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AUDRIE & DAISY

NETFLIX DOCUMENTARY SHEDS LIGHT ON 2012 SEXUAL ASSAULT TRAGEDIES

by Caitlyn Chen & Elizabeth Lee

nearly three years after Audrie committed suicide on Sept. 12, 2012, after she had been sexually assaulted by three boys she considered friends while passed out at a drunken Labor

"The class of 2015 awards an honorary diploma to Audrie Taylor Pott." These words rang through the football field on graduation day in June 2015,

>> **FILM** on pg. 3

Netflix released this logo for the documentary "Audrie & Daisy," which premiered on Sept. 23.

HOMECOMING

Class of 2017 anticipates final Quad Day

by SpringMa & EricSze

After four years of experimenting with cardboard food designs, occasionally mixing up the numbers of "2017" and choreographing unforgettable stunt dances, the class of 2017 will be performing its last Homecoming performance today.

Though only 50 members of the class participated as freshmen in 2014, this year's Quad Day will feature over 200 students in 11 dances.

After placing first in the Quad Day category last year, many of the same dance choreographers came back to teach another year. This year's stunt dance features all seven members of last year's team, along with new

member Gautham Arunkumar.

Although many of the members are returning, Trevor Leung said the choreography and the dynamics of the group have been stronger.

"What makes it different this year is that we're all contributing ideas," Leung said. "Max Vo is the main choreographer, but he's open to all our input."

The eight dancers will be dressed as the special forces, in full-on camouflage. They have included militaristic moves and stances to emulate this theme, such as a saluting motion in the beginning as well as shooting sounds in their audio.

Class president Rachel Won and the four other members of the script team — Jessy Liu, Raymond McCarthy, Zach Grob-Lipkis

and Suraj Mididaddi — made sure to embed each dance with a theme related to the script. The partner dance will be Barbie and Ken, the Bollywood Girls dance includes dancers wearing galaxy pants, and Kpop participants are Molly's toys.

Continuing with the tradition of themed dances, members of the All-Girls Dance will be wearing red flannels and bandanas, acting as members of Jessie's cowgirl crew. This year, Caroline Li's All Girls Dance features over 70 girls dancing to four songs. To keep the formation organized and allow adequate stage space for all dancers, Li split up the group for two of the songs.

As well as emphasizing more participation in all the dances, class officers have chosen actors from different groups on campus

to diversify the cast. Along with a couple of veterans, such as McCarthy, who played Captain Hook last year, many of the members are first-time script participants.

Stars of the script include Ryan Westman as Andy, McCarthy as Buzz and Dhruva Setlur as Woody. The plotline follows Andy's journey to college as his toys try to stop him from leaving. Though the Quad Day plan is ambitious, Won is hoping everything will click.

"This is our last Homecoming, and it's honestly such a blessing to see the whole class come together for the final time," Won said. "I think the Class of 2017 really embraces the spirit of Homecoming and because of this, has been able to leave a legacy in this school for our Quad Day." ♦

MEASURE E



Construction continues on the new Measure E-funded music building.

More projects start taking shape on school campus

by Frederick Kim & EthanKo

As summer drew to a close and the school year began in August, students and teachers stepped foot on a campus that looks different than the one they left in June.

Measure E bond funds are making possible new facilities and

technologies aimed at making academic and student life more comfortable and connected.

One of the technologies is the newly installed Epson BrightLink, an interactive projector that promotes teacher and student interaction during classroom activities

>> **REMODEL** on pg. 4

ADMINISTRATION

Back surgery to keep Robinson sidelined

by CaitlinJu

In May, principal Paul Robinson learned that he had two ruptured and bulging discs in his back and afterward tried physical therapy and cortisone shots to alleviate the pain.

Since neither route proved effective, Robinson will undergo back surgery on Oct. 3. As long as there are no complications, he is expected to return to his regular role two to four weeks later.

In Robinson's absence, assistant principal Brian Safine will serve as interim principal, but Robinson will remain accessible by phone or email.

Robinson said the ruptured discs, a result of age, genetics and



Robinson

his years playing college basketball and tennis have put him in consistent pain.

"It has kept me from being able to do all the activities I'd like to do, like sleeping or sitting," Robinson said. "It'll wake me up in the middle of the night, so I have to get into a position where it doesn't hurt."

Though Robinson wishes the surgery could have been done in the summer, he is glad he was still able to see Homecoming week.

"It's always hard for me to miss school and not be able to come to activities," Robinson said. "But don't worry, I'll be back as soon as I can, and then we're going to have the rest of a great year." ♦

>> what'sinside

COLLEGE

Athlete recruitment
Seniors Andre Xiao and Julia Vita discuss their plans to play a sport in college.
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DANCE TEAM

Four year veterans
Seniors Caroline Li and Chih-Hsu Hsuan reflect on the start of dance team in 2013.
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OPINION

Letter to the Editor
English teacher Ken Nguyen responds to the new student-run website, SHS Advisor.
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AP Gov/Economics curriculum reversed

With the 2016 presidential election coming up in November, AP Government and Economics teachers Kirk Abe and Mike Davey have reversed the curriculum to teach U.S. Government first semester to educate students about the election process.

"I think it's really important for students to get a grasp on their political opinions and opinions on candidates," Davey said. "It's also a great way to mobilize a long term interest in politics."

Senior Isaac Tang, who is in Abe's class, enjoys being able to share his own opinions on the election.

"It's great that the class as a whole can discuss the upcoming election while analyzing the effects of both candidates' campaigns," Tang said. "The class has allowed me to recognize how significant their speeches and advertisements are to their campaign."

With the election only months away, there is no better time to study it.

"Studying the election is really relevant to the situation in the real world," Abe said. "It's great that we get the chance to mesh our curriculum with what's happening."

In addition to the traditional two-party candidates, the class also looks at current third-party candidates, Jill Stein of the Green Party and Gary Johnson of the Libertarian Party, which gives students a fuller view of the election.

"Without [the class], I don't think I would have the same understanding of the inner workings of a campaign as I do now," Tang said. ♦

— Jason Zhao

Parade garners attendance from residents

During the celebratory parade for Saratoga's 60th anniversary on the morning of Sept. 17, the choir and cheer team marched alongside many representatives including the Boy Scouts and Saratoga Senior Center. While the parade made its way down Big Basin Way, cheers echoed from nearby sidewalks.

As history buffs know, the city of Saratoga actually started 160 years ago with just a sawmill and it grew over the years. In 1847, settlers began living in what is now Saratoga, when William Campbell created a sawmill nearby now downtown Saratoga. Saratoga went through numerous name changes, from McCarthysville in 1851 and Bank Mills in 1863, until finally in 1865, the town received its final name. In 1956, the city was commissioned, avoiding annexation by San Jose.

To start the parade, choir members sang "America the Beautiful."

"It's always fun to be a part of events like this because we get to establish our presence in the community and contribute back," said choir member Sarah Jin, a senior.

Cheerleaders followed in a mustang convertible, bringing the spirit usually seen in football games to the celebration.

"Having that many people recognize us and appreciate us as a team was awesome because as cheerleaders we normally cheer on others, not the other way around," sophomore cheerleader Mya Pai said. "It was amazing to be a part of an event that brought so many people together."

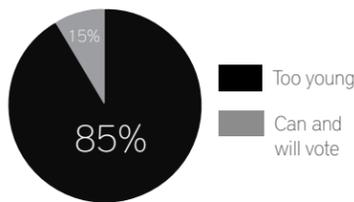
Although smaller than many cities, dozens of Saratogans showed how strong and tight-knit they are with the parade.

"We're really fortunate here in Saratoga to have such a phenomenal group of community organizers and volunteers," city council-manager James Lindsey said. ♦

— Karen Chow and Lina Kim

>> falconfigures

Seniors who can vote



Source: Falcon

— Roland Shen

>> picturethis



CLUB DAY >> Senior Cynthia Yang and junior Katrina Sung promote Art Reach Club on Sept. 22.

MUSIC THEORY

AP class enrollment dwindles

by ChelseaLeung

Though AP Music Theory has traditionally consisted of class sizes of 20 to 25 students, enrollment this year has hit an all-time low of nine students.

AP Music Theory teacher Dr. John Felder attributes the dwindling numbers to it now being a seventh-period class that ends at 3:45 p.m. Last year, the class was held during third period, which attracted 21 students.

"Because the class is seventh period, it's hard for students to take it," Felder said. "It would be nice if it were earlier in the day, but even to take it seventh period is worth it."

Although AP Music Theory was initially cut, the class was eventually placed back on the schedule after 22 students signed up for the class last spring.

Principal Paul Robinson and assistant principal Brian Safine describe the AP Music Theory situation this year as being a rare occurrence.

Although the administration tries not to hold elective classes with fewer than 20 students, most of the drops occurred in August, after students found out the class was to meet during the last period of the day.

The administration said they did not want to cancel a class after the start of the school year and after they had made a commitment to the teacher.

Though some students are hindered from taking a seventh-period class because of commitments to other extracurricular activities, students like sophomore Deysna Pai say they are thankful that they took the class.

"It's that class that I really look

forward to at the end of the day," Pai said. "It's definitely a challenge, but it's one that I am happy to take."

Pai likes having this year's small class.

"We all know each other and I think we'll all be really close friends by the end of the school year," Pai said. "It's not like a small group of people who are trying to learn something."

Although students cannot enroll anymore, Felder wishes more students could have the opportunity to take a class that could teach them so much.

"I think they would really enjoy it," Felder said. "It's challenging, but we're going to listen to other extracurricular activities, students like sophomore Deysna Pai say they are thankful that they took the class."

"I think they would really benefit from my class." ♦

LEADERSHIP CLASS

Period creates unity among groups

by MuthuPalaniappan & JasonZhao

In years past, here was the scene in the main office every other Monday at 6 p.m.: 60 students — class officers, commissioners and ASB members — piled in for bi-weekly ASB meetings. Chaotic and often unproductive, these meetings were the only times these students came together.

"Sometimes, we didn't know a meeting was happening until ASB told us," senior ASB club commissioner Ellicia Chiu said.

This year, these students have combined to form the fifth-period Leadership class that meets in the Team Room under the direction of activities director Matt Torrens.

Whereas the Leadership team met during lunch last year and focused on other students planning Speak Up for Change, rallies and other events, this year's Leadership class consists of class officers, commissioners, an Outreach team and the ASB.

Although the implementation of the class period was initially controversial, the overall reaction this year has been positive.

"Because all of us were new to the class period at first, we had trouble figuring out what the best

way to allocate time was so that every group felt like they were being productive," said Spring Ma, the ASB vice president. "But once we addressed this concern, I think everyone can agree that there is a lot less stress outside of school for Leadership work now."

The class period starts with a "Light on Leadership," where groups share moments of leadership outside of the classroom or recognize the individuals who have been working hard this year.

"We incorporated the 'Light on Leadership' to emphasize that we're working on leadership not just within SHS, but also in our community," Ma said.

For the rest of the class time, students are allowed to check in and check out of the Team Room to work on their respective projects in areas such as the Quad, the ASB room, or Torrens' regular room. Finally, at the end of the period, students report back for general announcements.

With the class period, communication between Leadership members has improved. According to ASB President Mitali Shanbhag, events like fundraisers and rallies are much easier to organize since class officers and ASB members communicate more easily.

"We have a recap session at the beginning of each period and check in with each group, so it makes the process of Leadership much better," said Shanbhag.

By having more time to meet, the Leadership team has been able to plan more events for the school. For instance, Chiu said, they plan on adding a night rally with Los Gatos and have been able to add an extra rally.

Class officers said they have also seen a noticeable difference in their workload after school and can spend class time preparing for Homecoming during school.

"We finished our entire Homecoming script and have been able to work on decorations," sophomore class president Cameron Lin said. "It's a lot less pressure because we have time to plan."

While the Leadership class has much more time to plan and work on events, some activities still have to be done outside of school, such as visiting venues for prom. Even so, student leaders seem happy with the class so far.

"[The new Leadership class] gives people the opportunity to connect every other day rather than through chat or having to make time after school," Shanbhag said. ♦

FILM

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Day weekend party.

Those boys took nude cellphone photos of her that were later shared with other students. Through Audrie's Facebook conversations with both her friends and her perpetrators, the documentary makes clear the fear and anguish that Audrie felt when she decided to take her own life.

Now, four years after her suicide and more than a year after the members of her class graduated, the Saratoga community is once again reminded of its loss in the documentary "Audrie and Daisy," which was shown at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival in January and released on Netflix on Sept. 23.

The documentary focuses on the stories of Audrie and Daisy Coleman, who was sexually assaulted by a group of male athletes in January of 2012 as a 14-year-old at Maryville High School in Maryville, Mo.

The assault occurred when Coleman had been drinking and was passed out; it was recorded on video by one of the boys. Afterward, Coleman and her family endured harassment both on social media — where Daisy was called a "skank," saying she was "asking for it" — and in-person — including the never-solved burning of her family's house.

The first part of the film includes the court testimonies of Audrie's assaulters, in addition to interviews with Audrie's parents and her best friend Amanda Le, who graduated in 2015 and now at-



Daisy Coleman, a sexual assault victim, was featured in "Audrie and Daisy."

tends De Anza College.

As part of the civil settlement with Audrie's family, the boys involved in the assault agreed to speak about their wrongdoings in the documentary (though their identities were concealed).

In the documentary, one perpetrator said he knew what happened was not right and that he "didn't mean for there to be any harm in it, other than a practical joke."

Le said the producers portrayed Audrie's story in a "pretty raw" manner, focusing on not only the victims themselves, but also the collateral damage on their families.

"That's what makes it so important," Le said when contacted by the Falcon through Facebook messenger. "It makes people think twice about their actions and how they can completely change somebody's life."

months," Mohinke said. "Families were impacted in numerous ways — even ways we don't fully know or understand."

Still, Mohinke hopes that after watching the documentary, current students will realize that they should find someone to talk to if they ever feel isolated or trapped in the way Audrie did.

Besides interviews with those involved in these incidents, the film also features candid scenes of life at Saratoga High, using clips of students walking in the quad, cheerleaders chanting on the track and football players running across Benny Pierce Field.

Sophomore Kaitlyn Lee said that although she did not know Audrie, the fact that the incident involved students from a school like Saratoga High underscores the widespread nature of the sexual assaults.

"As a sophomore myself, it's crazy to think that Audrie had to endure something so horrible at my age," Lee said. "It's scarring to think that people at our own school were involved in a horrible incident like this."

Lee found herself connecting with Audrie's story even more in one specific clip that documented Audrie's Facebook message exchange.

The message, which was from one of Audrie's perpetrators under with the pseudonym John R., read: "Audrie this will blow over before the weeks [sic] over ... You know Saratoga people make a big deal for a week ... and then forget about it."

To this, Audrie replied, "u [sic] have no idea what it's like to be a girl!"

Junior Valerie Yang thinks the film not only brings attention to the effects of slut-shaming or victim blaming, but it also encourages women to speak up about their own sexual assaults. In the process, serial predators are more likely to be caught earlier. Le said the film also emphasizes the importance of being responsible with technology.

"It's important for parents to teach their children how to handle technology and social media responsibly since it's such a feature of modern life," Le said.

According to Le, while many other Saratogans may have forgotten this incident in the years since it happened, she has never forgotten about her friend. Le said Audrie still remains in her thoughts and in her heart to this day, and probably always will. When Le thinks of her now, she remembers her fondest memories with Audrie.

"Whenever I watch the documentary, I always get emotional watching the part where I talk about our friendship because it's a reminder that I'll never get to see her again," Le said. "I can't help but feel like we would've still been best friends today if she was still here, but because of what happened, that can never be a reality."

Le hopes current Saratoga students and high schoolers generally will pay more attention to the widespread issue of sexual assault.

"It's time to stop avoiding this topic just because it's uncomfortable," Le said. "Boys need to be taught to respect women and view them with equality. Somebody's gender should not define how much respect they deserve; we all deserve equal respect." ♦

EVENT

District hosts second annual World Cafe to address student stress

by Cassandra King & Victor Liu

Over 100 students and staff gathered in the library for the second annual World Cafe on Sept. 21, an event that targets the reduction of student stress through round-table conversations among students, teachers and administrators.

This year, administrators are focusing on teaching students the solutions that reduce stress. The school district is working on this goal as well, as Los Gatos High School hosted its own World Cafe and connected to the SHS event through live feed at the same time.

In order to get first-hand perspectives from students, around 50 Media Arts Program students, Leadership members and others

were invited to the event. The activities were conducted with a 3-to-1 faculty-to-student ratio, in order to make the discussions more personable. Questions were posed by the cafe's moderator, district technology officer Nicole Dalesio, to the entire group, while each table discussed solutions.

According to principal Paul Robinson, the discussions were focused on how classes and teachers are meeting the needs of the students, as well as the strategies students apply to stressful situations to maintain resilience.

During each transition from topic to topic, one person remained at each table, serving as an anchor that informed new table members of what was discussed in past conversations. According to Robinson,

the rotations were an effective "way for people to share information but not just have one person speaking all the time."

Instead of reducing homework or making tests easier, teachers shared different strategies they have used in the classrooms to reduce their students' stress, some as simple as encouraging slow and deep breathing before a test.

For many, it was beneficial to view stress from both student and teacher perspectives.

"I didn't realize that teachers get a lot of stress too, especially in terms of organizing class because they have to learn to think quickly on their feet to keep the class engaged," senior Rachel Won said.

On Nov. 16, the school will host a follow-up World Cafe to continue



Junior Kelly Long converses with teachers Alex Hemmerich and Mike Tyler.

its efforts on encouraging student to teacher discussions. There will be a total of four meetings during this school year.

"The World Cafe is a communication tool," Robinson said. "It allows every voice to be heard, even if it's a large audience." ♦

CLASSES

APCS prerequisites create difficulties for some

by Frederick Kim & Vivier Zhang

Starting this year, the school's AP Computer Science classes have required new prerequisites that have caused some students stress and increased their difficulty.

Because the school now offers an Introduction to Computer Programming class, the teachers are assuming students know many basics of programming. If not, they can learn them through optional lecture videos and tutorials posted on Canvas.

APCS teacher Judi Heher said the introductory class is the right place for students who have little or

no coding experience.

The extra time from skipping the basic materials allows the students to go more in depth with difficult concepts such as data structures, and complete more projects that will contribute to their understanding of coding.

Some students said they were not prepared for this change when they enrolled in the course back in February and were taken back by the new expectations.

"When I first signed up for [the class], I didn't think it was going to be that difficult because I took a class before," sophomore Veda Jammula said. "But I still felt that adjusting to the class was really hard because

the class didn't re-teach certain topics."

Some students feel that taking an introductory class to prepare for the AP equivalent is too time consuming. The unexpected requirements caught many unprepared students by surprise, including senior Alex Kwon.

"They should have outlined [the prerequisites] before school ended to give everybody a good chance," Kwon said. Despite the concerns from students without coding experience, Troxell said that over 70 percent of the students from past years had been self-taught or took a summer course in preparation for the class. That meant many of them

did not need the first few months of class.

Even with the new prerequisites, Troxell said she has still made some accommodations for the students who have struggled so far.

"I went slower than I would have normally," Troxell said. "I talked about some topics in class more than I would have."

In the future, Troxell plans to help incoming APCS students become better prepared by hosting a mandatory lunch meeting in February to make sure that these students know of the prerequisites ahead of time. She is also considering assigning summer homework.

The AP Computer Science class

does not enforce whether students actually master the prerequisite requirement — it is up to them to do so. Packets and extra assignments are given out at the beginning of the year, having exercises that cover all of the knowledge students should already have.

Troxell hopes that by introducing these prerequisites, APCS will be more enjoyable and worthwhile for those with enough experience.

"Every year, people come to me more and more able with a lot of computer programming skills, so I think the majority of the students are happy with the change," Troxell said. ♦

SUMMER PROGRAM

Junior's film to be screened in New York

by Chelsea Leung & Elaine Sun

"How can society shatter this glass ceiling instead of shattering a girl's dream?" asks the narrator in junior Stacey Chen's short film, "The Glass Ceiling."

Behind the narrator, statistics of small percentages of women in the film industry flash in the background.

When Chen attended the National High School Institute Cherubs summer filmmaking program at Northwestern University, she noticed that many of her female peers in the program felt overpowered by male members. Chen decided to document the underrepresentation of women screenwriters, producers and actresses in her final project "The Glass Ceiling."

