



Reporters attempt to test life hacks.



Junior describes life with autistic brother.



Senior has been racing cars since age 12.



# THE saratogafalcon



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## 2016: a year of anger



### THIS YEAR'S POLARIZED ELECTION COMES TO A CLOSE

by Karissa Dong, SpringMa & Eric Sze

For those who have been following the 2016 presidential election since last fall, it's been a long, arduous road — from the short-lived success of Democratic-socialist Bernie Sanders to the Republican Party's nomination of Donald Trump and his unabashedly racist and sexist rhetoric.

There are, perhaps, some positives: Democrat Hillary Clinton has made history as the first female candidate of a major party in a presidential race. But it's also the first election in which one candidate has been questioned by the FBI and the other has undermined democracy by stating that he may refuse to accept the election results.

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#### CAMPAIGN QUIRKS

SNL shows, Reggae songs and Forrest Gump spoofs — the humorous backgrounds of this year's candidates.

GRAPHIC BY CHARIN PARK

## Board approves extra day off in Oct. 2017, 2018

by Karen Chow & Chelsea Leung

The "October slump" is a familiar concept to students and faculty alike. Whereas second semester is punctuated by two week-long breaks, first semester has only five school days off, and it's a time when seniors are bogged down with college applications along with heavy class loads.

The LGSUHSD school board recently sought to address this issue by integrating one more day off during October starting next year. Both 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 calendars have four-day weekends in the first week of October. In 2017, Oct. 6 will be off and in 2018, Oct. 5 will be off. According to the Jane Marashian, assistant to the superintendent, an annual staff development day was scheduled for the first time in October 2014.

After receiving positive feedback for this short break from students in the years since, the board looked to give not only students, but also staff a much-needed additional day off.

"This year, the calendar committee was supportive of continuing the October Staff Development Day and providing one additional day off," Marashian said. "The calendar now includes breaks at somewhat regular intervals throughout the school year."

Assistant principal Brian Safine hopes the strategically placed break will relieve students' stress in the midst of a busy month near college deadlines.

"The break gives both students and staff a long weekend to recharge their batteries when the curriculum is going full speed in October," Safine said. ♦

### ADMISSIONS

## Senior early applications increase dramatically

by Ami Nachiappan & Jenny Qian

Most members of the senior class, including senior Kirthana Ramesh, flooded the corridor to the office with their white college packets on Sept. 14.

Similar to many others in the line to get their packets checked off by guidance counselors, Ramesh had all eight spaces for early action or early decision colleges completely filled.

Five years ago, however, Ramesh's brother, 2011 alum Navneet Ramesh, had only one college filled out on his early packet.

This was normal, but according to guidance counselor Alinna Satake, there has been a large increase in the number of early colleges that seniors are applying to in the

past two to three years. This year, according to the guidance department, approximately 70 percent of the senior class applied early.

Seniors have the choice of applying either early-action, early-decision or regular decision. Students who choose to apply early-action submit their applications during the fall of their senior year, rather than during winter and early second semester. Those who apply early-decision, if accepted, are required to attend the school the following fall because of the binding agreement. The only approved and legitimate reason to withdraw from the commitment is insufficient financial aid.

Kirthana chose to apply early action to eight schools, including popular out-of-state public schools like the University of Michigan and University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. With eight early

>> **EARLY** on pg. 5



### RED RIBBON



Senior class officers "team up against drugs" by promoting the dress-up day on Oct. 27.

## Leadership hosts spirit week to raise drug abuse awareness

by Navin Tiwary & Elicia Ye

The Leadership class brought the Red Ribbon Campaign to SHS during the week of Oct. 24-28 to raise awareness about the harmful impacts of drugs and alcohol and promote a safe school environment.

The 2016 National Red Ribbon Week Theme is "Y.O.L.O. Be Drug Free," which encourages students to make better decisions because they "only live once."

To start the week, hundreds of students dressed up in pajamas on "Put Drugs to Bed" Monday, tie-dye on "Don't Get Tied up in Drugs" Tuesday, pink "On Wednesdays, We Wear Pink" in support of breast cancer, sports team gear on "Team Up Against Drugs" Thursday and patriotic colors on "Drugs Stop with U.S." Friday. On Friday, the Leadership class ushered everyone outside and gave people red ribbons to

>> **SPIRIT** on pg. 6

news >> briefs

Winter formal to be held next month

Almost as soon as Homecoming came to an end, the ASB officers and the Dance Commission started planning this year's Winter Formal on Dec. 10. After the first off-campus Formal was hosted at the Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose last year, they wanted to continue having off-campus dances.

"What we mainly focus on is how we can get people to come, what activities and food will be available during the dance, plan professional photos and photo booth," head dance commissioner junior Mervi Tan said.

She said decorations are less of a priority at off-site dances because the venue will take care of them. The dance commission plans to limit the number of attendees to around 500 to prevent overcrowding at the venue. The commissioners will be implementing an early-bird deadline for seniors on Nov. 17 to ensure that all those interested will be able to attend.

With only one month before the dance, commissioners are excited to continue coordinating for one of the most anticipated events of the school year. The venue will be revealed on Nov. 10 through SHSTV before tickets go on sale the following week at the starting price of \$35 with ASB and \$40 without.

— Jingyi Wang and Elicia Ye

Senior class raffles Great America Haunt tickets to support their class for the year

The senior class officers held an "opportunity drawing" the week of Oct. 17, raffling off two tickets to Great America's Halloween Haunt. They drew senior Natasha Ramakrishnan as the winner.

"It was really exciting because I wasn't expecting the win," said Ramakrishnan. "I only bought one ticket, so when I won, it was a really nice surprise."

According to senior class president Rachel Won, the idea for the drawing originally stemmed from other holiday-themed fundraisers, such as Turkey Up Your Teacher for Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day Grams.

"We don't have a specific purpose where we say the fundraiser is going to go towards Senior Prom," Won said. "We may use the money on other things such as extra rally materials or other pops for the class."

— Daniel Bessonov

Senior named as Siemens regional finalist

Out of the 1,600 applicants for the Siemens Competition for Math, Science and Technology competition, senior William Hu recently learned he is one of the 96 finalists.

For six and a half weeks this past summer at Stony Brook University in New York, Hu, along with two other students from Wisconsin and New York, investigated dental pulp stem cells, which are stem cells derived from the soft tissues in teeth.

His team used polylactic acid and polystyrene and spin casted them onto silicon wafers to create different topographical surfaces that replicate different teeth.

The goal of this project is to understand more about the intricacies of these cells.

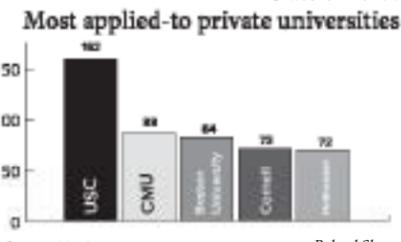
His team will present to a panel of judges on Nov. 12. If they are the best project, they will move onto the National Competition at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C., on Dec. 2.

"I hope to possibly continue this research in college," Hu said. "I want to study more broad cell response and different types of cells to expand on this project even more."

— David Fan

>> falconfigures

Class of 2017:



Source: Naviance

— Roland Shen

>> picturethis



FALCON PHOTO BY WEN ZHANG

FALL PLAY >> Seniors Kavya Sadras, Julie Cai and Zach Grob-Lipkins (left to right), the main characters of "The White Snake," which plays on Nov. 12-13 and 18-19, rehearse the final scene.

ASB

Leadership event strengthens bonds with special ed program

by Victor Liu & Neil Rao

The school's Leadership class is usually in the team room or ASB room making posters, debriefing events or planning upcoming fundraisers.

However, on Oct. 25, the students were out in the quad interacting with students from the Community Based Introduction (CBI) program.

The CBI social was planned by a group in the Leadership class dedicated to events such as blood drives, student of the month recognition events and the annual Speak Up for Change week.

Junior Stacey Chen said the event was recommended by activities director Matt Torrens.

"We see these students a lot in the hallways but never get to know them," Chen added. "Through this experience we allowed the heads of the school to get to talk with them and feel more at home on campus."

The goal of this project is to understand more about the intricacies of these cells.

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— David Fan

The school's new bell schedule has resulted in a 31 percent reduction in tardies so far this year, according to attendance secretary Mandy Armes.

As of Oct. 26, the school had recorded a total of 1,405 tardies as opposed to 2,031 at the same point last year — which is a drop of 626.

Assistant principal Brian Thompson attributes this reduction to the later start time and a shorter lunch that keeps students closer to campus.

He also sees students doing a better job of making it to class on time after the daily morning tutorial.

Now that school starts at 8:15 rather than 7:50, students who had many tardies last year are finding themselves getting

At the event, members of the class socialized with the CBI students through numerous games and presents.

The event included board games, origami, soccer, football,

"Even though one day can't make a major difference, it definitely did help."



CBI TEACHER Courtney Crase

root beer floats and even specialized gift boxes for each CBI student. For these students, simple social activities can be extremely hard, sophomore class secretary Nevin Prasad said.

"I got to see their struggles in life and it was interesting to see their hardships and how we can help them," Prasad said. "It's hard for them to communicate or understand social interactions

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so instead of treating them differently, we treated them just like anyone else to help the CBI students adjust."

For Leadership and CBI students alike, the event was a great success, CBI teacher Courtney Crase said.

"I think [working with the students] is an ongoing process and even though one day can't make a major difference, it definitely did help," Crase said. "I think the event also helped Leadership

students to also understand how to interact with them, which helps both ways."

Outreach is looking to host a similar get-together next semester.

The event really embodied the leadership goal of helping the school all round," Prasad said. "I personally have learned to talk to these students and have made new friends to connect with."

NEW SCHEDULE

Later start decreases number of tardies

by Frederick Kim & Ryan Kim

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He also sees students doing a better job of making it to class on time after the daily morning tutorial.

Now that school starts at 8:15 rather than 7:50, students who had many tardies last year are finding themselves getting

to class on time in the morning. Senior Veena Arvind was one of those students who was frequently rushing to class in the morning. This year she is able to leisurely make it to class on time far more often.

"I've always been the person to do everything in the morning from showering to packing to last-minute cramming," Arvind said.

"Last year, I would wake up at around 6:30 to 7 a.m. and scramble to get to school on time, but the extra time gives me just enough time to get things accomplished in the morning as well as getting to school on time."

According to Thompson, who often directs traffic in the parking lot before school, the decrease in morning tardies also results from the larger time window in which parents can drop off their kids.

"Last year, our traffic rush was

during a 7-minute window. This year, families are dropping off during a 15- to 20-minute window in the morning," Thompson said.

One of the major concerns over this year's new schedule was that both SHS and Redwood Middle School now have the same start time of 8:15.

But this conflict is one most parents seem to have worked out. Senior Roy Lee said students with siblings at Redwood are often pushed to come to school much earlier than last year, which attributes to the lower amount of tardies.

"I think that if you always have to carpool with your sibling, the schedule conflict will definitely make you come earlier to school," Lee said.

"It looks like the new schedule has definitely helped keep tardies down this year."

by Esha Lakhota & Katherine Zhou

This year, seniors Isaac Tang, and Dhruva Setlur have participated in a local election. This rare experience gave the seniors a taste of the real world and what their futures would be like.

Every Saturday this fall, seniors Dhruva Setlur and Isaac Tang have been canvassing, a door-to-door election campaigning technique, for California congressional candidate Ro Khanna in his race in the Santa Clara district against longtime incumbent Mike Honda. Also volunteering for Khanna are fellow seniors Alex Yagobi, Andrew Owens, Rachel Hsin and June Kim.

For over three hours each Saturday, Setlur and Tang knock on doors from Fremont to Saratoga, hoping to persuade people to vote for Khanna. Every day presents a different conversation: One of Setlur's favorite encounters was with an 84-year-old man who fled from German-occupied Russia to Argentina to Poland and finally settled down in America.

Though the conversation was not only about politics, Setlur made a genuine connection with the potential voter. He left the man's home having successfully persuaded him to vote for Khanna and also learned many life lessons from his life story, including the importance of resilience and optimism.

"What I learned from the man was that just because you move around a lot and never seem to settle down or are in a bad spot in life, it doesn't mean things will never work out; just grit your teeth and things will fall into place," Setlur said.

To Setlur, these talks are the heart of canvassing and convey the importance of his volunteering position at Khanna's office. This year, 39-year-old Democrat Khanna is running against 75-year-old Democrat Honda, who has represented the 17th District of California since 2000. Khanna previously came close but lost an election to

Honda in 2014.

Setlur, who got involved in the campaign in January, started out as a regular volunteer and slowly worked his way up to fellowship director in May. He now oversees over 70 volunteers who do door-to-door knocking and introduce community members to Khanna's campaign on a personal level. According to Setlur, he makes sure "they have water, food, rides, and checks in to see if they are doing well."

Tang, who started volunteering for Khanna early in the summer, also values the individual interactions with voters

as his favorite part of campaign work — regardless of the individual's political views. On a particularly interesting campaign walk one day, he had a 60-minute conversation with a Libertarian resident who opposes Khanna's views.

"I didn't manage to convince him to vote for Khanna, but I got to see why he supports

privatization of schools. I think it was really insightful about how other people think," Tang said. "Maybe next time, if someone has similar political issues, then I can provide other arguments."

From door-to-door interactions with voters, Tang and Setlur have learned the importance of keeping an open mind. According to Tang, he feels as if he has "broken out of the Saratoga bubble" through his work on supporting the campaign.

"I've reinforced my political stances, because I've seen lots of people who have had these struggles, they have to much student loans or they have inequality in the workplace," Tang said. "I feel like this is why I'm on this campaign: to help these people."

Though Setlur and Tang look forward to the results of the congressional campaign on Nov. 8, both plan to use the skills they have learned beyond Khanna's campaign.

"I've definitely learned to take things in stride," Setlur said. "As for what I want to do in the future, I do have an interest in politics, but it's too early for me to say what I'll do with it."

FALCON PARENTS RUN FOR SCHOOL BOARDS

GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

Parent of frosh runs for LGSUHSD board position

by Ethan Ko & Alexandra Li

As students created a pile of backpacks next to the cafeteria right after the lunch bell, a few of the backpacks stood out with their red and white "Vote for Ron Jones" pins. Freshman Sofia Jones and her friends have all pinned buttons on their backpacks to support her father's LGSUHSD School Board campaign.

The campaign has been a family effort: Even Jones' elder daughter and SHS Class of 2015 Alumna, Tia, who is at UC Santa Barbara, has been supporting her father from the sidelines.

"I'm really excited to see how far he can go," Tia said. "Ever since we moved here, he has always been giving his all to improving our education and I know he'd be amazing as a board member."

Jones is running against incumbents Katherine Tseng and Rosemary Rossi, and investment banker Kyle Park for the two open positions.

Out of these four candidates for the school board position Jones is only one with a child now at SHS. After Tia graduated and Sofia entered high school, Jones decided this was the ideal time to hold a position in office. He believes that one of the major advantages he will bring to office is his connection to the school through his daughters.

"It's different, really, having a kid in high school," said Jones. "I think that's a plus to bring that view."

Jones said his decision to run for the position seemed like a natural progression after he started volunteering 10 years ago on traffic duty at Foothill Elementary. From then on, he has always been connected to

the Saratoga community. When SUSD superintendent Lane Weiss was looking for a member to join his math committee, which supervised a transition in the math department in 2006, Jones stepped up immediately. He has since also served on the School Site Council, which oversees interactions between students and the school administration, and oversaw the Measure A and Measure B Committee, which increased taxes to assist the county.

After over 10 years of being in touch with the inner workings of the district, Jones is now putting his emphasis on the students. He mentioned that he wants to

"make sure that we get as much for the kids as we can: the most electives and the best teachers, but at the same time keep money in reserve so that if things do get bad, we'll still be stable."

He also has 20 years worth of work experience at a consulting company, which he says will help him monitor the financial aspects of the district.

Ever since he started campaigning three months ago, he has been raising money by contacting parents from over the last 10 years. Because it is his first time running for a public position, he has had to figure out how he will prepare by considering how much of what to buy, like yard signs, campaign buttons and cards.

Jones said his main goal is to target Los Gatos communities, since he is more well known in the Saratoga area.

He hopes his efforts will pay off and win him the local election on Nov. 8. "I don't think there's anything broken. I'm no big crusader saying I want to fix everything," Jones said. "But does that mean there's not a lot of things to do? Absolutely not."

Senior assists mother for SUSD board campaign

by Ashley Su & Katherine Zhou

At a typical SHS School Site Council meeting, Saratoga Union School District Board candidate Sophia Kao avidly contributes her ideas to enhance students' educational opportunities and experiences.

Her personal and professional life intersect at these meetings: With her son Theo Luan as a SHS senior and daughter Esther Luan as a seventh grader at Redwood Middle School, she sees herself as highly invested in Saratoga schools. Kao said her dedication to the schools is what inspired her to run, competing against parent Rui

(Rita) Cao and incumbent Arati Nagaraj for two open seats on the board that oversees the three elementary schools and Redwood.

According to Theo, the quality of schools has been a constant conversation with his mother.

"I've talked to her about our extracurriculars," Theo said. "And since my sister goes to Redwood, my mother noticed that Redwood

is at a disadvantage in terms of extracurricular resources, which makes it harder for students to have a well-rounded education." Kao hopes to address these problems as an SUSD school board member. She said that Saratoga schools have "the highest per student funding in the area, so students deserve every aspect of learning."

Kao's main goal for her campaign is to bring out more awareness in the community about school issues — for example, the adoption of Common Core — which requires her to "open up the communication and collaboration channel."

Currently, Kao is heavily involved in the Redwood Task Force, which reviews "collective community input" to try to enhance

the extracurriculars at Redwood. One of Kao's proposals is to have the orchestra program rehearse during the day so that students wouldn't have to allot after-school hours for rehearsal.

In addition, because the only after-school club available at Redwood is Math Club, Kao supports the district's proposal to add additional programs, including a media arts program or foreign language program.

"Based on feedback from the parents, we hope to include more elective options or after-school clubs beyond just math or academics. I think our students deserve to have a lot more options," Kao said.

However, Kao said running for the board has not been entirely effortless, especially trying to connect with less-involved citizens.

"More than 60 percent of the city voters don't have a student in the district, so one of the challenges is to reach out to those who may be parents of graduated children or retired senior citizens," Kao said.

Another difficulty Kao faces is the amount of time her campaign requires, leaving less to spend with family. Nevertheless, Kao said she is grateful for the aid and support her family has contributed in order to help lighten her workload.

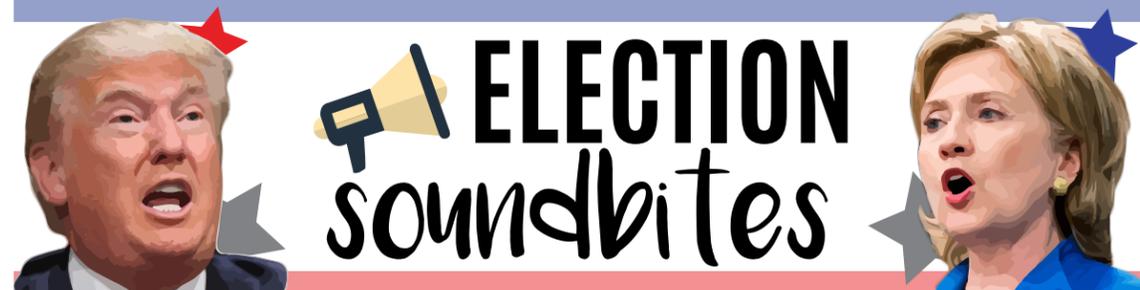
"I've helped with designing her flyers and website and taking care of things that she doesn't have enough time for, like driving my sister to and from orchestra practice," Theo said. "We are all supportive of her by taking over some responsibilities while she's busy planning and researching for the campaign."

