



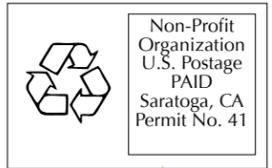
Senior designs playing cards inspired by 'Hamlet.'



Reporter reviews chart-topping album.



Former principal shares journey in education.



THE saratogafalcon



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SCHOOL DANCE

Junior prom to be held at The GlassHouse in San Jose

BY AshleyFeng

On April 15, eager students dressed in formal tuxedos and flowing prom gowns will climb down from multiple buses at The GlassHouse in San Jose, ready for a thrilling night at the Oscar-themed 2017 junior prom.

Once they stroll through the entrance on the red carpet, they will see Oscar award replicas on tables and an impressive wall of polaroid pictures of the class.

The venue was booked in early May last year by the Class of 2018's officers, who toured multiple other venues prior to settling on The GlassHouse.

"At first we thought the venue was a bit unoriginal and boring," junior class representative Nicholas Di said. "But that changed when we physically went to tour it and saw the different decorations that the other venues didn't have."

Bids went on sale on March 14 and are scheduled to last for around four weeks,

starting at \$135 with ASB and \$140 without ASB for two weeks.

Ticket prices will raise an additional \$5 every week afterwards.

"The venue is really exciting and fun, and some other schools even save this for senior prom," Di said. "We hope everyone has a memorable time and enjoys the prom." ♦

ROCK THE RUNWAY

BENEFIT FASHION SHOW RAISES MONEY FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS

BY ElaineFan & AshleyFeng

With the bright spotlights shining down on them, model after model strutted down the runway as the audience cheered and cameras flashed. A total of 179 models walked the runway on March 4 — the most in Benefit Fashion Show's history. What may have not been so obvious was the months of work that went into the 10 seconds of glamour each model experienced.

The show took place in the Large Gym, kicking off with a silent auction and fashion show later in the night in order to raise money for the Special Olympics Northern California.

The silent auction boasted of impressive items, including two tickets to a Warriors game that sold for \$550, a dinner with English teacher

>> **BENEFIT** on pg. 5



Sporting Rock n' Roll-themed wear, sophomore Tara Hojjat and the other models of the theme show off their outfits to the audience.

TALISMAN // ALLYSON CHANG

GPA

New scale finally implemented with class of 2020

BY FrancescaChu & MichelleLee

After some complications and delays, the school has finally adopted the new GPA system starting this spring semester for the Class of 2020.

This new system will use a 4-point GPA scale, which gets rid of pluses and minuses, but the original 13-point scale will still be shown on students' transcripts so colleges can see how they performed in each class.

According to principal Paul Robinson, about 60 percent of all students' plus or minus grades each semester are minuses, meaning the change will help most students' school GPAs.

"Our teachers and admin team looked at what other schools were doing and realized we were not lining up with everyone else," he said, "and it could be creating a disadvantage

>> **GPA** on pg. 4

>> what'sinside

■ JOHN PERRY

Guest speaker

Stanford professor of philosophy emeritus shares viewpoints with AP Lang students. **pg. 4**

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Bathrooms

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Peek into the past

Elders and family members lived through historical events. **pg. 18-19**

ROBOTICS

Couple transitions out of club, leaves behind legacy

BY LeenaElzeiny & AshleyFeng

At the Silicon Valley Regional last year, the robotics team smelled smoke. When the team traced it to its source, they were led to the cart that was used to store the parts of their robot. The students started to panic, but robotics team coordinator Bob France was right there to help.

"Mr. France calmly pulled out a flaming roll of paper towels, dropped it in a bucket and used the fire extinguisher to put it out," senior Samay Garg said.

Mr. France and his wife Diane have been the organizing force behind the M-SET robotics team since 2010, as mentors and sources of inspiration for participants. However, with the upcoming graduation of their youngest son, Kyle, they are beginning to hand the reins over to others.

It was the fall of 2010 when class of 2014 alum Ivan France, then a freshman, joined the club and involved his parents as well, according to Mrs. France.

"I helped with the club's elections, then recruiting events, and before I knew it, I was basically in charge of the club by the fall of 2011," she said.

When the leaders of the team stepped down in 2011, the Frances officially decided to step in.

"It looked like a great program," Mrs. France said, "and since I was a stay-at-home mom, I had more time than others to help."

Since then, the Frances have been responsible for organizing the teams, relaying information to parents, ordering supplies and gathering information for team attire. In addition, the duo

>> **ROBOTICS** on pg. 3

BOYS' BASKETBALL



Courtesy of PHILLIS FONG

Junior Harrison Fong drives to the basket on Feb. 17 against Fremont.

Falcons cap off historic season by reaching NorCals

BY ApoorvKwatra & TrevorLeung

When the 15 players on the varsity boys' basketball team began practicing in November, they knew they had a chance to be good this year. But they could not have predicted how far they would go — almost winning Division III CCS and reaching the NorCal

tournament for the first time in school history.

Their long season finally ended March 8 as the No. 2-seeded Vista del Lago, a school from the Sacramento area, knocked off No. 15-seeded Saratoga 75-52.

"Losing the way we did was difficult, especially in our last game of

>> **BASKETBALL** on pg. 20



Career Day canceled due to scheduling conflicts

Scheduling conflicts have made the school cancel its bi-annual Career Day. The school hopes to restart the event next year. Career Day in the past held three 40-minute sessions, where students could explore future careers by attending talks from professionals.

According to College and Career Center coordinator Bonnie Sheikh, both the AP exam registration, which was from Jan. 30 to Feb. 17, and the Smarter Balance Assessment, which is from March 21 to March 24, were both moved up earlier this year. Typically, Career Day is held in March or April. However, Sheikh said that the moving of the AP exam registration and the SBAC exams were not anticipated a year in advance, which meant that there was no available date to hold a Career Day.

Sheikh said that Career Day is planned to occur next year, since now the school has adjusted to the new bell schedule and earlier testing dates.

— David Fan

Annual art and literary magazine to release in May

Soundings, the school's annual art and literary magazine, is on track to be published in mid or late May.

The magazine, which features art, photography and literary work from students, will accept submissions through April 1. This year it is being organized by seniors Kevin Chow, Katherine Sun and Rachel Zhang.

"Art and writing are things that we don't generally focus on in a school like Saratoga High, so it's a good chance for us to validate the talents of some artists and writers," Chow said. "It's a great way for us to create a project together."

This year, Chow said the magazine is looking to include much more prose than in previous years, which were largely dominated by poetry and photography.

"The preference is extremely stylistic, but I think the right thing for us to do, as a student publication, is to put together something that modulates the official and reads like a professional magazine," Chow said. "A magazine with mostly prose just feels like The New Yorker."

As a writer and an artist himself, Chow recognizes the importance of the magazine as a way for young writers and artists to get their work published and out into the public, which is often very difficult for larger contests.

"There's so many people who can do those things well, so it's often immensely difficult for students to get published," Chow said.

Since Soundings doesn't receive a large number of submissions, most of the work that is submitted gets published. It's a great opportunity for students to see their work in a written form, and next to the work of other students who are equally as talented, Chow said.

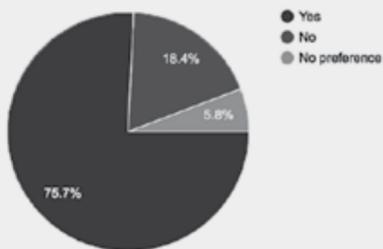
The staff is composed of students from the school's journalism program and gets help from the Creative Writing class for submitting works.

"For the future of Soundings, I hope that we get students to remember that there's this literary and art magazine," Chow said. "I hope that people who are passionate about the arts and writing continue to both publish and submit to it."

— Adina Bidel

>> falconfigures

Do you prefer this year's full block schedule over last year's partial block schedule?



The Falcon surveyed 66 students.

— Olivia Lu

>> picturethis



SOUND THE HORN >> Senior Peter VandeVort, eighth grader Raymond Yan, senior Bryant Chang and seventh grader Andrew Smith performed the song "Dear Future Husband" by Meghan Trainor on March 9 at the "Beauty and the Beat" Mesh Benefit Concert, which raised \$2,300 for the Harmony Project Bay Area. "Working with MESH is really such a rewarding experience, because you're finally getting the opportunity to give back into a program that helped you back when you were a kid," VandeVort said.

PAGEANT

Senior wins Mr. Saratoga on third try

By Jay Kim

Senior Nolan Chao, donning a suit, and his duet partner senior Kanika Vora, dressed in a casual dress, bowed after dancing and singing along to the hit song "City of Stars" from the film "La La Land" in the talent portion of the all-male pageant Mr. Saratoga on March 1.

It was Chao's third and final year of vying for the title of Mr. Saratoga, and the veteran contestant couldn't help but beam when he walked away as the winner.

Hosted by the senior class, Mr. Saratoga drew a crowd of 61 and raised \$490. Chao beat out four other competitors: seniors William Chen, Clifford Wong and Max Vo and sophomore David Berkowitz Sklar.

The original plan had three teacher judges to moderate the event — English teacher Erick Rector, math teacher Seema Patel and history teacher Mike Davey. However, at last-minute, attendance secretary Mandy Armes replaced Rector, because he for-

got about the event.

"I made a promise to [senior] Sydnie Vo to judge the event. It's a hundred percent my fault and I totally blanked on it," Rector said. "From now on anything that the senior class does where they need teachers to volunteer to be humiliated, I will do it."

Chao won 42 audience votes and all three judges' votes, which each counted as five votes. Berkowitz Sklar was the runner-up with 33 audience votes. The audience received a ticket when they entered and voted by putting their tickets into a paper bag for whomever they believed deserved the honor.

The pageant was divided into three sections: swimwear, the talent show and a Q&A session. During the talent show, Chao's "La La Land" duet with Vora came across as well rehearsed, but it was in fact pulled together the day before the show when Chao decided on the performance.

Berkowitz Sklar, who followed next, performed the song "Sweet Child O' Mine" by the rock band

Guns N' Roses with his band who call themselves the Books for now. The band, consisting of Berkowitz Sklar as the guitarist and main vocal, junior Samuel Hoffman as the guitarist, and sophomore Eli Markus as drummer met during lunches for rehearsals.

"We would practice in the choir room three times a week and we jammed," Berkowitz Sklar said. "We were missing a bass player and an actual singer but we all were stoked to perform."

In the Q&A section, the teachers asked the competitors why they wanted to be Mr. Saratoga as well as where they see themselves in 30 years.

"The Q&A is usually the hardest part because it isn't something that you can prepare for so I [prepared] some answers to potential questions in my head," Chao said. Regardless of his past failures, Chao said he does not regret his participation.

"I have a really fun time doing the show every year, but I would be lying if I said I wasn't really excited to win," Chao said. ♦

SPIRIT

Spring Fling to break Sadies tradition

By Elizabeth Lee

Organizers of this year's Spring Fling week are aiming to increase participation and school spirit by ending the traditional Sadies dance tradition and adding a school-wide Lip Dub.

Following the usual format, the annual Spring Fling week of Powderpuff football games and spirit days will be kicked off with the annual Powderpuff rally on March 24 and a dance the next evening in the small gym. Unlike past years, though, this year's dance will be a casual dance like Homecoming instead of date-centered Sadies to encourage more students to attend.

"Since Homecoming was such a huge success with 500 people in attendance, we decided to make the Spring Fling dance like a Homecoming part two," dance commissioner Mervi Tan said. "There's no stress about dates, but rather just a night to have fun and dance with friends."

The dance is themed "Dancing Through the Decades" and will have free food, a photobooth and a live DJ.

Following the dance, the Powderpuff football games will begin on Tuesday at lunch with a match-up of freshmen and junior girls. The next day sophomores and seniors clash. The losers of the first two games meet on Thursday in a consolation game, and the championship game occurs on Friday. At each game, boys will provide sideline entertainment.

"Powderpuff is an exciting way for the classes to get together and show their spirit in a fun and competitive way," junior Nicholas Di said. "I'm also excited for the cheer routines because I enjoy the experience of being able to perform a dance routine, which is something the girls usually do."

Homecoming/Spring Fling Commission is also coordinating the traditional spirit week that allows students to show off their spirit and creativity. Mon-

day's theme is "Lip Dub Monday," Tuesday's is "Meme Tuesday," Wednesday's is "Western Wednesday," Thursday's is "Rock and Roll Thursday" and Friday's is "Groovy Friday."

"Our goal is to get as many people involved with the spirit week," junior Spring Fling commissioner Andrew Zheng said. "We chose these themes because they were easy for the school population to participate in."

Besides the traditional Spring Fling week, the Rally Commission has planned a school-wide Lip Dub during tutorial on March 27, the Monday of Spring Fling week.

"We are super excited about Spring Fling because it gives people time to socialize and have fun especially before the cram for AP Testing and end-of-year activities," Zheng said. "Since there are a lot of fun activities planned, we hope that students would feel less stressed about the academic work they have to do." ♦

FALCON FOCUS

Alas, poor Yorick! To be reborn as a deck of cards!

'HAMLET' POSES AS INSPIRATION FOR SENIOR TO DESIGN A DECK OF PLAYING CARDS

By Leena Elzeiny & David Fan

At first, senior Steve Lai had the idea to create a single playing card as a gift to his junior year English teacher Suzanne Herzman.

While thinking about what book to base the card on, he began to conceive of card designs for Shakespeare's "Hamlet," specifically of the jester Yorick.

The project evolved into hours of design for an entire 52-card deck called Yorick that he eventually gave to Herzman.

"I loved this nerdfest of a gift because it brought together so many aspects of our sixth-period English 11 Honors class last year," Herzman said.

Each card has the same back design, which consists of two skulls with flowers behind a black background. Lai said he went with this design "to convey the beauty, death and mystery behind the life of the jester."

The ace and joker both have custom face designs. Lai said the aces have a pile of dirt with a shovel in it, showing the jester's burial, and the joker is a jester's hat oozing out black substance, symbolizing the death of the jester. The other cards have the same face designs as a normal deck of cards.

Now, Lai has started to design more decks of playing cards aside from Yorick. He has always enjoyed drawing during his spare time and had a fascination with magic and cards too.

For the Yorick deck, he said it took him around five hours to create the designs for all the cards. He drew each design using a piece of paper and a pen.

Usually, he was able to draw the face design in one or two sittings. Then he scanned it into his computer and added details to the designs on his editing software.

Once he finished the design of the Yorick deck of playing cards, Lai sent them to a manufacturer, and within a week, the cards

to allow time in class to apply and reinforce information. Freshman Claire Smerdon, who is in Orre's Biology class, said that his teaching methods are helpful because she is able to study more at home. While she prefers learning from classroom lectures, she appreciates other aspects of Orre's curriculum.

"I really like all the labs we've been doing because it brings it to life more than vodcasts do," she said. Orre has been using a more technology-heavy curriculum for eight years now. Ever since changing his method of teaching he has noticed a significant upgrade in student performance on labs and assessments.

In Orre's flipped classroom structure, both his Anatomy and Physiology and Biology students learn most of the information by taking notes on vodcasts at home. During class, they go over questions about the vodcasts and carry out labs to reinforce the information. "The easy part is exposing students to information; the harder part is the application of it," Orre said.

The idea is to create exposure at home

The projects and assignments Orre assigns in his class also appeal to multiple learning styles. For example, Biology students have designed and created an infographic that covered topics from their ge-

netics unit using a website or application of their choosing. This infographic project forced students to use graphic design, a subject that isn't commonly seen in a science classroom, but a useful skill in the media age.

For Smerdon, researching these topics at the beginning of the unit turned out to be helpful in that she gained a better understanding of the contents earlier in the unit, "rather than learning it all and putting the pieces together in the end."

"It was definitely a different learning technique than I've used before," she said. "You get a lot of creative freedom to go in the direction you want, as long as you cover the topics. I really liked the project because I'm a very artistic person, and so it was a lot of fun to put something together."

According to Smerdon, though, one possible downside to having more at-home studying is that it takes a lot of self-control to pay attention to vodcasts, as opposed to classroom lectures, where a teacher is physically in front of the classroom teaching.

In addition, students who have lots of questions while learning new concepts could have a harder time learning and find themselves with a buildup of information they don't fully understand.

"I should say that no teaching method is perfect for 100 percent of students," Orre said. "There are still students who do not like the flipped model."

A big part of Orre's class in the last two years is the integration of a blog, where students post chapter summaries and unit reflections on a public blog instead of turning assignments in on paper. By the end of the year, students have an "electronic portfolio" of their work, complete with embedded lab pictures from Twitter and a slew of other multimedia elements.

Orre received the idea to integrate a blog after attending a teacher conference and finding teachers who use blogs to promote writing and digital citizenship.

Orre's use of Twitter has become a large part of his curriculum since he started it last year. He uses it to document labs and class activities and share class curriculum with the larger world. To Orre, social media is more than just a way to share his curricula to the public. It also serves as a learning tool for his students.

"I'm really trying to teach the kids how to be full-fledged citizens in the 21st century," Orre said. "They need to be creative and independent thinkers." ♦

ROBOTICS

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attire. Also, the duo attends most competitions.

"Mr. France has been able to impart his experience onto us so that the team as a whole has become much stronger," Garg said. "Meanwhile, [Mrs. France] deals with all the logistics to keep us running and efficient."

The duo has since seen the team grow in size and diversity since 2011. When they started, 55 students were enrolled in robotics. Of those, only six were girls.

Now, almost six years later, the number of students enrolled has nearly doubled to 109 students, while the number of girls has increased to 37.

"With the philosophy of continuous improvement, we focus on opportunities for improvement in robotics with every season," Mrs. France said. "So far, we have been pretty successful."

The two Frances have cared for the program, said class of 2016 graduate David Mokhlesi, who was enrolled in the program for all four years.

"The valuable guidance we got as well as the resources at our disposal made it possible to work with minimal limitations," Mokhlesi said.

With the Frances' guidance, the robotics team went from "practically unknown" in 2011 to qualifying for the world competition in 2015.

"We started to do public displays, like at Back to School Night, and we built our Pride Bot to perform at football games to gain recognition in the community," Mrs. France said. "We invited staff to watch our robots at competitions and our practice sessions before the end of our build session."

