awesome! I rock! I’m the best teacher ever!’” Cochrum said.

However, after “bragging about how amazing [she] was” to her adviser, Cochrum learned that the student, who was on his second strike with his probation officer, had been exposed to violence at home and in the community; if he had been provoked and acted out, he easily could have been hauled back

to juvenile hall — not the result she was hoping to achieve.

“Since I almost blew it, [my adviser] told me that I was the luckiest little girl on the planet,” Cochrum said. “That experience changed my perspective and showed me that I don’t have the street instinct to teach in a community that I didn’t grow up in.”

After one semester in Oakland, Cochrum applied for a science teaching job at Saratoga. With her experience at a high pressure school, Cochrum walked into her job confidently in 1993 at the young age of 23.

“Many of my friends were intimidated by a school like Saratoga, but when I walked in, I was ready to bring it,” she said. “I purposefully don’t ask my students what their parents do because I just don’t want to know. All I want is a room full of kids who are treated the same.”

Though she advises new teachers to “see the entire breadth of what education looks like,” she has found her home in Saratoga High. Her humor and caring approach along with her flamboyant personality and unique teaching style were recognized when she was named the district’s Teacher of the Year in 2010.

“I always remember that kids are kids, no matter where they’re from,” Cochrum said. “I came ready to hack the pressures of being in this community, and that attitude has served me well.” ♦



LYNBROOK >>

continued from pg. 1

tion, sexism and bullying inherent in the page, few initially came forward about the issue.

In the meantime, word about the page had begun to leak out to people like Lynbrook seniors Renee Cai, Esha Patel and Alekhya Surepeddi.

At first the three female students were scared to act.

"I was so shocked because I had no idea that this stuff happened at Lynbrook," Cai later told the Falcon. "It had been kept so quiet."

Surepeddi said she first learned about the groups when discussing sexism with a male friend, who revealed he was a member of the group.

Later, she discovered more about the initiation processes and photographs that had been posted.

"Scared of starting drama, my friend and I sat on the information," Surepeddi said. "But this year we realized enough is enough."

Cai, Patel and Surepeddi made a Facebook group called "Women Against Ranking" on April 6 to help spread awareness about the issue. Though

there was only one of many that had been formed in response to the boys' groups, it was one of the first to gain widespread attention.

Through posts about sexism and the objectification of women, the girls disseminated the message that these boys' groups were "not acceptable," and that this rating system was "fundamentally rooted in gender inequality, disrespect and hatred," Patel said.

Patel said that this problem is not confined to Lynbrook: Across the country, such "rating" groups have already begun pervading Facebook.

"This is why we encourage everyone to step up and speak out," Patel said.

And many already have. To show their support for the anti-objectification movement, many Lynbrook students have changed their Facebook profile pictures to an image of five cutout silhouettes standing beneath the phrase, "We Are Not Objects," written in bold, dark red lettering. Beneath these silhouettes is a half-circle containing phrases from the boys' chats such as "She's like a three" and "I'd tap that."

Accompanying many of these profile picture changes are captions such as "I was so shocked because I had no idea that this stuff happened at Lynbrook. It had been kept so quiet."



Lynbrook senior Reine Cai

High. Some students like Lynbrook senior Alison Kou infused personal experiences into their impassioned arguments.

"As someone who has struggled with self-worth and self-confidence, even without other people bringing me down, I can only imagine the pain and heartbreak of those who have been severely bullied and deeply hurt by others' insensitivity, ignorance and complete lack of respect," Kou said on her Facebook post.

Since the "Women Against Ranking" movement started, many of the boys have come forward to the school's administration and apologized for their behavior. In addition, Patel said that she knows of no victims who have come forward to the administration with further complaints about bullying.

Patel believes the movement has helped raise awareness of this growing problem, preventing others from getting hurt in the future.

"[These movements on social media] will hopefully deter more of these groups from being created in the future, as well as encourage members to not only leave the group, but also treat others with respect," Patel said.

All of Women Against Ranking's posts shared a similar call to action as expressed in their group — the same conclusion that they appended to their profile picture captions:

"The women of Lynbrook High feel that this is an absolute disgrace and we want to make a change. Join us if you agree by sharing this post or creating one of your own with the hashtag #notanumber. And if you are a guy reading this and you feel as though what has been done is wrong, please remember that issues of gender inequality affect all of us whether you are male or female, and real change can only be made if we fight together." ♦

Students change lives by building homes in Mexico

BY Stephen Ding & Austin Wang

Senior Delaney Milton couldn't help but smile as she watched 12-year-old Michelle, a homeless child of two fruit sellers in Tijuana, Mexico, eat her lunch on the front steps of her new home.

Milton and the volunteer group had spent the week of Spring Break mixing concrete, sawing boards and constructing walls to build a home for Michelle's family. But to Milton, seeing the young girl's happiness made all the hard work worth it.

"It's kind of hard to describe in words," Milton said. "We were impacting their lives so much and they [were] impacting ours."

From April 2-8, Milton and nine other Saratoga High and Redwood Middle School students travelled to Tijuana, with 140 other volunteers on an annual trip, coordinated by the Saratoga Federated Church. At the end of the week, the volunteers built 10 one-bedroom homes and four newly remodeled homes.

The volunteers gathered in San Diego on April 2 and traveled by bus on a 2-hour drive across the border. Upon arriving in Tijuana, they set up a large tented camp at the construction site, where they built homes for an impoverished community that was ravaged by wildfires only a few weeks earlier.

On the first day, Milton met Michelle, who came to the camp each day to help build her own home and bring fruits for the volunteers. Milton soon found that the families in Tijuana were overwhelmingly grateful for the volunteers as "[they] tried to give as much as they could, even though they didn't really



Volunteers pose in the frame of a house in Tijuana, Mexico. By the end of the week of April 2, the volunteers had built 10 one-bedroom houses and remodeled four more.

have a whole lot." Milton said they often tried to give them the fruit that they would normally sell to earn a living.

Families in Tijuana earn an average of \$35-50 each week, and many do not have homes. Saratoga Federated Church pastor and trip organizer Tim Galleher said many volunteers were shocked by the contrasts between Mexico and the U.S.

