



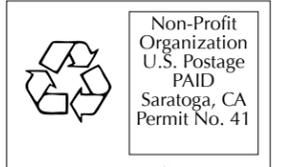
Mock Trial begins season with auditions.



Experience a day in the life of a drum major.



Football's loss puts CCS qualification in doubt.



# THE saratogafalcon



Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA  
An Independent School Publication

[saratogafalcon.org](http://saratogafalcon.org)

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## En Garde

MARCHING BAND TO DEFEND TITLE AT BANDS OF AMERICA COMPETITION

The marching band and color guard performed at their first competition of the season, the Cupertino Tournament of Bands, on Oct. 8, winning a first place brass award as well as all sweepstakes it was eligible for. Due to heavy rain, they were unable to perform at the Oct. 15 Garlic City Classic Band Tournament at Gilroy High School, and instead performed their show for the Homestead marching band in a gym. The marching band will perform their field show 'En Garde' at Bands of America Northern California Regional at San Jose University in the Spartan Stadium tomorrow. They will also be performing in Long Beach next weekend.

Courtesy of SHS MARCHING BAND

### ELECTION

## Political climate forces teachers to weigh curricula

BY AmiNachiappan & KyleWang

"Vote Na-MAN to be your MAN for president!" senior Naman Sajan yelled during his sixth-period AP Government simulation, a class taught by history teacher Kirk Abe. He was mimicking propaganda strategies used in the current election as a Libertarian candidate running for president. Though economics is usually taught in the first semester, Abe chose to teach his students AP Government in the fall so that the concepts they learned in class would be relevant to the 2016 election.

>> ELECTION on pg. 5

### SAFETY

## As the camera watched: School installs security upgrades

BY PranavAhuja & ApoorvKwatra

The administration is hoping that crimes that occur on campus will be easier to solve after upgrading school's security system over several months, starting last spring.

The improved security system included upgrading the cameras in the main parking lot on Herriman Avenue, the roofs, and the back

parking lot.

The cameras now display video in color and HD and have zoom features to capture detailed images, according to assistant principal Brian Thompson.

Campus supervisor Mark Hernandez said the updated security cameras are especially useful for identifying suspects when the school's security team is not present.

Last year, Hernandez said

thieves were sometimes stealing gas out of the vans and vandalizing cars.

"If someone says, 'My car got broken into after tutorial,'" Hernandez said, "we can go back and look and then we can hopefully get some kind of identification and pass it on to the sheriff."

Along with security cameras, an alarm system in many rooms on campus also provides security. If an intruder breaks into an alarmed

room, the system signals the sheriff's department.

Security staff like Hernandez are confident that break-ins, vandalism and other crimes on campus will see a steady decrease with the heightened security system.

Even as SHS has upgraded security cameras, the city of Saratoga is also contemplating the use of security cameras.

The recent spike of burglaries

has led to Saratoga council member Rishi Kumar to introduce the idea of placing security cameras on some streets in the Golden Triangle neighborhood.

"Currently, there is no policy from the city council to put cameras in Saratoga, so I have brought up the fact that cameras would increase the safety of our neighborhood," Kumar said. "It has only been a discussion that we have had." ♦

### DRAMA

## Fall play transports audience out of reality in 'The White Snake'

BY SanjanaMelkote

The curtains retreat and the scene unfolds: a majestic mountain towers over the stage, the home of two snake spirits. During their adventure, they travel through different worlds, rob banks, fall in love, witness a battle between the ocean and the wind and more, all in the course of an evening at the McAfee Center.

A cast of 35 students will transform themselves into spirits, snakes, puppeteers, musicians and forces of nature to perform this year's fall play "The White Snake" on Nov. 12, 13 and 18, 19.

The show has many leading roles, including six narrators. Sophomores Shasta Ganti and Dermot Gleeson, juniors Mateusz Kranz, Kelly McLaughlin, and

Katie Sabel, and senior Raymond McCarthy will guide the audience through the show, and throughout the rehearsal process, have been writing the music that will accompany the dialogue.

"The narrators have a large responsibility to create the atmosphere for the audience," Gleeson said. "Compared to a character role, a narrator is much more involved, but luckily the duty is distributed."



Thermond

The character leads, White snake and green snake, take two forms in the play, as humans and as snake spirits. While in the snake form, the characters are puppeteered by seniors Amelia Bernardo and Ania Kranz.

The more traditional acting leads are played by seniors Julie Cai

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### CLASS SIZE

## Extra teacher hired to aid 62-student sports P.E. class

BY KittyHuang & MichaelZhang

When teacher Richard Ellis saw the class list for his seventh-period sports P.E. class, he was astonished by how many students were in the class. On the first day of school, nearly 80 students filled the gym, compared to the usual 30 to 40 students.

"The class is gigantic," said freshman Jeffrey Xu, who is in the class. "At first, I thought it was two classes combined, but it turned out to be only one class."

According to guidance counselor Alinna Satake, the seventh-period P.E. class is exceptionally large mostly because more students signed up for spring sports than fall sports. Many more students have also tried to transfer into this class, but their requests were denied because the class had already reached capacity.

The sports P.E. class has always had as many as 50 students, but this year was "particularly bad," she said.

The first challenge the class faced was safety, since one teacher could not possibly supervise 80 students, Ellis said.

Three weeks into the school year, the school hired Danielle Burks as a teaching assistant. Burks used to be the school's strength and conditioning coach. Since the arrival of Burks, the class has effectively been split into two, Xu said. At the beginning of class, Ellis instructs the boys while Burks teaches the girls, but halfway through the period, the students switch instructors.

In addition, he noted that Ellis usually oversees running while Burks teaches weightlifting.

With Burks's help, Ellis can

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Class of 2016 alumna talks about her decision to attend community college. **pg. 8**

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Juniors describe the process to create customized geo filters for Homecoming. **pg. 14**

#### ELECTION

##### Presidential election

Reporters satirize the 2016 candidates. **pg. 18**



## French program plans spring break trip to France

by Neehar**Thumaty**  
& Rahu**Vadlakonda**

The foreign language department is in the process of organizing a trip to France over spring break that will be open to all students. Led by French teacher Elaine Haggerty, the group will delve into French culture, examine the French educational system and tour historically significant sites, including Versailles, the Louvre, the Eiffel Tower, Aix-en-Provence and the Church of Notre Dame. The students will stay with host families just outside of Paris, where they will sleep and eat. They will also take the morning RER, a train that connects outlying suburbs to the city, where they will then transfer to the metro taking them to their planned activ-

ity for the day.

Haggerty and Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguez will serve as chaperones for the group of students. But if more than a couple of dozen students wish to attend, Haggerty said she will need to ask another world language teacher to chaperone.

Since this is the first time Haggerty is planning a trip like this, she does not know how many people will take interest, but she is "happy that students seem to be excited about the trip." So far, five students have committed to the trip, and many more are thinking about it. The deadline to commit to the trip is tentatively the end of October.

Though Haggerty says some students may hesitate because of the hefty price tag of \$4,000, she is optimistic about the education-

enrichment the trip provides for students, from being able to use some of the French they have learned to seeing places they have only read about in their textbooks.

**"Ideally, I see us taking this trip every couple of years."**

TEACHER Elaine Haggerty

For example, sophomore Ali Lichtenberg hopes to connect what he has learned about France in World History MAP with what he will see on this trip.

"We have been learning a lot about the places we are going to during the French Revolution unit and there have been a lot of interesting recommendations from [history teacher Mike] Davey," Lichtenberg said.

Haggerty hopes to repeat trips like this in the future, along with traveling to more accessible French-influenced areas, which will allow for significantly lower costs and more student participation.

Although many trips in the past have been started, they have been called off due to a lack of signups. Even with the obstacles, Haggerty thinks the trip will be one to remember.

"Ideally, I see us taking this trip every couple of years, with a trip to French-speaking Canada in between," Haggerty said. ♦



## Former history teacher catches up with students

by Caitlyn**Chen**

Standing in the history wing, 2016 alumnus Farbod Moghadam held a bouquet of flowers in his hand, a few weeks before senior prom last spring.

Former World Geography and World History teacher at Saratoga High Jim Chin stood right beside him, holding a poster that read "We met in Chin, so let's go for the win."

When the bell rang, 2016 alumna Larissa Chiu walked out of the classroom, shocked and overjoyed to see both her friend and her former history teacher standing before her. "It was a huge honor to have Mr. Chin help with my prom asking, especially since he lives so far from us and had no obligation to help out," Moghadam said. "It was just really nice to see him again and be able to enjoy one more fun experience with him before leaving to college."

Both Moghadam and Chiu participated in an effort to petition the school to reserve its controversial decision to not offer Chin

tenure in 2013, a document that Moghadam estimated got 550 signatures. In fact, Moghadam's pun for the asking was derived from the petition, which was named "Chin for the win."

Chin now teaches history at Burlingame High School and lives in that city. Even though Burlingame and Saratoga are about an hour's drive apart, Chin said the schools are fairly connected.

"It's a small world — some students at BHS have relatives and friends at Saratoga," Chin said.

Although he doesn't teach at the school anymore, Chin still keeps in touch with students like Chiu and Moghadam through his Facebook account as well as through email. Chin has received a few heartfelt letters from former students, which he calls "one of the most touching gifts you can receive as a teacher."

One of the students that Chin still keeps in contact through Facebook messenger with is senior Sarah Jin, who was in his World Ge-

ography class during freshman year.

Jin recalls many instances in the class where Chin made history really interesting for her and her fellow classmates.

One time in his class, current senior Zach Grob-Lipkis tried to bribe the state of Israel with a five-dollar bill in a stimulation. Another time, the class dissected "Arabian Nights" from Aladdin to analyze racial and cultural stereotyping in Disney movies.

Jin was sad to see Chin leave. But every year, Jin sees Chin at the annual Stanford Model UN Conference in November, which was a great way to catch up with her old teacher.

"In sophomore year, we had a soccer game at Burlingame High School and Chin came out and got to say 'Hi' to all of us," Jin said. "It's great to still see him around."

Although he hasn't made an appearance on campus since Moghadam's prom asking, Chin is planning to catch up with some of his past students at one of the jazz band performances this year.



Senior Sarah Jin poses with former history teacher Jim Chin at a soccer game in 2014.

"I am privileged and lucky enough to still feel fairly connected with students," Chin said. "One of the upsides to social media is being able to see all the wonderful things the seniors — many of whom I taught as freshmen — are up to and marveling at how much they have grown as young adults!" ♦

## Teacher returns to New York to teach at her old high school

by Leena**Elzeiny**

Former English 9 and 10 teacher Rosalie Chung lives where one of her favorite classics, "The Great Gatsby," takes place: her home town in Long Island, New York.

And she now teaches at the same school where she went for high school, Island Trees High School, while living in her childhood home.

"I actually decided to come to this school district because it was so close to my parents' house and so close to family," Chung said.

Chung taught at Saratoga High last year as a substitute for English teacher Kelly Wissolik, who was on maternity leave. At Island Trees High School, she is a long-term substitute teacher for two women on maternity leave.

She now teaches a ninth-grade regular English class and will teach a tenth-grade English Honors class second semester.

Chung sees almost no differences in curriculum between New York and California. One of the few is that in New York, students only have to write one to three paragraphs on state testing for literary analysis. Still, she teaches some of the same works she did at SHS, such as "Romeo and Juliet."

Another difference Chung faces is the school schedule. In New York, school starts at 7:15 a.m. and ends at 2 p.m., with nine 45-minute periods each day.

"The periods here don't allow me to reach the same depth," Chung said. "I could do more complex group activities [at Saratoga] since students wanted to inherently learn."

Having gone to school there, Chung has been accustomed to this schedule since she was a teenager, and she enjoys the extra time. In the afternoon.

The most startling difference she faces, however, is that teachers change classrooms throughout the school day.

"It can be a bit more tiring," she said. "There is more movement around the building because teachers don't have their own classrooms to work in."

Although Chung has adjusted well to her school in New York, she said she misses Saratoga High.

"I really enjoyed teaching at Saratoga because the student population was motivated and very bright," she said. "It gave me an opportunity to delve deeper into the literature I was teaching." ♦



Chung

## Retired assistant principal works as college counselor

by Michelle**Lee**

As the former assistant principal at the school for 36 years, Karen Hyde was a large influence in the lives of the thousands of students she knew from the 1970s all the way until she retired in 2012.

In the past four years, Hyde transferred her passion for helping students into independent college counseling with her business Hyde Consults.

She retired in 2012 when her son Mac graduated.

"No one spent more time speaking with students and coordinating school activities than she did," assistant principal Brian Safine said. "She literally spent nights at the school when she was working late."

For Hyde, stepping down from her position as assistant principal was a difficult.

"It is hard to drive by a game, know that Homecoming is 'coming' and not miss the kids, the energy and the activities," Hyde said. "I have said loudly and proudly that I had the best career in the world."

Hyde now works in Los Gatos with around 40 high school students each year, especially athletes and performing arts stu-

dents. Her students come from Saratoga and other high schools in the area.

She guides them through the college admissions process, which includes choosing colleges and constructing a resume.

Because of her close affiliation with SHS, Hyde has a deep understanding of the school and its students.

One of her students, senior Megana Saripella, said that Hyde has kept her organized throughout the entire application process and that Hyde's knowledge of the Saratoga High guidance process in particular has helped to clear up confusion when going through the process.

"She's given me a lot of insights, such as which schools are statistically more successful to early and what aspects of my life to highlight," Saripella said. "Without her, I definitely would be behind."

Hyde said she is still working long hours, but it is in a different way from her previous job.

"The hours are equally long, but in my counseling, I sit in my office for nine hours. At Saratoga, I was rarely in my office and was never sitting," Hyde said. "But I still love that I am still working with kids." ♦



Hyde

## ELECTION

continued from pg. 1

Because the rhetoric and themes presented during presidential campaigns and debates are at times inappropriate for younger audiences, teachers have had to make slight changes in their curricula.

"Profanity and attacks have always been prevalent in elections, but this year, the candidates have taken it to a new extent," Abe said.

Because seniors are generally more mature, instead of censoring his lectures, Abe gears discussions toward his audience, while "trying his best to be truthful."

"We have to talk about what is going on right now, and we can't just avoid it. With seniors able to vote soon, they understand learning about politics is important," Abe said.

This year, to put students in the shoes of the presidential candidates, Abe has added a presidential simulation. Students learn about the importance of winning over swing states and gain experience using advertising strategies, political polls and media attention.

"The simulation was better than the presidential debates because the student candidates were more professional than the actual candidates," said senior Michelle Xu, who played a representative of a swing state. "There was less scandal talk and more issue-related discussion."

In the simulation, three students play either the Democratic candidate, Republican candidate or the Libertarian candidate. Each political party has a campaign manager and spin doctor who manage their campaign. Once parties choose which ads they want to air, they must run their ideas by the Federal Election Commission, a group of students who check each ad.

Some students play journalists, reporting any scandals in the election, while other students are in charge of the polls in swing states. The simulations started in the middle of October and will end close to election day.

"The whole goal of the simulation is to learn something from the current election and incorporate what actual candidates are doing in the election," Abe said.

While many high schoolers genuinely care about the election and have discussions with their peers about presidential candidates outside of the classroom, middle schoolers are more susceptible to the obscene language and adult-themed topics presented during debates.

Eighth-grade core teachers at Redwood Middle School, including Joshua Marks, Shannon Avina and Alexis Nesper have taken the challenge of tackling this unique election and teaching it to their students in simpler terms. These teachers have assigned watching the presidential debates as either homework or extra credit, requiring students to analyze what presidential candidates are saying and to critically think about issues candidates present in their speeches.

However, though the eighth-grade core teachers are assigning similar assignments regarding the current election, Avina has chosen to exclude talking about some adult-themed topics such as the sexual assault allegations against Trump with her 12- and 13-year-old students.

"It puts us middle school teachers in a tough spot," Avina said. "We didn't really feel like we could reasonably ask our students to research and respond to current news [such as sexual assaults related to Trump], knowing that they would inevitably encounter material that is more appropriate for high school students."

On her class website, Avina has pages entitled "Election 2016 @ WSJ" and "2016 Presidential Race" where she posts articles, polls and graphics regarding the current election from the Wall Street Journal. During in-class discussions, she tackles controversial topics such as the federal court system in a way that is "very legal and balanced."

"While many students may be aware of what has been said by presidential candidates, it's hard to discuss sensitive issues," Avina said. "We have to be respectful of families' beliefs or sensitivities and discuss these matters in a way that doesn't give away personal political views." ♦

## CLASS SIZE

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create a more engaging environment and provide individual attention that was lost in the large class.

"I definitely saw the kids beginning to lose interest, since the activities were easy to get out of because there were so many students," Ellis said.

However, the new arrangement has ensured a rigorous exercise curriculum for all the seventh period students. Hiring Burks has been greatly appreciated by both Ellis

and his students.

Another accommodation the administration made was allowing students who will participate in winter and spring sports to be excused from the class, because they would have had 10 P.E. credits already. After this change was implemented, only 62 students remained in the class.

"Some students did choose to take up that option, but the flip side of that is if they don't take a winter sport, they won't get credits for the first semester," Satake said.

The amount of available equipment, though, was never an issue. This is because the students usually take turns doing the

workouts. Also, in previous years, there were two P.E. classes during the same period with enough equipment for 80 students to use.

However, the high student enrollment in P.E. classes has led to a shortage of uniforms, forcing some students to wear their own athletic gear.

Even with the abnormally large class size, the administration's quick accommodations have made seventh-period P.E. manageable and effective.

"I would say that it's the best seventh-period athletic P.E. we've ever had," Ellis said. "I feel that it's very much setting up our athletes for success in their sport." ♦

## College speaker meetings help seniors learn more, narrow their selections

by Kitty**Huang**  
& Sanjana**Melkote**

Every year in the fall, college representatives from across the country talk to students about defining characteristics and the application process of their school. The meetings occur during tutorials, lunches and sometimes after school and are held at the Library Research Center, staff lounge, an office conference room and sometimes in the McAfee Center.

Senior Nicole Lin has signed up for five meetings this semester "to clarify steps in the application process and be able to ask questions in person."

To her, the most helpful element of college speaker meetings is that students understand more about the values and atmosphere of the school, rather than the requirements of admission.