According to Garg, robotics members are sad to see the Frances go, and cannot imagine the team without their presence. However, Mrs. France thinks the team will continue to thrive.

"With the growth of robotics, we are

implementing a parent booster group that will also be self-sustaining as a support group for the student leaders and members," she said.

Yet, the two agree that this year will not be the end of all things robotics. "While it will be nice to not be in charge, M-SET won't be rid of us so easily," Mrs. France said. "We'll continue to promote robotics and support the booster group throughout the transition."

"With the philosophy of continuous improvement, we focus on opportunities for improvement in robotics with every season."

PARENT Dianne France

The new parent booster group will be led by Sherri Liebo, mother of sophomore Evan Liebo. The group has officers dedicated to each aspect of Mrs. France's responsibilities starting in the fall of 2017.

According to senior David Doluca, a shift in leadership has already been taking place in preparation of the Frances' transition out of the program. AP Computer Science teacher Judi Heher joined in the spring of 2016 as an administrative leader. Other parents started to take shifts to supervise the robotics room this season, while Mrs. France selected parents for specific positions and responsibilities.

While almost all parents are involved in the booster group, 10 parents will coordinate different responsibilities that have been handled by Mrs. France. These include technical operations and finance, among others.

"Right now, the Frances are so integral for the program so we need mechanisms in place to make a long-lasting system," parent Wayne Yamamoto said. ♦



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DANCE FITNESS

No PE credits for incoming juniors taking elective

by CaitlynChen

As current sophomores sat in the McAfee Center recently listening to the guidance course selection presentation, many were surprised that Dance Fitness, which this year qualified for PE credit, was now listed as an elective and would not fulfill the school's physical education requirement.

Although this policy is disappointing to some who wanted to take Dance Fitness for PE credit in their junior year, assistant principal Brian Thompson said the policy was implemented to increase enrollment in the PE classes.

According to Thompson, since this school year was the first year for Dance Fitness, there were no restrictions for enrollment.

But as a result, enrollment in regular PE classes decreased; in particular, 24 students

chose to take Dance Fitness to get their PE credits instead.

For the 2017-18 year, juniors who want to enroll in Dance Fitness must have completed their two years of PE credit. Seniors, on the other hand, can still receive credit for Dance Fitness to fulfill their PE requirements.

This exception for seniors is not "advertised," Thompson said, and "on paper, Dance Fitness is still considered elective credit."

Current junior Jaime An said she was able to take Dance Fitness this year to fulfill her last two semesters of PE credit.

"I really enjoy Dance Fitness, and I'm really happy I can still get credit for it," An said. "If this policy was used last year, I'd probably be taking regular PE."

Thompson said the new policy may decrease enrollment in Dance Fitness, but the number of students needed for the class has

a wide range.

"You can still have Dance Fitness in the gym with 20 students or as many as 45," Thompson said.

Dance Fitness teacher Kim Anzalone said that although she might have fewer students next year, she understands the purpose of the new rule and PE teachers' desire to make sure students have basic understanding of fitness, teamwork and certain sports.

Still, Anzalone believes Dance Fitness is an attractive class because it allows students to work out in groups and have fun while staying fit, she said.

"Dance Fitness is so important because it teaches students a lifestyle of working out, of staying healthy," Anzalone said. "And it allows students to not feel intimidated when they're going to a group workout class, so they can join in more group fitness events in the future." ♦

PRESENTATION

AP Lang hosts Stanford philosophy professor

by DerekChen

"What's the most practical course you're going to take?" asked John Perry, a professor of Philosophy Emeritus from Stanford, to the room full of AP Language students. "The one you just took — the philosophy course."

On March 9, Perry came to the school for the first time to talk to seniors enrolled in AP Language. The dialogues in his 1978 book "A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality," which are philosophical conversations regarding God and personal identity, are a key part of the AP English Language and Composition course.

The seminar was organized by Truman Chen, a Class of 2013 alum and former student of AP Language teacher Jason Friend. As a history major at Stanford, Chen now works as a researcher for Philosophy Talk, a radio show hosted by Perry and his colleague Ken Taylor.

Chen recalls being at a pitch dinner for Philosophy Talk where he decided to ask Perry if he would be interested in visiting Saratoga High, and Perry was open to the idea.

"I thought of it just because I remember how influential AP Lang was, and how much my class enjoyed the readings," Chen said.



FALCON // DEREK CHEN

Stanford professor of philosophy John Perry speaks to AP Language students in the library on March 9.

"But at the same time, we as a class didn't have much real connection to these people that we were reading. Since I already knew one of the major authors of the course pretty well, I thought it'd be fun for students to see one of the faces behind the philosophy they had been reading."

In his talk, Perry encouraged the seniors to pursue what truly interests them, saying students could major in whatever interested them while taking a few strategic classes that would make them employable.

"It's true of American universities that you have this flexibility, and it's important to use it," he said. "You've got enough units to accomplish a great deal; learn about art history, learn how to program a computer and so on."

Perry noted that philosophy is perhaps the most useful field to study, asserting that it allows students of it to think through things more logically, yielding disproportionately higher scores in subjects such as medical science and law.

A question and answer session followed and seniors asked question such as: What makes life worth living? What if we could upload our consciousness to a computer? What happens after death?

Friend especially enjoyed this part of the talk, saying it was a "unique opportunity at SHS, and one that certainly doesn't happen at most high schools."

Students shared a similar sentiment about Perry's talk, expressing appreciation for the wisdom he offered.

"I thought his talk was very eye-opening regarding philosophy as an area of study in college," senior Jason Kao said.

"It made me more open to the idea of taking courses in college not for 'practicality' but rather for my own intellectual progress." ♦

GPA

continued from pg. 1

for a majority of our students."

Though the administration had planned to implement the new GPA system last fall, they ran into some technical problems with Aeries system in the beginning of the school year and were consequently unable to implement the new grading scale in the first semester.

"We had every intention that this was going to be a simple change, and it wasn't until we actually had grades in the system that we discovered that we needed a special program fix from Aeries to have freshman grades on a different calculation than grades 10-12," Robinson said.

In order to have the class of 2020 use a different formula for GPA, the school paid for a one time programming fee of approximately \$12,000.

The administration had been working with Aeries to find a solution and were on track to have the new system implemented by the first semester, but before the fix was able to run, Robinson went out on medical leave and said he "dropped the ball for getting it resolved for the fall semester." B

Although the freshman class did not have the new system in place last semester, Aeries will recalculate their grades from last year as soon as the program starts running. However, some freshmen have been skeptical about the GPA change.

"At first I thought it was a really good idea and it would relieve stress," freshman Nicole Wong said, "but if you're one of the people with borderline grades, it affects your grade more than it should, which is annoying."

One concern that has been raised is that the new system would lead to multiple people having the same GPA upon graduation and multiple valedictorians.

But Robinson said, that over the course of four years of grades, there is usually some separation between students for one reason or another.

In addition, there have been worries that students cannot get as high of a GPA as before with the new system. However, it would affect only those who only get plus grades, and according to Robinson, the school is unlikely to ever go back to the old system. The school hopes that with the new system, stress over grades will be reduced.

"It should keep students from asking teachers what they can do to change their grade after the fact," he said. ♦

active and involved community member," and is always promoting science.

Barry donates many solar panels to local schools in order to encourage hands-on-learning, but this particular project was an exciting donation for him because all five of his children have graduated from Saratoga High.

Khouja said the Cinnamons will be coming to see the group's final presentation at the end of the year.

Looking to the future, they have no plans to bring their product to the market.

"We've kind of toyed with the idea of trying to make something of it," France said, "but part of the problem is that when we got the panel and the other components, those were donated, so we would have to definitely get clearance if we were to try to monetize anything."

Pouring much time into class, the team is looking forward to presenting their product at the end of the year.

"It's like a real world product: prototype research and design-based," Khouja said. "You figure out what issue you want to solve. You do research to figure out what's currently on the market, who you're catering towards and how viable it is price-wise. And then you go through various iterations, and see how it turns out." ♦

Cinnamon's daughter, Julia Cinnamon, said that her father has always been "an

FUNDRAISER



FALCON // ASHLEY FENG

Members of the Saratoga Jazz Band prepare to perform one of their songs at the Jazz Cabaret.

Jazz Cabaret a success

by KevinChow & SanjanaMeikote

Last Saturday night, multicolored lights illuminated the dance floor set up in the Large Gym as people of all ages danced to the steady swing of jazz. Others sat on the side, nibbling on finger food, chatting.

Those who attended the annual Jazz Cabaret, which ran from 6-10 p.m., experienced a night of great food and lively music organized by the Saratoga Music Boosters. The proceeds go to the music department.

The first group of performers was Jazz Band 1a, known as Falcon Vibes, followed by Jazz Band 1b, named the Forte Falcons, and Jazz Band 2, called Toga Tones.

History teacher Kirk Abe, who played the drums, performed various pieces including "String

of Pearls" with a 17-member band named Sound Proof.

In between the program, senior choir member Kevin Wu soloed Frank Sinatra's "All the Way."

"I felt like all of the previous tension from the waiting was all being flushed out," Wu said about the performance. "I just focused on being part of the song."

Afterwards, senior Lea Moustakas sang a soulful rendition of Radiohead's "Creep."

"It's the first time I've sung a song of that magnitude in public before," Moustakas said. "I'm really glad that I did it. Half way through, I noticed my legs were actually shaking."

Senior Saya Sivaram said she was extremely proud of watching her friend sing.

"Seeing her perform so flawlessly definitely cemented her as one of the most gifted singers that

I know," she said.

The SHS Concert and Chamber choir then performed a variety of numbers, including a medley from Disney's "Hercules."

The Redwood Cantabileers, the Redwood Middle School (RMS) choir sang next, followed by their jazz band, The Griffin Kings of Swing.

In addition to the music, the food for the night, which included small snacks that ranged from turkey wraps to grapefruit gummy bears, was popular and went quickly, according to music director Jason Shiuan.

The success of the event was the result of many hours of preparation.

"The music department always does a fantastic job in setting up," senior Micah Lee said. "It was a wonderful night full of great jazz and fun with friends." ♦

MUSIC

Winter Percussion attempts to 'level up' their show

by ElaineFan

Each day after school, Winter Percussion's presence echoes in the school's hallways as thunderous rhythms resound from the music quad.

After their second competition in Fresno on March 4, the 29 members are in the heart of their season as they try to perfect their show, which is based on the theme "leveling up."

On Feb. 4, the Winter Percussion traveled to California High School in San Ramon for their first competition, placing fifth out of six groups in the open class. It wasn't their best performance.

"From the comments we got based on our incomplete show, we're motivated and optimistic about the rest of the season."

JUNIOR Vishal Narayan

"We fell apart all over the place," senior Ally Kim said.

According to Kim, the ensemble has faced difficulties in reaching the standard they have reached in previous years, due to difficult music and a lack of experience among new members. Around eight to nine members are new this year or have little previous experience.

According to senior Daniel Liu, it is difficult having new members because they have a lot to pick up in a short time.

"They need to learn how to play mallets,

then learn the music, then learn other logistics stuff like loading, coiling and setup," Liu said. "However, everyone has been working hard and I've seen good improvement."

According to Liu, the disarray at the competition could have been a result of nerves, since the rehearsals had gone relatively well. Many members had never done an actual setup for competition beforehand, which may have led to some confusion.

At their second competition in Fresno, the group placed eighth out of nine schools in their division.

"Since our show wasn't done, we didn't get very far," said junior Vishal Narayan. "But from the comments we got based on our incomplete show, we're motivated and optimistic about the rest of the season."

Their next competition will take place on April 1 at Mountain House High School, one week before their last competition of the season at Logan High School.

Freshman David Zhou, one of the synthesizer players, acts like "a backing voice" for the ensemble and is active for most of the show since his instrument is so flexible. As a result, he found that it was more obvious when he made mistakes.

"Executing the theme has been going pretty smoothly. Most of the challenge for me personally has been the music itself," Zhou said.

To build on the theme of "leveling up," the music gradually speeds up and the rhythms escalate in complexity as the show goes on. In the first movement, the front ensemble starts by kneeling on the ground, and everyone plays one note each. By the time the music enters the second movement, the members of the front ensemble have four mallets in their hands.

The group had another challenge at the

BENEFIT

continued from pg. 1

Ken Nguyen which sold for \$170 and multiple spa day coupons that sold for an average of \$80.

The silent auction raised \$3,010 while the ticket sales raised roughly \$4,600 for the Special Olympics Northern California Chapter.

Senior Head Benefit commissioner Hannah Leonard found the event was every bit the success she hoped it would be.

"Though there were problems leading up to the show, everything came together really nicely," she said. "I thought that it was really successful because it ran smoothly and the models had a great time."

The early stages of planning started in October, when the senior Benefit commissioners, including Jackie Han, Spring Ma, Leonard, Yuna Kim and Ellicia Chiu, met for the first time. From there, they started the long process of finding clothing sponsors and organizing the show.

The commissioners handed out flyers in-person to stores such as Title Nine, Macy's and REI with an explanation about the show.

Many stores were glad to sponsor the show, but there were some problems during the scouting.

"Communication was probably the biggest issue," Han said. "For example, for GAP there were two managers instead of one, and one was fine with [sponsoring] while the other wasn't. There were also stores that didn't reply at all."

The day after the show, all the clothing was returned to their respective stores. The task was long and tedious, but according to Leonard, it was facilitated by the kind and helpful staff at many of the stores they visited.

During fittings and rehearsals, there were a few obstacles as well. Some stores didn't send the cor-

rect clothing items, or the models' pieces got mixed up.

An hour before the show, the commissioners found out that six outfits did not make it onto the rack that was transported to the school. Leonard's mother, along with several other theme heads, rushed to the stores to find replacement outfits.

"Although there were a few roadblocks, the fittings and rehearsals overall went pretty well," Han said.

The show presented a total of 11 themes: Prom, Boho, Girls' Night Out, Bollywood, Country Club, Bromance, Rock N' Roll, First Date, Activewear, Outdoors and Festival.

"Modeling was really nerve racking at first, but once I walked it, it was really fun."

SOPHOMORE Tal Kibel

"Modeling was really nerve racking at first, but once [my partner] and I walked it, it was really fun," said sophomore Tal Kibel, who donned rock n' roll clothes.

"A lot of my friends were watching so it was encouraging hearing people cheering when we walked out."

Each model had to be fitting at the store that sponsored their theme, where the theme heads and store manager helped them choose an outfit for the show. Then, they practiced their runway walk and poses on the Friday and Saturday afternoons before the show.

"I feel proud of what we accomplished but also relieved that it's over because it was honestly really stressful," Han said. "I'm also really thankful that I had awesome commissioners to do it with." ♦

SENIOR PROJECT

Team builds automated solar panel cleaner for engineering

by CaitlynChen & ClaireRhee

When senior Zayne Khouja found out about his Engineering Design and Development class's final project last semester, he immediately started brainstorming problems that affected the environment and everyday life.

After narrowing down his options, Khouja decided to join with seniors Kyle France, James Johnston and James Lorenz to tackle the problem of how the efficiency of solar panels decreases by around 30 percent when they are covered in dust and pollen.

"If we could clean the panels, it'd be an opportunity to harvest more energy from a pre-existing set up," Khouja said. "Also, there's a massive market for solar panels, since solar renewable energy is taking off."

They came up with the solution of creating self-cleaning solar panels to clean off debris. They decided to build water jets on top of the solar panel so that the panel can clean itself.

Once the team agreed on their solution, they needed to start prototyping. However, they were missing a key component: a solar panel to work with.

By the end of first semester, they had

contacted a dozen or so well-known solar companies in the Bay Area, including Sun Power, The Solar Company and Solar City. The seniors were hoping they could either buy a used panel for cheap or receive a donation. To their disappointment, they received absolutely no responses.

"It's like a real world product: prototype research and design-based."



SENIOR Zayne Khouja

But during one of Khouja's college interviews, the interviewer, who happened to be the parent of an SHS alum, suggested contacting Barry Cinnamon at Cinnamon Solar. Although Khouja didn't have high hopes for a response from Cinnamon, he received a reply within 20 minutes.

"It was incredible," Khouja said. "We were getting nothing from any other companies, and when I heard back from Cinnamon, I told Kyle, 'No way!'"

Two days later, Khouja and France

drove to Cinnamon's shop in Campbell, where Cinnamon donated a \$200 solar panel to their project.

"In the course of our home installation research and development work, we occasionally have extra panels," Barry said. "I was glad that [France and Khouja] could put one of these to use."

In addition to giving them a panel, Barry taught the two how to use it and gave some tips on cleaning and recommendations on what they do with it.

This semester, the team has been focusing on carrying out their plan and actually building their self-cleaning panels.

The four have found that building their contraption has been difficult in some aspects, but obtaining the solar panels was a key step in proceeding with the project.

"We couldn't be doing this project without his solar panel. Now that we have it, we can build our cleaning contraption on top of it," Khouja said. "I've been in correspondence with both [Barry] and his daughter, and [Cinnamon Solar is] a very personable company. I've asked them various questions on how we should test [the contraption] and what components we need, and they quickly reply."

Cinnamon's daughter, Julia Cinnamon, said that her father has always been "an

FINANCIAL AID

Admin recommends students to apply for FAFSA

by Michelle Lee & Ashley Feng

According to Student Loan Hero, American students owe nearly \$1.3 trillion in student loan debt. And if it were not for financial aid, that number would be even higher.

FAFSA, or Free Application for Federal Student Aid, is the largest distributor of student financial aid in the nation. This government-run organization calculates the "Expected Family Contribution" (EFC), which is based on income and assets, of each applicant to determine how much the family will need to pay; families can expect their need-based financial aid package from a university to be the total cost for the university minus the EFC.

Because of the generally high incomes and assets of Saratoga families, though, many students either do not qualify for financial aid or qualify for very little aid. Moreover, FAFSA does not take into consideration family expenses, retirement savings

and more when calculating a family's EFC. For middle-class families here who struggle to completely cover college tuition, room and board and other personal expenses, qualifying for aid is difficult. They

"Many students are surprised by the fact that the FAFSA will suggest a college cost of attendance significantly less than the 'sticker price.'"