Upon arriving to the campsite, volunteers saw a destitute city with dirty sidewalks, burned out buildings and a lack of gutters that occasionally caused floods to literally wash the town away.

Milton, who has gone on the home-building trip for the past nine years, is still taken aback each time she crosses the border.

"It's really eye opening because it's such a different way of living than from [Saratoga]," Milton said. "As soon as you drive across the border, you see

houses that are literally made out of cardboard."

The volunteer organization for the past 17 years has returned to Tijuana annually to improve the community's housing. In this time, Tijuana now has 142 new homes as a result of their efforts.

"Think about how many homes that is in a city where there [was] nothing but ramshackle shacks," Galleher said. "You really see a difference versus just going and volunteering one time at some place and never going back again."

The Tijuana community is truly appreciative of the church's persistent efforts to help them. To show their support, many of the young Tijuana children come to the construction site with smiles to play with the volunteers and help with construction.

The volunteers mixed fresh concrete

by hand; sawed, hammered and nailed wooden boards; put cement plaster (stucco) on the walls; and tarred roofs.

Freshman Ines Picard, who attended the trip for the second year in a row, said she enjoyed the skills she learned such as making roofs out of paper and tar.

Picard remembered being surprised when she first learned about the tiny size of the houses they would build. She found that Saratoga students can learn much about community engagement from the Tijuana people who were ecstatic to see their new homes.

"Even if the families are poor, they are still really happy, and despite the poverty they live in, they are much closer to each other," Picard said.

Evidently, the trip did help to bond the volunteers' community as the trip united people of all ages from around the Bay Area, with the youngest volunteer being 6 and the oldest 92. Over his 17 years of managing the trip, Galleher has found that, without fail, the volunteers always create tight-knit communities with people from all different ages and backgrounds and interacted with people they would not normally converse with.

In volunteering with other Bay Area residents, Milton found that her years of service have not only left an impact on the impoverished families in Tijuana, but also created lasting memories for herself.

"[I remember] when [we] presented [the family] with the keys to the house, [everyone] was crying because they were so happy," Milton said. "I felt content and grateful for the opportunity to get to know them and offer them something that actually mattered." ♦

'SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE':

BIRACIAL SOPHOMORE EMBRACES HER INDIAN, CAUCASIAN CULTURES

BY Julia Miller & Katherine Zhou

As sophomore Ishana Narayanan's friends and family gathered around the dining table during Thanksgiving last year, Narayanan sat, staring in awe at the enticing Thanksgiving spread.

Alongside the traditional corn and green bean casserole appetizers, an assortment of Indian dishes like paneer, naan, chapatis, sambar, idli and chana masala line the table. In the center was the "star of the show" — the tofurkey: a imitation turkey made of tofu to accommodate the many vegetarian guests.

The meal is also a perfect metaphor for her mixed family, an Indian immigrant father and a Caucasian mother from the Midwest.

For many holidays, Narayanan's family incorporates both cultures in celebration with foods and traditions from both her Indian and American sides.

"I may be half-white but I'm still Indian; the whiteness does not wash out my identity," Narayanan said. "I feel like a common misconception [is that] a lot of people who come to America are white-washed, but doing things that have to do with your culture is [the opposite]."

When Narayanan's father, Seetharaman, moved from South India to Car-

bondale, Ill., in 1985 to attend graduate school, he never would have predicted that he would fall in love with a woman from a small town in southern Illinois. Nonetheless, when he moved to attend Southern Illinois University, he met Narayanan's mother, Annette Sherman.

At first, the family of Narayanan's father was skeptical about this mixed-race relationship and favored marrying inside their own race and culture.

"I feel like the reason they were against the marriage at the beginning was because it's always been Indians with Indians; they grew up with arranged marriages," Narayanan said. "When you defy that culture, it [brings] change, and as you can see through history, change is not necessarily something everyone's comfortable with."

When Narayanan's father "put his foot down" and told his family that he was going to marry Annette, his family eventually accepted their relationship.

On the other hand, Narayanan's mother did not face any discrimination for marrying an Indian man, and according to Narayanan, her family was very accepting of the relationship.

Still, the Narayanans face obstacles in trying to incorporate two different cultures into their lives.

During her family's annual summer trips to India, Narayanan finds herself



The Narayanan family poses after alumna Mounika Narayanan's SHS graduation in 2015.

sticking out in the crowd. With her light skin and brown hair, she can pass for a North Indian visitor, but since Tamil Nadu is in the South, and South Indians are usually darker skinned, passersby often gape at her unique appearance.

"In India, you're sheltered [because] there's not that many white people who come in the country," Narayanan said. "When I come in to visit or walk in the streets, people stare at me. I definitely do not look like I'm from the region."

However, her appearance is not the only difference: Narayanan can roughly comprehend but is unable to speak Tamil, the main dialect in the region.

"I feel like language is not really a big barrier; it's definitely a difference but not a barrier," Narayanan said.

Even so, Narayanan's father tries to make her practice Tamil at home. But it's often difficult for Narayanan to practice Tamil because her mother and friends don't know the language.

Narayanan does her best to include both cultures into her daily life.

Not only has she been baptized, completed her first Communion and celebrated Christmas every year, but she also participates in Bollywood and Indian classical dance.

"I find it hard to be completely white or completely Indian, so I try to find a balance somewhere in the middle," Narayanan said. "I don't consider myself more Catholic or more Hindu in any regard."

Raised by parents of different races, she experienced both American and Indian parenting in her childhood. While her Caucasian mother is very empathetic, she describes her Indian father's approach as being tough love, portraying the stereotypical Asian mentality of "push push push go go go."

