



Meet Fresh disappoints with lack of flavor.



Aspiring engineer finds passion in building.



Senior plans to continue sailing in college.



# THE saratogafalcon



Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA  
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## STUDENT GOVERNMENT

### ASB's summer activities aim for increased participation

by Adina **Bidel** & Ashley **Feng**

"5...4...3...2...1!" In the school's parking lot a crowd of roughly 450 people stood around a projector and counted down in time to the flickering numbers on the screen on Aug. 4. The atmosphere of suspense turned into surprise, and then amusement, when the Homecoming theme for the freshmen class, "A Bug's Life," was announced.

For the first time at SHS, Homecoming themes were revealed during the summer before school — several weeks earlier this year than previous years. The Pixar movie themes were announced early because the Homecoming week is a month earlier than usual. The reveal closed off the summer fundraiser that included a large food truck festival. The event was organized by ASB and Homecoming commission.

Over the summer, the eight members of

the ASB — president Mitali Shanbhag, vice president Spring Ma, secretary Kyle Wang, treasurer Roland Shen, board commissioner Nathon Chin, head commissioner Eileen Toh, and clubs co-commissioners Ellicia Chiu and Kedar Abhyankar, along with new activities director Matt Torrens — have been planning ahead to ensure a school year with more events and fewer problems. They have organized school-wide events during the summer and the first few weeks of school.

"Whenever we ran into problems last year it was because of a shortage of time," Shanbhag said. "We decided to get a head start this year to make sure everything ran smoothly and we didn't get overwhelmed."

One of the biggest changes that has helped ASB get a head start on organizing activities is the implementation of the mandatory leadership class, which now meets during

>> **ASB** on pg. 5

### Students travel abroad despite terrorist attacks

by Elizabeth **Lee** & Harshini **Ramaswamy**

As she wandered through the Palace of Versailles this past summer, class of 2016 alumna Nicole Prowse glanced at the beauty around her, captivated by its exquisite murals and architecture. Suddenly, the sound of security guard whistles and yelling shook Prowse out of her trance. Guards escorted her and the other visitors out of the palace, all the while murmuring about a suspicious backpack in the area. Immediately, Prowse and her friends ran from the building in fear of a possible terrorist attack — an abrupt end to their adventures in the royal mansion.

"I was scared and didn't know what to expect," Prowse said. "It was a frantic experience that made you see how real and intense the situation in France was."

According to CNN, acts of terrorism by ISIS have been occurring every 84 hours on average since June 8 throughout several

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## THE MAN BEHIND THE LEGEND

FORMER COACH BENNY PIERCE BUILT WINNING TEAMS, CHARACTER



Benny Pierce, now 82, was at one point the winningest football coach in California.

by Katherine **Sun** & Rachel **Zhang**

Fans watching the SHS football games look up to the scoreboard and probably never give the name they see there — Benny Pierce Field — a second thought.

What they may not realize is that Benny Pierce was nothing short of a legend during his three decades coaching football and teaching at the school — and 22 years after his retirement, he remains an honored part of program.

Pierce came to the school at its start in 1959 as one of the school's original teachers. As Saratoga's JV and then head football coach from 1959 to 1994, Pierce brought the Falcons to victory time and time again, leading them to

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FALCON // ISABELLE YANG

## ADMINISTRATION



FALCON // ISABELLE YANG

Large freshman class fills bleachers at the first rally of the year on Aug. 26.

### Size of unexpectedly large freshman class poses challenges

by Francesca **Chu** & Michael **Zhang**

As the crowd of nervous freshmen starting walking into the Large Gym for the first rally of the year, it was apparent that they wouldn't fit within their designated space.

The stands filled up quickly, and soon they were spilling into the sophomores' side. It was exciting for them, yet slightly intimidating for the other classes to see a sea of green shirts take up two-

thirds of their side of the gym. In many years, the typical class consists of just over 300 freshmen, and that was the number the administration had in mind for the Class of 2020.

"Based on the numbers we were expecting from Redwood [Middle School], we thought there would be about 320 incoming freshmen," principal Paul Robinson said.

However when the school year

>> **FRESHMEN** on pg. 5

## CLASSES

### Teachers and students adjust to new rolling block schedule

by Caitlyn **Chen** & Amy **Tang**

With a bag of Panda Express in his hand on a recent day, senior Jonathan Yun scrambled to his AP Chinese class at 12:42 p.m., just two minutes after the second bell had rung. Stumbling through the door, Yun heard his teacher stop talking mid-lecture as his classmates laughed hysterically in the background. He shuffled to his seat, thinking that if the school hadn't switched to a new schedule, he would have made it to class on time.

Like other upperclassmen on campus, Yun enjoys going out to lunch. But with only 35 minutes on the clock — 5 minutes fewer than the old schedule — it's harder to make it back to school on time.

"It's frustrating because the school is basically teasing us with the lunch policy," Yun said. "They let us go off, but only for 35 min-

utes. They're basically implementing a closed campus policy, encouraging kids to drive dangerously."

With its many changes — shorter lunches, more tutorials, a later start and a five-days-a-week block schedule — the new rolling block schedule has sparked debate on campus.

According to superintendent Bob Misteles, the new schedule reduces student stress by adding more tutorials. But even as a junior taking multiple AP and Honors classes, Atlas Yuen thinks three tutorials a week in the old schedule was fine.

While some students are having a hard time accepting the changes, others, like sophomore Cameron Lin, see the daily 35-minute tutorials as "opportunities to talk to teachers."

"Last year, I wouldn't get the chance to ask my teachers ques-

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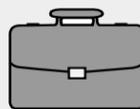
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**SHS emphasizes social media with hashtag**

With the start of the new school year, the administration has decided to create the hashtag #gofalconpower to promote school spirit and highlight the positive events occurring daily at the school.

Principal Paul Robinson said that many staff members have set up their own Instagram and Twitter accounts so that the school is better connected. At first, Robinson was wary about using social media, as he was unfamiliar with this platform; however, he has since embraced it and begun to incorporate social media to interact with the school community.

He has uploaded some videos and text messages on his twitter handle, @PRob\_SHS, and he has posted pictures of his experiences on his Instagram account, @p.rob.shs.

Senior Sydney Vo has said that #gofalconpower promotes "positive vibes" throughout the school and should also be improved in other ways.

"The school should add different hashtags for each grade level to bolster class spirit," Vo said. "This can be a neat way to extend on the social media aspect of the school."

With #gofalconpower, Robinson hopes to use social media to celebrate achievements in classrooms, clubs and sports.

"All of us should have a chance to see everything happening at school, and using #gofalconpower is an easy way to search and celebrate everything," Robinson said.

— Kevin Chow and David Fan

**31 named National Merit Semifinalists**

In October 2015, over 4 million students across the country registered to take the annual PSAT-NMSQT, a preliminary aptitude test similar to the SAT that serves as the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholar distinction. On Sept. 14, it was announced that 31 seniors who scored in the top 1 percent will be advancing in the competition as National Merit Semifinalists. Out of the 31,000 semifinalists nationwide, 7,100 will be chosen to be finalists in the spring. These finalists have the opportunity to receive scholarships from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation and participating colleges.

*Class of 2017 Semifinalists: Austin Cai, Sarah Chang, Hong-Hsuan Chen, Candace Chiang, Karena Chow, Kevin Chow, Harrison Cui, Karissa Dong, Jacqueline Han, Rachel Hsin, Chih-Hsuan Hsu, William Hu, Kyle Jew, Michelle Jiang, Sarah Jin, Raymond Lee, Nicole Lin, Daniel Liu, David Nguyen, Arnab Raha, Sanjit Rajendiran, Spencer Robinson, Naman Sajwan, Jeanna Sheen, Genghis Shyy, Katherine Sun, Miranda Tang, Neehar Thumaty, Mason Tian, Isabelle Tseng, Amulya Vadlakonda.*

— Michael Zhang

>> **picturethis**



**MUSIC IN THE MAKING >> Construction workers continue building the new music building. It will combine all current music classrooms. It is projected to be finished July 2017.**

**ADMINISTRATION**

**5-star scanning system expanded**

by Ashley Feng & Kyle Wang

Crowds of students from all grades poured into the Large Gym on Aug. 26, excited for the first rally of the year.

Having been told beforehand to install a new app for the 5-star system, students were given the opportunity to check in to the rally using the app's features, though only a few actually did so.

This was ASB's first test run of the 5-Star App, an expansion of the 5-star online voting system that students have only used to vote in ASB, class office, and Homecoming court elections in previous years.

For now, ASB does not know how many students have installed the app, but they hope more will continue to do so.

"It's most definitely going to

affect the way the school does stuff now," clubs co-commissioner Kedar Abhyankar said. "Rallies are going to use this heavily, and another example with this [being used] would be with big school events, like dances."

With the mobile app, attendees can now check in near beacons, which connect to mobile phones. Without the app, they can still check in by manually scanning their ID cards with event supervisors.

The school hopes to use the 5 Star App's "Points" feature, which rewards points based on attendance at school events, to boost overall school spirit.

At the end of the year, the class grade with the most points overall will receive a spirit trophy.

The school first tested out the system to track attendance at the first rally of the year.

Though they encouraged students to download the app and check in at the event, only nine people officially registered at the Aug. 26 Rally using the app — four juniors and five seniors.

"Any time there's a transition, advertising and having people completely shift from the status quo are major obstacles," ASB president Mitali Shanbhag said.

ASB and the administration hope that more students will be using the 5-Star System to check in at school events by the end of the year.

"We're definitely going to send out emails and maybe even give teachers time to explain the system in a classroom setting," Shanbhag said. "We're keeping it together, and we'll definitely be working on this. I'm sure with time everything will work out." ♦

**SHS ADVISOR**

**Seniors create database of notes**

by Jay Kim

thell said. "We wanted to distribute it to the whole school so anyone could use it."

Other resources the website provides are previously used study guides that were posted in Facebook class groups.

"I thought it would really help if people could use previous study guides because people already share them," Barthell said. "If there's one database for everything everyone can get it from there."

Barthell thinks the system could effectively decrease the high-stress nature of the school by encouraging students to help each other as their learn tough subjects. However, as school started only a couple weeks ago, the site is in its early stage, and much information needs to be added.

They are currently surveying past students, who have gotten As in those classes, for advice to succeed, especially for subjects such as English and math that which do not require as many study guides.

Additionally, the trio is planning to crowdsource some of the

remaining study guides on the class's Facebook pages to encourage others to help the school.

Luan explained that it would be greatly appreciated if students who are interested in sharing could contact them, as they would upload the guides only upon the authors' consent.

"It was challenging to get enough study guides to release [and also] to think of an efficient layout for each page," Luan said. "We wanted every word on the site to be useful to the students and we overcame that by just thinking what we would find useful since we are students ourselves."

Despite these challenges, the creators of the website are satisfied with their work so far. They are aiming to play a role in reducing students' stress and increasing their learning.

"Although there is still much work to be done on the site, I believe SHS Advisor will soon become a fundamental asset to each student's success in the classroom," Barthell said. ♦

**Rec letter blues — seniors struggle to find writers**

by Nidhi Jain & Olivia Lu

Then-junior Puja Maheshwari stared at the daunting \$25 senior packet in her hands after buying it from the guidance office in May, feeling a growing pit in her stomach as she eyed the words "humanities teacher" followed by a terrifyingly blank line.

Out of the six English and history teachers Maheshwari had been taught by so far, four had left either permanently or for an extended period of time, leaving only two teachers available to write her private university applications' letters of recommendation. Of the remaining teachers, one taught a class she had little passion for, while the other one was so overwhelmed by recommendation requests that she had to conduct a lottery where students are randomly chosen to write letters for.

As a result, near the end of junior year, Maheshwari still lacked confirmation on a humanities letter of recommendation.

Every year, over 90 percent of SHS seniors require letters of recommendation from a humanities or STEM teacher — often both — for their applications to private

colleges and out-of-state public colleges, according to statistics provided by the guidance office.

The process of receiving a recommendation letter may seem simple, but seniors like Maheshwari often find themselves in difficult situations where the number of students who want recommendations overwhelms the number of teachers who can write them.

Considering the fact that most private colleges state that a high-quality letter of recommendation from a non-elective teacher is integral for a quality application, these situations raise the question: How should those applying to private colleges try to get letters of recommendation?

After weeks filled with anxiety and panic, Maheshwari eventually approached English 11 H teacher Natasha Ritchie at the end of junior year for advice on her situation.

Ritchie, in response, told Maheshwari that asking a senior teacher and informing them in the beginning of the year of her recommendation letter request would be the best option. This way, the teacher would pay special attention and take notes on Maheshwari.

"That works out for me because all the places where I am

applying early on require one letter, so for those places, I'll only be submitting my STEM recommendation," Maheshwari said.

While the process seems incredibly hectic for students like Maheshwari, the dilemma is equally bad for teachers, as many eventually write about a total of 35 time-consuming letters each year.

"In a school like Saratoga, it becomes an incredible burden on teachers," Ritchie said. "It's a pretty big tension between [working on letters of recommendation] and getting enough grading and current students' work done."

Especially because teachers like Ritchie spend part of their summers writing letters, it is important for juniors to ask their teachers for letters before junior year ends. By thinking ahead, students can avoid spending the fall of their senior year frantically searching for teachers to write their letters.

According to Maheshwari, some situations, like hers, are simply a case of bad luck, and asking a teacher of seniors ends up being the sole solution.

However, guidance counselor Alinna Satake emphasizes that students should enter teachers' lottery system, be flexible enough to ask their sophomore and senior year teachers for recommendations, and see their guidance counselors at Wednesday office hours or materials on the school website for maximum support. ♦

**SCHEDULE**

continued from pg. 1

"Last year, I wouldn't get the chance to ask my teachers questions on Tuesdays and Thursdays," Lin said. "Having tutorials every day lets me see my teachers whenever I need to, especially when I have a homework assignment or test coming up."

Many also see benefits in switching from the old Monday schedule in which all classes met for 45 minutes.

Only having three or four classes after the weekend is "less stressful overall in terms of struggling to finish homework on Sunday nights," Lin said.

Sophomore Hanlin Sun added that having block Mondays is less "hectic" whereas the previous Monday schedule made it "hard for teachers to finish their notes and get through lessons."

The new schedule also features a later start, 8:15 rather than 7:50 a.m., which is supposed to help students get more sleep.

However, senior Caroline Li feels that 25 extra minutes of sleep "doesn't really make a difference" in reducing stress or making them feel more rested.

On the other hand, ninth grade English and World Geography teacher Susanna Ryan said she benefits from the extra 25 minutes in the morning, allowing her more time to get her children ready for school before making her commute to SHS.

Math teacher PJ Yim said the district's aligned schedule now offers teachers like new Algebra 1 and Geometry teacher D'Antona Patrizia the option to work part time at Los Gatos and part time at Saratoga.

Patrizia teaches Algebra 1 at Los Gatos during periods 2, 4, 6 on Red

(even) days. On Blue (odd) days, she teaches third period Algebra 1 at Los Gatos and commutes to Saratoga to teach seventh period Geometry.

Despite the initial difficulties in making the switch to a new schedule, many students and teachers are now adjusting to the new schedule.

Some like physics teacher Kirk Davis agree that the new red-day, blue-day alternating schedule can be confusing, but think that the switch to a rolling block schedule will be for the best.

"[The switch to a full-block schedule] is like switching from English to metric system," Davis said. "It might be hard to adjust to at first, but in the long run, it'll be beneficial."

In fact, assistant principal Brian Safine has already noted some positive trends since the start of the school year.

Tardies are down around 60 percent compared to the same point last year.

In addition, students seem to be more alert in the mornings given that the start time is 25 minutes later, Safine said.

With break, lunch or tutorial between every period besides fifth and seventh period, Safine adds that students have more opportunities to "recharge their batteries."

The initial effects of the new bell schedule seem positive, but principal Paul Robinson said school officials won't know the full impact for a few years.

Still, Safine said they are excited to get more data — both academic and behavioral — to further analyze the impact of the changes.

"While there is no perfect schedule, the rolling block gives students in strong academic programs the best chances for success," Robinson said. "They have time to go deeper in their subjects, and time for relief from the daily grind." ♦

**TRIPS**

**MAP students secure a slot in film festival**

by Julia Miller

For the second year in a row, Media Arts Program (MAP) students will participate in the All-American High School Film Festival (AAHSFF) in New York, accompanied by teacher chaperones Suzanne Herzman and Tony Palma. The film festival will take place Oct. 4-10.

Seniors Nathan Ching, Kelsey Kinoshita, Emily Li, Laura Makeever, Suraj Mididaddi, Kate Smalls, Isaiah Vivero, Kanika Vora and Ryan Westman, as well as junior Maya Gupta, will travel to New York City to attend the festival, where they will make a short film and present it to AAHSFF.

The 10 students were invited by AAHSFF based on an application they submitted earlier this year.

"The AAHSFF is an awesome opportunity to showcase our MAP skills, network with industry professionals and potentially win money for MAP," Kinoshita said.

Last year, class of 2016 alumni Marcus Emery and Sydney Torrens individually submitted films to the organization, and assistant principal Kerry Mohnike accompanied the two on their trip to New York. There, Mohnike enjoyed the experience of AAHSFF and what it has to offer for MAP students.

"I thought it was a remarkable opportunity for students interested in media, and particularly those in-

terested in film and documentary creation," Mohnike said. "It looked like a great opportunity to submit work for recognition and bring it to a larger audience and to also see other people pursuing career [or] creative endeavors."

Unlike Emery and Torrens, this year's 10 invited students applied and were awarded a slot in the Invitational — an opportunity to con-

*The group plans to create a fictional film involving alternate realities to present sometimes unseen effects of cyberbullying.*

struct a script about the festival's theme, film in New York City and edit a video in three days.

The film festival's theme this year is cyberbullying. Currently, the MAP students are finishing the script before they leave for New York. The group plans to create a fictional film involving alternate realities to present the sometimes unseen effects of cyberbullying. Kinoshita is confident they will create an amazing product.

"We have a great team that knows how to collaborate and work under a time crunch," Kinoshita said. ♦

**HOMECOMING**

**Freshmen class scrambles to prepare, due to earlier Quad Day**

by Leena Elzeiny & Michelle Lee

With Homecoming week starting on Sept. 26, the freshman class is left with only a few weeks to prepare for its very first Quad Day. The school's Homecoming theme this year is "Back in the Day," and the class of 2020 is tasked with Pixar's beloved classic "A Bug's Life."

"Our theme is quite interesting," freshman Sonali Shanbhag said. "I'm really liking it because we all came together as a class and thought of which concepts would be cool to incorporate in our Quad Day dance."

Despite the freshman class's enthusiasm, they still "have basically no time at all," freshman secretary Timothy Yoon said.

Because the freshmen have two to three fewer weeks to prepare for Homecoming compared to previous years, they, of all the classes, have felt the time crunch. Still, they are putting their best efforts into their first Quad Day.

"Fortunately, there are some really strong leaders in the class of 2020 that have stepped up to the plate and taken things on themselves," freshman class adviser Kristen Hamilton said.

The freshman officers' first step elected on Sept. 1 was to organize a screening of "A Bug's Life" on Sept. 6 for the freshmen who had not seen the movie. Since then, Hamilton has

been posting announcements on Canvas for those who do not have Facebook accounts, making Homecoming more "inclusive," she said.

More than 80 students signed up for the dances, such as the All Girls Dance, the All Boys Dance and the Partners Dance.

The freshmen have also decided to include a Bollywood dance a Color Guard routine and a finale.

The All Girls Dance is led by choreographers Gillian Koerber,

As dances are coming along, the Decoration Committee has begun to plan their designs.

However, Risa Carter, who is heading up the decorations, expressed concern with the limitations for freshmen, who cannot use any plastic, wood, or metal in their creations.

"Our decorations definitely won't be as high quality as the upperclassmen," Carter said, "but we will work around it in little ways."

Carter envisions a collaboration, allowing all to contribute their talents.

She has 24 people signed up and believes more will come as the meetings progress.

However, participation for the skit was not so ample.

Co-scriptwriter Alena Jarrett, who helped write scripts for school plays at her previous school and who has two years of experience in Multimedia Arts from Redwood Middle School, found herself the best suited to fill the shoes.

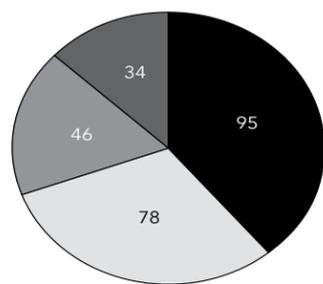
Jarrett and her co-scriptwriter, Jordan Bias, plan to have the actors practice individually in order to schedule only a few meetings for questions and run-throughs.

Despite the obstacles, Jarrett still believes the freshmen can defy expectations.

"All the other grades joke about the freshmen," said Jarrett. "But I want to prove them wrong and show them that we are here and a part of Saratoga High." ♦

>> **falconfigures**

**Kickoff Dance Attendees**



- Seniors
- Juniors
- Sophomores
- Freshmen

Source: ASB

— Roland Shen

# NEW ON CAMPUS

GRAPHIC BY ELAINE FAN

## 4 classes added to schedule

This year, four new classes are being offered at SHS: Engineering Design and Development (EDD), leadership, dance fitness and AP Studio Arts.

"Generationally, things change," computer science teacher Judi Heher said. "You've got to provide things that students are interested in."