Despite these challenges, Theo believes there is nothing his mom can't handle.

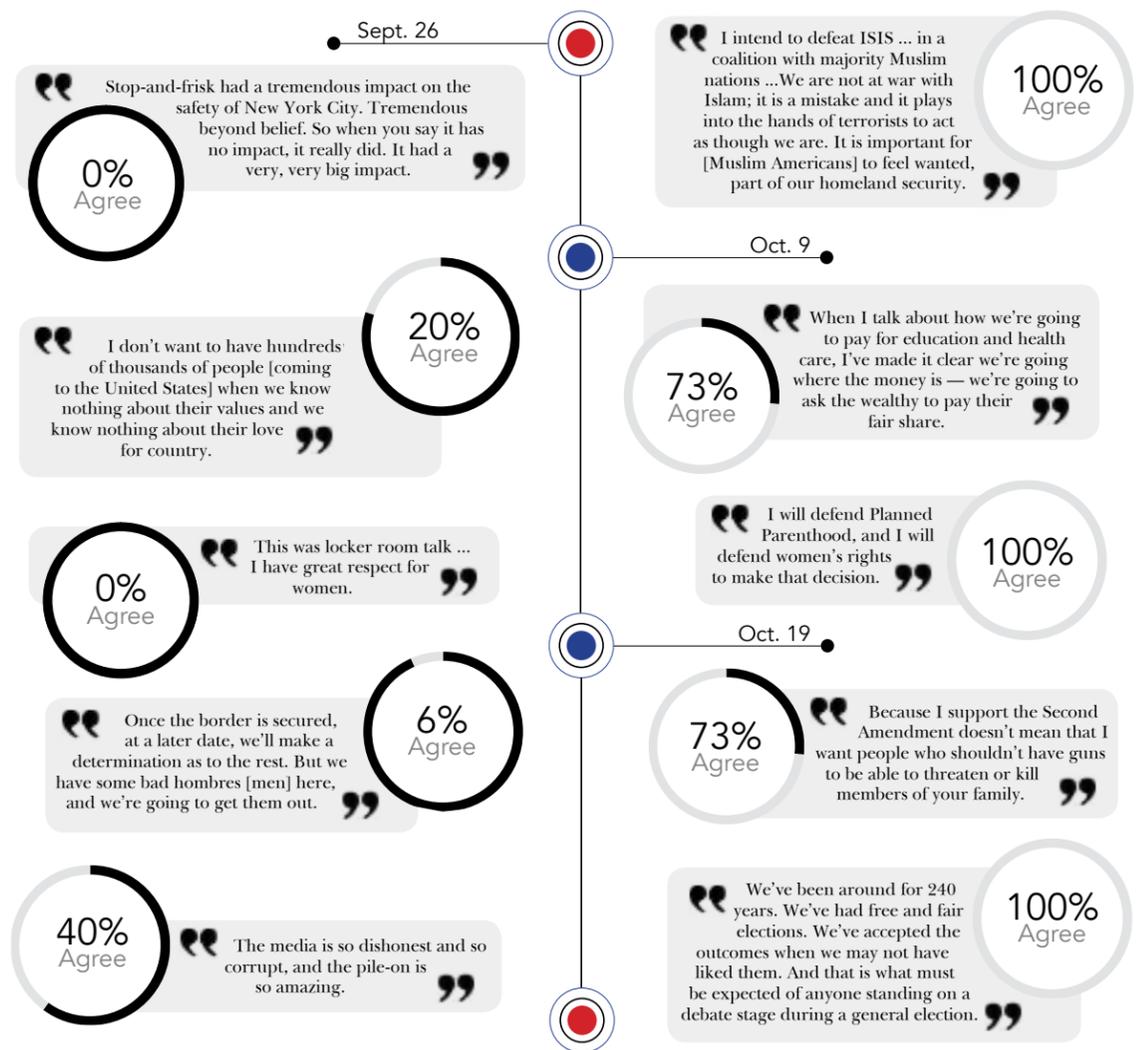
"She is very strong-willed and will push for change where it's needed," Theo said.

GLIMPSES OF OTHER CANDIDATES IN THE RACE: LGSUHSD KATHERINE TSENG (Incumbent Clerk), LGSUHSD ROSEMARY ROSSI (Incumbent VP), LGSUHSD KYLE PARK (Investment Banker), SUSD RUI "RITA" CAO (Parent, Engineer), SUSD ARATI NAGARAJ (Incumbent Board Member).

GRAPHIC BY SPRING MA



THE FALCON POLLED 15 STUDENTS ASKING FOR THEIR OPINIONS ON THE FOLLOWING QUOTES WITHOUT TELLING THEM WHETHER THEY ARE FROM TRUMP OR CLINTON. THESE WERE THEIR RESPONSES:



GRAPHICS BY DANIEL BESSONOV, ROLAND SHEN AND ELICIA YE

ELECTION

continued from pg. 1

"This election has brought out the worst in politics as it has so many different controversies and scandals," sophomore David Koh said. "It's more focused on slandering other campaigns than on creating an environment in which policies could be discussed that could better the country."

It's little surprise that in left-leaning California, many students, like junior Surya Murthy, align themselves with Clinton. Not because they agree with all her views, but rather because they are appalled by Trump.

"To me it comes down to who's going to best represent this country," Murthy said. "Trump is constantly degrading women, and although Hillary has multiple flaws, the amount of hate and close-mindedness that comes from his campaign is unbelievable." However, many including sophomore Maniit Sripadam believe that Clinton — with her 30 years in politics as First Lady, senator and secretary of state — is an exceptionally qualified candidate.

"She has lots of political experience," Sripadam said. "She's not a misogynist. She agrees somewhat with the views that I have. It's my duty to support Hillary Clinton." Perhaps even more important, Sripadam

believes that a Hillary Clinton administration will break the "glass ceiling" that has held back women. According to Sripadam, "now we have a whole generation of girls who say, 'I can be president, too.'" Still, even in a majority pro-Democrat school like Saratoga, Trump has not turned off everyone. Sophomore Rohan Pandey said he would much rather have "four years of stagnancy with Trump as president than four years or even eight years of Clinton doing whatever she wants."

"If Clinton is elected, no matter what Congress is, she'll be able to get what she wants because she has public and private

positions," Pandey said. "I never know what she's going to do." Nevertheless, both Koh and Pandey think there has not been enough emphasis on third-party candidates this year: in particular Jill Stein of the Green Party. Both think she would be the best president and is most closely aligned to Sanders, their candidate of choice. In the end, there's little doubt that this year's election will be remembered as one of the most polarized and contentious in history. "It's a general consensus that this election is by far the worst election ever," Murthy said. ♦

IN-CLASS ELECTIONS

GRAPHIC BY ERIC SZE

'Daveyland' provides election experience

by Lina Kim & Jason Zhao

After an entire Media Arts Program period of rallying for election candidates and presenting speeches to potential voters, history teacher Mike Davey, acting as the former king of Daveyland, stepped up to the podium on Oct. 26.

Building up suspense and raising up a paper with the winners' names, Davey announced the winners of the month-long mock election: sophomores David Berkowitz-Sklar, Sora Ebrahimi, Ashley Feng, David Koh, Sirisha Munukutla and Kiana Steele, a team who represented the Liberals.

"It was great to know that our speeches actually had an impact on our peers and that we were able to get our message across after so many weeks of hard work," said Berkowitz-Sklar, who played the role of the candidate for the group.

A yearly tradition for all MAP sophomores, Daveyland is a mock presidential election. Students are required to side with their assigned political party and conduct election

campaigns over the course of a month. "We had a bunch of different groups with different ideas coming through like conservatism, communism and nationalism, and we all tried to elect a new leader," sophomore Sasha Pickard said.

By designing logos, learning about political parties and applying propaganda techniques in their speeches, students combined the curricula of all three MAP classes — Media Arts 1, World History and English 10 MAP — to complete the project.

"Daveyland has really challenged my skills in all three classes of MAP," Berkowitz-Sklar said. "Each class pushed my knowledge of the subject."

Daveyland has not only helped MAP students develop their media arts skills, but also taught them how presidential election campaigning works.

"Campaigning was tough because we had to make our candidate appealing by finding an angle that was relatable to the general public," sophomore Isaiah Vivero said. "But overall, Daveyland has been a good learning experience and a project that I'll remember from MAP." ♦

AP Gov holds mock presidential elections

by Amith Galivanche & Austin Wang

Seniors in Kirk Abe's three AP Government classes had the opportunity to experience the democratic process up-close over the past month when they simulated political campaigns and voted for a president, chosen from multiple major American political parties.

In each class, the results leaned Democratic.

In second period, senior Daniel Liu was the Democratic candidate, senior Alex Yagobi was the Republican candidate, and senior Matthew Kermin was the Libertarian candidate. Liu won the election in a landslide, beating Yagobi by more than 100 Electoral College votes.

For Liu, strong ad campaigning was the key to success.

Senior Rajat Vora, playing the role of a Fox News executive, praised Liu for having "a really good campaign team and some pretty good commercials which

helped persuade the swing states. As for fourth period, Democratic candidate senior Zayne Khouja pulled ahead of Green Party candidate senior James Lorenz and Republican candidate senior Isaac Tang.



Vora

In Abe's sixth-period class, senior Kailas Shekar, also a Democratic candidate, was the victor, beating his opponents Libertarian candidate senior Naman Sajwan and Republican candidate senior Daniel Jiang by over a hundred electoral votes.

"Kailas won because he did a good job in the debate and started off with higher numbers in the polls since he was a Democrat," Libertarian campaign strategist senior Keshav Narayan said.

Students said the mock election kept them engaged and even informed about the current election process.

"I think it was a good hands-on or real-life situation," Vora said. "The project helped us learn how the election actually works." ♦

SARATOGA

'Ring' smart doorbells aim to help cut local crimes

by Daniel Bessonov & Amith Galivanche

In response to the recent increase of burglaries in Saratoga, city councilman Rishi Kumar has coordinated a deal with home security company Ring to provide all residents with a discounted "smart doorbell."

According to Kumar's website, an approximated \$2 million was stolen from Saratoga homes this year. As a result, Kumar has initiated weekly neighborhood meetings at homes throughout the Golden Triangle to better inform residents of the situation.

It was during one such meeting that Kumar realized how deterrents, such as cameras and surveillance systems, could be strategically placed to prevent break-ins.

"Given that the thieves typically want to make sure no one is home before they break in, and that they have to ring the doorbell to confirm presence," Kumar said, "I thought, why not take that first step away by placing a monitoring tool at the front door? Thus emerged the idea of a Ring doorbell outside every Saratoga door."

Many residents have taken advantage of the offering, investing in the \$139 smart doorbells (typically priced at \$199) in hopes

of protecting their homes and valuables. The doorbell has a camera that records cloud-accessible footage and offers hypersensitive motion detection.

"It lets [my family and me] see who comes to the door and also alerts us as they're approaching," sophomore Thomas Lim said.

As a result of Kumar's initiative, a committee of Saratoga citizens is now looking at getting similar deals on other home surveillance products such as alarm systems and smart door locks.

Although it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of such measures, Kumar

thinks the doorbells will be a successful deterrent.

"These Silicon Valley thieves are quite smart with their modus operandi," Kumar said. "If they see a home that has many deterrents in place and a home that does not, they will likely target the home that is easy to break into and not get caught."

Kumar initiated talks with Ring's CEO, Jamie Siminoff in order to pitch the viability of the discount on Ring doorbells in every Saratoga home.

Kumar said that he has not heard of a home break-in yet in one of the homes in which a Ring doorbell is installed. ♦

EARLY

continued from pg. 1

to complete, Kirthana has sometimes found it difficult to think of original ideas and complete all her applications on time by the Nov. 1 deadline.

"It was definitely a struggle for me to finish all of my early applications and put some of my best work for each college," she said. "Also, the 100-word college supplements were really hard to write since I couldn't say everything I wanted to. I had to reword sentences and cut a lot of them to fit the word count."

But Kirthana said the time crunch was worth it because students applying to colleges early have a higher acceptance rate.

"Especially for some schools that are my 'reach' colleges, I think applying early shows that I really want to go there and that I am willing to put in the time and effort to submit to an earlier deadline," Kirthana said.

Satake said this has been a view shared by most seniors for many years. More colleges are communicating to students that they have higher acceptance rates for early applicants in order to assure an accurate prediction of percentage yield, the number of students colleges predict will accept their acceptance letter.

According to Satake, colleges want to have a good idea of how many accepted students will actually enroll.

"Anytime colleges can get a student to commit earlier, they are closer to that percentage yield," Satake said.

The load of essays for students is not the only effect of applying to more schools early. Faculty members have also been feeling the stress of getting packets and letters out by early November or even early October for schools that have an Oct. 15 deadline.

"I think that all of us who are writing recommendation letters feel the extra stress," Satake said. "It's a very accelerated timeline that even if I try to write one letter per day, I don't have enough time to finish all of them."

Because 60 to 70 percent of the writing load happens before Nov. 1, the counselors had to request college packets in early September, compared to past years where they accepted the packets in October.

Each year, Satake said students become more competitive in this "rat race to college" and feel the need to compete against their peers. Applying to many early schools provides a "confidence booster" for students since in December, they will get a general idea of what their options are.

For senior Caroline Li, the incentive of having many of her college responses in hand by December was a major factor in



Satake

Saratoga Tutor advertisement featuring a woman's portrait, the text 'Over 30 Years Experience', 'Private Tutoring Service', 'Tutoring Saratoga High School students since 1998', 'Specializing in language arts, essay writing, SAT/ACT prep, and college application essays', the phone number '408-203-6527', and the website 'SaratogaTutor.com'.

MUSIC

Marching band wraps up their BOA competitions

by Chelsea Leung & Katherine Zhou

After winning second overall for the field show "En Gardé" at the Bands of America (BOA) Northern California Regionals at San Jose State University on Oct. 22, the marching band then won seventh overall at the Southern California Regionals at Long Beach on Oct. 28-30.

At NorCal Regionals, the band won first overall in the preliminary round for its class, 2A.

During finals, in which the top 10 bands of various classes competed against each other, the band garnered awards for Best Music and Best Visuals, and placed second overall behind Clovis West High School.

"They did phenomenally and it was one of their strongest performances," associate band director Jason Shiuan said. "They marched well, they played great and there was a lot of sound and energy."

Some band members, however, were disappointed with their placement because the band won first overall last year.

"People were disappointed we got second and blamed the judges because we lost by

0.8 of a point," drum major senior Adrianna White said. "However, I'm so proud of the band and what they accomplished."

According to Shiuan, the SoCal Regionals usually involve many more bands than the NorCal competition, and the SoCal bands are also much larger.

At the SoCal competition, the band once again won first in their class during preliminaries and also took the Music, Visual and General Effect awards.

During finals, the band came seventh place out of the top 10 bands.

Last year, the band did not attend SoCal Regionals, but came fifth place two years ago. Although some members were disappointed with placing, Shiuan believes that the band was overall extremely proud of their performance in the finals, which he called "the best they've ever done."

"Considering all the really awesome bands that were [at the SoCal Regionals], we should be really proud of ourselves," said senior drum major Jaewoo Lee. "That feeling of success after every performance is more important than any placing."

Now that the marching season is over, the band is now focusing on concert music



Color Guard member senior Gillian Grant prepares to toss her flag at the Bands of America tournament on Oct. 22 as the woodwind and brass sections play music in the background.

and after-school activities like winter percussion and winter guard.

Shiuan, who wants band to be a "home away from home that people love," stressed that winning is not his main goal for the band season.

"All that really matters is that after we play the last note and walk off the field, we feel good about our performance," Shiuan said. "I don't care whether we won or lost as long as we felt proud of what we accomplished." ♦

SPIRIT

continued from pg. 1

tie around the big trees in the quad.

"Red Ribbon Week is a drug awareness week, and we aimed at promoting awareness of the prevalence of substance abuse," ASB president Mitali Shanbhag said. "It was an effective effort to promote a good environment and a safe atmosphere on campus."

To further amp up the spirit week on campus, the spirit commission put up post-

ers, while senior class vice president Jessy Liu made a cover picture for the Red Ribbon Facebook event page to remind students to dress up.

"We distributed tie-dye pins and I choose to be drug free" stickers during the week to show spirit," head spirit commissioner Jacqueline Schwartz said.

Students also posted pictures with the #SHSRedRibbonWeek hashtag to show their spirit and potentially win a \$25 iPumps gift card given out by the spirit commission. To promote the event, ASB designated spirit

days to each commission and asked classes to post pictures of what they will be wearing the night before each day.

For example, along with the Homecoming/Spring Fling commissioners, sophomore class officers publicized "Put Drugs to Sleep" Monday by dressing up in pajamas and taking pictures at Wildwood Park to hype up the spirit.

"The theme for Monday was a pun on how you wear your pajamas to bed, thus putting 'drugs to bed,'" sophomore class president Cameron Lin said. "We brought

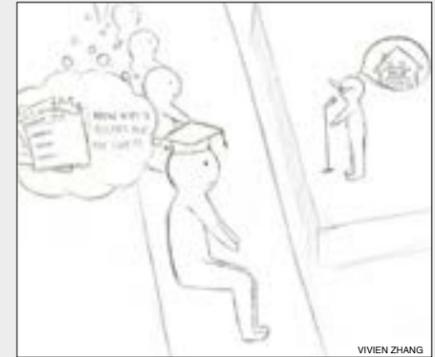
our stuffed animals and pillows and had a great time."

As the nation's oldest and largest drug prevention campaign, the Red Ribbon Movement seeks to empower youth to say no to drugs, alcohol, bullying, and other problems within their own personal communities.

"As students, it is important to be constantly reminded of staying healthy and drug-free, and we hope Red Ribbon Week could draw more attention to these issues," senior Megana Saripella said. ♦

Advertisement for ELITE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE featuring SAT and ACT Winter Boot Camps. Includes program dates, times, and contact information.

Demonstrated interest card adds stress to college admissions



At the end of the University of Southern California's college presentation on Sept. 13, the admissions representative handed out small red cards to the McAfee Center audience. She said the card was for those requesting more information to be mailed to them, and after most seniors getting countless college emails and pamphlets in the mail, some seniors decided it was the more eco-friendly option to toss the card.

But very soon they learned that eco-friendliness may not be a measure of any importance in college admissions process. In the next class, everyone was buzzing about how the card was an indication of "demonstrated interest." The seniors launched into a heated discussion about how these cards would track a student's interest in a college, leaving those who had tossed the card away feeling stressed.

It is a general understanding that SHS students will do almost anything to get into their dream colleges.

But "demonstrated interest" has become one of those obscure terms in the college admissions process that has caused individuals to feel compelled to attend every college information session — all in an effort to fill out that single card.

Maybe USC doesn't even care about demonstrated interest or maybe the concept barely factors into its admissions process. But from the student standpoint, the fact that it's impossible to know just how much it matters is the root of the problem.

It is well known that some admissions offices weigh "demonstrated interest" more heavily than others — for example, Carnegie Mellon University asks

for an essay on the applicant's alumni interview experience, and a Huffington Post article mentions that Brown University ranks demonstrated interest as "4/4" in terms of importance, while most public schools simply do not take this factor into account.

Of course, there are other ways to show a college that it is your top choice such as applying early decision, signing up for an interview or visiting their campus. But while many of these things can occur over summer or over the weekend, college presentations happen in the middle of the school day.