"I feel like having both of those viewpoints helps me understand where both races are coming from, and why Saratoga is actually like how it is — a blend of many cultures," Narayanan said. "The way parents were brought up in their native countries shapes the social group

SENIORS WEIGH IN: ADVICE TO MY FRESHMAN SELF

"Don't look back and regret anything. Put in hard work and enjoy your friends and family as much as you can. Find a balance and make time for what's important to you."
—Sabrina Clark

"Don't be afraid to open up and meet new people! It's possible that the next person who you're asking for homework help might become one of your closest friends. You never know."
—Alice He

"Put yourself out there, and if you want to do something, go for it! Don't let anything or anyone tell you that you can't or shouldn't do something, if you truly are passionate about it. I assure you that you won't be thanking people, who told you not to do something once high school is over."
—Amanda Meserve

"Find things to be grateful for every day. When you think positively and appreciate life's blessings, it makes the stresses feel totally manageable."
—Katie McLaughlin

"You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you."
—Rotem Shaked

"Take these four years as a chance to try new things, make lifelong friends, and not take anything for granted, because before you realize, you'll be the senior off to college."
—Jonathan Fung

"You should surround yourself with people who truly support you, don't judge you, and motivate you to better yourself. Try not to care about what other people think of you. As long as you're making decisions and choices that you're happy with, that's what matters."
—Bita Naimi

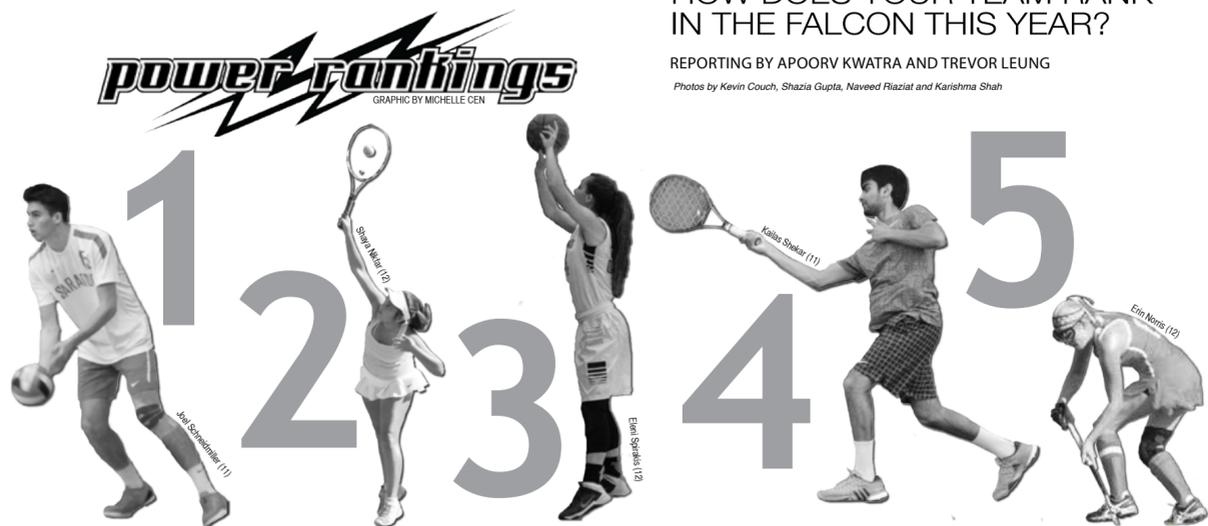
"Don't be afraid to be who you are. Your friends will like you anyway, and if they don't, they're not your true friends."
—Amanda Alexander

"It doesn't matter if you only make a few friends as long as they're good friends that will always be there for you."
—Michael Z. Guo

HOW DOES YOUR TEAM RANK IN THE FALCON THIS YEAR?