The process to create these new classes begins as early as the fall of the previous year. After the ideas are approved by the district, student signups begin in February. If the class is approved to be run — a big "if" since most new classes need to attract a minimum of about 25 student signups — the real work begins.

Over the summer, teachers buy materials for the classes, create lessons and prepare for their students.

The EDD class, taught by engineering and AP Calculus BC teacher Audrey Warmuth, is an engineering class provided only to seniors. It is the fourth and last engineering class now offered on campus.

A big goal of the new course is to provide flexibility for students.

The four engineering classes have been designed to allow students to come in and out of the program. EDD is the only engineering class that requires a previous knowledge of engineering.

EDD teaches advanced engineering mechanics to students with prior experience in the subject.

Rather than having lessons, worksheets and small projects like in the introductory course, EDD gives the students the opportunity to work on short projects, teach them new techniques and work on a original, year-long projects.

After the major project is completed, groups will present it to a panel of engineers, who will give feedback to them.

Senior Daniel Koh said that the class uses previous skills learned in other engineering classes.

"The biggest requirement would be to be able to think outside of the box," Koh said.

Another new offering is the leadership class led by activities director Matthew Torrens.

The class is mandatory for any student holding a leadership position, such as those in a commission or in student government.

At first, the class was met with opposition by some students but has gained in support. Sophomore Roshan Verma initially opposed the idea of the class.

However, he said that after talking to Torrens, the officers realized how the class could become a new, "integrated environment" where they could advance in their skills as leaders.

Verma said that as a result of taking leadership, many events on campus, such as fundraisers, can be planned more efficiently since the work is done in class rather than at lunch and outside of school.

Besides all of these academic classes, a new physical fitness class taught by longtime history teacher Kim Anzalone has begun: dance fitness. Anzalone said that the class is aimed to "reduce stress and encourage healthy lifestyles."

The class, which takes place during sixth period, consists of rigorous dance routines choreographed to 17 different songs.

Routines are switched out every 5 weeks. Anzalone said that by the end of the year, students will learn the routines well enough to teach them to others.

Senior Sarah Jin said that the class has helped her reduce stress and work out.

"I'm not really at athletic person, but taking dance fitness was kind of a way for me to regularly [work out], and it does not feel like work, which is really cool," Jin said.

Each new class has been made to cater to current and future students.

"There's not only one course or one topic that can satisfy everyone," Warmuth said, "and having something different is always nice."

— David Koh and Rahul Vadlakonda

## Math teacher hired for both district schools

New math teacher Patrizia D'Antona is currently teaching one Geometry class during seventh period at Saratoga High while also teaching Algebra 1 at Los Gatos High during periods 2, 3, 4 and 6.

Before applying for a teaching position in the district this summer, D'Antona was an electrical engineer at a local chip-design company for several years and then transitioned into becoming a homemaker.

Because the majority of her time is spent at LGHS, it is difficult for D'Antona to accommodate all of her students' needs.

"I have to split my teaching and tutorial time between the schools, which makes it harder for me to focus completely on one or the other," D'Antona said.

D'Antona tries to dedicate her Red Day tutorials to her students at Saratoga while devoting her Blue Days to her students at LGHS.

Despite the less-than-ideal class arrangements, D'Antona aims to provide students with the necessary resources and guidance for them to succeed. She has created lessons plans that include "a bit of fun," while incorporating rigorous material to challenge students.

In the few weeks D'Antona has taught at SHS, the math department has welcomed her and eased her transition into a new district.

"All the math teachers at Saratoga have been super helpful in making me feel a part of their team even as I am splitting my time between two schools," D'Antona said.

— Michelle Lee



D'Antona

## Ceramics program handed off to art teacher

Because longtime ceramics teacher Leah Aguayo is now teaching at Los Gatos High School, art teacher Diana Vanry has taken over the school's ceramics classes as well as an Art 1 class and a combined Art, 2,3 and AP Studio Art class.

"(Teaching ceramics) is a lot of extra work because it is new curriculum for me," said Vanry, who has taught regular art classes at the school for five years. "Also, because it is a more hands-on activity class compared to art, there is a lot more prep work that goes into the class."

Vanry is also new to the Canvas learning management system and still learning how to use all its functions. Fortunately, though, she said Canvas makes teaching the class so much easier as it helps her organize different projects that the students can choose from.

The work Vanry puts into her class does not go unnoticed; many students are appreciative for the new ceramics teacher.

"She is a really patient teacher and is always willing to take the time to teach every student," junior Varun Meduri said. "I can't wait to see what we will learn throughout this school year."

— Michelle Lee

## Photographer joins Media Arts Program staff

Anyone in the sophomore Media Arts Program (MAP) can always find teacher Alex Hemmerich helping students and patiently explaining how to use the tools in media softwares.

"Whenever someone needs help, Mr. Hemmerich is always there, and he really makes sure that everybody feels comfortable in his classroom," said sophomore Madison Stuart.

Hemmerich is the school's new Media Arts 1 and Digital Photography teacher. He started his teaching career soon after graduating from California College of the Arts, where he majored in photography. His first teaching job started five years ago at Oakland School for the Arts, and later taught at Acalanes High School located in Lafayette, Calif.

"I ended up getting into photography and other media arts because I thought it was cool creating art digitally but also taking things that exist in the world, and manipulating them through ways that give them new context," Hemmerich said.

As part of the sophomore MAP teacher team, Hemmerich has enjoyed collaborating with History teacher Mike Davey and English teacher Suzanne Herzman to create "flush-through curriculum" for their students.

"You get to experiment more with such a curriculum and you get to integrate everything," Hemmerich said. "It makes a lot of sense to have English, History and Art all coming together."

— Kitty Huang



Hemmerich

## 2011 alumnus returns as new band director

As a replacement of former band director Jonathan Pwu, class of 2011 alumnus Jason Shiuan will be leading the marching band, as well as leading the school's symphonic band, wind ensemble and jazz band.

He describes his job as "managing our staff, our schedules, and getting ready for competitions, all those administrative duty teaching music helping with the visuals of marching band."

His goals for the band this year include matching the standards previous bands have set, and taking the band to play at the Midwest Clinic, a highly prestigious high school conference where the orchestra performed last year.

After graduating high school, Shiuan attended Northwestern University, where he studied musical education and saxophone performance. Later, he volunteered at an impoverished school in India, teaching students various instruments including piano, drums and guitar.

Shiuan changed much from his experience in India because he realized how the underprivileged students there were so appreciative of everything.

"I learned not to take anything for granted as a teacher and also someone who is learning as well," Shiuan said. "I learned to work with people with different backgrounds and learnings. I'm trying to apply it here that [lesson]."

As an alum of the school, Shiuan also avidly participated in the school's marching band as a drum major. He explained that the amiable atmosphere of the school makes him feel like he never left, as the school feels like home.

"Everyone has been so welcoming and supportive and a great team to help me transition in," Shiuan said. "It's funny to see old teachers I had as a colleague."



Shiuan

— Jay Kim

## Former district worker takes role as secretary

Former district office employee Pola-Michelle Alas has begun working the new principal's secretary, replacing Susan Dini, who is retiring.

Dini has been training Alas in recent weeks.

Alas explained that, sitting at the front of the office, she is the "greeter" of the students, parents and staff who come in and processes a lot of the orders for school's supplies and books.

She also provides administrative support for principal Paul Robinson, staff, students and parents.

Although she might be a new face to students and parents, Alas is far from new to the district.

Alas has worked at the district office for the last 15 years, where she was an administrative assistant in the business office. However, her position was eliminated, leading her to apply for the open position of principal's secretary.

Alas explained that she is already impressed with the spirit of the school that she saw at the first rally of the year and she believes that there is much more to see from the students and staff.

"I'm very excited to be working here. There is so much positive energy with the students," Alas said. "[I am] looking forward to have a connection with the students and staff."



Alas

— Jay Kim

## Substitute fills in for teacher on maternity leave

There are few subjects that Colleen Haas hasn't subbed for. She has taught science and history at Los Gatos High School, filled in at four middle schools and taught history at UC Santa Barbara — the school from which she graduated as a history major.

She is now teaching AP U.S. Government/Economics and U.S. History in place of history teacher Margarita Morrele, who is on maternity leave until November.

"I love being a substitute teacher," Haas said. "You never know what to expect."

Haas also has great expectations for this year as she shares her enthusiasm of history with her students.

"I'm looking forward to digging into the stories with the students, and showing them that history still matters even though it happened a long time ago. [History] still gets in heated conversations," said Haas.

— Kitty Huang



Haas

## SPIRIT

# First rally kickstarts the new year

BY Harshini Ramaswamy

As the music began to play in the Large Gym, hundreds of students in the bleachers waited to see what the 2016-17 Rally Commission had in store for the first rally of the year on Friday, Aug. 26.

Soon the eight commissioners skated out onto the floor, encouraging everyone to cheer and participate in hopes of increasing attendance at school-wide events and rallies in the upcoming year.

"We really pushed [for an extra rally]," said senior Nolan Chao, the head rally commissioner. "We are hopefully trying to get every student involved and maintain the spirit built in the rallies and other events."

With the addition of the leadership class period, the rally commission no longer has to spend countless hours after school to prepare, said senior rally commissioner Emma Kovac.

"Thankfully to the leadership class we're able to work on [rallies] during class, so we don't have to do as much the night before," Kovac said.

Though the commission had more time to prepare for the debut rally, they still ran into problems with their preparations. The commission had to scramble for freshmen streamers the night before, resulting in yellow streamers instead of green. They also had issues with the administration concerning their routine.

"Our [skating] routine was about to get cut because [principal Paul] Robinson did not want us to roller blade across the expensive



FALCON // ISABELLE YANG

Senior Ramesh Farrokhi slides across the oil-slicked mat at the Aug. 26 rally. The seniors won the event by fishing objects out of shaving cream.

gym flooring," Kovac said. "But he was very understanding and we worked it out."

Other leadership students have also been able to contribute new ideas for increasing spirit at rallies during the leadership class.

Alongside the rally commission, leadership has come up with the "spirit trophy," which will be awarded to the class with that has the most attendance. There are also individual spirit competitions, where students with the most class spirit will receive a prize for their efforts.

"Last year we want to have a 'rally schedule' where we have rally events throughout the entire day," Kovac said. "Hopefully we will be able to implement it this year or in future years."

Chao as well as new recruits such as juniors Alex Metz and Will Turpin have also brought different

talents to the group to create more interactive games and increase attendance.

"The newbies are full of energy and have lots of great and funny suggestions for games and the script," Kovac said. "We are going to try to incorporate more new people and have games where the entire classes compete against each other."

The commission aims to have more participation in school events for not just football, so they have started to recognize other sports and music events during rallies to highlight other parts of the school.

"Our goal as a commission is to bring the school and all the classes together," Chao said. "We really want kids to get excited about their school and hopefully encourage them to attend all the school events and get involved in the rallies to

raise spirit." ♦

## ASB

continued from pg. 1

fifth period. Despite causing scheduling conflicts, the mandatory class has allowed for more efficient communication between ASB, class offices and commissions.

"The point of leadership class is to have a time [when] there is face to face communication," Shanbhag said. "I hope the class will make it easier to facilitate actual group working time and plan

events and commissions."

ASB's planning has paid off already, as they have held a few spirit events and fundraisers

over the summer. They first organized the Pokémon Go Social on July 18, an event where 80 students, administrators and parents trekked from the school to Saratoga downtown while playing the popular mobile game. Those who came enjoyed catching pokémon with friends they may not have seen during the vacation months.

"It was really cool for ASB to put together an event for all the students playing Pokémon Go, especially over the summer."

sophomore JUDY YANG

also coordinated a Back to School

Dance on Aug. 19, the Friday of the first week of school. Two hundred and sixty-six students, 46 more people than the targeted number, attended the dance. The sports-themed dance was held in the quad and included refreshments and mini-games tables.

"Dance commission started planning as soon as possible because it was so soon," dance commissioner junior Mervi Tan said.

Senior class representative Sydney Vo thought the dance was a great way to help the freshmen transition into high school.

"I thought the dance was a really big success, and we were able to get everybody to come together early in the school year," said Vo. ♦

stand, the junior class booked Kona Ice, the sophomores booked Madera's Taqueria and sold pizza and pearl milk tea, and ASB sold gyro from Yiassoo's Greek Restaurant for the freshman.

Senior class vice president Jessy Liu thinks that having a food truck festival was "amazing."

"Not only does it benefit the classes in terms of Homecoming, but it also benefits them monetarily," Liu said. "It also is a platform for new freshmen to come and see what the school's about. I think that making this an annual event would be really great for students to come together and have some fun."

The dance commission and the ASB also coordinated a Back to School

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hundred and sixty-six students, 46 more people than the targeted number, attended the dance. The sports-themed dance was held in the quad and included refreshments and mini-games tables.

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## LANGUAGE

# Upper French classes combine

BY Neehar Thumaty & Rahul Vadlakonda

This year the already combined class of French 4 and 5 Advanced Placement (AP) that has been offered at school has had to adjust to having yet more students in it: Now the class also includes French 3 students.

This combined class solution boosts numbers and will allow the advanced French program to continue.

According to French teacher Elaine Haggerty, who is teaching the combined class, it will have two distinct levels: the 4 and 5 AP levels and the level 3 group. The curricula will be adjusted to combine the 4 and 5 AP level into one AP level with the intent that all students in that group to take the AP French Language test in May.

"Having two groups in one classroom at the same time isn't ideal, but we dealt with it last year and the students will do their best this year as well," Haggerty said.

French 4 and 5 AP students now learn the same material, since both classes have similar curriculum. But she said that the difficult part of this change is teaching the French 3 students as well. While these students are still learning grammar, 4 and 5 AP students are aiming for fluency in the language.

Despite the obstacles that come with the new class arrangement, Haggerty sees benefits to a combined class, which includes the use of pair work between levels. This way, she said, the French

3 students get a glimpse of the work they can expect next year.

Senior Anya Herne, who is in French 5 AP, said that the French 5 students have been helping the French 3 students because the French 5 workbook has not arrived yet. Additionally, due to the combined levels, native French speakers are mixed with non-native speakers.

"One the one hand, it is a bit stressful because you're forced to realize there's this massive gap between your own French abilities," Herne said. "However, I personally want to become fluent one day, and having native speakers reminds me that I have a long

made her miss many activities.

Having to do so, she said has "ticked her off" because she is missing a part of a language class and it interferes with her long-term goal. But, she said that Haggerty is understanding.

Having to struggle with it now, Herne said that she is looking forward to post-season.

"I just keep reminding that after the season ends, I have the rest of the year to catch up on French," Herne said.

Haggerty hopes that students will be able to keep the French program alive for years to come.

"Everyone wants to keep the French program going, so we are doing what we need to until the program grows enough to have a separate period for each level,"

teacher ELAINE HAGGERTY

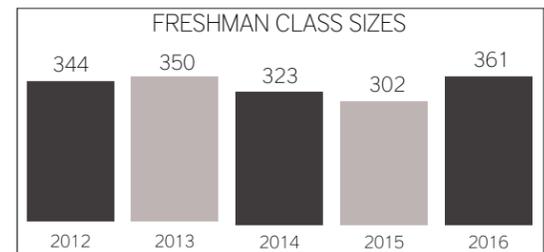
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GRAPHIC BY RACHEL ZHANG

## FRESHMEN

continued from pg. 1

started, there were "an additional 40 plus students [who came] in from private schools and new families in the area that no one predicted," Robinson said.

The unexpectedly large influx of freshmen caused a few challenges for the school in terms of class arrangements.

In particular, the school chose to add a section of biology to reduce class sizes in the classes.

The new biology class is now taught by AP Biology teacher Cheryl Lenz.

"I only learned two days ahead that I was teaching the class," Lenz said.

"However, I have taught this class before, so it isn't totally brand new, and the office was able to get all the kids to class on the first day, so it was manageable," Lenz said.

The other biology classes had over 30 students before this class reassignment, so this change allows students "to stay on track and work in smaller class sizes," Robinson said.

In addition to classes filling up,

the lunch lines have grown longer especially compared to the past few years.

Due to the unexpectedly large freshmen class, the cafeteria has had to order more food, said Pam Carlini, the manager of the cafeteria.

However, the cafeteria staff is prepared, as they have experienced this influx before in previous years

**The unexpectedly large influx of freshmen caused a few challenges for the school in terms of class arrangements.**

and always anticipate more students coming in at the beginning of the year.

For their part, the freshmen have been busy making the transition to the larger campus.

"I feel like the people at this school have tried hard to welcome and help us get used to the environment," freshman Gillian Koerber said. "It's been an easy transition, and I'm excited for this year." ♦

GRADES

# Canvas now used as school's main system

by Leena Elzeiny & Elaine Fan

Since its launch in 2010, Canvas Instruction has expanded its learning management system to over 2,000 schools. In 2014, Saratoga High joined its ranks after a decade of using Aeries as its main online interface for student information, which included grades and attendance. This year, teachers are required to switch to Canvas for students' grades while still using Aeries primarily for attendance.

According to IT manager Julie Grenier, the district felt that it was easier to have all the student grades in one place. She said that Aeries is a Student Information System, which is primarily used by the district to keep private student data and generate transcripts.

By contrast, Canvas is a Learning Management System, which is more of a student-centered interface used for the distribution of educational resources.

"I think Canvas is a very dynamic system,"

Grenier said. "It allows teachers to present the curriculum in many different ways through various media."

Having been launched here only a couple of years ago, Canvas is still relatively new to the campus, resulting in mixed feedback among teachers and students.

Spanish teacher Bret Yeilding started using the database only days before school started this August, having missed most of the tutorials the school offered during the summer. Though Yeilding agreed that the system is beneficial for students, he admitted that "old dogs like me, learning new tricks, struggle with it."

"I am hoping to [upload all materials onto Canvas] before I die of old age," Yeilding said. "That's the only timeline I'll agree to."

Other teachers have been able to make Canvas central to their teaching. When Canvas was introduced to teachers, science teacher Kristofer Orre began playing around with various features of the website by em-

bedding videos and using the discussion feature.

"Canvas gives teachers much more opportunity for personalization, and it allows them to tailor a course for their needs as little or as much as they want," Orre said.

Orre now uses the website extensively, since it provides a convenient platform to host his flipped classroom, a teaching style in which students take notes on online videos at home and spend class time doing labs and other activities.

"[Canvas] is an extension of the classroom and a blend of the classroom," Orre said. "So I see it as a hybridizing of what we're doing in class and just giving a little bit of redundancy and backup for students."

Senior Katrina Coglitore, who experienced Orre's flipped classroom, a system where lectures are given at home so labs may be done in class on both Google Drive during her freshman year and on Canvas this year, found Canvas much more to her liking, espe-

cially because of the discussion feature.

"You build off of each other's comments, which is really cool because it gives those people who don't feel comfortable talking in class, where you have scrutiny from all of your classmates, a chance to be heard," Coglitore said.

However, Orre said, Canvas is not perfect. "The programmers aren't necessarily thinking about what a teacher would actually use [Canvas] for, so there's too many steps for things, and it can get a little frustrating," he said.

Grenier acknowledged the difficulties some teachers have had with the new interface but found that the transition was going smoothly overall.

"Whenever teachers and students start using a new system, there are some growing pains," Grenier said. "But teachers are really making the effort to get their materials on Canvas and to make courses more transparent to their students." ♦

SCHOOL TRIP



Science teacher Matt Welander talks with students as they head to a field in the back of a pickup truck to plant trees. This was one of the many service activities they took part in.

## Students travel to Costa Rica for environmental studies

by Kitty Huang & Sanjana Melkote

From appreciating Costa Rica's natural beauty and picturesque sunsets to releasing baby turtles on the Osa Peninsula, 16 students had the incredible chance to experience environmental conservation on a six-day trip to Costa Rica from Aug. 31 to Sept. 5.

Seniors Danielle and Daviana Berkowitz, along with their sister sophomore Khiara Berkowitz, worked in conjunction with science teachers Kristen Thomson and Matt Welander to plan the trip's activities.

According to Danielle, the purpose of the trip was to learn about "sustainability, conservation, ecology and the interdependence of ecosystems."

After planning the trip for the first time last year, the Berkowitz family spent the past summer in Costa Rica, working out the logistics and adding new activities to the trip.

"We worked with the ministry of the environment, foundations, wildlife reserves and the private sector in Costa Rica for almost a year," Danielle said.

Last year, the students worked hands-on with marine turtles on the Caribbean coast.

This year, the group explored the Osa Peninsula, one which they helped marine turtles on nesting beaches. The data gathered by the group will eventually be used for further research by other organizations.

For many students, the trip was a fun

way to travel the world as well as engage in conservation activities beyond school campus.

According to senior Grant Guzzo, who has been on the trip for the past two years, the trip felt "really fulfilling [because he] was doing something meaningful, not just for the United States but for the world."

After Danielle and Daviana graduate this year, Khiara plans on taking over the trip preparations.

"If enough people sign up next year, I definitely want to be able to continue this trip to get students from Saratoga to experience Costa Rican ways of helping the environment," Khiara said. ♦

### bigidea

#### Costa Rica Trip

**Purpose of this trip?**  
To learn about the sustainability, conservation, ecology and interdependence of ecosystems on a six-day trip to the Osa Peninsula.

**What did students think of the trip?**  
A fun way to travel the world and do conservation activities outside of school.