"A lot of information across the colleges is the same for the application process, such as SAT scores, transcripts and letters of recommendations," said Lin. "But what's different between them is the personality of the campus and different opportunities that each college has to offer its students."

Admission representatives highlight the positives of their schools, including the size of the campus, housing, sports and music programs, according to senior Elicia Chiu.

The information sessions can create some hard decisions.

For example, Lin chose to attend the Columbia meeting, but missed seeing sophomore Quad Day, which her sister, Cameron Lin, participated in. Similarly, college visits have clashed with Club Day and are regularly double booked with club meetings.

"The number of students attending each meeting depends on their interest and avail-

ability. The turnout at the University of Southern California meeting was especially high, with about 75 seniors in attendance. The meetings for UCLA and Carnegie Mellon University meetings were also popular, with approximately 50 seniors attending.

An average about 20-50 people attend each meeting but some schools, including Miami University, New York Film Academy and the Olin College of Engineering have only one or two sign ups.

Seniors usually take time to learn about their colleges of interest well before the meetings are held, but attend them anyway because listening to the speakers can only inform and prepare them more.

"Most of us have already written out our college lists and done research on the school, and they reiterate what we already know," Chiu said. "But it's nice to have a college speaker come in regardless." ♦

## When is the 'right time' to pick a major?

by Nidhi**Jain**

At age 14, Kirthana Ramesh was asked what she wants to do for a career. The senior remembers responding along the lines of shrugging her shoulders.

Other students, like class of 2016 alumnus Andrew Weng and senior Kanika Seth, knew exactly what they wanted to do at age 14, thus raising the question: How early do students truly need to decide on their majors?

Currently on the pre-medicine track at Washington University in St. Louis, Weng feels that in order to maximize one's chances of being a competitive applicant in the medical field for college admissions, it is helpful for students to be, for the most part, set on a career in medicine from their early high school years on.

Weng became confident that he wanted to pursue medicine during his late freshman year after finding a keen interest in biology-related articles, speaking with friends who were studying medicine and applying to several biology internships. As a result, he began gearing his extracurricular activities toward biology and medicine.

"It's never too late to decide that you want to be a premed college student, but knowing what you want to do early in high school gives you a leg up because you're in tune with all the activities that most 'premed' universities are looking for," Weng said.

While choosing a competitive career path early in high school may give students a "leg up," it can also be harmful or wasteful in some cases if students are not truly interested in the path that they are pursuing.

"If a student knows for sure that he is interested in a specific program, he should take classes for that program," assistant principal Brian Safine said. "In general, students here are more worried about [deciding a major early], but it is wise that they learn as much as they can if they want to specialize."

Like Weng, senior Kanika Seth has known since a young age that she wanted to pursue medicine in college.

"I'm pretty big on helping others while also learning more about human biology," Seth said. "In high school, I decided to take Anatomy and Physiology to learn more about the function of our bodies."

Seth also geared her community service toward medicine. Although she has known

for years that she would like to major in some area of medicine, she decided during her early junior year that she would like to major in neuroscience after completing a summer program in cognitive neuroscience.

Safine said that deciding a college major or career in the middle of the teenage years is less important than students may think.

"Data shows that most students change their initial major or add a second major during their undergraduate experience, so students do have the chance to change their minds later," he said.

In her junior year, Ramesh said she was interested in pursuing statistics, but she is also willing to adjust her major in college based on learned interests.

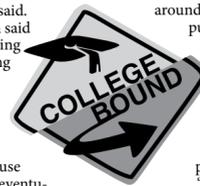
Many students also go into college undecided on what they want to pursue in college. However, because "undeclared" students will eventually have the option of pursuing any major of their choice, they need to be qualified enough to get into all of the potential majors, thus making it a more challenging applica-

tion path for some impacted or competitive fields.

While students do also have the option of switching majors in college, they may have trouble depending on the major and the college. If the university is particularly known for a major, then it is much easier to get accepted to the major straight from high school than to transfer in college. University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), for example, has an overall 18 percent acceptance rate. Transfer rates between majors, however, are around 4 percent, according to UCLA published statistics.

While choosing one's career path early does provide students with the option to solidify their interest in the field, students can easily delve into a variety of fields and later decide by just as competitive of an applicant.

"At the end of the day, I don't think it matters how early someone decides their major, but rather if they're truly passionate about it," Ramesh said. "I'm glad I waited to find out what I want to pursue." ♦



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DRAMA

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and Kavya Sadras, taking on the human forms of white snake and green snake.

The play is based on an ancient Chinese fable that has been passed down and interpreted differently over many centuries, said drama teacher and director Sarah Thermond. The story is about two friends who live in the spirit world, White Snake and Green Snake. The pair come to Earth to cure their boredom. The play follows their journey

“Audiences might not know what they’re getting themselves into but I think they’ll love it.”

TEACHER Sarah Thermond

ney as they venture into civilization, while learning life lessons along the way.

Many parents and students have offered insights into the culture, morals and intent of the fable, which have been greatly appreciated by Thermond and the cast in understanding the nuances of the play. The script has been adapted by Mary Zimmerman, an American playwright, who is “known for staging scenes to match the magical mo-

ments in a story,” Thermond said.

“She is a master in the sense that she can make it rain on stage or represent a battle of the sky and the ocean or depict someone flying down a mountain,” Thermond said.

One reason Thermond picked this play is that it allows a lot of room for the students to explore themes creatively and it strays away from the typical realistic productions the drama program has performed in the past, like “Pride and Prejudice.”

Auditions were held on Sept. 8-9 and the cast has been “off book” — lines memorized and every part of the show run at least once — since the beginning of October. The play’s unique theme allows for various creative interpretations from visuals to even body movement, because these technical elements are closely intertwined with the scenes and dialogue.

“A climax of the show is a battle between the ocean and the sky,” Thermond said. “I assigned the students to teams, and they choreographed their own fights. It left a lot of room for student input to have better ideas than I would’ve had.”

The script is written in modern language but structured like a fable, weaving comedy into the storyline, while incorporating a tragic ending. Thermond is excited for the community to come see the play.

“It’s an odd show; it’s different to what we’ve used to, but everyone is approaching it with such creativity,” Thermond said. “Audiences might not know what they’re getting themselves into but I think they’ll love it.”

SPEECH AND DEBATE

Team begins preparations for first travel tournament in Florida

BY ElizabethLee & KyleWang

Earlier in the school year, sophomore Arian Raje made plans to attend more out-of-state speech and debate tournaments. In October, he will have his first chance to compete at the Blue Key Invitational in Florida, which takes place from Oct. 28-30.

He will attend the competition along with juniors Ayush Aggarwal, Arun Ramakrishna and Kyle Wang. Raje will be competing in both International and United States Extemporaneous Speaking, an event in which competitors are given 30 minutes to prepare a 7-minute speech on a current affairs topic. Ramakrishna and Aggarwal will be competing as a team in Public Forum Debate.

After they expressed their interest in attending the tournament to Coach Christopher Harris, Harris made travel plans and signed them up for the tournament.

To prepare themselves for the tournament, Raje, Ramakrishna and Aggarwal have all practiced more frequently.

Raje has “been more disciplined about consistently attending practices,” while Ra-

makrishna and Aggarwal spend one hour per day researching.

At the tournament, all of them will face especially high stakes — the Blue Key Invitational offers a bid to the prestigious, invitation-only Tournament of Champions at Northwestern University to all competitors who advance to a certain round. For speech, all quarterfinalists receive a bid; for debate the cutoff starts in octofinals.

Nonetheless, none of them feels too much pressure to perform, given the sheer difficulty of the contest.

“There isn’t really anything we expect,” Ramakrishna said. “We’re going to the tournament to try to get a bid to the TOC, but we don’t necessarily expect anything since it’s hard to receive a bid especially at a tournament like Blue Key.”

Raje, similarly, is hopeful but doesn’t expect to earn a bid to the Tournament of Champions, which he also attended last year as a freshman and did not advance to the elimination rounds.

“I don’t really have any expectations other than just performing at the best of my ability,” he said.

CLUBS

Mock Trial season commences with role auditions

BY AshleyFeng & AngelaLiu

With veiled “Game of Thrones” references and quirky characters, the 2016-17 California Mock Trial case packet brings a fresh conflict to the table for high school mock trial members in the upcoming season.

“I dismissed it at first, thinking it was just a fluke,” senior prosecution co-captain Peter VandeVort said. “When I saw the name ‘Greyjoy’ as the prosecution’s human trafficking expert, I vividly remember slapping the table in front of me and shouting ‘YES!’”

The case packet, released on Sept. 8, deals with the issue of human trafficking, as the prosecution tries to prove that the defendant, Cameron Awbrey, is guilty of human trafficking and false imprisonment.

The case topic has not been covered in the last few years and reflects the growing awareness of human trafficking in the U.S.

“The case theme alternates from murder to theft or a different type of crime,” senior defense co-captain Jackie Han said. “For murder cases, we argue a lot about emotion and motive to kill someone, but this year it is more about evidence and the facts.”

In the Mock Trial members form prosecution and defense teams that compete against teams from other schools in a simulation of a real trial. Members play the roles of attorneys and witnesses.

The informational meeting for auditions was held on Oct. 5 during lunch, and auditions for roles on the team were released on

Oct. 11.

Those who auditioned were assigned a witness to research and placed into groups of three by the three co-captains — Han, VandeVort, and senior Isabelle Tseng. These groups had a short period of time to try out all three roles — prosecution lawyer, defense lawyer and witness — so that the captains could see which role fits each person the best.

Last year’s team came just short of making it to the quarterfinals in the Santa Clara County competition, placing one away from the cutoff at 11th place. VandeVort and Han voiced hopes for the team to make the cut this year — the first time in four years if they succeed.

With the first scrimmage planned to take place in January, VandeVort noted that the captains aim to improve communication between the prosecution and defense teams this year as well as to spend more time perfecting individual witness accounts in order to “holistically improve the team” for this year’s season.

“This year we really want to focus on witnesses, since we didn’t have much emphasis on it last year,” Han said. “Our goal for the year is to have more emphasis on objections, since we were so close to semifinals last year.”

In the Mock Trial club, members form prosecution and defense teams that compete against teams from other schools in a simulation of a real trial. During the trial, attorneys present the case to appeal to the jury for their side, and witnesses corroborate their attorneys’ statements with testimonial evidence.



Sophomore Ashley Feng and senior Peter VandeVort demonstrate a witness direct and cross examination to new members at the Mock Trial club’s informational meeting on Oct. 5.

The informational meeting for auditions was on Oct. 5 during lunch, and auditions for roles in the SHS Mock Trial team were decided on Oct. 11 in History teacher Matt Torrens’s room. Those who auditioned were assigned a witness to research and placed into groups of three by the three co-captains — Han, VandeVort, and senior Isabelle Tseng. These groups had a short period of time to try out all three roles — prosecution lawyer, defense lawyer and witness — so that the captains could see which role fits each person the best.

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Media Arts teachers adjust to Palma’s departure

BY JuliaMiller

Teachers in Media Arts Program have been adjusting to the departure of Tony Palma, who left the program this year to do work on teacher training programs and technology for the district.

Due to Palma’s departure, there have been changes in teacher assignments, as well as in the curriculum and technology used in the Media Arts classroom. In Palma’s place, the school hired Alex Hemmerich to teach MAP sophomores this year.

Hemmerich, who teaches Media Arts 1 and Digital Photography, has successfully adapted to the MAP program, and he credits the colleagues around him for his success so far.

“It was a relatively easy transition, especially when I think about some of my previ-

ous experiences,” Hemmerich said. “Everyone has been super responsive and helpful.”

“I stop in occasionally, and it seems to be going really well,” MAP teacher Joel Tarbox said. “He relates to them, and the students seem to enjoy him a lot.”

The technology that the MAP classes use also has been updated this year. Applications like Adobe Flash, which was used to teach animation, and Final Cut Express, a video-editing program, will be replaced by their more modern counterparts — After Effects and Premiere Pro, respectively.

Tarbox struggled initially to adapt to all these changes after Palma’s departure. Although Tarbox teaches the same classes as last year, it’s been difficult to be the “veteran” Media Arts teacher, especially since Tarbox has only been with the program for one year. “Palma has been there since the begin-

ning of the program [in 2007],” Tarbox said. “He has information that nobody else has, like where the key to this drawer is, or what adapter goes with which hard drive.”

Tarbox is glad Palma is still easily reachable and willing to provide support. Hem-

merich is excited for the year to come.

“I really enjoy the collaborative environment and integration of diverse subjects,” Hemmerich said. “The small-school approach is super innovative, and I’m excited to be part of one here.”

Advertisement for 'CAPTUREWHATYOULOVE' featuring a photo of two children and text: 'specialized in touching portraits taken in natural settings like your backyard, park, or beach, resulting in timeless turn key artworks: wall portraits, luxury albums and customized art products. Family Children Weddings Studio Business headshots'.

opinion saratogafalcon.org/opinion

100-WORD RANTS: Say ‘Yes’ To These California Propositions

PROPOSITION 62 WILL REPEAL DEATH PENALTY FOR MURDER IN CALIFORNIA. Includes a skull and crossbones icon.

We need to support California Proposition 62, which repeals the death penalty. The punishment is a never-ending cycle of violence created by a system plagued with racism and tainted by human error. Capital punishment does not treat people equally and is used disproportionately toward minorities and the underprivileged. In the U.S., a country that supposedly offers equal justice, black people are 11 times more likely to be sentenced with the death penalty than white people. California’s justice system needs to change. The death penalty is an outdated mechanism of punishment that undermines the very ideals of our criminal justice system and American equality.

—Amy Tang

PROPOSITION 56 WILL RAISE THE EXISTING TAX ON TOBACCO PRODUCTS. Includes a pack of Marlboro cigarettes icon.

Proposition 56, or the tobacco tax increase, is a ballot measure that will raise the existing tax on cigarettes as well as other tobacco products and electronic cigarettes by \$2. As of right now, the tobacco tax is 87 cents per pack of cigarettes. Ten cents go to the General Fund, and the rest funds tobacco prevention, health care for low-income persons, environmental protection, breast cancer research, and early childhood development programs. Increasing the tax would be beneficial for all of the above and may even fend off those who smoke, even if by a little. Say yes to the tobacco tax increase.

—Adina Bidel

PROPOSITION 64 WILL LEGALIZE RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA UNDER TAXES. Includes a marijuana leaf icon.

In the relatively affluent neighborhood of Saratoga, drugs, including marijuana are scary for most. However, the benefits of voting yes for Proposition 64 — to legalize recreational marijuana and hemp while establishing growing and purchasing taxes — has numerous benefits. With the potential profit and other illegalities more worthy of the attention of law enforcement, Californians should legalize marijuana. If successful, the proposition will allow the government to utilize the new tax revenue to fund state programs, including law enforcement programs. After all, wouldn’t you be glad if your tax money went to expenditures more deserving than the enforcement of a pointless law?

—David Fan

PROPOSITION 67 WILL ENACT A MINIMUM 10-CENT FEE ON PLASTIC BAGS. Includes a plastic bag icon.

I see plastic everywhere, but that isn’t what bothers me. What bothers me are the plastic cups, utensils and bags that are so harmful because most are not recycled. After our single use, odds are that it will land in the Pacific trash vortex, where almost 60 percent of marine debris has accumulated to make an artificial island. Because of this plastic in the sea, the sea turtle population has decreased by half in the past 30 years. Then, when the world finally reduces the amount of plastic bags by introducing Proposition 67, opposition runs rampant to revoke the plastic bag ban in all cities. I’m sorry for depriving you of 10 cents; the thought of extinction isn’t worth one-tenth of a dollar. We can save animals from their man-made doom. Say yes to Proposition 67 to enforce a ban for all of California.

—Leena Elzeiny

PROPOSITION 53 WILL REQUIRE VOTER APPROVAL FOR BONDS OVER \$2 MIL. Includes a ballot box icon.

In the early 2000s, a proposal was made to build a \$400 million bridge, which would connect an island of 50 people to the Alaskan mainland. Legislators had hoped to win the votes of cash-strapped districts by spending this money. Thankfully, spending for the bridge was eliminated in 2005 (though much of the money went to the state in different forms). To prevent this kind of wasteful spending, voters must approve Proposition 53. The measure requires all proposed projects that cost \$2 billion or more be put to a statewide vote. \$2 billion is a good start, but as the Gravi-na Island Bridge shows, massive amounts of money can be wasted anywhere. Right now, the state is not required to place expensive projects on the ballot, no matter their cost. It is necessary to leave such major decisions to the voters, a group who can’t be bought by donors or influenced by lobbyists. Prop 53 allows us to take control of runaway spending in our state, which has nearly \$500 billion in debt.

—Andrew Owens

PROPOSITION 61 SEEKS TO LOWER PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES IN CALIFORNIA. Includes a pill bottle icon.

Hepatitis C virus, also known as black jaundice, causes mild symptoms that include stomach pain and nausea. But left untreated, hepatitis C can develop into painful liver cancer and potential cirrhosis, scarring of the liver that may require a transplant. There are an estimated 2.7 to 3.9 million cases of chronic hepatitis C virus in the country. Yet in the United States, hepatitis C is treated with Gilead Sciences Incorporation’s overpriced, \$1,000 pills. Medication for hepatitis C is just one of many prescription drugs that corporate puppeteers have priced unreasonably high, harming regular civilians in their unethical quest to add to their already excessive wealth. The skyrocketing prices force low to medium income consumers to choose between three meals a day and medication for (often fatal) diseases. Enter Proposition 61 — California’s stand against greedy, money-grubbing prescription drug manufacturers. Its goal is to make medication more affordable by capping drug prices. Providing more access to life-saving drugs, Prop 61 can put an effective stop to the unprincipled price-gouging by drug companies.

—Ashley Feng

# Private college counselors are a godsend

by NidhiJain

My eyelids grew heavy as I attempted to bring four years of internships, programs, clubs and experiences to life within the confinement of a measly 650-word essay. After failing to fit even half of the activities into my supplementals, I looked to the 10 slots for activities, awards and service and groaned.

Hours later, I sunk into my bed and tried to let my thoughts drift — only to realize I left out three of my most respectable high school accomplishments.

Thank God I'm lucky enough to have a private counselor.

That night, I was (eventually) able to sleep while understanding that although my college applications were going extremely stressfully, I had my college counselor to rely on as a reliable

guide to turn toward for help on my innumerable questions.