REPORTING BY APOORV KWATRA AND TREVOR LEUNG

Photos by Kevin Couch, Shazia Gupta, Naveed Riazlat and Karishma Shah



<p>1. Boys' Volleyball (1) Campus Presence: 5 Improvement: 3 Winning %: 18 League Titles: 0 CCS: 5 Star Factor: J. Schneidmiller Total: 31</p> <p>To cap off a successful season, the volleyball team, led by Schneidmiller, won the CCS Finals against Leigh High. The team made NorCals because of their successful CCS run and played their first NorCals game on May 24.</p>	<p>2. Girls' Tennis (2) Campus Presence: 3 Improvement: 3 Winning %: 18 League Titles: 2 CCS: 4 Star Factor: S. Nikfar Total: 30</p> <p>With an 11-1 season record, the girls finished the season as league champions for the 5th consecutive year. The team placed second in CCS and NorCals, falling short to Menlo in both tournaments.</p>	<p>3. Girls' Basketball (15) Campus Presence: 4 Improvement: 3 Winning %: 15 League Titles: 0 CCS: 5 Star Factor: E. Spirakis Total: 27</p> <p>The team won CCS for the first time in Saratoga girls' basketball history, concluding a brilliant season in which the team exceeded already high expectations.</p>	<p>4. Boys' Tennis (3) Campus Presence: 3 Improvement: 2 Winning %: 17 League Titles: 2 CCS: 3 Star Factor: K. Shekar Total: 27</p> <p>The team won the De Anza League for the third time in a row but lost to Saint Ignatius College Prep 6-1 in CCS Semifinals. The Falcons will be losing four starting seniors to graduation this year.</p>	<p>5. Field Hockey (7) Campus Presence: 2 Improvement: 3 Winning %: 16 League Titles: 0 CCS: 3 Star Factor: E. Norris Total: 24</p> <p>Despite having a team of just 11 regular players, the Falcons were able to finish with a 10-2 league record and make it to CCS Semifinals before losing 2-0 to Los Gatos in a close game. The team will lose three key seniors this year.</p>
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Sport (last year's ranking)	Campus Presence (1-5)	Improvement (1-3)	Winning % (1-15 for lower league, 1-20 for upper)	League Title (1 for lower league, 2 for upper)	CCS (0-5)	Star Factor	Total	Evaluation
6. B. Cross Country (4)	2	1	15	0	5	M. Petterson	23	After losing star alumnus Steven Sum, Petterson stepped up and placed first in CCS for individuals.
7. G. Soccer (21)	3	3	13	0	3	L. Plesse	22	The team made it to CCS Semifinals for the first time since 1994. In league, the Falcons placed third, ahead of rival Los Gatos.
8. Badminton (24)	3	3	12	0	3	S. Ding	21	Improving greatly from last season, the team exceeded all expectations by finishing third in the league and sixth in CCS.
9. B. Water Polo (25)	4	3	14	0	0	M. Lee	21	The boys' water polo team drastically improved from last season, winning all but one game in the season.
10. Softball (16)	2	2	12	0	2	E. Spirakis	18	The softball team made it to the second round of CCS after a strong season.
11. G. Volleyball (5)	2	2	10	0	2	N. Chiou	16	Despite occasional struggles in the season, the girls' volleyball team made the CCS Quarterfinals.
12. Football (9)	5	2	9	0	0	K. Ghelichkani	16	The football team lost key players from last year but still managed to go 2-4.
13. B. Track (19)	3	1	8	0	3	V. Faylor	15	The boys' track team performed well at leagues, with four athletes qualifying for CCS but none making it to CCS Finals.
14. B. Golf (11)	1	1	12	0	1	L. Peng and M. Peng	15	The team did not make CCS, but Miles made CCS individually before losing in the first round.
15. G. Golf (12)	1	3	11	0	0	J. Jin	15	Boosted by the addition of Jin, the team finished 6-8 in the upper league, but did not make CCS for team or individuals.
16. B. Swimming (13)	3	3	4	0	5	J. Xie	15	Despite struggles during the season, the boys' swimming team had a very successful CCS, with Xie placing first in two events.
17. B. Lacrosse (23)	2	3	7	0	3	A. Peck	15	The team's new coach emphasized team chemistry, leading to a strong run that ended in the CCS Semifinals.
18. G. Swimming (18)	3	3	4	0	4	S. Ting	14	Even though the team struggled throughout the season, the team was able to send four swimmers to the CIF Swimming and Diving State Championships.
19. G. Track (17)	3	2	6	0	3	C. McGhee	14	Three athletes made CCS Trials after strong SCVAL performances, but none qualified for CCS Finals.
20. B. Basketball (8)	4	1	8	0	1	J. Mohanty	14	Despite some difficulties during the season, the team made CCS but was upset against Aptos at the buzzer in the first round.
21. Baseball (10)	4	1	9	0	0	T. Yoshihara	14	The baseball team finished with a 11-13 record in the upper league but did not make CCS.
22. Wrestling (20)	1	2	8	1	1	A. Camp	13	The team capped off their year with Camp placing first in leagues after losing alumnus Christian Murabito.
23. G. Lacrosse (14)	2	1	9	0	0	E. Norris	12	Despite a tough season where the team went 8-11, the players improved on their skills for next year.
24. G. Cross Country (4)	2	1	7	0	1	A. Chen	11	Although key players faced injuries, the team still made CCS this season.
25. B. Soccer (22)	3	3	5	0	0	K. Yu	11	Yu led the team in goals for the second straight season, but the team did not make CCS.
26. G. Water Polo (6)	2	1	5	0	0	J. Welton	8	The team focused on rebuilding after losing key players from last season and acquiring a new coach.

Dedicated badminton coach of four years to leave

by Jenny Qian

A swarm of red and white huddled around assistant coach Chris Do as he began to give his customary pep talk before the game against long time rival Lynbrook on April 19. In every match since 2012, the Vikings managed to squeeze past the Falcons by a narrow margin.

"I told [the players] my high school memory of never being able to beat our school rival and how it has haunted me ever since," said Do. "That's the last I would want for my team, and I told them to win not just for me but for their partners and for the team."

In the end, the Falcons were able to achieve a momentous 16-14 victory against the Vikings.

Unfortunately for the team, Do has decided to leave after this year; he has signed a contract with Yonex as an international sports photographer for tennis, golf and badminton.

"I'm sad that he is leaving, but I know that he's got bigger things ahead of him," boys' doubles player Josh Li said. "His famous line is 'how bad do you want it,' and he really helped me to get energy during games by hyping the players up."

After 2013 alumnus Cody Cai brought Do to a SHS open gym practice four years ago, Do was recruited by former head coach Alex Chan to be an assistant coach.

"[Chan] thought that I would be a

great fit to the team if I could demonstrate my technique and footwork," said Do. "He found my form to be very unique as if I learned how to play from five different players put into one, and I accepted his offer in 2013."

Do first started playing badminton when he was 16, playing on his high school's team at Piedmont High. He was inspired by the time and effort his coaches dedicated to his training and decided to become a coach.

"They gave skills and knowledge to help out aspiring athletes, and I wanted to give back by returning the favor down to someone else who is driven and also has goals," Do said.

As assistant coach, Do said he enjoys providing helpful strategies, advice, and motivation to players in all types of events. This had been a major improvement for him, as he was only able to help players playing the doubles events in the beginning.

Do said that being a doubles player himself in high school made it easy to give feedback to those playing the event whereas events such as singles and mixed doubles were unfamiliar. Nonetheless, Do said he has gotten better at reading games so that he can now help players in different events.

Because many of the athletes come in with extensive training from local clubs and have a good background in badminton, Do said that it is easier to coach and that he is still able to help them identify areas for improvement.



Courtesy of CF Ding

Do said that his bonds and relationships with Saratoga players has been his biggest reason for returning each year to coach.

"I like to treat everyone as a friend but set my foot down at times to make my points clear and keep the program organized," Do said. "I'm also a lot closer to the kids' ages, which makes it easier for me to relate to things, and it's not difficult for me to understand what's going

on in their minds and how they feel." After the season ends, Do plans to continue helping the players by practicing with them or having open gym in his free time.

"I'll take every moment I can have with them, and I will cherish the memories I made with the players for anything else in the world," Do said. "I wouldn't have chosen any other school than Saratoga. It's great to be a Falcon!"

BOYS' TENNIS CCS SEMIFINALS

6-1 loss to St. Ignatius ends season

by Ami Nachippan & Jihau Yu

Decked out in maroon and gray plaid uniforms with rackets in their hands, the boys' tennis team was ready for CCS semifinals on May 12.

The boys played against Saint Ignatius, a high school in San Francisco. Stakes were high and pressure rose as the Falcons, who have made CCS semifinals for four straight years, were determined to come out on the top and win.