**Who planned the trip?**  
Seniors Daviana and Danielle Berkowitz, sophomore Khiara Berkowitz and science teachers Kristen Thomson and Matt Welander helped organize the trip.

CLUBS

## Yim steps down as math club adviser to focus on his family

by Jay Kim & Michael Zhang

After eight years of supervising and building the school's math club into a national-level powerhouse, math teacher PJ Yim has stepped down from his role as the club's adviser. He has been replaced by special education aide Michael Silva.

"[As a math club adviser], there were a lot of times when I actually had to sacrifice the time," Yim said. "I had to deal with my three children, be a husband and make myself available to the students in my classroom, but I was a little upset I couldn't do all that."

Despite sacrificing time with his family, Yim only received a small stipend last year and no extra pay in the seven years before that.

In addition, he feels more comfortable stepping down because there is more incentive for other teachers to take over.

Throughout his years, Yim changed the math club from an exclusive, rigorous group to a more inclusive community. Initially, most of the club consisted of students from the Mathematical Olympiad Program, a selective camp that trained students to represent the U.S. at the International Mathematics Olympiad. The small club was successful, but many other students found it too daunting to join.

"When Yim found out that members had been leaving out of the fear of falling behind, he gradually changed the math club community so that they would feel more welcomed,

and that prospective members wouldn't be intimidated by the club's rigor and fast-paced lectures.

"I decided that we can't lose [new members] so I told everybody that there were certain phrases [they couldn't] use, such as 'this is easy,'" Yim said. "I wanted to make [math club] more approachable and more accessible to anyone who wanted to come, so I tried to make the open environment where kids could come, drop in and study."

This year, Silva, a graduate of UC Santa Cruz with a degree in mathematics and teaching, intends to keep the club on its trajectory. He intends for the club to help out the school, as well as be open to even more members. Although the math club was lucky enough to find a qualified adviser, the club's student leadership still expects to face new challenges that come with the change in advisers.

"[Yim leaving] means that all the accommodations that we took for granted previously such as room access, printing and encouragement are suddenly gone," said junior Aayush Gupta, the club's vice president.

Luckily, Silva was able to gain use of Calculus teacher Jennifer Mantle's room to hold their regular meetings, said senior Albert Tseng, the club's president.

"I don't have any regrets about my decision, but I do have some sense of bitterness as I planned on doing this for 20 years," Yim said. "I thought I have been unfair to [my own children], so for a while, I will let go of that responsibility." ♦

CHEER

## Combined squad preps for a 'year of rebuilding'

by Francesca Chu & Amy Tang

As the 2016-17 cheer season begins, the squad has made many changes, such as bringing in a new coach and making the transition to a single, bigger team.

Nicole Zambrano, the team's new coach, was cheer captain at Palo Alto High School and cheered at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

while she was attending college there.

"[Zambrano] knows what she's doing and pushes us to our limits. We're getting a lot done and everything works and flows really well," senior team captain Dallas Morgenstern said. "She's definitely all to thank for that."

Zambrano's primary goal this year is to rebuild the team and create a positive atmosphere for the girls to enjoy the sport.

The change of combining JV and varsity into one unified squad has not fazed the cheerleaders; in fact, they are "much more of a team already," said sophomore Mira Spendlove.

Morgenstern agrees, saying the team can also make larger formations and perform more complex stunts.

Over the summer, the cheer team invited instructors to SHS, who taught them new

stunts and tricks.

"It was a really challenging experience, but it made me a lot better," Spendlove said.

Morgenstern said, this year's cheer team may just be the best out of her four years at Saratoga High.

"We haven't really had a great team yet in my high school experience, but this year feels different. It's a year of rebuilding," Morgenstern said. ♦

DANCE

## Unforeseen difficulties force dancers to think on their feet

by Francesca Chu & Amy Tang

The 11 girls on the dance team are learning a simple lesson in the first few weeks of the school year: Expect the unexpected.

For one thing, there was confusion about whether the team would be able to perform the first rally. Later that same day, they ran into technical difficulties with their music during the first football game.

Three days before the rally, the team was told they would not be performing at the rally because there was not enough time, despite their dance being less than 2 minutes long, a decision that shocked members of the team and returning coach Kaitlyn Landeza.

The confusion continued when rally committee confirmed the rumors upon further questioning by the dance captains. However, Landeza said that activities director Matt Torrens changed his mind and gave the OK for the team to perform. The team faced another challenge during the football game. The girls waited on the field in their starting formations; however, the team's music did not work, so they performed to the sound of the cheer team counting.

Landez said that she is proud of the team for doing so well under the circumstances.

"I only have to worry about one thing, to press play," Landeza said. "When that doesn't work, everything goes wrong."

The challenges that the girls have faced have only made the team more determined.

"The year is just beginning, and the team is already stronger than it ever has been," Landeza said. ♦



The dance team, under the direction of coach Landeza, performs at the first rally on Aug. 26.

SPEECH AND DEBATE

## Team anticipates attending travel tournaments this year

by Elizabeth Lee & Kyle Wang

As he left the campus of Mission College in Santa Clara last May, then-sophomore Varun Viswanath felt a sense of utter disappointment.

Used to placing in the top three in local tournaments hosted by the Coast Forensics League, he was dissatisfied with ultimately placing 13th in Oratorical Interpretation at the State tournament.

The competition from other leagues had simply outshined him in the final rounds.

To better prepare himself for the upcoming season, Viswanath, like many other speech and debate team members, said he will attend more travel tournaments outside of California this year in order to experience a larger pool of competitors.

"These tournaments will not only be enjoyable, but [will also be] an educational experience that can definitely strengthen my skills," Viswanath said. "I [will be] able to meet different people and experience different levels and types of competition."

Traditionally, the team has competed only within the Bay Area, in both smaller local league tournaments and larger invitationals. These tournaments often involve similar pools of competition; only rarely do students living outside of California travel to California to compete.

For now, the team has not yet finished finalizing a list of tournaments. It will be attending during the 2017 season, but several members have expressed interest in faraway tournaments such as the Grapevine Invitational in Grapevine, Texas, and the Glenbrook Invitational at Glenbrook South High School in Glenview, Ill.

Sophomore Roshan Verma, who competes in International Extemporaneous Speaking, hopes that attending more travel tournaments will expose him to a different level of competition.

After he failed to advance to the elimination rounds at the state- and national-qualifying tournaments last year, Verma hopes to advance further this season.

Verma said his main goal is to qualify for the National Speech and Debate Association's national tournament in early June of 2017.

In order to qualify, Verma would need to place in the top three of his event, International Extemporaneous Speech, at the Coast Forensic League's annual National Qualifying Tournament.

To efficiently prepare himself for the upcoming season, Verma gave practice speeches by himself over the summer, even though the season doesn't officially start until early October of 2017.

For Verma, traveling to tournaments with his teammates is one key step along the way to reaching his goals.

"Going to travel tournaments motivates me to work harder, especially if I don't place," Verma said. "It can definitely be discouraging at times, but serves as a reminder to work hard; and if you do place, you have to remember you got there for a reason and you have to maintain your work ethic."

Though he understands that his challenging course load limits his options, Verma still plans on attending more travel tournaments.

"I definitely want to go to as many travel tournaments as I can," Verma said, "as long as the competition there pushes me to be the best speaker I can be." ♦

MUSIC

## Marching band 'en garde' for upcoming 2016 season

by Elaine Fan

In the marching band's field show this year, two groups approach each other from opposite ends of the field, as if they are two opponents acknowledging each other before sparring. Others mimic fencing stances with sabres, as they pair up to imitate a match.

The band has been practicing this routine, called En Garde, in preparation for their first competition on Oct. 8, the Cupertino Tournament of Bands at Cupertino High School. The title is a warning given before a fencing match, meaning "on guard" in French.

"It's very innovative and different from the shows you normally see," sophomore colorguard member Alex Ruemmler said. "The theme gives us a character to play, which is really nice."

The concept for the show was revealed to the marching band during the annual kickoff at the start of summer break, where they were given their sheet music.

Originally titled "Cinderella," the music for En Garde was repurposed to mimic the fencing theme. It takes music from Tchaikovsky's "Sleeping Beauty Waltz" and Rachmaninoff's "Piano Concerto No. 2."

Students also began learning for the performance during the last two weeks of summer break in band camp.

The annual, intensive, two-week camp began on Aug. 3, and continued until Aug. 13. According to sophomore trombonist Caroline Okuno, band camp this year did not last as long as last year's, and the heat was milder, so it "wasn't as physically intense," despite the infamous 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. rehearsals.

Since many of the instructors were at the Drum Corps International (DCI) nationals, the camp had fewer instructors than in the past. However, Okuno said they progressed considerably faster than last year, and they didn't waste as much time.

"We didn't spend as much time transitioning between activities, socializing or mindlessly working out," Okuno explained. "Instead, we were teaching what we needed

people to get good at and doing it as fast as possible."

In addition, the marching band received help from alumni, such as 2014 graduate Lauren Casey-Clyde, a former drum major and baritone player, as well as their new conductor, 2011 graduate Jason Shiuan.

The biggest difficulty has been time, because it always feels like we're behind," Shiuan said. "Otherwise, it's been relatively smooth. Everyone has been cooperative and really great, and they're learning things really fast. I think we're on track to do pretty well; we just have to keep pushing."

The band practiced on the newly installed upper field for the first time, but found that the light green yard lines were difficult to see, which interfered with learning new drills.

The idea of a drill is that each student has a specific position, and this forms a picture on the field. Students learn their positions drill set by drill set, then music is added on top, and finally the color guard choreography is added, so "it becomes this whole ensemble," Shiuan explained.

The 32 members of the color guard had several additional rehearsals before band camp, where they learned the warm-ups and other basic exercises.

Aiming to be as precise as possible, the coaches had the color guard watch fencing videos.

"They told us to do some research and give them facts about fencing," said Ruemmler. "It was pretty cool; I learned a lot."

The guard remains virtually unchanged from the previous year, since no seniors graduated, and only five new members joined. As a result, the group is "tight knit," and the members are "meshing well," Ruemmler said.

For many students, marching band has become a second family.

"I know it sounds really cliché, but my favorite part about marching band is growing with the people around you," Okuno said. "We spend a lot of time together, and go through a lot of really stressful events, so we develop a good bond. It's like family." ♦

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# Don't say I'm 'microaggressive'

TRIGGER WARNING: THIS ARTICLE IS NOT HERE TO CELEBRATE SAFE SPACES OR TRIGGER WARNINGS

by Kevin Chow

It was a breath of fresh air when the University of Chicago announced in its welcome letter to the class of 2020 that it would not permit the coddling of college-aged students and the censorship of open discussion. It's been said many times, but it needs to be said again that a student's emotions and the fear of "microaggressions" cannot be a college's grounds to prevent the free flow of speech.

Trigger warnings are statements warning an audience of potentially distressing material, and this often allows students to opt out of a complete education.

For example, Jeannie Suk, a law professor at Harvard, wrote in an essay that was published in The New Yorker that law students who request trigger warnings preceding discussion of sexual assault cases prevents the students from learning about an important subject in criminal law. According to Suk, around a dozen new teachers of criminal law have told her

that rape law is not something they will cover, because doing so is not worth the complaints from students.

She goes on to say that one teacher was asked by a student to not use the word "violate," even in the context of something like "this violates the law."

Often, trigger warnings are issued to deal with microaggressions. What is a microaggression? This is a term meant to describe an implied disrespect. Imagine if someone capitalized the word "indigenous" in the middle of a sentence on a research paper and you, being a teacher concerned about capitalization rules, marked that it should not be capitalized. The overly sensitive student, fearing semblances of marginalization, would call this a microaggression. Does this seem too off-the-wall to be true? Not so. It happened in UCLA and was grounds for a student sit-in.

With the way that microaggressions are treated on many college campuses, it seems that they've grown too macro. A trigger warning is not an appropriate remedy.

To be sure, there are certain situations that deserve the attention of trigger warnings, such as those regarding serious mental and emotional

*We know that we do not need safe spaces and trigger warnings, even if doing so — or because doing so — gives us the chance at a more authentic education.*

conditions, but not every instance of microaggression requires the option to skip out on a bit of education, and not every bit of sensitive material can be safely kept out of a high-tier course. Is it fair to devote a trigger warning to a rape law necessary in a criminal law education when trigger warnings were meant for World War I soldiers dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder? It's

reductive and disrespectful.

We, as a school, value intellectual stimulation, pushing beyond comfort zones to broaden our understanding of the world and the context in which history has placed us.

This is the goal of any worthwhile academic institution, not to pad every controversial statement and sanitize our education as if the world we will find when we emerge from the scholastic fortress is one, big neutered safe space.

At SHS, we read "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" to better grasp class and racial bigotry, even if doing so requires slogging through the N-word.

We learn about abolition and the women's rights movement so that we recognize how far we've come with our improving democratic system, even if doing so reveals our countless past injustices.

We know that we do not need safe spaces and trigger warnings, even if doing so — or because doing so — gives us the chance at a more authentic education. ♦

GRAPHIC BY KEVIN CHOW AND SANJANA MELKOTE

## Summer: time for enrichment

by Nidhi Jain

With eyes red and drooping above dark, lined bags from all-nighters filled with unsuccessful attempts to cram all of second semester's information, many Saratoga students gleefully imagine spending their summer slumping on the couch and binge watching television.

So go ahead, binge watch every show on Netflix you can find. Spend all day and night on that couch — for a week. Then, let the productivity begin.

While internships and coursework during the summer may seem more like school, they are actually doing far more good than harm.

Before calling me a teenage "tiger mom," it is important to realize that productivity does not necessarily signify studying from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., but rather finding a balanced schedule of productive enrichment and relaxation.

For example, a student who enjoys biology could effectively spend his or her summer interning at a biotechnology company on weekday afternoons and still relax in the evenings and on weekends.

This summer, I was fully dedicated to two rigorous computer science internships and spent 40 hours a week programming. Despite my seemingly "summer-spoiling" academic schedule, I still managed to spend time with my friends for hours every night.

Currently, many students already spend their summers with enrichment and relaxation, which often sparks uneasiness among parents who want their kids to spend summers stress-free.

But the whole idea of summer, according to many students, is to finally spend time that was once unavailable on hobbies and passions. I rarely had time to work on extracurricular computer



KITTY HUANG

science projects with the heavy workload of my seven classes and handling multiple clubs. Summer allowed me to explore my interests. This combination of passion as well as specialization in a certain topic most often results in success in a desired field. It is reasonable to assume that enrichment every summer throughout high school will eventually result in a built-up advantage in the selected field.

In college, students are likely to be finding places to intern and making money during their breaks, leaving little time for summer relaxation. By starting to get in the habit of being productive during the summer, students will have a far easier time transitioning into the workplace and college life.

But even more immediate than the transition to college is the

transition from summer to the upcoming school year. Rather than lose out on important information during the summer, students should enhance their knowledge of their desired academic fields.

According to a study published by the National Education Commission on Time and Learning, a lack of brain activity during a period as long as summer can slow down the ability to critically read or solve math problems. By seeking enrichment during the summer, students are avoiding a loss in their abilities.

So, while finishing all 12 seasons of "Grey's Anatomy" might seem like the best summer, it's safe to say that taking that summer course in Economics is the better option — your future self — and brain — will thank you for it. ♦

— 100 WORD RANTS

## Useless goldenrods

by Amy Tang

Goldenrods: the insignificant half-sheets of paper that come with textbooks every year. Their supposed purpose is to account for damages, but most students don't bother searching through 500 pages of text for every imperfection. Many vaguely write, "Corners slightly bent," without even glancing at the book. Some

simply discard their goldenrods, or don't even get them in the first place. And those who don't turn them in escape punishment, encouraging others to ignore the "mandatory" slips as well. Instead of being forced upon students, goldenrods should only be an option for books with major defects that students don't want to be held accountable for. ♦

## Colleges, can we start writing our essays yet?

by David Fan

Start early: two words students are told nonstop when the college application process begins. As soon as junior year ends, they're told to start brainstorming.

Students and parents are well aware of how early the college application grind begins; the Common Application and other application services should move at the same pace by having colleges release essay prompts earlier, which would mean moving August release dates or to the early summer.

In the first month of summer, only two college prompts are officially released: the UC's and the Common Application's personal statement. Other colleges should do the same. This makes sense, because the difficulty of writing often comes from simply brainstorming ideas. Since supplemental essay questions tend to overlap with the UC prompts and the personal statement, it would be more

efficient for students to be able to think about all the questions at once to be aware of the overlap. It is no longer about answering many questions as it is about fitting a few to multiple prompts. The problem grows more acute

*The problem grows more acute with the current trend of more students applying to more colleges.*

with the current trend of more students applying to more colleges. Perhaps the late essay release dates are a reason to prevent against overapplication, but unless student and parent attitudes change — and unless colleges are looking to lower application rates — the clear solution is to release prompts earlier. ♦

### THIRDPERIOD STAFFPOLICY

The Saratoga Falcon is published 12 times per year by the Advanced Journalism classes of Saratoga High School, 20300 Herriman Ave., Saratoga, CA 95070. Views expressed in The Saratoga Falcon are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the administration, faculty or school district. This issue features the new editors and staff for '16-'17.

### 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 kevin.chow@saratogafalcon.org. For ad information, phone (408) 867-3411, ext. 222.

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## Schoolwide switch to Canvas offers more interactive academic experience



Letting the Aeries eagle free. KEVIN CHOW

After hovering between two different grading systems — Aeries and Canvas — for over a year, the school has now switched all teachers over to Canvas. This change makes it easier for students to keep track of their grades and assignments, and the Canvas platform offers multiple useful features that Aeries lacks.

As the Canvas learning management system was introduced at the school in the past few years, some teachers opted to still use Aeries for grading, while others took the plunge and chose to exclusively use Canvas as both a classroom site and a grading platform.

For students, it was tiresome to switch between the grading systems and to remember which teachers used which platform. Aeries also couldn't provide the same support as Canvas; there was no way of seeing potential grades or communicating easily with a teacher through Aeries.

With all teachers now using Canvas for grading, students can keep track of all their classes on the same platform. Assignments for all classes now show up on the

same calendar, which works like a planner. Announcements and other notifications are all visible on the dashboard, which makes communication between students and teachers very efficient. Parents can also join classes as observers through their own

accounts, which is reminiscent of the Aeries parent account; this function is not lost in the transition to Canvas. Parents will be able to see upcoming assignments in their children's classes, as well as their grades. This is especially helpful for parents of seniors, as the guidance department posts tips for the college admissions process throughout the fall.

There are several functions of the Canvas platform that help students. Perhaps the most useful function allows students to enter in a possible grade for an assignment and see how it would affect their overall grade in the class. Because the weighting mechanism for each class is already

programmed into the grading system, students can get a clearer picture of how their overall grade will change based on grades in different assignments such as major tests or essays.

Aeries lacks these useful tool and many others. In fact, Aeries seemed simply designed to be only a way to store and report grades, while Canvas seems to be made more for the convenience of the student.

In addition to the grade function, Canvas allows for teacher-moderated and supervised discussions, online quizzes, meaningful collaborations and easy communication between students and teachers, among other things.

There was some concern that teachers would have a difficult time adjusting to the new platform. But the energy and time invested into moving the curriculum to an online platform ultimately makes it easier for teachers to distribute necessary papers, notes and forms for the class. As the school year has begun, teachers have already begun to transition relatively seamlessly. The long-term benefits of the switch justify the forced change and effort required to make it successful.

This uniformity promotes the development of better organizational skills for students. While it is still a very big change for many of the teachers, it is, on the whole, a way to make the school more cohesive, united and efficient for everyone. ♦

### Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

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Amulya Vadlakonda

The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 33-3 support of the editorial.

## School's traffic problems not as bad as feared

by Rahul Vadlakonda

With ongoing construction on the new music building and an inaccessible portion of the parking lot with a new bell schedule, one of this year's biggest fears was increased traffic.

While there are certainly some major headaches being caused by the construction, the traffic flow around the school seems to be relatively similar to previous years.

What has been more challenging this year has been parking, especially for staff members whose spots have been taken by the Measure E construction of the new building.

As more teachers park in the back lot, they now have to arrive early enough to secure a good parking spot, preferably one close to their classroom. This year, arriving later to school sometimes means having to park farther away than in the past.

Then there were all the concerns about the starting time of the school day. School now begins at 8:15, which is around the same time as Redwood Middle School and Foothill Elementary School do.

The redesign of the parking lot traffic system also added to traffic con-

cerns. The new system has only two entrances rather than four entrances like last year. On paper, this means more cars are around campus and should have made coming onto campus a harder task.

But the current reality suggests that traffic problems aren't much worse than they were in the past, because the later start time has mostly aided traffic by allowing parents and students to arrive during a wider window of time at the elementary schools, Redwood Middle School and SHS.

In the same way that the traffic problems aren't as dire as they seem, perhaps the weakest complaint with the new schedule is that lunch is now 5 minutes shorter. How is it fair that a 40 minute lunch be reduced to 35? With the late start and daily tutorial, a few minutes chipped off of the lunch time isn't much to lose sleep over. After all, 35 or 40 minutes, there was never enough time to eat anywhere nice, anyway.

With the year now in full swing, the dire predictions of a traffic Armageddon have been greatly exaggerated. Once the new music building opens in the fall of 2017, traffic and parking problems will ease further. ♦



"I could've made it with five more minutes!"