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL Brian Safine

most turn to options like merit-based or department-based scholarships; however, these scholarships are not as well advertised as FAFSA, and often students do not know very much about them.

"Getting scholarships from colleges is

also difficult, but it's definitely more attainable than through FAFSA," senior Siavash Yaghoobi said.

While there are different types of merit-based scholarships, the First Generation Scholarships and Leadership Scholarships, which both have applications that usually include a short essay but vary from college to college, are the kinds of scholarships more commonly sought by SHS students.

Other families have set aside money for many years, especially because they do not anticipate much financial support. However, many college advisers still recommend applying for FAFSA regardless of income.

In fact, universities such as Carnegie Mellon and UC Los Angeles require applicants to submit their FAFSA to be considered for merit scholarships.

Senior Jonathan Yun filled out the FAFSA with the belief that it was worth trying; after all, filling out an application is free.

"Even though Saratoga students probably will not get financial aid, I applied to

colleges that give merit scholarships," Yun said. "Most merit scholarships require you to apply for FAFSA to get money regardless, so I just applied."

Alumnus Anant Rajeev also recommends that families start a college fund, which seems to be the most typical method Saratoga families use. Because his parents opened a 529 plan, a college savings fund with eligibility for federal and state deductions, he never had "personal experience" with FAFSA.

According to assistant principal Brian Safine, there is money available for students who spend the time to look for it. Safine recommends looking at Naviance, the guidance web portal for Saratoga students, in their scholarship section to find money.

"Students should absolutely complete the FAFSA," Safine said. "It doesn't hurt to ask. Many students are surprised by the fact that the FAFSA will suggest a college cost of attendance significantly less than the 'sticker price.'" ♦

SENIORS

School to offer State Seal of Biliteracy on diplomas starting this year

by Michelle Lee & Michael Zhang

Starting this year, both Saratoga High School and Los Gatos High School are offering students a chance to receive the State Seal of Biliteracy on their diplomas.

Effective in California since 2012, the State Seal of Biliteracy is a program created by the superintendent of public education that recognizes graduates who have reached a high level of speaking, reading and writing in a language other than English. In the past five years, some schools in the area, such as

Cupertino and Lynbrook High, have already adopted this certificate for their students.

Guidance secretary Bonnie Sheikh said the seal "may serve as a goal or motivation for students taking or learning a foreign language."

Since this is the district's first year distributing this seal on diplomas, Sheikh and the guidance department are also unsure of the number of applications to expect. This year's seniors have until March 24 to submit an application for the designation.

Senior Saya Sivaram, who took AP Spanish Language last year, received a 5 on the

AP test later in May and intends to apply for the biliteracy seal.

"Being bilingual in California is useful nowadays, as well as in the professional fields," Sivaram said. "Maybe if I get the biliteracy diploma, it will allow me to further my opportunities such as studying abroad in a Spanish speaking country and further my knowledge of the culture and people."

To qualify for this award, students must have completed all English Language Arts (ELA) requirements with at least a 2.0 GPA and either pass the world language AP exam with a minimum score of 3, complete the

four-year high school course with at least a 3.0 GPA or pass the world language SAT II with a score at least 600 or higher.

Through these exams or criteria, students are able to obtain this seal for the study of one of 10 different languages, including Spanish, Chinese, and French, the language courses the school offers.

If students meet all these criteria, the California Department of Education will mail students a seal that can be put on a diploma or transcript. The application, which is free, needs to be submitted for consideration to the guidance department. ♦

The first step to feeling American: voting

by Isabelle Yang

The history of America is a dark fairytale, an ill-humored narrative of the near extermination of indigenous peoples, the Jim Crow laws and the first-ever Muslim ban in the world.

Yet despite all the antagonists in the American story, princesses and princes — Sojourner Truths and Abraham Lincolns — blossom into what we are taught as being the pinnacle of "being American." But for anyone seeking national identity, there is no easy definition to "being American," and many immigrants in America continue to more closely identify themselves with their country of origin.

According to a survey by the Washington Post, being a "true American" boils down to being able to speak English and sharing American customs and traditions.

For decades, Americans have implicitly defined what it means to be an American, whether this came in the form of celebrating Christmas and following the NFL or practicing Christianity. Above all, America has prided itself on its democratic freedom, despite its drastically lower voter turnout than any other developed country.

Americans, along with the rest of the world, have neatly packaged what being American is. While the strict image that American society has drawn up in its manual of becoming American, many immigrants or even American-born citizens feel far from American.

For a nation where 10 percent of its 318.9 million people consists of immigrants who support many of the largest American industries, just the feeling of "not being an American" can stem bigger problems than just cultural isolation.

In one of the most divisive elections in American history, voter turnout barely passed the 50 percent mark in a 20-year low according to CNN. Despite how America boasts its democratic freedom and expanse, it doesn't hide the low voter turnout.

It's no surprise a country that has suffered waves of nativism is afflicted with low voter turnout. Immigrants often feel a sense of cultural homelessness, that their lack of "feeling American" prevents them from voting. In fact even in 2012 the Hispanic voter turnout fell at 48 percent and despite the higher Hispanic voter turnout in the 2016, they were dwarfed by white and African American voters. They often believe that because they aren't "American," voting for American politicians and policies don't apply to them.

Even parents like my own, who

immigrated from Taiwan more than 30 years ago at 18, struggle to find reason to vote in a country they feel "isn't even theirs." Only when they were panicked by the impending reality of Trump as a president did they ever feel motivated to vote. Despite the disconnect many immigrants feel to American culture, voting and participating in democracy is something that defines being an American.

Still, "feeling American" or not shouldn't be an excuse to refuse rights given to all American citizens. The Muslim ban and President Trump's executive order to end funding for sanctuary cities have the potential to affect millions of people. Exercising our "American democracy" by protesting and voting and calling out government corruption could potentially help these millions.

Even though immigrants struggle with balancing their cultural identities while living in America, American policies — both domestic and international — have far reaching effects that are felt around the world.

This is ever more so important in a time when America has entered this uncertain time. The only way to prevent the same feeling of hopelessness that has plagued many is to exercise that right to vote, regardless of whether citizens feel truly American.

In the end, the country's problems matter to every American, no matter where you are from. In order to prevent history from repeating itself like a badly made horror film, Americans — immigrant or not — should pay attention and participate and vote. Those are the first steps to feeling — and being — truly American. ♦

Will fake news lead to an Orwellian society?

by Michael Zhang

The novel "1984" by George Orwell takes place in a futuristic world where fake news — fabrications in the form of actual news articles — is used to mislead the public. Sound familiar?

Orwell describes the horrors of such a world, including censorship, threats and corruption. What's apparent is that the world we live in today is creeping closer to this novel in many aspects.

Recently, the media has been re-exposed to this term during the 2016 presidential election, at first around stories and conspiracy theories put out to undermine Hillary Clinton.

One particularly notable example is "Pizzagate," a conspiracy theory that Clinton and other Democrats were running an child sex ring under a pizza restaurant in Washington, D.C. The bogus story motivated a man to open fire there on Dec. 4, but thankfully, no one was injured.

Additionally, media exposure to fake news has grown exponentially ever since Donald Trump began using the term to express his disapproval for mainstream news outlets such as the New York Times and CNN. Interest in this topic soared especially after Trump's first press conference as President-elect, according to data from Google searches.

There is a general consensus that fake news is dangerous. However, exactly what is considered fake news is something that people tend to gloss over and can be highly debated.

Bending the truth or omitting certain facts while campaigning in a presidential election or political movement is certainly nothing new; one may be more familiar with the term used to describe such actions — propaganda. Although propaganda is can be misleading, because it is not widespread and has not been problematic in the past, it has rarely been considered fake news.

As of late, however, fake news has become increasingly widespread.

Another story published last year stated that Pope Francis had endorsed Trump. Still, the story received around 1 million reactions, shares and comments on Facebook.

It seems logical that fake news regarding the election would have political motivations, but experts believe that this may not be the case, according to The Telegraph. In fact, many websites distribute fake news to generate clicks and earn money, rather than to support a political candidate.

Combined with a lack of regulations, the amount of fake news on the internet has exponentially increased over the years. Head-

lines are becoming more and more like "clickbait," and information from particular sources is becoming less and less reliable.

Since Trump has taken office, yet another issue has arisen. It is no secret that Trump's first few weeks in the presidency have been far from ideal, and as a result, many online news articles are criticizing the government. By terming these criticisms "fake news," Trump undermines the legitimacy of important issues such as global warming and the role of the Russian government in the 2016 election.

Additionally, many government officials are spewing false information. White House press secretary Sean Spicer lied about the number of people who attended Trump's inauguration, perhaps as an attempt to make Trump seem more popular. He said that Trump had the "largest audience to ever witness an inauguration," even though the crowd size appeared to be a third of what it was during Obama's inauguration in 2009. This is clearly problematic — it is disturbingly similar to the lies that were spread in 20th century dictatorships in order for the ruling party to gain the approval of the population.

With so much falsehood and fake news ("alternative facts," as Trump advisor Kellyanne Con-

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GRAPHIC BY KEVIN CHOW

way terms them) it is crucial that we, the public, do not spread this misinformation any further.

The first step in reaching such a goal would be discerning truth from untruth and confirming that information is correct before relaying it to others. This can often be done using a simple online search and verifying that other reliable sources have agreeing information. For instance, simply plugging the headline of a story

in a search engine would lead to multiple interpretations of the information and the ability to evaluate its verisimilitude.

In short, it is important to take headlines on the web with a grain of salt and sometimes less. But this is not just the media's problem. It is everyone's problem, and we all need to do our part to ensure that fake news does not become the new normal. Let "1984" be our warning. ♦

Political correctness has unintended consequences

by David Koh

Political correctness. Avoidance? Escapism? Liberal lying? With the rise of the Trump movement and the protests that have followed, political correctness has been referenced in countless news articles and angry tweets.

Political correctness is defined as the avoidance of actions or expression that are perceived to exclude or marginalize groups who are socially disadvantaged. Of course, the controversy surrounding political correctness is the large gray area surrounding what is considered "exclusionary" or not — a gray area that reveals political correctness to be truly intolerant.

First, the concept of political correctness is inherently paradoxical, in that by trying to foster tolerance and respect, political correctness excludes other groups, with views different from their own. Political correctness allows the people with the majority viewpoint to criticize the people in the "politically incorrect" minority.

Another issue is that we simply don't have and shouldn't have the right to not be offended. Realistically, the world is filled with people who couldn't care less about other people's feelings.

At some point political correctness just becomes escapism from a real world filled with "politically incorrect" dialogue and viewpoints. In reality, something branded

with that term is nothing more than a minority opinion that should be evaluated by a standard that's not just whether or not it alienates others.

Political correctness allows the people with the majority viewpoint to criticize the people in the minority.

The real problem with political correctness lies in its power to exclude meaning-

ful dialogue from both sides. While things like acute racism or hate speech don't add much to dialogue or debate and should be restricted, issues such as differing viewpoints or beliefs should always be included in public forums otherwise we end up with echo chambers in which there is only one viewpoint.

Instead of hiding or turning away from controversial viewpoints, people should face them head on. The extent taken doesn't need to be the point of provocation — in fact, it shouldn't be — but this is the only way to learn how to cope or deal with viewpoints that may be exclusionary or offensive to any group of people. Only then can debate be fostered. ♦

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Gender-neutral bathrooms are right — there's nothing to be worked up about

Finally. It's tremendously important that our school is installing gender-neutral bathrooms. It might be disingenuous to say that it's solely out of the goodness of the administration's hearts, but gender-neutral bathrooms made into existence through a law is better than no bathroom at all.

A permanent gender-neutral bathroom will be part of the currently-in-construction music building on the edge of campus, near the McAfee Center.

Meanwhile, the staff bathrooms near the MAP and ceramics buildings have already been opened to students as gender-neutral facilities.

Under President Obama, interpretation of Title IX (which states that institutions receiving federal funding cannot discriminate on the basis of gender) mandated that transgender students must be allowed to use restrooms and locker rooms consistent with their gender identity. (On Feb. 21, Trump's administration announced that they were rolling

back transgender protections, but this will not have an effect in California.)

The irrational fear against letting trans kids use the right restroom is that potential creeps will have free license in this environment, but there have never been cases of trans students assaulting others in their restroom.

"Well, what about cis creeps who could pretend to be trans to assault someone?" some may ask. Obviously that's illegal. Unfortunately, some people's personal insecurity fuels antagonism toward trans people.

By installing gender-neutral bathrooms, the school is taking a step in the right direction and enforcing tolerance toward a marginalized group. And furthermore, there isn't that big of a difference between someone of the same gender versus someone of a different birth gender seeing someone in the bathroom.

In the end, all people understand the sanctity of privacy and good conduct in the bathroom, and trans people are no different. ♦



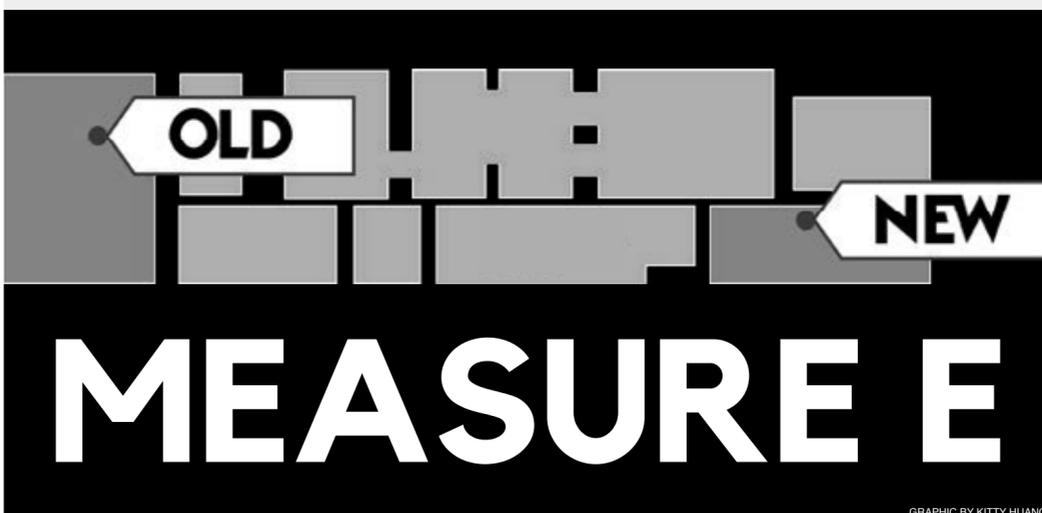
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Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

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GRAPHIC BY KITTY HUANG

Proposed new student center beneficial to both Leadership class and students

by Caitlyn Chen

During fifth period, students scramble to one far side of the campus, into the Team Room near the PE department office for Leadership class.

Not only is it problematic to have a class dedicated to leading the student body isolated on one side of the school out of sight for most students, Leadership's Team Room is also shared with sports and Health. In addition, Leadership students can't leave anything in the room or anything on the whiteboards, which seems like a must for a class dedicated to planning school events among other things, and the room is small for the growing Leadership class — it really isn't a classroom they can call home, just a temporary indoor meeting space.

Fortunately, as part of the Measure E construction, a new student center proposed to start construction this summer will solve this problem, providing a permanent classroom for the school's Leadership class.

This student center will be located in the 800 wing at the top of the quad steps, replacing the old music space, where the orchestra, band and choir occasionally practice.

The benefits of this facility have been long awaited and they are obvious.

A proposed selling booth for the center will allow clubs to easier fundraise, and the storage space for ASB will serve as a place for posters, decorations and other materials.

While in the past, each class had to provide its own sound sys-

tem for Quad Day, the new student center will also provide a microphone system for all students to use.

Leadership students can't leave anything on the whiteboards, which seems like a must for a class dedicated to planning school events.

When the center is not being used by Leadership class, it will be used as a place for students to meet and hang out, which is a must for

a school that has always lacked a central indoor student area.

For example, during rainy days, the cafeteria is too small to hold 1,300 students, so most underclassmen disperse across various classrooms. The new student center would offer another welcoming indoor area where people can gather.

Although some may say the space for the new center could have better uses, what else is more important that what was proposed?

The new student center is essential for the growth of the Leadership class in the next few years, as well as serving as a central space for students to gather, and generally improving the school campus. The student center is something that the school has needed for a long time. ♦

Problem with CollegeBoard is its monopoly, not greed

by Rahul Vadlakonda

After signing up for Advanced Placement (AP) tests for their respective AP classes, it is common to hear many students bemoan its high price. AP exams administered in the U.S. cost \$93, and those given in most other U.S. territories and commonwealths and in Canada are \$123.

Federal funding for financial assistance is no longer available starting with the 2017 AP exams, according to College Board. However, the price tag does not go solely to the bottom line of the College Board. Instead, it is split with the college faculty members and expert AP teachers who develop the tests, the proctors for the tests and the people who grade them.

With the vast numbers of people who help make such testing periods happen, College Board must generate enough revenue to pay all of its expenses.

The revenue the College Board makes should not affect the validity of the the organization's "not-for-profit" title in any way. The definition of a not-for-profit organization is one that primarily stands to use its revenue to further achieve its purpose (in College Board's case, measuring academic proficiency), rather than to make profit for shareholders. Whether we'd like to admit it or not, College Board's purpose is to evaluate prospective college applicants,

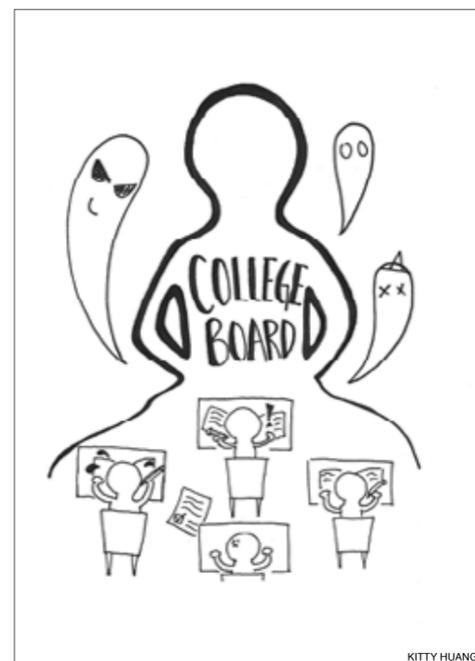
contributing to something in a way that for-profit companies can't claim.