Peer pressure becomes a huge factor. When all of your friends are attending every single college presentation, tutorial, after school and lunch, the chances are that you are going to do so as well.

Even the prospect of some colleges valuing demonstrated interest has caused the extremes of sending friends to fill out cards for each other, or skipping meals to come to college presentations, and not for the information.

This raises the question: Is demonstrated interest even a good gauge of a student's interest?

Say there's Student A, who lives on the East Coast right around New York, where there's a countless number of college campuses a bus ride away, or many college visits at the high school.

Then take Student B, who lives in the middle of nowhere in North Dakota — how are these chances equal at all to "demonstrate" your "interest?" With airfare and travel convenience making all the difference between Student A and Student B,

it is absolutely not an equal playing field for both applicants to a school that takes into account demonstrated interest.

Even on the admissions officer's end, demonstrated interest just seems like a hassle. On average, a school like Carnegie Mellon receives over 34,000 applications every fall for something like 1,500 spots in its freshman class. With so many files to keep track of, it seems silly to track every student's actions, when a college could equally measure an applicant's interest through a "Why College X" supplemental essay. Why not spend the time reading the actual application?

Many of these scenarios suggest that colleges should eliminate demonstrated interest policies in any college applications. And as a first step, there should be no more tricky "information" cards at college presentations. Without "demonstrated interest," there will no longer be speculation about how much it even matters, and no more college presentation hopping.

Yes, college presentations can be informative for those who are truly there to listen. But for those who are there simply to scribble their home address and contact information, we hope they can save their time for a more useful purpose — like the actual college application. ♦

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editors-in-chief: Karissa Dong, Eileen Toh; Opinion Editor: Saya Sivaram; Reporter: Spring Ma

The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 23-4 in support of this article.

All universities should use Common App

by Eric Sze

With the college application season in full swing, seniors scrambling to meet deadlines and finish their essays are becoming experts on the Common Application.

Some students have schools on their college list that don't use the Common App. Instead, these schools opt to use their own application system, often instructing students to submit their applications directly from their website.

This forces students to do extra work on their parts when they're already juggling so many other activities — from trying to maintain their performance in school and complete college applications to participating in extracurriculars like sports or music.

To take just one, the application for Georgetown University, a school that chooses not to use the Common App, includes questions that are similar to those on the Common App.

For example, the first essay prompt Georgetown provides is "Please submit a brief essay, either

personal or creative, which you feel best describes you."

In comparison, the Common App's first essay prompt is "Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story."

Though the wording between these prompts differs, they're asking the exact same thing from students: to share a personal statement.

Hence, other students are likely to recycle their majority of their Common App essay for Georgetown's, though they still would have to adjust segments to fit Georgetown's requirements.

The only extra essay Georgetown asks applicants to write is a statement telling the university why the student has chosen to apply there. But this isn't unique; the supplemental questions are commonly used.

Georgetown is hardly alone. Schools that don't use the Common App include the University of Michigan and Texas A&M. Even

longtime holdouts such as Columbia University have joined the Common App (doing so six years ago).

Schools that aren't on the Common App often say they want their applicants to have researched their schools well and know that they really want to attend their university.

The truth is that most students already research the schools they're applying to. After all, if all but one rejects an applicant, the applicants need to be sure that they know that school well enough that they're willing to spend the next four years there.

Furthermore, applying to college isn't cheap. According to US News, the average college application fee is \$41. With many students applying to 12-18 universities, that cost easily amounts to hundreds of dollars. Because of the high cost associated with college applications, students need to be sure that they're spending their money wisely and not just randomly selecting colleges to apply to.

There's not much reason for any university to be exempt from the

Common App.

The essay prompts are nearly identical and their reasoning for creating their own application process make little sense.

If all schools were to use the Common App, it would save students the stress of managing a handful of college application accounts and make the lives of seniors much easier. ♦

bigidea

Schools that don't use the Common Application

- University of Texas at Austin
Georgetown University
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
MIT
Oxford University
Arizona State University
CUNY Honors
CUNY School of Medicine
Rutgers University
University of Washington

# Media dismiss Asian voters at their peril

by Austin Wang

"Donald Trump beating up on China at the debate," the reporter asked an elderly Asian man. "How does that make you feel?"

The man laughed and smiled at the camera, obviously not understanding the question as cricket sounds played in the background. "Is it the year of the dragon?"

The camera zoomed in on the silent, still-smiling Asian man. "Rabbit?"

After five more seconds of silence, the Asian man took a drag from his cigarette and Fox News reporter Jesse Watters finally stopped badgering him.

Fox News's political satire show, The O'Reilly Factor's running segment "Watters' World" satirizes various political positions and events through humorous and controversial interviews.

For example, in October, Watters interviewed various drunk people in Las Vegas about their opinions on the presidential debates.

In this segment, however, "Watters' World" took its usual dose of satire a step too far.

On Oct. 3, Fox News had the opportunity to cover the increasingly important Asian American vote in this presidential election. Instead, they botched it: Watters went to Manhattan's Chinatown to harass unsuspecting Chinese immigrants, many of whom do not speak English, with condescending questions and racial stereotypes.

Beginning with an "oriental" piano riff, Watter's segment immediately spiraled into various other mockeries of Chinese tradition and language.

Watters asked the immigrants questions like "Do you do karate?" and "Do Chinese people dance?" in order to get cheap laughs.

While stereotypical jokes here and there are not necessarily a problem, Watters spent more time appropriating and even degrading Chinese culture than actually asking questions pertaining to the election.

Even when he did ask questions about the election, half of the interviewees he selected were elderly Chinese people who were not fluent in English. Watters then proceeded to ridicule their confusion through cuts to a movie scene where a woman yells "Speak! Why won't you speak!"

Additionally, his interviews drew a divide between Chinese Americans and white Americans. Watters continually asked interviewees whether China is "America's friend," at one point even asking a woman, "So, can you guys deal with North Korea for us?"

Watters views this community in Manhattan's Chinatown as foreign even though Chinese Americans have been integrated into and influenced American culture since the 1800s.

Asian Americans are not Chinese politicians. Nor are they only useful to cater to or serve white Americans' needs.

By asking for "you guys" to deal with North Korea "for us," Watters treated Chinese Americans as if they were not considered part of the "us" Americans and were only useful for dealing with "Asian problems."

Chinese immigrants are American citizens. By treating them as if they were non-American foreigners, Watters furthers racial discrimination against the Chinese

American population in a time when a presidential candidate has blamed the Chinese for "inventing global warming as a hoax" and stealing millions of American jobs.

The "Watters' World" segment reinforces negative stereotypes and subconscious feelings that Chinese Americans are not truly "American."

While "Watters' World" was blatantly racist, a great deal of the blame must also be placed on the Fox News's right-wing news and talk show "The O'Reilly Factor," which chose to use the "Watters' World" segment to discuss Asian American political views.

By using a comedy bit to cover the Asian American vote, O'Reilly discounts the importance of the Asian population, which makes up 5.6 percent of the total U.S. population but is the nation's fastest growing minority group.

As ex-presidential candidate and Florida governor Jeb Bush stated in 2013, Asian Americans are "the canary of the coal mine" and if the Republican Party loses the Asian American vote, they could be doomed in the polls.

This statement held true in

the 2012 election when president Barack Obama succeeded in getting over 70 percent of the Asian vote. Recently, Chinese Americans have been more inclined to vote for the Democratic Party candidate than ever before.

According to NPR, only about 7 percent of the Chinese American population affiliates with the Republican Party today.

With popular conservative news station Fox News treating Chinese Americans as the punchline for racist jokes, it's not hard to see why Chinese Americans feel alienated by the Republican Party.

Right now, Trump has only 19 percent of the Asian American vote. This is from a group that respects family values and favors low taxes and business-friendly government.

Whether outlets like Fox News choose to seriously cover the Asian American vote or not, their vote matters and, like every other demographic, Asian Americans will be shaping the course of our nation long after the impact Jesse Watters' and Donald Trump's divisive rhetoric and tactics pass. ♦

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# One-hundred word rants: Election Edition

**Harambe or Stein?**  
Jill Stein: Or, if you prefer, that candidate who's tied with Harambe in Texas' polls. She's running on the Green Party ticket — the same party that produced the equally obscure tree-hugging, pro-marijuana candidate Ralph Nader in the 2000 election cycle and whose popularity probably cost Al Gore the presidency. In an ideal world, her policy of "Medicare-for-All" would solve America's looming health-care crisis, and her "Green New Deal" would put millions back to work in the renewable energy sector. Unfortunately, this is America, not San Francisco in the 1970s. And 2016, like 2000 before it, will only bring disappointment for the thousands of #BernieOrBust voters who believed populism and ideological purity will win a general election.  
—Kyle Wang

**Johnson for the win!**  
I wouldn't personally know how presidential-hopeful Gary Johnson of the Libertarian Party feels with no major news site predicting a win for him, but judging from his hourly Facebook posts that urge his 1.7 million page-likers to write his name on their ballots, the former New Mexico governor still thinks he has a chance at winning the presidency. He may not know what Aleppo is, and he doesn't have a favorite foreign leader (or at least he still can't think of one), but his determination to win this election is an admirable quality that all presidential candidates (looking at you Ted Cruz, Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio) should have.  
—Victor Liu

**Stop Ripping Out Babies**  
Donald Trump doesn't understand how abortion works. There is absolutely no ripping of babies out of wombs in the hours before natural birth, I promise. Please educate yourself before you make these claims on a national stage. Trump has no right to use that kind of horrific imagery to talk about a terrible challenge that women have to face all over the world. It's painful and scarring, and nobody ever wants to be put in that kind of situation. Describing abortion in that manner is wildly inappropriate and it negates the experiences of thousands of women.  
—Saya Sivaram

**Pick Up Trump's Poop**  
A week ago, a classmate of mine — an 18-year-old who had already voted early for Trump — said he was "in no way responsible for anything Trump does" because the Republican candidate wasn't going to win. I was gobsmacked: In what kind of democracy do people vote for a sexist, xenophobic pig and then repudiate their association to and responsibility for their candidate? When you cast your ballot for Trump, you're vying for and creating the possibility of his election, whether or not you believe in his chances. When you vote for a man who embodies rape culture, screams "foul play" when he loses and vilifies immigrants and refugees, you can't acquit yourself of your complicity. As New York Times op-ed columnist Charles M. Blow writes, "If you support Trump, you are on some level supporting his bigotry and racism. You don't get to have a puppy and not pick up the poop."  
—Karissa Dong



# GOP may not soon recover from elections

by Daniel Bessonov & Alex Yang

Republican candidate Donald Trump's multiple embarrassments, both before the megaphone and behind the podium, have undoubtedly damaged the Grand Old Party's reputation — perhaps irreversibly.

As of October, according to political website FiveThirtyEight, Democrats have a 76 percent chance to regain control of the Senate. That predicted lead increased over 11 percent just days after a tape recording of an extremely low conversation between Trump and TV host Billy Bush was broadcast on Oct. 8.

In response, many prominent Republicans, including Ohio Gov. John Kasich, former California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and former New York Gov. George Pataki have retracted their endorsements of Trump or stated their unwillingness to vote for him.

The New York Times predicts that Clinton has a 93 percent chance of winning presidency. Of course, losing both the Senate and presidency — and later control of the Supreme Court — would be a huge blow to the Republican Party.

The situation raises the question: Can the Grand Old Party escape from becoming the Bland Old Party?

Donald's comments were vulgar, egregious and impossible to justify," Marco Rubio, a 2016 presidential candidate, wrote in a tweet on Oct. 7. "No one should ever talk about any woman in those terms, even in private."

2008 Republican presidential nominee John McCain has also scorned Trump and everything he stands for.

Additionally, this wave of condemnation after the "disgusting, vile and disqualifying" tapes, as Virginia congresswoman Barbara Comstock described them, may not have been as sudden as

many media outlets claimed. It was more like a catharsis of all the negative emotions many of the Republican Party harbored for their current situation in the U.S. political system.

After losing the last two presidential elections with strong candidates (Mitt Romney lost

united organization. By contrast, Democrats have mostly set aside differences and united under Hillary Clinton.

Trump has even lashed out against his own party, lashing out at House speaker Paul Ryan, one of the most prominent figureheads of his party. It is almost as if Trump is trying to drag as many of his friends as he is opponents down with him.

After blundering through all three presidential debates, Trump looks much more like a sore loser than a respectable man running for office. In fact, to the nation's horror, Trump has stated in multiple interviews that he may not accept the election results — "unless he wins."

The GOP simply may not be able to recover its public image for years after the PR disaster that is Trump's filterless mouth. The country won't easily forget this election. No attempt at recovery will erase the image of a xenophobic, racist, sexist head of

Obama in 2012), the Republican Party has basically chosen a clown to represent them this time around. If Trump fails to grab the presidency, it may be the beginning of the GOP's slow, painful decline.

As the Republican Party continues to splinter, it's harder to view the Republican Party as a

blonde hair running for the most powerful office in the country. The GOP is out of options. Given the more likely scenario of his loss, they'll have to make drastic changes — whatever it takes to distance themselves from Trump.

Looking beyond this upcoming election, Republicans need to find a way to appeal to minorities, women and the younger generation if they hope to win back the highest office.

While the Democratic Party's future is looking far brighter than the GOP's, that's not necessarily a good thing. In the worst-case scenario of the GOP cracking open, there might just be one party that dominates the presidency. The U.S. needs at least two viable parties — both conservative and liberal in balance.

In the meantime, the biggest brains at the top of the GOP need to pull their wrenches out, wipe away the residue of Trump and fix their party. ♦

## togataalks

Should the Republican Party disavow Donald Trump?

"Yes, any legitimacy the Republicans had before Trump is pretty much shot at this point."  
  
junior Anirudh Rao

"Maintaining that he's a Republican will only hurt the party's future with moderate voters."  
  
senior Kylash Krishnamurthy

"Yes, because I generally don't think that he's qualified for the presidency."  
  
senior Swetha Srinivasan



# Post-Trump: How scarring is his legacy?



horrific new standard. Tuning in to their first ever national debates, American youth saw Trump in fully bully mode — demeaning Clinton with misogynistic vocabulary, calling Mexican immigrants "bad hombres" and

Those of us appalled by the demagoguery and bigotry of his entire campaign hope to have a great sigh of relief when Hillary Clinton emerges victorious on Nov. 8.

But there's more to consider: How short-lived will our relief be?

Where will his supporters, relentlessly pursuing a vision of a white, Christian and patriarchal America, go?

And perhaps most importantly: Have we as a nation really escaped unscathed?

Trump, like a bull tearing through the political fabric of America's political landscape, has established a terrible and

interrupting with unsubstantiated and frequently incorrect claims. The truth is that we cannot underestimate the damage of Trump's divisive rhetoric. When the "playground talk" of our nation's children now includes Trump's degrading commentary on racial minorities, we have a problem that extends beyond our current generation. When the young minds of this country realize that the underlying themes of presidential campaign have, miraculously, managed to survive, they will conclude that

Trump's vicious language and assaults on women are somehow acceptable, even trivial. How are millions of Americans empowered by his vindictive, childish and callous behavior? As New York Times op-ed columnist Charles M. Blow writes, "Trump appeals to a regressive, patriarchal American whiteness in which white men prospered, in part because racial and ethnic minorities, to say nothing of women as a whole, were undervalued and underpaid, if not excluded altogether." In other words, Trump has taken the shackles off his supporters — or, as Hillary accurately named them, his "basket of deplorables." No longer are their burdened souls, brimming with hatred for a multicultural and progressive America, restrained by the moral obligation to maintain open-mindedness and a spirit of compromise and goodwill. A loss for Trump could even result in the resurgence of hate groups. It's safe to say the hateful fervor of Trump's campaign will not dissipate quickly. It's shocking, depressing and appalling how much bigotry has carried over into the 21st century. So Trump's scarring legacy is exactly this: He has helped despotism chauvinism — along with a disregard for facts — become a political and social norm. ♦



# Embrace it, 'millennial' is not an insult anymore

by Caitlin Ju

Type "Why are millennials so —" into Google search and "lazy," "rude," "poor" and "dumb" will pop up as choices to fill in the blank.

Millennials, loosely used to describe anyone born from 1982 to 2002 (or, perhaps more accurately, a



younger person that someone wants to insult), are mistakenly defined by short attention spans and apathy toward political affairs.

The children of the baby boomers, "millennials" encompass anyone from helicopter-parented teenagers to the 34-year-olds in mid-life crises.

The term is often associated with negative stereotypes (Time magazine tagged it as the Me Me generation).

In truth, we millennials should openly embrace the word. At the same time, others should not hurl it as an insult, because just as in any other generation, we millennials have transformed the world. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, 32, youngest Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, 19, and pop icon Lady Gaga, 30, are just a few millennials who have used their voices to bring public attention to education and gender and LGBTQ equality. Being tech-savvy and outspoken aren't bad qualities.

The older generation loves to hate millennials, just as everyone loves to blame the younger generation for the world's problems. Change is bound to outrage

those unable to keep up with it. Similar to how baby boomers were once referred to as the Spoiled Generation and Generation X-ers were "coddled complainers," millennials now bear their own generalization of being narcissistic and entitled. With time, that characterization will fade, so we may as well transform how we view the term now and work to defy the stereotypes.

As for the truth of those stereotypes, narcissism, often confused with pride, will always be more present in younger generations.

Just because teenagers love to take selfies, incorrectly viewed as the pinnacle of narcissism, it is not indicative of their larger way of thinking or acting. The Kardashians shouldn't define 80 million other people.

Entitlement is likewise muddled with individuals knowing what they want and not agreeing with the status quo. Employers need not worry; it simply means millennials dedicate themselves to reaching increasingly higher goals. This ambition is prompted, according to Forbes, to some degree by their average \$27,500 student loan debt.

Millennials continually innovate and many of them even found their own companies, often in technological fields. In addition to tweeting and sharing images supporting the latest hashtagged trend, 84 percent of millenni-

als, the Millennial Impact Report states, made a charitable donation in 2014.

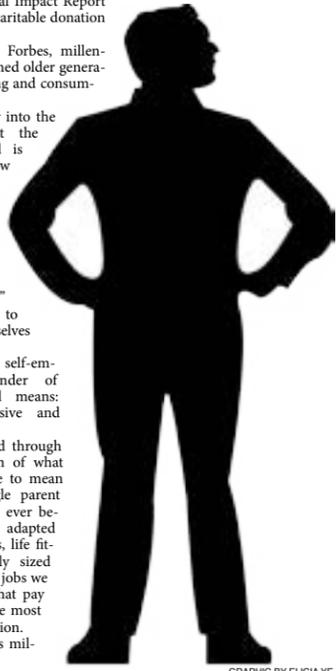
According to Forbes, millennials have "matched older generations volunteering and consumer activism."

Sadly, we buy into the perspective that the word millennial is an insult. A Pew research poll states only about 40 percent of people age 18 to 34 describe themselves as "millennials," most wishing to distance themselves from the label.

So, here's a self-empowering reminder of what millennial means: strong, progressive and complex.

We have lived through a new definition of what family has come to mean with more single parent households than ever before. We have adapted to virtual worlds, life fitting in variously sized screens. We take jobs we love over jobs that pay more. We are the most educated generation.

So yes, call us millennials. ♦



GRAPHIC BY ELICIA YE

## Non-MAP curriculum gives very few exciting field trips

by Neil Rao

Facebook Notification: "Nathan Ching is live in Times Square."