Chen said that the Glass Ceiling is "the barrier that separates women from the top-ranking positions in the film industry, so there are not as many female directors, screenwriters or cinematographers."

NHSI, a five-week film and video program for high school sophomores and juniors, was divided into three categories: screenwriting, production and acting.

"[NHSI] was really rigorous and intentional, but it was super rewarding as the facul-

ties were so experienced and friendly," Chen said. "The people there all had such love and dedication to film and created an amazing atmosphere for us young filmmakers."

Chen's short film will premiere at the All American High School Film Festival on Oct. 9 at AMC Empire 25 in Times Square, along with hundreds of other student films selected from high schools throughout the nation.

Although the deadline for AAHSFF had already passed by the time the students at Chen's program created their films, the program directors were able to get extensions for her film and nine others.

Chen was surprised that her film was selected because it was put together "really last minute."

After dropping out of directing another short due to schedule conflicts, Chen only had one day to create an entirely new project. She shot and composed the film in a single morning and finished editing the film in five hours.

"I didn't have a script, crew or even the time to create a story," Chen said. "I resorted to doing something I always wanted to do, which is creating a documentary about women in film."

Despite the time crunch, Chen formulated a doable plan using Chen's resources of



Junior Stacey Chen's mentor, Ugly Hauksdottir, helps her edit her film at Northwestern.

female filmmakers at the program thanks to one of her faculty members, Ugly Hauksdottir.

"My faculty mentor [Hauksdottir] helped me because she believed in the powerful message behind [my film]," Chen said. "If it weren't for her believing in me, my film would never have been considered for the festival."

Although Chen's film is only 3 minutes long, she hopes it will impact anyone who watches it.

"I definitely hope everyone could work together to break that glass ceiling, not just in the film industry, but in other businesses as well," Chen said. "[Women] should feel empowered and proud when they tell their stories." ♦

>> bigidea

A few Measure E funded changes:

- Integration of Epson BrightLink projectors and SmartBoards in many classrooms
- Construction of new music building
- Remodeling of walls and storage areas in the Thermond Drama Center
- Fans added to cafeteria
- Walls and AC in the staff lounge redone

larger backstage area.

"Our largest student production was 'Cyrano de Bergerac' and that was around 12 people, and it was very, very cramped," senior Lea Moustakas said. "Now, we have enough space where people can get changed and move around." ♦

Students in the drama class said that the remodeling will help significantly with their student productions, especially because of a

REMODEL

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and lectures.

"I think sharing information is one way that the projectors will be used because it offers an opportunity for teachers to capture notes, images and feedback from students that can be recorded," assistant principal Brian Thompson said. "Later, these recordings can be posted onto the Canvas system for students and teachers to access."

Thompson said there were two stages in implementing the smart projectors. The first installation included teachers who volunteered to test the systems and act as a model group. These teachers included science teacher Kirk Davis, math teacher Jennifer Mantle, AP Computer Science teacher Judi Heher, English teacher Ken Nguyen and English teacher Jason Friend. The Team Room also received a projector that will be used by the health and athletic departments.

Later, the projectors will be installed in classrooms for teachers who need them. Although some teachers already had the system installed in their classrooms, Thompson said

this year's installation is the largest yet.

Nguyen, who was part of the group who received the projectors this summer, found the projector to save time in practice.

"It turns the screen to an iPad and that's helpful because it saves on transition time," Nguyen said. "I don't have to come back to my computer to close out of a file and open up another one. If I wanted to show a YouTube clip, I don't have to come back to my computer; I just open it from the screen."

The new projectors will promote active learning and help students understand concepts better, he said.

"It's better than a document camera because when you're annotating under a document camera, students don't really see your hand movements," Nguyen said. "I think part of the learning and retention comes from watching a teacher mark up a text in big, wide arm arcs."

Another innovation is the refurbishing of the cafeteria, staff lounge and the Thermond Drama Center at the cost of roughly \$2 million.

Many of the changes that occurred were for safety and to abide by more recent building codes.

togotalks

What are your thoughts on the school's new construction?

"It doesn't really affect me, but I see how it could be a hindrance for other people."



senior Kyle Jody

"The construction causes a lot of traffic which makes me late to class a lot."



junior Helena Arzubov

"I think that it's great that we're getting a new music building and I think it's a good investment."



sophomore Marie McCarthy

Senior athletes go through college recruitment process

by Christopher Lee & Roland Shen

Senior Andre Xiao loves tennis and has been playing it ever since age 5. The sport has given him a lot of joy in the past, and his goal of playing the sport in college is a goal he has been training hard to achieve.

Xiao didn't sit back and wait to be recruited. Instead, he started the process by emailing coaches and expressing his interest. He introduced himself and explained why he is interested in their school. Xiao also updates coaches with his tournament results.

According to Xiao, he hopes these efforts are helping him make connections with coaches.

"I called every coach at least once a month

if not once every 2-3 weeks. It's key to keep in contact with them and really get them to like you as a person as well," Xiao said.

Xiao is also aware of potential recruiters in the stands watching him.

"I feel pressure, but during the matches, I focus on the match, so I tend to forget about the coaches, and it doesn't bother me too much," Xiao said.

Senior Julia Vita also hopes sports will be the ticket to a great college experience. She has played lacrosse since her freshman year and soon learned she excelled at it.

"It's been a big part of my life since then, and it's taught me a lot about determination," Vita said.

During her junior year, Vita was named captain of the varsity team, a position traditionally held by seniors. She earned the title for her skill on the field as well as her ability to help her teammates improve.

Ever since her junior year, Vita has been looking for opportunities to play lacrosse in college and has created recruiting pro-

files on websites such as NCSA sports to gain recognition. She has also emailed college coaches and created highlight videos.

"The recruitment process has been super successful," Vita said. "I've heard back from so many coaches, and I'm lined up to do some official visits."

For Vita, the lacrosse means much more to her than a shot at playing for a college team.

"Lacrosse helped me become a really good leader because when you're passionate about something you really go all out for it," Vita said.

Both athletes are still in the process of choosing which school they want to commit to, but they both have interest from several universities. ♦



Commission heads take charge of Homecoming

By Ami Nachiappan & Elaine Sun

Sitting in the yellow Thunderbird with Freddie the Falcon as the car slowly made its way across the track last October, now-senior Eileen Toh relaxed as her work as Homecoming head commissioner was almost over. As she waved to the crowd, stressful thoughts of setting up for the football game and organizing the Homecoming dinner replayed in her mind.

This year, Toh's job has been handed over to seniors Yuna Kim and Megana Saripella. The other commissioners are senior Amy Chiang and juniors Ishana Narayanan and Andrew Zheng.

The commission has been meeting to set rules, prepare for Quad Days and coordinate the coronation and dance. Both Kim and Saripella were on the commission last year, picking Homecoming themes and working with Toh.

"I saw so many problems with Homecoming happened in past years that I wanted to be more involved," Saripella said. "After understanding Homecoming on a better level in junior year, I wanted to help connect our school community even more."

This year, the girls work together with the ASB and activities director Matt Torrens to ensure all activities are ready. They solicit help from the other Homecoming commissioners, who contact shops to purchase flowers and balloons, rent bleachers and make reservations for the

annual Homecoming court dinner. Over the summer, the commissioners met to pick themes. Prior to the meeting, commissioners were required to bring at least three themes to the table; at the meeting, the commission discussed ideas, eliminating those that would not work very well for class decorations and skits and those that have already been done in past years.

"Picking the themes was one of the easier tasks to do," Kim said. "We all had similar ideas related to cartoons, old school movies, musical or fantasy. In the end, we chose to combine cartoon movies with an old-school style."

Because of the intense workload, the girls' involvement in the seniors' Homecoming is limited; Kim is participating in the partner dance while Saripella is in both the girls' Bollywood number and the all-girls' dance.

"I want to participate in senior Quad Day much more because I have such a high appreciation for the day, but I try not to get too involved so that Homecoming week doesn't become too hectic," Saripella said.

Along with college applications and schoolwork, their workload required for Homecoming is intense but rewarding.

"I really like seeing our finished product at the end since it is so satisfying," Kim said. "Most schools usually decide Homecoming themes by the student body or advisers, so I just took the opportunity that we have at our school and am going to make the best out of it." ♦



Kim



Saripella

Reyes steps up and leads Quad Day script writing

By Lina Kim & Neil Rao

Scrambling to get the Kickoff Dance prepared on the second day of school, class officers, commissioners and ASB officers dashed around the quad with balloons, streamers and nacho bowls before the dance on the night of Aug. 19.

At this stressful time, junior Connor Reyes stepped in, helping to set up the streamers for the entrance and taking action wherever needed.

Even though Reyes was not officially on the Leadership team, he was recognized by senior ASB president Mitali Shanbhag in a post on the Leadership page a couple days after the event, thanking him for his last-minute assistance.

He also contributed to the efforts of the junior class as the head of the Quad Day script-writing team. Reyes also helped out with decorations and was in the boys' and partner dances.

Reyes has had past experience working with the class of 2018 Homecoming committee from his sophomore year and decided to continue this year.

"Since no one else was going to [lead the skit], I decided I would commit myself to it," Reyes said. "I had a lot of fun working on it this year so I thought I would do it this year." While this was only Reyes's second year, he used his knowledge to create a successful

Quad Day for his class. Last year, he quickly learned the do's and don'ts of writing a script and now was able to turn the juniors' theme of Monsters Inc. into a humorous story of scaring the other classes.

Although Reyes himself is not an experienced scriptwriter, he worked with others in his class, such as junior drama student Hannah Yoon, to create it.

"He offers a lot of ideas and decides the final plot of how the skits going to go and who's going to be part of what," Yoon said. "People see him as a leader, and without him we would all be arguing."

However, Reyes ran into some problems due to this year's shorter lunch schedule.

Since the administration did not agree to an extended lunch period for Quad Day performances, Reyes was forced to work in a time crunch in order to convey a story in a shorter period.

Reyes also had to deal with complaints from his peers. He sometimes faced opposition to jokes, plot points and the like.

Although working with Homecoming was rewarding, it was also a challenge.

"It [was] definitely not easy with the stress of junior year, but I know that all the hard work truly paid off," Reyes said. "Put passion into whatever you do and you'll be rewarded." ♦



JUNIOR Connor Reyes

"It [was] definitely not easy... but I know the hard work truly paid off."



GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

Sophomore adds harder moves into choreography

By Chelsea Leung & Ami Nachiappan

For sophomore Lidya Payne, choreography for her class' dances for Homecoming Quad Day happens not just during dance practice after school. In late August, she tweaked the moves and created mixes of songs to ensure that her class would have their best Quad Day yet.

While doing homework, Payne listened to a mix of hip-hop and R&B music, her favorites being "Work" by Rihanna and "One Dance" by Drake, and envisioned potential dance moves in her mind.

After finishing her work, she practiced the dance in her room to see which steps would work well.

As Payne paired dance moves, inspired by her favorite styles, hip-hop and jazz, with perfect song choices, she knew she was prepared to teach the 12 girls in the all-girls' dance.

Last year, Payne choreographed the all-girls' dance; this year, however, the sophomores added a partners dance for the first time, an experience she described as "super exciting" since the dance has gotten positive feedback.

"Everyone seems to love the partners dance and we have a lot of people participating in it," Payne said.

Prior to teaching both dances, Payne let the participants listen to the songs she was using so that they would be comfortable dancing to them.

"To teach the girls the dance, I broke down the whole thing into sections," Payne said. "I taught them the first 30 seconds and made them repeat it again and again until they got it right, and did the same process for the rest of the song."

Payne started dancing at age 12 after quitting track and field in middle school. Payne's mom, Embet Payne, encouraged her to pick up another sport and signed her up for dance classes at Studio 10 Dance in San Jose.

"I started in ballet basics, and then hated it since it was slow-paced," Payne said. "I moved on to hip hop, which was really fun, and started to like dance."

Payne's experience as a teacher's assistant last year at her studio helped her organize this year's dances.

At her dance studio, Payne taught younger students various genres of dance, including hip-hop and jazz, for a month before quitting due to the increase in the workload from school.

Although teaching a group of inexperienced dancers is strenuous, Payne said that seeing the end result during the Quad Day made the hard work worth it.

"I was really excited for our Quad Day this year since we really stepped up our game with fast-paced dances and harder choreography," Payne said. "It was so satisfying to see them perform the whole dance well since it made me feel like I did something good." ♦



Payne

Freshman plans ahead before officer elections

By Ava Hooman & Alexandra Li

When the freshman class realized that Homecoming was going to be at the end of September — weeks earlier than last year — and the other grades had already started preparing, they feared they wouldn't finish on time. Without an elected class office over the summer, freshman Sonali Shanbhag stepped up to put the framework for Homecoming in place.

"Generally, it was more of a support thing," Shanbhag said. "I stepped up because some of my friends and my sister encouraged me to do so." Her sister is senior Mitali Shanbhag, this year's ASB president.

After adopting skills in her Redwood Middle School Leadership class, Shanbhag said that she learned how to communicate in a professional way and coordinate events.

Over the summer, she started the effort by creating a Facebook group for important announcements and posted a survey asking for dance, decorations and script signups from her class. After the freshman class election two weeks into the school year, freshman class president George Bian said

he appreciates Shanbhag's hard work in giving them a starting point to work with.

Added class representative Vivian Lin: "Without Sonali, we probably would still be doing decorations right now and wouldn't have started our practices on several of our dances. She got us motivated and pumping with adrenaline."

Even after contributing so much to Homecoming, Shanbhag decided not to run for class office because she has too many other activities and enjoys her other electives.

Nevertheless, she continued to help the freshman class officers with the dances and decorations, choreographing the finale.

Although Homecoming planning is time consuming, Shanbhag said that once others started to help out, the work became a lot easier.

With freshman Risa Carter and Elaine Toh heading decorations, Alena Jarrett writing the script and Shanbhag managing dances, all bases were covered.

"Everyone has been taking a huge stand in what we're doing," Shanbhag said. "I don't think I [deserve all the] credit, because if no one else decided to perform or participate, none of it would be happening." ♦



FRESHMAN Sonali Shanbhag

"I stepped up because some of my friends and my sister encouraged me to do so."

Team captains look back on 4-year journey

DANCE

By Caitlin Ju & Alexandra Li

On Feb. 8, 2014, the six dancers of the school's newly recreated dance team performed their brand new hip-hop routine on the Bella Vista High School gym floors for their first competition as a team, having learned the routine the day before.

Current senior co-captains Chih-Hsuan Hsu and Caroline Li, the first four-year veterans on the dance team, joined the dance team during their freshman year.

Their experience proved difficult and at times frustrating, they said, due to constant coaching changes and no competition experience, as the dance team had previously been discontinued in 2008 due to it merging with the cheer team.

Li, who stopped dancing at Pacific Ballet Academy because of the time commitment right before her freshman year began, found the team a perfect way to continue

dancing. And Hsu, after concentrating in classical dance and ballet at her studio since she was 5, wanted to try Western dance and "to integrate [herself] into the school with the sport."

"I can easily say it's the most time-consuming activity I have right now," Hsu said.

Li agreed that the dance team challenged her by adding to her workload, especially with the numerous Saturday practices. Being on the team not only forced her to manage her time better, but also helped her become more outgoing.

"I learned how to be a leader because in freshman year, I was very shy," Li said. "I'd never thought I'd be where I am today, leading a group of 11 girls. Dance team really pushed me to my limit."

Sophomore Chloe Peng, now in her second year on the team, sees Hsu and Li as leaders who seek to improve themselves and the team.

"They really push themselves more because they're our examples," Peng said. "After they leave, it's go-

ing to be a big loss because they're the main binders of the team."

Hsu and Li have also witnessed the team grow from the "disaster" Li said their freshman year was. After their second coach quit in March that year and no adequate replacement could be found, the dancers coached themselves until the end of the year. The current coach, Kaitlyn Landeza, was hired at the beginning of Hsu and Li's sophomore year, and the team gradually grew in campus presence.

"We've definitely become more experienced, and it's nice to see our friends supporting us rather than being unknown [to them]," Hsu said.

Li remembers her favorite moment at USA Nationals on March 2015 in Anaheim when their team was called for the second place trophy in the X-Small Lyrical Dance category. This was a sharp contrast to their first competition in 2014, when Hsu and Li recall their music suddenly skipping a few beats and coming to an abrupt halt.

Hsu, Li and the other dancers froze with the music, standing like deer in the headlights. The dancers could only walk off the stage in defeat.

"When we went up to get our trophy [for Nationals], we realized that all our hard work paid off and it made it all seem worth it," Li said.

As captains, they have similar goals, as Hsu hopes that they are able to place in every dance. Li adds how she hopes the team places high to prove how hard they've worked and feels confident in all their routines.

"[I want us] not only to give



TALISMAN // JERAMIE KIM, NAVEED RIAZIAT, KARISHMA SHAH

Chih-Hsuan Hsu and Caroline Li were part of the reintroduced dance team.

every competition] our best, but I want the entire team to be satisfied with our results. I don't want anyone to regret joining," Li said.

Though Hsu and Li are unsure of how they will continue dance in college, they realize how important the dance team has been to their high school experience.

"I found different styles of dance that I just loved, and it made me love dancing more than before," Li said. "I'm going to miss this close-knit group of family that I feel like no other team has." ♦

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GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

Junior from Spain joins SHS for year-long study abroad experience

By Caitlin Ju

Feeling lost and unconfident in her ability to speak English, Sofia Garcia de La Cuadra of Spain stood in the airport in Texas this past summer waiting for her connecting flight to San Jose and immediately thought that she had made a mistake coming to America.

Her first impression of America, an experience she compares to feeling "blind," quickly shifted to excitement when she met her Saratoga host family, the Fuldes, on Aug. 11.

In the next few weeks Garcia began to adjust, with the help of her host family's Spanish knowledge, to life in Saratoga and away from her home in Valencia, Spain, where she had lived her whole life.

"At the beginning, it was strange, because the food, the house and the language were different," said Garcia, who is a junior. "But my host brother, who is five years [younger], reminded me of my own younger brothers, who are one and four years [younger]. Their characters are so similar."

The Fuldes took Garcia on family trips to the Santa Cruz Boardwalk and the Monterey Aquarium and also to San Francisco. Her favorite memories included roasting marshmallows on a bonfire on the beach, playing tennis with her host family and watching the sea lions at the coast. Garcia also watched the movie "Secret Life of Pets" with her host brother but found the speed of the language hard to follow.

Although Homecoming planning is time consuming, Shanbhag said that once others started to help out, the work became a lot easier.

With freshman Risa Carter and Elaine Toh heading decorations, Alena Jarrett writing the script and Shanbhag managing dances, all bases were covered.

"Everyone has been taking a huge stand in what we're doing," Shanbhag said. "I don't think I [deserve all the] credit, because if no one else decided to perform or participate, none of it would be happening." ♦



Garcia

supermarket, and here for the transportation you have to depend on driving or someone else, whereas in Valencia, there are buses everywhere," Garcia said. "Everything is very centralized in Valencia, and the amusement parks are right in the city."

Last year, when her mother, who owned an academy that sends students to study abroad, asked her if she wanted to study in America for a year, Garcia immediately said yes.

"The movies gave me the idea that I should come to America out of all the countries," Garcia said. "When I watch all the Hollywood movies, like 'High School Musical,' I [wanted] to be like the main characters in them."

The International Student Exchange (ISE) sent Garcia to Saratoga on a J-1 visa, which is for study-based exchange visitor programs, meaning her parents cannot visit her and she cannot return to Spain until the last month of school.

"Maybe in one month when I am in reality, I will become homesick," Garcia said. "For now, it still feels like I'm on a holiday, like when you go on vacation to another country."

In Valencia, Garcia attended the Catholic school Colegio Nuestra Señora del Pilar since preschool, where she found cliques to be a major problem.

"If you're new and want to be in a group, it's impossible," Garcia said. "Here, I am making new friends all the time, and the people are very helpful and don't just ignore or exclude me."

Another difference is the food, particularly the rice which she describes as having a sweeter flavor here. She also remembers the

surprise of eating lunch at noon, whereas before she would have lunch at 3 p.m. and dinner at 11 p.m.

One of her main pursuits that she is excited to continue is basketball, the only girls' sports team her school had in Valencia. Garcia originally joined the basketball team because of her 6-foot height, playing as both the center and power forward.