However, hopes of advancing to CCS finals were crushed when the boys were defeated 6-1.

After all the three doubles pairs lost their matches, the team was forced to rely on its strong singles to win the match.

However, only No. 2 singles junior Kailas Shekar managed to win his match 7-6 and 6-2.

Both No. 3 singles sophomore Dean Stratakos and No. 4 singles senior Jihau Yu lost their respective matches.

No. 1 singles senior Karthik Padmanabhan won his first set 7-5, but stopped playing after straining his back.

"It felt really bad to be pulled out," Padmanabhan said. "It's always hard to lose, but we fought hard in the match so it was not too upsetting."

Prior to CCS semifinals, the Falcons won 4-3 on May 10 against Menlo-Atherton and 6-1 on May 9 against Archbishop Mitty.

Against Menlo-Atherton, Shekar, Stratakos and Yu all won.

But Padmanabhan was once again pulled out of the match because of his back injury.

"Coming into the match, we knew we had to get through Menlo-Atherton if we wanted to reach our goal of winning CCS," Stratakos said. "I think we handled the match well in terms of taking care of business efficiently."



Courtesy of INGRID PAN

Despite the injury to their strongest player and the disappointing end to the season, the boys said they will remember this season as a year of success.

With a record of 11-1, the team was seeded No. 3 for CCS.

They also won the De Anza League championship for the third consecutive year.

Their stellar performance throughout the season also contributed to the tight bonds and friendships the boys formed, creating lasting memories before the seniors graduate.

"I'm definitely going to miss the team," said Padmanabhan, who is slated to play at the Naval Academy next

year. "The group of guys we had were so different, but in the end, we managed to all become really close."

As the seniors, Naved Krishnamurthy, Abhay Aanabathula, Padmanabhan and Yu graduate this spring, Padmanabhan sees the team growing next season with a core group of players.

Next year, Stratakos, along with sophomore Varun Meduri and freshmen David Berkowitz and Derek Pina, will lead the team.

"I feel our team chemistry is extremely positive and we all work hard on the court," Stratakos said. "I'm excited for another great season. Hopefully we can continue the high energy that we created [this season]."

BOYS' LACROSSE

End of season allows team to reflect

by Amith Galivanche & Katherine Zhou

Before their playoff game on May 11, the boys' lacrosse team had hope that they could beat — or at least compete with — Palo Alto, ranked No. 1 in the De Anza League (DAL).

Their hope came from the tie they held through three quarters in a game on April 26, before losing 12-5.

However, their hope didn't translate into results on the field with the Falcons losing 16-3.

"We panicked because it was our first playoff game against this team, so they took control," sophomore attack Miles Owyang said.

The loss in the SCVAL semi-finals ended the team's season. They finished with a 4-5 record in the DAL and a 7-8 record overall.

On May 5, the team was neck to neck with Gunn at halftime in their last regular season game. They feared that Gunn, which is ranked lower than Saratoga in the DAL, would upset them.

The Falcons pushed themselves in the second half and went on to win 11-6.

Two days earlier, the team suffered at 12-11 loss against Los Altos. This was crushing for the players, since the Eagles were ranked sixth place in the league, whereas Saratoga was ranked fourth.

"Losing against Los Altos stung because we knew we were a better team, but we just weren't able to focus," junior defense Clifford Wong said.

Despite the season-ending loss to Palo Alto, the Falcons see this season as a huge improvement from the struggles of last year — one where they had many victories and gained respect.

"We have the capability to be a really good team, and we are going to do well next year," junior midfielder Kylash Krishnamurthy said.

SWIMMING

Individuals fall short of previous times at states; defending champ Xie chooses to skip state meet

BY Pranav Ahuja & Emily Chen

At Clovis West High School on May 20, juniors Stefanie Ting and Anna Zhou, sophomore Jeanette Khowong and freshman Lei Otsuka competed at the CIF Swimming and Diving State Championships. In the end, their preliminary times were not fast enough for them to qualify for a second swim in the finals on May 21.

Also notable was the team was without senior Jack Xie, who, despite qualifying for states, chose not to compete because his parents arrived from China at the same time. Xie decided to skip this meet so as to help his parents settle for his graduation and college orientation.

Though he missed the state meet, UC-Berkeley-bound Xie will keep busy during the summer, competing in events in China. He has not decided which competitions he will partake in but will likely swim in an open water competition in Taiwan.

At the state meet, Ting, Zhou, Khowong and Otsuka placed 30th in the 200-yard Medley Relay and finished with 1:51.42. Without sophomore Colina Guan, who could not attend the state meet, the team finished with a time that was about three seconds slower than the time they got at CCS. In the 100-yard breaststroke event, Ting placed 27th with a time of 1:05.57 (1:03.89 was her CCS preliminary round time) and Otsuka placed 30th with 1:05.63, which was

not far off her CCS finals time of 1:05.52. "After the race, we were a little disappointed since we didn't get a best time, but we still felt happy that we had this experience of going to states," Khowong said.

But while the state meet did not end as they hoped, the swimmers still made a splash during the season and at CCS. Ting, who finished the 100-yard breaststroke with a time of 1:04.36 in CCS, placed sixth and made the All-American consideration cut.

Individually, Otsuka finished with a time of 2:10.54, placed 14th in the 200-yard IM and finished 11th in the 100-yard breaststroke event, finishing in 1:05.52. Khowong finished 14th in the 100-yard backstroke event with a time of 58.87 and 16th in the 100-yard butterfly event with a time of 58.49.

For the second year in a row, Xie won his individual events in the 200-yard IM event and the 100-yard butterfly event at CCS. Xie's times of 1:47.43 for the 200-yard IM event and 47.40 for the 100-yard butterfly event both met All-American Automatic cuts.

"[Placing first] released my pressure because the first time you win, you feel really good," Xie said. "But the second time, you need to defend the champion-

ship, so there's so much pressure."

The boys' varsity swim team placed 13th out of 44 teams with a score of 52 at CCS at the Santa Clara International Swim Center from May 13-14. The women's team placed 15th out of 41 teams with a score of 50.