As I clicked on the notification, I jealously watched the livestream as 11 Media Arts Program students strolled down Central Park and strutted down the red carpet in October, all while I was sitting at home in my 5-year-old robe, studying the Intermediate Value Theorem and learning about the character Tituba in Arthur Miller's "The Crucible."

As many students have noticed, MAP life seems to be more enjoyable than the regular program. As a "reg" student, I have seen how MAP students attend several field trips a year, while the rest of us hardly even leave their rooms.

Yes, non-MAP students chose to be in regular classes, but the difference between MAP and regular classes is much greater than I would have anticipated.

As a reg student, I was led to believe that the main difference in the two classes was that MAP involved more group work. However, after many Socratic seminars and group presentations in my regular classes, I experience plenty of group activities as well.

But while reg students are busy analyzing books in class, MAP students seem to be out filming projects and otherwise leaving the classroom for exciting field trips to Angel Island, New York and Los Angeles, just to name a few.

One of the MAP field trips

includes a trip to a ropes ladder course in San Francisco during sophomore year.

When I found out that the reason for the field trip was "to bond," I felt betrayed.

How does climbing ropes have anything to do with world history? While my peers went off to swing on ropes like Tarzan, I was stuck living vicariously through a boy named Piggy, whose head was

smashed by a boulder in William Golding's "Lord of the Flies."

In addition, the MAP program takes students to Angel

Island for historical background on their courses. In reg, the only historical background I got was that of the Puritans through Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" and "The Crucible" — of course, much more in-class work.

While I am in no way criticizing reg or MAP classes, I am annoyed at the sharp differences in curriculum, especially in terms of field trips.

On behalf of all reg students: Why can't we at least have a few field trips now and then?

If reg students were allowed to have a field trip at least once a semester, not only would they be allowed a break from intense analysis, but it would also help add balance to the school experience and perhaps decrease some stress.

One day, I hope a reg student can have their own livestream during a class field trip and not have to watch only the MAP group have all the fun. ♦

## Gory in-class films unneeded

by Ryan Kim

Blood, guts and the grisly abomination of war litter the battlefield as the Allied Marines storm the beaches of Normandy. U.S. soldiers lie dying on the sand, their intestines spilling out on the sand and disembodied limbs project bloody spectacles that only a war fanatic or veteran could empathize with. So why is watching R-rated movies like "Saving Private Ryan" necessary in classes like World History and AP U.S. History?

Although these movies powerfully portray the atrocious conditions of war and human suffering, they could just as easily convey the same message without the vivid bloodshed and violence. PG-13 movies or documentaries can teach students as much about a specific atrocity as a gory, unnecessarily graphic movie.

Students cannot just decide to forgo signing the permission slip, either; peer pressure and the threat of being ridiculed as soft push students to watch the movies, regardless of their personal qualms about the violence in R-rated movies.

Watching the movie, I cringed at the blood spouting from the ragdoll bodies of soldiers flying through the air in the midst of an explosion.

I looked away when a man struggled to hold his guts together, and I started singing lullabies to distract myself from the shrieks of dying men, their wounds saturated in salt water and sand. In my view, the grotesque depictions of war, however accurate, are too vivid for a school setting.

That is not to say that all

classes that use R-rated movies are terrible.

World History is an incredibly enjoyable class; the simulations and lectures are fascinating and engaging. However, the use of barbaric scenes in R-rated movies like the opening scene of "Saving Private Ryan" distances students from school material by horrifying the students with their gore.

Schools already teach about human suffering in its various forms in war, slavery and oppression; there is no real need to re-teach what has been ingrained into us through years of repeated lessons.

Besides, many classes only show the brief, graphic clips of these movies to solidify viewers' visual understanding of the events; by watching a movie even the harshest critics and war veterans acknowledge as an accurate depiction of war's terror, what do students gain other than a repetition of knowledge and emotional scarring?

Granted, not all R-rated movies are scarring. Movies like "12 Years a Slave" use its grotesque yet accurate representations of history to convey messages of resilience and courage.

Although we cannot completely understand the mental and physical persecution in slavery, we do find a tangible image of the brutality of that time; in doing so, we find a better emotional understanding that we would not necessarily receive from vague and objective textbook descriptions.

However, while war movies may accomplish a similar message, only watching the brutal segments of "Saving Private Ryan" and "Enemy at the Gates,"

while entertaining, does not provide the same inspirational message.

It is clear that there is no true necessity to ingrain the full gamut of these horrors through R-rated movies. ♦

### >> THE bigidea

#### Movies watched in SHS

##### "12 Years a Slave"

This Academy Award-winning film is watched as a part of English 11 curriculum on Southern slavery in the 1800s. Certain scenes of brutality of the slaves are some of the most psychologically straining moments in movie history.

##### "Saving Private Ryan"

This gruesome film starring Tom Hanks is viewed in World History by 10th graders as a part of the curriculum on World War II. The opening scene of the film is particularly gory, containing tons of death and blood.

##### "Enemy at the Gates"

Sophomores in World History watch this film during their World War II unit. There is a lot of thoughtless killing of soldiers throughout the entire film.

##### "Platoon"

This film, watched in AP U.S. History, chronicles the life of United States soldier Chris Taylor and the horrifying mental torture of the Vietnam War.

##### "Argo"

Also watched in AP U.S. History, the film is about a secret CIA operative trying to save several American hostages in 1980. The film is known for its liberal swearing and mob violence.

# Student artists inspired by Inktober

by Victor Liu & AmiNachiappan

As junior Lillian Zeng sat at her desk one evening in early October, she grabbed her trusty black ink pen and began sketching an outline of a koi fish. Her middle school cross country coach had asked her to design a koi fish tattoo, and Zeng immediately accepted the request as part of the Inktober challenge.

Determined to present a complex drawing to her coach, Zeng added an array of geometric shapes inside the fish's body and used thick black strokes to accentuate its fins and tails. After hours of revising and perfecting her art, Zeng was excited to see her coach's reaction when she presented her drawing.

"Instead of being just another random drawing, my koi fish piece had a bigger impact since it served an actual purpose," Zeng said.

Inktober, a challenge for artists to create an ink drawing every day in October, started in 2009 as creator Jake Parker's personal initiative to improve his own inking skills and develop positive drawing habits but has since grown into a popular worldwide phenomenon. Artists now post works of art on social media accounts like Instagram and Facebook.

Several SHS students are part of the trend. This year, many have decided to take part in the hopes of improving their art skills and

learning new art styles from their peers' creations.

For junior Katrina Sung, who hopes to eventually major in art in college, devoting time for art is particularly difficult because of schoolwork. In order to ensure that she would continue making art every day, she decided to participate in the Inktober challenge.

Her inspiration stems from social media art accounts, where she saves pieces with interesting poses, different genres and various styles. "I follow a lot of accounts because it's fascinating to see what everyone can create," Sung said. "Everyone has a different prefer-

**"To me, pictures in frames are a way to collect memories, no matter how far away they seem."**

SENIOR Emily Li

ence, so it's a nice motivation."

To create her art, Sung forms an image in her mind, scribbles her ideas on paper and describes her piece in a few bullet points to get the main message of the piece.

Instead of starting her design with a pencil outline, Sung replicates her idea directly on paper using an ink pen.

One of Sung's favorites is her "Westside Witches" drawing, a part of the WitchxInktober challenge that circulated the art com-

munity during the month of October. Sung typically creates realist art, taking after the French movement that began in the 1850s, but this prompt encouraged her to step outside of her comfort zone.

"I really wanted to add some variety in my artwork and potentially develop a new style that I'm interested in," she said.

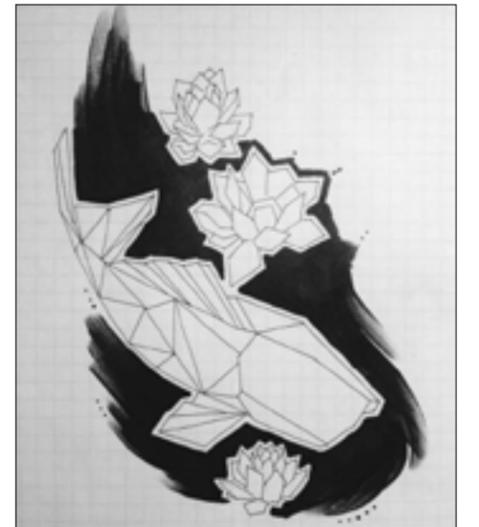
For senior Emily Li, a student in Art 4 Honors, Inktober is a way to relax during the stressful college application process and explore various art styles. Because so many school-related assignments have specific prompts to follow, Li enjoys how open-ended Inktober is.

"Instead of feeling like a burden, Inktober is a creative outlet," Li said. "There aren't any strict rules, so it creates a platform of opportunities to showcase inspirations."

Though Inktober is care-free and allows artists freedom with their creations, it provides a list of prompts for all 31 days as inspiration. Prompts range from "fast" on Day One to "tree" on Day 14 to "one dozen" on Day 24.

On the third day of Inktober, Li followed the prompt: "collect." As soon as she read the word, she immediately connected it with memories and things in the past.

Li took her imagination to the next level as she started out coloring an entire page black to represent time. She then used a gold marker to draw frame-like rectangles to represent memories. "That drawing really related to



Courtesy of LILLIAN ZENG

Junior Lillian Zeng drew this custom ink drawing of a koi fish for her cross country coach's tattoo as part of the Inktober challenge.

me," Li said. "To me, pictures are a way to collect memories, no matter how far away they seem."

Though Inktober is a challenge for students to make time each day to create a piece, it also encourages students to express their feelings outside of the classroom.

"Inktober is an opportunity for artists to demonstrate their fundamental art skills and creativity while expressing their thoughts and opinions," Sung said. "It brings the art community together and reminds everyone that art is still a valuable aspect of society." ♦

## Senior navigates through college application season

all I ju is win



Caitlin Ju

My vital coffee mug in hand, I stared blankly at the computer screen, hoping that the empty Word document would offer some sentiment of support.

Dazed by my fifth endeavor to talk creatively about myself, I could not muster any part of my inner wordsmith. In this infamous college application season awaits a workload with more nerve-racking responsibilities than the piles of homework I faced in junior year.

Above all, my art supplemental portfolio has consumed an extra time that I could have used to work on essays. Though not required by any of my schools and unrelated to my major, I wanted a way to showcase my art.

Since I do not take art classes in school and only began my portfolio last year, I have had to dedicate most of my free hours to my art portfolio but always immediately felt guilty whenever I glanced at my blank essay files.

Since each art piece takes me approximately 20 to 30 hours, it certainly does not help that, for some colleges, having a supplemental art portfolio meant earlier deadlines.

Frankly, I had already become tired of talking about myself months ago when I applied to summer programs. Even though I love each college I am applying to, my ea-

gerness often slides into annoyance as my essays glorifying each college's unique qualities begin to consume my late nights and weekends.

Before the summer even began, I created a schedule detailing the weeks leading up to each application deadline. I hung my calendar above my computer, determined to follow the sharpied "submits" and "finishes." Sadly, I began to lag behind my grand plan. Soon enough, I was giving myself more generous deadlines.

I grew increasingly frustrated, despite working on my essays throughout the summer. As fall arrived, I became wrapped up in my ever time-consuming tennis season, preventing me from pulling any late nights. To add on, I faced two to three additional essays, thanks to my applications to special programs.

The deadlines loom in the back of my mind. Nowadays, my conversations are filled with college application-induced anxiety and the same questions — do we really have to mail those University of Texas at Austin applications? How can I tell if my teachers have submitted their recommendations? Still, having chosen not to hire a private college counselor, I am comforted that my personal deadlines and choices are my own.

As much as my 44 supplemental essays and art portfolio pain me at times, I imagine all the past years I have spent wishing to be where I am right now. My coffee mug trembling in my hand, I stare back at the PDF file of my filled Word document, my heart uncontrollably pounding as my hand hovers the mouse over the tiny white rectangle button — submit. ♦



GRAPHIC BY ELICIA YE

November 4, 2016

## To all the smelly people out there, try baking soda when you're in a pinch

su-perwoman



Ashley Su

Watching dubiously as snot-like baking soda trickled down my underarms, I wondered whether this deodorant life hack would work.

Having woken up a few days ago just 10 minutes before the first bell would ring, I had frantically thrown on random clothes while reaching for my deodorant, only to realize that my Dove green tea and cucumber-scented deodorant had met its tragic end.

Throughout that whole day without the protection of my deodorant, I self-consciously shielded my underarms from the people near me, worried that they would get a whiff of my overwhelming sweat odor.

In emergencies like these, a quick 30-second DIY deodorant could save anyone from having to constantly worry about their body odor for the remainder of the day. So after reading about a deodorant life hack on Facebook, I decided to try it out in case I ever ran out of deodorant again.



After combining enough water with baking soda to create a paste-like consistency, I reached for a handful of the slimy solution and applied it to my underarms. Although the mixture looked like Elmer's Glue in the bowl, every time I tried to put it on, the baking soda and water separated, leaving me with a trail of water running down my side and a glob of baking soda on the floor.

When I finally managed to get the paste to stick, in just a few seconds, the solution dried up and the baking soda started brushing off when it came in contact with my clothes. I was left wondering whether my 20 minutes of hard work would even last an hour.

Throughout the school day, I stealthily sniffed my pits at hourly intervals, eliciting judgmental stares from people around me. Afraid that I was unable to pick up my own scent, I even tried asking a friend to "smell my pits" for me, but she stared at me and flatly refused.

At the end of the day, I concluded that the baking soda was effective in removing bodily odors: No matter how hard or close to my armpit I sniffed, I wasn't able to pick up any smell of my sweat.

However, although baking soda worked to conceal my body odors, it worked poorly as an antiperspirant. As the afternoon progressed, I could feel a shadow underneath my arms grow larger and larger, and I was constantly worrying that someone would notice the dark, damp patches on

my shirt.

While baking soda may have succeeded as a deodorant, I was not thrilled with the idea of having two wet spots around my armpits, especially because I could not use intense physical activity as an excuse.

Despite how much I enjoyed this creative experience, I will continue using regular deodorant. Unlike baking soda, store-bought deodorant not only offers a fresh scent but also prevents sweat.

In the case of an emergency, however, I would not hesitate to reach for some baking soda and water as a convenient alternative. ♦

## Freezer fails as washing machine

wangster gangster



Austin Wang

"Austin! Why is the freezer filled with laundry?"

Naturally, my mother was slightly confused when she reached into the freezer to defrost some chicken and instead, grabbed a pair of my old jeans.

I, too, always thought freezing and defrosting were for food, not pants, but on the

morning before my Calculus BC test, I found myself hurriedly stuffing frozen denim into a microwave.

I was testing a simple theory: Instead of washing my clothes, I would just freeze them to kill the bacteria.

If it works for raw fish, why wouldn't it work for blue jeans?

Additionally, the freezing plan could save me hours each week if I simply routinely froze and defrosted my clothes.

A quick Google search solidified my plan — I would place a pair of worn jeans in a Ziploc bag and freeze them overnight. I chose a pair without stains as I imagine any stain on my pants would freeze to the fabric.

The next day, the jeans did feel somewhat cleaner when I tried them on, although that may have just been because they were still cold after 15 seconds in the microwave on defrost. However, since my jeans weren't exactly bacteria-soaked and smelly before freezing them, it wasn't possible to tell how clean they actually were.

To further the experiment, I threw two unwashed jackets into the freezer, one with an aromatic dryer sheet and one without. After 12 hours in the freezer, I took the jackets out and set them on a par-

ticularly sunny spot on my couch to defrost.

Initially, both jackets didn't smell like anything, although the cold may have just been numbing my nose. However, after an hour of defrosting, it was clear that the freezing process did little to clean the jackets.

There was no difference in smell for the jacket without the dryer sheet and the jacket with the dryer sheet ended up feeling moist and smelling like mildew.

The mildew smell likely resulted from the existing moisture in the jacket. Freezing left the stained or damp jacket even dirtier than before, as the jacket would simply be marinating in its own frozen moisture for several hours.

When I did further research, I found that from a scientific perspective, freezing clothes actually has no merit.

Bernhard Redl, an associate professor of microbiology at the University of Innsbruck, found that the freezing process does not even kill most of the bacteria found on clothes.

With this life hack disproven, all that's left to do now is wash all my frozen clothes and hope the freezing process didn't do any lasting damage. ♦



Life Hacks DO THEY WORK?

## Beeswax will save your shoes this rainy season

soph the loaf



Sophia Zivanic

In September, after I clumsily spilled fluorescent pink nail polish onto my black Vans, I immediately wished I had waterproofed my shoes. To prevent future stains and prepare for the rainy season, I decided to search for cheap ways to waterproof my canvas shoes.

According to a post on Dibly, beeswax is a way to waterproof canvas or cloth shoes.

The directions say to vigorously rub beeswax onto the shoe, then blow dry the shoe until the wax melts into the material. Blow drying should continue until the wax is no longer visible on the surface of the shoe.

After failing in my quest at three stores, I finally found a one pound of beeswax at Michael's for \$18.

When I first started rubbing the bright yel-

low wax onto the my black Vans, the wax left prominent streaks and chunks all over the shoe.

My fruitless efforts at trying to wipe off large pieces of wax made me wonder if this entire experiment was a mistake — would I just end up ruining a perfect pair of Vans?

However, after two minutes of blow drying, the chunky wax miraculously disappeared. All that was left was a clean, canvas shoe that no one could tell I tampered with.

The color and texture were exactly the same as before, and when I tried them on, they felt like the same old pair of sneakers that I had been wearing since the beginning of summer.

I waited the recommended five minutes before pouring water onto the shoes.

Almost magically, the water slid right off, giving me great hope of success in the final test — the first rain of the season.

Not surprisingly, my shoes stayed extremely dry in the rain. However, I didn't waterproof the part of the shoe between each lace, which caused water to seep through a bit.

Conclusively, waterproofing your shoes with beeswax will change your life. ♦



## Mug cakes: perfect treats for late nights

clam chowder



Karen Chow

Typically, I reserve my favorite wide-mouthed mug for hot chocolate or orange juice. However, one late night while studying, I was craving a chocolaty treat, so I used my mug to try to make a molten chocolate cake.

Finding a recipe on Pinterest, I learned it takes only five minutes to make and is simple to do. Determined to make a mug cake, I went into the kitchen and tested out my sub-par baking skills.

Following the instructions, I added flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt directly into the mug and whisked it together with a fork.

After adding melted butter, milk, egg and vanilla into the flour mixture, I encoun-

tered my first challenge: smoothing out all the lumps in the batter.

I thought that, since I was mixing in a mug, I would have problems with spillage. But surprisingly, that was the easy part. The hard part was physically mixing the substance, as obtaining a uniform mixture required a considerable amount of energy.

I tried many different techniques of mixing: I tilted the mug, mixed as fast as an electric mixer and even used the baking technique folding — cutting the mixture vertically with a spatula and bringing it up the nearest side.

Finally, after a minute or so, everything was mixed together, but I was skeptical about how this thick, tan substance could possibly turn into a delicious cake.

But it was too late to turn back. I couldn't waste ingredients, nor could my stomach stop growling.

After placing chocolate pieces in the center of liquid and drizzling water into the mug, I popped the mixture into the microwave for a minute and 20 seconds, expect-

ing an undercooked, lumpy cake.

Being the impatient person I am, I peeked into the microwave at around one minute and to my surprise, the cake had doubled in height.

When the microwave beeped, I rushed to get the mug out and in my eagerness, almost burned myself. What was in the mug truly did look like a fluffy cake.

Breaking into the crust on top, I found a gooey puddle of rich chocolate sauce at the heart of the cake. My teeth bit into the warm, melted Hershey's chocolate, mixed in perfect harmony with the light spongy cake.