The main problem with College Board is that it is a monopoly that almost completely controls America's standardized testing industry. Aside from the ACT, which is developed by ACT Inc., and still doesn't match the SAT's popularity, College Board is responsible for just about every test that those who want an undergraduate education usually take.

That is the real problem: a lack of competition in the testing industry.

In addition, College Board does make an easy target for criticism. For example, its president, David Coleman, makes a salary of \$1.3 million annually, according to The New York Times. Though many people might say it is the result of the millions of students who take their tests every year, the main reason is the result of their monopoly over these tests. That is the real problem: a lack of competition in the testing industry.

As annual testing periods come and go, the public must take into account the goals of



KITTY HUANG

this organization before coming to any definite conclusions about any of the company's pricing structure. Though many people see the College Board as a money-sucking monster that is not deserving of non-profit status,

which may be the case, the root of the problem is that more competition needs to be introduced into the testing marketplace. Only when that happens will prices begin to become more reasonable. ♦

Ignorant of historical lessons, leaders repeat past mistakes

by Leena Elzeiny

We've heard our teachers repeat the elegant validation for learning history: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

The saying originated from 19th century Spain, in a book by Spanish American essayist George Santayana. But looking at our recent history, it seems that Santayana's warning is not being heeded — mere academics can't stop our constant re-enactment of historical missteps.

Our American history curriculum places emphasis on studying the past to lend students — and presumably future leaders — varied perspectives and avoid historical mistakes. But the current conduct of the American government shows that the sins of our fathers continue to be repeated in the modern day.

And the sins are numerous. Despite California State Standards demanding that all fourth graders learn about Native Americans and the injustice committed against them, the American government continues to tread on Native Americans' freedoms.

One would think that the actual American government would reflect some of the basic

values imparted in an elementary school classroom.

However, the current administration has perpetuated the American tradition of assaulting the Native American community and their rights. For evidence, look no further than the Dakota Access Pipeline.

The history curriculum incorrectly assumes that a clinical analysis of the past will translate into worldly empathy. Clearly, it won't.

The project runs through the few remaining bits of Native American territory. Not only was the pipeline never reviewed by environmental regulators (which the company in charge of overseeing construction refuses to do), but the Lakota Sioux tribe will likely never approve of a pipeline cutting through their homeland. Police have arrested

or shot with rubber bullets those peacefully exercising their right to assemble and protest, but it's safe to say that few citizens care about what is happening in this remote part of the U.S., never mind those crafting the fourth grade history curriculum.

Now, jumping to freshman year World Geography, it was part of the curriculum to learn how Europe had carved up the Middle East in 1918, but did so in no regards to culture or resources. It was an action that many historians agree was done haphazardly, but America may soon commit this offense yet again by involving itself in the Israel-Palestine border dispute.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, America found itself in the Industrial Revolution. Eventually, workers gained some basic rights. It was a huge step forward for common people.

But despite this success, we continue to impose the same cruel labor conditions to people across the globe, and continue to allow the exploitation of child labor in nations such as Bangladesh, where Abercrombie & Fitch locked over 3,000 workers into a building. In harsh conditions, workers only get paid 12 cents per hour, and they work 100-hour work weeks.

In our American History classes, we learned that the factories of the North exploited their workers in much the same way that the South exploited its slaves. Perhaps our modern-day industrialists have forgotten.

We cannot constantly repeat the mistakes of the past and hope that, just maybe, this time things will turn out better. On one hand, the history curriculum incorrectly assumes that a clinical analysis of the past will translate into worldly empathy. Clearly, it won't. On the other hand, instructors are not capable of translating facts into future wisdom for every student.

One thing that may help translate is instead of detached learning history, students should also be taught to apply history and draw parallels to modern-day events. Therefore, as leadership students will be able to reach reasonable solutions by drawing parallels to particular historical moments.

As a society, we are prone to mistakes, sometimes very problematic ones. But it is when we make the same mistake twice, three times or more, we must question the competence of not only our leaders, but also the effectiveness of the education our nation is receiving. ♦

Americans influenced to vote by celebrities

by Julia Miller

As far as the 2016 presidential race and its subsequent aftermath went, it sometimes seemed the biggest spotlight was not so much on the policies Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton supported, but more on who supported them. News coverage, whether on Snapchat or FOX news, seemed to be full of headlines about the celebrities who agreed or disagreed with our presidential candidates.

Stars like Beyonce and Jay Z followed Clinton through her entire campaign, and more people were likely to be talking about their support rather than the woman they were supporting. Similarly, outrage struck when New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady announced he was a Trump supporter, a voice of the nation's most prominent football player among millions of other Americans who supported Trump as well. (He, of course, was balanced out by LeBron James and his support of Clinton.)

If celebrities are not politicians or even political scientists, then why do we care so much about their opinions?

Which leads me to ask this question: If celebrities are not politicians or even political specialists, then why do we care so much about their opinions? It makes sense that since celebrities are widely known, they can be seen as role models. But does it mean that their opinions matter equally or even more than those of the people who have been governing this country for decades? To simply put it, no: Their opinions are pretty worthless.

Once Donald Trump was elected into the White House, coverage of Madonna and Scarlett Johansen constantly flooded my feeds, showing their thoughts on the Women's March, and less on the masses that joined together to create the largest organized march in history.

The constant coverage of celebrity opinions during the presidential race could have influenced voters to vote for a certain candidate because of the association with that celebrity, rather than the association with certain policies.

If this were widely true, then citizens now are treating elections as a chance to vote along with a favorite personality, not for an agenda. We treat our candidates like celebrities as well; we focus on their personalities rather than on their policies.

In 2020, most current high schoolers will be eligible to vote for the next president and members of congress. My advice is to learn the facts about the candidates. Be familiar with the stances they may have on important issues. And, above all, don't base your decision on what Lady Gaga or Tom Brady believes. ♦

The senior year bucket list: The last few things you need to do before you leave

BY Kyle Wang

Hello Class of 2017. I hope senior year has treated you well. The one and only Kevin Chow, this paper's opinion editor, asked me to write a piece about how to prepare for college because I, a junior, am apparently the most qualified person on staff to write about preparing for college (you've been warned about what this will end up being). I am also writing this in the midst of junior year's most hellish months — suffice it to say that I am both bored and frustrated and looking forward to potentially happier times. Basically, think of this as your high school bucket list of things to do before you graduate from high school in 83 days. Hope this helps.

The bucket list: In just months, you will be removed from your mama and your bed and everything you have called home for the last 17 years. So, now that you've submitted your college apps, I hope you'll be a bit more willing to do borderline life-threatening things that may or may not get you killed, or worse, rescinded. It's all in the name of a little fun though, right? Get your license, ideally before your permit expires. Otherwise, your junior friends will be the ones taking you off for lunch. Learn to ride a bicycle. Chances are you'll either do that to get around campus or #UberEverywhere.

ing your survival skills. You will need to know how to (a) thrive without maternal help in a predatory environment in which larger beasts will seek to destroy you and (b) get used to knowing absolutely nobody. This is an analogy about something in your future. You will need to learn to live amongst the prey once more, because these next few months are the last time you will be, as your teachers love to say, "at the top of the food chain." Speaking of prey and food ...

Sit down at a table of random freshmen. Throw a piece of ice on the ground, step on it and tell them "Hello, I'm _____ and now the ice is broken." In a few short months you will be expected to

In just months, you will be removed from your mama and your bed and everything you have called home for the last 17 years.

make conversation in the most uncomfortable of situations with figurative icebreakers. Better start getting used to it now. Buy a gym membership. Practice your grunting which you will use to intimidate other gym members and establish dominance. Also, you will need large muscles to attract women (or men). And speaking of loud noises ...

Learn to do the Maori Haka, the traditional war dance of the Maoris. You will perform this (1) at Toga's Got Talent and (2) before every single test to demonstrate your unshakeable confidence to your cowering classmates.

Start wearing cufflinks, regardless of the occasion. They're a great conversation starter and that's the type of stuff they wear at Princeton, so better get started.

Plant a bonsai tree in your backyard. Water it every day, trim it when necessary and, when the time comes, sell it. Oh, you thought this step was going to be something about the intangible value of dedication and compassion? No. Compassion is for the weak. Dedication is for the foolish. You will learn to mass produce bonsais and become a self-made billionaire (with, of course, a small, million-dollar loan from your parents) by the time you graduate. These lessons you will inevitably learn in college if you do not learn them now.

Follow along with a BuzzFeed Tasty video. Sooner or later you'll need to learn how to cook anyway, and it's as easy as those videos make it look, right? Your choices for now are either Gordon Ramsay or BuzzFeed. Choose BuzzFeed.

Plan, design and execute the most legendary prom asking the school has ever seen. Why? Because this is the last time you'll be able to show up at someone's house in the middle of the night in a Big Bird costume and not have them call the police on you. Also, because after three years of



hella extra askings, you really want those free tickets.

Tag along with your mom/dad during bring your kid to work day. Soon, you'll have to work in one of those cramped, poorly lit, stuffy cubicles with no access to free snacks, too. You may as well get used to the feeling now. Oh, yeah, and you won't be around your parents as much any more very soon. That too.

Do try to embrace these last few months in the quiet little suburbia you call Saratoga. Take a day off,

or several, if you really feel like it, to explore San Francisco with your friends (bring the underclassmen along, too). Go watch a movie with your embarrassingly endearing family. Finish that novel you've talked about writing for so long.

I hope you enjoy this short break, because soon you'll be right back where you started four years ago, only in a completely different place surrounded by completely different people.

Cheers, Kyle

Teachers should implement lenient sickness policies

BY ElizabethLee

As we emerge from the winter flu season, many students are still suffering through sicknesses — and still going to school even though they know it's not good for them.

Clearly, this is problematic. Besides missing out on the rest that they need to recover, sick students who come to school run the risk of spreading their pathogens and the misery that comes with being sick to a whole new host of people.

Sick policies know that. Yet they still choose to go to school because, they think skipping a school day is often not worth falling behind on classwork and assignments.

If the school wants to encourage students to stay home while sick — which it definitely should — teachers need to allow more lenient conditions for those who are absent. Of course, many teachers already have reasonable sick policies, but a single class with draconian sick policies means the student will be at school and exposed to others, even if for only a period.

A few policies are particularly problematic. Oftentimes, as a consequence of missing a test due to sickness, students are given make-up tests harder than

the original one or the student will be forced to take a midterm in replacement. In some cases, students are unable to receive credit for a class assignment or make up an assessment, making it an obligation for the student to attend class.

Also, some teachers double the next assessment to make up for the assessment that the student had missed. Although this may seem like a more reasonable policy, students should not have to receive a consequence for something largely outside of their control.

Students should not receive a consequence for something largely outside of their control.

Teachers should also provide more days to make up the classwork and homework that the student had missed, since it only adds more pressure for the student to finish all the work they missed in their classes in one day. The current school-wide policy, which gives the student the number of days they missed

as an extension to the deadline, seems fair.

But often the student needs to learn concepts taught in class on their own, a task which only adds to the existing make up work. Especially in a math class where lectures are harder to make up or learn on your own, students find it simpler to attend class and save the extra efforts.

Because of the current sick policies, rather than missing school, students have reason to believe that it is better to suffer through the day rather than take time to heal. Even though some may think that students make sickness as an excuse to stay home from school and take advantage of the extra time they have to do more work, their absences in the classes add up to become more stress for the student.

Even though some students certainly do abuse the current sick policies and feign illnesses on test days to gain additional time to study, a more lenient set of rules will not drastically change the norm; lax students will continue to skip school and motivated students will ultimately still have to complete the same work — ideally when they're feeling better again.

After all, when it comes down to it, the health of students should be the school's top priority. ♦



Four hours of sleep is not a badge of honor

BY KittyHuang

Many students seem to take pride in getting little sleep. It's no secret that doing late-night homework and waking up early (allegedly) by phone alarms has become part of the high school stereotype.

But as students pile more on their plate with busy classes, work and social schedules, we soon find ourselves in vicious cycles of sleepless nights that do no good whatsoever.

In the meantime, our proud claims of "I just pulled an all-nighter" seem to earn praise from our peers, who automatically assume that our late bed-times translate to a dedicated work ethic.

I was one of those students last semester. I often found myself

with a mountain of work to do at 1 a.m. and told myself I would be fine with a fix of venti coffee in the morning. What happened, though was that I got sick more often, my attention span shortened and I performed worse in school and in basketball.

We know well enough that cutting sleep isn't healthy. So many studies have shown serious impairments caused by sleep deprivation, even when we feel like we're fine. But our health will eventually pay the price. This semester, I decided to prioritize sleep and happiness, and I urge you to do it too. With excessive time, I can finally go to bed early, start studying for tests ahead of time instead of cramming right before, and do other things in my free time. Besides, who doesn't like to sleep? ♦

Face-off: Staff pairs battle for the pot of gold

shamrock shakers
Pranav Ahuja and Kyle Wang

To comply with our March centered life section, our life editors challenged two pairs of reporters to create leprechaun traps. With little to no restrictions on our creativity, the falcon reporters created two vastly different leprechaun traps.

On paper, the plan was perfect. We met at SHS on the Monday of February break. The night before, each of us had spent a solid two hours researching how to build leprechaun traps on WikiHow, and we were ready to get to work.

The philosophy behind our trap was fairly simple. We knew we couldn't use green because every other trap uses green. And the last time we checked, no green traps have successfully caught leprechauns.

No, our trap was going to be bigger, better, sexier — it was going to be hot pink.

So using bright pink paper, fake chocolate coins, a shoebox and a mousetrap, we laid the bait.

All told, building the trap took us two hours. Two hours for a shoebox wrapped in pink paper with a mousetrap inside. Oh, and some chocolate coins glued on the sides for decorations.

We then drove to Wildwood Park, a

relatively secluded area near nature and mythical beasts, and left the trap in a clump of bushes.

After we left Wildwood Park, we forgot about the trap for several days. The original plan was that one of us would go back and check each day in case we'd caught a leprechaun.

Except we forgot to do that. So, any leprechaun that we might have caught would have starved to death.

When we did remember, a week had passed. We went back to search and found nothing. Then Pranav almost tripped over something and kicked the shoebox, torn and crumpled as it was, into the center of the grass.

The box was empty. Our chocolate coins were a bit stale but, surprisingly enough, still edible.

Did we catch a leprechaun? No. If anything, we blame the timing. Peak leprechaun season comes in mid-to-late March, not the middle of February when most of them are still hibernating.

But we did, in the process, build one incredibly beautiful trap — a trap which should easily win this competition because it was cheap, economical and dead. And also hot pink.

#PinkIsTheNewGreen. ♦

leaping leprechauns
Angela Lee and Isabelle Yang

Our vision: a MTV worthy crib Leprechaun style, decorated in various hues of green and with a pot of gold as bait — only for the coolest of leprechauns.

To begin, we gathered our materials, which included a Prada shoebox, green construction paper, gold coins, green tissue paper, chopsticks, gold spray paint and a printed out rainbow for a dash of magic. We believed, since we were aiming to attract the highest class leprechaun out in the woods, that creating a lavish curtain entrance dipped in gold spray paint would lure in the best leprechaun.

We simulated a woodlands environment by delicately decorating the bottom of our trap with paper grass. Although we aimed for realism, it came out looking more like fake sushi grass.

We decided to spray paint everything gold — even the chopsticks, which held the lid open. For the top, we collaged a variety of green construction paper for our artistic



FALCON // ANGELA LEE
The Leaping Leprechauns take the win with their trap shown above.

leprechaun audience.

Under the roof, we placed a pot of gold (also decorated with sushi grass) to entice our mischievous money-hungry fairies. To top it off, by writing "cool leprechauns only," we emphasized that we preferred leprechauns to roll up in their Bentleys or motorcycles, smoking cigars with a cool leather jacket. We set our trap in Angela's house because we knew the leprechauns wanted somewhere warm to stay the night.

Because we decorated our trap in gold, we deserve gold, too, for the competition (even though we didn't catch any leprechauns). ♦

>> The Verdict

Falcon's Lifestyles editors Claire Rhee and Olivia Lu judged the contest in favor of Angela and Isabelle's house because Pranav and Kyle's was destroyed.

Açaí bowls: Are they worth it?

kat and mich
Michelle Lee and Katherine Zhou

After watching BuzzFeed's viral "Worth It?" series, in which content creators test out common food dishes at three different price points, we started our own challenge: trying açai bowls, trendy smoothie bowls with healthy toppings.

Right before watching Bombay in the Bay, we rushed over to Cupertino, where Vitality Bowl Cafe is located. Although it was a Saturday night, there was barely anyone in the establishment.

We quickly browsed the menu and decided to order the cheapest option, "Vitality Bowl," which includes organic açai, bananas, strawberries, flax seed, organic granola, honey and goji berries. We ordered the medium size. The cost was around \$11, the most pricey of all of the different bowls we tried.

However, to justify the expensive price tag, the cafe had a soothing atmosphere, with "Instagram-able" wood-paneled walls and free wifi. The service was also really fast, as the bowl was made in around 5 minutes.

When we got to trying the bowl, it was extremely sweet because of the honey, and the smoothie had a frozen-yogurt-like texture. It seemed like it was enough to fill our stomachs, but after sitting through the 3-hour Bombay in the Bay show, we were starving. We didn't feel the "endurance" and "energy" the vitality bowl promised.

After finding that Michelle had unused Jamba Juice gift cards on hand, we decided to try their version of an açai bowl. Jamba Juice only provides one size option for their "Açaí Primo" bowls at \$7.49. Although it may seem like a

good value, it ended up being about the same as Vitality Bowl. The bowl contains açai, soy milk, bananas, strawberries, blueberries, coconut shreds, honey and granola for a total of 490 calories.

And while the picture in the store's açai bowl poster advertised lots of fresh toppings, the actual bowl ended up lacking fruit and granola. The smoothie base was watery, unlike the yogurt-like texture of Vitality Bowl. It was more like a breakfast than a treat.

After visiting the first two places, we decided to challenge ourselves to create our own açai bowl.