In the finals on May 14, the women's 200-yard Medley Relay team of Ting, Khowong, Otsuka and sophomore Co-

lina Guan started the day off for Saratoga with a seventh-place finish and a time of 1:48.66, which met a California State consideration cut. The men's 200-yard Medley Relay team of Xie, seniors Graham Schmelzer, Harrison Yang and junior Nathan Ching placed 11th with a time of 1:38.66.

“We were a little disappointed since we didn't get a best time, but we still felt happy we had this experience of going to states.”



sophomore Jeanette Khowong

1-meter diving event in CCS. She placed 17th overall, with a score of 269.25.

In the preliminary rounds of CCS on Friday, Xie placed first in the 200-yard IM event and 100-yard butterfly event, Ting placed third in the 100-yard breaststroke event and the team of Ting, Khowong, Guan and Otsuka placed fifth in the 200-yard Medley Relay. Otsuka placed 16th in the 200-yard IM event and 13th in the 100-yard backstroke event, and Khowong placed ninth in the 100-yard backstroke event and 15th in the 100-yard backstroke event.

The week before on May 6-7, the team competed in the league meet at Gunn. According to boys' varsity swim coach Christian Bonner, though the team did well collectively, there was some disappointment for a handful of swimmers.

"There were close to 10 swimmers where people missed individual CCS cuts by a couple fractions of a second," Bonner said.

But all said and done, the team can be proud of both their individual and team accomplishments throughout the year and will continue look for ways to improve.

"Off-season is an opportunity to improve, whether it's through swimming or other sports," Bonner said. "Anything that is lost can be found again except for time wasted." ♦

An asset to the team this year, freshman Annika Domez competed in the

SOFTBALL



FALCON // DEREK CHEN

Senior Eleni Spirakis pitches during the CCS game in King's Academy on May 19.

Falcons persevere through regular season, qualify for CCS

BY Julia Miller & Jay Kim

After a rocky first half of the season, the Falcons managed to pick up their game and qualify again for CCS this year, even hosting and winning one game in the tournament.

On May 21, however, the team was edged out by a tough Half Moon Bay team 6-5.

The Falcons had faced the Cougars earlier in the season and lost 8-0.

"Even though we lost this time, it was nice to see some improvement in our hitting and our defense," junior first baseman Yianna Spirakis said.

In the first round at home against The King's Academy on May 18, the girls beat the Knights 10-3. Sophomore catcher Eryn Lee went four for four at the plate and senior Eleni Spirakis pitched, leading the Falcons to clinch a spot in the quarterfinals.

Concluding the season with a 1-0 win against Los Altos, the Falcons ended their regular season at fourth position

with a 6-6 record in the De Anza Division III.

Junior shortstop Rachel Davey said that even though the Kings had an undefeated record, the Falcons won their first CCS game due to their effective defense, good hitting and minimal errors made during plays.

Early on, the Falcons were nervous and made some mistakes before their focus was directed on getting a big win for the team. After starting the season slow as players returned from their basketball season late, the team focused during practice to perfect their technique and plays.

With Eleni and Savannah Green graduating this spring, the team will have to rely on underclassmen to succeed season.

"Next year might be a difficult season, because we are losing such important pieces in our team," Yianna said. "But our improvement at the end of the season is promising and we can hopefully carry that momentum into next season." ♦

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CCS >>

continued from pg. 1

with the second most total assists in the nation according to MaxPreps: an amazing total of 1,146.

Leigh High started the game strong, winning the first set 25-23, but the boys rebounded and won the following three sets 25-19, 25-15 and 25-23.

Schneidmiller impressed with 37 kills, bringing his total to 639 in the season, the second most in the nation.

"While [Schneidmiller] obviously contributed a ton to the team, I really think the championship was a team effort, and we needed everyone to win," Leung said.

After dropping the first set, the boys were determined to play harder for the rest of the game.

"We focused on coming out harder with more energy and serving better," Schneidmiller said.

The boys came back and eventually ended the match with sophomore middle Harrison Fong's game-winning

block.

On May 4, the boys wound up their regular season with a 3-0 win against Mountain View. They finished with a 10-4 league record in the tough De Anza League.

"Playing in the De Anza League helped us hone our skills and prepare us for the CCS tournament," Leung said.

The team defeated Mt. Madonna at home 3-0 on May 12 in the CCS Quarterfinals, and Archbishop Mitty at St. Francis 3-1 on May 14 in the CCS Semifinals to get to the CCS Finals.

"As a team we played better in situations where we needed to catch up when we were losing," senior outside hitter Spencer Yen said.

The team also learned a lot about themselves during the tournament.

"We went into CCS pretty optimistic as we'd beaten most of the teams already," Yen said. "But after the second round game against Mt. Madonna, we saw that as long as we served well and passed and played defense, we could beat almost any team."

The Falcons were looking to NorCals on May 24 with their



FALCON // ISABELLE YANG

Senior setter Chester Leung leaps forward to hit the ball during the boys' volleyball CCS finals against Leigh High at Saint Francis High School on May 17, en route to a 3-1 victory for the CCS championship.

opponent still yet to be determined. Leading up to NorCals, they were concentrating on resting. (Results of NorCals occurred too late to include in this edition of the Falcon.)

"We've been having light practices so that we'll have fresh legs for [NorCals]," Quanrud said.

Yen believes that the team has a promising opportunity to make it deep in the tournament.

"We can definitely make a run," Yen said.

"We are ranked 19th in California, so [we] have a good chance considering most of the top teams are in a different division." ♦

TRACK AND FIELD

Seven athletes advance past SCVALS to CCS Trials

BY Caitlin Ju & Ami Nachiappan

Discus in hand, sophomore Paige Hansen bent her knees and found her comfortable footing.

She placed her free hand under the discus, bent her fingers slightly and swung her arm. The discus landed 104' 06", a distance that garnered her 19th place at the CCS trials held at Gilroy High on May 21.

The throw was not enough to qualify for CCS Finals, but was an improvement from the 102' 06" throw that had given her a spot at the CCS trials and second place at the SCVAL meet.