Although many would automatically think of store-bought cakes in times of desperation, the mug cake's quick preparation time, irresistible taste and reasonable portion makes it a more practical and hassle-free choice. When I am

craving a chocolaty late night snack while cramming for tests, I will be making mug cakes from now on.

It's the perfect way to fulfill cravings in a time crunch. ♦



# New year, new struggles: Freshmen adjust to changes

by Alexandra Li & Jingyi Wang

As freshman George Bian returned home at 9 p.m. on Oct. 13, all he could think of was his inviting bed, adorned with his fluffy blankets and soft pillows. But as soon as he began dreaming of sleeping early, he remembered his Trigonometry/Pre-Calculus Honors homework that awaited him.

Prior to coming home from school, Bian had endured three hours of intense football practice, socialized with his teammates at a team dinner and made it back to school just in time to participate in a robotics team scrimmage.

"It was a tough night, but the next morning was definitely the worst because it was so much harder to wake up," Bian said.

Since that experience, Bian has learned that he cannot procrastinate the way he sometimes did in middle school years.

Now that two-thirds of first semester are over, Bian and other freshmen have gotten used to high school, whether by taking their first honors classes or joining their first extracurriculars and sports. However, as the workload piles up during the fall semester, Bian admits that at times, he is unable to "catch up" on work both inside and out of school.

Freshmen who came from Redwood Middle School, such as Bian, were used to

the early 12:45 p.m. dismissals once a week. In October, with no shorter days and only one day off, some freshmen are struggling to keep up with the pace of school.

"October is really just a rush hour for me and others," said Bian. "Fall sports and band are in the heart of their seasons so time management can get tricky."

For freshman Suruchi Rastogi, an active participant in cross country, robotics and speech and debate, a month with only one long weekend has forced her to deal with "earlier mornings and late nights" in order to complete her work.

"I used to have two hours every day to do whatever I wanted to do," Rastogi said. "Now it seems like I am always working on something school-related."

Rastogi recalls a particularly stressful week in the middle of October when she had a vocabulary test in English and an Algebra 2 Honors test on the same day, something that she had never encountered at Redwood.

The previous night, Rastogi put off her work until 9 p.m. After working for more than three hours, Rastogi finally went to sleep at midnight, compared to her usual 10 p.m. bedtime.

"It was a big change for me. Even though when I went to sleep it seemed like only two hours past my normal time, it made me exhausted the next day," Suruchi said.

To counter this high level of stress, fresh-



Freshman prince George Bian walks with freshman princess Lily Jiang during halftime at the Homecoming football game on Sept. 30.

men have turned to relaxation techniques to unwind.

As a wide receiver on the football team and freshman class president, Bian has many potential distractions every day, whether it be Facebook messaging his fellow class officers regarding future fundraisers or attending mandatory football team banquets.

While Bian said he uses daily tutorials to "get a head start on homework," he finds that listening to upbeat music helps him concentrate.

"Music with fast beats get me into a good rhythm, helping me stay positive and focused," Bian said.

For Rastogi, though cross country takes up her afternoons, running is a way for her to destress, momentarily forgetting about the pile of work awaiting her at home and causing her to feel "more energized and motivated to work" after a run.

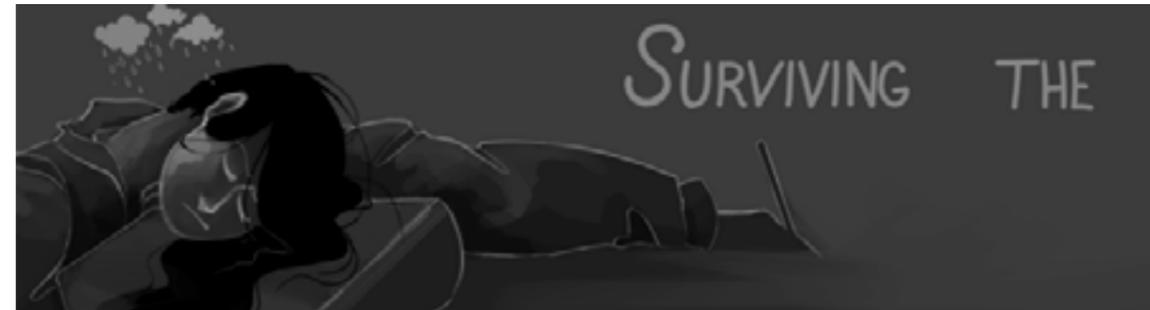
Despite the difficulties that freshmen have faced during the fateful month of October and will face as they finish up first semester, many have found the new environment and teaching styles to be positive changes.

"Even though the first months of high school have been difficult, especially October, I feel that I have become more responsible and that I am now more able to face future difficulties," Rastogi said. ♦



Rastogi

Courtesy of TALISMAN



# Academics grow in intensity for sophomores

phoe-reek-esh-ly fun

Esha Lakhota and Phoebe Wang

This fall has taught us a lesson: There's no room for watching "Grey's Anatomy" at 1 a.m. or stalking Selena Gomez on Instagram into the late hours of the night anymore.

While we slowly adjust to the changes in sophomore year, our nights now consist of homework and frequent Snapchats with captions complaining about the enormous amount of English homework thrown at us every class.

Unfortunately, when choosing our classes last year, we decided to take high-intensity classes such as Chemistry Honors. This, of course, was our downfall.

We've slogged through September and October while playing sports two hours a day. Esha plays squash while Phoebe plays water polo. We are now struggling to maintain decent GPAs.

Even regular classes, such as English 10, feel like honors-level courses because of the amount of reading and writing.

To say that it's been hard easing into our hectic schedules is an understatement.

Instead of spending hours devouring all the snacks in our pantry while watching Netflix in bed, our weekends now consist

of Starbucks meetings for World History group projects and constant FaceTimes to find out if we had to turn in our "Lord of the Flies" essays via Canvas or turnitin.com.

Because sports tournaments and games frequently take up our weekends, we are left with dedicating Sunday nights from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. to homework and studying.

**We are robbed not only of precious vacation time, but also of Halloween — the only holiday where we're able to disguise ourselves from being sophomores.**

Let's just say it takes several cups of vanilla lattes to get through the night.

And just as we were somewhat adjusting to our more stressful lives, October hit us.

With only one break in the entire month, it felt as if teachers were assigning even more homework and tests than usual.

We are robbed not only of precious vacation time, but also of Halloween — the only holiday where we're able to disguise ourselves from being sophomores.

Instead of going to a haunted house or hanging out with friends, our Halloween night consisted of us doing homework,

studying for the upcoming trigonometry test, and handing out Sour Patch Kids packets to three trick-o-treaters, as our neighborhoods have virtually no kids.

Additionally, we now have to worry about college preparation.

In freshman year, the SATs seemed a million years away and we didn't have to worry about college.

Now, in addition to homework, we have to study for the PSAT and the SAT, since we realize everyone is either taking the tests this year or early next year. We would usually study for these standardized tests on a long weekend or week-long break.

But, since October had none of those, we were left studying for twice as long on weekdays.

We are taking Chemistry Honors, trying to stay on top of newspaper deadlines and preparing for the SAT.

With all of that stress, sophomore year seems a lot like what we envisioned junior year to be like.

We have survived (at least, we hope we have) the month of October.

We've gone with our first standardized test (the PSAT) and with what we have been through so far, we can successfully say we've had our first peek at what junior and senior year will look like.

After pushing through what has been one of the toughest months yet, we're glad October is in the past.

All we can say now is: Thanksgiving break, we've never been more excited to see you coming. ♦

5 things to snack on while pulling an all-nighter:

3 am: LAYS  
Study while eating an entire bag of family-sized chips! Don't worry, everybody does it.

4 am: ☕  
Drink heaps of coffee! You have to stay awake for 3 more hours!

5 am: 🍦  
Eat ice cream until you get a brain freeze! Your stomach will hurt so much you can't fall asleep!

6 am: 🍩  
Donuts will give you a big sugar rush! Pick the one with the most sprinkles!

7 am: 💧  
At this point, just drink your tears; there'll be enough to keep you full for the rest of the day.  
GRAPHIC BY VIVIEN ZHANG

# Senior tries relaxation techniques

saya rox  
Saya Sivaram

It's my senior year — the year of parties and slacking off and relaxation.

Ha. What a joke. In point of fact, it's the year of college apps and stress and AP Language Composition, and sometimes I feel as if I'm dying a slow, painful death. I've suddenly been thrust into a world of responsibilities and deadlines. My entire life is defined by a Google spreadsheet that lists out all of the colleges I'm trying desperately to get into.

So, naturally, as one does in situations such as these, I spent the first three weeks of school in panic mode. I had a higher blood pressure than my 80-year-old grandma did and my palms started to feel perpetually clammy. I knew I had to do something in order to combat this awful college anxiety that had overtaken me, so I turned to

BuzzFeed for suggestions. Strategy No. 1: Create a clean and cheerful living space.

That seemed easy enough. I cleaned my room and hung inspirational quotes on the walls. Using Pinterest as my main inspiration, I made a DIY necklace holder that ended up looking more like a toilet paper roll with hot glue on it than the elegant oak tree that was pictured online.

It didn't work. I was still stressed out, and I had hot glue burns all over my fingers.

Strategy No. 2: Make a color-coded list of all of your to-dos. I'm not going to lie — it seemed fairly stupid, but I was desperate enough to try. I got myself a stack of beautiful, embossed card stock and invested in a plethora of rainbow colored pens. I thought that this might actually be successful, but then I actually tried it. My to-do list for one day took up half the stack of paper, and seeing the giant list of responsibilities was more stressful than anything. I wrote "to-do list" on my to-do list and

crossed it out, and that was that.

Strategy No. 3: Try to exercise. This was my last resort. I generally hate any type of physical exertion, but I realized that I had no other option. I went to my mother first — she's the queen of workouts and could probably bench press me — and we decided that the best course of action would be for me to try yoga. I joined Yoga Source Studio in Los Gatos and picked my class, Yin Yoga. After buying a yoga mat, I began my journey to Nirvana. I was love at first sight. The minute I walked into the studio, I was no longer hung up on whether reading "Don Quixote" would make me seem most impressive to Columbia, but was instead wrapped up in aligning my chakras and extending the energy of my soul. To be completely honest, I haven't done yoga in the past month or so because I've been so ridiculously busy, but there are some values from my classes that I can carry through this hectic fall semester. The deep breathing, the meditation and the comfortable clothes are all things that I apply to my day-to-day actions, hoping that my mastery of the crow pose will carry me through senior year. ♦



- 5 Cover your walls with Harvard posters for motivation. —Nathan Chin (11)
- 4 Listen to the ASB Joke of the Day. —Raj Janardhan (9)
- 3 Get therapy from talking with me. —Clifford Yin (11)
- 2 Don't even go to school, just hibernate. —Ruchir Mehta (12)
- 1 Trick question ... You don't survive. —Jannah El-Ashmawi (10)

GRAPHIC BY ELUCIA YE



GRAPHIC BY CHARIN PARK

# Juniors develop stress alleviating strategies to manage workload

by Daniel Bessonov & Ryan Kim

Junior Tiffany Huang woke up one day last month, her face flat on the AP U.S. History textbook that she had been reading prior to falling asleep. Half-awake, Huang drowsily turned her head and gasped when she saw the clock: 4:30 a.m. Yawning, Huang placed the textbook onto her desk and stretched. With a look of pure exhaustion, she reached for yet another thick textbook — "Top 10 Ways to Ace the SAT". Looking wearily at her empty bed, Huang hoped she could get through the difficult and breakless month of October. October is been known for its endless cycle of standardized tests and lack of breaks.

The constant bombardment has proven difficult for Huang and the rest of the current junior class, as they are the culprits of sleepless nights and seemingly endless study sessions.

## togotalks

How do you deal with the stress of junior year?

"Be completely calm while freaking out on the inside."



junior Peyton Sharp

"I like to challenge people to tic-tac-toe when I'm stressed."



junior Quinn Dozier

"I relieve my stress by making memes out of my mistakes."



junior Gavin King

In fact, some students like junior Aayush Agrawal find themselves going to significant extents to keep up with the immense homework and study load.

"After studying for the SAT all night, I realized that my WiFi had gone out and I still needed to submit my APUSH homework. So at 1 a.m. I hopped the fence and ran to my neighbor's house to submit the assignment. Luckily, it wasn't late," said Agrawal.

However, Huang and other students find that with time management and effective course-load balancing, students can endure what seems like an unsurvivable month. Huang avoids media platforms to stay focused and on-task.

"If I can avoid looking at Facebook or YouTube from the start, I avoid it for the entire night," Huang said. "But if not, then I'll get absorbed in them and distracted from my work."

Huang has also developed small meth-

ods to cope with the seemingly overwhelming workload, such as drinking water to keep herself alert and awake, especially during early morning periods.

"Those little tricks are especially helpful during an overwhelming month like this," Huang said. "Sometimes, though, I'm so tired that nothing helps. One time, I fell asleep on the floor and my brother walked into my room and asked what I was doing."

Other juniors like Connor Reyes allocate time to spend with friends and family, finding that such activities help alleviate stress.

His advice? — "Don't just focus fully on grades because you'll just drag yourself to the ground," Reyes said. "Make sure you're able to have those days when you can escape from the stress of school."

Junior Jaajit Singh also finds that spending time with friends and family is an effective strategy, recalling a time when his dad took him to a restaurant during an immensely stressful week in order to help relax him. Although little stimuli and break-time do help, junior Ryan Ahrari also chooses to plan study sessions and focus on one test at a time.

"Knowing that I have many things to study for, I usually like to allot time to SAT prep on the weekends and focus on school related tests at all other times," Ahrari said. "I'm bad at dealing with stress, so at times I make sure to plan everything out and not procrastinate."

Although the month of October seems like too much to handle at times, juniors agree that it is manageable with the right mindset.

"Even though sometimes I panic because everything about this month of October is so overwhelming, I trust that at the end of the day, my preparation will have a positive effect on the outcomes of my tests," Ahrari said. ♦

## Beyond self: living with an autistic sibling

by Charin Park

In most families, kids learn to be responsible for themselves, and only themselves. But in my family, it's different. Soon after my younger brother was born, it was obvious life with him would be different.

Brent is the brightest, most cheerful and affectionate 13-year-old I know. I remember him sprinting after a mud-stained soccer ball during practice, sunlight shattering against his dark hair like a broken halo. And the pair of floppy red and blue oven mitts, too big for his hands, as he pulls out a fresh tray of banana muffins that he baked himself. Or that one time during family karaoke night when he whispered the lyrics of "Let It Go" from "Frozen" into the microphone.

When my mother first heard his diagnosis from his developmental pediatrician, she felt like the world stopped spinning. She feared her fear, sadness and guilt would spill over: Did she do something wrong? How will we handle this as a family?

For me, being only three years older, that understanding came

later. I wondered why he refused to eat at preschool or sleep during naptime. I'd ask my parents why my brother still cannot speak, why he loved organizing his cards and bouncy balls into certain piles. They said he learns differently from me. It would be a while before they told me the whole truth.

### Somehow my successes and aspirations started to not only reflect myself, but also my brother's future.

When they do, my 7-year-old, 8-year-old, 9-year-old hands crumple into fists as I see my brother's classmates push him off his bike. The burning steel of his dusty red tricycle slams into the tanbar. Embarrassed, resentful and furious, I wanted to scream at them. I wanted to hit them for hitting my brother. But my parents pulled me back.

"They don't understand," my mother says gently. "I will talk to

them later."

When my parents finally told me the source of his differences, my life found a new center, winding around my brother's like a protective hand. My father's reminders to protect him, to look after him when I grow up, enclosed upon me.

Somehow my successes and aspirations started to not only reflect myself, but also my brother's future. I feared failure because it would mean letting him down. I wondered if I'd be capable of looking after him when I already had trouble taking care of myself.

Meanwhile, slowly and determinedly he is getting better at speaking. Unlike me, he loves doing his homework for his seventh-grade classes. His smile glows in the dusty light of the desk lamp as his tutor tells him of the technological advances of ancient Mesopotamians and of the 9-11 Memorial in New York. His scribbles are becoming more and more legible. He began replying to our questions:

"How are you?"

"What school do you go to?"

"What did you do today?"



Courtesy of CHARIN PARK  
Junior Charin Park and her younger brother Brent pose in front of the Bowling Greens Subway Station in New York City in the summer of 2012.

Recently, he brought home an abstract painting he made from oil and marbles — it reminds me of a volcanic explosion. The angry pink, white and orange splatter hangs in a silver frame by the kitchen table. And one morning, as I entered the living room, he paused the song playing on his iPad, leaned over to me from the couch and spoke to me on his own

for the first time.

"You are awesome," he said.

At the end of the day, I love my brother. I realized how selfish and conflicted I felt. He is not a burden. He is not just a dependent person; he has talents and abilities of his own. He is a person, and a lesson. My bond with him is not just reliance. It is joy. It is innocence. It is love. ♦



GRAPHIC BY CHARIN PARK

## Mohnike recounts raising a child with special needs

by Eleanor Goh  
& Cassandra King

"I do it. I do it," 5-year-old Breanna Mohnike-Rodriguez repeated with the only words she knew at the time. She wanted to be independent — to tie her own shoelaces, to get dressed by herself, to get herself a cup of water — but because of her language development disability, it was difficult for her to put her desires into words.

Breanna, now a senior, still struggles with forming and processing language. Due to her disability, she gets easily frustrated when her words get tangled in her mouth as she tries to speak or when she can't find the word for what she is trying to express.

For her mom, assistant principal Kerry Mohnike, it has been a challenging journey figuring out the best way for her to raise Breanna.

Mohnike and her husband, Alexander Rodriguez, adopted Breanna when she was 5. Unlike when raising her step-son, who is now 28-years-old, Mohnike had to take into account Breanna's disability and her own tendency to be over-protective.

"It's feeling safe enough to allow her to be independent, not trying to be too protective of her, because she does have special needs, but at the same time knowing that she's her own person," Mohnike said.



Courtesy of KERRY MOHNIKE  
Senior Breanna Mohnike-Rodriguez and her father Alexander Rodriguez pose for her mother's photograph on a Northwest camping trip in 2006.

"It's just hard not to be over-protective of her."

At the same time, Mohnike describes Breanna as "refreshing" in comparison to many of her hyper-competitive peers. Although she sometimes struggles to understand class assignments and lectures, she possesses a certain confidence that many could only wish to have.

"[Her disability] also comes with a freedom of not feeling overly judged by people. In her case, she has a great sense of being able to talk to just about anybody and

not worry about judgment, which is a very freeing thing, if you can imagine," Mohnike said.

When Breanna went to elementary and middle school in Santa Cruz, Mohnike heard from many of the other kids that Breanna was the most picked on for being different. However, the bullying never got to Breanna, as she never internalized the hurtful words she heard.

"She would never say she was bullied, because she doesn't perceive herself in that way," Mohnike said. "Her mental health is pretty

strong. She's just got that 'I do it' attitude; she had that when she was young and she still has it. She tells me I worry too much about it."

Having been here since freshman year, Breanna has found a place in marching band as well as various clubs, and the ease by which she has been welcomed made it a simple choice for Mohnike to move her here.

"One of the reasons I thought bringing her to Saratoga would be a good move was because the kids are genuinely really nice here," Mohnike said. "Even if somebody's different they're not going to go out of their way to put them down."

Additionally, Breanna's teachers understand her needs and support her when she struggles. Although it's not always easy to accommodate special needs students, Mohnike believes that SHS teachers put extra effort in adapting their curriculums and making Breanna and others with disabilities feel included.