Although some students from upon private college counselors, the immense advantages of having a private counselor significantly outweigh the potential long-term disadvantages.

Some of the main highlights of having a private college counselor are the essay improvements and topic suggestions.

Most seniors find themselves writing about personal topics and feel hesitant about asking others to revise their essays, as they feel afraid of judgment or harsh comments.

A college counselor, on the other hand, has likely had experience reading a wide range of essays and has a duty to improve these essays from an unbiased standpoint.

Despite what some students say, most college counselors do not

actually write the entire essay for their students.

Counselors often have nearly 30 seniors to help, and writing 30 Common Application essays with unique underlying voices is practically impossible.

## The immense advantages of having a private counselor significantly outweigh the potential long-term disadvantages.

For me, a private counselor is useful for keeping me on track with my deadlines. With nearly 16 colleges to apply to, dozens

of essays and nerve-wracking interviews, even some my most organized friends have a hard time staying on top of their application deadlines.

Because of my counselor, I have been set with a plan to finish smaller portions of work before multiple deadlines over a long period of time, thus relieving procrastination.

While these counselors are incredibly helpful, they are incredibly expensive. Most counselors charge a hefty price of nearly \$200 per hour, meaning their customers are mostly from well-off families.

This divide in opportunity between students with different economic backgrounds does inevitably result in an unfair advantage, but it is naive to assume, especially in an environment as competitive as Saratoga, that the

more privileged students will not take full advantage of these services.

Students who are less privileged can take advantage of their own opportunities as well. Essay coaches are significantly cheaper than private counselors, but they are still able to accomplish the most important duty — improving essays.

Students who are not able to afford an essay coach either should reach out to their English teachers or friends who have a strong foundation in writing.

At a time when college application season is at its peak, some form of external help is a necessary tool for already overwhelmed and exhausted students, and for me, this help has been the fence that has kept me from falling off the cliff and into insanity. ♦

# Community college: the smart way to go

by LeenaElzeiny

Any University of California school costs about \$30,000 per year with room and board. And that cost is an insignificant mosquito compared to the elephant price of Ivy League schools.

Most people accept that they can pay \$200,000 for their dream Ivy Leagues by the end of their undergraduate term, as reported by College Tuition Compare.

Yet a majority U.S. citizens can't afford these costs. According to the Social Security Administration, the average annual full-

for the first two years at a UC, when you can finish all your meaningless credits, General Education requirements, for \$3,300 a year at a community college?

At community college, students do this before transferring to a UC, where the same classes cost much more. These requirements have almost no relation to their major but are necessary nonetheless.

Community college is a fresh start that considers almost nothing from your high school career. Not even the SAT is necessary, because none of those tests count. Only your credits transfer with you.

Not enough? Get this: According to University of California Admissions, UC Berkeley's general admission rate is around 17 percent. However, as a transfer student, that number jumps to 24 percent.

That means that almost one transfer student is accepted out of every four — and that is a common trend across the board, not just at Berkeley.

And if these acceptance rates aren't enough, community colleges have Transfer Admission Guarantee programs, which ensure you a spot in one of the colleges in the programs, such as UC Irvine and UC Davis, as long as you fill out paperwork and finish their prerequisites with the minimum GPA, which varies from 2.9 to 3.4 depending on the major.

So if you are crying over your life, your GPA, your failures or simply the cost of college, just breathe and remember that the California community college system has got your back. ♦

time wage is about \$50,000.

That means four years of a 40-hour work week at \$25 per hour is required to pay for an undergraduate degree. And good luck paying for a graduate degree, because that can be the same price.

So here's a secret: There is a way to escape the financial pressures that come with paying off student loans. It's called community college.

Think of it this way: Why pay \$60,000

for the first two years at a UC, when you can finish all your meaningless credits, General Education requirements, for \$3,300 a year at a community college?

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So if you are crying over your life, your GPA, your failures or simply the cost of college, just breathe and remember that the California community college system has got your back. ♦

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR: a college path less traveled

Dear Falcon,

During the spring of my senior year, I cried into the envelopes of UC rejection letters.

Meanwhile, I ignored my acceptance letter to UC Santa Barbara. I rejected the partial scholarship I'd received from Scripps College. I pretended not to see the thick packet that arrived in the mail from the University of Southern California.

Why? Too expensive, I told friends and counselors. Since I was only one of four kids, my parents simply could not afford university tuition.

Students, teachers and staff alike expressed disappointment — even carefully masked disgust — when I explained that I wouldn't be getting my degree through the traditional route. My school counselor persisted, suggesting that I apply for student loans. I declined.

As graduation approached, my AP English Language and Composition teacher asked each of her students to share what school they'd be attending in the fall.

Brown. Chapman. UC San Diego. USC. Reed. Harvard. De Anza College.

Silence.

My teacher piped up, "I always knew you were the smartest student in the class. Community college was the best decision of my life! It's so inexpensive, and fun!"

As she raved about community college, I wished I could disappear.

I felt entitled; I had taken the same AP classes as my friends, applied to the

same colleges and even wasted countless summers taking official SAT practice tests. Had my efforts gone to naught?

For the new school year, I pledged to maintain competitive grades for my major, save up for school, get involved in ASB and sign a transfer agreement guarantee with UC Davis. Through the transfer process, I would get a second chance to stand out as the most perfect, well-rounded candidate. I was determined to check off boxes in a way that I'd simply missed at Saratoga.

As the school year approached, I felt a little spark of excitement. Even rebellion. A student in a printed giraffe dress shirt explained that it was his fourth year at community college. He was the student trustee for the Foothill-De Anza district and heavily involved in on-campus organizations. Bingo.

For the first time in my life, I heard students speak openly about being working class and poor.

At the same time, I began fighting for student rights and taking on issues that simply wouldn't have been relevant if I had gone to the "perfect" school. My vision of "radical" Berkeley in the '60s was my day-to-day life at De Anza College.

I love being around other students who are heavily invested in equity issues. I love the misfit I've become so much more than the form I was trying to check off.

I didn't reinvent the wheel. I just decided not to go to a 4-year university.

— Sara Elzeiny, class of 2015

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR: SHS Advisor useful

*Editor's Note: A complete version of the letter can be found on saratogafalcon.org.*

Dear Falcon,

As seniors at Saratoga High, we have long enjoyed the culture of collaboration at Saratoga. Teachers encourage their students to study academic material together, while students help each other and create Facebook groups to share study resources.

To further promote this collaborative spirit, we created SHS Advisor, a website that offers alumni advice, study resources and difficulty levels for classes.

Is such a platform detrimental

to the spirit of learning? Does enabling students to share resources regarding specific classes "reduce every class, every text, every unit into yet another hoop to jump through," as English teacher Mr. Nguyen writes in his letter to The Falcon?

Mr. Nguyen points out that the sharing of old study guides on our site will encourage foul play, branding these resources as "power cheat sheets." We disagree: students already make study guides through social media platforms such as Facebook.

In fact, many teachers encourage this cooperative effort because it allows students to spend less time on busywork.

In addition, we screen each study guide submitted to us before uploading them. Lastly, if any teachers have issues with our study guides for their classes, they can request removal.

Furthermore, Mr. Nguyen assumes the position of a student, stating, "It's one more thing, one more site, one more routine that I, Stressed Out Student, must now incorporate into my academic life." As students, we would not have created SHS Advisor if we did not believe it would benefit the student body.

Some students will find utility in the site, and some will not, but no one is obligated to use it.

Therefore, our site decreases

stress by allowing students to save time and energy wasted on busywork and focus more on learning; it has no effect on students who choose not to use it.

Mr. Nguyen's article demonstrates a phenomenon that we have observed in our four years at Saratoga High: Students are often bombarded with the notion that grades should not matter; learning is what is important.

While a system that values learning rather than marks is ideal, ignoring scores is impractical.

Regardless of the controversy over the American grading system and its flaws, grades and test scores are still universities' key indicators of a student's academic

ability and are heavily relied upon for admissions decisions.

As students, we did not choose this system, but it is within our power to determine how to best excel under these conditions.

In creating SHS Advisor, we were not trying to reform the education system. In reality, grades matter, scores matter and students care about these things.

We built SHS Advisor in the hopes of creating a platform that will foster academic cooperation, empower students to get the most out of the courses they choose and improve students' quality of life. ♦

— Seniors Anthony Barthell, Theo Luan and Apoorv Kwatra

100-WORD RANTS

## Homework: time waster

When students return to SHS after the summer, most quickly fall back to spending late nights to finish their work. Homework eats up hours of their life and leads them to sacrifice non-academic passions.

It is healthy to take part in extracurriculars like sports teams or volunteer programs, especially in high school. These activities aid in the development of skills needed as an adult. Too often we overlook how pursuits like art, music and athletics are just as important as homework. Homework should be reduced and perhaps become optional to allow students to pursue interests outside of school. ♦

— Francesca Chu

# Online study materials ruin independent learning

by ElaineFan

In an age when the response to any question is "just Google it," the availability of information is higher than ever. With the rise of websites such as Slader, AP Study Notes and even the new student-run SHS Advisor, students can access notes, worked problems and study guides at the click of a button.

This is extremely appealing for any student. Students stressing before a test or a quiz can find extra study guides and notes to help them fully prepare, especially in a time crunch.

Despite its immediate advantages, the availability of online study materials may damage fundamental learning skills that are

necessary in the long run.

For many students, the convenience of shared material sometimes takes away the need to pay close attention during class, since there is always a backup. They might never need to go through the study process that comes with making their own study guides.

The availability of online notes has even affected attendance rates in some universities, since students no longer see the necessity in attending classes.

For example, some university students are avoiding class by buying lecture notes online. Students lose the ability to ask questions and interact with others during class.

Students in English classes often turn to websites

such as Sparknotes and Shmoop, which takes away the whole point of literary analysis. Why read the actual book when a website can provide chapter summaries, themes, symbols, character descriptions, setting, tone and even useful quotes?

Notes found online can lead to a slew of other issues, such as inaccuracy, cheating, plagiarism, copyright infringements and worse of all, extremely grumpy teachers who grow exasperated at the shortcuts students take.

Students studying foreign languages frequently use translation tools online to complete their homework, resulting in ignorance of the actual language.

Dependence of online resources may lead to

the decline of certain independent learning skills that are necessary in the future. When students start working at actual jobs, information will not simply be handed to them over the Internet. Students going into fields involving research and analysis will not have convenient, organized studies at their fingertips.

However, this doesn't mean that the use of online resources is always bad. It's only the abuse of these resources that leads to detrimental side effects.

Though teenagers aren't going to give up the Internet anytime soon, it is important to take a step back and consider the possible long-term consequences of clicking on that handy Sparknotes link. ♦

# Smaller classes worth preserving

As the saying goes, "The more the merrier." However, this phrase doesn't apply to the number of students in a classroom. Although large classes do have some benefits, a stricter limit for class sizes is the ideal.

The average class size in Saratoga High this year is 29, compared to 27 from the 2015-16 school year, according to assistant principal Brian Safine. Although the influx may not seem significant, some classes feel — and are — much larger. For instance, teacher Richard Ellis's seventh-period sports P.E. class now contains nearly 62 students, which led to the school hiring an assistant to help him with the huge group.

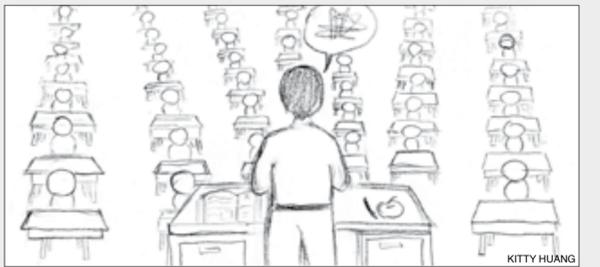
But even the addition of a handful of students forces teachers to clock in more

hours grading assignments and tests.

For instance, English teacher Amy Keys said she takes at least 20 minutes to grade an essay. If each of her five classes added three more students, she would have to spend a minimum of five extra hours grading one essay assignment.

The hours quickly accumulate, resulting in overwhelming workloads. In larger classes, students sometimes receive delayed feedback and less one-on-one attention from teachers, leaving students with unanswered questions.

Large classes can lead to a shortage of materials as well. In many math classes, textbooks have to be shared between two or three students. Also, a lack of space can be a problem, especially



KITTY HUANG

ly in science classes, when students are forced to stand on chairs or tables just to see a teacher's demonstration.

Beyond just Saratoga High, schools across the country have also experienced the effects of large class sizes. Perhaps most importantly, students in smaller classroom settings tend to score better on standardized tests. For example, the Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) experiment done in Tennessee has concluded that smaller class sizes directly correlate to higher test scores. This experiment also revealed that a high teacher-to-student ratio es-

pecially benefits those who need help most: students from low-income families.

However, larger class sizes may benefit some subjects. An extreme example is band, where large groups can result in bigger, more impressive performances and sound. Physical education classes can also be slightly larger, since the lessons are rather straightforward and do not elicit many questions.

While the optimal teacher-to-student ratio is still widely debated among experts, there is no threshold that has to be reached before class size reduction provides benefits. Whether a group of 40 is reduced to

20 or a group of 30 is reduced to 27 does not matter: Both scenarios increase the probability that students will engage more in learning.

Rather than campaigning for a drastic, unrealistic change, though, educational leaders should recognize that every step toward a smaller classroom, no matter how small, is still a step in the right direction.

The average class size at Saratoga High has increased by two from the past school year. But even if each classroom were just two students smaller, there would be appreciable benefits for both teachers and students. ♦

# Building a résumé: necessary or nearsighted?

by DavidKoh

Purposeless clubs and pointless activities — this has become the norm for many high school students at high-powered schools like SHS.

All too often, students find themselves stuck doing activities that they don't enjoy, such as managing clubs or volunteer work that they assume will look great on résumés. Here's the important question: Do activities that students aren't passionate about really matter to colleges? The answer is often no.

According to Time, colleges value passion and commitment over negligible entanglement in unvalued

activities. This means that doing activities for the sake of colleges is actually counterproductive and a waste of time. Instead of focusing on filling résumés up, students should focus on activities that they are interested in.

Of course, almost everyone professes agreement with these platitudes, but few understand the importance of dropping the college-padding activities.

One reason is the rising competition to make it into top colleges, especially in an affluent area like Saratoga.

The idea of trying to please colleges is problematic; instead, one

should consider pursuing individual interests. After all — and this is what people seem to miss — there is life after college, and colleges will appreciate the applicants who acknowledge this by doing what they are interested in.

Another root cause of this trend is simply confusion. According to Jane Parent, a writer at Your Teen, some high school students don't understand college standards. Parent goes on to say that it is important for students to be motivated and interested beyond the classroom.

2016 graduate Luke Salin is an example of how focusing on subjects one is passionate about is beneficial.

In his case, it was filmmaking.

"Going into film, I knew I had to be passionate and show that through my essays and portfolio," Salin said.

He said the best way to appeal to colleges is to prove how "real and authentic your passion and motivation is for what you're doing."

Salin's focus on doing what he loved paid off in the end when he was admitted to New York University. In the end, colleges are aware that students often do things to cater to the admissions process, and not only is cramming ineffective, quite frankly, it is difficult to be motivated doing something just for the sake of putting it on a résumé. ♦



# Why we should think like conservatives

BY Kevin Chow

At times, The Saratoga Falcon can be unbouedly liberal in its editorial views (see: other articles on this page). In fact, so are many academic institutions, especially universities (see: Harvard criminal law professor writes about student complaints about teaching rape law).

If anything, this makes clear the strange distortion of our current understanding of conservatism and liberalism. Judging from the election, to be conservative is to oppose immigration and dislike minorities; to be liberal is to want to ban guns and raise taxes, among other things.

But conservatism, like liberalism, is a valid line of thought with valid platforms. It may have a support base perhaps not familiar to us and with different values, but that doesn't detract from its value. Conservatives are people too, people who grew up in different circumstances with different values, but often we and the media see them as homophobic fanatics. This needs to change.

What is important to under-

stand is that parties change and the idea of what makes a conservative and what makes a liberal is ever-shifting. What also needs to be recognized is the shifting tide against conservatives (those Trump-loving hooligans!).

**They may have grown up insular and uncompromising, but these are Americans like us, and America wasn't founded on highborns thinking the best for the plebeians.**

There has always been the danger of a dominating ideology. Imagine the Bolsheviks overthrowing the Mensheviks. Especially with a government founded on checks and balances, conservatism and liberalism need a balance.

What's even scarier is that the current trend against conservatism

is led by academic institutions and students, the people who educate and create the next generation.

The problem is that conservatism has gotten for itself a bad name. Trump has both alienated and stereotyped conservatives. And many argue that the current state of the Republican party has been years in the making. Trump is only a byproduct, and that the right wing has been seized by reactionaries that are dragging the party by its ear.

Conservatism has been distorted, but it used to be an ideology that permitted libertarianism, economic conservatism and compromise with Democrats.

It's important to know that conservatism is the other side to our society. There's a reason that so many people believe in its ideals and support its (albeit rogue) candidate.

The conservative party platform has had a couple of worthy, persistent stances, including support of businesses, Second Amendment rights within reason, anti-marijuana and anti-illegal immigration. Despite the forms that these opinions take in our distorted me-

dia, these are valuable viewpoints. Conservatives aren't all mountain men white supremacists interested in keeping America in the dark ages — they are just people who have grown up in different circumstances.

We in the Silicon Valley, and even more so in Saratoga, value many things because of the context in which we live. We believe in the growth of technology, scientific inquiry, giving to those that are less fortunate, giving quarter to nationalities less fortunate, and these are all honorable goals.

But we have to keep in mind that most of America does not live like us. They may live paycheck to paycheck and fear taxes. They may live in a place in constant competition with low-wage working illegal immigrants. They may have lost someone to an extremist terrorist. They may have grown up insular and uncompromising, but these are Americans like us, and America wasn't founded on highborns thinking the best for the plebeians.

And put aside the people who grew up differently than us; now how many of the rest of us all get our information from the same

source? As argued by George Saunders for The New Yorker, with so many different media outlets, with so many different biases and agendas, can you blame anyone for having a view so different from yours that he is called conservative and you are called liberal? In the end, we are all Americans, and for the most part, we want what is best for America and its children.

Even if you don't believe in the merits of conservative thought, conservatism is important not necessarily because of its stances, but because it represents so much of our nation and a way that we can break out of our own ideological habits.