We used one pint of Amazon Planet açai sorbet, made up of frozen açai puree and sweeteners. Then, we added frozen bananas to add sweetness and creaminess to the bowl, and adorned the bowl with toppings.

We didn't feel the "endurance" and "energy" the vitality bowl promised.

Although we didn't have all of the toppings we wanted, we made it work with chopped strawberry popsicles and ground-up granola bars to create an appetizing dish. We placed it in a metal bowl, the kind Vitality Bowl offers, and drizzled honey over the top.

The bowl ended up being delicious; the açai flavor peaked through the toppings, and the bowl tasted healthy with no overpowering taste of artificial sweetness.

We could add any toppings we wanted and customize the smoothie base. Plus, it was more cost-efficient to make it ourselves, especially since it was so simple. ♦

MONTHLY horoscopes

<p>Aquarius Jan 20 - Feb 18</p> <p>This month, catch up with friends you've lost touch with or barely talk to anymore! QOTD: how do you throw away a garbage can?</p>	<p>Pisces Feb 19 - March 20</p> <p>Think about your future career choices; they say a sumo wrestler earns a net income of roughly \$260 per sponsor. QOTD: who closes the door after the bus driver gets off?</p>	<p>Aries March 21 - April 19</p> <p>Make good decisions when you go out with friends — limit your spending spree! QOTD: do you think sand is called sand because it's between the sea and the land?</p>
<p>Taurus April 20 - May 20</p> <p>Try out different music this month — who knows? You might find your new favorite genre (from R&B classics to weeping love ballads). QOTD: is the S or C in scent silent?</p>	<p>Gemini May 21 - June 20</p> <p>TREAT YO SELF! This month is perfect for cashing in on all the hard work you've put in for the past few weeks. QOTD: are you telling the truth if you lie in bed?</p>	<p>Cancer June 21 - July 22</p> <p>Exercise off all your stress this month! Running away from your responsibilities can only burn so many calories. QOTD: if only two percent is milk, what is the other 98%?</p>
<p>Leo July 23 - Aug 22</p> <p>Take some time to ponder your past life decisions, and strive to be the best you can be this month. Kindness rarely goes unnoticed! QOTD: why is it called a building if it was already built?</p>	<p>Virgo Aug 23 - Sept 22</p> <p>Learn to keep your distance when necessary, but also try to get closer with the special people in your life. QOTD: why do we bake cookies but cook bacon?</p>	<p>Libra Sept 23 - Oct 23</p> <p>Go the extra mile in all your school assignments this month! You never know when your teachers could notice the effort you put in. QOTD: if you're waiting for the waiter aren't you the waiter?</p>
<p>Scorpio Oct 24 - Nov 21</p> <p>This month is a perfect time to form new relationships. The new moon approaches soon, so during this period, turn to your close friends and family. QOTD: if you drop soap on the floor, is the floor clean or is the soap dirty?</p>	<p>Sagittarius Nov 22 - Dec 21</p> <p>Up your savagery this month! Sassy is one of the best forms of humor there is, and you might need all the laughs you can get. QOTD: if two vegans get into a fight, is it still called beef?</p>	<p>Capricorn Dec 22 - Jan 19</p> <p>Pursue your wackiest dreams this month; meme page owners have some of the most shocking follower counts on Instagram! QOTD: who put the alphabet in alphabetical order?</p>

GRAPHIC BY ASHLEY FENG

March 17, 2017

Conflicted yet confident: Junior finds her path

dancing queen



Julia Miller

Ten years from now, some of my current teachers will be retired. My peers in the Class of 2018 will be doing anything from living in the Bay Area with infants on their hips to halfway across the globe to exploring the uncharted depths of the world to discover revolutionary findings. But me? I have no idea.

2027 is just three years shy of my 30th birthday, and that sounds distant and

unimaginable. My mind can barely decide what I want for lunch, let alone devise a 10-year plan. I'm constantly conflicted as to what I want for the future, and I often imagine different versions of my older self.

Some days, I see myself bustling around in a hospital after graduating with a bachelors of science in nursing, saving lives and meeting new faces every day. Then, a switch goes off in my brain, and I picture myself on a movie set, finally directing my first blockbuster film following my acquisition of a bachelors of arts in film production degree at a competitive Los Angeles film school.

Yes, those two careers are polar opposites, I know. The hardest part about

being interested in nursing and film isn't that they're wildly different from each other but that I see myself fitting in both of those roles. Helping people and creating films are my two biggest passions.

Soon enough, I will attempt to listen to myself and figure out who I'm going to be.

Here's what I think so far: Maybe I'm married, but hopefully without kids. I have vowed to never live anywhere but California.

But just because my home will be in California does not mean that I will not travel the world. I will have gone on a safari in Africa, face-to-face with a lioness and her cubs. I will have rowed in a gondola underneath the bridges of

Venice, gazing up at the clear blue Italian skies. I plan to trek to the top of the Eiffel Tower and witness the twinkling city of Paris. Hopefully, I will travel to somewhere cold, maybe Iceland, to stare out into the night at the Northern Lights, the most beautiful sight of them all, in my opinion.

I will have learned how to live. Instead of holding back and staying in my comfort zone, I will be a person who has a hunger for adventure.

No, I may not know what colleges I'll apply to, what major I'll pursue, what job opportunities will await me or if I'm even going to be here in 2027, but one thing's for sure: I will not hold back on what the world has to offer me. ♦

Catching up to the clock: I don't want to spend the rest of my life chasing after time

sanj manj



Sanjana Melkote

I have spent the last 15 years of my life being late. I was born late in the day, learned to walk later than any healthy child should, got my braces off later than all my friends and even wrote this story 10 days later than the deadline.

I am the last person to write about where I see myself in the next 10 years

because I can't even think beyond what was due yesterday in my classes.

I don't know what I want to pursue as a career or when I want to get married. I don't even feel sure of my course selections for next year.

But today I can make a goal for myself, that I really hope I will have accomplished by the time I'm 25.

In 10 years, I would much rather live, soaking up every moment instead of missing all the important ones thanks to my habitual tardiness.

I don't want to wake up for my 9 a.m. dance class at 9 a.m.

I don't want to leave for school so

late that I can only make it in time if I get dropped off at an illegal bus stop. In fact, I don't even want to go to school, let alone get dropped off at school, in 10 years.

I want to be the kind of person who solves a tough math problem the same day I couldn't understand it, instead of memorizing the exact approach right before the test.

Instead of waiting until the show day to perfect every move, I want to be the dancer who performs in class like they were on stage.

As my life moves forward, I want to stop racing with deadlines and final

grades, which as of right now motivate me.

Instead of cramming because I have a test, I want to learn out of curiosity. I want to dance because I love to dance, not because of a future performance.

I want to drive the change in my life. I don't want to spend my life trying to catch up with time. I want to be ahead of it, use it and seize it.

My goals and aspirations will change with the day, every new thought igniting a different dream, but my hope is that I use the time between now and 2027 to make those dreams, whatever they may be, come true. ♦



FALCONS DESCRIBE WHAT THEY HOPE THEIR LIVES WILL BE LIKE IN 2027

togataalks

What would you tell yourself 10 years ago from the knowledge you have gained since then?

"The next 10 years aren't a race—so don't speed through them. Focus on building new skills, learning from mentors. See the world and be present. But if you insist on winning that race, remember that slow and steady toward thoughtful goals beats a sprint in no direction at all."

2007 alumnus Varun Sivaram, now a Geoeconomics Director at Council of Foreign Relations



"Strive for balance. If you constantly sacrifice happiness for work, you won't fully enjoy your journey."

2007 alumnus Jason Nguyen, now a Medical Student at UCLA



"When you run into former classmates, every single one of them is going to greet you with a smile and a hug, and genuine curiosity about where life has taken you. So much of life happens after high school, so much that by just 10 years out, all of the grudges or insecurities have become really distant, and nothing compared to how much you feel in common with people you spent 9-12th grade with."

2007 alumna Sarah Thermond now an SHS Drama Teacher



My future: an adventure of a lifetime

ra hooligan



Rahul Vadlakonda

In one decade, it is hard to keep track of the knowledge gained, memories made and relationships built. This vast amount of time, filled with countless experiences made day by day, makes my future seem unpredictable.

As of now, I am preoccupied with looming deadlines, test dates and a daily mountain of school work. Sitting at a desk and typing this story, I can only imagine what my life will be like.

In a decade, I know my life will have changed drastically: I will have completed my undergraduate degree from

a university (not trying to enforce the Saratoga stereotype, but I hope a good one). If all goes according to plan, I will have completed medical school, and I will have a stable job as a doctor.

I will be that guy walking around a hospital or clinic, seeing 25 patients every day and finally coming back home afterward to a nice relaxing couple of hours of paperwork. And though I say it like it is a bad thing, which it probably is, I know that it will be worth it 60 years from now knowing I spent my life helping others in one of the best ways on the planet.

In terms of where I will be living, I don't really know. But I do know at first, right after my college years, I will have to go through a roommate system before saving enough money to move into my own apartment.

If costs for living in a Bay Area are

affordable, I'll try to be here, but if not, I'll explore another metropolitan area, perhaps New York, Boston or Chicago.

As a kid from California, I'm ready to experience colder climates for at least some part of my life. Living in a cramped and populated city means that I will have to use public transportation.

Now, I know that most people might not mind using public transit and have gotten used to it after years of taking it, but as a kid who has grown up in the suburbs, I do know it will take at least a few months before I can navigate smoothly through the labyrinth that is a big city.

I will also keep in close contact with the friends I have right now, visiting them from time to time and maybe even settling down in the same area as them. We will still be poking each other on Facebook and spamming each other on

chats as we do today. And, having three cousins in Saratoga right now, I will definitely keep in contact with them (and I can't forget my four other cousins).

As time progresses, we will only get busier and the frequent visits we might make to each other's houses will slowly dwindle, or even stop at some point. But I know we will make it a priority to catch up between weeks of not seeing each other and faintly continue this "tradition."

In all, I hope to live a good, healthy, humble and prosperous life. I want to be a person who lives life to its fullest and finds joy in the simplest of things.

However cliché this last part might sound, I want to spend my life helping others — whether that be through working as a doctor or through the countless opportunities present for charity work. ♦

Me in a decade: still helplessly struggling

koh koh nut



David Koh

At some point in every year of my life I've come face to face with the dreaded question — "What do you want to be when you grow up?" or "Where do you see yourself in (blank) years?". Of course, my response was usually the obligatory "doctor" or "scientist."

Regardless, I never understood why people ask children what they expect themselves to be. At least when I was in elementary school, I was too caught up in learning to tie my shoes to bother worrying about my future.

However, as I've experienced almost two years of high school and countless lectures about the importance of my future, I've realized that perhaps there is some value to aspiration.

In 10 years, I hope I will have achieved my dream of becoming a professional racecar driver. We can ignore the fact that while being well over 16 years old, I have yet to lay my hands on a steering wheel or my foot on a gas pedal.

In all seriousness, given my current levels of procrastination, I'll probably end up being one of those people who will have an AAA business and call card in my wallet and a spare tank of gas in my trunk at all times. Unfortunately, a mindset of "I'll fill it up at the next station" or "I can go a few more miles" will only leave me stranded on a highway, possibly a metaphor for everything else that may happen in my life.

But I've always dreamed of attending Gonzaga University in Washington after attending a debate camp there and discovering the joys of Red Bull smoothies. To my dismay, when I returned to Saratoga and asked my local Starbucks to put Red Bull in my drink, they asked me to leave. I do hope there comes a time in my life when Red Bull smoothies become a

walk away instead of several states away.

As to where I'll be living after college, honestly, I would be happy with anything so long as I'm not living in my parents' basement. I've watched all these movies and read all these books about grown men living in their parents' basement amongst garbage, McDonald's recruitment fliers and rejection letters from colleges, but it never really occurred to me that depending on how I performed or what I did during high school I could easily end up jobless, hopeless and stuck with a Game Boy as my best friend for the rest of my life. Needless to say, as scary as the prospect of living in my parents' basement is for me, it's no doubt scarier for them.

Then there's the other path, assuming I scrape through college and find myself ready to face the world with an enormous student debt on my shoulders and college diploma in hand.

Naturally, while most other college graduates' first move might be to go get a drink and party to celebrate the end of

their schooling days, I've always been a stay-at-home re-watching TV series with a bag of popcorn and Toblerone type of guy. Somehow watching "The Suite Life of Zack and Cody" is more enjoyable than a night of partying could ever be.

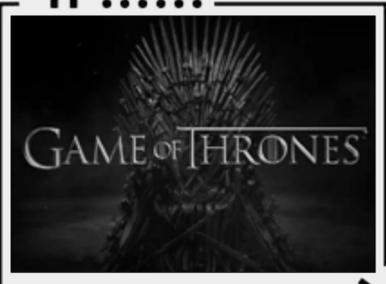
After getting over the euphoria of graduating I will probably go find a job and activate thrift-mode. My third-grade teacher once told me that the years after college were years in which nickels on the street were like jackpots. During this time, I'll become an expert in couponing and have an ear tuned to the sound of dropping coins. Of course, there will be the trips to Chipotle where my bag will be filled with more napkins than food.

While all of these aspects of my life may change, I expect that most of my tendencies and habit will stay the same — things like craving junk food in the middle of the night or pulling on push doors.

Although I may enter a whole new world of adulthood and responsibility, I'll still struggle with simple things. ♦

If you like _____, then watch _____

IF.....



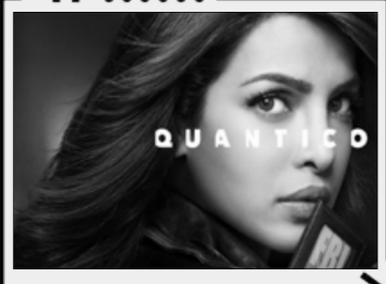
THEN.....



With less gore and nudity, more conservative GoT viewers will be pleased with this show that takes place in a similar setting of old castles and feuding groups. "Vikings," tells the tale of a farmer who ultimately becomes the king of Denmark. Its captivating storyline, which focuses on Lothbrok's journey to expand his clan's land west and defend his supremacy against rivals, is tamer than GoT but still contains plot and character development that will make you pull for characters you initially disapproved of, similar to GoT.

— Harshini Ramaswamy

IF.....



THEN.....



ABC's "Quantico" features Bollywood star Priyanka Chopra as Alex Parrish, a promising FBI recruit who becomes a prime suspect after a terrorist attack on Grand Central. A similar FBI show that offers the same thrills is USA Network's "White Collar." Neal Caffrey, a con artist, forger and thief, is captured by FBI agent Peter Burke. As the show progresses, Caffrey's sarcasm seeps more and more into Burke's personality, resulting in seven hilarious, emotional and captivating seasons (which are all on Netflix for you to binge-watch).

— Amy Tang

ALL GRAPHICS BY ANGELA LEE AND KITTY HUANG

New music floods singles charts within 3 days

POP STAR ED SHEERAN RETURNS FROM ONE-YEAR HIATUS WITH THIRD ALBUM

By Trevor Leung

After taking a year off from releasing music and from social media, singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran made his long-awaited return by releasing "÷" (Divide), his third album, on March 3.

His album once again impresses by showcasing his ability to produce music across different styles. Sheeran is looking for "÷" to be his second No. 1 album on the Billboard 200 chart, which will be announced on March 12. Less than 12 hours after it was released, his album had already reached No. 1 on iTunes.

Since his previous album "x" (Multiply) was released three years ago, Sheeran has written hundreds of songs for his third album, with just 16 making the final cut, according to an interview he did with the Guardian. One song he wrote that did not make the album was "Love Yourself," which he gave to fellow pop star Justin Bieber and which received two Grammy Award nominations.

According to Sheeran in an interview with BBC, Sheeran got rid of

his phone during his one-year social media hiatus, which he found greatly improved his life because he did not have to worry about trying to appeal to everyone's expectations and wants. Instead, he could just focus on creating music and enjoying his life.

In "÷," all but one of Sheeran's songs are based on real stories from his life, making for a very personal album. He even made the cover art himself through a meeting with a spin painter. Spin painting is a process whereby a painter throws paint into a spinning machine which creates circular patterns on a canvas.

Sheeran gave fans a taste of his new music prior to the album's drop date, releasing "Shape of You" and "Castle on the Hill" on Jan. 6. "Shape of You" immediately surged to popularity, with its audio video on YouTube garnering over 373 million views within two months after it was uploaded. As can be seen by the catchy rhythm set by a marimba in the background and the equally catchy

chorus sang by Sheeran, it's no wonder "Shape of You" reached the popularity that it did.

However, while "Shape of You" makes a better initial impression, Sheeran himself believes that "Castle on the Hill" will be the better song in the long run. The "Castle on the Hill" lyrics have more meaning, as they describe Sheeran's memories of his childhood in Suffolk, England. It's the kind of song to play while staring out the car window on a road trip, evoking feelings of nostalgia.

Two ballads on the album, "Dive" and "Perfect," also impress. In "Dive," Sheeran's straining vocals touchingly convey the frustrations of being in love with someone who may or may not love you back.

"Perfect," which Sheeran told BBC is his "best song ever written," is the first song he wrote for the album. The song title says it all: It is the "perfect" slow song, combining romantic lyrics about how beautiful his partner looks with a soft but uplifting rhythm to match the romantic feeling.

Another love song on the album, "How Would You Feel (Paean)," also shows off Sheeran's ability to bring out listener's emotions through his lyrics about confessing his love to a lover. The song features a gentle guitar solo by Sheeran, along with a short repetitive melody from the piano in the background.

While Sheeran can easily evoke emotions in his songs, "Supermarket Flowers" brings out the largest emotional reaction by far. Sheeran wrote this song honoring his grandmother, who passed during his hiatus. He told MTV, "That's my first reaction for anything that happens to me, good or bad: pick up a guitar." Sheeran demonstrates his lyrical genius again in this song, singing that "a heart that's broke is a heart that's been loved."

Less than 12 hours after it was released, his album had reached No. 1 on iTunes.

Sheeran also shows off his flexibility by writing "Happier," which depicts the pain from loving and longing after a break-up, and "New Man," a more upbeat and confident song claiming that Sheeran is better than his ex's new partner. "Hearts Don't Break Around Here" gives listeners a taste reminiscent of his older music, which consisted of slow and mellow love songs.