"Basketball is my life," she said. "If I don't have basketball, I'm not me. I've been playing basketball since I was seven years old."

Garcia also finds that being able to choose the classes she can take at Saratoga, such as drama and French, is a positive difference from her school in Spain.

Drama teacher Sarah Thermann, who teaches Garcia in Drama I, has valued her enthusiasm and thoughtfulness.

"I've noticed if a student is struggling or seems nervous, [Garcia's] always one of the first to offer them a suggestion or support," Thermann said.

Garcia also chose to take Anatomy and Physiology to explore her future career interest, a path she chose mainly because of the challenge it presented.

"I want to study something related to health and help rehabilitate people, so I found physiotherapy especially interesting to me," she said.

Garcia has not yet decided if she will stay in the U.S. to go to college next year or study abroad in Canada, but she already sees herself becoming fluent at English and expanding her view of the world.

"I hope I make a lot of friends who I can visit over the summer and learn a lot of values different from the things I did all the time back in Spain," Garcia said. "For me, language is all, and I can already hear myself getting better." ♦

Exchange student from India thrives in Saratoga

By Jenny Qian

Junior Soumya Nimmu remembers trying to navigate through the crowded streets of Bangalore, India, with her friends at 4 a.m., setting off firecrackers and streamers.

It was a dark night in Bangalore, but the city of 4.3 million people was lit with oil lamps hanging from houses for Diwali, the festival of lights.

"In India, Diwali is as big as Christmas in America, and we spend several days having fun and bursting firecrackers with our friends. It's amazing," Nimmu said.

Born in Mountain View, Nimmu moved to India when she was 8 as a result of her dad's job transfer.

While in India, Nimmu moved frequently and attended three different international schools.

The schools had grades from preschool to 12th grade, with about 90 students per grade.

Though Nimmu spent much of her elementary and middle school education learning the Indian curriculum, she doesn't see huge differences between the American and Indian systems of teaching.

"The Indian curriculum was pretty difficult because I had to learn Indian history," Nimmu said. "Every year in math, we [learn] every topic such as trigonometry, algebra and geometry. The levels get harder and definitely more detailed each year." Nimmu was also an active

member in her school community. She started a women's empowerment project at school to decrease the rate of school dropouts among women in rural India.

In addition, Nimmu was a dedicated member of Model United Nations (MUN) and her school's leadership class.

Upon her arrival in Saratoga this summer, Nimmu sought opportunities to continue her passions in her new community.

After approaching assistant principal KERRY Mohnik, Nimmu was recommended to join the school's Leadership class as an outreach commissioner.

With senior Puja Maheshwari, Nimmu is now planning a joint dessert social. The social mixes special education students in the school's Community Based Instruction program and the Leadership class.

Though her move here has been a sudden change in Nimmu's high school career, she has been integrating herself into the Saratoga community and looks forward to involvement in leadership.

Nimmu said that in India, there was also student leadership in schools except the positions were called "Head Boy and Head Girl."

"It's always been a dream for me to be Head Girl, but now that I am here, I hope I can become part of ASB," Nimmu said. "Though starting over and jumping into high school was kind of sudden, I have been able to fit in easily." ♦

"Though starting over was kind of sudden, I have been able to fit in easily."



JUNIOR Soumya Nimmu

Peter Thiel is totally a money bully, people

THIRD-PARTY PERSONAL VENDETTAS HAVE NO PLACE IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM

by Caitlin Ju

"Billionaire backs lawsuit to silence media" sounds like a familiar, dramatic plot of a crime fiction movie...

The Silicon Valley billionaire spent \$10 million to bankroll a lawsuit against online media company Gawker...

Thiel's personal vendetta against Gawker, which he describes as a "terrible bully," traces back to a 2007 article on the news and gossip site titled "Peter Thiel is totally gay, people."

Though Gawker made an inexcusable and immature decision to out Thiel, who announced this past summer at the GOP convention that he is "proud to be

Republican and proud to be gay," there should be legislation in place to regulate and reduce the practice of "third-party litigation funding," the legal involvement of outside entities.

Those with personal grudges — in this case, billionaires like Thiel — have corrupted the legal system, throwing their money to silence people and organizations they disagree with.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce said that with third-party litigation funding, in some cases, defendants can be unaware there is a funder involved in litigation against them since funding arrangements can be decided secretly.

Funders can also extend cases by

requiring exorbitant settlements, which affects entire law firms.

It would be naive to think most funders are investing thousands or millions of dollars out of their will to seek justice. Furthermore, when funders wave their money at the civil justice system in order to receive the outcomes they want, it is outrageous that the law says nothing against it.

In fact, third-party litigation has become a major industry itself. Though Thiel and other third-party funders defend themselves by saying they are simply leveling the playing field, in most cases their personal agendas wield overwhelming unethical influence over the cases.

In another example of third-party litigation, litigation-finance firm Burford Capital invested \$4 million in a pollution lawsuit against Chevron in Ecuador.

Policy makers should pass legislation to increase litigation finance transparency; the public should know of any third-party



Former pro-wrestler Hulk Hogan's (left) lawsuit, funded by Silicon Valley billionaire Peter Thiel (right), bankrupted the news site Gawker.

involvement after a case has been resolved. The percentage that the third-party funders gain from a judgment or settlement should also be limited so as to deter investment in the industry, and if the case is prolonged past a certain date, the

percentage can be lowered. Just as a sixth player would not be allowed for one basketball team while the other had five, measures need to be taken so that billionaires and corporations cannot game the civil justice system.

Quad Day festivities limited by restrictive lunch schedule

For hundreds of students, preparation for Quad Day is a big deal. Since August, members of the Class of 2017 have been working to perfect their Quad Day dances and skit.

This time limit restricts the enjoyment of these events and generally results in students rushing last minute to class, and classes right after lunch being shorter than other periods.

This time limit restricts the enjoyment of these events and generally results in students rushing last minute to class



Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editors-in-Chief: Karissa Dong, Eileen Toh; Opinion Editor: Saya Sivaram; Reporter: Ryan Kim

The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 34-0 in support of the editorial.

FOURTH PERIOD STAFF POLICY

The Saratoga Falcon is published 12 times per year by the Advanced Journalism classes of Saratoga High School...

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.

Editors-in-Chief: Karissa Dong, Eileen Toh; Associate Editor: Eric Sze; News Editor: Spring Ma; Opinion Editor: Saya Sivaram; Sports Editors: Jenny Qian, Jason Zhao; Lifestyles Editors: Eleanor Goh, Cassi King; Entertainment Editor: Maya Prasad; Associate Entertainment Editor: Amith Galivanche; In-Depth Editor: Caitlin Ju; School Scope Editor: Ami Nachiappan; Backpage Editor: Neil Rao; Head Copy Editors: Frederick Kim, Ryan Kim, Austin Wang; Head Photographer: Vivien Zhang; Head Graphics Editor: Charin Park; Assistant Graphics Editor: Elicia Ye; Art Editor: Karen Chow; Photographers: Jingyi Wang, Mathia Palantappan; Social Media Editor: Katherine Zhou; Weekly News/Web Team: Stephen Ding, Navin Triway, Alex Yang; Business/Ad Manager: Roland Shen; Reporters: Daniel Bessonov, Aaron Choi, Ian Fu, Awa Hooman, Lina Kim, Ethan Ko, Esha Lakhotia, Christopher Lee, Chelsea Leung, Alexandra Li, Patrick Li, Victor Liu, Ashley Su, Elaine Sun, Phoebe Wang, Sophie Zsanzic; Adviser: Mike Tyler; Printed by Folger Graphics in Hayward, Calif.

Even after efforts by some seniors, the administration rejected the idea of extending the daily 35-minute lunch for their Quad Day. This is despite the fact that senior Quad Days in recent years often last 45 to 55 minutes.

While the most frequently voiced concern had been over the lunch time because of difficulty of off-campus eating, many students had not realized that the new bell schedule failed to account for special events, especially those that are student-run.

Currently, the new rolling

block schedule doesn't make room for school spirit events that take place during lunch, even if they are as important and popular as Homecoming Quad Days.

This year, lunches are fixed at 35 minutes, and if the seniors' Quad Day goes over the time limit — as it almost certainly wills — the extra time seems likely to be cut from fifth period only.

Why not evenly distribute the time cut throughout the other periods as well, or shorten the tutorial period to allow for an extended lunch?

The school already reduces class times for special events like rallies. The same should be true for significant lunchtime events like the seniors' Quad Day.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: SHS ADVISOR

ENGLISH TEACHER QUESTIONS NEW STUDENT DATABASE

Dear Falcon,

I think we — students and staff alike — are so blessed here at Saratoga High School to live and work and thrive in a learning community that values collaboration, one graced with a generosity of spirit perhaps unrivaled anywhere else.

So, it's with a bit of mild consternation and dismay that I read Jay Kim's article, "Seniors create database with students' perspectives, notes on classes," published on Sept. 9, about the creation of a website called SHS Advisor.

The tagline for the site boasts that it will provide students a "guide to breeze through your four years at Saratoga High," a message which seems questionable to me because it implies that 1) your four years here should be a "breeze," that you shouldn't have to try or put in some effort when it comes to your own learning and personal growth and development, and 2) that the classes themselves are not necessarily worth the time or effort spent.

perusal, I also noticed that each of the courses feature this subheading: "How to Get an A," a marketing decision which seems to run counter to the group's mission and goals. How do you relieve stress by fostering an atmosphere that focuses on an obsession with grades and competition? Moreover, is "getting an A" the only worthwhile goal for each of these classes? Is that how narrowly "success" is being defined? Are all "As" the same? In quieting minds would like to know!

Yet another red flag is this ranking system employed by the site. Each subject area is given a "difficulty" rating that ranges from "Very Easy" to "Very Challenging."

Against what sort of metric are these classes being measured? Easy in what sense? Challenging in what sense? Is one subject's level of ease/challenge equivalent to another's? Is the class's quality in terms of its ability to help you learn a new skill or open your eyes to a new perspective or broaden the scope of your understanding

or deepen your capacity for empathy not worth measuring?

The article also states that the website would provide "previously used study guides [I'm assuming for specific courses] that were posted in Facebook class groups," the argument being that "people already share them in general" and that it "could effectively decrease the high-stress nature of the school by encouraging students to help each other as they learn tough subjects."

Are the study guides being referenced teacher-sanctioned? Teacher created? If so, why is a database of such guides needed if aforesaid guides will be provided by the teachers, anyway? Or, are these "guides" student-created, ones tailored and tweaked and touted after tests are taken?

Every hero in every journey needs a guide, obviously, but at what point do these guides become mighty morphing power cheat sheets? Ultimately, I don't see how developing a site like this (at least in

terms of its current form and marketing) will reduce the high stress nature of academics at our school; it's one more thing, one more site, one more routine that I, Stressed Out Student, must now incorporate into my academic life.

And in doing so, I reduce every class, every text, every unit into yet another hoop to jump through, another box to check off, so much so that whatever joy or surprise or discovery or exploration or construction of learning that could have been experienced during this whole process is preemptively nullified.

Sort of like preparing to go see a movie you've been looking forward to by having someone who has already seen it tell you what to expect, minute by minute.

Maybe I'm just being an old fuddy-duddy (and you know I am because I just used the term "fuddy-duddy"), but it used to be a mark of shame and embarrassment as a proud Nerd to be caught with a copy of Cliffnotes (the fuddy-duddy version of SparkNotes). It was akin to being seen with stolen merchandise. Not to be nostalgic, but perhaps it's time we re-adapt that attitude, so that you can proudly sport that symbolic N (for Nerd) on your chest. Better than F — for Fake — that's for sure.

—Ken Nguyen, English Department

by Ryan Kim & Alex Yang

"Space: the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Its 5-year mission: to explore strange new worlds, seek out new life and new civilizations and boldly go where no man has gone before."

For all space geeks, this goosebump-inducing introduction to each "Star Trek" episode defines innovation in the field of space travel.

Now, fans and scientists alike are nerding out over the recent discovery of another planet outside of our solar system that may sustain life.

Proxima b is a planet in the "nearby" Proxima Centauri solar system. It has been estimated to be close enough to the habitable zone of the solar system to have liquid water.

This hints at the possibility of alien life, a once-baseless idea that has since become a feasible theory, a massive project in space exploration, a major portion of the entertainment industry and a

mass movement for space-nerds worldwide.

In fact, NASA released a statement on Aug. 24 that the James Webb Space Telescope, which is set to launch in 2018, will be capable of analyzing this new and promising planet through spectroscopy, a scientific method that manipulates electromagnetic radiation to detect matter.

But both of these projects would come with a huge price tag. Space travel and space technology development has always been costly.

Billions of dollars would come with a huge price tag. Space travel and space technology development has always been costly.

Billions of dollars would come with a huge price tag. Space travel and space technology development has always been costly.

The Apollo Program, which sent astronauts to an extraterrestrial



GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

Saratoga needs more viewing spots open to teens, public

by Spring Ma

It's 9 p.m. and you're stuck in Saratoga on a weekend — now what? You're in a car full of friends, excited to spend time together, but just can't get past this pesky question.

Just thinking back on the past month, I can't even begin to count the number of times this scenario has popped up.

The options for hangout spots in the general vicinity of Saratoga are very limited, but recently, many teens and others have started driving up Big Basin Way to find viewpoints — open spaces where they can view the sunset and city lights.

With a blanket or two in hand and some good music, we find that these hangout spots can often inspire deep conversations and quality time.

However, as the teenagers flood up the mountains to hang out, sheriff's deputies have started patrolling the areas and shutting them down at sunset.

Just 15 minutes from SHS, Prospect Point used to be filled with cars every evening around sunset.

With a picturesque 360-degree view of the Bay Area, one can spot both the school's Benny Pierce Field as well as the Bay Bridge.

But technically, the entrance to Prospect Point is on private property; to get to the scenic viewing spot, you have to park your car in a neighborhood court and walk a short trail up the mountain.

As Prospect Point became more popular, the neighbors started calling the deputies on visitors or directly telling them to leave. This is when neighborhood watch

cars started patrolling the area just around sunset: people can no longer take the short drive down Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road to enjoy the night views without getting an angry escort down the mountain.

The residents of countless other viewpoints have followed suit. Pierce Road leads up to an incredibly scenic drive into the mountains, but neighborhood watch cars are constantly circling the upper courts.

When a couple friends and I visited Apollo Heights, another view-

point off Highway 9, the neighbors kicked us off the property before we even got out of the car.

To welcome more visitors to see the view at Saratoga and the Santa Cruz Mountains, more communal viewpoints should be created in the area.

Though it is possible to see the Bay Area view in Saratoga at destinations such as Fremont Older Space Preserve and Hunter's Point, these viewpoints involve long hikes to get to the top.

Creating more viewpoints for cars to park on public property would give students the incentive to stay within the city, instead of going to Cupertino, San Jose or even San Francisco to hang out.

Moreover, these public destinations would attract high schoolers away from the existing neighborhood-embedded viewpoints, ap-

pearing property owners around Prospect Point, Apollo Heights, and more.

One example of this is Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve — because the park was created with an intent for many visitors, it's become a popular destination for high schoolers.

The only downside is that Skyline Ridge requires a 40-minute drive from Saratoga.

Making more public viewpoints for citizens is something the city ought to consider. Though it is understandable that property owners have safety and traffic concerns, a view is meant to be shared. Neighborhood patrols are solving the problem for property owners, but are also eliminating the already-scarce choices for teens and residents to hang out in their own city.





Senior takes on bigger Interact leadership role

When Senior Jessy Liu signed up for Interact Club back in 2013 as a freshman, she didn't envision the impact it would have on her. When she first stepped foot on campus, Liu admits that she grossly miscalculated the amount of effort and time that the high school's workload would take. Since the difference between middle school and high school was overwhelming, Liu began to lose motivation. "I lost my interest in my activities and stopped trying my best in school," Liu said. "I was just losing everything in general." Just as her hopes began to diminish, however, Liu was asked to join Interact, a club that she initially thought was just a service and volunteering club. As Liu continued to attend meetings, she began to find good friends in Interact, friends who

were able to support her through her tough times and reassure her that she would regain the confidence and motivation she needed to succeed. "The officers at the time woke me up," Liu said. "They pulled me out of my ditch, took me to events and taught me how to manage stress. Without the Interact officers teaching me how to be the best version of me I could be, I wouldn't be the person that I am today." The officers who mentored her included 2015 alumni Josh Pi, Sherrilyn Ling, Jane Park and Lauren Louie, and 2016 alumni Ariel Liu, Felicia Hung and Helen Chen. Three years following Liu's introduction to Interact, she has not only become the co-president of the club with senior Mitali Shanbhag, but is also on the local Interact board as an outreach coordinator. Each school with an Interact Club is grouped into areas that col-

lectively make up a district. District 5170 is comprised of 13 areas with 95 schools. This division system is based on location and proximity of schools and makes it more convenient for local clubs to organize events together. As a member of the district council, Liu acts as the liaison between the Interact Club at the school and District A11's area director, Lily Solomon, planning activities and reporting the club's progress. "Being able to immerse myself in a group of passionate, driven and genuine leaders both in and out of school really set a new precedent for my personal standards," Liu said. "At the same time, it required a lot more communication skills, as I now had to organize everything from pearl milk tea fundraisers to events for more than 4,000 people and be responsible for something



Senior Jessy Liu speaks about new events at the September District Summit.

that is larger than just myself." Now that she has taken on a larger role as an Interact member, Liu wants all of the school's 80 or so Interact members to feel the same encouragement that she did three years ago. "I am so dedicated to making my officer team feel welcomed and involved," Liu said. "I want to show them all the things that they can accomplish through Interact." ♦

togatalks

How does your club fund events throughout the year?

"To pay for competitions needed to assemble our robot, we apply for grants from companies like Sandisk and Apple." 
senior Nicole Lin, MSET Robotics president

"Downtown Bollywood, an event that takes place a week before school starts, is free, but we make profit by selling food." 
senior Kushagro Bhattacharjee, ICAC treasurer

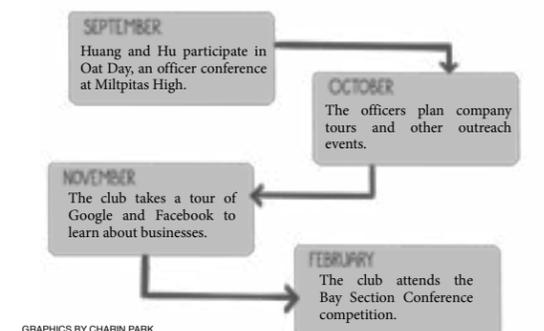
"Instead of fundraising, we have a fee at the beginning of the year that pays for attire and admission into the courthouse." 
senior Peter VandeVort, Mock Trial president

Follow a club through the year:

THE FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS OF AMERICA



The 2015 FBLA team poses at a state conference in April in Ontario, Calif. This year, the club's presidents are seniors William Hu and Lesley Huang, third from left.