Hansen was one of seven Saratoga High athletes who placed in the top six in their respective events at the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League (SCVAL) meet that took place on May 13 at Los

Gatos High; their stellar performances earned them spots at CCS trials, but none qualified for CCS finals on May 27.

With the exception of Hansen and senior shot putter Tanner Zuleeg, the Falcons fared better than at CCS Trials. Senior Mathew Peterson placed sixth in the 800-meter run with a time of 1:59, achieving his goal of a sub 2-minute race, whereas at CCS trials he ran 2:02. At the SCVAL meet sophomore Chloe McGhee placed fourth in the 300-meter hurdles with a time of 47.18 seconds.

Senior Vincent Faylor was a favor-

ite to place high at the SCVAL meet for the 300-meter hurdles, but fell during the race and lost his spot in the top six. However, he did compete in the 110-meter hurdles event at CCS trials.

Sophomore high jumper Riley Carter, senior discus thrower Justin Mohanty and Zuleeg also qualified for CCS trials, though Mohanty did not end up competing. Last year, the girls' team only

sent two athletes to the SCVAL meet. This year, it sent nine: Also qualifying besides Carter, Hansen and McGhee were senior sprinters Kimberly Chen and Fiona Sequeira; junior sprinter Ce-

line Bellegarda, sophomore Priya Chaganti, a 300-meter hurdler, sophomore long jumper Valerie Yang and freshman 800-meter runner Sasha Pickard.

On the boys' team, besides Faylor, Mohanty, Peterson and Zuleeg, senior distance runner Stephen Law and senior triple jumper Brandon Hulme; junior thrower Tristan Bush and junior Kyle Jew, who ran as part of the 4x400m relay team; and sophomore sprinters Alexander Hawks, Jaijit Singh and Will Turpin competed.

As the season approached its end, the seniors on the team felt grateful for the opportunities they received to reach their highest potential.

"The coaches kept the mood light and helped us improve," Sequeira said. "I bonded with so many people and those unexpected friendships just added to an overall great season." ♦

A factor that has contributed to the team's success this year has been the relationship between the coach and athletes.

BADMINTON

Falcons send three to NorCals

BY Isabelle Yang & Jason Zhao

After two long days, the Falcon badminton team members emerged victorious from CCS on May 13-14, sending No. 1 boys' singles player Stephen Ding and No. 1 boys' doubles players Partha Shah and Josh Li to play at the NorCal State Championships on May 21.

At CCS, Ding lost to Wilcox No. 1 player Darren Yang in the first round 21-17 and 21-14. Ding then went to the consolation round, losing to Wilcox again for the second/third place spot 21-17, 21-17 and 21-15, earning third place.

"We didn't even think we would place in CCS, so [qualifying for NorCals] was a big accomplishment," Li said.

Li and Shah also lost in the first round to a pair from Burlingame High 22-20 and 21-15. They lost to a Palo Alto pair 21-19, 22-20 and 21-18, earning themselves third place in CCS.

No. 1 mixed doubles junior Spring Ma and senior Michael Owyang did not have the same success. They beat Santa Teresa in the first round 21-17

and 21-19 but then lost to Gunn 21-13 and 21-13. They then proceeded to the consolation round and lost to Lynbrook 21-16 and 21-19, not making NorCal qualifications.

Prior to CCS, Saratoga sent a total of 24 players to Wilcox High School on May 5-7 to play at SCVALS. In the tournament, Li and Shah managed to defeat a pair from Cupertino, which were seeded second in the tournament, 21-19, 23-21 and 21-14 to secure their spot in CCS.

They later went into the finals against Palo Alto where they played a best of three games but lost 2-1.

At the end, Ding placed fourth; Shah and Li placed second; and Ma and Owyang placed fourth, all qualifying for CCS.

After a rough 2015 season, the team was able to rebound this season.

"Our players performed very well and pleased the crowd as we kept Saratoga badminton's image nice and high," assistant coach Chris Do said.

The Falcons finished with a record of 6-6 and ended up third in the league behind Monta Vista and Cupertino, a huge improvement from last year. ♦

BOYS' GOLF

Peng qualifies individually, eliminated after first round

BY Apoorv Kwatra & Trevor Leung

Despite overall poor performances by the team in the league tournament, No. 2 player senior Miles Peng just made the cut individually for Central Coast Sectionals (CCS) by shooting a seven-over 78 after 18 holes at the league tournament held at Santa Teresa Golf Club (par 71) on May 3.

The team placed fifth out of six teams in the league tournament and did not qualify for CCS.

"We just made too many mistakes, and it killed us at the end," said No. 1 player senior Lucas Peng, who shot an 81.

Freshman William Liu shot a 79, but needed a 78 or less to make it past the CCS cut. Liu was happy with his performance for most of the round, since he had been shooting even par after 15 holes, but performed poorly on the last holes.

"I let myself get distracted by thirst and a bad hole, and as a result, I played badly for the last few holes," Liu said.

Even though Miles made the cut, he said that he could have performed better at Leagues.

"I started out weaker than I wanted too," Miles said. "I lost strokes early in my round."

In the first round of CCS, Miles tied for 56th out of 83 players by shooting a 12-over 83. He did not make the cut to the next round of CCS.

"I lost most of my strokes in putting," Miles said. "I putted a lot worse than I usually do."

The team finished second in the league during the regular season with a 9-3 record.

"Despite the disappointing end to the season, our team showed endurance," Shang said. "Although we lost four players in the top six [to graduation] from last year, we improved as a team compared to where we were at in the beginning of the season." ♦



Peng

>> snapshots



Courtesy of TALISMAN



Courtesy of NATASHA RITCHIE



FALCON // VIVIEN ZHANG



FALCON // ISABELLE YANG

Senior Jerame Kim prepares to unload the boxes during the yearbook distribution on May 18.

Senior MAP students stand on stage after SMASH'N, which took place on May 20.

Junior George Wang participates in AP Chemistry's Tie-Dye day on May 11.

Music teacher Andrew Ford and other teachers sing to encourage the school community at the rally on May 13.

Warriors' style historic but not revolutionary

not kev jumba

Kyle Wang



About one month ago, the Wall Street Journal released a story proclaiming that the Golden State Warriors had revolutionized the game of basketball.