"What Do I Know?" which samples a catchy melody with Sheeran's guitar, is an ode to music. Sheeran sings that while others are focused on politics, he is

focused on trying to impact the world through music.

Sheeran's most noticeable deviations in "÷" from his previous albums are the songs that invoke different cultures' musical styles. He creates an upbeat tone in "Barcelona," utilizing the Spanish festival-like style of music, and he even sings in Spanish for parts of the song.

Sheeran also shows African music's influence in "Bibia Be Ye Ye" and Irish music's influence in "Galway Girl" and "Nancy Mulligan." "Galway Girl" almost did not make the album because Sheeran's record company did not think the Irish fiddle sounds would be appealing, but Sheeran determinedly pushed it through to the final list, successfully demonstrating that Irish music can be appealing.

While most of his songs on "÷" are about others, Sheeran's first and last tracks focus on self-help. Sheeran raps and sings in "Eraser" about erasing pain, and advises in "Save Myself" to help yourself before helping others.

While Sheeran's album does seem like he is taking some risks by experimenting with different styles of music, he did spend years writing, discarding and rewriting songs to satisfy his desires for "÷."

Once again, Sheeran reminds everyone that he is one of the most talented singer-songwriters on the planet. ♦

'La La Land' devotee first soars, then plummets following Oscars mishap

By Claire Rhee

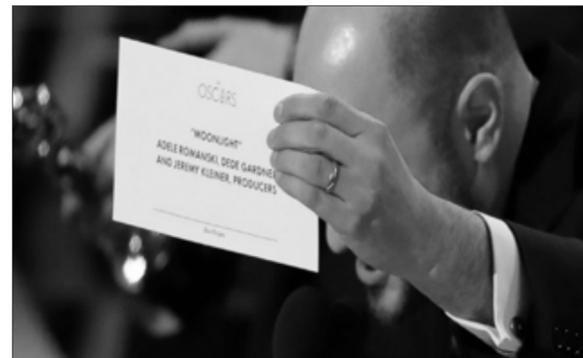
The 89th Academy Awards, commonly known as the Oscars, took place on Feb. 26 at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, and it was a show no one will soon forget.

The Academy Awards presents annual cinematic awards to the winners of categories such as Best Actress in a Leading Role, Best Actor in a Leading Role and Best Picture. Hosted this year by talk show comedian Jimmy Kimmel, the show kept me laughing as candy in parachutes dropped from the ceiling and actress Jennifer Aniston gave her sunglasses to a tourist.

To me, everything seemed to be going well: Justin Timberlake energized the crowd with his hit original song, "Can't Stop the Feeling," Kimmel and actor Matt Damon amused the audience with their ongoing fake feud and cookies and doughnuts were handed to the crowd.

2016 Oscar winner Brie Larson presented Casey Affleck with his first Oscar for Best Actor in a Leading Role for his emotional and captivating performance in "Manchester by the Sea," while beloved actress Emma Stone won Best Actress in a Leading Role for her stunning work in the movie musical "La La Land." But the real highlight of the night and the moment that I was waiting for, after watching the awards ceremony for three hours, was the announcement of Best Picture. This year's Best Picture announcement began past the time that the show was supposed to end: I just wanted to hear the winner, scream in joy (or sadness, depending on which movie won) and go to bed. But all my tiredness disappeared the second that the iconic duo Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway, who played Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow in "Bonnie and Clyde," stepped out on stage to announce Best Picture.

Personally, I wanted "La La Land" to win. I love musicals and have a special place in my heart for dancing, especially tap dancing. So you can imagine my excitement when "La La Land" was announced as the winner. That excitement unfortunately only lasted two and a half minutes before the stage was swarming with stage manag-



Courtesy of ABC Network

"La La Land" producer Jordan Horowitz held up the Best Picture envelope for "Moonlight" to the confused crowd in the Dolby Theatre on Feb. 26 after his movie was announced.

ers and confused faces. No one knew what was going on until "La La Land" producer Jordan Horowitz went to the microphone and said "Moonlight, you guys won Best Picture."

I was honestly a little crushed and, of course, shocked. I'm sure "Moonlight" is a phenomenal movie, but my heart was set on "La La Land" winning. However, with the racial controversy that has surrounded the Oscars in previous years, the fact that "Moonlight" won with its cast of mainly African American actors demonstrated progress.

Huge themes of the Oscars in recent years have been diversity and inclusion. When "Moonlight" took the award, it took the Oscars a step further into the diverse community that so many viewers wanted. But both films still could have arguably been winners since they are so different from each other and it would be nearly impossible to compare the two.

In fact, if both had won, it would have showed a friendly reconciliation of the two different groups in Hollywood rather than only having one winner. Regarding

the flub, I'm still dumbfounded as to how such a large mistake could be made at a show like the Oscars, but reports say Beatty and Dunaway were given the wrong card to read; they were given the second copy of the Best Actress in a Leading Role card by a partner from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), the company that has led the balloting process for the Oscars for 83 years.

If I felt depressed and a little angry, I can't even imagine how the "La La Land" cast must have felt after thinking they had won for a couple of minutes, only to learn they hadn't.

I understand that mistakes happen, but announcing the wrong Best Picture is the worst mistake the Academy could possibly make.

Even though the Oscars ended in a disappointing result for Best Picture winner for me, it was probably the most interesting show I have ever witnessed.

I trust that "Moonlight" deserved Best Picture, but I still think "La La Land" deserved one too, especially after all the cast and crew went through. At least the "La La Land" cast won six other Oscars. ♦

'13 Reasons Why' novel shines light on kindness

By Sherrie Shen

Imagine receiving a dusty old shoebox full of cassettes on your doorstep one morning, finding a recording with a dead girl's voice on them and then realizing you're one of the 13 reasons why she committed suicide.

As improbable as it sounds, this is the story of Hannah Baker's progression toward taking her own life in Jay Asher's fictional novel, "Thirteen Reasons Why."

A Netflix series based on this best-selling novel will be released on March 31 with executive producers Selena Gomez and Brian Yorkey.

In the novel, the narrator, Clay Jensen, receives seven tapes of a "baker's dozen" — a joke our protagonist doesn't find so funny — that hold stories.

As he listens, Clay discovers that each side of one of the seven cassettes tells of someone in Hannah's life that ultimately leads to her decision to commit suicide.

As Clay listens to her sarcastic, yet self-deprecating tapes, he follows her in reality, going to places marked on a map that Hannah left behind.

Ultimately, Asher's message is to pay attention to the people around us, give them friends and hope, and ultimately a reason to live.

Eventually, we find out that Clay had a crush on Hannah when she was still alive, and the first time they talked was when Hannah snuck out to a party.

It was during their conversations that Hannah first realized she was breaking. Not to the point of committing suicide, but acknowledging she was truly alone, despite wild lights and noise around her.

And although Hannah doesn't blame Clay and simply included him in the list almost on impulse, Clay blames himself for leaving that day and not talking to her sooner.

Had he done so, Hannah might not have isolated herself from the rest of the world.

In the end, we're left with the image of Clay calling out to a girl named Skye, walking down the same stretch of the hallway Hannah walked down, her footsteps growing weaker and weaker.

Ultimately, Asher's message is to pay attention to the people around us, give them friends and hope, and ultimately a reason to live.

Everyday interactions that don't translate into a grade on a college transcript are much more important than face value.

Although the world in this novel seems very distant from ours today, its "foreign" concepts are inevitably intertwined with the lives of our high school population.

The themes it embodies are similar to those of our recent Speak Up For Change week: recognizing and embracing differences. And while Asher's novel is fiction, it sets a standard as to how 13 lives changed forever.

While "Thirteen Reasons Why" isn't the most light-hearted book, I'd recommend it for the message it conveys as well as its writing style.

There's a Netflix series scheduled to come out at the end of March, so if you ever have time, dive into the novel or watch the story come alive on screen later this month. ♦

Millions of children log out and bid goodbye to Club Penguin

koh koh nut

David Koh



Snow glistened on treetops. Inhabitants of the town milled about on the streets, throwing snowballs, busting out in spontaneous dances and announcing "party at my igloo."

Overhead, they flew in jetpacks, collecting coins. Down below, they explored a vast expanse of mining tunnels, speeding by in minecarts and performing tricks as they went.

What will be missed the most about Club Penguin is the individual attachment felt by each of its users.

Of course, in the virtual world of Club Penguin, all of this was possible. However, as users logged in on Jan. 30 to begin their day of fun in the snow, they were met with a bright orange bar at the top of their

screens that read, "Hello penguins, the Club Penguin virtual world will be closing March 29, 2017."

Ever since its launch on Oct. 24, 2005, Club Penguin has become a large part of many children's lives across the world, reaching over 200 million registered accounts.

The owner of the Club Penguin franchise, Disney, has unfortunately announced that it will be closing down in order to open up a new version of the game, "Club Penguin Island."

As users prepare to part with their puffles and personal records, it is important to look back at all of the good times and memories that were made during Club Penguin's 11-year lifetime.

What will be missed the most about Club Penguin is the individual attachment felt by each of its users.

Much of the game's appeal was contained in its variety of game modes and people. At the end of its lifespan, Club Penguin was home to 29 different mini games and hosted countless special events on holidays and vacations.

Especially given its young player base, it left lasting impacts on its players.

As young children experienced the euphoria of getting their first puffle, they also felt the weight of the responsibility of owning a new pet.

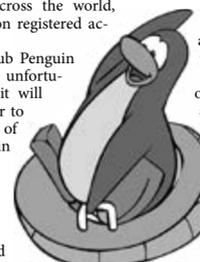
I fondly remember logging in almost every day as a child, sitting on the edge of my seat with apprehension, wondering if any of my beloved puffles had run away.

Personally, much of my time on Club Penguin was spent walking aimlessly around and throwing snowballs at random people in the hopes of making a new friend.

I remember the good times, like when my parents finally broke down and let me buy a membership (even though they cancelled it after a month).

But there were also bad times, like the time all of my puffles ran away and never came back. While Club Penguin may be leaving us a little heartbroken and missing a piece of our childhoods, it has left happy memories for its players and will continue to live on in its players' minds.

I still miss you, my beloved puffles. ♦



Past editors-in-chief reflect on time at Falcon

by Ashley Feng

The Falcon emailed questions to two of its past editors-in-chief, Henry Barmeier, a 2006 SHS graduate, and Sabrina Chen, a 2015 SHS graduate. Barmeier, an editor-in-chief during the 2005-2006 school year, graduated from Princeton University and received a Rhodes Scholarship in 2010 to study at Oxford University. He now works in a non-profit consulting firm in San Francisco. Chen was an editor-in-chief during the 2014-2015 school year, and now is a sophomore double majoring in neuroscience and molecular/cellular biology at Johns Hopkins University, where she is an editor for the campus newsletter and also runs the Humans of JHU Facebook page.

Q: Did you pursue any journalism-related activities in college or work?

Barmeier: I wrote some long-form nonfiction pieces for a magazine and did design and layout for a business publication at Princeton. I haven't pursued any journalism after college.

Chen: I'm an editor on the Hopkins News-Letter, our weekly campus newsletter. I run the science and technology section which covers world science news and recent discoveries as well as scientific breakthroughs on campus. Since Hopkins is a research university, there's always a lot to cover. I also founded Humans of JHU this year, a Facebook page based off of Humans of New York, aimed at connecting the Hopkins community through stories and portraits. I do most of the interviewing and photography for that site.

Q: Did your experience as an EIC affect your college life? How so?

Barmeier: Yes, in many ways! First, after

having the responsibility of managing a staff and putting out issues every month in high school on top of classes, sports and other extracurriculars, the first year of college felt pretty tame. Second, all of the reporting and writing I was able to do as a staff writer and section editor at The Falcon built my skills in independent research. Working on the newspaper helped me develop good instincts for tracking down key sources, conducting interviews with experts ... and reconciling conflicting perspectives, all of which are key aspects of quality research. Third, the editing aspects of the job made me realize how much I love working with writers to develop their ideas.

Chen: Definitely, I fell in love with journalism through The Falcon ... the ability to really make a difference through storytelling, and that's carried not only in my college activities but also in my everyday relationships. Though I'm not pursuing a journalism career, I feel that the skills I've learned from working on a publication are so applicable. I'm pre-med and I've been shadowing a lot of doctors lately. What I realized is that the best doctors are journalists in a sense ... they listen to their patient, take notes, build rapport and in the end they are able to compile all this information in a coherent way. In that way I think what I've learned about interviewing and getting to know someone will really transcend into my medical career.

Q: How would you describe your experience as a chickadee (first-year staff member)? As a section editor?

Barmeier: I loved my first two years on the paper. I usually wrote 5-10 articles per issue, so I was always reporting, writing and revising something.

Chen: Overall I had a truly unforgettable experience on The Falcon. It really shaped who I was in high school. I'm incredibly grateful for the mentors and friends I had. It became my tightest social circle.

Q: What were some challenges you faced as an EIC?

Barmeier: There were constant challenges! The biggest was time management. There was always so much to do, and so few hours in the day to accomplish everything required to get the issue out the door on time. I had tremendous support from my co-EIC, Elaine Mao, who often put in many, many hours herself to help me and my staff finish the issue. I also pitched in when Elaine and her staff were on deadline. Then there was the challenge of running articles that not everyone was happy about. I give Mr. Tyler and the school a ton of credit for allowing The Falcon to have a very independent voice. This meant that we sometimes got criticized, but the quality of journalism was much higher since we weren't willing to gloss over problems at the school.

Q: Do you remember any interesting stories about your time in newspaper?

Barmeier: One of my fondest memories of my time in newspaper was attending a high school journalism conference in New York during my junior year. I was out in the city one night with a few other members of staff, and we ended up befriending an off-duty firefighter on the street who recommended an amazing Italian restaurant to us, and also helped us get standing-room-only tickets to a "Spamalot" show. It was a magical time, and bonding experiences like that with friends on staff made all of the many hours of hard work worth it.

Chen: On a happier note, I have many, many positive stories from newspaper too ... pranks during Secret Santa ... going out for food, a lot ... and the j-room being my go-to spot senior year, and I guess just the people I met. My boyfriend and I most likely wouldn't have met if we weren't in newspaper together, so it's crazy to think that working together for two years would bring people so close together. ♦



Barmeier



Chen

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

GRAPHIC BY SANJANA MELKOTE AND FRANCESCA CHU

Alumnus recalls lessons learned as school leader

by Amith Galivanche & Navin Tiwary

As the ASB president, opinion section editor for The Falcon and a manager for the marching band, 2012 alumnus Anshu Siripurapu was a key leader on campus.

Most notably, as ASB president, Siripurapu said that he learned management through his experience in overseeing all commissions and activities within the student government.

When he began attending the University of Southern California after graduation, he continued to get involved with campus affairs at the university. Siripurapu originally started college as a pre-med major, with an interest in health policy, since he planned to become a physician. But as he became involved with USC's student newspaper, The Daily Trojan, his interests shifted and he graduated in 2016 with a degree in political economy.

He said that because the Trojan was a non-credit activity, the staff of was made up of a diverse group of majors who wrote for the publication out of genuine interest. In his senior year, Siripurapu became editor-in-chief of the Daily Trojan, overseeing a century-old paper with thousands of issues in circulation at any given time that also, as

its name suggests, releases issues on a daily basis.

"My experience as ASB president in high school definitely helped me as the editor of The Trojan," Siripurapu said. "It wasn't the exact same situation, but it definitely helped to have experience in management when I was overseeing the various sections of The Trojan."

"We're living in exciting times, and I wouldn't want to miss out on the chance to cover everything going on."

ALUMNUS Anshu Siripurapu

Siripurapu said that journalism specifically appealed to him for a number of reasons.

"My reasons for going into journalism are best captured by an essay I read a few months ago written by the editor of Politico, John Harris, and one of the things he talked about was how journalism was the perfect combination of a number of different fields,"

Siripurapu said. "It's a [form of] public service, but you don't have to sacrifice your life the way politicians do. So that resonated with me. I think I'm an intellectual person but not an academic, and I've always been attracted to service-oriented professions."

After graduation, Siripurapu interned for The Sacramento Bee for a summer, covering everything from childhood vaccine laws to affordable housing legislation. He is currently taking some time off to travel and spend time with family as he works toward securing a job in journalism.

Though he is sure that he will stay in journalism for at least a few years, Siripurapu said that he has thought about eventually applying to law school. Still, he feels that having work experience beforehand would be valuable. Siripurapu said that through his experiences, he has learned that what many people may think of as "strong leadership" is not necessarily the best way to lead.

"A lot of people think that a strong leader has to be a dominator and always get their way, but in

my experience a leader is only as strong as their team," Siripurapu said. "As a good leader, you can't try to take all the credit, but you do have to take all the blame."

As he settles into pursuing his career as a journalist, Siripurapu said that he knows he has chosen a good path for himself.

"Journalism is something that I do see myself in for at least the next several years," Siripurapu said. "We're living in exciting times, and I wouldn't want to miss out on the chance to cover everything going on." ♦



Courtesy of ANSHU SIRIPURAPU

Former principal recalls journey through four school districts

by Caitlyn Chen

Opening the door to the wrestling room on one of his final days at SHS in 2004, former principal Kevin Skelly remembers watching as his four children scrambled into the gym.

As they passed balls around, Skelly recalls realizing the special place the school had come to occupy in his heart. After all, his children had grown up in this community — watching football games, playing youth sports, even attending a preschool program the school used to house and sitting in the audience of many drama productions.

As principal, Skelly enjoyed dropping in on classes, talking to students on a daily basis and going to sports events, saying he "loved it all."

"I have so many great memories of Saratoga High," Skelly said. "It was hard to leave a place I loved, but it was good for the school, for me and for my family in the end."

After graduating from Harvard University with honors and a degree in Economics, completing his Ph.D. in Education Policy and Administration at the University of California, Berkeley and working as a math teacher, Skelly became principal in 1993 and stayed here for 11 years.

Principal Paul Robinson said it's easy to see the impact of Skelly's 11-year term as principal. Besides hiring a large number of teachers who are still at the school, Skelly was critical to the development of the strong community support at SHS: During his time, the school board passed a facilities bond to build the library and science buildings, received a grant for the media arts building and garnered community support that led to the

McAfee Center.