So it's worth spreading a new understanding of conservatism that takes into account the changing status quo. Some conservatives support gender and minority equality, new gun control laws, reasonable immigration control. It's up to us, the students and community of Saratoga High, to accept a renovated conservatism and learn to stop demonizing it.

Even we at The Saratoga Falcon — we'll try, too. ♦

# Trump's insulting, sexist maternity leave plan

BY Amy Tang

Donald Trump isn't particularly appealing to female voters, and one of his latest proposals isn't helping.

Trump's attempt at gaining female votes with his maternity leave plan reinforces gender stereotypes of family roles and fails to provide the support that American families desperately need.

His campaign plans for women who don't receive paid leave from their employers to receive six weeks of paid maternity leave.

Though this family leave plan was supposed to help Trump gain female supporters, it ended up

being blatantly sexist and confirmed an antiquated view of the world: Men should be the breadwinners and women should be the childcare providers.

And what about those not in a male-female partnership?

The proposal, which was urged on by his daughter Ivanka, focuses solely on maternity leave and excludes fathers of all kinds.

In an interview with Cosmopolitan, she said, "There's tremendous benefit here to enabling the mother to recover after childbirth. It's critical for the health of the mother."

If men are working all day and arrive home late at night, as Trump seems to propose,



they will barely have any contact with their newborn child.

Leaving out half the population in a "family" leave plan hurts fathers who want to be involved in their child's life, and strengthens the stereotype that women

stay at home to care for the children while men go out and work.

The presence of a parental figure during the first months of a newborn's life are extremely important, and both parents should be given the opportunity to be

active participants in their child's life.

A policy that focuses on only mothers is damaging to children, fathers and women. It limits a father's ability to connect with his child and makes it much harder for fathers to achieve equality in parenting, while also putting the extra pressure of child-raising on women. Apparently, Trump believes the best way for fathers to support their family is through a paycheck.

Also, his plan excludes gay couples, single fathers and those who choose to adopt. The number of stay-at-home dads has been increasing, as women are the main source of income in 40 percent of two-parent

households, according to the New York Times.

The policy reflects a profound misunderstanding of just how much time new parents and babies truly need together. A 6-week-old baby can barely raise its hand, and is in no condition to be left without a parent.

Perhaps worst of all, Trump's plan would provide a powerful incentive for employers to hire and promote men over women. Why hire a woman when you can hire the man who has to come right back to work? Women have always faced discrimination in the workplace based on the mere prospect of pregnancy, and Trump's policy would only make the situation worse. ♦

# Clickbait, the election: We're responsible for the mess

BY Kyle Wang

It's easy to blame CNN, NBC and virtually every other TV network whose name is a three-letter acronym for the mess that has become the 2016 election.

Yes, they have consistently provided Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump with far more coverage than moderate candidates because his statements are inherently more radical, more interesting — more appalling, even, to a slice of the general public.

But, in spite of all the superficiality, the general public still tunes in to watch this coverage. They still read the clickbait-y articles and roll their eyes when they see videos of Trump in their newsfeeds, only to watch them anyway.

They, ultimately, give these media companies — from BuzzFeed to CBS — an audience.

So the blame falls on them as much as it does on the often criticized mass media.

To begin with, sites like BuzzFeed release stories based

purely on readers' interest; if a story generates more "buzz," then BuzzFeed will release more similar stories in the future.

In one article about Trump, for example, BuzzFeed released a supposed "news" story titled "Thirteen Times Trump was wrong about being the first to campaign in front of a plane," which is neither directly newsworthy in any sense of the word nor relevant to any political election.

Yes, that politicians frequently lie and exaggerate is a major problem — but that's not something that BuzzFeed, which is no bastion of objective or thorough reporting by any standard, should be out to stop.

To clarify, there's nothing inherently wrong with this clickbait. BuzzFeed, with all of its semi-filtered randomness and chaos, is a fantastic antidote for boredom on a Saturday night.

But problems arise when we begin using websites like BuzzFeed as our primary source for news and information — one Pew Re-

search Center survey found that 62 percent of polled adults get their news via a social media website like Facebook, where clickbait sites such as BuzzFeed dominate.

As for TV channels like CNN, who once paused an interview with a cybersecurity analyst during the height of the Snowden controversy to release a "special report" that Justin Bieber had been arrested, there isn't much to say. Those who choose to continue watching do so at their own risk.

Of course, pointing at clickbait-y websites and shallow news networks helps to absolve the blame that rests on our shoulders. But, in the internet age, we are given a choice as to what we read and what information we find. Moderate, qualified candidates such as Ohio Gov. John Kasich and Martin O'Malley, the former governor of Maryland, have been the frontrunners for this presidential race, but both floundered in the primaries after receiving sparse media coverage and attention.

Blame CNN, blame BuzzFeed,

blame whomever you'd like, but all the information about these candidates and their political views was free and open for the world. But at times, it seemed as though the people had already voted long before the primaries were over — and vot-

**Blame CNN, blame BuzzFeed, blame whomever you'd like, but all the information about these candidates and their political views was free and open for the world.**

ed based not on political substance, but on flair and name recognition. Naturally, not everybody enjoys reading dense political analyses about each candidate's policy platform, but good, educated citizen-

## Can you live superstitiously?

REPORTER TRIES TO LIVE ACCORDING TO HOROSCOPE

i am kevjumba

Kyle Wang

My one week foray into living superstitiously started with a paper cutout of a rabbit's foot. I read online somewhere that a rabbit's foot brings you luck, but I don't believe in animal cruelty or spending money on things I can (sort of) make at home. So, at 9 p.m. on Sunday night, when I probably should have been studying for my Spanish test, I was browsing through pictures of feet. Rabbit feet.

I've never believed in superstitions, so this experiment was pretty fascinating for me. If nothing else, I had an excuse to fool around when I should have been studying. When my mom asked me why I was reading my horoscope for the week, I could tell her it was for newspaper.

For the week of Sept. 19, my horoscope told me (via a poetic but pretty much meaningless 100-word paragraph) to "let [myself] be held by the sheer delight of living."

It took me a good five minutes for me to figure out that I basically had full license to do whatever I wanted for the whole entire week.

In the middle of rejoicing over my full license to YOLO, I suddenly remembered I

still hadn't studied for Spanish. Oops.

The next day, in the middle of my Spanish test, I remembered the rectangular slip of paper in my pocket holding a kindergarten-level drawing of a rabbit's foot.

I was tempted to reach in and give it a pat for good luck, but decided against it, as Señor Rodriguex probably would have thought I was cheating.

Now, as I write this, I've already forgotten most of last week. My horoscope said that the week of Sept. 19 was a week to leave me "without words, without stories." I didn't think they meant that literally — I still have no idea how a horoscope or my little rabbit's foot was supposed to bring me joy.

**My horoscope said that the week of Sept. 19 was a week to leave me "without words, without stories."**

Even though my expectations weren't high to begin with, I can't say that having a paper cutout of a rabbit's foot in my pocket was any less entertaining.

As long as I have a good excuse to procrastinate on APUSH reading and look up pictures of bunnies, I won't complain about superstition. ♦

### FAVORITE HALLOWEEN COSTUME

**A look into sophomore Sasha Pickard's costumes**

**Q: What did your doll costume look like?**

A: I made it all myself. I wore a dress and made a cardboard cutout of the windup key, and then did doll makeup and put my hair in curled pigtails.

**Q: What was another one of your favorite costumes?**

A: I dressed up as a whoopee cushion once.

Courtesy of SASHA PICKARD  
Pickard poses in her doll costume in seventh grade.

GRAPHIC BY ELAINE FAN

## SQUAD STYLE FILES

Palace Roadrunner Hoodie, \$150

Adidas Originals x Palace Runners Cap, \$50

Nike Flex Running Shorts, \$50

Play CDG x Converse Low White, \$100

Palace Suave-it Shell Top White, \$188

Adidas Palace Pro Primeknit White/Orange, \$155

Total cost: \$350

**Brennan Wu, 12**

Palace P6 Hat Dark Grey, \$48

Gosha Rubchinskiy Grey Big Logo Tee, \$50

Gosha Rubchinskiy x Timur Novikov Rising Sun Beige Cap, \$60

H&M Distressed Denim, \$40

Adidas Ultra Boost ATR Black/Dark Grey, \$180

Travis Scott Rodeo Tour T-Shirt, \$40

Pendleton Flannel, \$35

Total cost: \$456

**Samet Ghirnkar, 12**

Bianca Chandón NY Hoodie Black, \$185

Arc'teryx Veilance Voronoi Pants Black, \$200

Total cost: \$788

**Derek Chen, 12**

H&M Cotton Twill Joggers, \$30

All-Black Nike Air Huarache Shoes, \$110

Total cost: \$215

**Jonathan Cai, 12**

FALCON // VIVIAN ZHANG

October 21, 2016

# SPOOKY STORIES

STUDENTS DESCRIBE THEIR MOST MYSTERIOUS, CREEPY AND THRILLING EXPERIENCES

## Five Nights at the Fengs'

SOPHOMORE ENCOUNTERS PARANORMAL EVENTS IN HOME

ashley fangs

Ashley Feng

"Yes, the weather today was an average of 92 degrees, with a low of 63 degrees. Weather next week will be slightly lower temperatures and mostly cloudy skies."

The Amazon Echo's robotic intonation is drowned out by startled swearing and alarming sounds of a person falling off a chair.

This scene is a frequent occurrence in my house, where the paranormal meets the paranoid.

Recently my dad bought an Amazon Echo, a voice-activated device that can control lighting, report news and play music. The old-school expression about children — they don't speak (or play) unless spoken to — rings true of our Echo.

However, during a night of studying, the lights in the hallway started dimming; at first, I thought it was an old lightbulb. But then, I saw that our Echo had been activated and I immediately suspected paranormal events at play — perhaps some evil spirits roaming around in my house.

This happened a second time, a third time, a fourth time — every time there would be a sudden booming voice.

My paranoid self likened the events at my house to the plot of the horror video game "Five Nights at Freddy's." In the game, a security guard is forced to single-handedly man a decrepit entertainment venue much like Chuck E. Cheese's, where giant possessed animal costumes with insatiable thirsts for blood eerily roam the halls.

In short, my paranoia of having the game become a part of my reality caused many sleepless nights.

Along with our Amazon Echo, my family also has a creepy statue placed in a dark corner of the study. When I was a child, my

parents purchased the pale white, miniature sculpture of a waitress dressed in a glittering silver gown. I named her Betty, and her blond locks, ruby red lips and poised pose were the picture of perfection.

But one thing unsettled me — her eyes. Much like the Mona Lisa, the statue's eyes seem to follow the viewer, and coupled with pale blue irises, Betty was one creepy house decoration.

One night, in the midst of total silence, I heard a creak — it wasn't very noticeable, but just loud enough to cause suspicion. Slowly looking around, I happened to glance at the study room.

**"At that point, I accepted the fact that I would either never live to see daylight again, or my tired eyes were playing tricks on me."**

SOPHOMORE Ashley Feng

There stood Betty with her pale eyes and unnerving stare. She seemed to be staring intently in my direction, and her blood red lips were much creepier than usual.

All of a sudden, I heard a startling crash and nearly jumped out of my chair. A quick glance at the kitchen confirmed my worst fears — another paranormal event had occurred.

A knife was on the floor, after apparently falling down from the counter. If it had been a spoon, I would have passed it off as nothing important. But, it was a knife — the exact type of murder weapon I would envision Betty using.

At that point, I accepted the fact that I would either never live to see daylight again, or my tired eyes were playing tricks on me.

In that moment of despair, I forced myself to succumb to the arms of sleep, awaiting my death or another exhausting day at school. ♦

## 'Scarytoga' Cemetery haunts junior during cross country

micHELLe lee

Michelle Lee

Once in awhile, the girls' cross country captains decide to drag the entire team on a particularly difficult and far run.

The most painful course is called "Lookout," a 5-mile run that goes through Downtown Saratoga and up an enormous hill that leads directly through the Montalvo hiking trails.

These types of runs are always accompanied with a series of complaints about the excruciating weather and our mysterious "joint pains," which only seem to hurt when we actually start running.

But the one motivation for us to actually run, instead of our usual brisk suburban-mom-fast-walk, is the Saratoga Cemetery, also known as the Madronia Cemetery Home, a huge expanse of endless rows of dusty tombstones.

Even though it is broad daylight, just knowing that there are hundreds of dead bodies buried there mere inches underneath our feet sends chills running down

our backs. It sounds cliché, but it feels straight out of a horror movie.

One time, my friend junior Tiffany Huang and I dared each other to peek into the black mailbox nailed by the entrance of the cemetery; we were both curious as to why the deceased needed a mailbox anyway. But we instantly regretted it, because as soon as we opened the mailbox, cobwebs flew at us almost as if in retaliation for disrupting the peace. I slammed the lid shut, which made such a loud crash that it could have almost woken the dead, and we sped past the looming graveyard.

I'm usually a huge horror fan and having watched dozens of horror movies, I feel as if I'm conditioned to not get scared so easily. So how does an inanimate place manage to elicit so many shudders?

It's not so much that I think one of the decaying bodies under the dirt will stick out its bony arm to grab my ankles and try to pull me into the underworld. It's the fact that, inevitably, all of us will end up under that very ground with only a slab of rock and an engraved name to serve as the only reminder of your existence in the world.

And the thought that hundreds of years later, a group of cross country girls will run past without giving a second thought about who you were is just simply downright scary. ♦

## Paranormal meets the physical in sophomore's everyday life

by Leena Elzeiny & Sherrie Shen

Sophomore Yash Rachepalli, standing at 6 feet with broad shoulders and long arms, may seem fearless to some. But even he is afraid of the supernatural and holds many superstitions.

Rachepalli said that his fear did not come from his family or culture, but rather of his own accord.

It all started when Rachepalli moved to Bangalore, India, in 2011, when he was 10.

"I heard about 20 ghost stories from my friends, and I started playing with the idea of ghosts when I realized the odds of all of these stories being a coincidence," Rachepalli said.

Rachepalli recalls one of the frightening stories that his friends told him in India.

In the story, a man returns to his hometown after five years and reac-

quaints with a childhood friend on the streets. They talk for some time. The man later runs into his friend's parents, who tell the man that his friend has in fact been dead for years.

Since hearing these supernatural stories years ago, Rachepalli has engaged in various methods of warding off the supernatural, such as throwing salt over his shoulder to supposedly "blind the devil waiting there" and even spitting when speaking about plans in order to keep the dark angel from interfering.

In fact, he never walks under ladders or purposefully breaks mirrors. He avoids being awake at 3 a.m., saying he is afraid of the "devil's hour," the time when evil can transfer between the spiritual world, home of all paranormal activity, and the physical world, home of humans.

"Believing in ghosts has affected my beliefs, affected my choices and affected my actions," Rachepalli said. "I'll never be the same again." ♦

## Beware of the Metropolitan, a haven for the supernatural

angel(a) or devil

Angela Lee

I've always been a slightly superstitious person: I carry a good luck charm on test days, a safety amulet dangles in my car and I look away whenever I pass a cemetery. Most of these idiosyncrasies stem from my mom, but thanks to my experience at the Metropolitan Art Museum in New York, I have developed my greatest superstition — to never wear black or joke around near historical artifacts.

Two years ago, during a summer vacation, my family and I visited New York. The day we visited the Metropolitan, I sported a black dress and black sandals. The Metropolitan amazed me with its massive displays of historical art from all over the world. I browsed armor from Europe's medieval ages and walked among ornate coffins of deceased Egyptian royalty.

But among the awe-inspiring artwork were paintings and statues with unusual and often amusing images. Whenever I stumbled upon a particularly funny expression in an art piece or artifact, I would point to it and make jokes to my sister.

Little did I know that my seemingly innocent jokes would soon lead to a horrifying out of body experience.

After our fascinating experience at

the Metropolitan, we had dinner with my older cousin at a stylish bistro, and as the waitress delivered my steak, I started to shiver until I was uncontrollably shaking. I suddenly started to cry, but I had no idea why.

At this point, my mom decided to usher me to the outside seating with my plate of steak. She hoped that I would calm down with a breath of fresh air. But instead of relaxing, I started to hallucinate. Visions of myself bolting into the ongoing traffic and getting hit by a yellow taxi cab replayed in my head, and I felt a growing dread.

My mom was alarmed. When I picked up my knife, she looked relieved, as she thought I had calmed down enough to eat.

But instead of slicing into the steak, I started stabbing it repeatedly. I couldn't stop myself. I felt like I had no control over my body. I had never felt so helpless.

Finally after a few minutes of incessant stabbing and my mom praying, I finally put down my knife and my tears stopped. I didn't understand what had happened, but my mom had a theory: Not only did my dark outfit attract the supernatural in the Metropolitan, but my jokes had offended the spirits as well; in turn, they tried to possess me.

To this day, I can't explain why I behaved so strangely that night in New York. With my only explanation being my mom's theory, I have no choice but to believe her. For anyone who plans to visit the Metropolitan, I advise you to not wear black, and to not make any snide jokes about anything in that museum. ♦

# BEHIND THE SCREEN

## EXPLORING NEW TRENDING FEATURES IN SOCIAL MEDIA

ALL GRAPHICS BY SANJANA MELKOTE AND MAYA PRASAD



### ARTISTS MAKE SNAPCHAT GEOFILTERS TO INCREASE PUBLICITY ON CAMPUS

BY Francesca Chu & Sanjana Melkote

From tagging locations to promoting events, Snapchat geofilters have become an increasingly popular method of publicity.

Geofilters are location-based overlays that Snapchat users can apply to their pictures. Any user has the ability to create a filter by designing a graphic and submitting it to Snapchat's website. Snapchat requires that the submission is a web-optimized form and follows their suggested dimensions.

Snapchat is a widely used social media platform with over 30 million monthly users, and pictures that are posted are often tagged with popular geofilters, thus advertising locations, events and more.

Junior Lillian Zeng decided to take advantage of Snapchat's popularity and created a geofilter to promote the class of 2018's Homecoming Quad Day this year. Zeng's filter falls under Snapchat's category of "business filters," which is intended for a specific event or a private location.

The filter was designed on Adobe Illustrator and went through a few artistic revisions before being finalized. The final product was a design with the words "Junior Power" in blue placed over a dark navy gradient background.