KEVIN CHOW

# 'American' ethnic foods grossly misrepresented

by Isabelle Yang

Every now and then when I enjoy dumplings, I am reminded of emotions and memories. They bring back memories of the dumplings my Chinese nanny made with a special heirloom recipe and the fragrant smell of the minced meat that was carefully wrapped in a thin layer of dough.

Despite these fond memories, I'll also never forget the first time I brought dumplings to school and was mocked by elementary school classmates for bringing something so "smelly" and "yucky."

Ethnic food is the story of any immigrant child who brought ethnic cuisine to the second grade. To the foodies today who enjoy kimchi burgers or the dim sum menu from any "trendy" upstate restaurant I'm sorry to tell you that what you've been eating has grossly misrepresented food.

Although it is natural for cuisines to evolve over time,

Americans need to acknowledge and honor the ethnic roots of foods that become mainstream cuisine. What happens too often is that Asian Americans and other minorities see the way their cultural foods have been commercialized and feel the same shame they faced for bringing dumplings or other cultural foods to school.

Ethnic cuisine isn't a cursory fetish that American chefs can reap the profits of — it is something immigrant families and their descendants grew up eating, a blend of their tradition food and a reminder of home.

To have American food connoisseurs claim these ethnic foods as their own creations is proof that America's respect for other cultures has advanced no further than when Columbus arrived in America, claiming everything from palm trees to Native Americans as his own.

Although I am no longer surprised when I see restaurants

that sell their foods on the basis that their foods have "ethnic authenticity" my first experience of a high-end "Chinese" restaurant in San Francisco is one that I won't forget. Walking into the front desk which displayed a jar of fortune cookies, my parents could only scoff at the cultural accuracy of this supposed "real Chinese cuisine" experience.

Seeing dishes such as, "The Great Wall of Chocolate" and "Mandarin Orange Salad," proved to me that these restaurants neither cared for cultural accuracy but also treated Chinese culture as a marketing point to sell a dish that is the polar opposite of authentic Chinese food.

These restaurants that advertise "exotic" cuisines like P.F. Chang's, whose menu includes a variety of raw salads that are almost never eaten in authentic Chinese cuisine in which vegetable dishes are cooked or steamed. These restaurants are no more than choirs

singing with the verses of cultural appropriation: "Find a new culture, take what seems exotic or different, label it as your own and repeat."

To make matters more insulting, just because a restaurant menu advertises a dish with a name of any "exotic" region like "Chinese seared shrimp" does not mean that the dish is any more authentic than pasta with marinara sauce.

While the complaints of cultural appropriation may sound like whining to some people, the consequences of giving ethnic cuisine a casual and superficial "fad-treatment" run much deeper than complaints over childhood bullies.

One such example is sushi, which I have witnessed been grossly manipulated from its traditional recipe. Many people casually accept this, allowing for the mutilation of a classic dish that holds deep significance in Japanese history and culture. With the invention of "fruit sushi" and "candy sushi," these new

takes on sushi inappropriately modify a traditional recipe, whose ethnic roots are being used to sell something else.

If so many Americans are concerned about whether their ingredients are sourced from 10 miles or 100 miles away or whether pesticides have been used on them, why haven't they bothered to understand a meal's cultural origins?

What is imperative to solving America's leanings toward trendy and "cool" ethnic food is understanding the pain of many immigrants who have hidden their cultural identities after having been shamed into doing so. The problem doesn't lie in the fact that ethnic foods have finally gained more acceptance, but that we treat ethnic foods with a fetishizing attitude. By avoiding this disgusting and extremely ill-thought approach, Americans and immigrants can finally enjoy food for what it is and was meant to be. ♦



## PRO: Criticizing Third-World countries is not the way to go

by David Koh

Venues in shambles, green pools breeding mosquitos with Zika bio-hazard, athletes held at gunpoint — the Rio Olympics were supposed to be a disaster. Yet, despite international hesitance and doubt, the recent games concluded without many incidents.

All the criticism directed at Rio wasn't shown during the London Olympics in 2012, yet London remains one of the world's most unequal cities with a 15 percent poverty rate and increasing wage gaps. The main difference? Rio is in a third-world country.

Throughout the history of the Olympics, the Western media and public have constantly criticized other countries' abilities to host the Olympics.

This can be seen in the upcoming 2020 Olympics hosted by Japan. Western media have already begun to criticize Japan's attempts to create a more personalized Olympic logo and build a stadium.

Time and time again, the West has expressed superiority over other countries. Perhaps the entire controversy surrounding the Rio Olympics has once again been an exaggeration from Western media outlets.

One example is the threat of Zika. News outlets portrayed Zika as a big threat, yet as the Olympics rolled by, cold temperatures and wind eliminated Zika as a threat.

While this over-exaggeration of threats may be in the best interests of athletes, it actually caused some serious repercussions: It has made the U.S. appear overbearing and has caused unnecessary concerns for threats that don't exist.

Our perceptions of third-world countries have led some to take advantage of them. Athlete Ryan Lochte was caught lying about being mugged at gunpoint to cover up for his own drunken vandalizing of a bathroom.

If we made more efforts to help developing countries instead of criticizing them, more could be accomplished. In Rio, the U.S. was more focused on protecting its own athletes instead of trying to improve the environment it criticized. For example, we worried about the Zika virus threat but did little about it.

The West's view of third-world countries is flawed. We should begin to change the way that we think of them so we can create real change. Criticizing problems is only useful if we try to solve them as well. ♦

## CON: Brazil shows Third World cannot handle the Olympics

by Andrew Owens

Brazil never should have hosted the Olympics. It was only through luck that the worst stories to come out of the Olympics concerned Ryan Lochte's antics, and not an outbreak of Zika or the murder of an Olympian.

Just last May the Brazilian army moved into Rio's slums, to retake them from powerful gangs. Any city that needs the army to battle for internal control should not have been selected to host the largest sporting event in the world.

Making matters worse, Forbes called Brazil the "murder capital of the world" just months before the Olympics began. And according to the Center for Public Security And Criminal Justice, Brazil has 22 of the 50 worst cities by murder rate.

While most of America has far more crime than Saratoga has, the United States is no Brazil. The Brazilian murder rate is a staggering 523 percent higher than that of the U.S. and an incredible 3,600 percent higher than that of the United Kingdom.

Olympians were not isolated from these crimes. The Australian Olympic team suf-

fered heavily because of this; arsonists lit the Australians' quarters on fire to distract the athletes while the criminals robbed their rooms.

Third-world Brazil also fell down on the job in the health department. The Associated Press reported that outdoor Olympic swimmers would only have to swallow three teaspoons of waterway water to be certain of contracting a virus, adding to the concerns of the international community.

Despite reassurances by the Brazilian government that it would sanitize its water, Brazil lacked the ability to literally clean up its act — during the games, a human foot washed up on one of the beaches. Even after reports of human remains being cleared that were further out from shore, this remained a problem.

All of these occurrences show that Brazil was not prepared to host the games, and they will act as a reminder that not every country should be given the opportunity. The Olympic Committee has only ever selected two countries that were not in the Anglosphere, in Europe or East Asian. In order to have a successful, and above all else, safe Olympics, the committee must not repeat the mistake of selecting a country unprepared to host. ♦

### Fans criticize positivity

A country in the midst of political and economic crises, Brazil has had a little more than hosting the Olympics to celebrate. Yet when rare heartwarming acts occur, like when German twins completed a marathon hand in hand, the athletes received a backlash for their lack of competitive spirit. In the twins' case, their country's very own athletic federation director said they should treat the Olympics "more seriously." His comment was unnecessary, bearing in mind how other athletes acted in such a public way but haven't been insulted in such a public way. Instead of criticizing, onlookers should instead encourage such inspiring acts.

— Ashley Feng

### Gold Medal for Sexism

The Rio Olympics has showcased some of the most phenomenal feats by female athletes in history (namely, Katie Ledecky in swimming and Simone Biles in gymnastics). Some media outlets, however, to reduced these athletes' worth to a pretty face. A recent Fox News segment said all female athletes should be required to wear makeup to look "beautiful." This promoted the idea that not wearing makeup reduces an individual's beauty. A guest on the segment said, "Would you put money behind a gal that won the gold medal who looks like a washed out rag?" It's disgusting that a major sporting event like the Olympics can be reduced to a beauty contest.

— Amy Tang

### Olympic restrictions unconstitutional

The first hijabi from the USA, Ibtihaj Muhammad, just appeared in Olympic fencing; meanwhile, the hijab, a statement of modesty, is still banned in U.S. women's basketball. Article 4.4.2 of the FIBA Official Basketball Rules bans equipment that can harm others, which somehow includes headgear larger than 5 cm — as if cloth could draw blood. Whether the athletes wear a hijab, turban or yarmulkes, they are forced to choose between practicing passion or faith. No one should have to set aside their beliefs to compete in a sport. Why can't any citizen, despite their looks, represent America in the Olympics?

— Leena Elzeiny

### Athletes unfairly selected

The U.S. men's basketball team has come out of each summer Olympics with a gold medal since 1992. 2016 was no different. They have only been standing on the first place podium for 24 years because NBA players make up the team roster. The Olympics was created in 1894 with the philosophy that athletes who practice a sport professionally have an unfair advantage over those who practice the sport as a hobby. Viewers want to see high-level competition, but sports like basketball aren't true to the founding values of the Olympics. The Olympics should be about more than expanding the brand names of athletes who are already millionaires.

— Julia Miller

## Popularity of Escape Room is no puzzle

amazing escape

Amy Tang

The clock was ticking. The handcuffs that bound my left arm to the metal bar were starting to hurt my wrist. "Where's the key?" I kept asking, exasperated at my friends on the other side of the cell.

I looked up at the security camera and started waving my free hand in a desperate signal for help. A deep voice echoed through the cell: "Would you like a hint?"

Earlier this year, my friends and I participated in Real Escape Room in San Francisco. We were first taken to the room and briefed on the storyline and rules by the "gamemaster."

We were prisoners taken to Alcatraz and our mission was to make it through a series of rooms, the last of which would lead to our successful escape.

The door was locked, we were handcuffed

to the cell, and the countdown began.

We escaped the cell by using a chain and a magnet to attract the hidden key. When we moved on to the next room, we were greeted by a dummy dressed as a guard. There were playing cards in his hands and a calendar on his desk, along with an assortment of other objects.

After a frustrating 20 minutes, we eventually figured out that the cards correlated to a date on the calendar, which was the code to the second locked door. Two rooms later, we reached our final destination.

As the clock ticked on, we began to lose hope, until one of my friends found a hidden remote. Then, I remembered a set of televisions I had seen earlier. We sprinted back to the start and clicked the remote.

The screen displayed four prisoners in their cells, each moving their arms. With less than 5 minutes left, we deduced that their bodies were forming letters.

We immediately punched the code into

the final lock and opened the door to freedom.

In an average escape room game, a group ranging from 2-12 people solves puzzles to escape a locked room within a time limit, which is usually about an hour.

The admission is \$25 to \$30 per person or \$130 per room, depending on the level of difficulty. Considering all the materials involved in creating the escape room and the stimulating experience, it's definitely worth the money.

The experience is great for team bonding events and groups of friends, as the adrenaline of the game causes people to work closely together.

The mix of emotions that occurs during the game creates a unique option of entertainment. It's as if you're the star of your own thrilling movie.

Going to Real Escape Room is one of the most popular activities among my friends, and we can't wait to go back. ♦

*The mix of emotions that occurs during the game creates a unique option of entertainment.*

## Pokémon Go creates new real world connections

marvelous mike

Michael Zhang

Ever since the free game Pokémon Go was released on July 6, crowds have filled the sidewalks of busy streets and given their undivided attention to their phones. Having played a fair share of the game myself, I can say that there is definitely a reason for this phenomenon.

When the much-anticipated game finally hit the App Store, I was attending a summer program at the University of Michigan, and

soon enough, everyone there was hooked on the game — students, counselors and even some of the professors.

The day after the game's release, the majority of students spent the 15-minute walk to class with their heads down and eyes glued to their screens. Despite the seeming isolation of pursuing these creatures, Pokémon Go helped create a friendly atmosphere, one in which players assisted each other with the game.

Before long, phrases such as "Where was that Pikachu?" or "Wait for me, I gotta hit that Pokéstop" became routine. Striking up conversations with other students was a straightforward task, since many of them shared an interest in the game.

Although it has been over a month since

this encounter, I still remember an undergraduate student I met in a park. He was tall, wore large, black-rimmed glasses and had dark, curly hair. My friends and I were sitting on the edge of a fountain when he looked over our shoulders and asked, "Hey, you guys playing Pokémon Go?"

After showing us his extensive collection of Pokémon, he led us to The Diag, a large open space in the university's Central Campus, where hundreds of people were playing the game.

Right as we walked in, Pokémon began popping up one after another like people in a busy marketplace.

I was ecstatic, as the sheer number of spawning Pokémon meant we didn't even have to move to catch them all. During the

last week of camp, we returned to this spot every day to catch more.

However, as great as Pokémon Go sounds, it still has its drawbacks. When I first arrived back at home and opened the app, I was utterly disappointed. In small towns like Saratoga, there are very few Pokémon, and as I progressed further through the game, the more time consuming it became. As the school year started, there simply wasn't enough time for me to make reasonable progress in the game.

Despite its downsides, the game is easy to learn for beginners. Plus, the opportunity to meet others and exercise is a bonus.

But be careful, because I might defeat your Pokémon if you're not paying close enough attention. ♦

## Meet Fresh: not so fresh options

REPORTERS TRY NEW TAIWANESE DESSERT RESTAURANT

angebelle yee

Angela Lee and Isabelle Yang

This past summer, we had the pleasure of traveling to Taiwan. Although we traveled separately, these trips spoiled both of us a bit and elevated expectations of what makes genuine Taiwanese cuisine.

When Din Tai Fung, a traditional Taiwanese restaurant, opened in Valley Fair this past May, we were disappointed by its Americanized dishes. However, we had high expectations for Meet Fresh, a dessert shop located in the newly constructed plaza on Stevens Creek Boulevard. We hoped that its menu items, which included bowls of different traditional Taiwanese toppings, would redeem Taiwanese cuisine in the Bay Area.

Upon approaching Meet Fresh's building on a Sunday afternoon, we were astounded by the long line of people, which translated into a 30-minute wait. On the menu, we found a selection of traditional Taiwanese desserts, but were also introduced to some new toppings, such as the crystal jelly noodle.

After much consideration, we ordered three desserts in total. We picked a cold bowl of dou hua — a traditional Taiwanese delicacy made of silken tofu doused in a sweet sugar water mixture — topped with boba and glutinous rice balls. For our second

bowl, we chose the Meet Fresh signature, which comprised of cream, grass jelly, yam balls and taro balls. Our last bowl was the piping hot Taro Ball No. 5. Each bowl was around \$6.80 regardless of the toppings — a little too expensive for people whose favorite kind of meal is a cheap one.

The cashier handed us a buzzer before we took a seat. The large windows, neutral colors and soft lighting contributed to the relaxed atmosphere, reminiscent of a refined and modernized 1960s Taiwanese night market. Because the shop was crowded, the table arrangement seemed messy, but overall, the space was clean and comfortable.

After waiting for 20 minutes, we received our order and began to feast. We dipped our spoons into the dou hua and found that it tasted similar to watered down honey. Out of all the toppings we ordered, the honey boba, a classic in Taiwanese cuisine, was the only one executed well with its chewy texture and slight sweetness.

The Meet Fresh Signature was too sweet, but it would be a tasty treat for those new to Taiwanese desserts. On the other hand, our experience with the hot Taro Ball Bowl was lackluster. The yam balls had a plastic-like flavor — evidently the shop had sacrificed taste for texture. Still, the warmth from the dish balanced out the iciness of the other two bowls.

All in all, we enjoyed our dishes and appreciate that Taiwanese cuisine has come into the Bay Area. However, considering the long wait time and lack of punch in flavor, we've concluded that Meet Fresh is overhyped. ♦

GRAPHIC BY ELAINE FAN

September 16, 2016

# For better

## Please don't mind my running shoes

JUNIOR REVAMPS HIS WARDROBE AND HAIRSTYLE

I am kevjumba

Kyle Wang



One of the many reasons I avoid going through freshman and sophomore year photos is that I inevitably end up regretting it. It's not that I was fat(ter) back then or that my hairstyle has (marginally) evolved since — it's the whole package.

long-sleeved shirt was totally acceptable. During freshman year, I combed my hair only sporadically, doing just enough to make sure that I didn't look like Ted Mosby from "How I Met Your Mother." On top of that, I wore many bright green shirts, not only because of #FreshmanPower but also because it was the first thing I saw when I opened my closet in the morning.

Sophomore year wasn't much better: I mostly wore free T-shirts, hoodies and running shorts. I even stopped combing my hair for roughly three months. Now, at the start of junior year, I've decided to try something new. I found a bottle of old hair gel in one of the bathroom drawers. I don't quite cover my hair with it, à la Cristiano Ronaldo, but I do use enough to make my hair look a bit more suave.

Of course, my style change only goes so far — I haven't revamped my wardrobe entirely because that's too expensive. Instead, I have

stolen some of my dad's unworn clothes. That's right, I've gone from the "I literally woke up like this" look to the "I stole this sweater from my dad's closet" look.

But I still have a problem with my shoes: I've always had wide feet, so buying street shoes from Nike or Converse has never really been an option. Plus, because I run cross country and I'm too lazy to bring an extra set of sneakers, I usually just wear my electric blue Asics running shoes to school.

And let's be honest here: Very few things look cool or "swaggy" with electric blue sneakers.

In short, when you see me walking around campus wearing running shoes with

my "I'm a middle-aged dad" clothing, feel free to judge but please do understand my situation. With my inconveniently wide feet and unwillingness to pay good money for clothes, I don't have many other options.

Above all, I'd prefer it if you just ignore my shoes and allow me to continue dreaming that I look somewhat professional. ♦



## Freshman tries Facebook, finds it useless

by Victor Liu

Freshman Jeffrey Xu has a head start in life. Although he's only a high school freshman, as stated by his Facebook profile's introduction, the rest of his biography is remarkable for an average ninth grader.

According to Xu's "About" section on Facebook, his achievements include being a former Dean at Redwood Middle School, a former sports column journalist at the Krusty Krab and a graduate of "nunya business" at San Diego Miramar College.

But as it turns out, Xu isn't some super-savant who has finished college before starting high school.

Instead, he's a 14-year-old who's new to Facebook or at least seem-

ing new to it (he first used Facebook in third-grade for the then-popular game "Backyard Monsters"), and his bio's white lies are the remnants of a third-grader's humor.

"I put [the bio] there because one of my friends did it, and I thought it was cool, but now that I think about it, it's pretty stupid," Xu said. "I probably did that when I was in third grade, so please don't judge me on that."

Now, Xu has re-

turned to Facebook because of advice from older students to join online school groups.

While Xu has good intentions for wanting to restart his Facebook journey, he has gone off-course, using Facebook "to

hit people up to play Super Smash Bros."

However, Xu claims to use Facebook for only 30 minutes a day, a small figure when compared with the hours many



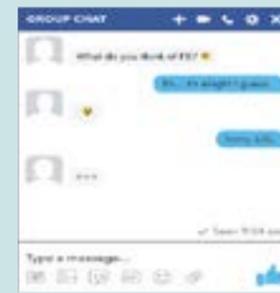
Xu

other students tend to lose on the site.

"I just check my feed to see what's going on, and I do some 'Happy Birthday' wishes," Xu said. "[And] if it's someone that I know very well, then I put a picture of them doing something [silly]."

Unlike many of his schoolmates, Xu also intends on keeping his Facebook browsing time to a minimum.

"[Facebook]'s not really that important. What's important is what you do in real life," Xu said. "I play the piano, I play badminton, I prank call people, I do math, I do Chinese and I do Boy Scouts. Interacting with people in real life is the truest way to communicate face-to-face." ♦



# CHANGE.

FALCONS RECOUNT THE WAYS THEY'VE GROWN OVER THE SUMMER



## How to Cherry Bomb your entire lifestyle

SENIOR VENTURES INTO HAIR DYES AND RAINBOWS

by Angela Liu

In the Class of 2017, there's probably one senior who can attest to having sported hair colors like "brilliance blue" and "cherry bomb": Sarah Chang.

Chang first dyed her hair last spring. She thought it would be a "less radical way" to change her appearance, leading to her first and least favorite of her hair colors: blue.

"The original color was actually OK," Chang said, "but it faded out to a gross green color. Whenever I shed a hair, you could see it go from black to blonde to blue to green."

Over the course of the last five months, Chang has dyed her hair three times and sported five colors. Her blue hair faded to green before she switched to bright pink, and her newest dye, a red henna powder, has since faded into an orange-black color.

According to Chang, henna powder is generally considered a more "natural" hair dye, so it isn't as harmful to hair as other artificial dyes are.

Because henna is less pigmented than industrial dyes, Chang "used string tea instead of water so [the dye appeared] darker" on



Chang

her already bleached hair.

With eye-catching neon hues, Chang's hair quickly caught the attention of her classmates.

"People were pretty shocked because I don't seem like [someone] who would [dye my hair]," Chang said. "But [the shock] died off after the first month."

Chang's hair has also earned her a few nicknames, including "RedFire," "Volcano" and "Blue

Mermaid." None of the names stuck for long except "Rubia" — the nickname Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguez gave her, which is the Spanish word for "blonde."