GRAPHICS BY CHARIN PARK

New clubs focus on fitness, music

by Roland Shen & Katherine Zhou

Seniors Max Vo, Apoorv Kwatra and Kai-las Shekar decked out in tank tops and gym shorts and walked into the Ray Goni fitness center in the beginning of the school year, ready for their daily workout routine of dead lifts, squats and cleans. Underclassmen watched the three experienced lifters in awe, awed by their strength. The three, noticing the confusion of the freshmen, spoke later and decided to do something to teach the newcomers. Earlier this year, the three formed the Barbell Club, a lifting club designed to teach inexperienced students how to lift weights and to encourage more people to take up weightlifting. Vo, Kwatra and Shekar initially began lifting as freshmen to improve in their respective sports. Vo specializes in taekwondo, Kwatra is on the basketball team, and Shekar is a tennis player. "Since we were in the weight room all the time, we wanted to use all of the experience that we gained from lifting to create a community where people aren't scared to go to the weight room," said Vo, the president of the club. Vo remembers how as a freshman, he took advantage of the school's weightlifting facilities. Since he had already learned proper workouts from taekwondo, he mostly needed a nearby facility in which to train. In addition to creating an environment for students to work out in, the club aims to have bi-weekly lunch meetings where they will hold fitness, nutrition and question and answer sessions. The club's main goals this year are to en-

courage people to set goals for themselves and provide workout plans to achieve them. Science teacher and current workout trainer Kristofer Orre will advise the club and help supervise workout sessions, as well as plan workouts with the club officers. "Even if people don't need help, the club is a great way to meet new people to train with," Vo said. **Tri-M Music Club** Another club that was created to help the community is the Tri-M Music Club, which was reinstated by members from the school's orchestra program after 10 years of inactivity. The club is led by senior co-presidents Ellicia Chiu and Alisha Luo and junior vice president Jaimee Luo. "Our goal is to have a long-lasting club that brings our community together with music to conduct different service projects," Chiu said. The club plans to host a benefit orchestra concert on May 27 and donate the funds to nonprofit organizations of the club's choice. The club also plans to teach students in special education departments, who will perform at the spring concert. Throughout the school year, the club will hold bi-weekly meetings and one to two practices per week. With this club, Chiu hopes to spread awareness about the impact of music. The officers will assign club members to lead chamber groups, small ensembles that consist of three-five students. The members will be responsible for teaching and conducting various pieces. "We're hoping our passion will speak out to others and raise awareness for the causes we're raising money for," Chiu said. ♦

Class of 2017 to finish all four engineering electives

by Frederick Kim & Neil Rao

Senior Trishla Pokharna has seen a lot in her four years of engineering as a member of the first group of students to go through the school's first four-year engineering program. She recalls walking into a dingy, dusty workshop as a freshman. Today, that same workshop has been revamped and equipped into a room with 3-D printers, laser cutters and more state of the art equipment. Pokharna is one of eight seniors who will complete all four engineering electives offered at the school this year. They are among the 145 students currently taking one of the engineering classes, according to registrar Jeanne Jamieson. The school's engineering program is an offshoot of Project Lead the Way, introduced here in 2013, which envisioned a series of engineering courses, including both programming and physical engineering. Since then, a new engineering class has been added each year—Introduction to Engineering Design, Principles of Engineering, Digital Electronics and this year's Engineering Design and Development. Pokharna, who hopes to pursue an engineering career, especially likes the atmosphere of the classes, as students have a light outside-of-class workload. According to Pokharna, Introduction to

Engineering, the first class, teaches the basic principles and allows students to make robots. Next, they use these principles in Digital Electronics to incorporate circuits. In Engineering Design and Development, they are creating a year-long engineering project. For senior Rachel Won, who is also in her final year of the program and plans to pursue engineering, these classes offer materials and approaches that other classes lack, saying that math and sciences class don't offer as much hands-on experiences as engineering does. "The courses were good to dip my feet in and get a feel for what engineering is," Won said. Won added that the final senior capstone course, EDD, is especially beneficial as the class focuses on creating small scale projects and machinery, mirroring the lives of real-life engineers. Won calls the engineering classes "low-stress, high-quality classes." Students learn a lot of cooperation and are able to be creative, and the engineering teachers Matthew Welander and Audrey Warmuth are "willing to help" and let students "use their resources in any way." However, because the Class of 2017 is the first to experience all four courses, they have also been the "guinea pigs." According to Pokharna, the classes have sometimes moved too fast or too slow for students.

"The courses were good to dip my feet in and get a feel for what engineering is."



SENIOR Rachel Won



This year, with the addition of Engineering Design and Development, the engineering room has equipment such as 3D printers, laser cutters and new machines like saws and drill presses.

The teachers have also run into numerous challenges and had to make adjustments along the way. "It's been an issue to get signups and communicate what's going on, and I think there's some misconceptions about what the class is like," Warmuth said. Added Warmuth: "The one thing I wish people would know more about the engineering program is that if they were in the classes, they would realize how much they enjoy them. Some kids think that you have to be a math genius, but you don't." In addition to the problems that many new electives face recruiting students, the engineering teachers had facility problems rarely experienced by teachers in other disciplines. "The engineering room was the old woodshop room, so it had been unused for at least three years and was a mess," Warmuth said. "We spent three summers trying to clean it out and shape it the way we want, and there's still some more work we need to do." With all four classes now running, the engineering program appears to be closing in on the vision she had four years ago when she first entered that dingy, dusty room. ♦

Bring your child to work day every day

Some students and staff members meet their family daily at school. How is it like to see your family at school?

How often do you see your son or daughter around campus?

History teacher Matt Torrens: Too much when they [freshman Drew Torrens and junior Tyler Torrens] want lunch money and not enough when I want to talk about grades!

Math teacher PJ Yim: Before and after school. (His daughter is freshman Jinsu Yim)

Math teacher Kristen Hamilton: I see her a couple times a week.

History teacher Kirk Abe: Every day! (referring to his son, junior Kyle Abe, and daughter, freshman Ashleigh Abe)

History teacher Mike Davey: Quite often. My room is [senior Rachel Davey's] storage locker and she is here in the morning, sometimes at lunch, and since I coach her in basketball, I usually see her after school as well.

What are some of the best aspects of working at the same school your child attends?

Assistant principal Brian Thompson: Every year, I get to experience working with 1,300 kids and set up community events, but my family doesn't necessarily get to see or feel what I feel. Now, I have an opportunity to share with my daughter [freshman Kaitlyn Thompson] the passion I have for education and for Saratoga.

Abe: Just being able to see them a whole lot more is awesome!

Hamilton: Besides the fact that I love her [freshman Kathryn Hamilton], it's nice getting to see her a little bit more than just the car ride over. Also, it's probably a little easier from a parent perspective. I understand how to use Canvas, what classes to take and when, sports programs and just what's going on around campus.

How is it like seeing your parent at school?

Freshman Kaitlyn Thompson: It's actually not awkward. I guess for some people it might be awkward seeing your parents in front of your friends, but it doesn't really matter to me.

Junior Tyler Torrens: Oh, it's awkward. That's for sure.

Senior Rachel Davey: Sometimes it's embarrassing because he'll talk to me and my friends in the hallways, but it's also nice because I know I always have someone I can go to on campus.

Freshman Ashleigh Abe: It's strange seeing them at school because social life and school life are usually separated from home life, but now it's all one.

What is it like having your parent as your teacher?

Tyler: I always hear stories from past students of my dad telling embarrassing moments of me. One time, he told the class that I eat dirt in my free time. I'll just leave it at that.

Sophomore Vivian Tarbox: At times, I want to ask [stepdad Mike Davey] 'are you picking me up from school today?' or 'what time are you taking me home?' but then I realize that I can't since I'm still in class. Being in his class definitely motivates me to work harder since I know that if I'm not on my best behavior, he'll bring it up at home. Whenever I need help on homework, he's always there.

GRAPHIC BY ELEANOR GOH

Reporting by Aaron Choi and Eleanor Goh

Lazy Dog caters to man and man's best friend

NEW RESTAURANT ON CUPERTINO MAIN STREET IS AFFORDABLE AND WELCOMING

BY Alexandra Li

The sound of dogs happily barking reached my ears as I walked toward the chimney-shaped entrance of Lazy Dog Restaurant and Bar. When I took a closer look, I noticed dog owners sitting on the patio looking over not only their own menu, but a separate, pet-friendly menu with a few choices of meat and rice.

Lazy Dog, a global comfort food restaurant chain, is located on Main Street Cupertino, a series of stores built in the vicinity of the new Apple building.

The waiting area was cozy and welcoming, with couches and a fireplace for my friends and me to wait as everyone arrived.

After being seated right away and served drinks, our waiter listened patiently as we debated over what to order. The menu included food that all sounded delicious when described; after reading through it, I was torn between the sundried tomato pesto pasta and the barbecue pulled pork sandwich. When half of my friends announced that they were ordering pasta, I settled with the pulled pork sandwich.

Within 20 minutes, the waiter placed before me a \$12.25 dish fit for a king. The pulled pork sandwich sat on one half of the plate,

the top bun baked to a perfect brown with onion straws balancing on the light coleslaw. The braised pork completed the skewered sandwich, with a set of crispy-looking fries on the side.

When I took my first bite into the sandwich, I was surprised by how well the crispiness of the onion mixed with the rich coleslaw.

The crunchy and fresh lettuce pieces and the well-cooked meat tasted wonderful, and the bun was crunchy on the outside yet still soft.

My friend's fettuccine alfredo, which cost \$11.50, although on the simple side, looked delicious, with the creamy whiteness of the pasta, topped with sprinkles of parsley and set off with a nice side of thin garlic bread slices. I eventually got to try a small portion of the fettuccine alfredo, and it was just as good as it looked.

The pasta noodles were well-cooked: slightly chewy and not too stringy or dry, while the alfredo added just the right amount of rich sauce. However, the garlic bread was just average, with mediocre flavors and chewy bread.

Once we finished eating, the bill arrived and I noticed that the food was reasonably priced, leaving us all with filled stomachs at a fair cost.

Around the restaurant, I noticed pictures of dogs framed on the walls and pawprints all around the building. A walk outside led me to the high tables with water bowls, ready for a dog to use. Although pets were not allowed inside, the well-lit patio with a bonfire provided a great location for dogs to dine alongside owners.

With their welcoming attitude toward dogs and reasonable prices, Lazy Dog's food and service are worth checking out. ♦



FALCON // CASSANDRA KING



FALCON // ALEXANDRA LI

Top: The brick entrance offers a warm and welcoming atmosphere to the unique restaurant. There is a patio for owners and their dogs to relax and eat. Lazy Dog opened with Cupertino Main Street's grand opening this September.

Left: Sesame crusted ahi tuna with coconut cream sauce is one of the many superbly made dishes that are offered. The creamy sauce and vegetable mash balanced the medium rare tuna perfectly.

Lazy Dog

(OUT OF FIVE)

Located: Cupertino Main Street

Reporter's favorite dish: Fettuccine alfredo with garlic bread

Best Feature: friendly environment

Can you say 'hi' to everyone you see?



takis
fuego

Neil Rao

"Hello." I never knew such a common phrase could affect me so much.

Because of my undying love for the Falcon, I accepted the challenge from my Lifestyles editors to greet everyone — and I mean EVERYONE — with "hello" for a day. And boy, was that awkward — though "awkward" is an immense understatement.

Imagine, for instance, peering over the urinals to a little kid and having to say "hello" with a strange look on my face. Moments like this constituted my interactions for a whole day.

On Sept. 1, I set out to do my assignment. Not sure where to start, I began with greeting close friends with a simple "what's up." Of course, they just looked at me with dismay, thinking that I was dumb.

While walking to my first-period class, out of nowhere those same friends yelled at me to continue the task. In the middle of APUSH, I would have to stand up, peer across the room and wave to anyone who noticed me. Most replied with a puzzled look, while the occasional few waved back with a forced smile that reminded me of visiting distant relatives at uncomfortable family reunions.

After practicing my hellos during first period, I gained confidence. I began talking to seniors, sophomores and even freshmen,

although I think it creeped them out. While most seniors and sophomores knew who I was and responded with a sarcastic wave back or a questioning head tilt, many freshmen were reluctant to respond; one even briskly walked away from me with fear.

What I learned was that most people preferred to be left alone. They would huddle back into their friend groups like wildebeests lost from their herd, stare at me as though I didn't belong and even tell me to leave them alone.

However, the few who responded with smiles and waves made up for all these rejections.

There was one smaller guy I met who actually took the time to ask me how my day was. I assumed he was a freshman, for his backpack was larger than his own body, but I chatted back and we started walking together.

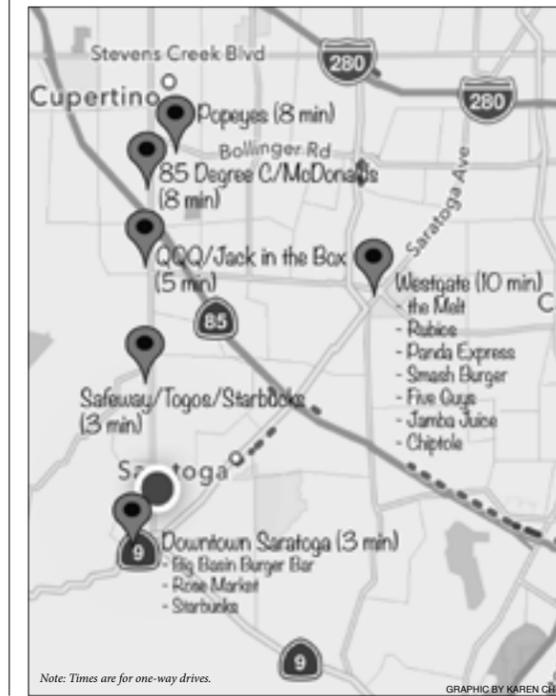
I learned that he was a new student on campus, and so I showed him around for the entirety of tutorial.

I talked to him about his struggles dealing with the transition from middle school. We shared connections about how friend groups slowly separated away from each other and how at one point in life, we all feel lonely. I realized that I had actually made another friend.

Despite all the previous trouble, getting to know this new friend truly made my day. And although the task seemed daunting at first, having even one person value your presence makes up for all the previous rejections and puzzled looks.

I strongly recommend anyone to try this challenge one day. After all, you never know who you might meet along the way. ♦

Local places to eat lunch in 35 minutes or less



September 30, 2016

WHAT HAVE YOU CHECKED OFF YOUR



FOUR FALCON STAFFERS TAKE THE CHANCE TO DO THINGS THEY HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO DO

✓ Paintballing

SENIOR REGRETS EXPERIENCE ON EAST COAST



sprugglin'

Spring Ma

It was 100 degrees out in the clammy East Coast humidity, and all I wanted to do was stay wherever there was AC. Instead, I found myself in the middle of the woods somewhere in Philadelphia, with white paint dripping into my mouth and a terrible headache.

Over the summer, I was at a camp hosted by the University of Pennsylvania when my friends decided to go paintballing. I signed myself up without hesitation, eager to attempt a sport that had been on my bucket list for years.

Little did I know that paintballing was a death trap — or so it felt when our counselors told us that we could not cover ourselves with any gear other than helmets. Scrambling to pull together a somewhat protective outfit, I stole a sweater from my roommate and pulled on the

only pair of long pants I brought.

After an hour-long bus ride into a completely forested area, all 150 of us were shepherded off the bus. A man dressed in full camouflage told us to take off all outer layers, citing the potential of heat stroke in this weather. This was when the day's nightmare hit its final phase for me — with not even an illusion of safety in my mind, we marched toward the battlefield.

The actual act of paintballing proved to be a lot more rugged and savage than I had expected.

I felt like I was in "Lord of the Flies" as I clung onto my friend's arm and my gun for dear life, throwing up red flags to claim our team's property.

For a couple moments, adrenaline overtook my fear. My friend and I captured a few tents, but soon enough, I felt random things slamming into my neck — coming from the direction of my own teammates. Even though my arms were up and flailing in surrender, my confused teammates kept on shooting at me, thinking I was an enemy team member. Aghast, I scurried away to the only safe area I could find.

I actually got in trouble for running for my life — soon after, a worker took away my gun,

saying I had illegally left boundaries.

Annoyed by his bogus customer service, I never returned for a second game. That concluded my paintballing experience. I was shot a couple times in the face, but the worst shot hit my outer thigh — the ball had come from someone so close to me that it shredded through my soccer pants, leaving a swelling bruise.

I can cross paintballing off my bucket list now, but frankly, I may never have the desire to enter a forest ed area ever again. Maybe I just encountered a bad situation (plenty of paintballers on Instagram seem like they were in normal societal areas, protected with sturdy gear), but I recommend anyone with an ounce of self-preservation to avoid paintballing at all costs. Just remove it from your bucket list. It hurts. ♦



✓ Performing solo

HITTING THE RIGHT NOTE: JUNIOR MAKES DEBUT



t-ryan' 2 be cool

Ryan Kim

I've always had some form of stage fright — shaky knees, quaking voice, my signature tomato-red face literally glowing in embarrassment. Never did I think that I would go up alone on stage and perform for anyone, much less for an audience of 70 people.

But that was exactly what I did when I attended California Philharmonic Youth Orchestra camp from Aug. 7 to Aug. 13 at Walden West, Saratoga and accepted the opportunity to sing for the annual talent show.

My friends pleaded with me to go up and perform for the talent show; being stupidly courageous and susceptible to peer pressure as I was, I thought, "Why not?"

Now, I still did not know what I would showcase as my talent. I am not a math or musical instrument prodigy, and my sense of humor could dry up the Pacific Ocean. So, as I was pondering the most difficult question of my life, my friend

suggested singing.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not skilled at singing either; in fact, I should have laughed at the absurdity of the suggestion. But strangely enough, the idea began to take hold, and I chose to sing "Just Haven't Met You Yet," by Michael Bublé.

My friend promised to accompany my vocals with his guitar, and we finalized our plans for the next day, both flushed with excitement.

Fast-forward to 15 minutes before my performance, and I was sweating profusely, a tingly ball of nerves, and my partner had failed to show.

Just as I was about to call it quits, my savior, a piano prodigy named Andrew, volunteered to step in. In 13 minutes, he glanced over the score and was ready to go.

Finally — or was it too soon? — we were called up to the makeshift stage. I had no clue how to begin, and Andrew and I hadn't even practiced together, but I felt that strange, unique Ryan-esque brashness surge through me.

The process itself was a blur. Was everyone cheering for me, or were they smirking at my evident lack of practice?

Was that my friend recording me to post a video on Facebook, or was he just laughing at the fool I made of myself on stage? I didn't

know, and up there, I didn't care. I was performing with whatever ounce of skill I had, and I was going to do well.

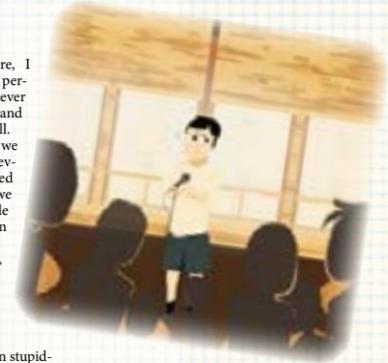
Needless to say, we messed up a lot. Nevertheless, we persisted and by the time we finished, the whole room erupted in cheers.

I was shocked, not only at the generous applause, but at the fact that I had gone up and performed, whether from courage or plain stupidity.

Now that all that effort and anxiety is in the past, I can confidently say that it was worth all the trouble.

This "debut" will serve as a stepping stone, a confidence-booster for my future endeavors like skydiving or backpacking in Europe.

All I know is that I have a lot left on my bucket list, and I'm not going to finish it anytime soon. But at least I've done one. ♦



✓ Getting autographs

SENIOR MEETS CELEBRITIES AFTER BROADWAY SHOW



all I ju is win

Caitlin Ju

Resale ticket: \$1,500. As desperately as I wanted to see the musical "Hamilton" while its creator Lin-Manuel Miranda was still performing, \$500 is the ticket price I draw the line at (even for Beyoncé).

With my first choice of "Hamilton" no longer an option for my summer afternoon in New York City, I scrolled through the dozens of Broadway shows with Sunday tickets still available and paused only slightly before selecting the \$150 tickets for "The Color Purple," which only a week ago had won a Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical.

Though I had read the novel "The Color Purple" by Alice Walker two years ago and was gripped by the main character Celie's painful struggle against racial prejudice and gender inequality, I was nonetheless unprepared for the cast's musical and theatrical talent and electrify-

ing energy.

Celie, a 14-year-old African American girl living in rural Georgia in the 1930s, grapples with emotional and physical abuse from her father and husband but eventually transforms into, quite literally, the one wearing the pants with her tailoring business.

Heather Headley starred as Celie's closest friend, the dynamic Shug Avery, who helps Celie break free from her abusive husband, while actress Danielle Brooks played the tough and sassy Sofia, who refuses to be controlled by a man.

Both Headley and Brooks shone with their powerhouse voices and provided comedic relief, receiving well-deserved standing ovations. Frankly, every cast member's performance impressed me so much that I wanted to join Broadway myself. After the 3-hour show, I exited the theater, only to find a crowd gathered around one of its side doors.

Situating myself within the barriered sidewalk, I realized the crowd anticipated the cast's appearance, as limos and luxury cars waited a short distance from the side door. Still, I expected only the minor cast members to show and sign the first few playbills they saw.

Within moments, lead Cynthia Erivo, Tony

Award winner for her performance as Celie, appeared to autograph playbills, followed by Grammy-award winning Headley, who played my childhood favorite Nala in "The Lion King" musical, and Brooks who also stars as Tasha "Taystee" Jefferson on the binge-worthy Netflix series "Orange Is the New Black."

Though my playbill-holding arm grew tired from extending for 45 minutes, I was impressed that these acclaimed actresses and performers even bothered to sign them for us. Headley even personally checked that I had gotten an autograph even though I stood two rows from the front.