"That's an incredible legacy," Robinson said. "If you ask the staff that worked with him, they will all tell you he is the best principal they've ever had."

At the time, Skelly thought he would be a principal here until he retired, but as his kids grew up, he realized he needed different challenges.

"When my oldest son came to high school, he didn't much like having his dad as principal," he said. "I also think that, after over a decade, the school was ready to hear a different principal voice and I needed a change as well."

Skelly was offered a job as an associate superintendent in Poway school district in San Diego County in 2004. After three years at Poway, Skelly's family came back to Northern California, where Skelly's parents live.

"If you ask the staff that worked with Skelly, they will all tell you he is the best principal they've ever had."

PRINCIPAL Paul Robinson

In 2007, Skelly became the superintendent in the Palo Alto Unified School District. Skelly said that at Palo Alto, he worked in a district with demographics and pressures very similar to Saratoga.

For seven years, Skelly was superintendent. After leaving Palo Alto, Skelly became superintendent of San Mateo Union High School District, which like Saratoga-Los Gatos UHSD, is an all high school district. With about 8,500

students, the San Mateo UHSD serves six communities, including San Bruno, Hillsborough, San Mateo, Burlingame, Foster City and Millbrae.

"They're a much more diverse student body, both economically and racially, which is really nice," Skelly said.

But even 13 years after he left his job as principal at SHS, Skelly said he still tries to stay in touch with the Saratoga community. His four children all have friends from elementary and middle school they see regularly. Skelly follows SHS sports, music and publications, and even came to present to the leadership class as a guest speaker in January.

Skelly knew Robinson from his time at the Poway Unified School District, and encouraged him to apply for the job at Saratoga when it opened in 2013.

"I really liked his style," Robinson said. "He always made me feel very comfortable in talking about any topic we had to discuss. He helped our district become one of the top districts in the country, and I admired his hard work and strong relationships he built over the years."

Robinson was promoted to principal of RBHS during Connor's senior year. After graduating, Skelly took the position of superintendent in Palo Alto Unified. But six years later when Robinson felt he needed a change, he noticed that Saratoga High was advertising for a principal.

"Dr. Skelly was my first call," Robinson said. "He told me how wonderful the students, staff, and community was and I was sold on the idea. He then told me he thought I'd be a great fit at SHS, and I've tried to live up to that ever since. I know I wouldn't be here without his recommendation. It was the best move I've ever made." ♦



Courtesy of THE TALISMAN

Former principal Kevin Skelly attends a football game with his son during the 1994-95 school year. Arnaldo Rodriguez, a Spanish teacher at SHS of 42 years, fondly recalls enjoying working with Skelly, saying that the former principal "really cared about the human side of things." "His best interest was always the students and the staff at the school," Rodriguez said. "He established a caring environment in the school that has only grown since then."

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Internment survivor faced fears after life in camps

by KittyHuang & AngelaLee

As 9-year-old Jeanette Arakawa looked on in terror, two FBI agents sequestered her family under house arrest in San Francisco. They were soon relocated to an internment camp, an experience she'll never forget.

Arakawa, now 84 and living in the Los Altos Hills, is a survivor of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. She met and became friends with fellow survivor Margaret Abe, mother of history teacher Kirk Abe, when their husbands had offices in the same building.

In May, Arakawa will be releasing an autobiographical fiction book called "The Little Exile," about her experience in the Japanese internment camps during World War II.

In accordance with the FBI's investigation of Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor, the Arakawas were one of many families placed under house arrest in 1942.

After three months, they were imprisoned in an assembly center, or temporary camp, that occupied the San Joaquin County Fairgrounds. Each family was assigned a bedroom with bathrooms in a separate building, and their meals were served in a mess hall.

Five months later, Arakawa and her family were transported to the Rohwer Re-

location Center in Arkansas, a place with meager living conditions where they lived in for three years. With the camp situated in swampy bottomlands, residents suffered from the effects of humidity year-round and a lack of indoor plumbing or kitchens. They arrived in Arkansas in October, 1942 and left in July, 1945, shortly before the war ended.

Despite the hardships of internment, Arakawa recalls a sense of unity in Rohwer. They "became a village for me," Arakawa said.

Arakawa's internment also reaffirmed friendships outside of the camp. Her best friend, a white girl who was the daughter of the Captain of Inspectors of the San Francisco Police Department, sent Arakawa a radio which had been confiscated from them after Pearl Harbor as well as other living items, including sweaters and skirts, to the camp.

"The memory of [their] kindness is forever etched in my mind," Arakawa said.

Arakawa blames the internment of Japanese Americans on the rampant racism and xenophobia against Asian immigrants that began in the 19th century with "blatantly discriminatory laws," which limited marriage choices, land and property ownership, immigration and naturalization.

However, immigrants from the affected countries tolerated these restrictions and most still preferred the U.S. as their home

over their birthplace, according to Arakawa.

"Despite the racism, they discovered that the culture and politics of our country offered more freedom and opportunities than found in their native countries," she said.

While being restricted by discriminatory laws and living in war camps, Arakawa said her experience at Rohwer stripped away her confidence at the time.

"After camp, I had become fearful of crossing streets and traffic, overwhelmed by the stocked shelves in the grocery store, and lacked confidence in approaching strangers, particularly folks who were not Japanese," Arakawa said. "Most of all, I missed the 'village' which was my support system."

Arakawa had been a gregarious child until the camps, but then felt herself becoming shy and withdrawn. For many years, she felt personally responsible for Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor to the point where she could not bring herself to go out in public.

"It was a very difficult transition from camp life to being 'outside,'" Arakawa said.

Survivors of the camps are now elderly, but the lessons of their experiences remain fresh to members of their families.

"You don't want internment to happen again," Kirk Abe said. "Rounding up people based on their ethnicity but not on their actions is very dangerous." ◆



Jeanette Arakawa gives a speech as head-coordinator of the exhibit at the Japanese American Museum in San Jose in 2008.

Although the Japanese internment happened roughly 75 years ago, many Americans are drawing parallels to the fear and prejudice faced by Muslims and Mexicans today. Arakawa hopes that revisiting the experience in our history will help to keep such massive prejudice from happening again.

"If the insidious racism had not been permitted to grow unchecked, perhaps the disruption of 120,000 innocent individuals could have been prevented," Arakawa said.

"If what [philosopher] George Santayana said is correct, 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.'" ◆

My grandpa survived the horrific Korean War

LEE CHANG HO DESCRIBES HOW THE 'FORGOTTEN WAR' ALTERED HIS CHILDHOOD

by MichelleLee

Bullets whistled in the air as the disorganized South Korean soldiers scrambled around in hopes of evading the shots fired by a wave of the North Korean and Japanese army.

The South Korean forces had been hastily glued together in a couple of weeks, and a majority of the soldiers were businessmen and industrial workers forced to fight for their country by a mandatory draft.

The North Korean and Japanese armies, on the other hand, were far more prepared with financial backing coming from major countries such as Russia.

My grandfather, Lee Chang Ho, was only 13 at the start of the Korean War on Sept. 15, 1950, and was living in the city of Chungju with his family of six.

"Back then, Korea wasn't the busy, loud and modernized country you know now," he said. "The country was worse off than some of the poorest present-day African countries [like Malawi and Burundi]. There were so many people before the war who were hungry, dirty and homeless, but that was nothing compared to what happened to the people during the war."

Nestled between the cataclysmic end of WWII and the start of the Vietnam War, the Korean War is too often referred to as the

"Forgotten War."

The war truly started for my grandfather a few months after September 1950, when he saw a couple of American soldiers in their standard army green uniforms for the first time. Never having seen a Caucasian person before, Lee was most impressed by their broad shoulders and can still remember the smell of their cigarette smoke.

"It's indescribable what human beings will do in times of immediate danger."



WAR SURVIVOR Lee Chang Ho

"American cigarettes smell different from the ones Korea had back then; they smell sharper and cleaner," he said. "I was actually grateful that the American soldiers were smoking because it covered up the terrible stench of feces and dirty bodies covering the streets of Korea."

Lee's worst memory of the Korean War was the Summer of Terror. Confused, I asked him to clarify, and he was thoroughly

shocked when I told him that I didn't know what the Summer of Terror was. He even had me flip through my AP U.S. History textbook to confirm that there was no mention of it.

As the most tragic and brutal chapter of the Korean War, the Summer of Terror was a series of mass murders issued by South Korean President Syngman Rhee on June 25, 1950.

Rhee was terrified about the idea of South Koreans joining the Communists and ordered more than 100,000 South Koreans to be killed in only a couple of weeks.

Specifically, many poor farmers and peasants were targeted despite most not even knowing what communism was.

"Despite being part of the poorer half of the country, my family and I were fortunately not a part of this huge roundup of 'Communist suspects,' as we managed to go into hiding in a more secluded area of the country," Lee said. "My parents gave my siblings and me piggy back rides all the way to the city of Busan."

Lee said that many of the Summer of Terror victims were slain on the streets and thrown in makeshift ditches that barely covered the bodies.

The killings were done so hastily that some people were barely alive, and they were left to die on the streets.

Walking by these bodies every day de-

sensitized the people to the horror around, which is what my grandfather believes is one of the worst aspects of war. Everyone stayed silent, even the families of those unjustifiably murdered, as no one wanted to be the next target.

"It's indescribable as to what human beings will do in times of immediate danger," he said. "You might wonder why no one stopped to help the victim and their families. But the whole mindset of 'every man to themselves' is a natural instinct that you can't help. It hurts to think about."

At the end of the war, my grandfather managed to rebuild his life by getting a degree for teaching. He taught all core class subjects to elementary school students for almost 35 years in the city of Chungju in South Korea.

Becoming a teacher, Lee said, was his way of trying to be a force for good to cure the evil that he saw everywhere in war.

He urged today's teenagers to take it upon themselves to learn more about this significant event.

"The Korean War should not be a forgotten war. Over a million people were killed. How could it be forgotten?" he said. "We say history repeats itself, but if only people were more exposed to war, then we will put in much more thought before starting fights here and there." ◆



GRAPHIC BY ANGELA LEE AND ERIC SZY

WWII Japanese attacks in China marred my grandma's youth

by CaitlynChen

Editor's Note: All quotes translated from Chinese.

My dad's mother, Ko-Hua Chen, only 7 at the time, was walking from home to her elementary school 3 miles away in Jiangxi, China, in 1941. From a distance, she heard the whirring sounds of a helicopter — one of the first ones ever used in war — and spotted it, low in the sky.

She swore she could see the face of the Japanese pilot. Quickly, she ran away from the street, walking through the cemetery instead to hide from the looming enemy planes above.

Whenever they heard the planes get nearer, she would duck in bomb shelters ditches, crouching, without saying a word. When she could no longer hear the blaring of the helicopters above, she got up, and some of her classmates were standing by a tombstone, staring at a broken burial and the bones of a dead person inside.

"In the eight years [during World War II], [the Japanese] kept on dropping bombs on our country, and trespassing into our country," she told me, now 85-years-old. "They would harm the civilians — killing people who were not even part of the army."

She was just five at the start of the war and 13 by the end.

During the time, many of her brothers, uncles and family friends enlisted in the army. The Japanese had been invading the Chinese mainland since 1937 in the Nanking Massacre. When World War II began in 1939, Japanese forces expanded into my grandma's



Ko-Hua Chen, 22, third from the right, poses for a family picture in 1956, after moving to Taiwan during the Chinese Civil War.

hometown of Jiangxi in the south. Even her father gave his life to the cause.

Her dad, my great grandpa, was a doctor who ran a clinic in Zhangzhou (in Fujian) before the war started. When the war began, her dad YeZai Shuai closed the clinic and went to help out in the army hospital, caring for the wounded soldiers from the frontline.

But one time, she told me, her dad was caring for a wounded soldier who had gone to the front lines to fight and was hurt — but not hurt badly. My great grandpa said that he could go fight again, but the soldier refused to go because he was scared of the war.

Later, my great grandpa told him he had to go back to fight, because he couldn't stay in the hospital any longer.

The soldier got mad, took a gun and killed her father.

"My dad gave his name to the army," she said.

After living through the merciless fight-

ing against the Japanese, she said she was glad the U.S. entered the war in 1941 and could help end the fighting.

At the time, she could not help believing that the Japanese had "bad hearts," after all they had done to her, her family and friends.

But looking back on it, as we read in our history textbooks today, this idea of Japanese militarism — that surrender was considered worse than death — was something ingrained in their culture as a result of Emperor Hirohito's reign.

The Japanese were made to believe that the strength of the military is equal to the strength of a nation, and so they were "merciless" to the Chinese, my grandma said.

"I'm so thankful for America for dropping the two atomic bombs that made Japan surrender," she said. "Or else, Japan would keep dropping bombs on China."

My grandma thought that was the end of the war, but only a few years later in 1946, the Chinese Civil War began, the communists led by Mao Ze Dong and the nationalists led by Jiang Kaishek.

At the time, my grandma lived in her uncle's house, while her mother, a nurse, helped soldiers in the front lines. Even as she helped her uncle with housework every day, my grandma said sometimes there were no food on the table.

Because of wartime inflation, a handful of rice would cost one Yuan one day and the next, it would cost three.

By the time she was 17, the fighting had reached her hometown in Fujian, FuZhou, China, and she had to leave her uncle's house. She didn't take the pictures of her mother and father off her desk; she didn't know she would never come back for them. ◆

Her family fled the country and moved to the island of Taiwan. While the communists continued to fight for power in the mainland until 1961, she was able to find peace in Taiwan, and studied to be teacher. She ended up being second place in her class, right after my grandpa, who took the No. 1 spot.

"The war defined my life, and I'm glad I could redefine it since then."

WWII SURVIVOR Ko-Hua Chen

"I was never able to beat number one!" she laughed. "He was pretty incredible."

Thereafter, she got a job as an elementary school teacher and began raising four children in Taiwan.

When her children, including my dad, graduated from undergraduate schools in Taiwan, they all moved to California for graduate school. Four decades after the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1993, she would join her children in California after retiring from her teaching job of over 36 years.

Still, even years after the war she would wake up from sleep in a cold sweat, thinking she was hearing the whirring sounds of enemy planes.

She has never forgotten what she lived through, and only hoped it would never happen again in her lifetime.

"It was hard to focus on my studies during that time," she said. "The war defined my life, and I'm glad I could redefine it since then." ◆

Tiananmen: then and now, through my father's eyes

by KyleWang

From a distance, I could see the portrait of Chairman Mao hanging over the gate to the Forbidden City, but the locals — tour guides, soldiers, passersby — did not seem to notice it. It hung over them like a storm cloud in the distance, growing larger as we neared Tiananmen Square.

We walked past street vendors, past tourists posing for photographs and past soldiers standing guard over the plaza. I don't remember if I counted the flags or tried to read the bold, golden Chinese lettering plastered on the walls of Tiananmen Gate.

All I remember is the red we saw — the bold, fearless red of the Chinese flag.

All of this happened two summers ago, when my parents decided that it was time for my then-10-year-old brother and me to visit Beijing.

They took us to Tiananmen Square, where 30 years ago hundreds of students had stood in protest against the communist regime.

In 1989, China faced serious economic difficulties with rising living costs and rampant inflation. It was during this stagnation that thousands Chinese university students had begun to blame the Communist Party as the source of their troubles.

At first, they clamored for reform, and when that didn't work, they protested more openly, defying decades of iron-fisted control by the party.

My father, Eddie Wang, was 819 miles away from Tiananmen in Shanghai when the protests erupted. But like thousands of other students, he took to the streets.

"Regardless of where you were at the time, we were all trying to achieve the same thing,"

my father said. "It started because students were not happy with the pervasive corruption they'd seen and they had no channels to voice their concerns."

Nowadays, he speaks about the incidents carefully. I don't imagine he was the loudest voice of them all, or standing upon a stage with a megaphone. No, he was just a student, a face in the crowd — there to show his support for a cause but not ready to fully commit.

"We thought we had the people's support," my father said. "But we didn't realize that we only had their sympathies. Nothing more."

He remembers one specific incident. While students marched down a busy street in Shanghai, their protests interrupted the flow of daily traffic in the city.

One large bus filled with older, working-class citizens parked in the middle of the crowd — perhaps because it was unable to move through the swarm of arms and bodies, or maybe just because the driver wanted to make a point.

Nevertheless, the passengers stayed put. They sat and watched as the students marched, choosing to wait in the traffic peacefully rather than join in protest.

"[The passengers] knew we were being watched," my father said. "They knew we were being influenced to direct our anger toward certain party leaders because we'd been told who was corrupt. They were a lot more sensitive than us about that."

My father grew up in a small coastal city in Southeast China, with two parents who served in the Chinese military as hospital workers. As a child, he lived far and away from the political interplay of big-city life in China, and spent his days preparing for his

Gaokao college entrance exams.

Even then, he remembers that in the liberal arts and humanities-related subjects such as history and literature, the government had censored school textbooks fairly tightly.

By the time he arrived in college in Shanghai, the government censorship had taken a different turn. Many student-run newspapers were being closed down for openly promoting "pro-Western" policies.

"We thought we had the people's support. We didn't realize we only had their sympathies. Nothing more."

FORMER STUDENT Eddie Wang

"The protests were pretty important," my father said. "They took up almost a whole semester."

Like most major Chinese universities, the one that he attended in Shanghai chose to end that semester early, he told me later. The situation had spiraled out of control after the government sent troops to Tiananmen Square 819 miles away.

As many as 10,000 protesters were arrested in the aftermath; estimates put the death toll at anywhere from several hundred to thousands of civilians. But, as a mere participant in Shanghai, my father was safe.

In the weeks following the tumult, my father went back to school. Soon the protests, the shouting, the anger faded into memory.

"It was so busy," my father said, "with homework and all."

I've been to Shanghai exactly once in my life, and I've never visited the streets where my father might have stood. Back then, I was too young to understand it all. Even when I visited Beijing just two years ago, I didn't see or feel the decades of blood, sweat and anger trampled beneath so many tourist's feet.

To me, of course, these names and phrases are meaningless. I feel guilty writing this, but that's the way it is — I did not stand beside those students and chant in the same angry voice or make the same sacrifices for freedom.