For example, in her creative writing class, teacher Sarah Thermond often gives Breanna one-on-one help and extra time to finish her assignments.

"Extensions allow me to have time to check-in with her and help guide her through each step of the process," Thermond said. "We sit and break down assignments to-

gether so that she can know exactly what the goal is."

Breanna's academic journey has not always been so smooth, as her elementary and middle school teachers would not send homework home with her or even assign her classwork. They reasoned that because of her disability, it would be too frustrating for her or she would not be able to understand it.

"That's not really fair; she should be challenged to some degree," Mohnike said.

When Breanna was in elementary school, Mohnike attended the school's open house to view Breanna's work but while all her classmates had art projects and writing assignments on the desks and on the walls, Breanna did not have a single thing she had made showcased.

Through the way Breanna was routinely left out of class activities in elementary school, Mohnike found that one of the biggest challenges she faced was having people have appropriate expectations of Breanna and not to simply dismiss her abilities because she has special needs.

"You see someone with special needs and you make assumptions that they don't have the capacity to understand, to do whatever, and that's not really fair. They do," Mohnike said. "People are going to surprise you — you never want to undercut them." ♦

## Part-time service jobs promote independence

by Alexandra Li  
& Ami Nachiappan

"Wait, Yuna, what are you doing here?" Saratoga students at Big Basin Cafe on a Saturday evening ask their peer, senior Yuna Kim. Standing behind the counter, Kim busily creates latte art on coffee.

With a smile planted on her face, Kim laughs as she jokingly responds: "Oh, I'm just shopping for some groceries."

For Kim, working as a barista at the small but busy cafe in Downtown Saratoga means that this conversation happens all the time. Even if it has resulted in these awkward encounters since she got the job during the summer, Kim has grown to love her work.

"At first, working there was really stressful since it was so busy during my working hours, but what I've gained from working there is amazing," she said.

During high school, while many students opt for internships to get experience in fields like medicine and engineering, some upperclassmen have chosen to take part-time jobs.

One such student is senior Alex Yagobi, who works as a cashier and barista at McDonald's.

"I heard from my friends that internships were nothing but getting coffee for people," he said. "A lot of people around the Bay Area feel that working at fast-food places somehow equates to failing in life, and I hope that by working there, I can debunk this stereotype."

Both Kim and Yagobi said they have developed people skills, including better time management and more effective communication.

Similarly, senior Sydney Vo, who has worked as a cashier at Big Basin since the summer of 2015, hopes her time at the cafe will help her as she goes on to major in business in college.

"In the future, I aspire to be a small business owner or entrepreneur, and working

at the cafe has helped me realize the hardships and rewards of working for yourself while pursuing your passions," Vo said.

Working allows the students to branch out and build a community outside of school too. For sophomore Valentina Araya, working at Big Basin Cafe since September of 2015 has provided her with many new experiences that she otherwise would not have been able to have.

"I really enjoy working there because the community is very loving and is like a little family," Araya said. "I'm so glad that I get to be a part of that."

But Araya said starting a job poses challenges. When she started working, Araya accidentally pushed over one of the chocolate mousses in the refrigerator.

"Thankfully, the owner is the sweetest lady I've ever met," she said. "I still have the job now so I guess I must have done something right."

For Kim, Vo and Yagobi, who are all on the verge of becoming college freshmen, being able to earn money for their hard work, even if they earn \$10 an hour at Big Basin Cafe, has paved the way for independence from their parents.

Kim, who wanted to dye her hair professionally, felt guilty asking her parents for money for her personal purchases. Working at Big Basin helped her proudly sport the new hairstyle.

"Getting my hair done wasn't cheap at all, but I felt good knowing that I was the one who paid it off," she said.

Though at times the jobs prove stressful as students are forced to constantly be on their feet all day, ready to fulfill customers' needs, the benefits outweigh the costs as these students become more socially mature.

"I used to absolutely dread talking to new people, but this job really helped me get comfortable with my own skin," Kim said. "This job has taught me so much about dealing with stressful situations that I know it will definitely help me with my future career." ♦



GRAPHIC BY ELICIA YE

## Behind the name: students grapple with unusual names

by Chelsea Leung  
& Katherine Zhou

After preparing for months, students in Math Club were eager to begin the February 2015 AMC math competition. When it was time to start, they quickly flipped open the questions packet and began reading the problems, but one student stood out: then sophomore and now senior Balakumaran Balasubramanian, who was still bubbling in his name.

It's easy to see why filling out his name takes him so long on forms and why Balasubramanian goes by the nickname "Bala Bala." When his parents named him Balakumaran, they did not realize the large impact it would have on his life. Instead, they simply based his name on tradition.

"In South Indian tradition, a guru looks at star alignments, and during that particular day that you're born, there is a certain sound that should be in your name," Balasubramanian said. "So for my first name, it should have been 'Ba,' and my last name was taken from my dad. I don't think [my parents] actually thought about [the alliteration in my name] at the time; it was more coincidental."

In his freshman year, Balasubramanian initially disliked having his name called during attendance due to the frequent mispronunciations, especially since his name is so long that it does not fit on the roll call sheet.

Similarly, sophomore Angela Poo, whose last name has also caused her to stand out, dislikes roll call.

"I pray that the teacher won't say my last name because it makes me feel embarrassed and afraid that someone might laugh or comment on it," Poo said.

Poo's last name is Chinese and is usually spelled "Pwu," but her grandfather spelled it as "Poo" when translating the family name while immigrating to Botswana.

Poo said that although her last name does not affect her life on a daily basis, she often feels ashamed when spelling her name out loud or introducing herself to others.

"Lots of people have treated me differently, but I don't think they meant to hurt my feelings," Poo said. "I don't love [my last name], but I've accepted that it's something that I was born with."

Senior Kailee Donez, who goes by the nickname "Kai," also initially felt embarrassment because of his first name when he was in elementary school, especially since it sounds like the often-female name "Kylie."

"My parents chose my name because they wanted to have something that wasn't

necessarily generic or too ethnically oriented in some way," Donez said. "The name Kailee has both Chinese and Hawaiian origins, as it means 'ocean' in Hawaiian and 'victorious' [in Chinese]."

Compared to Donez and Balasubramanian, Poo has encountered many more difficulties with a unique last name. When Poo attempted to make a Facebook account the summer before fresh-

man year, Facebook barred her from using her real last name, saying it was "inappropriate," and Poo resorted to substituting "Pwu" for "Poo." Because of this, her classmates have asked whether she is related to former music teacher Jonathan Pwu or if she changed her last name.

However, unlike Poo, Balasubramanian has had a positive experience in creating his Facebook. When he first created his Facebook account in his freshman year, he chose to put the name, "Bala Bala," instead of his full name, gaining him schoolwide recognition as many noticed his interesting name and wanted to get to know him in person.

Despite feeling shame sometimes, Poo has learned to accept her last name, seeing it as "unique and funny," and does not plan to change it in the future.

Balasubramanian has also learned to appreciate the benefits of his name, although he tries to prevent his name from defining him completely.

"Some people would rather be defined by a unique quality," Balasubramanian said. "But it's a lot easier to talk to people because if you have a weird name, they have a topic to talk to you about already." ♦



Poo

## Toga Points of View

REPORTING BY DANIEL BESSONOV



Republicans



### What is your take on the election?

If I could vote I would vote for Hillary, since the only bad thing I really know about what she did is the email scandal. The media's view of Trump really makes him look like a really bad person. Trump also likes lying a lot.

— Abhinav Tumu (10)

Pretty depressing since I was a diehard Bernie fan. Now we kind of just have to support Hillary because although she isn't ideal, it still does much less damage than a Trump presidency would.

— Kha Nguyen (12)

The election has really been dumbed down to a series of personal attacks that resemble childish fights. While it is extremely entertaining, the major political issues that needed to be discussed are lost in the excitement.

— Satvik Narasimhan (10)

Democrats



GRAPHICS BY CHARIN PARK AND ELICIA YE

### What will the world be like in 2036?

iPhones will be a lot bigger.

— Shveta Ram (9)

If Trump is elected, I'm afraid there won't be a world in 2036.

— Basil Shama (10)

It'll be gone since people don't respect Mother Earth.

— Nathon Chin (11)

The world will be full of terrorism unless we learn to live together.

— Candice Chiang (12)

# ELECTION

## ENTERTAINMENT

GRAPHICS BY MAYA PRASAD

### SNL reduces integrity of presidential elections

BY Saya Sivaram

"My microphone is broken. She did it. She and Obama took my microphone to Kenya and broke it and now it's broken."

As Alec Baldwin channeled his inner Donald Trump and addressed Kate McKinnon, who played Hillary Clinton, laughs burst from the audience. It was the first presidential debate — or, at least, a re-enactment of it, done by comedy show "Saturday Night Live."

It's a troubling time when the only difference between a presidential debate and a comedic sketch of it is the ending. Without the "Live from New York, it's Saturday night!" I wouldn't have known that the skit where Baldwin plays Trump was a farce rather than reality.

Maybe I'm exaggerating a bit, but it is true that in this presidential election, comedy shows like SNL don't need to do a lot of work to create ridiculous and amusing tidbits. In their case, Trump is the gift that keeps on giving.

SNL reaches a demographic that the debates often don't and therefore leaves a lasting impression among a younger, less political demographic. Although the sketches are amusing, they clearly sway the viewer toward one candidate — often without much actual substance.

While it is hilarious to see Baldwin's spot-on impersonation of Trump, shows

like SNL actually damage the integrity of the elections because they influence viewers without actually discussing any of the issues that are addressed in the platforms of the candidates.

Take the sketch that SNL recently did on the first presidential debate. The aim was to make fun of the dynamic between Clinton and Trump, but it just made the former look smug and the latter look incompetent. And although this might be true of the candidates (that's up to your personal interpretation), these qualities were shown through histrionic actions such as exaggerated facial expressions and mannerisms, and none of the real issues that were discussed in the debate such as foreign policy and economic development came up.

The people who watch SNL but not the actual debates are making a decision on a candidate based on a facetious interpretation, rather than an informed choice. In that sense, SNL is actually lowering the validity of these elections. The discussion is more focused on Kate McKinnon's acting job than it is on Hillary Clinton's plan to create actual job opportunities if she is elected.

SNL needs to decide whether it wants to be a comedy show or a source of political commentary, because they certainly can't be both. Until then, they should stick to sketches like "The Crucible Cast Party." Now that was funny. ♦

### Bern-ing Reggae CDs

SANDERS' 1987 ALBUM RESURFACES DURING ELECTION

BY Neil Rao & Navin Tiwary

Democratic socialist "Bernie" Sanders offered a breath of fresh air during the mess of this year's presidential election.

With his charming combination somewhere between a hippie and a grandfather, Sanders enticed America's youth with a new perspective.

Amazingly, he is also a singer — or at least he was. Released in 1987, Sanders's album, "We Shall Overcome," mixes a rap of political ideals with mellow jazz tones of the '80s.

At the time of the album's release, Sanders was the mayor of Burlington, Vt., and expressed his socialist ideals, which were considered far more radical at the time, through his music.

Owner of White Crow Audio recording studio, Todd Lockwood, told Rolling Stone that he inspired Sanders to record the album.

Lockwood and Sanders planned to record the album to showcase inequality issues among people in the U.S., and what started as a small project soon involved the entire community of Burlington.

Before long, singers from around the town volunteered to be featured in his songs

and although not a singer by heart, Sanders's music turned out great considering his lack of experience, Lockwood told Rolling Stone.

Much of Sanders's music was influenced by pop icon Michael Jackson and his album "We Are the World," released in 1985.

According to Lockwood, Sanders was a hit during his short-lived music career, at least in his city.

The album included five songs based on cultural hymns from the '50s and '60s.

In 2014, however, Sanders's album was rereleased, gaining exposure during his presidential run.

Over 2,000 people have purchased his album and all profits were donated to charity.

Although Sanders is far from a master vocalist, his efforts were for a positive cause and entertained many listeners around the world, both in 1987 and 2016.

Junior Varun Meduri, a passionate political follower, said Sanders's album taught him new perspectives about leadership.

"Sanders's unique approach to expressing his views has helped me learn new methods of helping society," Meduri said. "For many youths specifically, it is hard to pay attention to important matters, but with interesting approaches such as music, [understanding] becomes easier." ♦



### topten

MOST ENTERTAINING MILESTONES OF THE 2016 ELECTION

- 10 **Deez Nuts.** He's a 15 year-old from Iowa, but most Americans would probably vote for him if they could.
- 9 **Twitter wars.** Nothing like scrolling through Donald Trump's Twitter while munching on a bowl of microwave popcorn.
- 8 **Nov. 28.** The day Trump told his supporters to get out and vote for him. Why did we have to correct him?
- 7 **Nicknames.** Sure, "Lyin' Ted" and "Killary" are good, but they don't quite match up to "Cheeto Hair."
- 6 **"Bad Hombres."** Trump made history by being the first candidate to use Spanglish to advance his xenophobic agenda.
- 5 **Birdie Sanders.** A bird landing on his speech podium only made Bernie all the more lovable.
- 4 **What is Aleppo?** Still a mystery as to whether Johnson's question was due to deep philosophical thinking or a lack of knowledge on foreign policy.
- 3 **'Pokemon Go' to the polls.** Clinton's attempt to get millennials to vote was admirable, but not well-executed.
- 2 **Ken Bone.** He became America's sweetheart and drifted into obscurity 24 hours later.
- 1 **"No one loves women more than I do."** The audience laughed when Trump said this during the third debate, but was it out of delight or discomfort?

>> Amith Galivanche & Maya Prasad



### Run, Hillary, run!

CANDIDATE RELEASED 'FORREST GUMP' SPOOF VIDEOS AS FIRST LADY TO PROMOTE 1993 HEALTH-CARE PROPOSAL

BY Daniel Bessonov & Victor Liu

"Life is like a regional health-care alliance. If you pull your risks with a community health purchasing cooperative and mix in a prospective payment review, you can reach an ideal cost-containment ratio while leaving the single payer system available. Now that's good advice!"

First aired at the 1995 annual Gridiron Club Dinner, which traditionally features self-deprecating and comedic performances from politicians, Hillary Clinton's "Forrest Gump" spoof achieved internet fame in May 2016 when a Reddit post titled "TIL in 1995 Hillary Clinton made a 5-minute cringe inducing parody of Forrest Gump" surged to the site's front page.

The short clip mirrors iconic aspects of the original "Forrest Gump" blockbuster, portraying Clinton as a participant in a variety of historical events such as the infamous Watergate Scandal and parodies the famous opening quote in "Forrest Gump": "My momma always said, life was like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get!"

Originally intended to promote Clinton's 1993 health care plan, "Hillarycare,"

the spoof now preserves and documents Clinton's earlier political strategies.

Clinton may not have the same ability to attract frothing-at-the-mouth voters like Trump and Sanders, but she still has the ability to cater to the demographic of on-the-fence voters.

"She doesn't really have the ability to rally people to the degree that Bernie and Trump have been able to achieve," said senior Kushagra Bhattacharjee. "But I think her professionalism during the debates and her positive track record can really tip over undecided voters in her favor, especially in an election like this [year's]."

But spoofs like these, which highlight the extreme lengths that candidates will go to garner more popular votes, may dishearten young voters who are still deciding which candidate to vote for in the upcoming election. "I felt like [the video was] borderline insulting, like the way she was trying with her accent," said senior Meghana Kaza said. "It was just strange, and kind of upsetting that she is probably going to win and she does that kind of stuff."

Nevertheless, it's true that candidates such as Clinton should play up to their strengths, instead of compensating for their weaknesses. ♦



## A debate as old as Stan Lee: Marvel or DC?

MARVEL HAS A SLIGHT ADVANTAGE OVER DC COMICS

BY Navin Tiwary

Coke vs. Pepsi. Kimmel vs. Fallon. The Hatfields vs. the McCoy's.

None of these comparisons are anywhere as important as my personal favorite: Marvel vs. DC. For obvious reasons — better movies, plot development and comics — Marvel trumps DC by a long shot.

Marvel's appeal comes from its movies and products. Iron Man, Hulk, Captain America and Thor are the stars of various Hollywood movies.

As well as helping promote the heroes, the films also develop their characters and backstories in a way that publishing company DC's rarely released movies can't.

Captain America has gradually evolved from an obscure character into one of the most popular superheroes worldwide. Most of the attention can be attributed to hit movie "The Avengers," released in 2012.

From its inception in 1963, Marvel comics have made people laugh and cry all around the globe, from its first issue about The Human Torch all the way to its most recent "Gwenpool" that was released in the year 2015.

On the other hand, DC Comics seems to focus only on its comics, which has

become an obsolete medium. Most people would rather see a movie than flip through pages of drawings and cartoons that are portrayed by DC comics.

While DC may have Batman, Marvel has better-developed superheroes like Captain America, who has an exceptionally compelling background story. He was frozen for 70 years, and everything he once knew is gone forever when he awakes.

In Marvel, female characters like the Black Widow are strong role models.

She is shown as smart and resourceful, whereas in DC's "Suicide Squad," the female characters, most notably Harley Quinn, are portrayed negatively and have no valuable traits to aid the team of the DC universe.

Black Widow is often seen formulating plans to help stop the villain in "The Avengers," but in "Suicide Squad" Quinn hardly has any important roles and simply flaunts her body.

Even in the comics themselves, Iron Man, the Hulk, Thor, Captain America, Black Widow and Hawkeye could easily defeat Superman, Batman, Aquaman, Flash, Green Lantern, Martian Manhunter and Wonder Woman.

For starters, Thor is a god; the only member of the Justice League who might challenge the Avengers' superiority is Superman. As a team, The Avengers are stronger than the Justice League.

Marvel's "Avengers" solidifies a story between five main characters and also builds on each individual character's story, while DC makes unrelated character plots and movies that never incorporate more than one major hero.

At the end of the day, I think both comics are great, but I would have to say that Marvel takes the cake simply because of its exhilarating movies. ♦



GRAPHIC BY MAYA PRASAD

DC COMICS PRESENTS A MORE COMPLETE UNIVERSE

BY Roland Shen

Thousands of fans around the world cheered on Oct. 4 as Barry Allen, a character of hit show "The Flash," zoomed across Central City, leaving trails of orange lightning behind him in the debut episode of the third season. It was yet another moment that signified DC Comics' accomplishments in the vast world of superhero stories.

DC Comics derives its appeal from its television shows and animated movies. As of now, a few flagship heroes such as The Flash, Green Arrow and Supergirl are the stars of various CW network shows.

Not only do these shows help promote the heroes, but they also develop their personalities and backstories in a way that publishing company Marvel's bi-monthly movies can't.

For example, The Flash has slowly transformed from a relatively unknown character into one of the most popular heroes. Most of the attention can be attributed to the hit TV show, which aired for the first time in 2014.

For the past two years, the show has followed the adventures of Barry Allen, starting from his discovery of super-speed. Marvel heavily focuses on several two-hour movies, where there just isn't enough time to fully captivate the viewers. On top of movies, DC Comics creates TV shows to track every movement of the superheroes, putting the viewers in the characters' shoes.

The DC Universe trumps Marvel once again with its comic series Batman, arguably the most developed and popular character among all of the superhero plotlines. Batman and his archenemy, the Joker, are entwined in a conflict so complex that the

series' focus goes down to the moral roots of their characters, rather than just the characters going head to head in superficial and physical battles over Gotham City.