Armed with my autograph-filled playbill, I've now checked off one thing from my bucket list. Next up: Pet a penguin? ♦



✓ Shooting a gun

SOPHOMORE FINDS LIFE IS NOT A VIDEO GAME



victoria's secret

Victor Liu

"Today we're going to make some real Americans," the shooting range instructor declared, snapping me out of my daydream of sleeping on real mattresses and eating real food.

Firing a shotgun has never been that high up on my bucket list, but when I got the opportunity to shoot one at Boy Scout camp in New Mexico this past summer, I decided to give it a try.

I definitely should have listened to the instructor's explanations on how to properly shoot, but reading a conveniently placed white-

board with a quick summary of his lengthy speech seemed sufficient for understanding how to operate a shotgun. Everyone had three shells to use — or waste — on clay targets the staff would throw in the air.

Given my on-and-off relationship with first-person shooter video games such as Gangstar Vegas and Duck Hunt, I confidently stepped onto the range thinking that I would be able to shoot at least two, if not all three, of the targets. That bravado immediately disappeared after I picked up the shotgun.

It was surprisingly heavy for something that movie actors and video game protagonists effortlessly pick up, but I didn't doubt my un-Channing Tatum-like arms until the instructor threw the first target. I immediately shot — and missed. I put the gun down and rested.

My second shot managed to miss the target again, this time eliciting a slight groan of disapproval from the instructor.

I still kept my hopes high because hitting the last target meant beating all the other scouts who missed all of theirs.

My final shot was no better than the first two, striking the tree 5 feet to the right of the target. As I hung my head in defeat, the instructor said, "You missed all those shots because you're left-eye dominant but you shot on your right side."

Needless to say, although I failed miserably with zero out of three hits, at least I crossed something off my bucket list.

If I ever shoot again, I'll remember to aim with my dominant eye, but for now, I'll just stick to virtual shooting. ♦



Major music services looking for more ears

SPOTIFY, APPLE MUSIC, SOUNDCLOUD, AND PANDORA COMPETE FOR BEST VIRTUAL MUSIC

by Alex Yang & Katherine Zhou

Over the years, it's undeniable that music consumption methods have changed rapidly. From phonographs and cassette tapes in the 1960s to smartphones and surround-sound speakers today, the music industry is in a constant state of technological progress.

Recently, more than ever, physical music sales have been in decline and have been replaced by an easier and more cost-effective way of listening: streaming.

Since the music streaming market started in the early 2000s, companies such as Pandora, Spotify, Amazon Prime, Soundcloud and Apple Music have been aggressively competing for users.

With each having its own pros and cons, it's difficult to deem one as "the best."

To find out which streaming services are the most popular at Saratoga High, the Falcon polled 122 students for their preferred streaming service.

Of those polled, about two-thirds said that Spotify was their favorite, with Soundcloud, Apple Music, and Pandora pulling in around 10 percent each.

Only one student chose Amazon Prime music streaming as their favorite service.

With a strong business model, it's clear why Spotify is dominating this market.

On top of a radio function akin to Pandora and Apple Music, Spotify's main appeal is its ability to play songs on-demand as well as user-created playlists for users.

"[I enjoy using] Spotify Premium because you can use it without wifi," junior Mervi Tan said. "You get access to a lot more songs. [For] Taylor Swift [and other artists not on Spotify], I already have all her music on iTunes."

For less popular services like Apple Music, which launched in June 2015, the company still struggles with getting people on board.

The 15 million subscribers it has one year since its release pales in comparison to Spotify's 100 million plus users.

Despite its promise of music streaming similar to Spotify's, one reason for Apple Music's lack of subscribers lies in its business model.

Both services cost \$9.99 per month, but Spotify Premium offers a \$4.99 student discount.

Unlike Spotify's premium service which gets rid of ads and allows users to download playlists to listen to offline, Apple Music is a fully subscription-based service, which is likely a turn-off for millions of people who

already listen for free on Spotify.

Still, some are making the switch from Spotify to the novice Apple Music because of the music selection.

Although both services boast over 30 million songs, many artists, such as Taylor Swift, have pulled their songs from Spotify because of arguments over compensation.

Many other artists decide to have a "windowed" release, where they delay putting their albums on Spotify in order to maximize sales and anticipation.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the spectrum, Oakland-based personalized radio service Pandora is struggling to compete with newer on-demand services.

Its user-base only grew by about 4 million active users between 2013 and 2014. Its ad-free service, Pandora One, costs \$4.99 per month.

Still, many prefer Pandora for its simplistic radio-style streaming.

"I don't want to choose my music, and I like to listen to [everything]," junior Tiffany Huang said. "Pandora is just so much easier, because I don't have to choose the music. Spotify is too complex."

Although it seems like Spotify is dominating competition at this time, new services are being developed all the time.

With both Amazon and Pandora announcing the development of their own on-demand music streaming services, it looks like the crowd won't be thinning any time soon. ♦

>> falconfigures

89	Use Spotify
15	Use Pandora
11	Use Apple Music
4	Use Amazon Prime

The Falcon polled 119 students.

Pokemon Go-es downhill

GAME DECLINES AFTER MIOCRE UPDATES

by Karen Chow & Austin Wang

We've all seen the sight recently: a stampede of people hurry from downtown Saratoga to Wildwood Park, phones out and fingers primed for flicking.

The swarm amasses around the bridge over Saratoga Creek as the joyous cry "I got it!" echoes throughout the crowd.

This summer, Pokemon Go took the world by a storm, attracting a record-breaking 9.5 million daily users in a week after its release.

Locally, downtown Saratoga and Wildwood Park were constantly filled with children, teens and adults — all hunting for rare Pokemon.

Pokemon Go was based on the iconic childhood game and show, "Pokemon Gotta Catch em' All." Watching it come to life with immersive technology made Pokemon fans feel as if they were real Pokemon trainers.

Senior Siavash Yagoobi, who played Pokemon games as a child, was drawn to the game's realistic feel as well as its use of innovative new technology.

"The technology creates a situation in which players feel like a part of the actual game since it uses real-world locations as its map," Yagoobi said.

Junior Alan Lu also got hooked because of the satisfaction of catching a rare Pokemon.

Lu attributes Pokemon Go's success to the game's high-profile nature. He said that seeing people play the popular game on the sidewalks created a wave of curiosity which led to more people playing.

Only about one month after its release, however, interest started to decline.

"It got kind of boring because after you catch [many] Pokemon, it's really hard to get the rarer Pokemon

and you waste a lot of time just getting the common ones," Yagoobi said.

Furthering the decline of the game, Niantic, the creator of Pokemon Go, made changes that disrupted the game.

The July 31 update removed three-footstep tracking, a core feature that allowed users to see if they were getting closer to nearby Pokemon, as the company felt that it was too confusing and prone to glitches.

Directly after the removal of tracking, Niantic received a heavy backlash and the number of players began to dwindle.

Instead of remedying the situation by re-adding the feature or attempting to fix it, Niantic began removing third-party tracking sites.

This left users with no way to easily track Pokemon and caused their user numbers to plummet further.

Despite all these changes, Lu and Yagoobi still plan on playing.

"Considering school [has started] it might not be wise to be playing now, but regardless of what they [update] I think I will play next summer," Yagoobi said. ♦

Instagram steals the show with same feature as Snapchat

by Frederick Kim

Clicking on the Snapchat icon and then swiping to the left, I checked the different stories my friends uploaded, tapping through the list of timed photos and videos. After I had closed out of the Snapchat app, I opened another: popular photo-sharing app Instagram.

A new feature had been added.

At the top, I clicked on the Instagram stories' circles, skimming through the list of 10-second photos and videos.

Implemented on Aug. 2, Instagram Stories was introduced as a new feature of the app, which is owned by Facebook.

Much of the public viewed this new feature as a plagiarism of Snapchat Stories, introduced three years ago.

It is, without a doubt, difficult to distinguish the two. After all, they have many of the same functionalities of each other.

Both apps' Stories have circles that show a preview snapshot of stories.

Both have the option to doodle and add text after taking the picture or video.

Both have a maximum video length of 10 seconds, and you can skip by tapping or go to the next person's story by swiping.

Looking at the two Stories side by side, however, the two have minor differences.

For example, Instagram allows for more options in drawing on the picture or video, offering three different pen styles while

Snapchat has only one option to do the same thing. Instagram also orders the different stories by closest friends using an algorithm.

On the other hand, Snapchat provides stickers and geofilters, filters that are only available in a certain location.

Snapchat has even already expanded its Stories to include specific events for "livestreaming," introduced as Live Story on June 17, 2014.

In addition, a Discover section for advertisements was launched on Instagram on Jan. 27, 2015.

Snapchat's position as a photo and television production, is the main producer, while Propach, a junior at Chapman University majoring in screenwriting, and Propach's friend Alé Cois are

helped me successfully work with other artists," York said. Ever since he graduated from SHS, York has worked in a variety of job positions for film companies in Los Angeles

such as Jason Wang Productions, allowing him to use his experience and expertise to make this series a success. "I will admit that I had to take on a lot in order to get [this show] completed," York said. "And sometimes, our crew was only as big as 10 people. Other times, the crew only included myself and Blake."

Once the pilot episode airs Dec. 2, viewers will be given the option to donate money. They are aiming to raise \$5,500 to create another five episodes. In order to encourage donations, the team has also created a "less optimistic version of the board game Candy Land," called Mort's Life Board Game," which will be given out as prizes to project donors.

"I think SHS students are going to enjoy 'Mort's Life,'" York said. "It's not just about a character who is larger than life, but also about how they dealt with the expectations their parents had for the them."

The lead actor of "Mort's Life," senior Naman Sajwan, plays the tragically afflicted character Morteza, a reckless genius. He has knowledge bottled up inside of



GRAPHIC BY MAYA PRASAD

Beyoncé takes us to 'Heaven' with her concert

by Eric Sze

Donning Ray-Ban sunglasses and shirts with Beyoncé's lyrics written in large letters, junior Mervi Tan, senior Emily Li and I strutted into Levi's Stadium on Sept. 17 looking as flawless as we could manage.

As a zealous Beyoncé fan, I would admit that my expectations were pretty high. Paying \$120 for her concert isn't too overboard, but it isn't chump change either.

In the end, simply saying that she met my expectations is a huge understatement.

As we sat on the red seats waiting for Beyoncé to come on stage, DJ Scratch played remixes of various songs by artists including Big Sean and DJ Snake. At 8:45 p.m., the sun began to set and a blackness surrounded the stadium.

Suddenly, the screen on stage faded from white to black, and as the lights dimmed, the iconic beats of "Formation" pierced through the air.

Everyone excitedly looked for Beyoncé, and as she rose onto stage, the crowd began screaming and cheering.

As the first beats of "Formation" continued to play through the background, Beyoncé spread her fierceness by saying, "If you're proud of who you are and where you come

from, say: I slay."

The crowd echoed "I slay" back, and her face broke out into a huge grin as she began to sing "Formation."

"Jumping up and down with our hands in the air, we belted the lyrics at the top of our lungs.

After playing the most popular songs from her new album "Lemonade," including "Formation" and "Sorry," she moved onto her second set and toned the mood down by performing slower songs like "Mine" and "Baby Boy."

She then threw it all the way back to her first album with the track, "Me Myself and I."

Beyoncé continued with songs from her self-titled album released in 2013, "Beyoncé," with some of her most famous hits, "***Flawless," "Drunk in Love" and "Partition."

After she finished an artistic rendition of "Freedom," involving ballet in a shallow pool of water, she ended the grand finale with one of her most vocally powerful tracks, "Halo."

It wasn't just Beyoncé's vocals that made this night one to remember. It was her stage presence.

Each time she performed a song, she had a troupe of backup dancers who performed complicated choreographies. Despite the fact that she danced to each song, Beyoncé never



COURTESY OF MERV TAN

Beyoncé's face appears in black and white on a megatron at Levi's Stadium during concert.

ran out of breath or went off tune.

Her live performance sounded identical, if not better, than her studio recordings. It made us wonder whether Beyoncé is truly a goddess.

Even the interludes between each of the six sets was captivating and showcased Beyoncé's artistic vision. From funny videos like "Bad B***," in which a man talks about how much Beyoncé slays, to more serious interludes involving dramatic drum beats and a modern Picasso-esque artwork, there was always something new between acts.

My favorite was between the fifth and

sixth acts, which played Prince's "Purple Rain" while the audience turned on their phone flashlights and swayed. The night felt almost majestic, as the centerpiece illuminated a rich violet color and was surrounded by a million tiny lights, like fireflies in the dark sky.

As the night ended and Beyoncé vanished beyond the stage, we exited the Beyhive. We took one last look at the stage that Beyoncé had performed on, just a couple hundred feet away from where we were standing.

Though the concert finished, our memories of the day will likely live on forever. ♦

'Mort's Life': a webseries by alumni to debut soon

by Vivien Zhang

Class of 2015 alumni Blake Propach and Andrew York began working together during their freshman year.

The school's Media Arts Program allowed for them to collaborate on projects and understand how every task needed to be completed well in order to make a quality film.

That spirit of collaboration has resulted in a new webseries called "Mort's Life," which tells a story about the epic adventures three friends go through and how love and lies create conflict and excitement. It is set to premiere on Dec. 2 on the series' Gofundme page, which will be up on the same day.

York, now a junior at Loyola Marymount University majoring in film and television production, is the main producer, while Propach, a junior at Chapman University majoring in screenwriting, and Propach's friend Alé Cois are

helped me successfully work with other artists," York said. Ever since he graduated from SHS, York has worked in a variety of job positions for film companies in Los Angeles

such as Jason Wang Productions, allowing him to use his experience and expertise to make this series a success.

"I will admit that I had to take on a lot in order to get [this show] completed," York said. "And sometimes, our crew was only as big as 10 people. Other times, the crew only included myself and Blake."

Once the pilot episode airs Dec. 2, viewers will be given the option to donate money. They are aiming to raise \$5,500 to create another five episodes. In order to encourage donations, the team has also created a "less optimistic version of the board game Candy Land," called Mort's Life Board Game," which will be given out as prizes to project donors.

"I think SHS students are going to enjoy 'Mort's Life,'" York said. "It's not just about a character who is larger than life, but also about how they dealt with the expectations their parents had for the them."

The lead actor of "Mort's Life," senior Naman Sajwan, plays the tragically afflicted character Morteza, a reckless genius. He has knowledge bottled up inside of

him but nobody can really see how smart he is because he doesn't let it show.

"It was my first time doing anything like this and Andrew made sure I had a fun time with it," Sajwan said. "It was a pretty unique experience because when you're in a film, you have to get used to practicing over and over again and you can't divert from that."

Other students who play important roles are 2016 alumnus Austin Villanueva, a love-starved poet; senior Julie Cai, who obsesses over a secret admirer; and senior Saya Sivaram, an emotional and heartwarming groupmate. Propach and York started pre-production, writing and revising the script of each episode in May.

"MAP gave me a strong understanding of collaborating with others, which in turn helped me successfully work with other artists," York said.

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such as Jason Wang Productions, allowing him to use his experience and expertise to make this series a success.

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Final 'Jason Bourne' film fails to impress avid fan

by Neil Rao

Blurry chase scenes, the memorable buzzes of the theme music and a classic plot of an intricate spy network all marked the fourth installment of The Bourne blockbuster franchise, "Jason Bourne."

Released in theatres on July 29, the film stars Matt Damon as Bourne, an amnesiac ex-CIA spy trying to remember his prior identity.

The movie follows Bourne on his quest to uncover hidden truths about his life from 10 years ago, including information about his deceased father and the men responsible for taking away his life and making him a covert CIA operative.

But unlike the previous movies in the franchise, this installment, with its unrealistic action scenes and lackluster storyline, failed to impress.

As the bullets flew across the screen at ridiculous angles and the cliché storyline of an enemy as a hero's love interest unraveled, I couldn't help but be reminded of a Katherine Heigl rom-com.

While the movie did maintain a good number of action scenes to satisfy my craving for car chases and daring jumps, it displayed scenes that were unoriginal and too identical to those that were part of the past installments.

The once thought-provoking spy tactics, such as tracing calls and unleashing secret weapons, were outdated and average at best. Additionally, in comparison to other popular spy movies like "Mission Impossible" and "James Bond," "Jason Bourne" only scrapes the bottom of the barrel for anything close to a captivating plot.

Although the movie is supposed to follow Bourne finding out the truth about his father, I often became lost as the father is only mentioned a total of two times.

In the last minutes of the movie, however, the director Paul Greengrass changes the entire series by tackily revealing the truth behind Bourne's father's murder in a small matter of three seconds.

Ending the Jason Bourne series much too abruptly, the film leaves viewers questioning

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"Jason Bourne"
The movie turned out to not be as big of a hit as its previous installments. Compared to movies like "James Bond" and "Mission Impossible," this movie had outdated and average spy tactics. Although the number of action scenes were satisfying, the scenes itself were repetitive of those in the past movies. Rather than focus solely on the plot's intensity, the producers of the movie contained unrealistic action scenes and a cliché romantic storyline.

the point of such a complex series if the suspenseful idea was given away in a matter of seconds. Furthermore, in the first three movies, a young Damon was agile and clever. Now, 14 years after the first movie, Damon is much older and slower, and while his acting is still on point, Damon doesn't look the part and is unable to attempt daring stunts like he once did in the past.

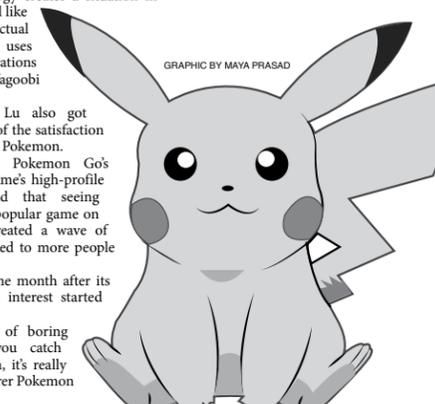
Another lead that fell short was actress Alicia Vikander, who portrayed the CIA agent and antagonist Heather Lee.

Although Vikander is a talented actress and an Academy Award winner, her character in the film was adequate at best.

She seemed to have little importance in the plot as all she did was make a pitiful attempt to stop Bourne in his tracks, which made her presence both unnecessary and annoying.

While the first three installments of the Bourne franchise set a benchmark for the category of spy movies, revisiting this trilogy with a fourth installment was a mistake.

As an avid fan of the series, I wish I didn't spend \$12 to watch it because the movie failed to reach my expectations and, if anything, tainted a successful series. ♦



GRAPHIC BY MAYA PRASAD

Misrepresentation in Hollywood

Oscar-winning animation full of stereotypes

BY Ava Hooman

Like other children, I watched the Academy Award-winning Disney animated movie "Aladdin" and immediately fell in love with the Middle Eastern folk tale. The magic carpet's sassiness, blue genie and unforgettable songs such as "A Whole New World" glued me to the TV for the entire time it played. However, my unquestionable love for this movie began to waver when I rewatched the film recently, realizing how Disney weaved some rather controversial topics into the classic tale. As a 4-year-old, I skipped past them, but these implications have been increasingly apparent as I've gotten older. Within the first five minutes of the movie, I am transported into the land of Agrabah through the

song "Arabian Nights," which at first seems like a simple, catchy number, yet its lyrics are ripe with stereotypes about Arabs. The original lyrics of the song contained the lines: "Where they cut off your ear, if they don't like your face. It's barbaric, but hey, it's home." Although this was not included in the version I watched, the idea that Disney had originally included these degrading, violent phrases to describe Arabs is appalling. This song perpetuates Western ideas about the Middle East as nothing more than a war-torn region and strips the nuances of the region's history and culture. Besides the cultural misrepresentation of Arabs, Disney also manages to include gender stereotypes through the female

protagonist, Princess Jasmine. In the climactic fight scene, Jasmine is trapped in the hourglass by the evil Royal Vizier of Agrabah, Jafar. Even though she uses a great amount of force to break the glass, she cannot escape this trap until Aladdin breaks it for her. Disney gives the impression that women are damsels in distress who tend to be helpless and unable to fend for themselves. Rather than convincing young girls that they are inferior to men, Disney should instead be imparting a sense of confidence and independence. After all, this movie was made in 1992, not the 1950s. The misconceptions in "Aladdin" are not just bound to the stereotypes of Arabs and the insinuation that

women are the weaker sex, but even include a massive confusion between Arab and Indian culture. For example, Jasmine's pet, Rajah, is a Bengal tiger, native to India; yet he somehow happens to be owned by an Arab family. The setting itself is also an issue because they based the Sultan's palace off of the Taj Mahal, which is a historical and cultural monument of India. There are a bit too many confusing choices that the directors of the movie have done to include that do not benefit the movie rather they add confusion for watchers and mix cultures. Although "Aladdin" is a timeless tale for children to watch and enjoy, watching the movie through teenage eyes now makes me notice the wrongdoings and understand its effect on the movie. ♦



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"Aladdin"
How does this movie showcase cultural misrepresentation? This Disney movie portrays several scenes of cultural confusion between Indian and Arabic cultures. It also presents women as the weaker sex through Princess Jasmine, who always needs Aladdin to save her.