According to Zeng, even small design elements like the exact shade of the background and the curvatures of the graphic grew into hours of indecisiveness.

Although Zeng hoped to have her filter available for use throughout the

whole 12-hour-day, she was unable to negotiate with Snapchat enough for an affordable price.

For a business filter, Snapchat charges \$5 per 20,000 square feet, and to cover the whole school for the entire day would have cost \$200.

To lower the price to \$50, the filter was only up from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and was not active in the back of the school, the fields or the parking lot.

Besides business filters intended for advertising, users also have the option of designing community filters which are free to publish for public locations such as a city, university or local landmark. Over the summer, sophomore Samyu Iyer decided to spend her free time designing Saratoga community filters. Her first two graphic filters were rejected by Snapchat due to location restrictions.

For her third submission, Iyer chose to create a filter for Villa Montalvo, a garden center with hiking trails; it was the prime location for a geofilter to Iyer, as the park is popular amongst high school students.

Students were already constantly posting Snapchat pictures to their stories from Montalvo, so it seemed likely that they would use a geofilter if it were available.

The process took about an hour on Adobe Illustrator and was designed to resemble the Carriage House Theatre in Montalvo.

"Making the filter was a really good learning opportunity for me, and I'd love to do it again when I find the time," she said. ♦



### STUDENTS RECRUITED AS INSTAGRAM REPS TO PROMOTE BRANDS

BY Ashley Feng & Elizabeth Lee

Scrolling through Instagram, students have recently noticed the sudden bombardment of posts promoting obscure companies such as Wave and Fin and Serengetee.

Although only high-profile social media figures have been recruited to endorse these brands in the past, companies that are not yet established enough to hire celebrities have recently started reaching out to college and high school students in an effort to advertise to a larger audience.

Senior Anna Zhou was recruited by Wave and Fin, a small clothing brand looking for more publicity, as a campus representative in August. Through the Instagram account @waveandfinreps, Zhou contacted Wave and Fin via direct message and asked for an opportunity to be a campus rep to receive free apparel, as she often wears their merchandise.

Soon after Zhou became a rep, she posted a photo on Instagram publicizing the brand's discount code.

"It's pretty cool having everyday people advertise instead of high-profile fashionistas because we really advocate a honest opinion, whereas the high-end Instagrammers are required to say certain things," she said.

After almost three months working with the brand, Zhou said that she is interested in continuing to be a rep for the company and in seeing what other opportunities arise in the future.

Like Zhou, junior Jingyi Wang also received a sponsorship from a clothing brand. Wang was chosen to be a campus representative from over 3,000 applicants for Serengetee, a company that takes imported fabric and incorporates the prints into apparel. Wang initially discovered the company from a friend, and after Wang saw Serengetee's posts on Facebook recruiting high-school reps,

Wang applied. Aware of the company's philanthropy, Wang was further motivated to seek this opportunity.

"Since the company donates 10 percent of its profits to countries in need, I thought it was inspiring to bring a bunch of different cultures' artistic features to America while being able to help them financially as well," Wang said.

Wang hopes to gain more experience marketing while help increase donations to third-world countries. As a high-school campus rep for Serengetee, Wang is responsible for promoting sales on social media and spreading awareness of the needs of third-world countries such as electricity, education and housing.

Because most brands have been wary of seeking minors to advertise their products, companies like Wave and Fin and Serengetee are traversing an unfamiliar path by recruiting younger representatives. Although reps like Zhou and Wang are not paid and only given discount codes and free merchandise, this marketing strategy could benefit charities and other philanthropic organizations in the future. By allowing these groups to reach out to a large audience through social media, awareness of global issues can be spread more effectively to the millennial generation.

"Knowing that the company I rep donates money in turn, it inspires me to continue promoting the company," Wang said. "It feels good to be able to promote a company with such a good message and goal." ♦



Senior Anna Zhou advertises a brand by wearing its apparel.



Juniors Kate Bossi and Ayush Aggarwal pose for a Snapchat photo decorated with Zeng's geofilter.

### FACEBOOK'S LIVE STREAMING ADDITION GAINS POPULARITY AMONG STUDENTS, REVEALS INTEREST IN WATCHING REAL-TIME EVENTS

BY Apoorva Kwatra & Neehar Thumathy

Senior Alex Yagobi has been one of the first SHS students to dive into the new realm of live streaming, a feature introduced on Facebook in April.

In it, users share live video content, while friends can view and comment in real time. Yagobi was introduced to live streaming when he stumbled upon a live stream hosted by rapper A\$AP Ferg on his Facebook news feed. He was drawn to the live video's humor and entertainment and decided to try it out himself.

While working his Sunday shift at McDonald's, Yagobi often found himself "bored" during his breaks and began to document himself and friends humorously reviewing McDonald's food items. Yagobi soon became notorious for his

frequent live streams, and some attracted up to 735 viewers.

Yagobi's compelling live streams have inspired senior William Chen to use live streaming to document the behind-the-scenes of school activities. During Homecoming move-in weekend, Chen recorded the seniors setting up decorations in an effort to increase participation during move in and found live streaming to be "a great way to tell the world what's on your mind." The live aspect of the video streams encourages students to share their honest opinions, while also invoking instant discussion through the comment section.

This is why many celebrities, including professional athletes, have been live streaming to reach out to and interact with their fans. During the NBA playoffs, former Golden State Warriors for-

ward Harrison Barnes conducted a public Q&A through Facebook live stream. Senior Gautham Arunkumar through the comment feature was even able to get his question answered by Barnes publicly.

However, with the rise of live streaming, sharing on social media has become more instant and constant, since when a Facebook user posts a live stream, a notification is sent all his or her friends. The flood of updates have left some users such as senior Shoumil Sarkar irritated.

Fortunately for Sarkar, many students are finding new ways to use live streaming. Rather than just using it as a humorous tool, senior Nathan Ching live streamed from New York to show his Facebook friends what he was doing on his trip with the Media Arts Program.

"I wanted to update family, friends, and other MAP students about how we

were doing in New York," Ching said.

Facebook live streaming has also allowed some users to share some controversial videos with the public. The medium gained widespread attention in July when a woman recorded the death of her boyfriend, Philando Castile, after he was shot by the police in Minnesota, claiming, as she told the media, to "want it to go viral so people could determine themselves as to what was right and what was wrong." Despite the occasional controversial or graphic or graphic live stream, a majority of live streams have been lighthearted. From entertainment to Q&As, students are enjoying the benefits of this technology.

"It's great to see what my friends are doing," Arunkumar said. "Live streaming is one of the best things Facebook has done." ♦

# Shawn Mendes impresses with 'Illuminate' album

BY Trevor Leung

Many 18-year-olds are currently celebrating the cease of their first college midterms. Of course, Canadian singer and songwriter turned pop star Shawn Mendes is not like the average 18-year-old.

After becoming an overnight sensation at just 15 on Vine in 2013 by posting 10-second clips of his amazing vocals, Mendes is now selling out concerts at Madison Square Garden in under 5 minutes.

After his first album "Handwritten" was released, it debuted on the Billboard 200 album chart at No. 1 for a week. Mendes somehow found a way to exceed his fans' sky-high expectations after releasing his sophomore album called "Illuminate" on Sept. 23.

In the album, Mendes shows off his combination of unbelievable vocals with well-written and deep lyrics about growing up and falling in love in all 15 songs on his newest album.

A few months before the release of his album, Mendes put out his single "Treat You Better," which has garnered over 223 million views for its music video — becoming the most popular track on the album.

The song uses guitar instrumentation to set the beat and weaves in the same passionate and soft vocals that made "Stitches" popular for the perfect harmony. The song's catchy chorus perfectly complements his lyrics, making it no surprise that the single earned the No. 6 spot on the Billboard Hot 100 list.

In the song, Mendes promises that he can treat his listeners better, as part of his stand against domestic violence. He enforces his stand by including The National Domestic Violence Hotline number at the end of the song's music video.

His third track on the album is "Mercy," an emotional ballad that focuses on a relatable subject: heartbreak. In just one week, the music video reached over 7 million views. Mendes gives the song a unique twist with his rhythmic humming. The acoustic version of "Mercy" offers a gentle take on the song.

Another guitar instrumental heavy track, "Patience," was inspired by Mendes's past relationship with an older girl who broke the relationship because she was wary of the age difference. However, to connect with a larger audience, Mendes speaks for most young adults when he sings about being fed up with being treated differently because of his age.

At age 18, Mendes reveals how much he has matured and grown to be capable of being treated as an adult through tracks like "Hold On." In "Hold On," Mendes emphasizes keeping a positive outlook to life despite difficult circumstances. Mendes quotes his father in the song, turning the piece into a heartfelt message that can be used to comfort and inspire his fans who are facing challenging times.

Mendes's music in the album itself may seem unbeatable, but his whole process of creating the album is even more impressive. Mendes made sure he was involved in writing every song on the album to personalize them. Mayer's musical influence can also be heard in the



Mendes poses in the cover art for his album, "Illuminate."

# 'Miss Peregrine's' an epic miss for Tim Burton



Michelle Lee and Katherine Zhou

At first we were hesitant to watch the movie "Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children," out of fear that the movie adaptation might ruin the beauty of the original book series. We were convinced to see it only after discovering Tim Burton was directing it; after all, Burton is well known for creating eerie movies, a perfect match for the scary elements of the novel.

But instead of being a Burton classic, we were let down by the silver-screen version of the book.

Based on author Ransom Riggs' best-selling book series, the movie, released on Sept. 30, follows the basic "hero" plotline: an adolescent protagonist, Jake Portman, doesn't fit in his regular life. After a terrifying call to action (his grandfather mysteriously dying), he goes on an adventure to a new world (a house for children who have "peculiar" powers, cared for by Miss Peregrine). There, he discovers a new truth about himself: He has these magical powers himself.

Unfortunately, this movie was nothing like Burton's spectacular classics such as "Beetlejuice" and "Edward Scissorhands." This movie is just another in a long line of live-action movies with a convoluted and illogical plotline.

The plotline becomes mangled when Jake discovers a 1943 eternal loop the children are stuck in, and changes between vis-

iting there and present time. Jake seems to be extremely concerned with returning to the present time, yet when the book reaches its resolution, he forgets about this concern completely. Burton also adds illogical elements such as Jake's dad, who could not care less that his teenage son is missing for days on a foreign island.

Along with these problems, during the climax of the movie, although each child could singlehandedly defeat all of the antagonists (example: a girl literally has fire hands), their use of power is almost comedic. (See: the girl sets a tiny bit of an enemy's jacket on fire, which he pats away. Then he slaps her, and she simply falls to the ground.)

Not to mention, the climax, designed to provoke fear, caused us to immediately burst into laughter as we quietly continued our debate on whether Asa Butterfield, who

plays Jake, or Finlay MacMillan, who plays the character Enoch, was more attractive.

To Burton's credit, the movie did have its moments. The movie is visually beautiful, overcast with gloomy colors and shadows, with unique-looking characters with big eyes and vibrant costume design.

By contrast, the book succeeds in many areas the movie does not; it is sufficiently scary, relying on the reader's imagination and real-life pictures inserted in its pages to haunt the reader. The novel is a page-turner, packed with excitement, while the movie left us confused and bored.

So instead of spending the two hours at the movie theater watching "Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children," take an afternoon to read the tales of Jake on his venture into the world of peculiars. We promise you won't be disappointed. ♦



## Presidential race blurs purpose of award shows

BY Amy Tang

As the 2016 Emmy Awards began, it only took a matter of minutes for the first of many political bashes to be thrown out on stage. Jimmy Kimmel started the show with a heavily politicized segment featuring former GOP presidential candidate Jeb Bush, and from there, the Trump jokes and political references escalated.

Viewers of the Sept. 18 show soon witnessed the night transform from a celebration of television's finest to a platform for entertainment celebrities to preach their political views.

Many viewers, including me, were angered. Nobody tunes in to an awards show to listen to A-listers talk about their personal political opinions. If people wanted to listen to a political debate, they would be watching CNN instead of ABC.

Entertainment programs, namely awards shows, should be free of politics because it detracts from the achievements of actors and actresses. The purpose of the night is to give hard-working entertainers a time

to shine, but mixing politics in diminishes their accomplishments by drawing all attention to the presidential race.

It also causes ignorant voters to focus their attention on the opinions of actors, actresses, directors, reality television stars or other celebrities who most likely do not have any more insight into political issues than the average person on the street.

Some celebrities also use their acceptance speeches to talk about politics or promote certain beliefs. During the Emmys, Courtney B. Vance, who won best lead actor, said, "Obama out, Hilary in!" at the end of his speech.

Celebrities have somehow managed to integrate politics into every award show. We seem to be constantly surrounded by politic-influenced entertainment.

Mixing politics with entertainment ruins what the industry is supposed to be about: celebrating the accomplishments of talented performers.

Entertainers attend these award shows to be recognized for their work, not to be overshadowed by talk of politics. ♦

## Celebrities use platforms to bring forth public matters

BY Harshini Ramaswamy

As "Grey's Anatomy" actor Jesse Williams stepped up to receive the humanitarian award at the 2016 BET awards ceremony held in June, he barely hesitated before launching into a speech that would raise the audience on its feet before he even reached the thick of it.

"The award is not for me, this is for the real organizers all over the country," Williams said in his speech. "The people who are realizing that a system built to divide, impoverish and destroy us can not stand if we do."

Williams is hardly the first actor to speak out against injustices during a ceremony meant to celebrate the achievements of the entertainment community.

Actors such as Lin-Manuel Miranda, who delivered a sonnet in memory of the victims of Orlando during the 2016 Tony awards, and Leonardo di Caprio, who spoke of climate change in his Oscar speech have used their social status to enlighten viewers of the tragedies occurring around them.

"Making 'The Revenant' was about man's relationship with the natural world," Di Caprio said in his speech. "Climate change is real, it is the most urgent threat facing our entire species. We need to support leaders around the world who do not speak for the big corporations, but who speak for all of humanity."

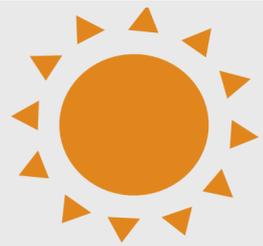
Award shows like the Oscars can attract up to 40 million viewers, an audience size that rivals political convention broadcasts.

Entertainers are also using social media for political advocacy.

Musicians such as John Legend and Katy Perry can be found tweeting their political views to their millions of followers and using the hashtag #imwithher to support Hillary Clinton.

Celebrities like Legend are often role models for the younger generation, and a simple tweet endorsements can immediately become a trend.

By voicing their opinions on political matters celebrities are spreading awareness about what is going on politically and benefiting society as a whole. ♦



# May IN THE Life



GRAPHIC BY KITTY HUANG

## Art in the past, present and future

### SOPHOMORE'S PASSION FOR DRAWING GOES BEYOND THE NOW

by SherrieShen

Variations of blue, periwinkle and white flutter across the screen, as sophomore Colleen Feng adds finishing touches of an anime girl to the final layer of canvas on a digital art program called Sai.

As the time nears midnight, Feng still stares intently at her computer screen through pink amethyst glasses reflecting the blue-tinted screen. She twirls slightly in her brown swivel chair, eyes often wandering to the blank space above her computer.

Her tablet sits a perfectly perpendicular to the edge of her desk — not on her lap because there's radiation. A copy of "Love Live Illustrations Book 3" is splayed open to her right, next to a pack of matcha rocky remains untouched.

In time such as these, Feng sometimes finds herself unintentionally staying up until 2 a.m. finishing one last drawing. Time passes too quickly.

With her natural talent and dedication in art and design, the only

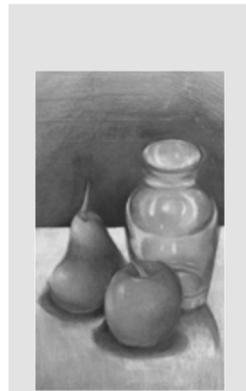
challenge Feng faces is the environment around her, as she lives in the Silicon Valley, a center of high-tech innovation that has historically provided few opportunities for aspiring artists. Despite this, Feng believes it offers new chances as well.

"If I didn't live here, I might not have access to all the high-tech tablets and programs available, as I do now," Feng said. "Silicon Valley's advanced technology has only enhanced my learning in the fine arts."

Feng first discovered art early on, and still thinks back to the arguments and tears brought by her first day of art class at Little Seed Studio.

Only 4 at the time, Feng was mad at her mom for making her attend this seemingly pointless class. But as the weeks progressed, Feng found herself enjoying art more and more.

Since then, Feng has rarely spent a day without drawing. On average, she spends 12 hours a week at her desk drawing. She prefers drawing plain pencil sketches to all other



Courtesy of COLLEEN FENG  
Sophomore Colleen Feng created this drawing during her second semester of Art 2. It was displayed at the school art gallery.

forms of art, but occasionally tries her hand at graphic art.

"I've always liked creating things based off of what I see and think," Feng said. "Drawing an aesthetically appealing image not only expresses what I can't in words, it just feels right."

However, charcoal sketching, a particular medium of art, holds a place as dark as its color — or rather lack of color — in Feng's mind.

"It's really messy, and always ends up looking really messy," Feng said. "But you can't always do everything you like in life, and for me, charcoal is a reminder of that."

Art is now her longest lasting and strongest passion, and Feng intends to become more competitively involved during the rest of high school.

Even if she doesn't place first in contests, Feng makes the experience well worth the time.

This summer, she and six other girls attended a week-long art camp in Villa Montalvo, sitting by outdoor easels and drawing the area's surrounding structures.

From the rise of the sun to its halfway journey across the sky, the girls painted the canvas with streaks of charcoal, at times accidentally smudging the black powder.

Nevertheless, after years of art and despite her late nights drawing at the studio and at home, Feng is unsure whether she will major in art in college. If she does, it would likely be in graphic design or animation.

But for now, Feng plans on attending one of the many prestigious art camps on the East Coast next summer.

And while other students her age sometimes drop their involvement in the arts in pursuit of math, science and tech, Feng still remains undeterred to follow her path.

"Art allows me to express creativity and feelings through pictures and visuals rather than using words," Feng said. "I want others to be inspired and have joy in looking at what I make. It's a very satisfying feeling when someone is happy looking at what you've drawn." ♦

## Working at former high school brings joy to counselor

by HarshiniRamaswamy

The school day for guidance counselor Eileen Allen usually begins before she reaches school each morning. She tries to answer the influx of emails that accumulated overnight while at home.