Many people wonder how her hair is faring after three dye jobs within the span of a few months, but Chang isn't so worried.

"I have pretty strong, healthy hair, so even when I've bleached it four times I still don't really have much breakage or stretching in my hair," Chang said. "I'm pretty grateful for that because otherwise I don't think I could do this so often." ♦



## Junior pained from wisdom teeth

dancing queen

Julia Miller

At first glance, the summer of 2016 seemed like a glamorous one. I transformed into a tourist in Los Angeles, cruising Route 66 in a blue convertible Mustang.

Underneath flashing light shows, I boogied to funk bands and drank mouthwatering milkshakes at the High Sierra Music Festival. I flew to heavenly Hawaii, where I soared above the ocean on a parasail and snokeled among the ocean's vibrant sea life.

Nothing could ruin this summer, I thought as I basked

in the Hawaiian sun. Sadly, I was extremely wrong.

This summer, I not only experienced the most astounding moments of my life, but also got a taste of absolute misery, and for me, that was my wisdom teeth extraction.

Many people had warned me about the agony of getting wisdom teeth removed.

But as I walked into the oral surgeon's office, I pushed away every negative surgery story I had heard and told myself mine would be completely different. I was right: Mine was much, much worse.

I became a whining, agitated mess. Every 20 minutes, the gauze inside my mouth had to be changed to promote the formation of blood clots over my wounds. The numbness from the surgery didn't wear off until nighttime, so my throat felt completely numb.

The bleeding inside my mouth went on for an "unusual amount

of time," according to my oral surgeon.

It continued for roughly 48 hours, and to stop the bleeding, I had to put tea bags in my mouth, a so-called "natural remedy."

For the next week, my relaxed, summer life turned into an interminable torture. I couldn't drink out of straws or eat anything chewier than pasta. I longed to eat a home-cooked meal and use a normal toothbrush, since I was subject to using one with sensitive bristles.

Pain shot up my jaw and cheekbones when I laughed, and I mumbled every time I spoke. I was put on several post-surgery medications to help fight off infections, but they only made me sleepy and irritable.

Finally, the checkup at the oral surgeon's office had arrived. At this point, I was ready to eat a delicious cheeseburger for lunch, when I could bite into it pain-free.

But the oral surgeon only handed me a plastic syringe, used to clean out "debris" from the holes in my gums that my wisdom teeth left behind.

On top of that, she told me there was nothing she could do about my aching jaw and that I'd just have to wait it out.

So, no cheeseburger. For another torturous week, I had to continue to eat soft foods and add squirting water in my mouth in order for my extraction sites to heal. And I thought my wisdom teeth removal couldn't get any worse.

So, when people ask how I changed this summer, I'll eagerly tell them my newfound love for traveling or the way I conquered my fear of heights while parasailing 80 feet in the air.

But inside, I'll think of how I have four less teeth and one more anguished memory of my summer before junior year. ♦

# or for worse.

GRAPHICS BY ANGELA LEE, OLIVIA LU, JISHING YU



# 'Vampire Diaries' fan travels to Las Vegas

By Jay Kim

On one of her walls, junior Kelly McLaughlin can see a signed poster with her idols Ian Somerhalder and Paul Wesley. They are mementos from her trip to Las Vegas two summers ago, where she was able to attend a "Vampire Diaries" convention and get autographed posters signed by the main actors in the TV show.

McLaughlin couldn't help but scream when her idols called her a "cutie" as she approached the two men she'd only ever seen through a TV screen. She hugged them tight, never wanting this surreal moment to end. McLaughlin is unlike most of the 3 million viewers, who watch the television series "The Vampire Diaries." She is a superfan: She has watched the series numerous times and has even travelled out of state to meet the cast.

The show premiered in 2009,

but she only started watching two years later after she discovered it on Netflix. From there, she finished the show's four seasons, and now every Friday night at 8 p.m., she religiously watches teen heartthrobs Somerhalder and Wesley heroically fight various villains all while battling each other for the love interest.

The drama stars Nina Dobrev, who plays Elena Gilbert, and vampire brothers Stefan and Damon Salvatore — played by Wesley and Somerhalder respectively. The trio of them meet at the start of Dobrev's Friday night of high school, and a love triangle develops in the midst of them braving through supernatural threats of werewolves, witches and ghosts.

"The first three seasons I binge-watched, [making] it really easy to get into it," McLaughlin said. "Each episode has a unique plot, and they all tie together really well. It's captivating and you

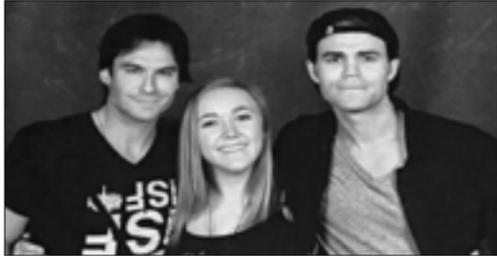
get hooked on it really [easily]."

McLaughlin explained that one especially intriguing aspect of the series was the dynamic character relationships.

"Each character cares a lot about each other, even if they are a villain. [The audience] still wants all of them to succeed," McLaughlin said. "Different relationships between characters allows [for] romance, friendships, deaths, gore and surprises."

Led by her immense love and interest for the series, McLaughlin attended a "Vampire Diaries" convention held in Las Vegas two summers ago. The convention featured a panel with cast members, whom McLaughlin only ever dreamed of meeting.

There, McLaughlin collected autographs from the main cast members and received huge posters of them. She also got to live a "Vampire Diaries" superfan's biggest dream: meeting the



Courtesy of KELLY MCLAUGHLIN  
Junior Kelly McLaughlin meets stars Ian Somerhalder and Paul Wesley.

stars of the show.

McLaughlin met Somerhalder and Wesley and took a picture with Michael Malarkey, who plays Enzo St. John on the show. According to McLaughlin meeting them has made her enthusiasm of the show even greater.

"I've rewatched the series

over 10 times and I can recite every word of my favorite scene," McLaughlin said. "[The series] came to me at a really difficult time in middle school, and it was something that I could have a passion for. [It was something] I could always look forward to watching." ♦

# Vita: 'The Bachelor' dominates reality television

By Francesca Chu

A crowd of thousands of people, decked out in their team's colors, screams deafeningly as the soccer ball swooshes into the back of the goal.

A girl excitedly adds another special edition poster of her idol to the growing collection covering the walls of her room.

Long winding lines of people camp for hours outside their favorite clothing store so that they can be the first one inside the next morning.

These people all have something in common: They're dedi-

cated fans, and senior Julia Vita can relate.

Eagerly grabbing a bag of pretzels every Monday night, Vita is one of thousands of fans of avid "The Bachelor" fans — the American reality hit television show with a separate spinoff series called "The Bachelorette."

Both are dating reality shows in which a male or female lead who is cast as the eligible bachelor or bachelorette has several romantic interests.

Week after week, the contestants are eliminated until only one love interest remains.

When Vita was first introduced

to these shows, she was hesitant about the competitive dating con-

*Eagerly grabbing a bag of pretzels every Monday night, Vita is one of thousands of avid "The*

however, and they convinced her to watch with them.

Once Vita began watching the shows, she realized that her original assumptions were wrong.

"Once I got into the show, it didn't really matter that some of the scenes may have been scripted. Obviously reality TV isn't fully unscripted, but the show is entertaining and fun to watch," Vita said.

For Vita, watching "The Bachelor" and "The Bachelorette" has become a social occasion for her and other seniors.

"My friends and I have these watch parties where we get together,

eat food and watch the latest episode together," she said. "Every time, we try to guess who's going to get eliminated and we bet on who we think will end up winning. It's so much fun to see whose guesses were actually correct."

From this past season of "The Bachelorette," Vita's favorite person was Robby Hayes.

Hayes was eliminated in the final episode.

"I was disappointed [with] the outcome, but I'm really really excited for the next season to start," Vita said. "My friends and I will definitely be watching every episode together." ♦

# Junior raps along with Hamilton

By Kitty Huang

Junior Katie Sabel never knew she would become so obsessed by the musical "Hamilton." She remembers being enticed when she first listened to "You'll Be Back," a song from the musical, in the drama department's green room while preparing for the "Pride and Prejudice" production last year.

The hip-hop musical "Hamilton," created by Lin-Manuel Miranda, has been the most talked about Broadway show in years. It portrays how one of the Founding Fathers, Alexander Hamilton, endured various conflicts to become one of the most influential figures in American history.

The "Hamilton fever" has swept the country, including the school's drama department. Almost every drama student shares the same obsession with the musical's remarkable performances and soundtracks.

"I'm not a person that's like, 'Oh yes, rap, Eminem is my jam,' but [the musical's raps are] still enticing because the characters are so genuine," Sabel said. "Even though it's a story about our Founding Fathers, there are many traits about them that we can see through the musical."

Sabel listened to the whole soundtrack for a couple days following her discovery of "Hamilton," trying to analyze the lyrics and understand their meaning.

Soon after finding "Hamilton," Sabel came to the realization that she knew all of

the words to the songs. At this point, the cast recordings of "Hamilton" had already become Sabel's "go-to-album." Whenever her "Hamilton" playlist is on shuffle, she knows the exact moments in each song when actors perform the heart-wrenching melodies, such as for Alexander Hamilton's death.

Not only does Sabel pour over the musical's script and melodies, but she also follows the cast members just as obsessively, keeping tabs on all their YouTube, Instagram and Twitter activity. She often spends hours online stalking the lead actors, and in true fan-girl fashion, she views these pursuits as simply "trying to get involved as much as [she] possibly can."

Despite all her obsession over "Hamilton," Sabel has still not seen the musical in person, owing to the musical's average ticket price of \$500-600.

However, knowing that "Hamilton" is coming to San Francisco for a traveling tour next year on March 17, Sabel is hoping for a miracle in the form of two tickets to see her favorite musical.

Sabel said she has drawn inspiration from the musical's creator, Miranda. His determination inof making the unlikely musical into a runaway success has inspired Sabel to conquer her own doubts in real life.

"It motivates me to try exploring new ideas no matter how idiotic they appear to when people put it on paper and try to explain it," she said. ♦

# NEW MUSIC MANIA: TOP FOUR UPCOMING ALBUMS TO LOOK FORWARD TO THIS FALL

<p><b>1. Bon Iver: 22, A Million   Sept. 30</b> After more than five years, critically acclaimed indie folk rock band Bon Iver is set to return in just two weeks with their highly anticipated third studio album. Fans who were captivated by the band's second album <i>Bon Iver</i>, Bon Iver will find themselves in a similar daze with <i>22, A Million</i>, featuring frontman Justin Vernon's signature voice and introspective lyrics.</p>	
<p><b>2. Justice: Untitled   TBA</b> Iconic French electronic duo Justice have announced they are "putting the last touches on" their third studio album. On July 13, the duo released "Safe and Sound," their first new material since 2011, making use of impressive guitar lines and a choir over a progressive rock and funk-based instrumental. Justice continues to sound unlike any other artist, and their return is refreshing for fans of EDM.</p>	
<p><b>3. Danny Brown: Atrocity Exhibition   Sept. 30</b> After a 3-year hiatus, the highly polarizing 35-year-old experimental rapper Danny Brown plans on releasing his fourth studio album on Sept. 30. Brown is best known for his dark, fast-paced rapping style and distinct high-pitched voice, showcased in his abrasive raps about poverty and violence on his single "When It Rains." Fans can expect more of his tense and unconventional sound on <i>Atrocity Exhibition</i>.</p>	
<p><b>4. Devendra Banhart: Ape in Pink Marble   Sept. 23</b> Lo-fi alternative folk artist Devendra Obi Banhart is set to release his ninth studio album on Sept. 23. Utilizing a soft and uncomplicated indie pop sound, Banhart delivers romantic lyrics characterized by both sentimentality and humor over soothing guitar lines. Known to weave "insouciant, joking tunes that are for fun" into his albums, <i>Ape in Pink Marble</i> should be perfect for lighthearted listening.</p>	

GRAPHIC BY DEREK CHEN

# Aspiring rapper slows down for junior year

By Elizabeth Lee & Harshini Ramaswamy

"I feel like Lil Uzi, I got a tight chain on my neck, the way I be spittin', you know I be gaining some respect."

Those are lines written by junior Revel Sisco in his tribute to his favorite rap artist, Lil Uzi Vert.

Sisco became interested in writing rap lyrics as a 12-year-old. He often would spend his free time listening to instrumentals and jotting down rhymes that came to his head. Since then, Sisco has taken on the stage name Revdog and has dropped 62 tracks on his Soundcloud account.

His most popular track, "Draymond Green," has been played 616 times.

His younger brother Talon, a freshman, said his brother's progress as a rapper isn't a surprise.

"It's his favorite thing to learn about and read about, and he really enjoys it," Talon said.

Supported by friends, his six sisters, his brother and his parents, Sisco produces music by himself and also collaborates with others, which include junior George Yoshinaga,

a Palo Alto student under the name of "Gravy" and alumnus Nik Aji, a.k.a. "Nik Charger." Sisco often writes about experiences he has been going through, which allows him to talk about his problems through the lyrics.

Though Sisco has received praise from followers, criticism has also followed him. Despite the negativity about his tracks and the idea of him being a rapper from some, Sisco has learned to use the criticism as motivation to create more tracks.

"I've seen people making fun of my stuff, but I take the good with the bad," Sisco said. "I can't really do anything about it, so if someone else wants to spend their time putting someone else down for doing what they love, that's their choice."

Sisco hopes to one day perform a live playlist of his best work. The idea of playing in front of an audience doesn't intimidate him, Sisco said, but rather it excites him to be able to have such an opportunity.

Though the aspiring rapper may be starting on the right foot, Sisco said that it might be time to slow his music career and focus on his personal and academic life, but he "will always be working on [music] on the side because it is something [he] enjoys." ♦



Courtesy of REVEL SISCO  
Junior Revel Sisco sits on Saratoga Elementary's bench as he raps a lyric in his first music video, "Break From Toga," which has received more than 1,000 views on Youtube.

# 'Stranger Things' blends science, horror, friendship

By Angela Lee

As someone who could not sleep for a week after reading the plot of "Paranormal Activity," I have never appreciated

horror. So when my friends gushed about the new Netflix Original "Stranger Things," I promised to watch the show with the understanding that because of my fears, I would never be able to truly enjoy the show. I could not have been more wrong.

"Stranger Things," a science-fiction horror show set in the 1980s, follows three middle school boys. When their friend Will disappears from their small town in Indiana, the four struggle to find him.

Despite my initial reservations about the show, I loved the characters from the beginning. I laughed at their humorous and realistic friendship but grieving when they argued.

Their quest was riddled with petty fights, flashes of jealousy, childish thinking and a strong passion for Dungeons and Dragons.

Unlikely bonds were a recurrence in the show, from a teenage outcast and the high school "Miss Perfect" to a hopeful mother

and a cynical cop. The teamwork between such different characters made the show even more interesting to watch.

The plot put a twist on a traditional mystery by adding elements of horror and science. The science behind the paranormal occurrences was easy to understand but made the show even more believable, and therefore, scary.

Although I tend to shy away from anything horror, that is not to say that this show was not scary. "Stranger Things" was filled with horrifying motifs: the blurry photographs, the monster's low growling, sudden disappearances of people and messages of flashing lights. Worst of all was the bloodthirsty monster, who appeared through walls — I could not stare at my wall for days.

Even the cinematography contributed to the creepy theme of "Stranger Things." With long shots and dark colors, the camera conveyed a spooky, suspenseful atmosphere.

The truth is, "Stranger Things" scared me to the point that I could not sleep at night and could barely stay home alone.

But for the first time in my life, I enjoyed the scare. By adding elements of horror, scientific validity and complex and likeable characters, the show managed to win my heart.

When the show returns with its second season in the summer of 2017, I will be ready to dive back in, even if it means more sleepless nights. ♦

# Female Olympians face double standards in Rio



Isabelle Yang and Amulya Vadlakonda

"Wife of Bears lineman Mitch Unrein wins bronze in Rio."

The Chicago Tribune felt the need to reinforce to their readers that this athlete, American Olympic trap shooter Corey Cogdell, was the "wife of a Bears lineman." Although it has since been fixed, the newspaper originally didn't even honor Cogdell by her name in the headline celebrating her bronze medal.

It is so simple to explain this away: Surely, the Tribune was just providing a means of identifying the athlete by her husband.

Of course, almost every instance of blatant sexism can be explained away as a fluke, but we need to step back and see the bigger picture: There are double standards in the way that we as a society treat female athletes, and the 2016 Olympics has had too many red flags to ignore.

The Tribune article goes on to discuss the relationship between Cogdell and her husband, after only briefly mentioning that she had won a bronze medal.

It doesn't discuss how the race went or how Cogdell prepared herself for what was arguably the most important race of her career. And while it skims through what the race meant to her, it instead gives us more information about how supportive her husband was.

When Hungarian swimmer Katinka Hosszu won gold in the 400m individual medley, NBC called her husband "the man responsible" not 2 minutes after it was an-

nounced that she had broken the world record. When American swimmer Katie Ledecky took home the gold in the 400m freestyle, The Daily Mail dubbed her "the female Michael Phelps." Due to backlash, the headline of the article has since been changed, but the article itself still uses the phrase.

It is so easy to dismiss these events as compliments, especially in Ledecky's case. Phelps is considered the greatest swimmer of all time, and to be compared to him is high praise.

But when BBC presenter John Inverdale casually told male athlete Andy Murray that he was the first tennis player to win two consecutive Olympic gold medals, Inverdale casually ignored the fact that "Venus and Serena [Williams] have won about four each," in Murray's own words.

These incidences are not isolated, nor are they flukes. And women are getting more

than just discredited for their achievements. Fox News anchors Bo Dietl and Mark Simone asserted that female athletes should wear more makeup when they go on TV, especially because those athletes' main purpose at the Olympics can be summed up with two words: "product endorsements."

"When you see an athlete, why should you have to look at some chick's zits?" Dietl said. "I like to see a person that wins that gold medal go up there and look beautiful."

It should go without saying how utterly stupid these statements are. Not only do they undermine the hard work and ultimate success of these athletes — whether they are male or female — but they also unfairly assume that the athletes compete for someone other than themselves.

It's time to stop with the excuses. Naturally, sexism won't stop any time soon, but we, as a society, need to actively call out the actions of those who perpetuate it. ♦

# RISD gives senior in-depth look at visual arts

by Caitlyn Chen

At 3 a.m. on a July night, the campus of Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) was mostly dark and quiet, save for few lights — one of them coming from the South Hall dorms. Inside, senior Ingrid Yang sat at her desk, wires and wire-cutters in hand, snipping away.

Her five suitemates kept her company, chatting and laughing as she worked through the night on her triptych, which consists of three painted canvases. Yang's included three paintings of faces and wires attached to the canvases to create a 3D look.

"There were times when we pulled two or three all-nighters in a row because of the workload that was given," Yang said. "But in the end, I produced my favorite piece of work for my final project."

While many of her friends spent their summers at science internships or math camps, Yang spent six weeks at a pre-collegiate

program experiencing the "college life" at RISD, the No. 1 design school in the world, according to Business Insider.

To gain admission, each student had to send in a 250-word essay. In the end, about 500 students were accepted. The program cost about \$10,000.

**Yet, while the program gave Yang the freedom to create many of her best works, Yang said that at times, the process was extremely stressful.**

Yang chose graphic design as her major for the program.

Every weekday at 9 a.m., classes started in the art building: Monday was drawing foundation, Tuesday was art history, Wednesday was design foundation and Thursday and Friday were graphic design.

Each class lasted about six hours, except for art history, which lasted two hours.

"What surprised me was that the teachers didn't give a lot of lectures on how to draw better. They just wanted us to draw," Yang said. "So when I went to class, [I drew], and when I went back to the dorms, I drew some more. Every day just consisted of art and really nothing else."

Yet while the program gave Yang the freedom to create many of her best works, Yang said that at times, the process was extremely stressful.

"The first all-nighter I ever pulled with my friends, we

Once, Yang said she was supposed to create three envelopes, three business cards and three postcards in a week, but because she had procrastinated, she left all her work for the night before it was due.

At 7 in the morning, when she was finally done drawing them, she realized she couldn't print out the



Courtesy of INGRID YANG  
Senior Ingrid Yang's final project used wires to create a 3D look. In total, she spent six weeks at RISD.

postcards because her ID card had run out of money.

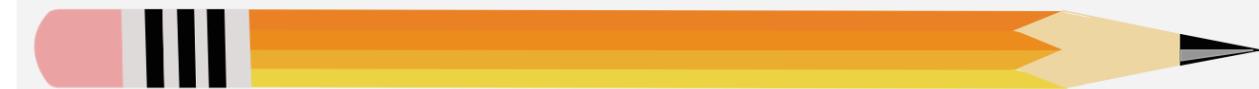
"I had to run back and forth trying to find someone to borrow some money. My posters were also at FedEx, which was a 15-minute walk away, and my class was starting in 45 minutes," Yang said. "It was really stressful, but the adrenaline made it a pretty fun experience."

While there, Yang experienced the life of a college student studying graphic design.

Even though Yang knows that a path in the arts will be difficult, she said she is willing to work hard to find success in the design industry.