'The Great Wall' not so whitewashed after all

BY Patrick Li & Victor Liu

Since March, movie-goers have been using Twitter and other social media outlets to complain about the increased trend of whitewashed movies. On July 28, Chinese director Zhang Yimou appeared to rub salt in the wound by releasing a trailer starring Matt Damon, a white actor, as the savior of China in his upcoming movie, "The Great Wall." Once again, Twitter became the public's platform to voice disapproval of Damon's casting in the film, which releases on Feb. 17. "Our heroes don't look like Matt Damon. They look like Malala, Ghandi, Mandela. Your big sister when she stood up to those bullies that one time," said Constance Wu, star actress of ABC's "Fresh Off

the Boat" on a twitter rant. "We don't need salvation. We like our color and our culture and our own strengths and our own stories." Although Damon is a white actor Chinese movie, the whitewashing in "The Great Wall" is a more complicated than the typical, culturally appropriative movie. Judging from the movie's trailer, it's undeniable that Damon plays an integral character, but what most people don't realize is that Damon isn't robbing an Asian actor of a role. "Our film is not about the construction of the Great Wall. Matt Damon is not playing a role that was originally conceived for a Chinese actor," Yimou told Entertainment

Weekly. "The arrival of his character in our story is an important plot point. There are five major heroes in our story and he is one of them — the other four are all Chinese." Damon's character is supposed to be Caucasian — and "The Great Wall" shouldn't be blindly labeled as a "whitewashed" movie. In Hollywood, it's movies like "Ghost In The Shell," in which white actors and actresses like Scarlett Johansson are cast for roles intended for Asians, that should called out for their cultural misappropriation. Furthermore, Yimou's decision to choose Damon is more likely to be about money than purposeful whitewashing. By casting Damon, Yimou not only captivates the

Chinese market with the majority of the actors being mostly Chinese celebrities, but also the U.S. market with an American actor who can attract even more movie-goers. Because the movie targets both American and Chinese consumers, future partnerships between Hollywood and Chinese production companies will be improved. "In many ways "The Great Wall" is opposite of what is being suggested," Yimou said. "For the first time, a film deeply rooted in Chinese culture, with one of the largest Chinese casts ever assembled, is made at tentpole scale for a world audience. I believe that's a trend that should be embraced by our industry." Although the public has reason to be angered at movies that marginalize Asian voices, "The Great Wall" isn't one of them. ♦

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"The Great Wall"
How does this movie showcase cultural misrepresentation? In the "Great Wall," great controversy occurred surrounding the casting of Matt Damon in a Chinese production. Many took to social media in order to speak against its supposed "whitewashing."

Stereotypes in 'Indiana Jones' discovered

BY Ryan Kim

The "Indiana Jones" franchise has a global following — fans still enjoy the classic humor and adventure of the film series. But the franchise's second installment, "Indiana Jones: The Temple of Doom," betrays its exterior of amusing entertainment with a mound of ignorance. The 1984 film equates all Hindus to the extremist Kali tribe, characterizing an entire ethnic group as savage, bloodthirsty and cultist subhumans. The representation of Hindu people is gravely inappropriate. With their demonic rituals, primitive chants and strange food choices such as monkey brains for dessert, the tribe is ultimately depicted as inhumane. The movie's underlying racism

comes across most prominently in a human sacrifice scene. The leader of a group uses dark sorcery to carve out a captive's heart and burn him alive. Indiana Jones, the stereotypical Western hero, saves the day once again by defeating the barbaric tribe, further emphasizing Hollywood's preference for all things western and white. The producers of "Indiana Jones" not only relegated the Hindu population to offensive stereotypes, but made a mockery of Hindu culture. For example, the strange chants the Kali tribe says are a convoluted, twisted version of actual Hindu chants and prayers. This distortion of culture could

not be further from the truth. In reality, Hindus worship a variety of gods, many of which are benevolent and generous rather than devilish like Kali Ma, the main god the cultists worshipped in the movie. Furthermore, Hindus promote peace and love; they don't sacrifice humans, they don't wear barbaric skull masks, and they most certainly don't drink blood. It seems all the Hindus in the movie are wild, small brown men with unruly hair. This movie generalizes an entire population with its exaggerations of a very fictional extremist group branded as Hindu and takes away

the Hindus' humanity, making them seem like a barbaric and alien tribe. This twist of reality prompted stereotypes and falsehoods against Hindus by influencing uneducated movie-goers. When there were fewer American-Hindus in the 1980s than today, the entertainment industry of the nation so self-proclaimed as the champion of equality led many Americans to believe these lies. It is clear that the entertainment industry in the past has used baseless stereotypes to characterize little-known cultures. We should learn that movies have power and shouldn't carelessly disseminate false information. Until we fix how we view "barbaric savages," we can't progress in understanding more about other cultures. ♦



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"Indiana Jones"
How does this movie showcase cultural misrepresentation? The "Indiana Jones" franchise, however entertaining, contains misappropriation of Hindu religion. Equating all Hindus to the one extreme tribe, the Kalis, the movie gives the idea that the religion is based on savage teachings.

'Aloha' casting shows that racial problems still exist

BY Christopher Lee

The 2015 romantic comedy "Aloha" follows the love story of an Air Force liaison and fighter pilot named Allison Ng and military contractor Brian Gilcrest. Together, the pair is on a mission to negotiate a military deal with natives in Oahu, Hawaii. But the rom-com's success was short-lived. Controversy ensued soon after its release over director Cameron Crowe's decision to cast Emma Stone, a white actress, as Asian-Hawaiian character Ng. While the character of Ng is one-quarter Chinese and one-quarter Hawaiian, Stone has obvious Anglo-Saxon features, such as light hair and green eyes. "Aloha" is evidence that racial misrepresentation hasn't

disappeared from the Hollywood industry. "I've learned on a macro level about the insane history of whitewashing in Hollywood and how prevalent the problem truly is," Stone said in an interview with Australian news outlet News.com. "It's ignited a conversation that's very important." The "Aloha" controversy is unnervingly similar to that of the 1961 film "Breakfast at Tiffany's," produced well over a decade before the height of the Civil Rights Movement. Mickey Rooney, a white actor, portrayed a Japanese character named Mr. Yunioshi and used

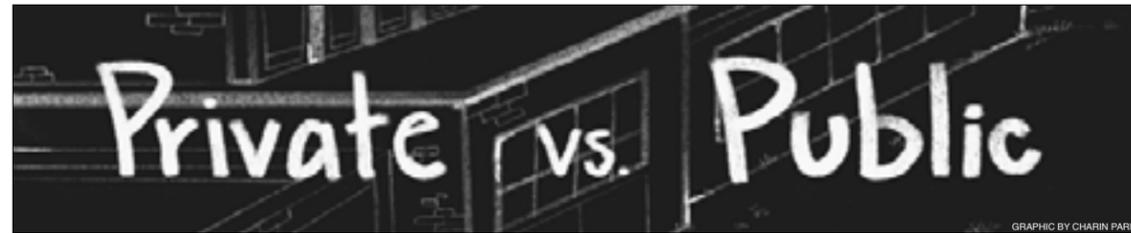
heavy makeup for a slant-eyed look and a mouth prosthetic to simulate buckteeth. This nearly 50-year-old film received little to no backlash in its day, likely due to a smaller Asian American community and overall less racial and cultural awareness. On the other hand, "Aloha" contains traces of whitewashing far too similar to those in old movies. But for all of the poor judgment displayed in "Aloha," Crowe's apology suggests that members of Hollywood are finally addressing the issue of whitewashing. Even though "Aloha" was produced in 2015 and we expect Hollywood to be past such blatant insensitivity, it's a step forward that influential figures in Hollywood are acknowledging racial misrepresentation. ♦

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"Aloha"
How does this movie showcase cultural misrepresentation? The casting of a white actress, Emma Stone, as a Hawaiian glares in its cultural misrepresentation. Director Cameron Crowe apologized soon after, indicating that Hollywood is finally acknowledging the issues of whitewashing movies.



GRAPHIC BY CHARIN PARK

PRIVATE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE BROADENS STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

BY Alexandra Li & Katherine Zhou

Junior Chris Auches, then in his freshman year at Bellarmine College Preparatory, faced disappointment when he was cut from the freshman soccer team. Given that Auches played soccer competitively for 11 years, his elimination in the first of five rounds devastated him, opening his eyes to the reality students sometimes face in private schools.

As Auches looked over the list his coach had given him in areas where he could improve, he realized it was an unrealistic time commitment to baseball. It made him realize that he wouldn't be able to play the sports wanted to at Bellarmine.

Auches, after attending Saratoga Elementary School and Redwood Middle School, decided to attend Bellarmine with encouragement from his parents. However, he decided to transfer back to Saratoga for his sophomore year after his experience at Bellarmine.

In the Bay Area, many students consider attending private schools. But since there are also many prestigious public high schools in the area, the question for many is whether the private school path is the right one for them.

According to Auches, many students choose to attend private schools primarily for their athletic careers, so these sports teams tend to be more competitive with extremely dedicated players who practice all year round.

Private schools such as Bellarmine have the funding to offer state-of-the-art equipment, such as an all-weather track. Bellarmine can also afford to hire the best coaches, such as Larry Rogers, who led the water polo

team to 14 CCS titles out of 15 years.

Sports, however, can also be the deciding factor in transferring back to public schools. After soccer team tryouts, Auches moved back to Saratoga, since he saw that Bellarmine's cutthroat sports culture prevented him from pursuing soccer and baseball while still investing time in other interests.

However, a possible benefit of attending a private school lies in its course variety. With more funding, private schools like Bellarmine can offer specialized courses such as Biochemistry, Latin, Neurobiology, Hebrew Scriptures, AP Studio Art and more.

Like Auches, sophomore Satvik Narasimhan attended The Harker School, a private school in San Jose, during his freshman year before moving back to Saratoga High for his sophomore year.

After attending The Challenger School until third grade, Narasimhan transferred to Argonaut Elementary School, Redwood Middle School and then Harker for his freshman year. He noted that Harker's teaching style was much stricter than Saratoga's.

"[Private schools] try to nurture from a very young age to have a strong regimented environment, starting around fifth or sixth grade," Narasimhan said. "[But] it just wasn't for me."

At a public school like Saratoga, it is com-

mon to have around 30 students in one classroom, but at Harker, a class will range from having six to 18 students.

"The class sizes were the main difference [at Harker]," Narasimhan said. "But for me, I didn't really see the benefit of smaller classes."

Although private schools have a perceived competitive academic culture, both Narasimhan and Auches found the classes at Harker and Bellarmine to be easier than the average

Saratoga class, even if they had only experienced the freshman workload at their private schools.

Auches thinks Saratoga is more rigorous than Bellarmine, where his schedule consisted of 50-minute classes rotating four days a week, with classes starting at 8:05 a.m., a 2:45 p.m.

dismissal Monday through Thursday and a 1:20 p.m. dismissal on Friday. This flexible

schedule led to a lighter workload, especially with teachers assigning less homework.

Aside from academics, Auches discovered differences in the social scene. At Bellarmine, Auches observed the students acted more like a "family," as students from as far away as Gilroy to Milpitas bonded in their commitment to attend the school.

"It was 'cool' to be smart and a good student," Auches said. "They chose it for robotics, for the variety of classes, for the sports, for the atmosphere, for the speech and debate program. There wasn't anything that

"My personality was better for a public school, since it's not as regimented, and you can have a better student-teacher relationship," Narasimhan said. "[The strict environment of Harker] isn't bad and works for many people, but it just wasn't for me."

Even so, Narasimhan doesn't regret his experiences at Harker.

"If I hadn't had that one year at Harker, I don't think I would do as well with the rest of [Saratoga]," Narasimhan said. "Harker really prepares you for the rest of high school and college." ♦

Private schools try to nurture from a very young age to have a strong regimented environment, starting around fifth grade. But it just wasn't for me.

SOPHOMORE Satvik Narasimhan

Alternative schools prove to be popular with SHS students

BY Amith Galivanche & Muthu Palaniappan

The school has a population of about 1,300 and classes can be as large as 35 or even larger in some extreme cases.

By contrast, in Los Gatos, only a 10-minute drive away, are private schools like Fusion Academy and the School for Independent Learners (SIL), private schools that allow students to receive the same credits and have few or no other students in their classes. The two schools have the same goal of student academic achievements, though they provide different environments.

The Fusion Academy is an accredited private middle and high school with several branches that provides students with one-to-one instruction, much like SIL. Students who find the regular public school environment difficult get the chance to learn in a slower-paced option, with grades that can be transferred directly to their transcripts.

It's little surprise that the schools are pric-

ey, costing over \$3,000 to enroll in a course for a semester. A class at Fusion or SIL is more focused on students, however, because it only is the tutor and the student in the class.

A student who said she was helped by this environment is senior Sophia Crolla, who attended SIL in her junior year to take Trigonometry/Pre-calculus Honors.

"I took it because I'm not very good at math in general so I figured a one-on-one class would be much easier for me," Crolla said.

These schools also bill themselves as an opportunity for students who may not be satisfied with their grades in a class or prefer to study at their own pace with tutors who typically hold university degrees in the subject.

Along with Fusion Academy, schools like Halstrom Academy have the same programs that give students credits for courses outside of their high schools.

Crolla had decided to attend the school

after her older sister took a class there and liked it.

"I've never done as well in a math class as I did at SIL; my teacher was very accommodating and I could go at a pace that was easy for me," Crolla said.

While Fusion Academy has six branches in the Bay Area, SIL is only based in Los Altos. Crolla found the location to be the hardest part of the experience due to the time-consuming commute.

To finish the course, Crolla spent a year at SIL. She attended the classes less often than she would have at SHS, although she missed a few classes while she was injured during her lacrosse season. Crolla said that she would consider taking another math class at SIL.

Senior McConnell Gou had a different reason for attending SIL: He wanted to accommodate his competitive fencing schedule.

Gou decided to take AP Biology, US History and even Latin, a SIL course that is no longer offered at almost all public schools.

Since Gou finished his freshman year courses at SIL at around the same pace as he would have had he taken them at SHS, he continued taking classes there for the next three years. He took the rest of his classes, including English and math, at SHS. Every week, Gou spent one day at SIL and the next at SHS to make his schedule work. He is currently enrolled in Calculus, US Government

and Economics at SIL.

Junior Connor Reyes also had a positive experience when he took Algebra 2 at Fusion Academy for five weeks during the summer, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. every day.

"I really liked Fusion because it's one-on-one and you can't really dilly-dally in class," he said. "There is no using your phone without getting caught, so you learn the material much better."

Reyes said that he learned most of the content that he would have learned during the school year, and he was also able to delve deeper into the subject.

Despite the glowing reviews from students like these, the validity of classes like those offered at Fusion and SIL remain a question. While the grades are transferred directly to a student's transcript, some feel that specialized schools like these give students an unfair advantage because they assume classes are easier.

Reyes, however, stands by Fusion, saying that the only reason for the controversy is due to the school's lack of name-recognition.

"I think it is sort of hypocritical and a double standard," Reyes said. "People can take courses at St. Francis High School for credit, but nobody bats an eye if someone is getting their credit from any outside place. St. Francis, Mitty, all have that name appeal, whereas people may not think of Fusion as that." ♦

I really liked Fusion, because it's one-on-one and you can't really dilly-dally in class.

JUNIOR Connor Reyes



Sophomore chess champion shares expertise

BY Eleanor Goh & Ami Nachiappan

Elite chess players are not like everyone else.

Instead of relying solely on the logic-heavy left brain the way amateurs tend to do, they make their best moves by using both sides of their brains, combining analytical and visual aspects to form the most logical decision.

It's an ability only a few players at the highest level possess.

One of those people is sophomore Tanuj Vasudeva, who at age 7 claimed the title of national champion for his K-1 group.

Vasudeva has brought also home medals from numerous competitions, including a gold medal in both North and South America at age 8, a silver medal at the World Youth Championship chess tournament in Turkey in the same year and a bronze medal in the Under-8 Section of North America at age 6.

In his preparation for world-class tournaments, Vasudeva often spent five to six hours looking through potential opponents' games. Then he would train with "tactics," complex exercises that comprise a large portion of tournament training.



GRAPHIC BY ELAINE SUN

"Tactics are a very important part of chess and a bit difficult to explain," Vasudeva said. "It is similar to football, in which there are many different plays and patterns that can be observed."

While football plays are carried out on the field and require a strong physical build, in chess, factors like age and size do not matter — an aspect of the game that Vasudeva has taken advantage of.

"Being a small guy, I've always felt quite a feeling of superiority over the board, something that I don't usually feel," Vasudeva said.

Vasudeva started playing the board game out of interest right before he turned 5, with no intentions of taking it so far.

"I started chess as I did with anything that intrigued me, and I treated it as a game," Vasudeva said. "Later, I discovered that this game was more than just amusing, and I wanted to play against more people and start winning."

Vasudeva credits his father, Tarun Vasudeva, for most of his success, citing the tremendous amount of time his father has sacrificed to help him practice and take him to tournaments.

"He was the lighter for this spark that caused the most memorable moments in my life," Vasudeva said.

Since his win at the national championships in 2008, Vasudeva has received global attention for his achievements. He got his first taste of stardom when he found an article about himself on renowned chess player and world-class coach Michael Aigner's blog.

"I had met him before, but I had no idea that it was newsworthy at the time," Vasudeva said. "Soon, [other articles] began to pop up, and it was a healthy motivator for me to continue and pursue my dream."

Later in 2009, Vasudeva was featured by NBC, and one of his interviews aired on CBS 6 o'clock Eyewitness news.



FALCON // VIVIEN ZHANG

Sophomore Tanuj Vasudeva reaches to move black king piece on his portable chess board.

Because of Vasudeva's success in the game, many have labeled him as a "prodigy" along the way; however, Vasudeva thinks the term "undermines the immense amount of hard work gone into tournaments and preparation."

Traveling the world as a chess champion, Vasudeva has not only developed analytical thinking and problem solving skills, but has also met others who share his passion for the game.

"Chess has affected my social life in huge ways, as I have been introduced to so many amazing people and have made many new connections through competitions worldwide," he said.

Nowadays, although he does not attend large-scale tournaments as frequently because of other time commitments, Vasudeva still stays active, whether it be through playing games at Santana Row or

meeting up with his chess friends.

Because chess has had such an impact on his life, Vasudeva wants to share his expertise with younger players. In hopes that they will develop the same passion that he has for the game, this summer he hosted lessons for elementary and middle school students at his house.

"I can relive the experience by teaching these kids," Vasudeva said. "What you really learn when you teach for the first time is that it's a beautiful thing to see the next generation growing."

When he was younger, Vasudeva had always aimed to overtake his coach, Ted Castro, at the time, a goal he later accomplished in 2012.

Now a coach himself, Vasudeva hopes that his own students can experience the success and joy in a game that has meant so much to him. ♦

Toga Points of View



On contemporary art:

The role of the artist is decreasing as years progress, while the role of the viewer gets bigger. Now art is more about how its meaning gets delivered to the audience rather than the techniques.

— JR Im (11)

On naked Donald Trump statues:

[The naked Donald Trump statues are] kind of a mix between art and a political statement. I think it's really cool. It's freedom of speech.

— Laura Chaland (11)

On glasses left in SF MOMA:

[The glasses] do speak to the disconnect between the art world and the larger population. A larger viewing public finds that too problematic to understand to really care about it.

— MAP teacher Joel Tarbox

Should the number of AP and Honors classes SHS students take be limited?

Limiting the number of AP and Honors classes is a bad thing. But you never know whether [some students are] actually ready for [the classes] or not, and if they are, they should be given the option to take whatever they want.