Though the process can take up to an hour, Allen tries to respond to every message, whether it's about scheduling questions, transcript reviews, college admissions inquiries or college essay help.

When done, Allen heads to her kitchen to brew a strong cup of coffee, which she follows up with a walk with a rescue dog named Maxine.

"I try my best to do some sort of exercise if I can," Allen said. "I find that it's really helpful for my stress level, even if it's going for a half an hour walk or something."

Her 20-minute commute takes her to her office in the administration building.

Throughout the day, Allen chats with students and her co-workers, making an effort to maintain "open communication."

"I love to walk around and see how people are doing," Allen said. "I consider that a big part of what I do and my belief. I'm not just here to support parents and students, but also to be seen as somebody

that anyone on staff can talk about anything to."

Each day for Allen varies, as unexpected student crises may arise, forcing her to shift a full day of planned meetings with staff, students and parents from discussing ways to improve the learning experience of students with special needs to setting up a student support group.

"What I love about my job that makes me excited to come to work is that there isn't really a typical day," said Allen. "It's often really different from day to day, just depending on the different things that come up."

Between meetings, Allen often talks to students who are struggling with personal issues. These situations can bring out the best of Allen's capabilities, when she advises students through their troubles with peer relationships, circumstances at home or even bullying.

"It's part of my job to make sure that everyone feels heard and understood," Allen said. "Being that person who is willing to listen, show compassion and attempt to understand can sometimes go a long way, even when you can't offer an immediate solution."

Along with student guidance, Allen also resolves complaints from both students and parents.

Sometimes Allen cannot offer immediate solutions, which she finds frustrating at times, saying she often wants to "fix things right away."

On a day with fewer appointments or meetings, Allen finds herself with a large chunk of free time at work, often spending it in the company of some of her "teacher friends."

"I like to find time to step away from my desk," Allen said. "I think it makes me a better counselor to just have some quiet time with friends to chat, and then I come back better off for the rest of the day."

After work, Allen sometimes heads to the gym to clear her head and alleviate the stress.

To wind down at home, Allen often entertains guests for dinner or hosts "The Bachelor" watching parties with her friends or spends time alone binge watching Netflix TV shows, such as her current obsession "Stranger Things."

"I'm a very social person and I love to have dinner with my friends," Allen said. "But it's nice to have that quiet time especially after a big or long day."

But it's common for her to become preoccupied with "coming up with solutions" to a student's difficulties at night. Allen has always grappled with separating



FALCON // DEREK CHEN  
Counselor Eileen Allen works with seniors who are turning in their college packets during tutorial and answers questions about the process.

work from her personal life at home.

"I think it's always a struggle, in any job where you're working with people and trying to support them," Allen said. "Sometimes it can be hard to compartmentalize and leave some of that concern for others at work."

Though Allen initially did not intend to work at her former high school, she feels that working in a familiar community helps her

understand student experiences. Her favorite part of the day is knowing that she has done something to help either a student or a staff member.

"I love getting to work with a diverse group of students and families and the exceptional teaching staff and administration group," Allen said. "I consider it such a privilege to know so many hard-working and compassionate people." ♦

## Senior drum major finds his rhythm in music-heavy schedule

by JayKim  
& ElizabethLee

As a drum major for the marching band, senior Jaewoo Lee has much responsibility on his shoulders even during a typical rehearsal.

Under the hot sun, he turns on the metronome. Glistening with sunscreen and wearing his jet-black sunglasses, he stands on a podium overseeing the 175 band members. With the help of other drum majors, senior Peter Vandevort, Adrianna White and Wyatt Schulman, the band members simultaneously move with the beat of Lee's conducting to perfect their performance as the other drum majors yell out instructions.

"I love the atmosphere of a laser-focused rehearsal," Lee said. "Everyone becomes so much better when we all forget about all the other parts of our lives and just think about band."

Lee started his music career in seventh grade, playing the trombone for Redwood Middle School's band. Now, almost seven years later, as one of the drum majors for the marching band and a trombone player for her concert band, Lee spends about 15 hours playing music every week.

Thursdays are his most intense days for music. His mornings start with first-period chamber choir, where he sings the bass part of famous songs such as "The Awakening," "Always Something Sings and If Ye Love Me." Afterward, Lee heads to his favorite class



FALCON // ISABELLE YANG  
Senior drum major Jaewoo Lee conducts the band at its Oct. 13 Thursday night rehearsal. Lee estimates that he spends roughly 15 hours doing music-related activities every week.

— band, of course only 1.5 hours of the 4.5 hours he will spend with the band that day. During rehearsals, Lee leads the band in practicing and memorizing music that they will perform at upcoming football games or competitions.

Though his music classes for the day have finished, Lee often finds himself in conversations about band throughout the day. His tutorials are often spent hanging

around in the band room, chatting with friends or experimenting with melodies on the piano.

At 6 p.m. on Thursdays, Lee returns to school for a 3-hour band rehearsal. Although the focus of each practice varies, the band usually completes some stretching or visual review for marching movements and then warms up on instruments.

"Stretching brings in people's focus and

gets them mentally ready for rehearsal," Lee said. "After an hour, the band then works on marching and playing at the same time as a full group for the remaining time."

Lee sees himself pursuing music in college and further delving into his passion in future years. Now that his four year in band are coming to a close, he sees how far it has helped him come.

Lee said that an especially memorable moment occurred the band won at BOA last year when nobody was expecting them to beat the other exceptional bands.

"Band has given me many musical and moral role models to look up to," Lee said. "Band helps so many different people just from SHS to connect where they couldn't before, forming friendships across boundaries. I think band is a really positive experience just from meeting so many new people in one activity."

Lee also remembers the highlight of last year when so many of the seniors cried in happiness after the school won the Bands of America competition in Napa and how every single member celebrated all the hard work and sacrifice they put in.

"Now that I'm a senior, I think I actually understand how they felt having their last performance after four years of marching band result in celebrations," Lee said. "I realized even more the power of a group sacrificing time and energy into making something great." ♦

## World geography, P.E. teacher relieves stress through surfing

by JuliaMiller

World Geography and P.E. teacher Richard Ellis feels the ocean rolling beneath him as he waits upon his surfboard for a big wave to catch.

With a day of teaching behind him, Ellis can't wait to clear his head by riding one of Santa Cruz's ocean waves, which has transformed into one of his top priorities since his move to Santa Cruz in 1997.

Ellis starts each day in his Santa Cruz home, first waking up his children and dropping them off at their respective schools. Afterwards, Ellis makes the hour-commute to SHS on Highway 17.

"This gives me time to have a big cup of coffee, listen to the radio and get caught up on the news of the day," Ellis said.

Depending on the day, Ellis arrives at school at different times and immediately begins prepping for his classes. Ellis teaches P.E. periods 5 and 7, World Geography periods 2 and 4, and band P.E. period 6. Ellis enjoys teaching both subjects because they incorporate two of his passions: social studies and coaching.

"I like discussing current events and

tying them into what we are covering in class," Ellis said. "I like being physical as well, being outside and helping students acquire the skills necessary to maintain a healthy lifestyle."

Freshman Rohan Rao, one of Ellis's World Geography students, enjoys the analogies Ellis ties between school and current events.

"Because we're learning about South Asia right now, Mr. Ellis relates the culture and government to scenarios that could be in our school," Rao said. "It makes the class more interesting for me."

Not only does Ellis teach students, he also enjoys coaching his youngest son, 10, and his flag football team after work in Santa Cruz. And, if there's no practice to coach and the tide is just right, Ellis will run down to the ocean to surf.

Surfing has developed into Ellis's stress reliever ever since he learned how to as a kid in Southern California.

"I am fortunate to live very close to the water, which means I can run down to the beach and get in quickly," Ellis said. "Being close to the ocean, preferably in it, is a stress reliever for me. It is good for my head, [and I've made] it a priority in my life." ♦

## Column: Junior realizes life-changing discovery with new schedule change

punctual p-dog

Pranav Ahuja



It was 7:44 a.m. The neon red digits of my alarm clock blinked as my eyes slowly fluttered open. I was about to be tardy to school for the fourth time that week ... and it was only Thursday.

To clarify, this event (or chain of events) took place last year when I was a sophomore, before the new bell schedule had gone into place.

This meant that school started at 7:50 a.m., instead of the current 8:15 a.m. starting time.

Punctuality has never been my strong suit — whether it's school, after-school classes or Homecoming dance practices, I'm usually the last to come.

I'm tardy to the point where my friends and teachers are surprised if I even manage to come within 5 minutes of the planned

start time. In fact, last year every time I walked in late to Spanish, Mr. Yeilding would make the class applaud. In other words, I basically got a standing ovation three times a week.

Last year I racked up over 25 tardies. I quite possibly set a school record for the most tardies in one semester. This also meant that I had to suffer through my fair share of detentions.

Although I probably did not receive as many as I truly deserved, I still had a detention every three weeks or so. It wasn't a total waste, though, because detention was the only place I ever got any work done. That wasn't because I was bored, but because Mr. Elliot would often walk by my table giving me sly stares. Naturally, that inspired me to do some work.

This year, however, thanks to the new schedule, I am now a changed man.

Even though I wake up at the same time as last year, I am still able to get to school on time thanks to the extra 25 minutes we have been given from the new schedule.

Although I do miss my standing ovations, I love my new self and this new schedule too much to ever look back. ♦

## OUR FUTURE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF Reporters satirize the 2016 presidential candidates

### If Hillary wins: Here we go again

BY Andrew Owens

To examine the months of the Clinton administration's challenges, we must look back to the beginning of her presidency.

Hillary Clinton won by using the innovative new tactic of customizing her positions for each American.

Looking at this week's opinion polls, perhaps it would have been better for the Democratic Party if Clinton had lost.

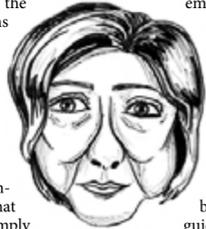
Soon after Inauguration Day, Clinton hit her first major problem. The Clinton Foundation was attacked as a slush fund for semi-legal activities. This time the money was coming from one Donald J. Trump.

Another scandal that

plagued the Clintons on the campaign trail soon reared its ugly head.

Much like Kim Jong Un's disappearance in 2014, in the early months of the Clinton administration, the president often went un-seen. Clinton insiders insisted that she was simply working hard and happy to have reached the presidency. But leaked clips emerged purporting that large amounts of coughing could be heard from inside the Oval Office.

Instead of running the



country, Clinton has also been recently spotted at Cedar Rapids High School "just chillin'" while also posting her latest tweet in emojis.

Perhaps worst of all, the promised economic recovery failed to materialize. Along with the collapse of the oil industry caused by OPEC policies, experts blame the misguided deletion of Gmail for causing a downturn in the tech industry.

It is a great irony that the party that won an unprecedented third term is now on track for electoral disaster. "Crooked Hillary" won the battle but lost the war. ♦

### Trump's presidency to be America's Great Cleanse

BY David Koh & Rahul Vadlakonda

In the nine months since his I-told-you-so inauguration in January 2017, Trump has been a man of his word, acting on many of the ideas that he presented during his run for the presidency.

To the surprise of supporters and opponents alike, what seemed like mere exaggerations during the campaign turned out to be Trump's true convictions (shocker!).

A look at one major success: Remember how he said that we're getting bested by China? Well, he took a page out of their Little Red Book and named the new wall on the border with Mexico "The Great Wall of Trump." Sadly, he couldn't get the Mexican government to pay for it.

In addition to his wall, Trump is trying to send undocumented immigrants back to Mexico to eradicate the arrival of anymore drugs and crime in the country.

After tackling the issue of reducing the number of Mexicans in the U.S., he looked to the Muslims and other minorities, deporting anyone without "absolute perfect documentation."

Nevertheless, despite his tough-on-almost-everyone-who's-not-white-and-rich policies, his proud wife Melania has given several speeches at acclaimed universities. Observers have noted the similarity in these texts to other speeches by American figures, including "Obama out!" and "The British are coming!"

Trump's tax returns still haven't been released, but people agree that he hasn't paid a single cent of federal taxes in his adult life.

Of course, we've come to accept almost everything he says. On the other hand, it is safe to say that Trump is not popular with female supporters. He's been trying to win them back by saying that he had thought his Miss Universe Organization was a spinoff of "Sesame Street" — this explains the "Miss Piggy" comment about former winner Alicia Machado.

So far, it has only been nine months into Trump's presidency, and he has made some noticeable changes. We can all conclude, despite all the doubts, that America is on its way to being great again thanks to President Trump. ♦



### Gary Johnson: Who is this guy again?

BY Kyle Wang

It is April of 2017, and by some unforeseen miracle (or "inside job," as the now-disgraced Republican candidate Donald Trump claims), Gary Johnson, the 64-year-old Libertarian candidate, is now entering the 100th day of his presidency.

He entered office in January, having won the November elections in a landslide. Rumor has it that most individuals at the polls simply checked off the "other" option besides "Hillary" or "Trump."

Take his first major act as president: By executive order, he removed marijuana's status as a controlled substance. Thousands of bearded ex-snowboarders living in the Colorado mountains as well as washed-out surfers in Santa Cruz rejoiced — the Republican party wasn't quite as enthused.

Johnson's own take was as follows: "Don't do drugs." He plans on applying the same restrictions that exist for alcohol consumption on marijuana use, leading to widespread protests.

Domestically, Johnson has struggled to work with a still-polarized Congress. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has oscillated between instant praise for Johnson's willingness to sell himself to the NRA (National Rifle Association)

and harsh criticism for his support of ending the War on Drugs.

Reception among Democrats has been unpredictable — when House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi was asked about her opinion of Johnson's performance, she responded with one word: "Who?"

Adding insult to injury, Trump has affectionately labeled the president "Gassy Gary Johnson," unable to remember a more complicated insult that started with the letter "g."

Johnson has found one supporter, though: former President Barack Obama praised Johnson's efforts to communicate his unconventional views to Americans.

"I love how a 64-year-old privileged WASP male is trying to reach out to a diverse group of young people through social media," Obama tweeted. "#ImWithHim. #IStillDontKnowHim."

Internationally, Johnson's policies have been equally difficult to pigeon-hole. Obama was rumored to have made plans for a major house party after Johnson signed an executive order that loosened restrictions on Syrian refugees, but soon canceled the party after Johnson pledged to reduce U.S. involvement in Ukraine.

For thousands of regis-

tered Democrats and Republicans, understanding even the basic principles behind Johnson's domestic and foreign policy has been virtually impossible. To communicate with the general public, Johnson has continued hosting biweekly live Facebook Q&A sessions.

At best, these videos have marginally improved his recognition. In a recent poll, 53 percent of voters said they now recognized his face — a substantial jump from the 42 percent who provided the same answer just two months ago.

If nothing else, Johnson's presidency has proven that American politics can still be boring even when the outside world is (both figuratively and, in parts of Syria, literally) on fire. At his best, Johnson speaks like a basketball coach trying to inspire a team losing by forty points with 30 seconds left to go. "I've climbed Mount Everest," he declared. "I don't quit."

At his worst, he sounds like Wolf Blitzer. Looking forward, the movement to elect Kanye West to the presidency has picked up steam. Hoping to permanently break the two party system, voters have now begun spamming Johnson's twitter account with "#Yeazy2020" posts.

By now, efforts to make Johnson a relevant voice in American politics seem increasingly futile — if winning the presidency still couldn't get voters to learn his name, then nothing ever will. ♦



### Green Party's Jill Stein doles out revolutionary policies

BY Kevin Chow

In 1899, Jill Stein overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy as the current leader of the Hawaiian Pineapple Company. Or maybe that was James Dole's cousin.

But I have a good reason for mixing those two up. First, they both bring revolutionary vigor into their campaigns or coups. Second, Jill Stein's name stylization is basically the Dole logo.

In other news, according to nearly every source, Stein is polling lower than every other candidate (and one gorilla), so of course a Stein presidency means that impossibility can happen.

So here's life under the Green Party:

Imagine the basic presidential promises: abolished student debt, universal medical insurance, the end of police brutality and wars.

Now add in some Green: a moratorium on GMOs until

proven safe, an end to fracking, and 100 percent renewable energy by 2030 (algae; oh boy!).

I can't help but think that a stop to all GMOs (starvation) is part of the plan to save the environment (remove people).

And you know that Jill's going to make this all happen. Aside from being a politician, she's a physician and a criminal! Be sure to expect economic equality for all and the destruction of big businesses that are coincidentally also ruining the ecosystem.

We all know that the fall of Wall Street would mean the fall of Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton; she'd probably succumb to pneumonia. Like every other candidate (and Donald Trump would say, one's a winner and the other's a loser).

Anyway, there's a big contradiction. If Jill Stein is everything that she says she is, why does she associate herself with Dole? If you she'd clarify and distance herself from the food industry, then maybe people would like her more. Heck, maybe she'd be invited to the debates. ♦



## Students anticipate service in Korean military

BY Elizabeth Lee & Michelle Lee

Unlike the United States, South Korea requires all male citizens to serve in the military for 22 months any time between the ages of 18 and 33. If a citizen passes the age limit and has not completed his service, he is unable to return to South Korea and faces arrest or even expulsion.

"I do not want to go, and I know that I will be treated terribly."

SENIOR Roy Lee

This is the reality for young people who have South Korean citizenship. Even for those with a dual South Korean and American citizenship, the South Korean government refrains from acknowledging Korean-American citizenships.

Senior Roy Lee, who moved to America from South Korea in September 2013, is a citizen of South Korea. For Lee, switching to a dual citizenship is out of the question, since he is set on his decision to serve in the Korean military. The most pressing decision for him now is when to go serve in South Korea.

"I want to live in Korea in the future; I don't want to become a foreigner to Korea," Lee said. "Since I was born in Korea, and it's where I grew up, I just feel more comfortable with Korean culture. All of my family will be in Korea as well."

Senior Alex Kwon also faces a similar situation in which he must return to Korea in the future and complete his military service. Kwon, who moved to America in 2004, hopes to return to his home country to live with the rest of his family.

Kwon plans to leave for service in Korea after freshman year of college here in America, and then to permanently remain in Korea afterwards.

GRAPHIC BY DEREK CHEN



Soldiers are given small meals and are forced to wake up at dawn and endure intense training for hours. Lack of proper equipment and violence have been chronic problems in the Korean army. Lee said he will be forced to obey his superiors, or else they could "easily beat him up."