"When I get asked what I want to major in, I say visual arts, and then people ask me what would be a backup plan if that doesn't go well," Yang said. "To them, graphic design seems like an occupation that wouldn't be able to give you a roof to live under or food on your plate. But it means a lot to me. I love what I do, and I wouldn't trade anything for it." ♦

# Summer School



STUDENTS SPEND THEIR BREAKS AT INTENSIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

GRAPHIC BY KITTY HUANG

## Junior devotes weeks to research faraway galaxies

by Michelle Lee

Junior Andrew Zheng approached the corner of the dorm hallway this past summer surrounded by other teens who had become some of his closest friends. They were all gripping cardboard shields and hastily made "Axe bombs" — cans of spray deodorant.

The entire hallway reeked of men's deodorant. Zheng and his friends were embroiled in the midst of an intense dorm war against another group of students, which started after a broken promise about Oreos.

Looking at this scene, few would have guessed that Zheng was in his third week

**Even three months after SSTP ended, Zheng still remembers everything, from staying up until 6 a.m. doing yoga exercises to messing his peers up during their presentations.**

subjects for students to explore, ranging from cancer research to drug creation testing. Zheng chose to study astrophysics, mostly because he has loved watching sci-fi movies involving space ever since he was young.

"I chose this camp mainly because online it looked like such an interesting experience for me," Zheng said. "This research opportunity allowed for me to expand my boundaries of sciences and try something I have never done before."

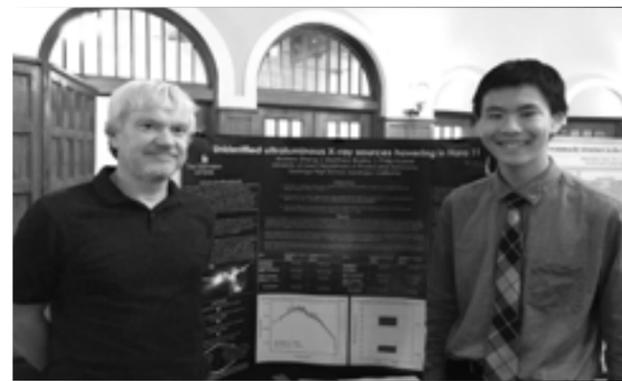
After choosing a subject to study, students were paired with a professor and a collegiate research team that has already been at SSTP before. With the guidance of the professor, they not only learned how to write a research paper and deliver a research presentation, but also practiced the techniques of collecting data. At the end of the five weeks, the students' lab research culminated into a final research poster.

Zheng's research project was about identifying different types of galaxies, more specifically Lyman Alpha Emitters, or galaxies that emit most of their light through hydrogen transitions.

"My research was on the importance of these Lyman Alpha Emitters because the way the galaxies' light are transmitted can maybe explain why we see the universe as it is today," Zheng said.

Zheng studied Lyman Alpha Emitters by using an X-ray astronomy program to analyze the observation of a galaxy taken about a year ago and tried to determine if the energy came from a single source or multiple sources in the galaxy.

Though he was, ultimately, at an academic program, Zheng gained more than just research experience. Because Zheng lived with



Courtesy of ANDREW ZHENG  
Junior Andrew Zheng stands beside his completed poster presenting the information he gathered while working with physics prof. Philip Kaaret (left) from the University of Iowa.

two other people in a cramped dorm room during the program, Zheng was forced to improve his communication skills.

"There would be times when some of my friends were getting on each other's nerves," Zheng said. "Learning how to resolve these conflicts, either by communication or when we needed to bring help, was emphasized by living together."

Outside the classroom, the program organized various activities such as visiting a waterpark, bowling, and exploring downtown Iowa. At the end of the program, a public

poster fair was held where the students' research papers were on display for their peers, families and mentors to see.

Even now, three months after SSTP ended, Zheng still remembers everything, from staying up until 6 a.m. doing yoga exercises to messing his peers up during their presentation to making music videos of songs that Zheng would never listen to again.

"The people that I became close friends with and still keep in contact with are those that found a healthy balance between academics and having fun," Zheng said. ♦

# Sophomore composes music at Stanford summer program

by Elizabeth Lee & Rahul Vadlakonda

Sophomore Anson Tong gathered with his three groupmates at a table scattered with countless sheets of music, trying to assemble their ideas to compose a four-movement string quartet. Despite having to spend dozens of hours on the masterpiece, Tong and his groupmates felt rewarded after having the opportunity to listen to their piece being played by a professional string quartet.

This past summer, Tong participated in a three-week residential program called "Why Music Matters" at the Stanford Summer

Institute of Arts. While there, he learned more about the university's music program and expand his knowledge about different genres of music.

Tong was introduced to music early on, learning to play the piano at age 5. But his true love of music blossomed four years later when he began playing the violin.

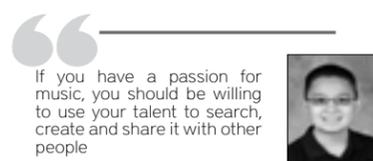
"I love the sound and flexibility of the range of the violin," he said. "I also loved how multiple pitches could be played at the same time."

At camp, Tong explored subjects such as music composition, music history, music theory, sound acoustics, music recording and diverse instruments such as the harpsichord and bells.

For Tong, a typical day started at 9:30 a.m.

Throughout the day, he spent four to five hours immersing himself in music whether that was working with six or seven other students and a music professor, finishing reading homework or composing music. Though lights-out was at 11 p.m., Tong occasionally stayed up to finish his music composition.

Tong's favorite composition that he wrote was the team composition, which resembled a "Haydn-Mozart type string quartet that also included a piano and a capella." The hardest parts of this were narrowing down the many ideas they had and then having to devote numerous hours to composing the piece digitally.



sophomore ANSON TONG

"If you have a passion for music, you should be willing to use your talent to search, create and share it with other people"

Not only did Tong expand his knowledge of music and make new friends, but he also realized that pursuing a music career will require him to have a comprehensive knowledge of subjects such as pitch, rhythm and a deep understanding of music theory.

In the future, Tong plans to pursue music in college and hopes to become a mentor to beginners. Tong is especially interested in

Romantic music, an era characterized by emotion, and he hopes to pursue this path when he does musical research.

Tong has one piece of advice for those pursuing music: "If you have a passion for music, you should be willing to use your talent to search, create and share it with other people." ♦



GRAPHICS BY ANGELA LEE AND CHARIN PARK

*Editor's note: The Falcon sought out freelance writing for this issue. This story was written at the University of Virginia's Writing Workshop this summer, where students participated in a camp-wide slam poetry contest. The following is a poem about procrastination.*

Hey procrastination,

It's me again, still (Pokemon-) going nowhere with this slam.

I've watched months become weeks become days become hours—

Not minutes though, never minutes And I thank you for that limit You've always had your special ways to motivate me in my darkest hour,

Or you can call it the darkest four hours from 1 to 5 am on a Thursday night or Friday morning when the paper is due and yes, because of you, all I have written is "THIS PAPER GONNA BE ON FLEEK YEE"

Like an insurance company, you ruin lives and give only after you've taken too much

You're a synthetic adrenaline, a sudden Adderall high after a month-long low And doing work finally feels rewarding thanks to you but no thanks to you

You're addictive, you wake up the slumbering Snorlax-like genius inside all of us and now I want to join Procrastinators Anonymous, but until that exists, I will have to wait because I will never make my own.

You helped me find never-discovered-before tracks on Spotify's Late Night Focus Playlist such as No Fun, which is the exact amount of fun I had—none—as my fingers pressed the keyboard keys faster than the final stage of Temple Run

Sometimes, no, usually, I say why not tomorrow? And my whimpering self-control whispers no But you shout yes, scream yes, let's go on Reddit and peruse the darkest, deepest pits of the interwebs

You know what procrastination? Maybe it's not you that is the problem Maybe it's me, like in a broken teenage relationship, It's been me all along.

After all, what corners could hide you if I never made them in the first place? What impending due dates could you shy from if I had done projects and essays before it was too late?

I guess you're not to blame for the endless nights scrolling and mouse-rolling. It's on me for binge watching of Tasty videos And you never told me to watch Gravity Falls in one week I told myself that

You did not keep me awake until 3 the day before that math final, drowning Deep in an ocean of sine and cosine waves—I did that

I live inside a pigsty, My bed a constant mess I'll make later; My laptop has 50 tabs open which I'll read later My clothes are piling on the floor like the leaves in the front yard Which I said, for the thirty-third time, that I'll rake later Why should I read now when I can read Sparknotes fifteen minutes before It's too late?

Wait.

I totally forgot I still have to finish my essay. Gotta bounce.

Love Always, Victor Liu

## Ups and downs: Junior pursues passion for building, engineering

by Sherrice Shen

Last summer, out of boredom, junior Alan Lu and two other friends from nearby schools decided to build a backyard roller coaster.

Lu and his friends designed the basic framework by mapping the structure out, and built it through trial and error. In four weeks, they completed 70 percent of the intended result, finally stopping after realizing the rollercoaster wasn't working out the way they had intended.

"We tried to ride [the roller coaster], but it was too dangerous, so we just kind of stopped," Lu said.

The unfinished structure now stands in the drying grass of Lu's backyard, an incomplete roller coaster made of PVC pipes and sawed wood. At 3.5 meters tall, 2.5 meters wide and 10 meters long, it looks small next to the towering Redwood trees, hidden completely within his house's backyard fence.

The roller coaster is just one example of Lu's enthusiasm for building projects, both big and small, that he has created in the past seven years. An aspiring engineer in automotive design, he enjoyed building objects like Lego constructions, first by following manuals, and later through designing his own projects.

His parents, who recognized his talents, encouraged him to pursue his interests further, driving him around and buying him supplies.

At age 10, Lu was introduced to a Lego robot called Mindstorm, which was when he first learned to build original projects without instructions.

Although he didn't particularly like the coding involved in the process of making this robot, Lu loved working with mechanics, eventually opening up a two-week summer camp to teach other kids how to code and build a Mindstorm robot.

As time passed and more opportunities arose, Lu found great enjoyment in engineering these projects and started tackling grander designs.

"For most of the projects I did, I just had random inspirations and decided to make [them], like the roller coaster," Lu said.

Other times, he created projects out of necessity. For instance, Lu's idea of an electric skateboard came to him when he was walking home from a friend's house near the end of his freshman year. The distance was a couple miles too far for Lu's liking, so he decided



Courtesy of ALAN LU  
Last summer, junior Alan Lu began building a roller coaster. The structure still stands in his backyard.

to craft a motor-powered skateboard with electric parts bought online.

Whenever he found time, Lu spent a few hours per week building the skateboard in a makeshift workshop in his garage, complete with saws, drills and other machinery. Later, during his sophomore year, Lu also experimented with lighting alcohol, using it as propulsion power.

"I realized that hot air will explode out from the nozzle, so I put a straw in there and plugged in a [foil ball]," Lu said, grinning. "Basically, I made a gun."

Lu made most of these projects during his freshman and sophomore year, but as junior year grows increasingly busy, Lu does not plan to continue this long-time hobby, at least throughout this school year.

"Right now, my projects are just for personal entertainment," Lu said. "But in the future, because I want to be an engineer, I can create bigger projects that can help the community." ♦



### Virus-hidden chain mail attacks many email accounts

By Emily Chen & Sherrie Shen

Glancing at her emails in early August, junior Daphne Liu's eyes caught the subject line of an email from one of her friends, junior Dasha Gousseva: "Top Ten Things to do Before School Starts." Intrigued by the headline, Liu opened the email and clicked the link, but was brought to a webpage reading, "Link not available at this time." A week later, she began receiving messages from friends regarding weird emails she had supposedly sent. She also received 132 emails herself from the server, letting her know that some of the emails sent by the virus never went through. "I was irritated because viruses are hard to get rid of," Liu said. "I also had to apologize to some people. It was a hassle

to clean everything up." At around the same time, junior Jaime An didn't realize her email was hacked until she received messages from concerned friends about whether the link the virus sent them, which advertised weight loss or dieting, was trustworthy. "I felt nervous [and] I was frantically hoping that people didn't open the links because that usually leads to more hacking for their account," An said. "I was so confused because my password is quite secure." An and Liu were victims of viruses that, once activated from a link, send out emails to all of an account's contacts. These emails had subjects such as "surveyed," "Personalized?" "interviewed," and "beautiful,"

to entice the recipients into opening the emails. Luckily, since only their emails were hacked, neither An nor Liu has experienced any issues with their computers. However, other people who are hacked can be less lucky. According to the LiveScience website, activated viruses can manipulate computer programs to run the virus's code. This allows other malware to plague computers with slower performance, sys-



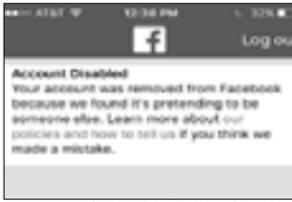
GRAPHIC BY SANJANA MELKOTE

tem crashes, data loss and ads, ultimately deteriorating their hardware and software. With some malware, hackers can monitor one's computer activity and steal personal information. "The ability to attack is certainly outpacing the ability to defend [computer viruses]," Lillian Ablon, a security researcher at the Rand Corporation, said in an interview with The New York Times. "We're constantly playing cat and mouse, but ultimately companies just patch and pray." Although there is no certain way to prevent hackers and viruses from gaining access to computers, computer science and math teacher Judi Heher advises people to not click on suspicious links and to keep strong and updated passwords: "You're not always going to be completely safe, but you'll be safer." ♦

### Facebook disables user profiles

By Angela Liu & Kyle Wang

Junior Karthik Ramachandran knew something was wrong. He'd tried logging in to his Facebook for the third time in a row, but the message was still there: "Your account has been disabled. If you have any questions or concerns, you can visit our FAQ page here." Ramachandran was one of four juniors whose Facebook account was disabled in early July. He, along with his friends Ayush Aggarwal, Sathvik Koneru and Varun Meduri, were informed that their accounts had been disabled because someone had reported them for the "impersonation of a person or entity, or other misrepresentation of identity" as stated in the Facebook Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. The statement also gives Facebook the right to disable the accounts of users. These Facebook impersonation problems are regulated by actual people. But according to Facebook's 2014 annual report, up to 11.2 percent of its 1.23 billion monthly users could be fake accounts — a portion that makes any type of regulation, real or automated, highly error prone. Individuals looking to report an impersonator can fill out a form after logging in requesting Facebook staff to review the account. "What probably happened is [somebody] who thought he was being funny reported us, and we got banned because of it," Ramachandran said. Meduri remembers feeling "enraged" when he first received the message. He, like the other juniors, was asked to submit some form of proper identification to Facebook indicating that he would be entering his junior year Saratoga High School in August. Meduri and Koneru were among the lucky ones — they successfully



Courtesy of KARTHIK RAMACHANDRAN

sent photographs of their student IDs to Facebook via text in the few days they were given. Ramachandran, however, wasn't as fortunate. He remembers sending pictures of his student ID multiple times to Facebook; each time, he received a message saying he had used the "wrong channel of communication" to provide identification. "It was frustrating because [Facebook] never told me what was the right channel," Ramachandran said. Eventually, Ramachandran relented and simply made a new account with his cellphone number, reasoning that reactivating his old account wasn't worth the trouble. "In the end, I'm pretty happy about it," Ramachandran said, "because all the stupid photos of me on my old account are gone." Aggarwal faced a similar predicament when he tried to reactivate his account. He was "forced into an infinite loop" in which he tried and failed to submit his ID to the site administration. After doing his own research, he found out that these loops occur when Facebook plans to delete an account completely. "I was quite enraged when I couldn't get my account back," Aggarwal said. "Long story short, my parents heard some choice words." In the end, only Koneru and Meduri were able to recover their original accounts, with Aggarwal and Ramachandran both creating new ones. However, the juniors still feel that Facebook should have acted differently. "This [policy] allows for people's accounts to be taken away for no reason," Meduri said. Considering that Ramachandran, Koneru, Aggarwal and Meduri are all close friends, Ramachandran assumes they were targeted. Nevertheless, he said he feels "no bitterness" over the incident — saying that in spite of all the trouble, making a new account gave him a clean slate. ♦

### Apps leak personal info

By Nidhi Jain & Julia Miller

Thirty-year old web developer Chris Grey signed into Venmo, an iPhone application used to send or receive money to friends, according to The Slate. With the volume of Venmo payments tripling to \$2.1 billion in the most recently reported quarter, according to The New York Times, the app has become one of the most popular, simple methods to conduct financial transactions. But when Grey looked at his checkings account, he noticed an irreversible transfer of \$3,000 to an unknown account. Over the years, Internet users have become increasingly comfortable letting websites and apps access their personal information, such as their address and credit card numbers, which has often resulted in permanent and disastrous consequences. Some of these apps, including Venmo, are small startups with fewer than 500 developers, often signifying a lack of a robust credit card security system. Venmo only is liable for up to only \$50 for any fraudulent activity, even in cases such as Grey's, and can often take several days to respond to urgent, fraud-related emails. "It's scary to think that an app as popular as Venmo doesn't have more accountability for such a huge mistake," said senior Naman Sajwan, a Venmo user. "It reminds us that we need to be more careful even with the most widely used apps." In order for developers to use credit card information in an iPhone application, they need to use third-party companies like Apple Pay that serve as Payment Gateways, which are applications that are completely dedicated to payment systems, thus preventing app developers from ever handling their users' credit card information themselves. According to the Apple Developer Forums, the main security concerns arise when customers think that credit

card transactions happen immediately. For example, fraudulent users on Venmo are able to access money by canceling transactions immediately after the app states that owed money has been transferred, when, in reality, the money has not been sent yet. Users' security is also a concern with popular apps like Uber. However, with multiple departments and thousands of employees, not including drivers and a work culture that focuses on maintaining quality customer service, Uber is more likely to keep its customers' information safe. "We try very hard to find good technical skills and an even better cultural fit for the company," said class of 2012 alumnus Vineet Jain, a current software engineer at Uber. "[Fitting in culturally with the work atmosphere] allows employees to be extremely passionate about what they're making and how the customers are affected." Because of the efforts at Uber, security issues are more likely to be handled in an immediate manner, according to Jain. Similarly, the app Poshmark — used to buy and sell clothing from other users — has also slowly risen in popularity since its debut in 2011. The front page of the app links users to a page selling "designer clothes." Poshmark users not only give out their personal information such as their address and credit card information, but also risk the possibility of buying fake designer clothes from a seller they've never met. Junior Katrina Sung has used Poshmark for about a year, and she has had only positive experiences with the app. Most Poshmark users don't question anyone's intentions, since the app appears "organized, convenient and efficient," Sung said. "I know that [users] share the same struggles of staying trendy and financially stable," Sung said. "[Poshmark is] pretty popular among my friends, and there aren't very many cases of fraud, so I'm not worried." ♦



GRAPHIC BY SANJANA MELKOTE

GRAPHIC BY KITTY HUANG

## Housing prices lead to long commutes for teachers

By Leena Elzeiny & Claire Rhee

English 11 Honors and MAP teacher Natasha Ritchie wakes just after sunrise in her house in Santa Cruz each school day and is already in her car by 6:20 a.m., ready to start her usual 45 minutes or longer commute to work. Ritchie is among the dozens of Saratoga High teachers who have to commute from outside of Saratoga. Due to the extremely high housing prices in Los Gatos-Saratoga district, those teachers almost always live in more affordable communities. A school directory shows that 36 of about the roughly 70 Saratoga High teachers live in San Jose, Santa Clara or Campbell, and at least 18 live in Santa Cruz, Aptos or Soquel. In contrast, only 12 teachers actually live in either Saratoga or Los Gatos. While housing in places like Santa Cruz and Campbell is far from cheap, they cost a lot less than housing in Saratoga and Los Gatos. On average, teachers in the Bay Area are usually paid a salary of anywhere from \$60,000-\$100,000 depending on how long they have been teaching and the degrees they have earned. The highest-paid Saratoga High teacher — one with 75 units beyond a master's degree — will earn \$129,157, according to the district salary schedule. The minimum starting salary for a full-time teacher in the district is \$65,124. That puts the price of a home in Saratoga — about \$2.3 million — far out of the reach of most teachers, even if their spouses work full time in high-paying jobs. Moreover, with a monthly salary in the range of \$5,000-\$8,333, most teachers would be unlikely to

be able to pay the median monthly rent of \$5,225 for a house in Saratoga, according to Trulia. "There's no question that my family couldn't afford to buy or even rent in Saratoga," Ritchie said. "[But] I lived in Santa Cruz before I started working in Saratoga, and I knew that I would be committing to commuting, since I love both places." In general, it has often been easier for teachers who have been teaching here for 10 or more years to have found a home in a commutable location, whereas young teachers often have a more difficult time finding affordable housing in the Bay Area. While most teachers cannot afford to live in Saratoga or Los Gatos, people with occupations in the medical or technology fields earn wages that give them the opportunity to live here. In the Bay Area, doctors collect a salary of about \$300,000, roughly three times the amount that teachers earn annually, according to TIME magazine. Most computer engineers, according to Sokanu, receive a median salary of \$111,730 nationally, and their salaries are often far higher in the Bay Area. AP Calculus BC and engineering teacher Audrey Warmuth used to be an engineer with greater potential for a high salary. After she graduated from McGill University in Canada with a degree in mechanical engineering, she worked for a company Bombardier. After having her second child, however, she decided to give up her job as an engineer and become a teacher. Despite the lower pay, Warmuth said she made the right decision. "I wanted [a job] that had more [interpersonal] relationships," Warmuth

said. "When the lessons [in class] go well, I can't imagine a better feeling. I feel like a world is opening up to [the students], and being able to be a part of that and to witness that feels really good." Besides teachers, Bay Area firefighters and nurses have also had a hard time trying to find stable housing in the area in recent years. "The wage gap between industries is frankly astounding at times," class of 2009 alumna Adela Chang, now a software engineer at Crunchyroll, said. "Many of my classmates would be happy just to make half of what my computer science friends are making, even though their work may be just as challenging in its own way." According to the San Jose Mercury News, the median price for a home in the Bay Area reached a new record high of \$750,000 in May. With such high prices becoming the new normal, many people are moving inland to communities such as Hayward and Alameda, where the prices are more manageable. As more people move away from here, schools in the Bay Area are losing highly respected teachers and other staff members. Monta Vista High School recently lost at least four of its teachers, including the long-time journalism adviser and American Studies teacher Michelle Balmeo, who moved to Albany, Oregon, due to the long commute to work and expensive housing in