— Jackson Green (9)

By restricting the amount of AP/Honors classes, students are unable to reach their full potential and strive for more. We should know our limits and should be able to decide for ourselves on how much we can take.

— Michelle Vu (10)

It is a good idea since many students feel pressured to take harder classes just for colleges, making their four years extremely stressful. We no longer have to feel obligated to take an AP class we don't enjoy.

— Colina Guan (11)

No, it shouldn't be limited. For better or worse, [students] will either learn that they were right to push themselves to take the AP, or learn that next time, they should take a more reasonable set of classes.

— Joyce Lai (12)



GRAPHICS BY CHARIN PARK

Average size of freshman English class



GRAPHIC BY CAITLIN JU AND ELAINE SUN

Synchro swimmer advocates for Paralympics addition

by Charin Park & Jason Zhao

The flare of a thousand red and gold fireworks lit up junior Raquel Boales' eyes as she watched the Paralympic opening ceremony in Maracanã Stadium, Rio on Sept. 7. Giant cloth numbers tumbled down from all sides of the amphitheater as the audience roared a countdown.

As the procession of athletes headed to a nearby exit, Boales and a handful of Americans in front of her waved their flags. Boales was there representing her group, Synchronized Swimming Athletes with Disabilities (AWD).

Her mission was to campaign for synchronized swimming to be a Paralympic sport.

"To compete in the Paralympics would mean the universe to me," Boales said. "By the time 2024 rolls around, assuming we have enough support and that everything is going well, synchronized swimming will be introduced in the Paralympics, which I hope to compete in."

In order to add a sport to the Paralympics, AWD requires the cooperation of the sports federations from at least 25 countries. Despite the enormous task, Boales and her group have gained the interest and cooperation of over 20 countries in just two years.

Through the help of her mom

Tina and president of AWD, Boales has traveled to six countries so far: Canada, Taiwan, Japan, Spain, Israel and Brazil. Boales also plans to visit Russia and Australia.

In these countries, Boales has participated in camps and exhibitions where she was able to help other disabled swimmers, while also working with coaches to develop better ways to help train. In addition, she has gone to conferences to spread the word about synchronized swimming.

While in Brazil, she went to a sports medicine conference in São Paulo, where she presented and listened to speeches from people from around the world. Following the conference, she performed at a livestreamed exhibition with teams from countries around the world, including Mexico, Canada and Japan.

"I performed my solo and team routine with my USA team, and also did a duet with a girl who only has one arm — a right arm," Boales said. "She lives in Brazil, so when we were writing the duet, I actually wrote the routine here in the U.S. and we just talked over Facebook and performed it for the first time at the exhibitions."

After saying goodbye to the other teams, Boales took a plane to Rio, where she attended the Paralympics opening ceremony and watched events and competitions

for about three days before returning home.

While watching the other disabled athletes perform, she became even more determined in her efforts.

"Their willpower and abilities were exceptional beyond belief, and their 'disabilities' disappeared as soon as the timer started," Boales said. "It was amazing to witness in person."

While the journey ahead is still long and arduous, Boales is determined to see it through.

"I just want to see everyone with disabilities and special needs be given the same opportunities for sports and advancement like everyone else who is not disabled," Boales said.

Despite being diagnosed with Erb's Palsy, a brachial plexus injury caused by damage to the nerves and tissue in her left shoulder, Boales developed an interest in synchronized swimming and began to train with the San Jose Angelfish at age 8. Two years later, something extraordinary happened to her at the State Games of America when she competed in the novice category.

"Even though it was novice, it was still a hard category for me to be in because everyone I was competing against was able-bodied, and none of them had physical or cognitive disabilities," Boales said. But when they announced the



Courtesy of Raquel Boales
Junior Raquel Boales (left) prepares to perform her duet at an exhibition with her partner from Brazil.

winners in the category, Boales was shocked to hear her name get called for first place.

Only 10 years old with two years of experience, Boales never dreamed of winning first. From that point on, she never looked back.

With confidence in her mission and the encouragement from her parents, Boales is working to be able to compete in the Paralympics one day in her favorite sport.

"Not only can I broadcast my talent and hard work at the highest level possible, but other swimmers like me can do the same as well," Boales said. ♦

Senior hammer thrower recounts years of throwing

by Eleanor Goh & Charin Park

The dark mesh of the throwing cage wavered in the searing summer heat of Greensboro, North Carolina. Senior Tristan Bush stepped into the throw circle, the white letters of "Saratoga" gleaming against his blue and red sports tank top.

"Boys' 2016 championship hammer: flight one, round 3," the announcer declared.

Despite being 6'1" and having nearly 200 pounds of muscle, Bush was surprisingly nimble as his red and black track shoes paced inside the ring. His 12-pound hammer blazed about him five times like a steel comet before hurtling across the landing sector, landing 54.33 meters away.

This past summer, Bush competed in the New Balance National Championships, taking 17th overall in the national high school division.

On his first day of throwing, Bush was 4th in the Emerging Elites division. He said that when he threw in the Championships division, he knew he wasn't going to make finals, so he was a lot more relaxed. As a result, he was able to throw further and "have fun with it."

Bush's first experience with hammer, however, started in middle school as an inside joke between his parents. His dad, Bob Bush, used to throw in college, so his mother, Patti Bush, bought Bush a throwing starter kit for Christmas, including the equipment for discus, shot put and hammer. He and his dad started practicing every Sunday in the dust between second base and centerfield in Congress Springs, a baseball field in Saratoga.

Bush threw shotput and discus in middle school, but he didn't realize his talent for hammer throw until high school, when he began training regularly with two coaches:

his dad, who coaches at De Anza College, and another coach in Santa Cruz. In freshman and sophomore year, Bush went to the Junior Olympics and placed seventh both times.

Although managing school and sports was a struggle at first, Bush started to get the hang of it by the end of junior year.

"So far, it has been pretty good for me this year," Bush said, "I would first go home and get a quick snack. Then I'd go to throw and lift. This leaves me with about two hours to do my homework at night after practice."

Now in his fifth year of hammer throw, Bush said he usually spends six days a week training.

After warming up and taking one quick lap around the track, Bush spends most of his two-hour practice doing drills for his release and turn.

"I do 'walk-arounds' where you just walk the hammer around yourself and do your turns to get your rhythm," Bush said. "For those, you do not actually have to use a hammer. Instead, you could use something like a broom or a medicine ball."

In order to be able to throw a hammer far and not get thrown around, Bush says he must gain enough weight to combat the ball. He is working to his goal of 220 pounds through a "weight gainer," a 1000-calorie protein shake that he takes once when he wakes up and once before bed.

In this coming season, Bush hopes to throw 220 feet in hammer and break the school record in discus, which is 167 feet. He has also been talking to colleges about his future in the sport.

"I like hammer because it forces me to learn how to calm myself down, forget about the past, and focus on the present and future," Bush said. "Plus, everyone who throws is super nice and friendly, and you actually become friends with the kids you throw against." ♦



Bush

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

Teamwork leads Falcons to a 3-1 record in league

by Karen Chow & Stephen Ding

Racing across the court, junior setter Dasha Gousseva maneuvered through her teammates and tried to set up the play during a tough match against Gunn on Sept. 22. She quickly dove for the ball and bumped perfectly to junior outside Riley Carter, who then aggressively smashed the ball down for a point.

This kind of teamwork led the Falcons to a 3-0 victory over the Titans. The team's league record as of Sept. 26 was 3-1.

The team started off the game strong, defeating Gunn in the first set 25-12. Gunn fought back the second game, but the Falcons remained composed and pulled through 25-23.

They went on to take the third set 25-23.

On Sept. 24, the Falcons were able to defeat Santa Clara 3-0. With their strong offense, the Falcons were able to keep the Bruins under 20 each set; 25-16 the first set, 25-18 the second set and closing the game at 25-17 the third set.

In the girls second league game on Sept. 15 against Milpitas, the game started off poorly for the Falcons when they lost their serving advantage, but senior libero Julia Vita was able to bring the team to a lead with her quality serves. The girls won the first set 25-17.

During the second set, Milpitas had countless rotation errors, and the Falcons triumphed 25-20. In the third set, the girls were able to close up the game 25-10, with great kills from sophomore outside Katie Hulme.

Hulme said that the girls hope to continue working and communicating well together as a team.

"It's going to be harder to go to CCS because there are fewer bids in this lower division, and so the higher we get in league, the better chance we have [of] going to CCS," Hulme said.

On Sept. 13, the girls lost to Cupertino 3-0 in the first league game of the season.

Though they trailed by 34 points earlier in the game, the Falcons put their final points on the board in the last quarter when senior wide receiver Kian Ghelichkhani scored a touchdown to end the game 49-14. He believes the team could have been competitive with Milpitas — a traditional powerhouse in the league — if they had come out stronger in the first half.

"It was good to see our team have a good drive and get points on the board," Ghelichkhani said. "I wasn't happy because I knew we could have won, but I was proud to see us execute and play harder in the second half."

Senior Kian Ghelichkhani

a strong start was the key to the victory. "We felt confident prior to the game because we were on a two-game win streak after beating Silver Creek and Piedmont Hills, and we were prepared because we studied the film all week," Turpin said.

The Falcons are feeling confident heading into the game tonight against the Vikings, who have a record of 2-3 so far. Historically, the Falcons have had success when facing the Vikings. Last year, however, the Falcons lost to Palo Alto in a crushing overtime defeat that was a significant factor in keeping them out of the CCS playoffs. ♦



SOPHOMORE Katie Hulme

"We can definitely improve and help each other out. That way we're going to have lots of improvements."

Soccer star commits to Carnegie Mellon

by Karen Chow & Neil Rao

Senior Kevin Yu, a star soccer player for the varsity team since freshman year, will be setting the Falcon crest aside to play for the Carnegie Mellon Tartans next fall on a Division 3 squad.

On the way to recruitment, Yu gained many valuable experiences.

He said recruitment for soccer is different from that of other team sports like football and basketball since less emphasis tends to be placed on individual statistics.

Yu began his recruitment process by attending summer soccer camps at CMU as well as sending in a video showing his strengths.

He then advanced to tryouts, where he was among 50 others competing for a spot at CMU.

"I wasn't sure if I was good enough," he said. "On the first day, you have to stand out. I kept working hard and eventually, the coach said he would contact me about what to do from here."

Yu had previously met CMU's head coach, Brandon Bowman, who saw him play at Surf Cup, an invitational tournament in San Diego. Yu was attending with his club team, the '98 De Anza Force Blue.

At the time, Bowman told Yu that he was impressed to see how well Yu's skills and teamwork were. Following his tryouts

at CMU in July, he offered Yu a spot on the team and admission into the school, but, like sports offers at many academic colleges, not a scholarship.

Playing for both Force and the school team has helped Yu intensify his training.

Yu praised his coaches, Dave Burgee and Matt Marquess, for helping him develop as a player and bolstering his fitness level and defensive and offensive abilities.

Yu believes that this combination of strong coaches and considerable playing time on the school team, helped him develop as a well-rounded player.

Yu's teammate, senior forward Jonathan Yun, has played with Yu since they were in elementary school and admires his hard work both on the field and off.

"His work ethic has translated into his academics and he is very diligent in completing his work with quality," Yun said. "I think Kevin will continue to be a very successful student athlete in college because of his boldness in and out of the classroom."

In mid-August, Yu verbally committed to attending CMU where he will be studying business.

Now in his seventh year with Force, Yu is grateful for all that the club has offered and is looking forward to his time with the Tartans.

"The combination of academics, coaching staff, great environment, friendly players and my desire to play soccer were ultimately the reasons why I chose CMU," Yu said. ♦



Courtesy of TIM YU
Playing with his Force club team, senior Kevin Yu shoots against Palo Alto Soccer Club.

FOOTBALL

Falcons lose key players to injuries vs. Milpitas

by Navin Tiwary & Sophia Zivanic

The Falcons' three-game win streak ended with a 49-14 home loss to the Milpitas Trojans on Sept. 23, bringing their overall record to 3-2 and their league record to 0-1.

Tonight's Homecoming game against Palo Alto offers them a chance at redemption at the same time they try to pick up an important league victory.

Last Friday, they were undersized compared to the Trojans, and faced an uphill battle the whole game. They were down 34-0 at one point.

Worse still, the boys suffered several injuries against Milpitas, losing two key players, seniors defensive end Aaron Vogel and wide receiver Daelan Denenberg, both of whom may be out for the rest of the season.

Vogel suffered a sprained and possibly torn ACL, while Denenberg got injured in the second quarter when he separated his sternoclavicular joint and fractured his clavicle.

"I obviously don't feel that good about the injury, but there's nothing I can do about it," Denenberg said. "I just have to hope it heals before the season's over and cheer on my teammates."

Though they trailed by 34 points earlier in the game, the Falcons put their final points on the board in the last quarter



FALCON // VIVIAN ZHANG
The Falcon linemen prepare for the snap during the game against Milpitas on Sept. 22.

Ghelichkhani hopes that if everyone on the team continues to stay focused during practice and work hard then the Falcons will have a great season.

One week earlier, the Falcons were feeling much better when they traveled to Leigh High School and handed the Longhorns a crushing 42-27 defeat. Junior wide receiver Will Turpin said

into the game tonight against the Vikings, who have a record of 2-3 so far. Historically, the Falcons have had success when facing the Vikings. Last year, however, the Falcons lost to Palo Alto in a crushing overtime defeat that was a significant factor in keeping them out of the CCS playoffs. ♦

Even though they are focusing on hitting longer shots, the team is still practicing on their short game because they believe that is where their success will come from. "Such shots, which are hard under pressure, help us close out matches and are very important," Jin said.

Due to printing deadlines, the issue was not able to cover matches against Los Gatos on Sept. 27 and Lynbrook on Sept. 29. ♦

GIRLS' GOLF

Despite initial losses, Falcons persevere

by Patrick Li & Neil Rao

Well into the new season, the girls' golf team is looking to putt their way to the top of the leaderboard. So far, they have found trouble along the way.

On Sept. 22, the girls played Gunn, losing by 7 with a score of 228-235. It was an extremely close game, and came down to the last hole, but the girls were not able to pull through.

No. 1 player Janelle Jin, for the third time, was the medalist with a score of 42. No. 3 player Sarah Lo was second with 48, and No. 2 player Cynthia Lang third with 48.

The Falcons played Palo Alto on Sept. 19 at the Saratoga Country Club and lost 206-216.

In their first match of the season on Sept. 12, the Falcons suffered a 208-223 loss to their rival Los Gatos at the Saratoga Country Club. Jin led the way for the Falcons with a score of 38 for nine holes. Despite her success, the Wildcats clawed their way back, with two co-medalists each receiving a score of par 37.

To improve on their early setbacks, the team is looking to Jin and their coach David Gragnola for the leadership to turn around their season.

"When we're on the driving range hitting balls and one of us is having trouble with our swing, Jin and Gragnola watch closely and try to diagnose the problem," Yang said. "Also, when we're on the green practicing, they show us fun putting games to practice techniques and help improve our accuracy."

While the team's home course is at the Saratoga Country Club, most of their opponents have longer courses, said Jin. If the team hopes to make CCS, they must be able to produce results on a variety of courses.

Even though they are focusing on hitting longer shots, the team is still practicing on their short game because they believe that is where their success will come from.

"Such shots, which are hard under pressure, help us close out matches and are very important," Jin said.

Due to printing deadlines, the issue was not able to cover matches against Los Gatos on Sept. 27 and Lynbrook on Sept. 29. ♦

scoreboard

Sept. 9
Saratoga 29, Piedmont Hills 13
The Falcons overcame a 13-9 deficit at half-time to win the game 29-13.

Sept. 23
Saratoga 14, Milpitas 49
Losing key seniors Aaron Vogel and Daelan Denenberg, the team failed to pull through.

Sept. 30
Saratoga vs. Palo Alto
The Falcons will face off against the Vikings tonight for the Homecoming game.

BOYS' WATER POLO

New coach helps Falcons learn new strategies

BY RolandShen

In recent weeks, the boys on the water polo team have been training hard under the direction of new head coach Jacob Young, who took over for past coach Courtney Crase this year.

As of Sept. 22, the team held a league record of 3-2.

Young, a former professional player and part of water polo team USA Alumni Club, has made a big impact on the team's performance by teaching new drills and plays.

For instance, in a game against Fremont on Sept. 22, the Falcons made a valiant effort, winning the game 14-11. Throughout the game, the boys found themselves ahead of Fremont by three goals each quarter. Despite the Fremont players being bigger, the Falcons outworked them in the hole-set and utility positions.

"Though they were a bigger team, we were able to beat them by playing smart and going extremely hard," senior hole-set Armin Agha-Ebrahim said.

The Falcons agree that Young's addition to the team has had a positive impact on the team.

"He acts a lot younger than other coaches, which makes him a lot more relatable to us," junior utility Alan Lu said. "He's able to come

into the water to demonstrate moves for us, which is really helpful."

At Lynbrook on Sept. 20, despite a hard-fought effort, they lost 8-3.

"We definitely suffered from their counterattacks, especially early on in the game," Lu said. "They were a really fast team, and we weren't very prepared for their speed."

On Sept. 15, the Falcons had their first loss of the season against Harker 14-5 due to a weak defense.

"Earlier in the game, our defense was pretty sloppy," senior utility William Lew said. "They were able to score a lot of goals off counterattacks, and that shouldn't happen."

The boys dominated Milpitas in an away game on Sept. 13, ending up ahead 10-2. On Sept. 8, the Falcons kicked off the season with a 9-5 win against Cupertino. The team was led by senior utility Grant Guzzo, who scored three goals, and Agha-Ebrahim, who scored two.

"We just had more fundamentals than Cupertino, which lead to a solid victory," Guzzo said. "Even so, we could have improved our coordination as a team, which is something that will improve every game."

The boys dominated Milpitas in an away game on Sept. 13, ending up ahead 10-2. On Sept. 8, the Falcons kicked off the season with a 9-5 win against Cupertino. The team was led by senior utility Grant Guzzo, who scored three goals, and Agha-Ebrahim, who scored two.

"We just had more fundamentals than Cupertino, which lead to a solid victory," Guzzo said. "Even so, we could have improved our coordination as a team, which is something that will improve every game."

This year, the team suffers from having a smaller physique in comparison to other schools. Only Guzzo, the team's captain,



Senior William Lew chases after the ball during the game against Fremont on Sept. 22.

stands at over six foot, while numerous players, and even though our team isn't very large in size, we make up for it in hard work and dedication."

The Falcons will face Milpitas on Oct. 4 and Harker on Oct. 6. ♦

Ebrahim said. "We have many talented players, and even though our team isn't very large in size, we make up for it in hard work and dedication."

The Falcons will face Milpitas on Oct. 4 and Harker on Oct. 6. ♦

Doping tactics at Olympic games grow more complex

BY KatherineZhou

Among other things, criticism of the 2016 Olympics in Rio centered on flooding, claims of robbery and green diving pools. However, another issue plagued the Games: doping, the administration of drugs in order to enhance or inhibit performance in sports.

Doping is hardly a new concept. Even in ancient times, Olympians gnawed on animal testicles to boost strength.

One of the first prominent cases of doping surfaced in 1904. American marathoner Thomas Hicks won a gold medal after his handlers fed him what seemed to be a harmless energy drink of whiskey, egg whites and strychnine, a chemical now used in rat poison.

However, only after Danish cyclist, Knud Enemark Jensen, died from an amphetamine-related crash in the 1960 Olympics, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) started enforcement over doping in 1968.

In the recent years, many doping scandals have been uncovered, revealing the prevalence of the issue, especially in sports based on strength or endurance.

When 454 Olympic samples from the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games were retested, many athletes were caught for doping, including Kenyan Nesta Carter, who ran the 4x100m along with Usain Bolt and won the gold in 2008.

At this year's Olympics, a shocking 110 Russian athletes were caught, including the entire track and field, weightlifting and rowing teams.

In fact, many Olympians came forward to reveal a history of state-sponsored doping: Nikita Kamaev, the executive director

of the Russian Anti-Doping Agency, emailed a historian to admit that he wanted to write a book about the true story of sport pharmacology and doping in Russia since 1987 while he was a young researcher in USSR Institute of Sports Medicine.

Along with that, the former director of the Russian anti-doping program, Grigory Rodchenkov, revealed in May of 2016 the doping techniques of Russian athletes during the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympic Games.