Despite the harsh conditions of the military system in Korea and the fear of North Korean attacks, Lee said that he feels obligated to join the military to protect the country, especially because of the ongoing bomb and nuclear attack threats from North Korea.

By contrast, Lee plans to return to America after his service to finish his education in America, for he believes many American colleges are more prestigious.

One worry Lee has about joining the Korean mandatory military system is its "terrible" reputation. Known for being unjustly biased toward rich Korean citizens, the

military's hierarchy system is one of the strictest in the world.

"Honestly, I don't expect much from the army," Lee said. "It's just a part of my civil duty as a Korean citizen. I do not want to go, and I know that I will be treated terribly."

Korean soldiers get paid about \$15 a month and have to "work like crazy," Lee said.

## UNDER TWO FLAGS

Students recount experiences with non-American or dual citizenships

GRAPHIC BY FRANCESCA CHU

### I'm a CBCA — a Canadian born Chinese American

cashley Ashley Feng

No, I don't like maple syrup. No, I don't enjoy watching ice hockey. No, I'm not the nicest person you'll ever meet. But yes, I am Canadian.

I'm a Canadian citizen who has been living in the U.S. for 12 years. (Under perfectly legal conditions, thank you for asking, Mr. Trump!) I watch fireworks every July 4th, I (sometimes) listen to country music, and I even have a favorite president (Abraham Lincoln).

Yet, despite my patriotic customs, I cannot be considered "fully American." This is because I was born in Toronto, Canada, and only moved to the United States when I was 3.

You would think that after all these years, I would be an American citizen by now. But getting a U.S. citizenship is not as easy as it sounds.

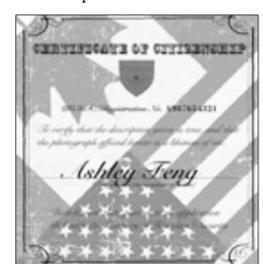
It all started when my family applied for green cards.

Green cards are, like the name suggests, small, credit-card-shaped objects that hold a lot of power in many immigrants' lives, allowing

foreigners to live and work permanently in the U.S.

In order for us to receive green cards, my dad couldn't change jobs during the waiting process. But in 2007, he did, so we started the process all over again.

Now you want to ask, "Wait, 2007? That was nine years ago! How does she STILL not have a citizenship?"



GRAPHIC BY KITTY HUANG

Well, the waiting process took a little while. And by a little, I mean seven whole years.

Family and employment quotas, extensive background checks and too many cases for too few judges all may have contributed to the wait.

But when we finally received those green cards in the mail in 2014, it marked a pretty significant moment in my life.

See, even though my family had applied for a green card, that didn't mean we would be guaranteed them. In fact, according to the American Immigration Center, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services receives and processes almost 6 million immigration applications from individuals. Every year, the USCIS approves roughly 1 million of the applications — only 17 percent of the total applications.

So when the green cards were mailed to my family, it meant that we, out of the 6 million applicants that year, had received the privilege to wait another five years until we could officially be naturalized as American citizens. And that is where I am today, with three more years to go — whee!

By the time I become an American citizen, I will have graduated from high school, gone on to college and spent 15 years in America.

So now, I want to take a few extra moments to appreciate the culture, the environment and the people I'm surrounded by. Because if my parents hadn't been so determined, maybe I would like maple syrup and ice hockey. Maybe I would be living back in Canada and not here in sunny California, drinking boba, eating In-n-Out, watching football games and being an American in every way except true citizenship. ♦

### What it's like to LIVE IN AMERICA without a U.S. citizenship

"The only big difference is that you cannot vote, and that a green card can be taken away, unlike a nationality."

Mathis Picard (12) from France

"Not being an American citizen has affected my life a lot. I only had a traveling visa when I went to Redwood, which was illegal, so I got sent back to China in the middle of the school year. Now, my green card is still processing, but it's going to be many years before I become a citizen."

Sida Ren (11) from China

# Freshman figure skater sets high goals

by Jay Kim & Michelle Lee

At 5 a.m. sharp, freshman Elizabeth Ding climbs out of bed, suits up in her pink under armour training suit and rushes out the door to head to the Sharks Ice rink in San Jose for her early morning practices.

Arriving by 6:45, she warms up for half an hour with land exercises that include running, jump roping and stretching. She then hits the ice at 7:45 and starts her lesson with her primary coach, former Olympian and 2010 U.S. National Champion Rachael Flatt. This has been Ding's daily routine for the past six years.

"I've put extreme dedication and hard work into this sport," Ding said. "I've made a lot of sacrifices, like skipping fun events and birthday parties, just to go skate."

But it was ironically at a birthday party at the ice rink years ago when she first discovered her passion for figure skating. Soon after, 6-years-old Ding begged her father, Tim Ding, to sign her up for skating classes at the local ice center in Cupertino.

According to her father, although it was her first time on ice, she was able to master the basics within 15 minutes.

"One year later, she became serious about her passion for figure skating, so we moved her to the Sharks Ice and started intense training [for her] under a famous coach," her dad said.

There, Ding was introduced to Flatt through her old coach and eventually switched to Flatt as her main coach.

Ding's parents have played vital roles in her success on ice, supporting her financially and sacrificing their time, driving her to and from for early-morning practices. They look to her daughter's "dedication and commitment."

"As her parents, we are very proud of her dedication and commitment," Tim Ding said.

Through her dedication and coach's guidance, Ding has mastered many difficult tricks early on; her greatest accomplishments were landing her first axel by age 7 and landing her double axel at age 11.

Her natural talent coupled with long hours of training has led her to receive many accolades. In 2015, Ding placed fourth at the Central Pacific Regionals (CPR) in Utah. She then qualified for sectionals, a competition featuring the 12 best skaters in the Novice Ladies division from the West Coast. On top of this, Ding has

won numerous medals in smaller competitions.

Most recently, on Oct. 7-9, Ding competed again in the CPR in Utah and placed fifth, but did not make the cut to sectionals, where only the top four proceeded.

Her impressive results could be accredited to some of Ding's mentors.

Ding said she has been inspired by her coach, Flatt, as well as 18-year-old Olympian figure skater Polina Edmunds, who compet-

ed in the 2014 Olympics in London and has shared the same rink and coaches with Ding for the past seven years.

"I know [Edmunds] really well," Ding said. "It was especially inspiring for me when she made it into the Olympics because I saw how hard she worked for that goal, and it really proved that hard work does pay off."

In the past eight months of working with Flatt, Ding has gone through tremendous growth in her skills and is consistently training hard toward her ultimate goal: to skate for the U.S. team in the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics.

"She has a terrific work ethic and dem-

onstrates a love for figure skating," Flatt said. "With lots of hard work and preparation, along with building a domestic and international competitive resume, she has the potential to be in the pool of athletes that could be considered for an Olympic berth." As a renowned figure skater in the region for her age group, Ding is looking forward to possibly participating in the upcoming Winter Olympics.

"The Olympics are in six years, and I'm far from prepared," Ding said. "But I feel that if I work hard until then, especially on moves such as the double axel, I will be prepared by the time 2022 rolls around." ♦



Courtesy of ELIZABETH DING

Freshman Elizabeth Ding performs a layback spin at the Central Pacific Regionals in 2015.

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# Hype for Durant shifts focus away from Curry

dancing queen

Julia Miller

This summer, the NBA was stunned when former league MVP Kevin Durant chose to leave the Oklahoma City Thunder after nine years to play for our Bay Area team, the Golden State Warriors.

After I watched the Warriors lose Game 7 of the NBA finals last season to Cleveland, not only was I devastated, but I had lost all hope of Durant ever moving to California to play for us. That's why I, along with almost every NBA fan in the world, was amazed when I read his farewell to his teammates and fans in Oklahoma City, and his greetings to the West Coast.

Durant, a seven-time NBA All-star, slowly rose to stardom after he was drafted in 2007. Few would've ever guessed that a player as popular as he is would leave his loyal Thunder fans to play for our team in the Bay.

Soon after Durant's first practice with the Warriors, the price of his jersey skyrocketed to \$110. I couldn't believe how quickly fans jumped on the Durant wagon without ever having seen him play on our court.

Even though Durant's addition is powerful, I was still skeptical leading up to the preseason game I attended on Oct. 6. I was afraid, as a die-hard Warrior fan, that the old team that I had come to love and root for unconditionally would be altered after all the player trades during the offseason this summer, the most significant trade being the exit of Warriors star center Andrew Bogut.

Immediately following the tip-off, Durant dominated the Warrior offense, scoring 25 points by the end of the game. His tall, lean

figure mixed with his outrageous ball-handling skills prevented every defender from successfully guarding him.

Although Durant ultimately won us the preseason match against the Sacramento Kings, I missed the spotlight on Steph Curry throughout the game. Durant's dominance seemed to overshadow the star point guard, and people were noticeably cheering harder for Durant than Curry.

The star of the team could shift from Warriors veteran Curry to the newbie, Durant, this season. Although Durant may guarantee the Warriors a ticket to the championship round, I hope fans don't push Curry, the leader who brought the Warriors out of its 50-year championship drought, to the side for the new, shinier player Durant just because of the hype that is now surrounding him. ♦

## >> falconfigures

73 Record setting win count the Warriors had last season

35 Jersey number of Warriors addition Kevin Durant

28 Average number of points Durant scored each game in '15-'16

30 Average number of points Curry scored each game in '15-'16

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## FOOTBALL

# Loss to MV leaves Falcons desperate for win

by Apoorv Kwatra & Trevor Leung

After a 42-41 loss against Mountain View High last Friday, the team's Senior Night game, the Falcons' conference record now stands at 1-3 and their overall record at 4-4 as they shift their focus to the final two games of the season. They play at Santa Clara on Oct. 28 and at Los Gatos on Nov. 4.

The Falcons fought hard in their last regular season home game of the season, leading for most of the game until senior quarterback Will Little was sidelined by a leg injury after a hard hit late in the game. This injury began the demise of the Falcons.

Though they led by 13 points in the fourth quarter, Mountain View scored two late touchdowns to win by one point. Throughout the game, Mountain View dominated the running game, rushing for 423 yards with a 76-yard touchdown return and exploiting holes in the Falcons' defense.

Little threw four touchdowns for the Falcons, with senior wide receiver Kian Ghelckhani scoring two of those touchdowns. Junior running back Robert Scott also added two touchdowns.

The Mountain View game was their sec-

ond straight loss. They fell 83-48 to powerful Wilcox in an away game on Oct. 7. Despite fighting hard to score touchdown after touchdown, the Falcons were overwhelmed by the Wilcox offense.

"Coming out of Wilcox, we noticed that our offense did what was necessary by putting up 48 points," junior wide receiver Harrison Fong said. "Usually that should be enough to win, but our defense really struggled to stop the high speed and high-powered Wilcox run."

Before the loss against Wilcox, the Falcons were able to finish their Homecoming week strong with a convincing victory against Palo Alto on Sept. 30, finishing with a score of 35-21. They were able to get back on track after a tough 49-14 loss to Milpitas the week before, which ended their two-game win streak.

"During Homecoming, we knew that we couldn't let our fans, family and alumni down," Fong said. "We knew that Palo Alto was going to be tough to beat, but all the excitement of Homecoming really pumped the team up and ultimately got us that victory."

Unsatisfied with the success the team has experienced this season, the Falcons are trying to improve their defense schematically and look forward to executing stronger de-



FALCON // AMY TANG

In a game against Mountain View on Oct. 14, junior Robert Scott scores a touchdown.

fense for the rest of the season.

"We are focusing on aggressiveness off the ball, as well as really trying to do what we are coached to do," Liddle said. "It can be quite challenging at times."

They continue to work hard as they focus on winning their last two games of the season. In order to make CCS, the Falcons

will have to win at least one of their two final games of the regular season.

"Right now, we're looking at the season one game at the time," senior wide receiver Rajat Vora said. "When the playoffs come, we will focus on that, but for now, we have business to take care of against Santa Clara and Los Gatos." ♦

## CROSS COUNTRY

# Runners battle fatigue due to tightly scheduled meets

by Andrew Owens & Kyle Wang

Junior Charles Qi felt nervous as he watched the brown, dusty trail of the Crystal Springs course draw closer outside the bus window. The hilly, 2.95 mile Crystal Springs course would be his second race in seven days; for other runners, it was their third.

With the Artichoke Invitational on Saturday [Oct. 1] and Crystal Springs on Tuesday [Oct. 4], finding time to take a rest day was

difficult, Qi said.

Normally, runners like Qi use Saturday as a rest day if they know they will be running on Tuesday — without it, they needed to change their workout plans. Even though Qi skipped the Artichoke Invitational, he still felt the fatigue from running two races in a 7-day span.

"Running three races in a row just tires you out in general," Qi said.

Nonetheless, in spite of their fatigue, seven runners set personal records on the

course. But even with these strong individual performances, the team struggled against tough competition from schools such as Palo Alto and Monta Vista. In the boys' race, the team placed ninth out of 12 schools, led by junior Amit Nag, who finished in 16:41, and sophomore David Berkowitz Sklar, who finished at 17:27, respectively.

Qi, who finished with a time of 18:21, is confident that the team's performance will continue to improve.

"As a team, we'll get stronger as the sea-

son goes on," Qi said. "We should be in good shape to re-qualify to states."

The girls' team did not attend the Artichoke Invitational, but still competed in two meets (the Central Park Meet on Sept. 27 and Crystal Springs) in a 7-day span. The girls' team finished last among all 14 teams, led by freshman Julia Hoffman, who ran 15:19 at Central Park and 21:56 at Crystal Springs.

The teams have three meets left in the season before league finals on Nov. 1. The CCS championship will be on Nov. 12. ♦

## GIRLS' TENNIS

# Team crushes Battle of the Bay; rivalry with LG intensifies

by Elizabeth Lee

With a current record of 7-1, the Falcons are continuing their season goal of qualifying for NorCals, but it's increasingly clear that just like last year, their main competition will be Los Gatos, the only team to have beaten them this year.

For the most part, the Falcons are breezing through their non-Los Gatos matches. On Oct. 6, the girls played Lynbrook for the second time, resulting in a 6-1 win against the Vikings. Since No. 2 singles player freshman Monica Stratakos was injured, the girls had to juggle a new and different lineup but played hard to obtain another victory.

The team took on Gunn High School on Oct. 4 in their sixth league match, bringing home a victory of 5-2. All the doubles played exceptionally well, locking the Falcons' win against the Titans.

The previous weekend, on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1, the girls won at the annual Battle of the Bay, a tournament held at Cupertino High School consisting of eight teams each from the South Bay and the North Bay.

On the first day, the Falcons won all four matches with a 6-1 victory against San Ramon Valley High School and a 7-0 victory against Miramonte. The next morning, the girls won 6-1 against Mill Valley-Tamalpais High and then won 7-0 against Piedmont in the afternoon. Four players were absent on Oct. 1, the second day of the tournament, due to the SAT and USTA Sectional Championships, a major tennis tournament, held the same day, so the lineup was altered to ensure the victories against Mill Valley-Tamalpais and Piedmont. Freshman Vivian Lin was pulled up from JV to complete the lineup.



Courtesy of SHEILA STRATAKOS

Senior No. 2 doubles Neeka Nikfar returns the ball in a game against Monta Vista on Oct. 11.

"It was difficult to try and figure out what would work best, since we did not have some of our strongest doubles and singles players to compete," No. 3 doubles player sophomore Khiara Berkowitz said.

The Falcons played the Homestead Mustangs on Sept. 28, finishing off with a win of 4-3. No. 3 and 4 singles players Anissa Mu and Varsha Horantur led the team to a strong start, winning their matches 6-1, 6-0 and 6-0, 6-0, respectively.

The week before, the girls had a heated and controversial match at home against rival Los Gatos on Sept. 22, suffering a loss of 4-3, and motivating the players to work even harder to win league championship.

"Los Gatos is our biggest rival this season

and it was tough to accept defeat, since we have consistently beat them for the past few years," No. 3 doubles player senior Shreya Ingle said. "We had a good chance of winning but No. 2 singles Monica Stratakos was injured, which brought us down."

During the match, the two teams found themselves arguing over a controversial match that would ultimately determine the winner. The match score was 3-3. The final match, No. 3 singles, would break the tie, determining the winner for the overall match.

The singles match was at a split set, meaning that the set score was 1-1 and the players had to then play a tiebreaker in lieu of a third set to finish the match. Aware that this was a crucial match that had to be won, No.

3 singles player junior Stephanie Ren headed to the bathroom before the tiebreaker to take a short break from the pressure on the court.

Though the match had not yet finished, the Los Gatos player refused to play and Los Gatos claimed the match as their victory, claiming that Ren had taken too long in the bathroom.

This sparked a bitter argument among the parents, players and coaches between the two teams.

"It wasn't right for them to just claim their victory in an unfair way," Stratakos said. "The victory should've been ours, but since they are so determined to beat us this year they are doing whatever it takes to bring us down."

Following the match, a Los Gatos player posted comments on her Snapchat story that Falcons players saw in a negative way.

"She basically flipped us off and said that we had cheated when in reality we did not," Stratakos said. "It really infuriated us and increased our determination to beat them in our future matches."

Last year, the team faced Los Gatos in the finals of CCS, which would determine who would compete in NorCals. Even though Saratoga won 4-3, the matches were close and difficult, alerting the team that Los Gatos was now a strong team to be reckoned with.

"We're going to have to fight very hard to gain a spot in NorCals this year, since we are expecting to meet them in the finals for CCS again this year," No. 2 doubles player senior Neeka Nikfar said. "Los Gatos is a very strong team overall after gaining many skilled players last year, but I know that we will be able to pull through and beat them." ♦

Due to printing deadlines for the issue, the Los Gatos game was unable to be covered.

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

# Team seeks first place in El Camino League

By Kitty **Huang** & Harshini **Ramaswamy**

With just a few games left in the season, the team is still hoping to win the El Camino League.

Originally tied for first with Gunn High and Cupertino High, the Falcons are looking to take home league championship. But that goal took a hit with their 3-1 loss to Gunn on Oct. 14, a loss that dropped them to second in the league.

"We gave them more points than they actually earned and that's what kills us in every game," senior captain Julia Vita said. "We need to work on protecting the ball more."