No character in all of Marvel's comics compares to Batman and his crusade to end crime. Marvel might have a diverse selection of crime fighters, but the two essential factors in making a great story are plot and character development — two fields that DC Comics triumph in.

In addition, DC Comics appeals to female audiences much more than Marvel. Through the superhero Wonder Woman, DC Comics creates a character with an entertaining backstory.

However, the most complex debate lies in the superhero teams: Marvel's Avengers vs. DC Comics' Justice League.

The Justice League has a few clear advantages that place DC Comics miles ahead of Marvel. First of all, the seven original members of the League — Batman, Aquaman, The Flash, Green Lantern, Martian Manhunter, Superman and Wonder Woman — are each given equal screen time throughout their animated movies, television shows and comics.

This storytelling technique brings out the most action and creates the best stories, whereas Marvel places emphasis on only characters like Iron Man or Captain America, de-

tracting from the rest of the team.

In essence, The Avengers become a story of just two or three characters.

I've always been a fan of superhero stories, and although there are Marvel characters that I enjoy and love to follow, the DC world feels more complete.

Special effects and cool powers like X-ray vision are just extra effects and don't make an entertaining story; character and plot development do, and that's where DC succeeds the most. ♦

Special effects and cool powers like X-ray vision are just extra effects and don't make an entertaining story; character and plot development do, and that's where DC succeeds the most. ♦



### togetalks

If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?

"I would want to go back in time because I would have the ability to change the past and to do things differently."



senior Arjun Mishra

"I would like to have the power to read other people's minds because I want to know what they are thinking."



senior Raina Kolluri

"If I could have a superpower, I want the ability to stop time so that I can finish homework before 3 a.m."



junior Dean Stratakos

## Hollywood inaccurately portrays high school life

MOVIES LIKE 'MEAN GIRLS' CREATE FALSE STEREOTYPES ABOUT HOW AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOLERS THINK

BY Ryan Kim & Vivien Zhang

"You can't sit with us!"

Gretchen Weiners' famous line from the 2004 teen comedy film "Mean Girls" has defined, or perhaps stereotyped, the high school experience. Although entertaining, this movie and other similar films that depict teenage life skew people's views on what high school is actually like.

"Mean Girls" portrays high school life as survival in a pressure cooker, though not in terms of academics.

Rather than illustrating high school as a place where students are focused on studying and learning, the movie portrays high school as completely centered around the latest gossip and judgmental cynicism, completely ignoring the educational and positive sides of it.

From what we've seen, bullying is not as prominent at SHS as depicted in "Mean Girls," in which one dominating and

popular clique called "The Plastics" control and manipulate the rest.

We do, however, maintain a myriad of small "cliques" around the campus; each small group of friends is very close-knit by common interests and its members are often wary to break out of their friendship circles. Although some cliques are more willing to interact with others, the vast majority of students — divided by race, academics and athletic interests — keep to their own circles.

The bullying in "Mean Girls" is exaggerated. Students do not make "burn books," nor do they write verbal assaults about "making out with a hot dog."

Of course, SHS is not free from bullying. In 2014, a student made a Gossip Girl account, targeting many people on Instagram, a popular social media platform. There was once even a Confessions Facebook page, which exposed many students' secrets.

All of these were eventually shut down, but not before it hurt and embarrassed

many students.

Most troubling of all was what SHS sadly experienced in 2012 with the death of Audrie Pott. (See the documentary "Audrie and Daisy" for a heart-wrenching account of this episode.)

Most of the bullying that occurs at the school is not met through face-to-face confrontations as shown in the movies, but instead occurs online behind internet anonymity, quite possibly making the situation worse.

In addition, rather than physical aggression, students placed under academic stress also sometimes passively make fun of one another, comparing intellect and appearances.

In academically competitive schools such as SHS, students who earn worse grades than others are at times the target of derision.

The segregation shown in "Mean Girls" places a hierarchy of groups based on race and economic standing. It places the wealthy

"Plastics" at the top of the social pyramid, sending the message that happiness and success in high school can only be achieved through appearance and money. This presents unrealistic images and social expectations that people may be tempted to think are accurate interpretations of high school society.

Although movies and television shows may not be the sole influence creating false perceptions, they do help perpetuate the idea of a toxic high school culture.

Movies like "Mean Girls" are not documentaries of the lives people are living as high schoolers. The dangerous obsession of fitting in with others often forces people to change their images so that they match the unrealistic ones shown in these movies.

Although some aspects presented in these movies, such as bullying, do occur, we've found high school to mostly be a place where students learn in a positive environment along with supportive friends and teachers, especially at our school. ♦

# Public turns away after Kardashian's robbery

by Caitlin Ju  
 "She can re-earn some more by flashing."

"What sort of vain human carries that much jewelry? Dislike!" The flood of unsympathetic tweets followed the gunpoint robbery of television personality Kim Kardashian on Oct. 3 in Paris.

Kardashian reportedly lost an estimated \$10 million in jewelry. Recent tweets, such as "This is a publicity stunt," are indicative of the public's complete lack of empathy toward celebrities.

Five masked men, disguised as law enforcement, forced the night concierge to bring them to Kardashian's luxury apartment in Paris, where she was staying alone without security. Before she

could call her bodyguard Pascal Duvier, who was protecting her sisters, Kardashian was locked in the bathroom, duct-taped across the mouth and fearing for her life. The men escaped quickly on bicycles with the jewelry and two phones.

As expected, the media and public immediately reacted, but not with the usual "I hope she's OK" that should be offered to such victims.

Instead, the public chose to speculate whether the robbery was even real, focusing on her social media posts boasting her jewelry. Given the controversies surrounding the Kardashians, people have

**This amount of negativity is overwhelming and insensitive.**

inappropriately assumed that she is fabricating the story.

This amount of negativity is overwhelmingly insensitive, as if everyone had forgotten that during the robbery, Kardashian feared murder. This is not a joking matter and the media shouldn't perpetuate that she is a lying victim.

Entertainment Tonight reported that Kardashian still relives the frightening experience in flashbacks and "gets emotional." Kardashian heightened her security team, a possibility of body doubles and 24-hour protection, in a response to the traumatic experience.

Her response is warranted given the extreme crime; however, the focus has unfortunately been on her wealth and the high insurance values of the stolen jewelry rather than on the robbery itself. Her husband Kanye West stopped his concert in New York for the family emergency, and even that has been covered far more than any cries to find and prosecute her attackers. The public's reaction demonstrates the heartlessness surrounding celebrity culture, in which jealousy over people's wealth define the type of justice someone deserves.

Model Chrissy Teigen's tweet on the situation perfectly summarizes the public's mind-set: "Fame is interesting. Celebs are supposed to love you guys while also know-

ing you'd make a meme of our dead bodies to get retweets." She added, "No one is begging you for sympathy. I know the game plan is to naturally hate celebrities."

The robbery was after prankster Vitalii Sediuk attempted to kiss Kardashian's rear end and grabbed model Gigi Hadid. Hadid fought back, prompting unsympathetic headlines that she had "furiously lashed out" at a fan — just another example of the public's lack of empathy for celebrities.

If there is anything positive to make of the situation, this robbery serves as the wake-up call for celebrities to increase security and decrease in-the-moment social media. Net worth aside, nobody deserves what had happened to Kardashian. ♦

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# 'Nation' remake is a counternarrative to original

by Chelsea Leung & Alexandra Li

As we walked into the movie theater with tickets in hand, we were expecting "The Birth of a Nation," which was released on Oct. 7, to be nothing less than spectacular. Just from readings in school, the history behind Nathaniel Turner and the 1831 American slave rebellion he led already seemed fascinating, and a film putting all of these words into action had to beat a high standard.

We found the title choice of Nate Parker, who directed, produced and portrayed Turner in the movie, intriguing, as it shares the name of a 1915 film that villainized African Americans and was used as a method of recruitment

by the Ku Klux Klan.

According to the International Business Times, Parker intentionally chose this title before he started writing the script to reclaim the title and give it a new meaning.

We both approved of his desire to redefine the phrase "The Birth of a Nation," especially since the Ku Klux Klan committed horrific crimes against African Americans.

However, the film has struggled since its first premiere at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival on Jan. 25 because of a 1999 case against Parker surrounding the rape of a classmate at Pennsylvania State.

Parker was acquitted, as he maintained that it was consensual, but the classmate committed suicide 12 years after. When Deadline Hollywood brought this to light in

August, many boycotted the film in protest.

Although we also did not want to support the film of a potential rapist, we decided to watch the film anyway because it portrays an important part of history.

The film claimed to be based on the true story, but because much of history is uncertain, Parker created many of his own details to strengthen the piece.

For example, in the movie, one of Turner's motives for stirring up the rebellion stemmed from the brutal rape of his wife, who was assaulted by a group of white slaves catchers, but this was never mentioned in historical accounts.

We believe that this scene was added to emphasize the cruelty of slave-catchers, especially how

often the slave catchers attacked slaves ruthlessly and without proof of the slaves' wrongdoings.

Seeing this barbaric cruelty demonstrated the lack of humanity among the slave catchers and everyone involved in slave trade.

While visiting other plantations to preach to fellow slaves, Turner witnesses their horrifying treatment, such as when one slave's teeth are knocked out with a hammer in order to be force-fed through a bloody funnel.

At another house, the front door opens and a happy young white girl skips while pulling along a slave girl with a rope-like leash around her neck like an animal.

We found these scenes especially powerful. They show how such cruel treatment of slaves was

ingrained in the culture.

As the movie progressed, the revolting scenes made it apparent why the film received an R-rating. They all showcased extreme and gruesome bloodshed, including a slave decapitating a slave owner and displaying the fresh head to the other slaves.

Throughout the two hours, Parker successfully builds a powerful message for viewers that even with its overdramatized fighting and historical inaccuracy, makes "The Birth of Nation" a movie worth watching. ♦

# Toad hits the road: Pepe has been declared a hate symbol

by Victor Liu & Alex Yang

To the internet's surprise, once-harmless meme "Pepe" has been branded as a hate symbol by the Anti-Defamation League in late September. Pepe the Frog, which depicts a poorly drawn frog with different facial expressions, now falls into the same category as the Nazi Swastika and Confederate flag.

Pepe the character originated in the "Boy's Club" comic by Matt Furie in the mid-2000s. However, users on internet forums Reddit and 4chan quickly turned the butt-headed frog into one of the most popular memes today.

Senior meme enthusiast Bryant Chang also has been closely following the Pepe online debate and recalled his knowledge on the history of the green frog.

"There was the influx of 'Rare Pepe memes' that appeared around a year ago," Chang said. "Basically, people manipulate the images of Pepe to express what they are feeling."

Furie claimed that the frog was meant to bring a smile to people's faces. That definitely happened, although not in the way he expected.

In 2015 and 2016, Pepe became one of the most popular internet memes to date, even spreading to mainstream media through postings by Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump. Trump linked a fan-made compilation on YouTube titled "You Can't Stump the Trump" along with a tweeted photo of Pepe photoshopped with Trump's signature hair.

Unfortunately, this frog has been cat-

egorized as a hate symbol because the "Alt-right" movement has allegedly adopted it as a symbol of bigotry and racism.

"Once again, racists and haters have taken a popular Internet meme," said ADL CEO Jonathan Greenblatt in an interview with ADL's online media department. "They've twisted it for their own purposes of spreading bigotry and harassing users."

At SHS, several students have been following the meme both before the incident and after. Sophomore Noah Lee is one of them.

"It's still a funny meme, but now I have to be careful where I bring it up because it could spark controversy," Lee said. "What did Pepe ever do to them?"

Chang was also in disagreement with the mainstream media's treatment of Pepe.

"The news agencies only know the racist Pepe: the images used by the Alt-right," Chang said. "They have no idea of the vast amount of acceptable Pepe images that are used throughout the internet."

Although Chang didn't agree with the decision to designate Pepe as a hate symbol, he sympathizes with some of those who do.

"The actions of a few Alt-right trolls have scarred the good name of Pepe, but the backlash is understandable," Chang said.

"People who have no knowledge of memes suddenly sees a green frog used as a Nazi symbol, so they designate it as hate speech." ♦



GRAPHIC BY MAYA PRAASAD

# 2014 grad finds his passion in performing stand-up comedy

by Neil Rao

In high school, Class of 2014 alumnus Sanj Nalwa could be seen quietly walking around campus. Not the most vocal of his class, Nalwa was not the type to control the limelight.

Now a junior studying Economics and English at the University of California, Berkeley, Nalwa has been doing standup comedy in Bay Area clubs.

Like a caterpillar morphing into a vibrant butterfly, Nalwa has changed drastically after leaving high school. In the last three years, he has taken a greater interest in music and performing.

A singer growing up, he originally started doing stand-up as a way of increasing his stage presence.

Nalwa said that his performances in various locations, including comedy clubs and bars, in Oakland, San Francisco and San Jose, have allowed him to gain exposure to all types of audiences and recognize what people are looking for.

His experiences in comedy include performing in front of numerous packed crowds with excited listeners. He has even been paid for performing at several shows.

Although Nalwa usually presents at open-mic events where there are no entry fees, the lack of monetary reward doesn't discourage him from performing.

His jokes vary from controversial topics about sexual orientation or politics to

light-hearted quips on society.

For booked events, Nalwa, along with his friend Ken Suzuki, a fellow student comedian, have been running a production studio called "Kensanj Productions." Together, they have been able to coordinate six successful shows since June.

During one of these shows, Nalwa recalled a moment when a member from the audience charged at him after making a joke about pedophiles being primarily white men.

Nalwa has learned that the best ways to succeed is to learn from audience reaction and implement those changes in future shows.

"Standup comedy entails writing a lot of jokes off stage, and then testing them onstage to see what works, what doesn't, what might and what has no chance," Nalwa said. "I prepare by making sure I know the premises and punchlines, and then just get up on stage. I don't really do long bits or stories. I like to set up and punch."

Although being heckled on stage by offended audience members is not his goal, Nalwa has progressed to the point where he now hosts packed crowds consistently.

Although Nalwa only sees comedy as a hobby, he said that he will continue comedy until it stops being fun.

"It's definitely given me more confidence in all aspects of my life; it really frees you from all inhibition," Nalwa said. "I think once you've embarrassed yourself in front of a roomful of strangers, nothing frightens you anymore." ♦



Nalwa

# Senior verbally commits to WashU for softball

by Chelsea Leung & Alexandra Li

During the summer of 2013, Coach Mike Davey helplessly stared back at the club softball team he was coaching. Everyone was present except for the crucial center fielder. Davey's first thought was to move current senior Natasha Ramakrishnan, who was playing at second base, to center field.

"No problem, coach," Davey remembers Ramakrishnan saying. "Whatever's best for the team."

Davey recalls Ramakrishnan going out and playing a stellar game at center field, later replacing the missing player for the entire season.

Ramakrishnan's passion for the sport and value as a versatile player has now allowed her to play it at the college level. She has verbally committed to Washington University in St. Louis (WashU) for Division III softball. She intends to major in biological sciences.

Ramakrishnan comes from an athletic family, but she is the first to pursue a sport in college.

Following in the footsteps of her brother, class of 2015 alumnus Samir, who played baseball all through high school, Ramakrishnan started playing softball at the Los Gatos Saratoga Recreation League when she was 7.

Later she joined the Los Gatos-Saratoga

Magic. She continued on to the San Jose Lightning during the summer of 2015, and played for the NorCal Legends this summer as a left fielder.

"The Legends is a great group of girls who share my same intensity and passion for the sport," Ramakrishnan said. "I've been able to compete with other players who play at a high caliber, so I am always motivated to get better."

Ramakrishnan credits her club coaches with encouraging her to attend the Heads First softball camp, where she met WashU's assistant coach, Kaitlyn Dulac, at Irvine this past summer.

After maintaining contact with Dulac throughout the summer and touring WashU's campus, Ramakrishnan was offered a second visit, in which Ramakrishnan met both the softball team and head coach Michelle Ventrella.

One week after her second visit, she was offered a position on the team.

Committing to WashU lifted the pressure from her college application process, as she now only has to apply to some backup schools.

Being one of her top choices, the school fits her both academically and athletically.

Ramakrishnan said she is now focusing on receiving an academic scholarship because Division III schools aren't able to offer sports scholarships.

Davey agrees that WashU will be a per-



Courtesy of JIMMY TULABING

Senior Natasha Ramakrishnan prepares for the pitch at the Surf City Tournament on July 8.

fect fit for Ramakrishnan. During the seven years he's coached her, she has been a joy to have in class and on the field.

Ramakrishnan looks forward to her future at WashU, and when reflecting on her past, she said she realizes how influential her coaches have been.

"I would like to thank Michelle Ventrella, Kaitlyn Dulac, Mike Davey, [coach] Greg Spirakis and [high school coach] Chris Smith," said Ramakrishnan. "I'm really excited to pursue my passion for the sport in college while still being able to focus on academics and biological sciences." ♦

## FOOTBALL

# 51-20 win over Bruins ensures CCS; LG tonight

by Jenny Qian & Jason Zhao

As the game ended on Oct. 28, the Falcons players walked off Santa Clara's field feeling their season had been salvaged. They had just completed a 51-20 blowout against the Bruins.

"We were playing for our lives that game and we knew that everyone had to step up or else our season would be over," senior wide receiver Kian Ghelichkhani said.

After suffering a heartbreaking 42-41 loss to Mountain View on Oct. 14, the Falcons needed to win one of the next two games in order to qualify for CCS.

Their more beatable opponent was Santa Clara with the game against Los Gatos scheduled for tonight.

"We started making practices more intense and treating them as if they were real games," senior lineman Alex Yagobi said.

When it came game time against the Bruins, the Falcons scored a touchdown on their first possession with a 3-yard run from

senior running back Nolan Chao.

Following the touchdown, the Falcons capitalized on a fumble from Santa Clara scored another touchdown with a 5-yard pass from senior quarterback Will Liddle to junior tight end Tyler Torrens. At the end of the first quarter, the Falcons led 14-0.

The Falcons went on to recover another fumble and kick a 35-yard field goal from junior kicker Quinn Dozier.

The Bruins fought and scored their first touchdown, but the Falcons fought back with a touchdown each from Ghelichkhani and Chao to end the first half.

The Falcons continued their relentless attack with two consecutive outside kicks. By taking advantage of this special team's weakness, according to Yagobi, the Falcons were able to recover the ball both times.

The defense also hit the Bruins hard with a 42-yard Pick-Six from senior cornerback Daelen Denenburg. These plays increased their lead to 51-14.

The Bruins were able to score a touchdown in the final minutes of play, but by then, it was a clear win for the Falcons.

## Game Preview

### Falcons vs. Wildcats

Location: Home field at Los Gatos  
 Time: 7 p.m.

Saratoga Record: 5-4

Players to watch: WR Kian Ghelichkhani, QB Will Liddle, RB Nolan Chao, CB Dalen Denenburg

Los Gatos Record: 6-3

Defeated Wilcox 50-36 and Milpitas 23-13; teams Falcons lost to.

## FIELD HOCKEY

# Girls end season on high note, prepare for CCS

by Lina Kim & Neil Rao

The field hockey team travelled to Los Gatos Oct. 28 hoping to reverse the string of losses they've had against their rivals. But again the result was the same: The Falcons lost 4-1 with the lone goal scored by senior forward Tina Miller.

The Falcons finished the season with an overall record of 11-4-2 and ended up in

second place of the De Anza League behind Los Gatos.

The girls played a home game against Monta Vista on Oct. 26 and won 5-1, with two goals from senior midfielder Hannah Leonard and three from Miller. The same night, the girls celebrated their win and cherished their team with their Senior Night, honoring Leonard, Miller, Emily Chen, Rachel Davey, Kelsey Kinoshita, and the twins Maxine and Sophie Parr.