After rumors that he was behind the scandal, Rodchenkov resigned and fled to America in January.

In the 2014 Games, the Russian anti-doping laboratory facilitated an elaborate plan to fake doping tests for thousands of Russian Olympians.

The plan, which was organized meticulously for years, consisted of a Rodchenkov giving Russian athletes a three-drug cocktail of banned substances that he mixed with liquor. Then Russian intelligence and anti-doping officers replaced dirty samples with clean urine, breaking into tamper-proof bottles.

Rodchenkov told the New York Times that helping with doping techniques was necessary in order to continue to receive funding from the government.

Rodchenkov estimated that 100 dirty

samples were expunged by the end of the Olympic Games, with none of the athletes caught. Russia ended up winning the most amount of medals in the Olympics, surpassing the U.S. and Canada.

This year, it is speculated that the Russians tried to use a similar plan: switching dirty samples with clean ones between intelligence and anti-doping officers. But they were caught, and after retesting, a historic 110 athletes tested positive for doping.

David Goldblatt, author of "The Games: A Global History of the Olympics," claims that this stems from a "culture of cheating" in Russia, which dates back to the Soviet Union, when the state would sponsor administrations of testosterone and anabolic steroids.

Every year, the drugs athletes use are similar: anabolic steroids, human growth hormone and occasionally asthma medication or insulin.

Although drugs rarely change, methods for doping grow more complex each year, making doping a more widespread issue.

For example, a competitor might schedule their drug use so that they peak at a time when they won't be tested, so that by the time it's game day, their levels will be back

to normal. Beyond medications, athletes will use blood transfusions.

Americans are also guilty of these offenses. Take for example, Olympic sprinter Justin Gatlin, who won the silver in Rio for the 100m dash.

Gatlin was first banned from international competitions by the International Association of Athletic Federations in 2001, when he tested positive for amphetamines, a stimulant. However, he was reinstated after he claimed that he had been taking them since childhood for attention deficit disorder. Gatlin was handed another 4-year ban in 2006 for testing positive for testosterone, a steroid, while he claimed that a massage therapist rubbed steroid cream onto his legs.

Junior Chloe McGhee, a track and field athlete who qualified for CCS trials in the 300m hurdles last year, thinks doping is simply "cheating yourself," as it restricts athletes from realizing their full potential independently.

"[In the case of Gatlin's first suspension], he had to use drugs to fix his symptoms, so I believe that athletes shouldn't be banned for life, but have suspension and enough time to be fully clean," McGhee said.

Senior Stefanie Ting, a competitive swimmer who competed at the CIF Swimming and Diving State Championships, sees a zero-tolerance policy as being the only cure-all.

"I think if athletes are caught using performance enhancing drugs they should definitely be banned for life," Ting said. "Even if it was only one incident, the credibility of the athlete is destroyed. There's nothing worse than someone cheating others who work hard to earn their wins." ♦

"The team is all really bonded, so that's a major factor to our success," freshman field player Thaila Morganstern said. "We've been working on a lot of defense, so with great defense comes great offense as well."

Chung has been telling the girls that they have the potential to win CCS this year and move up a division at the end of the season.

"Our coach is definitely pushing us to be the best that we can," Morganstern said. "With more hard work and team communication, I think we have a high chance of making it to CCS this year." ♦

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GIRLS' WATER POLO

New coach and new players: starting leagues undefeated

BY ElaineSun & VivienZhang

With the score tied at 6-6 and the shot-clock under 5 seconds in a game against Monta Vista on Sept. 22, senior Kailyn Koberer swung the ball into the net, winning the game by one goal and bringing the girls' league record to 6-0.

After failing to qualify for CCS last year, the team has been working hard in the lower El Camino League to pile up victories. Perhaps making the task tougher, the Falcons

have six new players and a new coach named Jerome Chung.

Players say they are happy to see the improvement in their record, surpassing the two league victories they had last year.

On Sept. 10 and 11, the girls participated in the Santa Clara tournament, winning three out of four games, losing to Saint Ignatius and placing fifth.

In their first league game against Homestead on Sept. 6, the girls prevailed 6-4. They continued with a 5-2 win against Wilcox on Sept. 8.

Senior field players Sophie Sellers, Kanika Vora and Kailyn Kroeber have been the leading scorers, with most of their shots coming from perimeter passes.

"Our team has come so far since last season," Vora said. "We have grown to be really close and our chemistry translates to our success in the pool, which shows in our record."

Although they lost their first preseason game on Aug. 25 against Half Moon Bay 6-3, the girls quickly figured out what they had to improve on and won their second preseason game against Mercy 6-4.

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GIRLS' TENNIS

Falcons win state-level Fresno tournament

BY CaitlinJu

Huddled around the court sidelines in Fresno, the girls' tennis team waited expectantly as No. 1 doubles senior Danielle Berkowitz-Sklar and freshman Varsha Horanrur secured the Division 1 California Tennis Classic championship on Sept. 10.

Their 6-3, 6-4 victory against Oakridge High signaled a strong season start. Less than a week later, the girls breezed with a 6-1 win over Lynbrook in the first league match on Sept. 13, a 6-1 win over Monta Vista on Sept. 15 and 5-2 win over Cupertino on Sept. 19. With nearly half of the 13-player team new to varsity, including three singles tournament players, expectations were high for the California Tennis Classic and the league season as the team worked to find the right lineup.

"Even though we were very confident with our team, we stayed grounded going into the tournament, especially because we were overconfident last year at the Golden State Classic," No. 2 doubles senior Daviana Berkowitz-Sklar said. "We approached every match with the same intensity, even if our team was winning."

Though the girls played the Golden State Classic at Stanford the previous year, the team switched back to playing the California Tennis Classic, a tournament they placed third in two years ago, because of invitation and registration complications. In the two-day round-robin event, 98 teams from all California counties were divided into seven divisions. The Falcons were seeded No. 1 out of the eight Division 1 teams.

Of the four teams the girls faced during the California Tennis Classic, Los-Angeles based West Ranch High proved to be one of the toughest matchups, resulting in a narrow 4-3 win for the Falcons.

"We knew that going into the match, [West Ranch] had destroyed Oakridge 7-0 and that they had an especially strong doubles lineup, something most teams don't have," No. 2 singles freshman Monica Stratatos said. "But we knew that with our team we would be tough to beat."

With the team up 3-2 and only No. 1 singles and doubles remaining, Danielle and Horanrur won a close match against their previously undefeated opponents 3-6, 6-1, 12-10, while No. 1 singles senior Caitlin Ju lost 7-5, 7-5. Singles proved key against West Ranch, as Stratatos won 6-2, 6-1, No. 3 singles junior Stephanie Ren won 6-0, 6-1 and

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Head coach Florin Marica said success at the Fresno tournament proved not only an important bonding event for the team but an indicator of the team's potential for strong De Anza League and post-season performances.

"We have a great chance to achieve our end goal to win it all," Marica said. ♦



The girls pose after winning the California Girls' Tennis Classic Tournament on Sept. 10.

No. 4 singles freshman Annissa Mu won 6-0, 6-0.

The previous day, the girls beat Clovis West High 6-1 in the morning match and Menlo-Atherton 5-2 in the afternoon.

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GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

Breathing easily, freshman keeps pace with older runners

BY RyanKim & AmiNachappan

With her white racerback tank top, black Nike shorts and black hair tied tightly in a ponytail, freshman Julia Hoffman raced to the track shack on a September afternoon. Receiving a congratulatory high-five from girls' cross country coach Danny Moon, she grinned, knowing that once again, her hard work during the run had paid off.

Hoffman was inspired to join cross country by her older sister, 2016 alum Emma Hoffman. Though petite, she has taken the lead for the Falcons.

On the flat, 2.1 mile course at Lynbrook on Sept. 6, Hoffman placed third with a time of 14:13 and a mile pace of 6:47. Freshman Ellie Pickard followed in fifth place with a time of 15:20.

Hoffman has found that the running dis-

ance suits her endurance level from soccer. She started playing soccer at age 4 and joined the De Anza Force club soccer team in 2011.

In soccer games, playing left outside defender, Hoffman was required to run back and forth across the field to support the offense and help defense.

During the summer of 2012, her team trained at Lake Tahoe in high altitudes to help increase their endurance. During practice in Tahoe, her coach taught her a vital lesson that Hoffman always keeps in mind.

"My coach taught us to breathe in through our nose and out through our mouth to make it easier for us to breathe and not hyperventilate," she said. "That trick has really helped me no matter what altitude I'm running at."

Though the Falcons have only been practicing for a month, Hoffman has already found her spot on the team and has been taken under the wings of upperclassmen.

"The times before and after we go on runs is my favorite part so far since our team as

a whole can socialize and get to know each other better," she said. "The atmosphere that the captains create is always really positive."

After losing key alumni such as Ashley Chen and Kimberly Chen to graduation, senior co-captain Alice Bian is glad to have Hoffman on the team.

"She is always so bubbly and happy, which is really great, especially when upperclassmen are stressed out by SATs or college apps," Bian said.

So far, the team has had two meets; at both Lynbrook and at Central Park, Hoffman has placed well relative to the team. As her high school running career takes off, Julia hopes to maintain her passion for running.

"I love the free feeling I get when I run, like I can do anything and go anywhere," Hoffman said. "Running, especially when I'm sprinting at the end of a race feels like flying higher and higher into the air." ♦

FIELD HOCKEY

Led by senior forward and captain, girls start strong

BY LimaKim & NeilRao

Fields out, mouth guards ready. The girls' field hockey team is in full throttle for this current season and is a top competitor in the De Anza League.

The girls are 4-2 as of Sept. 23. They played Homestead on Sept. 21 and won with a score of 2-0, with both goals scored by senior forward Tina Miller and freshman Simrita Advani, who was playing goalie and held the Mustangs out of the net.

On Sept. 16, they beat Cupertino 2-1. Team captain Miller scored the first goal with a solo attack. Cupertino responded with a quick equalizer, but the Falcons continued to push forward with their high-intensity play.

Senior midfielder Emily Chen capitalized on an interception in the midfield and hit it to Miller, who deflected the ball for the winning goal.

The team also had a 2-0 win at Los Altos on Sept. 14, but fell short against Mitty's home-field pressure 1-0 on Sept. 9. The Falcons played against St. Francis at home on Sept. 7 but lost 3-1.

Just like last year, the team has struggled with low numbers. The team only has 12 players and only has one substitute during games.

"The low numbers require us to put in a lot of work and be that much more in shape," Miller said. "The team is really positive with it and [we] have a good attitude towards the low numbers and we know that this is just what we have to work it."

The Falcons are looking to beat rival Los Gatos after a defeat in the CCS semifinals last year, said senior forward Kelsey Kinoshita.

The girls are preparing for their matchup against the Wildcats on Oct. 5 at home.

"We like to have fun, but we know when we need to focus up and be serious," Kinoshita said. "Last year, one of our coaches gave us shirts that say, 'If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together.' We work hard together to get the results we want, whether it be for a certain play or it be an overall win." ♦

Due to printing deadlines the issue was not able to cover games against Lynbrook on Sept. 28 and Monta Vista on Sept. 30.



Miller

BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY

Team works hard to defend last year's CCS championship

BY RyanKim & AmiNachappan

As his feet hit the rocky path with each stride he took, senior captain Nicholas Sum tried to ignore the blazing heat that had tortured him throughout the course and focused on his finish. As he crossed the finish line, Sum placed eighth in the senior division with a time of 12:44.

On Sept. 6, the boys ran their first meet of the season, a 2.1 mile flat course at Lynbrook High School.

Other star Falcons at the meet included junior Amit Nag, who ran a time of 11:15; sophomore David Berkowitz, who ran a time of 12:03; and senior Kushagro Bhat-tacharjee, who ran a time of 12:27.

With Scott Bang starting his second year as coach for the Falcons, the runners gotten used to Bang's style of workouts.

Typical runs during the week include sprint sessions, hill repeats and distance runs. This strenuous training is what helped the boys come out on top as champions last year at CCS.

2015 alumnus Matthew Peterson won CCS in Division III and the team came in first place.

This season, Sum wants to cap his high

school career with a personal record. "I really hope that we can win CCS again and return to staves this year as a team," Sum said. "Even with the loss of two of our top runners, [Peterson and 2015 alumni Steven Law to graduation], I still believe we can work hard toward those goals."

Though the team has lost key athletes to graduation, they have gained some returning and new star talent; among the key additions this year is junior Anirudh Rao, who transferred from Mission San Jose High School.

"Any new member is helpful to the team; new varsity members mean new faces and personalities, which makes running more interesting and fun," Sum said.

Though the team has only had two meets so far, one at Lynbrook and the other at Central Park on Sept. 27, Sum hopes that they will learn to cooperate and develop as a team together as the season progresses.

"We have done similar things as last year in terms of training, but another year means more people," Sum said. "It's definitely been fun to meet new members, and I look forward to spending more time with them." ♦

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the Central Park meet on Sept. 27.

>> snapshots



FALCON // VIVIEN ZHANG



FALCON // VIVIEN ZHANG



FALCON // VIVIEN ZHANG



FALCON // MUTHU PALANIAPPAN

Junior safety Alec Lindeman fends off a Milpitas High School blocker on Sept. 23.

Senior defender David Nguyen reaches for a Fremont High School attacker in their home game on Sept. 22. The boys won 14-11.

ICAC president senior Karan Desai and senior club officer Ruchir Mehta enthusiastically reach out to freshmen on Club Day Sept. 22.

Teachers Sara Tseng, Elaine Haggerty, Arnaldo Rodriguex and Sarah Voorhees participate in the dance during the teacher Quad Day on Sept. 26.

buzzworthy >> Harambe memes expose internet culture

BY Austin Wang & Alex Yang

At the top of Reddit's front page on Aug. 23, users found the headline: "Zoo Staff Find Harambe's Tomb Empty."

This is one of many satirical stories that emerged after the death of a silverback gorilla named Harambe in the Cincinnati Zoo.

On May 28, one day before Harambe's 17th birthday, a 3-year-old boy climbed over a 3-foot fence and fell into the gorilla enclosure. Harambe grabbed the toddler and dragged him around the pit before being shot and killed by panicked zoo officials.

Experts have disagreed over whether the boy was in real danger, as gorillas have been known to protect children. For example, in 1996, a 5-year-old boy fell into the Jersey Zoo's gorilla exhibit, where a gorilla named Jambo stood over the child and stroked the child's head until the child regained consciousness.

The controversy over Harambe's intent

attracted attention from news outlets like CNN and NBC. Many people were upset with the killing of Harambe, but others found the extensive coverage to be over the top and even humorous.

Within weeks, Internet users created jokes out of Harambe, which generated a stark contrast to the seriousness of the gorilla's death. After hashtags like "#doitforharambe" began spreading on Twitter, Harambe suddenly became one of the most popular memes of the year.

Students, too, have joined the conversation. Senior Bryant Chang, a meme enthusiast, explained the Harambe phenomenon. "There are Facebook groups and pages dedicated to posting memes about Harambe," Chang said. "Harambe has even made an appearance in the presidential race, as both [Republican presidential nominee] Donald Trump and [Green Party nominee] Jill Stein have commented on the gorilla."

Although Harambe seems to be just another Internet fad, the fact that multiple

presidential candidates have addressed the incident elevates Harambe to the national spotlight.

On May 31, Trump said to reporters, "It's amazing because there were moments with the gorilla. The way [Harambe] held that child was almost like a mother holding a baby. [Harambe] looked so beautiful and calm."

Chang also defended Harambe and the meme, claiming that Internet users were bound to make Harambe's death a joke.

"I understand the zoo deemed the meming of Harambe disrespectful, but it's their fault for killing the gorilla. You can't stop the internet from making more memes [as a response]," Chang said.

Reddit users have even jokingly suggested that Gorilla Glue is given its name "because Harambe is the glue that held this nation together."

Beyond the Internet, Harambe's influence can even be seen interrupting everyday life. One Cincinnati high school football game

was interrupted by a man in a banana costume holding a sign that read "R.I.P Harambe" while another man in a gorilla suit dragged children around the sidelines.



The ape has also been displayed on merchandise, as several entrepreneurs have been trying to cash in on the new fad.

One Kickstarter, aptly named "Shots for Harambe," promises to sell shot glasses with illustrations of Harambe, because "[Harambe] took [a shot] for you."

After the huge amount of buzz online about the dead primate, the Cincinnati Zoo shut down all of its online accounts.

Although Chang claims the Harambe memes are dying out, at the very least, they taught society a lesson on the oddness of the Internet that won't be forgotten soon.

"I see it as an incident that spread the weird side of the Internet," Chang said. "Never forget May 28." ♦

Breaking up with Facebook: the stages of grief

ANONYMOUS USER REPORTS ACCOUNT FOR IMPERSONATION



maya-ster of none

Maya Prasad

"Account Disabled. Your account was removed from Facebook because we found it's pretending to be someone else." These sentences that appeared on my computer screen on Sept. 8 brought immense fear into my life when I tried to log on. Much like going through a text-breakup, my recent separation with Facebook caused me to enter the cycle of the seven stages of grief.

Stage 1: Shock and Denial

At first, I couldn't believe what was in front of my eyes and thought I had entered the wrong login information. I hopelessly entered my username and password three more times only to get the same message over again. Impersonation? I have never pretended to be someone else on my account before. On what basis could Facebook disable my account? I kept

pushing this issue away, telling myself it would come back in a few hours due to a momentary glitch in the system.

Stage 2: Pain and Guilt

I began to feel self-doubt and justify Facebook's actions. Maybe I did impersonate another user every time I messaged my friends "I wish I were Beyonce" or maybe I was too clingy because I logged on every five seconds. My friends told me to stop putting the blame on myself and that it wasn't my fault.

Stage 3: Anger and Bargaining

After all the devotion I showed toward Facebook almost every moment of the day, how can it treat me this way and breakup with me so impersonally through text? Facebook required me to send in a photo verification so I sent in my ID numerous times only to receive an email saying I sent it through the "wrong channel."

It was like Facebook had changed all forms of communication just to avoid

contact with me. Infuriated, I began a series of rants about what kind of malicious high schooler would report my account as a joke. I transitioned from venting about this anonymous student to insulting Facebook and its inability to recognize that I was a real person.

Stage 4: Depression

No one understood what I was going through. With a tub of ice cream, I realized Facebook always let me connect to the social world and spend time away from the mountains of homework on my desk. A few days later, I found solace in a group of students whose accounts had also been disabled by Facebook for no reason as well. We shared our tales of how Facebook abandoned us and I didn't feel so alone anymore. I wasn't the only one.

Stage 5: The Upward Turn

I tried to ignore anything that was remotely related to Facebook and found some benefit in my account being disabled. I wasn't so distracted anymore or worried about spending time with Facebook. I didn't have to focus on a relationship because

it was my time now. I became more focused on my homework, finishing by 10 p.m. and getting nine hours of sleep almost every day.

Step 6: Reconstruction and Working Through

My mind cleared all its initial moments of grief and I formulated a plan: I didn't want to crawl back into Facebook's arms, but maybe Facebook could change.

I decided to give it the benefit of doubt since I am a firm believer that people can indeed change. I got in touch with someone who works at Facebook and we began the journey to recover my account.

Stage 7: Acceptance and Hope

My account was gone and I knew it. But I also knew it would come back to me soon. Despite everything, my connection with Facebook was undeniably special and that the incident was just a mistake. As I waited to see if Facebook would meet me halfway, I could only hope that my account and I would be reunited soon. And on the morning of Sept. 19, we were back together again. ♦

topten

THINGS TO DO IN OCTOBER

- 10 "Studying" for the SAT. No better way to start October than taking the most important test of your life!
- 9 PSAT. Don't worry, it's just "practice."
- 8 Midterms. They can't possibly fail all of us, can they?
- 7 Crying. When you realize that most of the "Top 10" is academic.
- 6 Studying for the SAT... again. Harvard can't ask for all your SAT scores, right?
- 5 National seafood month. No fishy business "insert business fish sticker here."
- 4 Fall scenery. Leaves are dead, and not just because of the drought.
- 3 Pumpkin spice lattes at Starbucks. Don't forget the Uggs and yoga pants to complete the look!
- 2 Halloween. Is there APUSH extra credit for wearing a sexy Lincoln costume?
- 1 "Relax." October 31 has never felt so good... until seniors realize college apps are due.

>> Neil Rao and Navin Tiwary