**"I think our spirits were a little low, so we could have definitely been a little more pumped for the game."**

JUNIOR Isabelle Strawn

The Falcons are hoping Gunn drops at least one more match to give them a shot at the championship. The girls fought hard against Gunn, their biggest rival, but could not hold off the Titans' strong offense. The Falcons lost 25-12 and 25-17 in their first two sets. The girls were able to win the third set 25-17, but lost the fourth set 25-18.

"Because this is a really important game, we were all in our heads a little too much and missed many passes and serves," sophomore

hitter Katie Hulme said. "We're all very capable players, but when it comes down to how we play, it really depends on what we're thinking about and how much pressure is on us."

Before their loss against Gunn, the Falcons won 3-1 against Santa Clara High on Oct. 11. Though the girls took the first set 25-22, Santa Clara came back and won the second set 25-19. The Falcons responded by dominating the next two sets 25-18 and 25-20.

Their hard-earned victory was the result of the girls' strong offense, led by Hulme's 21 kills and junior hitter Riley Carter's 20 kills. Vita and sophomore Chaaya Patel protected the backcourt by diving to save balls.

The team also defeated the Milpitas Trojans 3-0 on Oct. 6. The girls won all three sets in a dominant fashion 25-10, 25-18 and 25-15. Carter led the offense with 13 kills, while Hulme had 7.

On Oct. 4, the Falcons fell to the Sacred Heart Gators in straight sets.

The girls played hard against the Gators, but could not keep up with their aggressive serves.

"There could definitely be more communication between the players," junior hitter Belle Strawn said. "We could've done better if we put mistakes behind us and supported each other so that everyone had a better attitude."

The girls had also defeated Wilcox 3-1 on Sept. 29. After dropping the first set, they established a fast pace for the rest of the game and were able to work together against Wilcox to win the next three sets.

"Everyone contributed to the win and we played pretty well as a team," junior setter



Sophomore Katie Hulme hits the ball over the net during a game against Santa Clara High on Oct. 11.

Dasha Gousseva said. "We were a lot stronger compared to them, and the game was really fun and wasn't as stressful."

The team won in straight sets again on Sept. 27 against Fremont High. The girls barely won in the first set with a score of 25-22, but were able to take care of the rest of the game by winning the second set 25-12 and the third set 25-15 behind Carter's 13 kills, Hulme's 10 kills and Vita's strong defense.

Though the team won all three sets, Gous-

seva still felt that the team had room for improvement.

"Overall the team needs to improve on working together and supporting each other to keep each other up," Gousseva said. "Our skills are all really good; we just need to come together." ♦

*Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the game against Fremont High on Oct. 18 and the game at Wilcox High on Oct. 20.*

GIRLS' GOLF

# Players notice improvement leading into Leagues

By Trevor **Leung**

After losing their first five matches of the season, the girls have begun to see improvement as they head into leagues.

The team won two of their past three matches, 221-232 vs. Palo Alto High on Oct. 13 and 230-267 vs. Los Altos High on Oct. 5, both at Shoreline Golf Links (par 36), bringing their record to 2-6-1.

No. 1 player sophomore Janelle Jin led the team with a 40, while No. 2 player junior Sarah Lo shot 42 against Palo Alto. Both of them shot 43 against Los Altos. No. 3 player senior Cynthia Yang, who shot 44 in both matches, credits their wins to head coach Dave Gragnola's advice.

"We did well especially because we did what our coach told us to do on the greens:

read greens from both sides of the hole," Yang said. "We saved many strokes by making long putts as well as playing safe and smartly on difficult holes."

Jin has been anchoring the team this season, averaging 39.5 strokes per match. She is currently 10th individually in the De Anza League. Jin credits her performance to practicing almost every day during the summer.

On Oct. 10, the girls dropped a close match 207-209 to Lynbrook at the Saratoga Country Club (par 34). Jin and Lo paced the team with scores of 38.

"We actually did really well in our home match against Lynbrook but we ended up losing by two because of a couple of

simple errors and extra strokes that could've been avoided, like short putts on the last hole," Lo said.

They also lost to Lynbrook 178-185 at Deep Cliff Golf Course (par 30) on Sept. 29, with Jin and Lo shooting 35, Yang shooting 36 and No. 6 player senior Anya Herne shooting 38.

On Oct. 3, the girls tied 214-214 with Gunn at Saratoga Country Club. Jin led with a 3-over 37, Lo shot 41 and No. 5 player senior Raina Kolluri chipped in a 44. This rare occurrence showed how every stroke matters in the game.

"Every player on our team agreed that had we could've played better collectively and easily shaven off a stroke or

two in our individual rounds to win," Yang said.

Los Gatos also defeated the girls 220-237 on Sept. 27 at La Rinconada Country Club (par 36), with Jin shooting 42, Lo shooting 44 and No. 4 player freshman Sally Kim shooting 48.

The top six players who will be representing the team at Leagues is composed of Jin, Lo, Yang, Kim, Kolluri and Herne. According to Kolluri, they are expecting to place at least fourth or fifth at Leagues, which will take place on Oct. 25 at Santa Teresa Golf Club.

"We just need to focus on striking the ball well in order to get distance, especially at Santa Teresa," Kolluri said. ♦

*Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the match against Los Altos High at home on Oct. 17.*



Jin

BOYS' WATER POLO

# Captain urges more communication and teamwork

By Jay **Kim** & Michelle **Lee**

As the Falcons reached the end of their home game against Lynbrook on Oct. 11, team captain Grant Guzzo shook his head. The team lost the game 11-1, and lack of teamwork played a big part in it, Guzzo said.

"Our hardships mainly consisted of team dynamic and dedication, as the seniors this year are the last people with serious water polo culture," Guzzo said. "It took about half the season to really get [the other players] into not only making themselves better, but the team better."

After beating Fremont on Oct. 13 with a score of 10-6, the team has a 7-4 record.

According to Guzzo, the team's strengths and weaknesses have become evident

throughout the season.

"We have hardly any trouble setting up or getting back on defense," Guzzo said. "However, we often make bad passes or leave a man open on defense the split second he needs to shoot the ball."

The team had been on a winning streak during the earlier stages of the season, coming out victorious four games back to back, including a 7-6 win against Santa Clara on Sept. 27, an 8-6 win against Cupertino on Sept. 29 and a 15-2 win against Milpitas on Oct. 4.

The streak ended, however, with a 13-5 loss to Harker on Oct. 6. The team also lost against Lynbrook on Oct. 11 by the score of 8-3.

"When we were playing Cupertino, [the players] were dead-silent," Guzzo said. "No

one really talks in the water, and the juniors don't have the experience to act quickly enough."

**"When we were playing Cupertino the players were dead silent."**

SENIOR Grant Guzzo

Despite these setbacks, Guzzo believes that as long as the team focuses on commu-

nication and dedication, they will be able to carry some momentum into the postseason.

"Personally I'm looking forward to our team dynamic in these next games," Guzzo said.

Although according to Guzzo, the dynamics of the team has improved drastically over the season, it is unlikely for the team to make CCS as only the top team proceeds for their league.

"It would be very difficult for us to beat either Harker or Lynbrook, which are surprisingly good teams compared to the rest of the league with far more experienced players than us," senior David Nguyen said. "It's not impossible, but I think it's unlikely." ♦

*Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the game against Santa Clara High on Oct. 18.*

GIRLS' WATER POLO

# Falcons stay on track for CCS

By Ashley **Feng**

The girls bounced back after their first conference loss to Lynbrook with a 5-2 win against Monta Vista on Oct. 13, bringing their conference record to 11-1.

"It felt good to shut MV down, and I believe we're either first or tied for first with Homestead in our league right now," senior field player Jessy Liu said. "So, going into leagues we're going to be the team that other teams are scared to play."

The team won their first 10 conference games, but lost 3-2 against Lynbrook on Oct. 11. Despite the loss, the girls remain in first place in the El Camino League over Lynbrook, which has an 8-4 record.

Before their first conference loss, the girls defeated Harker 5-4 on Oct. 6 and Milpitas 15-1 on Oct. 4. After letting in one goal in the first quarter against Milpitas, junior goalie Aileen Zhang did not allow the opposing team to slip any



FALCON // ASHLEY FENG

Senior Kailyn Koerber passes in a game against Monta Vista on Oct. 13.

games, the girls did not win them without difficulty: Half of the field players were absent due to injuries or the Media Arts Program New York filmfest trip that ran through Oct. 4-10.

"But we still won the two games we played, which indicates how every member of our team brings something different to the table," senior goalie Sandy You said. "Our team isn't dependent on just a few key players."

Before the games against Harker and Milpitas, the team destroyed Wilcox 14-0 on Sept. 29, with Zhang and You shutting out Wilcox. Eight different players combined to score the 14 goals.

Because the girls have already played the other teams in their league at least once, coach Jerome Chung has given them new plays

to run for the last few games.

"In practice our newest defensive set up worked well, so during the league tournament it should be good to go," Liu said.

The girls are on pace to make it to CCS this year with just one loss. "I have a good feeling about the last couple of league games coming up because we have already beat these teams before," sophomore field player Sarah Daoudi said. "Our team has really come together outside of the pool and I feel like that has transferred to our teamwork and the way we play during our games." ♦

*Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to print the results of the game against Santa Clara High on Oct. 18 and the game at Homestead High on Oct. 20 in this issue.*

FIELD HOCKEY

# Intensity the key to meeting goals

By Emily **Chen** & Leena **Elzeiny**

Heading into the remainder of the season and now in second place in the De Anza League with an overall record of 9-3-2, the field hockey team is looking to keep up its intensity as it works toward the goal of returning to CCS.

"Now that the halfway mark of our season has passed, the team is especially motivated," senior forward Kelsey Kinoshita said. "For more than half the team, it's our last season of high school hockey."

Besides just preparing for the postseason, the team anticipates its rematch against Los Gatos, the top team in the league.

The Falcons fell to the Wildcats 4-1 on Oct. 5. The team kept calm under the fast pace and high pressure from LG but went down 2-0 late in the first half. Saratoga responded with a second-half goal from Bossi, but LG scored twice more before the game ended.

"I think we were upset that we lost only because we worked really hard, and it wasn't like they dominated or anything like that — we had possession, they had possession," Miller said. "It was a really fair game, and I just think we're a little bit upset that we lost and didn't execute our opportunities."

The girls remain hopeful for the last league game of the season against Los Gatos on Oct. 28.

"LG is the one team that we all

have wanted to beat for our past four years," Miller said. "It will be the last time to prove ourselves and the last time to break their streak."

Since their LG game, the Falcons have rebounded strongly.

The team's determination showed in its home game against Homestead on Oct. 14, when it won 5-0.

Three goals were scored by senior forward Tina Miller, while senior midfielder Hannah Leonard and junior forward Kate Bossi picked up a goal each.

On Oct. 12, the team beat Cupertino 1-0. Miller scored the sole goal of the game early in the first half.

Against Los Altos on Oct. 7, the team won 2-0. Though they were unable to finish some opportunities on goal, the Falcons controlled the game against the Eagles.

They went up early in the first half when senior midfielder Emily Chen scored off a penalty stroke. In the second half Bossi scored with assists from Chen and senior defender Rachel Davey.

"Right now, our intensity is on the uprise, and we are peaking as we are headed to CCS," Bossi said. "We are all mentally checked in and ready to face Los Gatos again. We simply need to keep our spirits up and get better every game in order to go places." ♦

*Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon could not cover the away game at Lynbrook on Oct. 21.*

## Smart Students Plan Ahead & Start Early

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Senior Kian Ghelichkhani prepares the football during the game against Palo Alto on Oct. 14.

The seniors' stunt squad poses at the end of their dance during Senior Quad day on Sept. 30.

Seniors Tina Miller, Rachel Davey and Hannah Leonard playfully act in the Senior Homecoming skit on Sept. 30.

The seniors' all-boy group performs their dance during Senior Quad day on Sept. 30.

# Another PSA: It's not Isabella or Izabelle

JUNIOR RECOUNTS THE STRUGGLE OF HER NAME'S "COMPLEXITY" THROUGH HER SCHOOL LIFE

don't leave me yangin'

Isabelle Yang



It's me and I'm back again to tell you that I have even more grievances to air with my name. As much as I'd like to say that upon releasing my previous article, I had been reborn as a new person — or perhaps as the "Isabelle" I'd always been — and I had extended into the heavens as a graceful butterfly.

Sadly, this is not the case. I'm here to tell you about something just as necessary as not mistaking my name for Elizabeth, another name not even remotely similar: the proper

spelling and pronunciation of Isabelle.

Although I'd love to be a compassionate human being that is kind and keen to forgiving others on butchering my name in hundreds of ways, including my elementary school teacher who went through an entire parent teacher conference calling me Isabella to my mom. This is now a PSA, a state of emergency; my name is Isabelle, not Isabel, or Isabella, or Izabelle, or "I've-just-given-up-and-spelled-Isabelle-with-three-'I's."

As mentioned in my previous article, I've given some friendly reminders to remind you of how my name is "Isabelle" and not "Elizabeth." I'll again bless your poor soul on how to spell my name because frankly, I know, I know, Isabelle is difficult to spell.

If you recall learning phonetics, you'll probably remember the difference between an "e" and an "a." Quick test: What's the dif-

ference between "awesome" and "elephant"? That's right, they're two completely different words, both beginning with two different phonetic sounds of "a" and "e"!

I'm here to tell you about something just as necessary as not mistaking my name for Elizabeth.

Why did I make you take this test that even a kindergartener could pass? Because now hopefully you'll know that my name isn't Isabella. It's only taken me this long, but I've finally done it. After going into classes

where teachers have continued to adamantly call me Isabella and write my name with an extra "a" and losing the "e"; I urge you to campaign with me #dontlosethelettere2k16.

Now, being the clever person I am, I again have a trick tailored just for you who struggle to spell my name: "Spell" with two 'I's just like Isabelle with two 'I's.

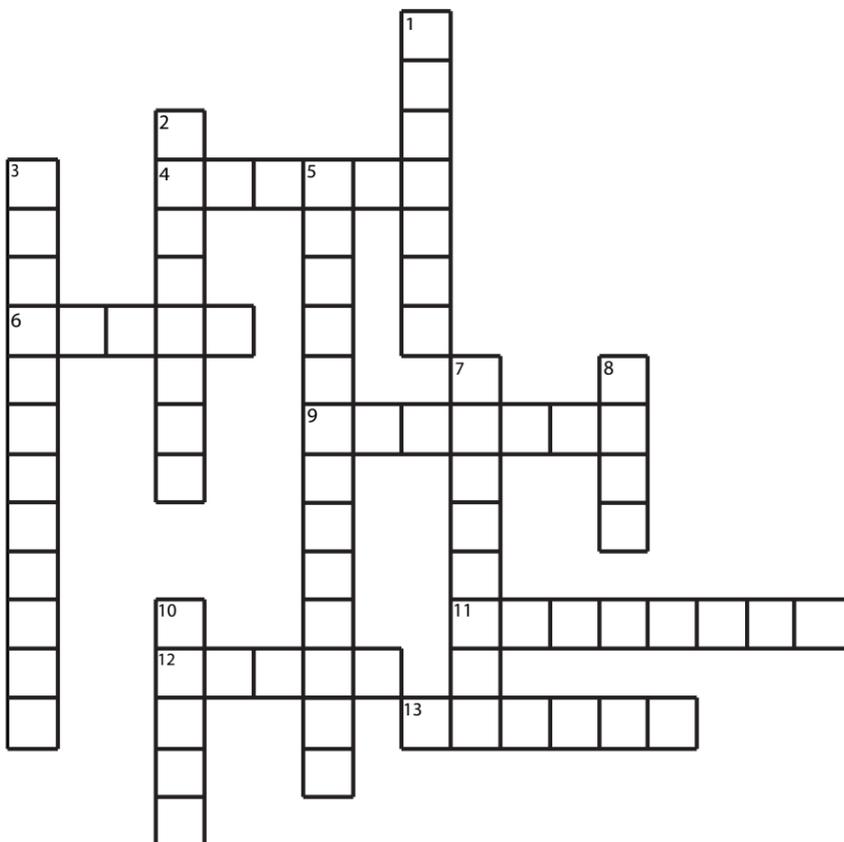
After this trick, I'm almost certain I could pass as some witty modern-day slam poet but also I'm also certain that my name will never be spelt with just one "I" anymore and instead, two.

I hope that I have taught you something valuable; I'm a girl named Isabelle and I'm going to pester you until all the other Isabellas in the world can rest in peace, knowing that people care enough about us to spell our names correctly.

#prayforisabelle2k16. ♦

## >> crossword

Answers can be found in this issue. Key online at saratogafalcon.org.



ACROSS >>

- 4. First name of Falcon reporter who has a Canadian citizenship
- 6. Last name of presidential candidate who "stole" the Dole logo
- 9. Proposition 56 is based on this substance
- 11. The name of robotics new FTC team
- 12. Last name of teacher who enjoys surfing during his free time
- 13. First name of presidential candidate who wants to build a wall on the Mexican border

DOWN >>

- 1. The state where the MAP students went to participate in a film festival
- 2. Basketball team that acquired player Kevin Durant
- 3. Opinion editor Kevin Chow wants people to think like this
- 5. The new sharing platform on Facebook
- 7. The team the football team beat during Homecoming week
- 8. Last name of a wide receiver for the football team
- 10. Senior Bryant Chang is interested in these Internet pictures

## topten

THINGS TO DO ON HALLOWEEN

- 10 **Forget about homework.** Sucks that Halloween is on a Monday.
- 9 **Carve a pumpkin.** You can make your own personal "Trumpkin."
- 8 **Use a pillowcase bag.** They hold the most candy, and let's be honest — you weren't sleeping this semester anyways.
- 7 **Stay safe.** It's Saratoga, but you never know where you'll run into a clown.
- 6 **Pick out your squad and choose a concept.** Then realize all your friends are busy doing college apps.
- 5 **Dress up.** Pretend you're back from the dead and be Bernie Sanders.
- 4 **Watch a scary movie.** The haunting images will replace those of the PSAT you took recently.
- 3 **Marvel at how many treats you have.** Throw away the Almond Joys or trick your sibling into trading.
- 2 **Prepare yourself mentally.** Don't be scared if you gain a few pounds, it'll help you stay warm during the winter.
- 1 **Dig in.** Eat while crying over how your grades drop over the semester.

>> David Fan and Jay Kim