The girls soundly defeated Lynbrook 5-0 in an away game on Oct. 21. The team secured their victory with three goals from Miller and one each from Davey and junior midfielder Kate Bossi.

Earlier, in a home non-league game against Davis on Oct. 19, the girls tied with a score of 1-1, with the one goal scored by Miller.

The girls have qualified for CCS for the fourth year in a row, after reaching semi-

nals last year. In preparation for their first match of CCS, the girls are working on their passing accuracy.

"I have the utmost confidence in the team and their ability to get the job done," coach Nanu Sidhu said. "It's been great to see the team play the way they have, and having fun doing so." ♦

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the first round of CCS in the print issue.

# Senior racer takes driving to the extreme

by Eleanor Goh & Charin Park

Senior Christian Kinder remembers being a 3-year-old and watching in awe as his father, decked in a racing suit and tucked snugly in his sports car, whizzed around on the race track.

Since early childhood, Kinder has been attending his father's racing events and watching from the stands — his family often says that he was "raised in the passenger seat."

After years of watching his father race and being fascinated with everything about cars, Kinder started kart racing at 12 and later expanded into sports car racing in high school. Since junior year, he has dedicated himself to sports car racing.

Both kart and sports car racing fall in the category of open track racing, where drivers navigate through race tracks filled with steeply-banked, sharp turns and blind, rollercoaster-esque drops.

"A lot of the times, there are corners where it's steep — I've experienced a 10-story drop in one turn," Kinder said. "It's so much fun. Other sports don't give me the same exhilaration that has always intrigued me while racing."

**"Other sports don't give me the same exhilaration that has always intrigued me while racing"**

SENIOR Christian Kinder

sports cars competitively.

Although the procedure of obtaining a racing license is similar to that of a regular driving license, he said driving a race car is like trying to maneuver a tractor moving at 200 mph while being strapped back and shaken around forcefully.

"The braking compounds are much more aggressive, allowing you to brake harder," Kinder said. "Depending on cars, you have a lot of horsepower and a lot of aerodynamic grip."

In addition, a slight movement in the driver's seat can impact the movement of the entire car, which does not have suspension.

Many experienced drivers are able to take advantage of the car's sensitivity, pushing themselves to the back of their seats to gain more traction and speed while they make a turn.

This minute detail helps racers improve by a few tenths of a second, which could be the difference between ranking high or low.

Depending on his schedule, Kinder attends racing events at Thunderhill Raceway Park in Willows, Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in Salinas and Sonoma and Sonoma.

Raceway in Sonoma, all of which are about two to three hours away. In order to prepare drivers for competitions, each event consists of alternating driving and reviewing sessions, a process similar to that of obtaining a racing license.

"It's essentially like a driving school,"



Courtesy of BOB BONDURANT

Senior Christian Kinder practices his newly acquired skills around an open track at Bob Bondurant's School of Racing on Oct. 25.

Kinder said. "I work with my instructor, and after driving for a while, we debrief how to go faster. Then I just keep repeating that over and over again."

When he is not attending events, Kinder reads books on racing methods and watches online videos of other drivers navigating the same courses — in hopes that in the future, he can "become a faster driver" and be "a force to reckon with."

At his events, Kinder is able to bond with many other racing enthusiasts like him over

their shared love of cars. He meets racers who fall in an extremely broad age range — as young as 14, and as old as 80.

The members of the racing community, who he says are very friendly and open, chat about different types of cars and exchange speed secrets and tips on how to better execute turns.

"Everyone has the same passion," he said. "You're all there for the love of cars, and it's universal. There's this saying: People come for the cars, but they stay for the people." ♦

## BOYS' WATER POLO



FALCON // VIVIEN ZHANG

Senior Grant Guzzo squares up to shoot a goal against a Santa Clara defender on Oct. 18.

## Falcons end with win over Bruins

by Daniel Bessonov & Roland Shen

The third-seeded Falcons got fifth place in the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League Championship during the week of Oct. 21 after a 15-5 victory over the Santa Clara Bruins.

Following a loss against Fremont 9-8 at the league tournament, the Falcons came back strong against Milpitas, dominating with a 11-3 victory.

As a lower-division team, the Falcons needed to win the El Camino League to qualify for CCS, but fell short.

On Oct. 21 and 22, the Falcons attended the Ronald J. Freeman Memorial tournament hosted at Monta Vista High School. In their first match, the boys had a 15-2 loss against rival Harker.

Following the Harker game, the Falcons lost to Willow Glen 11-8, a score the team was satisfied with because the Rams are the highest ranked team. In the final game, the boys lost to Monta Vista 8-5.

"We did pretty well at the tournament, considering that we were only three goals behind Willow Glen and Monta Vista, which are both teams in the upper league," senior hole-defense David Nguyen said.

A few days before on Oct. 18, the five seniors — Nguyen, Metz, utility William Lew,

Guzzo and hole-set Armin Agha-Ebrahim — celebrated their Senior Day game against Santa Clara with speeches.

The Falcons had a rocky start to the game, managing a 3-3 score at the end of the first half.

"When we hit the half, the stress of this being my last home game hit me personally," Agha-Ebrahim said. "We all realized it then, and it blew us up with intensity. After that we started scoring back to back goals."

Agha-Ebrahim, who was fired up by the crowd, led the team with four goals. Nguyen and Guzzo made two goals each, while the crowd continued shouting "you can't guard them."

The team ended up winning 10-4, a lot better than the team's first game against Santa Clara, which ended with a narrow 7-6 Falcon win.

"Santa Clara wasn't going to come to our house and make us look like fools," Agha-Ebrahim said.

The Falcons' win over Santa Clara finalized their record at 8-4, placing them at the third place spot in the El Camino League.

"In our final game against Santa Clara, our coach took out all the seniors and only put in the juniors and sophomores," Lew said. "This time, we just kept scoring." ♦

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## GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

# Close victory results in CCS qualification

by Karen Chow & Stephen Ding

After a season of hard-fought effort, the girls' volleyball clinched the El Camino League championship and a spot in CCS playoffs with a 3-0 win over Cupertino on Oct. 27. They will be the No. 3 seed in Division III.

Prior to the win over Cupertino, the players honored senior libero Julia Vita for a final time during their Senior Day.

"We were all so excited not only because it was our last game, but also because it was Senior Day, and this game decided our first place spot in leagues," Vita said. "There was a lot of emotion before the game; everyone was crying during the ceremony and everyone worked really hard to make my last league game fun."

The girls won the first game 25-19. In the second game, Cupertino came on stronger with their offensive, but the Falcons were able to win 25-20. The third set was the closest of the regular season, ending 30-28.

The tension could be felt throughout the stands and on the court as junior setter Da-

sha Gousseva called out plays.

Every point was critical because of how tight the game was, but the girls had solid passing by Vita and hitting by sophomore outside Katie Hulme, leading them to win this crucial game and win the league. The victory brought their overall record to 21-9.

Recently, the team won the white division at the Second Spikefest tournament at Independence High School on Oct. 22. The Falcons went 3-2. According to Hulme, their greatest achievement was beating Cupertino, one of their top league rivals.

Earlier, the team beat the Wilcox Chargers 3-1 on Oct. 20. The girls kept the Chargers at 15 in the first game with their quick sets by Gousseva and fast kills by Hulme, winning 25-15. In the second game, the Falcons triumphed 26-24. In the third set, however, the Falcons fell short 15-25, but with this loss under their belt, the girls knew they had to give it their all and were able to close the game 25-17.

Looking ahead to the playoffs, Vita said, "I want to win especially since it is my senior year, so it would really make my last season memorable." ♦



FALCON // VIVIEN ZHANG

Junior Riley Carter and sophomore Audrey Adams jump up to block in a game against Cupertino on Oct. 27. The Falcons won 3-0, securing them a spot in CCS.

## GIRLS' TENNIS

# Fighting to be first, Falcons avenge loss to Los Gatos

by Caitlin Ju

With all three doubles in the bag, the team looked on eagerly as freshman No. 4 singles player Anissa Mu gained a 3-2 lead in the second set of the deciding match against Los Gatos on Oct. 18.

The first league matchup against Los Gatos earlier in the season ended in a controversial 4-3 loss for the Falcons.

Mu knew how much her match meant, but even with the pressure, the freshman secured the match 6-1, 6-2. The team could finally let out a sigh of relief; they had evened the score with their rivals.

The match figures heavily in the league title.

By winning, the Falcons are tied as De Anza League champions with Los Gatos.

As the strongest teams in CCS, both having won state-level tournaments, the rivalry will continue in a tiebreaker match solely for

future CCS seeding purposes.

The match will occur at an undetermined date.

The Falcons breezed through their other league matches with the exception of a difficult matchup against Cupertino on Oct. 25. The girls won 4-3 against the Pioneers with a close deciding win 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 from No. 2

singles freshman Monica Stratakos, helping them secure a 11-1 league season record. On Oct. 20, the team beat Homestead 6-1 and on Oct. 11 also defeated Monta Vista 6-1.

During the Los Gatos away match, No. 1 doubles senior Danielle Berkowitz-Sklar and freshman Varsha Horantur and No. 2 doubles seniors Daviana Berkowitz Sklar and Kelly Hsu started strong, winning in straight sets. Given that the Wildcats only have five courts, both Mu and No. 3 doubles junior Elizabeth Lee and senior Neeka Nikfar were unable to start until both a doubles match and singles match had finished.

The doubles were all able to secure much quicker wins this time, as Los Gatos had previously switched their No. 1 and No. 2 doubles only against the Falcons. Against all other teams in the league, the Wildcats had the reversed lineup.

"Clearly something wasn't right, because the first time, we lost in a close match against their then-No. 2 doubles team," Hsu said. "But in this match we were playing the team they had previously placed at No. 1 doubles and we won more easily."

Knowing they will likely face Los Gatos in CCS, which begins Nov. 7, the team is working hard.

"As long as we all work together and do what we have been doing, we are optimistic we can do well in CCS."

SENIOR Daviana Berkowitz-Sklar

With all three other singles having lost, it put pressure on the remaining matches to both win. "It was annoying only being able to watch for a long time in such an important match," Nikfar said. "It was getting dark and hard to see by the time our match ended."

## GIRLS' WATER POLO

# In overtime of league finals, team loses to Homestead

by Vivien Zhang

As the last buzzer rang, the girls silently got out of the pool and buried their faces in their hands in disappointment.

They had lost in the El Camino League tournament finals against Homestead on Oct. 28 after tying 3-3 in regulation, and falling 5-4 after going into overtime.

With the frustrating loss, the season came to an end. The team ended the season with a record of 14-3, having lost to Lynbrook and Homestead 3-2 during the regular season and losing once more against Homestead in the postseason league's week.

During the league's tournament, the girls also won 5-1 against Wilcox on Oct. 26 and 7-1 against Harker on Oct. 25, earning them second place in the league but unable to move on to CCS, their season coming to an end.

Before leagues, the girls beat Santa Clara 9-6 on Oct. 18, prevailed 5-4 against Harker on Oct. 6, shut down Milpitas 13-1 on Oct. 4, defeated Wilcox 14-0 on Sept. 29 and edged 9-7 against Santa Clara on Sept. 27.

The team attributes its first two losses

to the fluctuating number of players throughout the months.

Junior goalie Aileen Zhang recently suffered from a concussion, keeping her out of action; sophomore field player Alyssa Whitman has had rotator cuff injury; senior field player Kate Smalls has been out due to cardiac issues; and senior Sophie Sellers missed the last game due to food poisoning.

In addition, two seniors were gone due to the English 12 MAP trip. All the overlapping absences left the team with only three subs during their games.

"Going into these games, we were facing a lot of setbacks," senior field player Kanika Vora said. "A lot of our starters weren't available, so that threw us off and we really struggled with it. I'm proud of our team for making it a close one goal loss in both games though."

In addition, the girls were not able to hold practices at home for an entire week in early October. Since the pool heater broke, it was too cold for the girls to swim.

The girls ended up having to commute to Los Gatos High School for the time being. The pool was fixed as of Oct. 16, and the

girls are back to training with their normal drills.

"Having practice at another school was frustrating," junior goalie Aileen Zhang said. "We had to share the pool with the JV and varsity Los Gatos teams, leaving us with a really small area to swim. I don't think we practiced as hard as we normally did because of the limited space."

After the disappointing losses, the girls quickly went over what they did wrong and came back stronger than before, putting up a good fight during leagues week.

"We all had our amazing moments this season," senior goalie Sandy You said. "It doesn't matter that we ended on a loss — one game doesn't dictate how well the rest of our season went. I'm proud of this team." ♦

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FALCON // VIVIEN ZHANG

Junior Riley Carter prepares to serve the ball against Cupertino on Oct. 27. The girls won the match 3-0.

Engineering teacher Matt Welander and science teacher Kristofer Orre speak to a parent at the World Cafe on Oct. 27.

Senior David Nguyen stretches to block an oncoming shot from a Santa Clara attacker on Oct. 18.

Sophomore class officers dress up in pajamas to promote Red Ribbon Week.

**buzzworthy** >> These terrorizing clowns are not a joke

BY Kyle Wang

They are, apparently, inescapable, lurking around street corners, crouching in front yard bushes. They have been seen in places as close as San Jose as well as faraway countries like the United Kingdom and Australia.

The killer clowns have taken over Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, and now they've gone global.

Sorry — let me start from the beginning. I didn't care about the clowns until two weeks ago, when I tried to take a nighttime walk, but my parents wouldn't let me.

I blame the clowns, even though my parents wouldn't directly say that they were afraid of encountering them.

To be fair, they have every right to be concerned. These strange men (or women, for that matter) dressed in clown costumes are, well, no laughing matter.

They made that clear in late August when

they were first sighted attempting to lure small children into the rural backwoods of South Carolina.

Sure, some claim that most of these clowns are good-natured jokesters looking for a little fun, but others have spotted clowns brandishing knives and even loaded guns.

The point is that even if 90 percent of these clowns are harmless pranksters, the slightest possibility of danger should be enough to cause alarm for everyone.

And the fact that this trend has spread beyond our nation's borders is even more frightening in the public's eyes.

Earlier in October, British citizens

began reporting clown sightings to local authorities.

Some described being attacked viciously; others were surprised when, out of nowhere, the clowns jumped in front of their vehicles.

Now, I'm all for a good scare, but creeping on innocent little kids and trying to break into other people's cars in the name of "Halloween spirit" or "good fun" is more than disturbing, to say the least.

But, in a larger sense, even if this whole killer clown craze fades as quickly as dabbing or Lorde's popularity, it speaks volumes about America's — and the world's — willingness to jump onto the latest trend, especially

when that trend involves potential stalking and otherwise creepy (not to mention criminal) activities.

Admittedly, that criticism is only true if you believe that this clown mania is nothing more than a fad like Silly Bands was in 2010.

But if killer clowns have been driven by some mass global conspiracy, then one, thanks for the invite; and two, that's even worse for everybody.

No matter what happens from here on out, I hope the clown hysteria ends before Halloween is over. These are not the types of clowns I want to see on Halloween while trick-or-treating with my little brother.

I miss my nighttime walks, and I'll be pretty mad if I can't take them because some cruel human being in a clown mask has taken an unusual interest in my nocturnal activities. ♦



**"I miss my nighttime walks, and I'll be pretty mad if I can't take them."**



JUNIOR Kyle Wang

Lunch restrictions promote adventures

SENIORS REFLECT ON THEIR SPEEDY OUTINGS OFF-CAMPUS

easy money



Jenny Qian and Eric Sze

If you have the pleasure of knowing both of us, you are likely aware of our obsession with food. When deciding lunch destinations, we say yes to everything.

In fact, our conversations usually revolve around the new food places that we want to visit next.

When the new rolling block schedule reduced our lunch time by a precious 5 minutes — from 40 to 35 minutes — we were mortified. But then we thought about it and saw it as a personal challenge to push ourselves to go even farther than our usual destinations.

After many texts and debates, we finally settled on choosing our first target Pho Hoa in Cupertino. While not a terribly far location, as it's only a 10-minute drive, it was a rather odd lunch choice.

Bringing noodle soup back to school isn't very common. Who would have known that there was such a thing as pho takeout anyway?

During tutorial, Eric was able to call in our orders, and once the lunch bell rang, the

two of us sprinted to his car. Beating traffic and passing through a string of green lights, we arrived at Pho Hoa in under 15 minutes. Our two bowls of hot soup and bag of noodles and sprouts sat in a bag next to the cashier, ready to be picked up as soon as we entered.

Had our friends, senior Ellicia Chiu and Falcon editor Karissa Dong, not been so unrelenting in their demands for us to buy them pearl milk tea, we probably could've made it back to campus at least 5 minutes before the first bell rang.

That trip was too easy. We decided to push ourselves more for our next lunch adventure and chose Noodles and Company, situated near the intersection between Stevens Creek and De Anza Blvd. and 4.3-mile drive away from the school.

On the day of our Noodles and Company run, we raced to the Journalism Room, laptops in hand, our minds dreaming about the pasta that we would be getting. We flipped open our laptops and hastily scrolled through the menu and placed our order for pickup later.

As the lunch bell rang, we dashed out of our classrooms and ran to Eric's car; the tires hitting Herriman Avenue before 12:02 p.m. The speedometer read a constant 40 mph as we sped down Saratoga-Sunnyvale and De Anza. Tension filled the air, our eyes constantly darting from the road ahead to the clock and back. We didn't want to relive the

days of walking in class 5 minutes late.

As Eric slid the car into a parking spot only a couple feet away from the entrance to Noodles and Co., the clock had just struck 12:15 p.m. Our order was ready to go on the counter and we were back in the car by 12:18 p.m.

However, our anxiety rose again when we waited to get out of the shopping plaza. The red left turn light would not change to green for over 5 minutes.

By the time it did, we were only left with 12 minutes to get back to campus. Luckily for us, the traffic on the way back wasn't that bad, and though we did hit a couple red lights, we were usually the first car ahead of the traffic, and thus were able to race ahead when the light turned green.

The atmosphere began to feel a little more relaxed as we entered the parking lot at 12:30, 5 minutes before the second bell rang. We were surprised to even see that we had beat a few of our friends who had gone to 85°C Bakery Cafe for lunch, which is only an easy 3 miles away.

Though the dry pesto pasta and odd-tasting Pad Thai were not the most appetizing, we were still proud to have traveled to Noodles and Co. with time to spare.

Having completed both of our trips with much success, we are now even more determined to push our limits further and see where to go next. We're looking at you, In-N-Out. ♦

topten

THINGS TO DO IN NOVEMBER ...

- 10 **Set up for Diwali and Hanukkah.** Hang those Christmas lights extra early, it's lit!
- 9 **Black Friday shopping.** Time to get a new pair of Yeezys.
- 8 **Buy a Snuggly.** Relive 2008 without the recession.
- 7 **Saratoga Idol.** Watch your teachers channel their inner Simon Cowell: oh, wait ...
- 6 **Plan your formal asking.** Make a poster but decide to go stag.
- 5 **Make a wish list for "Santa Claus."** Maybe that B in Calculus can come true.
- 4 **Binge watch your favorite shows.** Maybe the "Big Bang Theory" will teach me something about Physics.
- 3 **Thanksgiving.** Take a "break" from schoolwork.
- 2 **NoShaveNovember.** Every minute spent shaving is one less minute spent on college apps.
- 1 **Sweat Bullets.** A spray-tanned tangerine with the vocabulary of a third-grader has even a chance to become the POTUS in four days.

>> Neil Rao and Kyle Wang