In retrospect, the story was as prophetic as it was timely. On April 13, the Warriors made NBA history by winning their 73rd game, surpassing the Chicago Bulls' record of 72 wins and 10 losses from the 1995-1996 season; on May 10, Warriors star Stephen Curry became the NBA's first unanimously recognized MVP.

Nonetheless, while brilliant basketball certainly drives the Warriors' success, the Warriors have by no means

revolutionized the game.

Calling them a revolutionary basketball team is as inaccurate as it is unfair: They merely exemplify a model centered around 3-point shooting and smaller lineups that has been built over the years.

During the 2015-2016 season, the Warriors attempted an average of 31.6 3's per game, making 13.1 of them. This is high, considering that the average NBA team only makes 8.5 of 22.5 attempted 3's per game, but not a distant outlier by any standard.

The point here is that the Warriors aren't breaking any new ground — they're taking a formula that other teams have already experimented with and using it to their advantage.

They're simply doing what other teams have already done at a much higher level.

Of course, one might argue that stylistically the Warriors have revolutionized

the sport. That their success and innovation cannot be quantified through numbers or algorithms; that the Warriors' genius can only be understood when seen through the naked eye.

Without their 3-point shooting, however, the Warriors are a little more on offense than a more fluid version of the Steve Nash's Phoenix Suns or Gregg Popovich's San Antonio Spurs.

Yes, Warriors basketball is beautifully fluid, dynamic and efficient. But they were not the first to try a "small-ball" based approach toward the game, which sacrifices size and strength for speed and agility (the general idea is that smaller, more versatile players can create more scoring opportunities than taller, less mobile ones).

Before LeBron James left the Miami Heat, the Heat employed a similar small-ball strategy from 2010-2014.

Under Coach Steve Kerr, the Warriors took these tried and tested techniques

and took them to new heights with their skills as individuals and as a team.

A small-ball approach, for example, led to easier scoring opportunities with shooters for Thompson and Curry; shooting more 3-pointers is easier to justify with players of that caliber as well.

This isn't to say that Kerr isn't a genius or even that the 2015-2016 Warriors won't go down as one of history's greatest basketball teams, but their success isn't based on a revolutionary style.

The Warriors went 73-9 this season by combining a series of styles that have already been explored in the past. Just because they can exploit the 3-pointer with more success with players such as Thompson and Curry does not mean that the Warriors have invented a new form of basketball.

Judging from the season to date, they're just better at it than anyone has ever been. ♦

How I received my driver's permit

SOPHOMORE HAS TOUGH EXPERIENCES WITH TIMING IN DMV

dancing queen

Julia Miller



The shivers began once I saw the dull gray building approaching my right side in downtown Los Gatos. As the Department of Motor Vehicles sign passed by my passenger side window, I let out a cry for help, my mouth quivering.

In the past three days, I had crammed in my head driving facts, regulations and road signs. For hours a day, reading 25 different practice guides and a read-through of the entire driving handbook had led up to the moment I had been dreading: taking my permit test.

Palms sweating and breath quickening, I stepped out of my car and began walking to the DMV with all my paperwork. I've always been a stressed test taker, but this time, I felt like I was going to pass out from anxiety. I pushed open the door of the DMV to reveal a long, long line.

"Don't worry, it'll all work out fine," my mom said. Little did she know what was about to unfold.

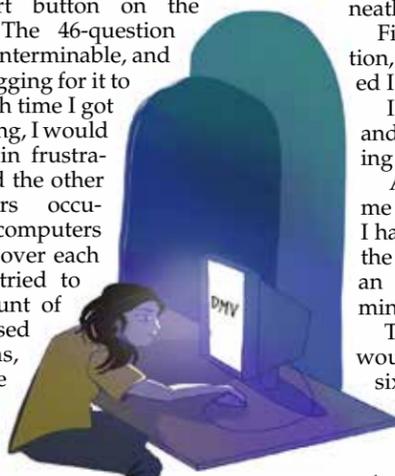
After messing up the DMV forms four times in 10 minutes, whether by spelling street names wrong or signing in the wrong place, we finally completed the form.

The DMV employees then rushed me from station to station. With each passing minute, the stress mounted.

Once I went through the vision test and took a flash-blinding picture, I chose computer No. 7, my lucky number, to take the test.

My hands began shaking as I clicked the start button on the screen. The 46-question test felt interminable, and I was begging for it to end. Each time I got one wrong, I would cry out in frustration, and the other test-takers occupying computers glanced over each time. I tried to keep count of my missed questions, but the number disappeared under-

As the man behind the desk handed me my driver's permit, I was relieved. I had just accomplished what might be the most stressful task in my life.



GRAPHIC BY CHARIN PARK

neath my sea of stress.

Finally, after answering the last question, a message popped up and indicated I had passed.

I cheered and clapped my hands, and I'm pretty sure everyone was staring at me like I was insane.

As the man behind the desk handed me my driver's permit, I was relieved. I had just accomplished what might be the most stressful task in my life. Then, an unfortunate thought crossed my mind.

This was only the beginning to what would trump that amount of stress in six months: taking my road driving test.

At that, I cringed and walked out of the DMV, feeling successful yet once again terribly nervous. ♦

>> topten

WAYS TO SPEND SUMMER

- 10 **Sleep in.** Catch up on those zzzs.
- 9 **Keep up with "Game of Thrones."** R+L=J, if you know what I mean.
- 8 **Watch the Summer Olympics in Brazil.** Will it be canceled at the last minute?
- 7 **Take up a hobby.** Underwater basket weaving seems fun and is a college major!
- 6 **Dedicate time to fashion.** Try a new look in style. Jorts!
- 5 **Wait for AP scores in July.** Go tubing in your own tears.
- 4 **Leave the country.** Check out real estate in Canada, just in case Trump wins.
- 3 **Do nothing!** It's not like we did much during the year anyway.
- 2 **Internships.** Prepare for your future career, and learn that it's boring.
- 1 **Study!** Get a head start stressing out for next year by studying ahead.

>> David Fan and Neil Rao