GRAPHIC BY ANGELA LEE

the Bay Area. "[Balmeo's] Writing for Publication course definitely got me and quite a few others really interested in journalism because she had such an interesting way of teaching," Monta Vista senior Shriya Deshpande said. "When we were learning how to write reviews, she brought in a variety of donuts for us to taste and rate and observe how other critics wrote effective reviews." According to the San Francisco Chronicle, as housing prices continue to soar, schools have discussed the possibility of building housing specifically for teachers and staff with the hope that it will help retain teachers in the costly area. "If [the building] is done right, it could potentially be really interesting," Ritchie said. "But, it's always hard to have a place to [build housing], someone who's willing to put forth the money as an investment and actually making sure it solves the problem." ♦

### TRAVELS

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countries in Europe, including France, Germany and Turkey. Despite the attacks, Prowse and her friends, twin sisters Gwyneth and Gwyneverer Hunger, had planned their senior trip months before. While security guards and police intruding on her vacation was often inconvenient, Prowse felt a little more comforted by the precautions the European officials took. Prowse said that during the Tour De France, an annual bicycle race with participants from around the globe, everyone was searched and bags were checked as they entered the perimeter. Prowse also noted the extra security underneath the Eiffel Tower, as she was inspected for dangerous objects. Similarly, Italy had tanks on the streets with armored guards that stood post at the various monuments. During sophomore Jenna El-Ashmawi's trip to Egypt over the summer, she saw that not only were there tanks on the street, but also that checkpoints were placed every few

miles on the highway. The local people were also more cautious around tourists, and El-Ashmawi's family warned her to be more aware and to take care in public places. "The area was really unsafe and the security was from the army," El-Ashmawi said. "I did feel nervous, but I knew I wouldn't have gone if my parents didn't think it was safe." Like Prowse and El-Ashmawi, Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguez was well aware of the several terrorist attacks that had been occurring around the globe when he traveled to Greece, Russia, Turkey and Italy. Due to a coup in Istanbul, Rodriguez's cruise ship was forced to make a stop at Athens instead. While on his trip, a cargo truck deliberately drove through crowds celebrating Bastille Day on July 14 in Nice, France, killing or injuring hundreds of people. According to Stanford News, terrorists are more frequently utilizing everyday vehicles like trucks for mass murder, allowing those inexperienced with guns or bombs to easily pull off an effective attack. Despite the events occurring in neighboring countries, Rodriguez said that he noticed extra security only in Italy, where security

guards paid more attention and showed a larger presence toward suspicious behavior and actions. Travelers themselves are also being more cautious of their surroundings. "When you travel you're apprehensive, and in smaller cities like Nice, you wouldn't expect something crazy to happen while traveling," Rodriguez said. "I never felt unsafe, but never felt 100 percent comfortable because of the things that were going on." Though Prowse, Ashmawi, and Rodriguez were able to enjoy their trips and return home safely, two college students from UC Berkeley were not as fortunate. Nicolas Leslie, who was studying abroad in Nice, was killed during the terrorist attack there that

claimed the lives of 86 people. "This is tragic, devastating news," UC Berkeley Chancellor Nicholas Dirks said in an article for Berkeley News. "All of us in the UC Berkeley family—both here on campus, and around the world are heartbroken to learn that another promising student has been lost to senseless violence," Dirks said. His death came weeks after the death of another student, sophomore Tarishi Jain, who was killed in a hostage situation by Islamic Militants in Dhaka, Bangladesh. She had been working in an e-commerce growth internship at Eastern Bank. A memorial was held for both students on their school campus weeks after their deaths, and in honor of the countless others killed by violent attacks that now plague parts of Europe and Asia. ♦



Spanish teacher ARNALDO RODRIGUEX

I never felt unsafe, but never felt 100 percent comfortable because of the things that were going on.

## Relevance of classical literature in curriculums debated

By Isabelle Yang

During a recent class, the juniors in English teacher Amy Keys's 11 period 3 Honors class held copies of Arthur Miller's play "The Crucible" in their hands. They were engaged in a Socratic Seminar, sharing quotes from the story of 17th century Puritan life. Talk of "the Devil," "witchcraft" and magical rituals to conjure the dead filled the room. To many students, the classic works of literature taught in English classes seem hard to understand and frankly irrelevant, raising the question: Is reading something written decades, or even centuries, ago relevant to students in 2016? Although the exact definition of a "classic" is debatable, literary scholars generally agree that classics are books that have survived a lengthy amount of time and have retained a universal appeal. In the case of "The Crucible," English teacher Natasha Ritchie points out that the

story is a historical allegory for the 1950s Red Scare, when people believed to be Communists were sought after "witch-hunt" style. Ritchie said that both the Salem Witch Trials and the trials of the Red Scare demonstrate the constant tension between individuals and government — an issue that is still applicable today. Even from a play written 64 years ago about an event that took place 324 years ago, themes such as persecution of certain people, scapegoating because of fear and martyrdom for a cause are still "extremely relevant," Ritchie said. While many professionals and educators consider classics to be "timeless," students are split on the debate. Some, like sophomore Mark Guidry, believe they should be replaced with more modern or "interesting" literature. "Even though classics are considered valuable in literature, there are a lot of books other than the classics that would have a better message," Guidry said. According to Guidry, modern novels such

as "Harry Potter" and "Milk and Honey" have great morals and themes. Yet according to Ritchie, plenty of modern works — not just classics — are difficult to read, but "this doesn't mean we shouldn't read them." When her classes are reading required classics, Ritchie said she tries to engage her students in discussions and group activities, in addition to providing current articles with the same theme, recordings and video clips. One skill that Ritchie and the other English teachers focus heavily on is close reading — the ability to read with careful, sustained interpretation of a text. In this case, it is great to use difficult works like the classics, because according to sophomore Ferrenie Liu, "[they] usually have deep meanings for students to analyze, strengthening their critical thinking skills." Aside from improving readers' critical thinking skills, researchers in a 2013 study published in the journal "Science" found that reading classics leads to better social perception and emotional intelligence. For this reason, classics have been a part of high school curriculum for decades and will be well into the future. But what if English teachers want to up-

date their curriculum and replace an older book with a more modern one? According to Ritchie, adding even one book title costs the school district thousands of dollars, but when the English teachers "find one that is worth it, [they] go through the process of getting the book adopted and approved." She said the process of adding a book to the curriculum is extensive, but it ensures that every book, including the traditional classics, are in the curriculum because of their value to students. One of these newly included books is "The Kite Runner," a book that has all the literary merits of older books but may even arguably present a more readable message because of its modern setting. The key, according to English teachers, is that the classic works teach deep lessons about the human condition. "There is a reason why 'the classics' became classics. Gatsby's struggles with idealism and contentment resonate with us. Hamlet's often sassy and always complex contemplations of life's struggles are still brilliant," Ritchie said. "Each classic, in its own right, has themes about humanity that are relevant to the critical reader." ♦



PIERCE

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31 winning seasons, 16 league championships, a county title and four CCS crowns. His coaching record of 270-84-4 is nothing short of astounding.

His 1980 team ended the season undefeated and ranked sixth nationally. At one point, he was the winningest football coach in California.

During Pierce's last year at Saratoga High, the school held a dinner for his departure, naming the football field the Benny Pierce Field. The field would come to serve as a reminder of the inspiration and success he had brought to hundreds of his players over the years.

"I'm proud to have his name on our field because it represents what is great about high school athletics," principal Paul Robinson said. "It's not about winning. It's about growing to become the best person you can be."

Pierce, now 82, still lives in Los Gatos and was happy to reminisce about the glory days of Saratoga football. As he reflects on it now, the element of wonder still lingers on his face.

"It was one of those things, where we were fortunate and we came together at the right time," he said.

The example to follow

Coaching was more than a hobby for him.

"Even though I was home at nights, my mind was on football," Pierce said. "I thought about who to put here, who to put there."

His interest in coaching began in the fields of his alma mater, Los Gatos High School. It was his baseball coach, a man named Harold Sonntag, who inspired him to pursue a profession in coaching and who "set the example" for him.

Pierce went on to play for San Jose State University's football team as a quarterback and linebacker. When he threw the ball, one of his targets was Bill Walsh, who later led the San Francisco 49ers to three Super Bowl wins. At San Jose State, Pierce familiarized himself with strategies while also discovering that some coaches did not get along with their players.

"The coach wasn't personal," Pierce said. "And you learn from these negative coaching experiences as well as from positive experiences."

After graduating, Pierce served three years in the Air Force until March of 1959. The following September, he joined Saratoga High's first set of staff as the physical education instructor and football coach.

Victories pile up

On the football field, Pierce found success early and credits the team's many wins to talented players and assistant coaches. Throughout his time at SHS, the team had only one losing season: the first year.

"It was a long year," Pierce said. "You find out that you don't really like to lose."

In the 1960s, the Falcons gathered enough momentum to achieve a high level of success. When the team came out victorious, people accepted whatever Pierce had to say; when they had trouble winning, people sometimes questioned what he did.

"In other words, we worked the system, and if the players did what they were supposed to, they could be successful," Pierce said.

He stressed that each player contributed to the team's victories. Even

in the years with many players on the team, he tried to make each one feel important. Class of 1987 alumnus Steve Leonard vividly remembers Pierce repeating that it took even practice squad players to gain each victory.

"Pierce's teams were always great, no matter if they had superstars or not," Leonard said. "He always made them work."

For Pierce, it is not the victories compiled but rather the players he coached that he remembers most vividly.

"I never thought about accomplishment," Pierce said. "It was always [about] being able to help young people become good people. I tried to make them better football players, a better team and maybe better men."

Sizing up the opposition

To Pierce, football was not a mere sport, but rather a way of life. He instilled into his players this sense of dedication and love for the sport through endless hours of practice and drills.

Pierce also weaved in humor, telling his players, "I've seen better hands on a clock," or "All State's got better hands than you do," whenever they dropped the football.

When it came time for games, the team had a home field disadvantage — games were primarily held at Los Gatos High because Saratoga did not have a turf field or lights for night games. The team made up for this disadvantage with hours practicing and air-tight game plans that he taught his players to execute.

"It's like playing a chess game. You try to out-manuever the other person," Pierce said. "It's always about how you can outsmart their defense, and have your defense stop what they are doing."

Because the team was often outmanned physically, they lined their players up at an angle to avoid one-on-one blocking. When they gathered during halftime, they discussed these strategies and listened to Pierce's energetic pep talks.

"His halftime inspirational and motivational speeches always pumped the entire team up," Leonard said. "We would always come out of halftime ready to play in the second half."

These speeches were almost always followed by victories. Bus rides back to school were never complete without the song players had created for winning occasions. Even the custodian, who would be waiting back at school, joined the singing and celebration.

When the team did leave in defeat, Pierce used it as a motivator to work harder the next week.

"You are the only guys who think you can win tonight. If you don't think you're going to win you will never win. You've got to believe in yourself."

former coach BENNY PIERCE

"It's not like I couldn't stand losing, but I always wanted to win," Pierce said. "If it doesn't bother you when you lose a game, there is something wrong."

When it comes to today's SHS teams, which have had difficulty finding the same success as Pierce's teams, Pierce sees numbers as the major problem. He believes that SHS has talented players, but not enough team members and not enough raw size. During Pierce's coaching career, his team averaged around 40 players, larger than today's teams.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:

Benny Pierce gives the 1978 varsity team a pep talk during a timeout.

From left to right, Pierce and his fellow varsity coaches Mike Devine and Don Baroni survey the field in 1966.

Pierce and players pledge allegiance before a game in 1980.

Pierce watches closely during a 1982 home game against Monta Vista High.

Pierce lifts the 1972 team's county championship trophy.



Courtesy of THE TALISMAN

"You need size for football and you don't have that right now," he said. "Sometimes you are just out-manned."

During the 2015 season, Pierce came to give the team a pre-game talk, huddling up the players in the locker room. Coach Tim Lugo put up his hands when Pierce asked how many players thought they would win that night.

"That's good," Pierce told them. "Because you are the only guys that think you can win tonight. If you don't think you are going to win, you will never win. You've got to believe in yourself!"

The magic of believing

Pierce's relationship with his players brought lasting memories and seasons. Take, for instance, 1987, the year the Falcons tied for third in the league and eked into CCS after winning a coin flip. "The team defeated Monterey and marched off the field as the most unlikely of CCS champions."

"I always call them the Cinderella team because it came from nowhere," Pierce said.

"It was seasons like the miracle '87 team that still bring a smile to Pierce's face. Some of his fondest memories, however, came from the support of his family and community.

His wife Mignon, who passed away in 2015, was one of his staunchest supporters. Rather than tell him criticisms she had heard while sitting in the stands, she instead always asked him why he had run a certain play.

"[My wife] was good, and she didn't want me to know who said what," Pierce said. "For college coaches or professional coaches, their families sitting at the stands take a lot of abuse. It's very tough on the family."

Pierce himself received many college coaching opportunities, from being an assistant coach at San Jose State University to being the head coach at De Anza College, but he chose to stay at Saratoga High out of "loyalty" and love for his players.

"I was spoiled coaching for Saratoga, to be honest," he said. "There were always challenges, but I loved the school and loved the kids and loved the area. It's hard to pass up."

With so many fond memories and his deep love for the school, it was difficult for Pierce to finally retire. But in 1991, after Pierce had suffered from a heart attack and had bypass surgery, the superintendent offered him and a small group of teachers the chance to retire under attractive terms. Pierce surprised himself by saying, "Yes."

"I had not contemplated retire-

ment at that age. You never know what's going to happen in your life," Pierce said. "Over the years as a football coach, people would think you have extra time. You really don't."

Luckily, Pierce could still coach football, which he continued to do as an assistant coach and then on and off before leaving the high school scene for good in 1994. "My heart was that I wanted to teach and I wanted to coach, so that's kind of what I was fortunate to do," he said. "It's a great profession, being able to direct lives. I was very blessed."

It's been more than two decades since he stepped away from the field. Pierce has attended football games and kept in contact with his past players.

In all the years he was coaching, Pierce said he never expected to become a local legend. But as he looks back on his legacy, he thinks not of his wins but rather of the players who still come back to visit, telling him that playing football here changed their lives. For Pierce, coaching was a blessing.

"As a coach, I never got up a day in my life thinking, 'I do not want to go to work today,'" he said. "It's not that everything is easy, but I enjoyed what I did and enjoyed the people I worked with." ♦

FOOTBALL

Team bounces back after rough start

By Apoorv Kwatra, Trevor Leung & Siva Sambasivam

Coming off a two-game win streak, the Falcons are heading into their game tonight against Leigh with confidence. Winning tonight would push their preseason record to 3-1, with their only loss being 27-26 heart-breaker to Half Moon Bay on Aug. 26 in their home opener.

After a convincing away win against Silver Creek on Sept. 2, the team hoped to carry on their newfound momentum into the game against Piedmont Hills last Friday. In this game, the team found themselves behind 13-9 at halftime after a first half plagued with dropped passes, pressure on their quarterback and an ineffective defensive presence against Silver Creek.

Throughout the first half, senior quarterback William Liddle had difficulties connecting with his core group of receivers as the pressure of the Pirates' defensive line kept getting to him.

Immediately as the second half started, though, Liddle threw a laser beam pass to junior wide receiver Harrison Fong for a momentum-shifting 50-yard touchdown pass. Following the extra point, the Falcons had

a 16-13 lead, a lead they never gave up after their defense stiffened.

With a breakout game from junior running back Robert Scott, and a stellar effort from senior defensive end Aaron Vogel, the Falcons shut the Pirates out in the second half, winning the game 29-13.

Scott led the Falcons by going for 107 yards with 22 carries to go along with his three touchdowns.

Liddle threw for 251 yards on 26-37 passing, and one touchdown. Eight of Liddle's completions were to Fong, who finished the game with 137 yards and a touchdown.

After the team's opening loss to Half Moon Bay, coach Tim Lugo said he was not worried about its impact on his team. With a little polishing up of fundamentals, he was sure his team will bounce back.

Said Lugo: "We have great leadership; I know we will respond with a win Friday night at Silver Creek."

Lugo could not have been more correct, as the Falcons bounced back from their opening loss with a convincing 28-13 victory.

"We really focused on improving our mistakes from the first game," senior wide receiver Rajat Vora said. "We could notice a significant difference in our play quality between the game against Half Moon Bay and the game against Silver Creek."

The Falcons worked on their passing and running games in practices between the Half Moon Bay and the Silver Creek games.

"Going into the game [against Silver Creek], we knew we just had to play our game to win," Fong said. "[We knew we had to] be able to throw and run the ball [better than we did against Half Moon Bay]," Fong said. The Half Moon Bay game is one the Falcons were determined to learn from.

"We came out strong in the first half [against Half Moon Bay], but our defense just gave Half Moon Bay too many rushing yards," Vogel said.

In the fourth quarter, Lugo had an important decision to make after the Falcons scored a touchdown to get them within one point of Half Moon Bay, with a score of 27-26. Lugo could have the team either go for the 2-point



Senior wide receiver Kian Ghelichkhani catches a well-thrown pass in the opening game on Aug. 26 vs. Half Moon Bay High School. The Falcons lost 27-26.

conversion and the win, or go for the extra point, tie the game, and go into overtime.

Under pressure, he made the decision to go for the win, mainly because of overtime rules: Each team gets four plays from the 10-yard line and whoever is ahead after a possession is the winner.

"Based on how much success [the Cougars] double-wing formation had in the second half, I didn't feel we could win in that format," Lugo said. Betting instead on Liddle's second-half

conversion and the win, or go for the extra point, tie the game, and go into overtime. Unfortunately, however, the two intended receivers accidentally collided, forcing Liddle to scramble and run the ball on his own. He was eventually tackled by the defense, ending the Falcons' chances for the win. ♦

FALCON FOCUS

Senior plans to sail in college

By Emily Chen

Saltwater splashing into her face, senior Lilah Foster maneuvered her boat across the water in Santa Cruz, near the beach in front of the beloved Boardwalk Amusement Park.

Donning her salt-crusted sunglasses, go-to baseball cap, hydrophobic pants, sport tech shirt and lifejacket, Foster braved a typical day on the water.

"It's super cool to sail right next to the Boardwalk because it is such a beautiful place," Foster said, "and it is super cool to see the Boardwalk from another angle."

During the school year, Foster sails at the Santa Cruz Yacht Club two to three times a week for drills and practice races.

Every month or so, she competes in a regatta with 15 to 20 other boats. These boat races occur in locations such as Oakland, Richmond, Sausalito and Half Moon Bay.

Sometimes taking on the role of a skipper and other times the role of the crew, Foster teams up with another sailor to race other two-person boats.

As the skipper, she aims to find clean air, which is wind unobstructed by other boats, and directs the boat by managing the main

sheet and the tiller.

The main sheet is a rope that controls the main sail, and the tiller connects to the rudder.

The crew assists the skipper with various tasks like controlling the smaller sail and moving around the boat to distribute weight in a way that maximizes the boat's speed.

These races take place on courses

"You are going fast; the wind is in your face, and it is the closest feeling to flying [I've ever experienced]."

senior LILAH FOSTER

es that are designed to take about 45 minutes to complete.

Depending on the direction and strength of the wind, the course may be shortened or lengthened, with the average course being about 3 miles long. When she is the skipper — her favorite position — Foster loves finding ways to win the race.

"I always have to look five steps ahead because I need to make sure that where I am on the course is the most optimal position and [check]

if there is more wind on the other side," she said. "I always have to be thinking about what other people might do so I can get to clean air."

Her involvement in sailing began at a summer camp in Harrison, Maine, that she has attended annually since she started as a camper at age 9.

This past year, Foster attended the camp for the first time as a counselor, teaching children about sailing.

"It was a pretty smooth transition [from being a camper to being a counselor]," said Foster. "It's nice because I also have friends who were campers, so I have a different relationship with them."

Foster plans to continue her sailing career in college.

The process for recruitment in sailing is similar to that of any other sport, in which athletes are individually recruited to the team.

Not many schools have varsity sailing teams, but some have club teams that Foster may join.

Through her years of sailing, Foster has found a particular joy in "hiking out," which is when a sailor steers the boat while leaning off the side, providing an experience unique to her sport.

"You are going fast; the wind is in your face, and it is the closest feeling to flying," Foster said. ♦



Senior Lilah Foster races at the Stevenson Cup regatta at Feb. 16.

Courtesy of LILAH FOSTER



# FALL SPORTS

## FOOTBALL: TEAM EYES IMPROVEMENT FROM LAST SEASON

**Head coach:** Tim Lugo  
**2015-2016 league record:** 2-4  
**2015-2016 recap:** The Falcons did not qualify for CCS after finishing their season with a record of 2-4.  
**Key additions:** quarterback Niko Rositano, wide receiver Harrison Fong, defensive tackle Allie Liddle, wide receiver Will Turpin. All are juniors.  
**Key opponents:** Milpitas, Wilcox, Los Gatos  
**Star athletes:** seniors wide receiver Kian Ghelichkhani, quarterback Will Liddle, running back Nolan Chao, defensive tackle Aaron Vogel, lineman Jesse Chung, juniors quarterback Niko Rositano, wide receiver Harrison Fong, defensive tackle Allie Liddle, wide receiver Will Turpin  
**Key losses (graduated athletes):** Adam Camp, Vinny Faylor, Vincent Kung, Michael Kazmierczak  
**League:** Santa Clara Valley Athletics League, De Anza League  
**Prognosis:** "We are expecting to make it to the playoffs," senior Rajat Vora said. "Anything less is a failure."

Although the Falcons lost many important players to graduation, including Adam Camp and Michael Kazmierczak, they come into the league season with a skilled group. They hope to rebound from last season's subpar performance and earn a CCS bid.  
 Their improvement did not wait until their season started, as they trained hard all summer long.  
 "In the summer, we practiced a lot on our individual skills along with trying to get better as a team," Vora said.  
 Their diligence has continued during the season, as they prepare for upcoming games.  
 "We are trying our best to stay healthy and focused throughout the season," Vora said. "We will prepare by practicing hard and staying motivated."  
 With this dedication instilled in the whole team, from the coaches to each individual player, the team seems to be on the path to improve on their last season. ♦

—Apoorv Kwatra and Trevor Leung



Senior wide receiver Kian Ghelichkhani avoids a Half Moon Bay defender on Aug. 26.

FALCON // KEVIN COUCH

## CROSS COUNTRY: STRONG NEW RUNNERS HELP REBUILD TEAM

**Head coaches:** Scott Bang (boys) and Dany Moon (girls)  
**2015-2016 recap:** The boys placed 12th at California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) State Meet in Division III and fourth overall in the De Anza League and won their division in CCS, led by CCS Champion alumnus Matthew Peterson. The girls did not qualify for the state meet.  
**Key additions:** junior Anirudh Rao, freshman Kole Tippetts, Jinghao Wang and Sahaj Rastogi (boys); freshman Julia Hoffman (girls)

**Key opponents:** Lynbrook, Los Gatos  
**Star athletes:** senior Nick Sum, junior Amit Nag, sophomores Nirav Adunuthula, David Berkowitz-Sklar (boys); junior Miranda Song, sophomore Sasha Pickard (girls)  
**Key losses (graduated athletes):** Roinin Staunovo Polacco (moved schools), Stephen Law, Matt Peterson and Kevin Duong-Le (boys); Kimberly Chen and Ashley Chen (girls)  
**League:** De Anza League  
**Prognosis:** "I've noticed a difference in

dedication to the sport this year. I truly believe [the boys' team] are all in for defending our CCS crown," boys' head coach Scott Bang said.  
 Having lost four of its five fastest runners, the boys' team is looking to rebuild, win CCS and improve on last year's performance at the state meet.  
 With 50 total members, including many key underclassmen additions, Bang hopes the team can place in the top 10 this year at the state meet.

"We have more depth this year," Bang said. "We have 12 to 14 runners pushing for our seven varsity spots, so we have a lot of healthy competition in practice."  
 The girls' team, which was plagued by injuries last season, hopes to make CCS, led by a strong group of underclassmen.  
 "There are a lot of new girls that show a lot of potential, and I'm excited to see how they perform in the upcoming meets," junior captain Miranda Song said. ♦

—Andrew Owens and Kyle Wang

## BOYS' WATER POLO: PLAYERS WORK TO FILL IN MISSING GAPS

**Head coach:** Jacob Young  
**2015-2016 record:** 8-2 overall, 2-1 in league  
**2015-2016 recap:** The team lost 10-9 in the finals of the league season during double overtime against Homestead High School.  
**Key additions:** juniors Nathan Chin, Alan Lu and Roland Shen, sophomores Ryan Busse and Andrew Gao  
**Key matchups:** Homestead, Lynbrook  
**Star players:** seniors William Lew, Armin Agha-Ebrahim, David Nguyen, Chris Metz and Grant Guzzo  
**Key losses (graduated athletes):** Mason Lee, Noah Quanrud, Davis Robertson and Graham Schmelzer  
**League:** Santa Clara Valley Athletics League, El Camino Division  
**Prognosis:** "We're expecting a great season

with lots of close games and a good chance at CCS," junior hole defender Nathan Chin said.  
 After losing four key players to graduation, the Falcons are looking to make up for the loss by training harder in practice.  
 "They will focus on learning each other's strengths and weaknesses to use them to their advantage."  
 "A challenge is not having a dedicated hole set, [a position that focuses on scoring, so] we have to try unorthodox strategies," senior utility William Lew said.  
 The water polo team will also face another challenge in being undersized physically after the four players graduated last year.  
 "We practiced extra hard this year to deal with our physical weaknesses. Key members are leading and motivating the team."  
 junior ALAN LU

"We practiced extra hard this year to deal with our physical weaknesses," junior Alan Lu said. "Key senior members are leading and motivating the rest of the team." ♦

—Jay Kim and Michelle Lee



Senior Grant Guzzo tries to score over defenders against Half Moon Bay on Aug. 25.

FALCON // ASHLEY FENG

## GIRLS' WATER POLO: A SHOT AT PLAYOFFS IN A NEW LEAGUE

**Head coach:** Jerome Chung  
**2015-2016 record:** 2-10 regular season  
**2015-2016 recap:** After half of the starting lineup graduated, the team quickly regrouped but fell far short of making it to CCS.  
**Key additions:** sophomores Madi Hartman and Maddie Stuart, juniors Aileen Zhang and Vivien Zhang  
**Key matchups:** Homestead, Milpitas, Wilcox  
**Star players:** seniors Kailyn Koerber, Kanika Vora and Sophie Sellers  
**Key losses (graduated athletes):** Haley Rositano and Jace Welton  
**League:** Santa Clara Valley Athletics League, El Camino Division  
**Prognosis:** "If we put the effort in, and if

we really focus on what [our coach] wants us to do, then we can make it to the top in leagues this year," sophomore Maddie Stuart said. "And that's what we're all striving for."  
 After ending last season with a 2-11 record and being moved to the less competitive El Camino Division this year, the team is confident it can make playoffs and even win in its division.  
 "We have a new coach, we have a lot of new girls on the team and we're in a new league. I think we have a lot of potential, and we just need to play up to it," senior Kanika Vora said.  
 New head coach Jerome Chung started coaching at Saratoga after training with

*New head coach Jerome Chung has enforced training regiments during practice to prepare the Falcons for the upcoming season.*

Lynbrook's boys' water polo team. He has enforced training regiments during practice to prepare the Falcons for the upcoming season.  
 With the exception of the goalies, he wants to make sure each player can cover every position equally well.  
 "[Our coach] takes practice very seri-

—Ashley Feng

# 2016



GRAPHIC BY FRANCESCA CHU, ASHLEY FENG AND AMY TANG

## GIRLS' TENNIS: TEAM HOPES TO BE LEAGUE CHAMPIONS FOR FOURTH STRAIGHT YEAR

**Head coach:** Florin Marica  
**Assistant coach:** Jonathon Chui  
**2015-2016 record:** 11-1  
**2015-2016 recap:** The team finished the season as defending league champions for the fourth straight year and second at CCS and NorCals after falling short against Menlo in both tournaments.  
**Key additions:** freshman Monica Stratos, sophomore Khiara Berkowitz  
**Star players:** seniors Caitlin Ju and Neeka Nikfar  
**Key losses (graduated athletes):** Shaya Nikfar, Meera Rachamalla, Shireen Haghshenas and Allison Lin  
**League:** Santa Clara Valley Athletics League, De Anza League  
**Prognosis:** "I think our team will definitely be able to exceed our last season's achievements with the addition of five strong players, and bring home a CCS and NorCals

viory," senior Neeka Nikfar said. "We are focusing on making the most out of our practices while also designating time for team bonding to strengthen our teamwork."  
 After claiming its fourth consecutive league championship and placing second at NorCals and CCS last season, falling short to rival Menlo High, the top seed, in both tournaments, the team hopes to exceed last year's success by winning

NorCals.  
 "We lost four key players, but we are looking forward to another great season with an even stronger team," senior Kelly Hsu said. "I'm confident that we will be able to win the league championship and hopefully even win CCS."  
 The team is looking forward to respond to last year's second place finishes after the losses to Menlo High.  
 "We have five new strong players this year and I think we are definitely capable of achieving another league championship and even winning NorCals."



senior SHREYA INGLE

year and I think we are definitely capable of achieving another league championship and even winning NorCals," senior Shreya Ingle said. "Menlo is considered to be the best team in our area, so we look forward to playing and hopefully beating them this year."  
 Though the team ended with a league record of 11-1 after a devastating 4-3 loss to Monta Vista High last season, the girls are determined to stay strong and finish the year undefeated.  
 "Right now, we are focusing on taking each match and tournament one at a time so that in the end, we will end up with good results," coach Florin Marica said.  
 The girls placed first at the California Tennis Classic tournament held in Fresno on Sept. 9 and 10, after beating Oakridge High in the finals. ♦

—Elizabeth Lee and Sanjana Melkote

## GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL: FALCONS HOPE TO SOAR IN LOWER LEAGUE

**Head coach:** Brad Fredrickson  
**2015-2016 record:** 12-19  
**2015-2016 recap:** The team lost in the quarterfinals of CCS to Notre Dame after finishing as the No. 8 overall seed in the De Anza League.  
**Key additions:** sophomore middle Audrey Adams, junior middle Jacqueline Schwartz, junior outside Hannah Fan  
**Key matchups:** Lynbrook, Gunn, Los Gatos  
**Star players:** senior libero Julia Vita, junior outside Riley Carter, junior setter Dasha

Gousseva, junior middle Isabella Strawn  
**Key losses (graduated athletes):** Amanda Meserve, Nicole Chiou, Jennifer Chen  
**League:** Santa Clara Valley Athletics League, El Camino League  
**Prognosis:** "Our coach is expecting us to hopefully win every game since we are in a lower league," junior outside Riley Carter said.  
 The girls' volleyball team hopes to capitalize on their move down from the De Anza League to the El Camino League this

year by taking home the league championship. To get there and to fill gaps left by the 2016 alumni, the team will move up five players from JV.  
 "The new five players are a fairly young group, but they're all experienced in volleyball," Vita said. "All the returning players are working together to be better teachers for [the younger players] and help improve their skills overall so it will bring up our team's level."  
 Helping the younger players allows the team to bond more and improve their

teamwork, which has grown tremendously over past years according to Vita. The girls also hope to develop their team chemistry, which will help them on the court, through team bonding events such as sleepovers and karaoke nights.  
 "It's great to have friends on the team and we get to grow closer together," Carter said. "It'll show on the court as we play better if we're more comfortable knowing where we are on the court." ♦

—Kitty Huang and Harshini Ramaswamy

## FIELD HOCKEY: TEAM CONTINUES TO HAVE LOW NUMBER OF PLAYERS

**Head coach:** Nanu Sidhu  
**2015-2016 record:** 18-3-1  
**2015-2016 recap:** With a roster of only 11 players, the team prevailed through league play and made it to the semifinals of CCS, where they lost to Los Gatos.  
**Key additions:** juniors forward Kate Bossi, defender Chanecé Gaskin, forward Siobhan Burgos, midfielder Valerie Yang and sophomore goalie Judy Yang  
**Key matchups:** Los Gatos and Monta Vista  
**Star players:** senior midfielder Emily Chen, defender Rachel Davey, forward Kelsey Kinoshita, midfielder Hannah Leonard, forward Tina Miller, defender Maxine Parr and defender Sophie Parr  
**Key losses (graduated athletes):** defender Sabrina Clark and midfielder Erin Norris  
**League:** Santa Clara Valley Athletics

League, De Anza League  
**Prognosis:** "I think we'll have a lot of fun like we always do, make it to CCS — hopefully finals — and hopefully beat I.G.," senior midfielder Hannah Leonard said.  
 With 12 players on the roster, one more than last year's, the field hockey team will have one sub during games as they look to replicate their success in leagues and CCS.  
 "There are big shoes to fill because of the people that we lost, but I definitely think that we can do it," senior forward Tina Miller said.  
 The team, comprised of seven seniors, four juniors and one sophomore, is under new direct leadership. Former head coach Lifon Huynh is preparing for the arrival of her baby, so she will become the assistant

coach this season. Nanu Sidhu, who had previously coached the JV field hockey team in 2013, will take the reins as head coach for the varsity team.  
 "The tight-knit team shares the aspirations of making CCS, beating rival Los Gatos and winning CCS. To get there, the Falcons have been working hard to improve their overall shape while on the field and to maintain their stamina, a priority due to limited subbing opportunities.  
 "The thing I admire most about the team is our commitment to do well," senior forward Kelsey Kinoshita said. "We all give 100 percent for sprints and conditioning, and we put in work during practice. We know it will pay off when it's game time." ♦

—Emily Chen



Senior Rachel Davey brings the ball up the field during a game against Homestead last fall.

COURTESY OF STEVEN CHEN

## GIRLS' GOLF: LOW SCORES AT TRYOUTS SHOW IMPROVEMENT

**Head coach:** Dave Gragnola  
**Assistant coach:** Louise Hall  
**2015-2016 record:** 6-8  
**2015-2016 recap:** After finishing 6-8 in the regular season, the team did not make CCS for teams or individuals.  
**Key additions:** Freshman Sally Kim  
**Key matchups:** Lynbrook, Los Gatos, Palo Alto, Gunn  
**Star players:** No. 1 player sophomore Janelle Jin, No. 2 player junior Sarah Lo  
**Key losses (graduated athletes):** Claire Leung, Ankitra Sarvesh  
**League:** Santa Clara Valley Athletics League, De Anza League  
**Prognosis:** "I think that we will do pretty well, but a lot of the lower teams who did not score as well moved down a league, so there will definitely be harder competition,"

sophomore Janelle Jin said.  
 After scores in the low 40s and lower from the top six players during tryouts, as well as the addition of No. 6 player freshman Sally Kim, the team looks forward to the upcoming season.  
 "[The low scores] means we improved from last year and that we'll play well and score lower during matches this year," No. 2 player junior Sarah Lo said. "[We'll] beat other teams so we can make it to league finals later in the season."  
 The team moved up from the El Camino League to the De Anza League, which features strong teams like Los Altos.  
 Another challenge the girls will face is playing on different courses. Saratoga Country Club, the team's home course, is

shorter than most other courses they will play at during the season, so they are focused on practicing with their longer clubs during practices.  
 Over the summer, head coach Dave Gragnola also brought some girls to play at the country club, and during practice, the team sometimes played games like Horseraces, in which players team up in groups of two and compete against each other. The team's goal is to build chemistry, which they believe is vital for success.  
 "Having a supportive team goes a long way in matches," said senior Cynthia Yang, the No. 3 player. "Words of encouragement or reassurance can really take the stress off of every player." ♦

—Trevor Leung



No. 1 player sophomore Janelle Jin watches her putt last fall in a match against Monta Vista.

COURTESY OF THE TALISMAN

>> snapshots



FALCON // ASHLEY FENG



FALCON // ISABELLE YANG



FALCON // ISABELLE YANG



FALCON // SANJANA MELKOTE

Sophomore Eric Lei prepares to pass the ball during a water polo game against Cupertino High on Sept. 8.

The sophomore class cheers loudly as classmates compete in the rally activities on Aug. 26.

Math teacher Debra Troxell speaks to the parents during Back to School night on Aug. 30.

Parent volunteer Annie Ying hands out burgers to students at the all school barbeque on Aug. 26.

**buzzworthy:** Cafeteria pizza sliced smaller, but same price

BY Pranav Ahuja & Julia Miller

During lunchtime a trail of students lines up behind the pizza cart, religiously relying on the cheesy goodness every day.

At the beginning of the school year, however, students have noticed a major difference in the pizza sizes: The slices are smaller, but have the same price tag.

The reason? The school has switched vendors: from Round Table Pizza to Mountain Mike's Pizza, according to cafeteria head Pam Carolina.

"Round Table raised their prices this year, so it isn't affordable anymore," Carolino said.

Although this subject may seem inconsequential, some students aren't fans of the change.



"I think it's extremely cheap for the school to charge me the same amount of money they

used to for a slice of pizza that's half the size," junior Gina Hinojosa said. "The school needs to lower the price of the pizza or bring back the old pizza."



I prefer Mountain Mike's to Round Table because it tastes better. But at the same time, my friends and I don't care about the taste. These kids need calories to work as hard as they do.



junior JAIJIT SINGH



Not all students are upset, however. Though smaller, the new pizza tastes much

better junior Jaijit Singh said.

"I prefer Mountain Mike's to Round Table because it tastes better," Singh said. "But at the same time, most of my friends and I don't care about the taste [as much as we do about the size]. Kids need calories to work as hard as they do."

Like Singh, freshman Monica Stratakos said the smaller serving size may be beneficial when looking at it from a health perspective.

"Considering that I play a lot of tennis, I really require the extra fuel the bigger slices give me," Stratakos said.

Although students may have differing views on the taste and size of the new pizza, one thing is for certain.

It seems there will always be long lines willing to pay \$2.50 for cafeteria pizza, no matter what its size is. ♦



FALCON // ISABELLE YANG

Students stand in line, patiently waiting for their pizza slices during lunch on Sept. 12.

A summer spent pursuing hoop dreams

RAW BASKETBALL PLAYER GAINS THE SKILLS TO DISPROVE HIS CRITIC

they see me rollin'

Roland Shen



"You'll never beat me. You'll never beat anyone."

These were the words that sent me on the path to basketball mastery and a life-changing experience.

With some encouragement by my friend, I started practicing at Foothill Elementary school's courts. I played with more experienced players, and being my first time, I made many mistakes. I played another game and again I lost severely. In addition to not knowing how to correctly play the game, I stand at 5-3, which puts me at a huge physical disadvantage.

Was this really the right thing to do? Couldn't I just concede and admit that I really couldn't beat anyone at basketball? Maybe I should just study more for the SAT.

But after that day of defeat, I went home embarrassed and frustrated; it wasn't my fault I was a good foot shorter than everyone else. As the anger simmered down and my head cleared, I focused on a lingering desire to prove those who had doubted me wrong. I was going to be a respected basketball player, and I vowed that I would wipe that conde-

scending smirk off that guy's face: "You'll never beat anyone." Those words stuck.

It was hard at first. Twenty shots only yielded one basket, and that one was probably from sheer luck. The first month was extremely frustrating — everyone else I played with was able to score with ease, while I was still struggling to clumsily toss balls against the backboard. Some people laughed and said I looked like a grandma, and for those first few days, I sure felt like one.

I kept practicing. I spent hours on week-

*Whenever I grew frustrated watching my shots miss the hoop time after time again, the thought of those words would push me forward.*

ends at Foothill, playing pickup games with friends and people I barely knew, sometimes shooting by myself for more than three hours after they had left. Picture that lone kid in that one movie who's practicing by himself, silhouetted against the setting sun, hand on his hips and panting hard, dripping sweat, while the "Rocky" theme song blasts in the background. That was me.

Whenever I grew frustrated watching my

shots miss the hoop time after time again, the thought of those words would push me forward. "You'll never beat me." Another shot deflected off the rim. "You'll never beat anyone." A perfect swish. They stayed as a constant reminder of my goal.

Things started looking up when I was introduced to some players who went to the SHS courts every day. They took me under their wing, and they taught me their tricks: how to properly shoot, with one hand stabilizing the ball and the other flinging it forward; how to make layups and to juke people out with a confounding crossover.

I learned how to use my lack of height to my advantage. By focusing on crossovers, continuously moving and playing defense, I started improving in games.

And then the day came. It was the day that would decide everything, whether or not my effort had paid off, whether or not I had wasted my time. I found myself at a court with the people who had once teased me. With them was that kid who had said I would never win, back in the beginning of summer.

I was nervous, my palms sweaty, and for a second I was almost convinced that I should leave right then and there, save myself the shame.

But when I felt the ball in my grip and heard the satisfying thump of my dribble, I found a familiar rhythm. Dribble, shoot, steal, dribble, shoot, steal.

We won by the score of 11-10. And it felt better than acing the SAT. ♦

topten

THINGS TO DO DURING THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

- 10 Reminiscence on what you did over the summer. Realize you didn't do anything at all.
- 9 See all your friends again. You're going to need them for this year.
- 8 Go shopping for new clothes. You may need to go up an extra size.
- 7 Watch the new TV shows. "Stranger Things" is amazing!!!
- 6 Talk about everything that happened this summer: The Olympics, Pokemon Go, Harambe ...
- 5 Apply for colleges. RIP seniors.
- 4 Look at all the classes you are taking. Notice that you can't mess up these classes as bad as Steph Curry did in the finals.
- 3 Visit your old teachers. Remind them who you are so that you'll be fresh in their minds for recommendations.
- 2 Prepare for Homecoming. If the arch falls this year, maybe the freshmen will help.
- 1 Look ahead in the school year. Is it winter break yet?

>> David Fan