Naturally, my father has grown since then, and he looks back at the protests with a mixture of pride and regret.

"I would say this is a little bit like some of the demonstrations in the U.S. today," he said, "but ours flamed out of control like the Vietnam anti-war protests in 1968."

None of this was on his mind when he and my mother first brought my brother and me to visit Tiananmen Square.

"It's such a solemn place. I wanted you to understand it's importance as a cultural center with all the rich history behind the buildings," he said. "It wasn't all about 1989."

Looking back at the photographs from our visit, I see now that both my father and I wore red when we visited the square that day.

My father sported the red of the Chinese flag and I, coincidentally, the deep maroon colors of Arizona State University, the American university he would later attend.

Both of us are smiling. We look harmless — maybe not total pacifists, but just tourists who have allowed the echoes of 1989 to fade into memory. ◆

BASKETBALL

continued from pg. 1

the season," senior forward Kevin Couch said. "But just to be able to get to where we did is something that I'm really proud of."

To make the NorCal tournament, the 19-10 Falcons made the CCS finals on March 4, where they lost 72-56 to Monterey.

"Even though we lost to Monterey, I'm proud of how far we were able to go in the entire season," senior guard Jonathan Cai said. "We rose above people's expectations to achieve what we knew we could."

The boys put up a fight to try to get the championship, but they could not keep up with Monterey's outside shooting and fast-paced offense.

"We played pretty well, especially in the second half," senior guard Joshua Deng said. "Monterey just had an exceptional game, and there's not much we can do about that."

In order to make it to the CCS championship game, the Falcons defeated Gundersen 60-55 on March 1. With the game tied with under 2 minutes to go, the boys shut the Grizzlies down with stifling defense and were able to score just enough to win.

"The Gundersen game really highlighted how we have grown as a team," Cai said. "Early on in the season, we may have folded under the pressure in the last minutes, but this time, we did what was necessary to win."

In thrilling game on Feb. 25, the Falcons

defeated Aptos in the quarterfinals 62-61 in overtime after being down 8 points with just over 2 minutes remaining in regulation.

Previously, the Falcons routed Pajaro Valley in their first CCS round on Feb. 23 with a score of 83-51. According to Couch, this win gave the Falcons the confidence they needed.

How did the Falcons climb so high this year? Players pointed to a team culture that changed with the addition of new head coach Patrick Judge and assistant coaches Benjamin Neves and Brad Nall.

"Our entire brand of basketball changed with the coaching change," Cai said. "We play a more fast-paced offense, and I think it really contributed to our success this year."

After narrowly missing out on a league title to champion Mountain View, the Falcons refused to give up. With senior center Joel Schneidmiller and junior guard Harrison Fong leading the team, they were able to reach the Division III CCS championship as just the 5th seed. Schneidmiller, a 6-6 center with extraordinary jumping ability, led the team in scoring and rebounding with over 15 points a game and 10 rebounds a game.

However, the team's success was not solely a result of the new offensive approach. According to Deng, the closeness of this team is a major reason for its success.

"This year was definitely a special year for us," Deng said, "I couldn't be any prouder of what our seniors, and the whole team, accomplished." ♦



Junior guard Will Turpin shoots the ball in a 62-61 overtime win against Aptos on Feb. 25.

Courtesy of PHYLLIS FONG

Senior basketball guard dribbles through injury

by Ashley Feng & Kitty Huang

Senior guard Jenny Qian tore her ACL and PCL, two of the four main ligaments in the knee, and her meniscus, a piece of cartilage in the knee, in her sophomore year during varsity basketball practice, when she slipped on class of 2016 alumna Nicole Prows's foot and cracked her knee the wrong way while being guarded in a drill.

"It's still hard for me to walk," Qian said. "A lot of times I wake up in the morning and it's really painful."

To help relieve the pain, she frequently stretches in the morning before going to school. Qian's injury also means she isn't able to hike, snowboard, ski, or participate in any other potentially harmful activities.

Her biggest disappointment from this experience is the way the injury has limited the number of basketball games and minutes she can play.

"It really hit me hard because I was just getting used to being on varsity as a sophomore and I was getting more playing time," Qian said, "but after the injury, everything went down, so I had to work hard to get back."

Qian went through several months of physical therapy, which she still attends occasionally, after her knee surgery and also worked on her basketball skills. She ran on her elliptical machine at home to improve the muscles in her legs, trained her shooting on the court and did workouts such as running and weightlifting in preparation

for the basketball season.

She worked hard enough not only to come back from her injury but also to become a key piece of the team.

"It really taught me how hard work does pay off, and I wouldn't be able to play and be a starter now on varsity if I didn't work as hard," she said.

Qian recalls the basketball lunch meeting when her teammates and coach Mike Davey broke the news of her torn ACL.

"When I heard that, I was sobbing so much," Qian said. "But [my teammates] were all there for me and they were supporting me, giving me words of encouragement. Even until this day, sometimes when I get down on myself, every-

one just helps pick me up."

Qian's teammates said she had been playing very well up to that point during her first year on varsity, even as a sophomore. Her work ethic did not go unnoticed by them.

"She is always attentive and always wanting to learn more and get better in practices. Even when she takes breaks because her knee is hurting, she still shoots on the side and helps us out," senior point guard Rachel Davey said.

Despite the drawbacks of her injury, Qian realized that it also taught her a valuable life lesson.

"Obviously if that injury didn't happen, I would be able to do a lot of stuff I can't do now," Qian said, "but I'm glad in a way that injury happened because I've never worked so hard to get somewhere." ♦



Qian

Annual March Madness tournament promotes school unity

by Jay Kim & Roland Shen

Recently, some students have been entering their classes after lunch, sweaty, tired and decked out in Nike headbands and shorts. This is a result of ASB's annual March Madness tournament, in which students form teams of four and compete against each other for NBA jerseys of each player's choice.

The teams compete in a single-elimination tournament. Twenty-five students from all grades are participating in the tournament, with the first games played on Feb. 28 and the final game is played at the end of March.

The event was mainly organized by ASB, as well as a few other members of the leadership class, including senior class officer Gautham Arunkumar.

"The goal of this event is to bring together people of different groups and skill levels and put them in the same environment," Arunkumar said. "Whether you're a varsity starter or a Mystery Club enthusiast, we have provided a medium to express the love of basketball."

Students like senior Kushagro Bhattacharjee decided to participate in the event because it gives them an opportunity to express their love of the sport.

"I play basketball a lot in my free time,



Sophomore Hanlin Sun shoots a 3-pointer during his March Madness game on March 10.

FALCON / ASHLEY FENG

and March Madness is a time for me to play in a competitive setting," Bhattacharjee said. "I've always participated in the tournament during past years because it's just something fun I can do with my friends."

In order to fix many of the issues discovered in last year's tournament, such as having "super teams" that dominated everyone else, new rules were implemented this year to promote fairer competition and to try and lessen the power of these dominant

teams, usually filled with SHS basketball team players.

For one, no two starters on any school basketball team, whether it be freshman, JV or varsity, are allowed on the same March Madness team. In addition, no team can include more than two school basketball players at all, regardless of whether or not they are a starter.

"We thought these rules would even the playing field and just create a more enjoy-

able experience for everyone," Arunkumar said.

This year's bracket was completely randomized as usual, but many participants were upset with their position in the tournament. As a result, some teams attempted to find loopholes around the rules, which gave the tournament administrators a variety of challenges to deal with. Many teams attempted to change their matchups or to update their roster after the tournament started to gain an edge, according to ASB Board Representative Nathan Chin.

"We had to do a lot to make sure no team has an unfair advantage," Chin said. "There were lots of issues regarding ethics, and we just had to make the best decisions we could."

Nonetheless, after overcoming the initial challenges, the tournament proceeded fairly, Chin said.

The annual tradition has been anticipated since the beginning of the school year, and has evolved into something more than the conventional sports tournament.

"So many people from all corners of Saratoga High participate in the event that it brings a sense of unity to the school during the month of March," Arunkumar said. "It's more than just a fun event to play in — it's an opportunity for anyone to play and to form new friendships." ♦

The Parr sisters share last softball season together

by Emily Chen

As twins, seniors Sophie and Maxine Parr are used to working together on the field or court. After all, they've played sports together since kindergarten.

But though they both play field hockey, basketball and softball, this softball season is the first that Sophie, Maxine and Ella, their freshman sister, will play an entire season on the same team together.

"Playing with Sophie has been so much fun because we are competitive with each other and not afraid to be tough with each other, but we also are able to laugh with each other about mistakes we make," Maxine said. "Playing with Ella is not much different, but it brings another Parr to the team, which can be a handful."

As one of three freshmen on the varsity girl's softball team, first baseman and outfielder Ella sees the familiar faces of her sisters when she sees Maxine playing third base and Sophie at catcher and in the outfield.

The twins have played high school softball for the past three seasons and are not afraid to give Ella advice.

"They don't feel bad about critiquing me because they know they can't really hurt my feelings, and even if they do they don't care," Ella said. "They definitely support me and I know that they'll tell me the truth, and that's always nice."

Playing together provides more time for the sisters to bond and share inside jokes, but the Parrs especially enjoy singing and dancing along to ABBA, a Swedish pop group, during warm-ups or batting practice.

Even though they spend lots of their time together at home and at practice, Maxine is glad she can "always have someone to

laugh with when on the field" when playing with her sisters.

As the team starts to prepare for its league season, which started on March 15, the three feel extra driven to be successful this year and push each other to get better.

"We're all kind of at the same level for the sport, so we can play with each other and fight for this," Ella said.

Last year the team made CCS but lost in the first round to Half Moon Bay.

Even with the loss of last year's strong senior class, Sophie believes the team, which moved down to the El Camino league, will find success.

"We are competitive and not afraid to be tough with each other."



SENIOR Maxine Parr

"I think that the teams will be a nice fit to play," Sophie said, "And with our team getting back into the game each practice and improving each day, we will have a really good shot this year to show how good of a team we really are."

In the end, the Parrs are happily embracing the time they have to play together on the softball field since Maxine and Sophie are graduating later this year and leaving for college.

"My favorite part about getting to play with them is that they are my other half," Maxine said, "and [that] I am able to play my last season with them and share moments with them." ♦

Player grows up with her basketball team and family

by Harshini Ramaswamy

I was introduced to basketball at age 8 when my parents signed me up for "City Hoops," a program for elementary school kids. I initially didn't think much of the sport — it was just one of the many my parents had signed me up for as a kid.

As I grew older, though, basketball grew in importance even as I lost interest in other sports. Soccer, swimming and tennis faded into the background, and I spent most of my evenings shooting hoops. I soon emerged as a standout player from my stints in National Junior Basketball from fourth to seventh grade.



Courtesy of HARSHINI RAMASWAMY

Playing for the spotlight

My height and speed gave me an advantage over other players. I became the top scorer in every team I played on. I lived for the special pats on my back awarded solely to me from the opposing team's coaches, and as a result, I played for the spotlight.

I cringe thinking about the cockiness I displayed in elementary and middle school. I found that even though there is no "I" in team, there is an "I" in "win." I played an individual game, often refusing to pass to my teammates because I was overconfident in my abilities. I bashfully looked down as people complimented my skills, but on the inside, I would greedily hoard their praise.

That all changed when I attended a basketball camp in Sonora with Saratoga High's JV basketball team in seventh grade. As a seventh grader playing with the high schoolers, I swelled with confidence because I believed I was special playing at a more competitive level. But after every game that camp, I was beaten down.

The JV players were much better than I was. I was blocked, shoved and pushed down on those courts, instilling in me a fear of high school basketball and hurting my confidence. I cried in secret almost every night and became timid and unsure of my game.

Questioning my place on the team

Entering high school, I considered not trying out for the school team. A large factor that had played into this decision was the fact that my older sister, Dharini, had been a star player, making the varsity team as a freshman, and I was afraid I couldn't live up to the reputation she had built.

She had been one of the best guards the

I felt as if I had not earned my spot and the success of the team did not feel like a success for me.

school had ever seen — her name was in the top few of nearly every record in rebounds, points, steals and assists. I felt many eyes on me and an unseen pressure to play extremely well as a freshman. I lived in her shadow when I entered school as the girl known as "Dharini's little sister."

Even after making the JV team, I realized that suddenly, I was one of the shortest centers in the league. If I really wanted playing time, I would have to step it up.

I threw myself into the work required to improve. I was determined to work hard and the results showed on the court, but as sophomore year came around and I found myself on the varsity team, I was still missing the confidence I once exuded.

Being benched certainly didn't help, though it was what I expected and knew I deserved. Although I got playing time, I was not in the game long enough to develop a rhythm or find the flow, getting pulled out abruptly in favor of our main scorers.

At my lowest points, I did not even feel like a part of the team. I felt as if I had not earned my spot and the success of the team did not feel like a success for me.

Center Harshini Ramaswamy avoids her opponents while dribbling across the court.

Perhaps it was because of those days as the "star" of my childhood basketball teams, yet in time I would realize it was my own negative attitude that separated me from the team and that I should have focused on the "bright side."

Playing on varsity allowed me to play

I began to savor the contact and welcome the bruises forming on my knees, finding a release from the anger, frustration and self-hatred I felt.

with bigger and faster girls whose defense beat me down more times than I would like to admit. Yet all this did was increase my determination to find a way around them. I began to savor the contact and welcome the bruises forming on my knees, finding a release from the anger, frustration and self-hatred I felt and finally feeling as if I was working for my playing time.

Trust from my teammates

When I was inserted into the starting lineup this year, the familiar excitement returned. I wanted to have a fantastic year with the team filled with the seniors I've known and loved since I was in fourth grade. T

hough we didn't end the season the way we wanted to, I did not regret any of the time spent with them.

The night of our last game, I cried into the arms of my teammates. I pass them in the hallways and will for these last few months, but the bonds felt on the court will never be what they once were, and should be properly mourned.

I have them to thank for an atmosphere that made me to comfortable to play and laugh on the court for the last few years. Not many people find their "niche" at high school, and however clichéd it may sound, mine was there with my team on the court.

Coach Mike Davey has also taught me important lessons: Above all, work relentlessly to get what you want and have a positive attitude.

He taught me that "victory goes to the vulnerable," and I would not be the player I am today if it had not been for the guidance of Wallace, Davey and our assistant coach Aron Mitsunaga.

It saddens me to say goodbye to the seniors I love from the bottom of my heart, yet as the upcoming varsity players began to enter the room during a postseason lunch meeting, I began to feel that excitement at the prospect of another season.

I look forward to learning who they are and becoming a team with the same bonds as the special one this season. ♦

BOYS' TENNIS

Doubles struggle to match success of singles players

by Jay Kim & Elizabeth Lee

The boys on the varsity tennis team got off to a promising start this season, winning two of their first three matches, including a 6-1 win against Lynbrook on March 9.

The Falcons won a clean sweep by all the singles against the Vikings and were able to ease the pressure on the doubles teams, who had struggled in previous matches.

"I think as a team, we are improving," No. 3 singles player senior Andre Xiao said. "Our doubles did exceptionally well, as Lynbrook tried to stack some positions and only managed to win one match."

The team participated in the annual California Tennis Classic tournament in Fresno on March 3-4, where they placed fourth in Division 1 competition, the top level.

The boys won their first match 6-1 against Archbishop Mitty High School on March 3. Later that day, the team beat Menlo-Atherton High 4-3 in a tough match with another clean sweep by all singles but three losses from the doubles. Xiao secured the team's victory by winning a 10-point tiebreaker in his match.

"Menlo-Atherton's doubles were slightly stronger than ours, but we had a chance for No. 2 and No. 3 doubles to win," No. 2 singles player senior Kailas Shekar said.

Following their first day of the tournament on March 3, the Falcons played against Palisades High School and Homestead High School on March 4, falling short 4-3 in both matches.

The team changed their lineup for the two matches in response to the other teams' lineup changes, according to No. 2 doubles

player junior Varun Meduri.

"It was clear that they were stacking their lineup in order to increase their chances of winning," Meduri said. "We decided that it would be most efficient if we changed around our lineup to match theirs."

To improve, the team hopes to strengthen their doubles by working on strategies and communication.

The week prior to the tournament, they won their first league match 5-2 against Gunn High School on Feb. 28 and suffered a 4-3 loss to Monta Vista High on March 1.

According to No. 1 singles player junior Dean Stratakos, almost all of the Matadors' players play competitively in the United States Tennis Association and have more experience in tight games than the Falcons.

"However, we have been successful against them in the past, and we have a shot of taking them down next time now that we understand what needs to be done," Stratakos said.

To improve for upcoming matches, the team hopes to strengthen their doubles by working on strategies and communication.

"Our team gained many new additions this season, and we must decide who plays best together, since both must work as a team in order for the match to flow," Stratakos said. "I definitely believe our team has a lot of potential to be unveiled with more practice." ♦

BADMINTON

Falcons face early losses as new players take up varsity positions

by Sherrie Shen & Rahul Vadlakonda

With a challenging season ahead, the badminton team has lost its first three matches, including a 21-9 loss against Cupertino High on March 9.

The highlight of the match were victories by No. 1 mixed doubles partners Spring Ma and Jason Zhao, who won their matches 24-22, 21-16, while the No. 1 boys' doubles team of Stephen Ding and Josh Li prevailed 21-10 and 21-13.

"I don't think the players are mentally strong enough to handle the pressure that comes with matches, especially if the set is close," Zhao said. "We are trying to bring out the intensity in practices, and hopefully

we'll see some progress."

The team also lost 18-12 to Milpitas High on March 2 and 26-4 to Monta Vista High on March 7. Although the loss to Monta Vista was expected, the loss against Milpitas came as a surprise.

The team hoped that they would prevail against the Trojans, a team had just been promoted from the lower division. But the Falcons are still struggling to fill gaps left by graduating seniors, having lost almost half the varsity team.

There were many close matches vs. Milpitas including No. 1 girls' doubles and No. 2 boys' doubles, and if the Falcons won those games, the final score would have resulted in a 17-13 win.

Though the players' confidence might

have been hurt by the loss to a seemingly beatable opponent, Zhang said they will be able to move on from the loss quickly, an ability the coaches instill into the players through constant motivation.

"The captains and the coaches were not affected by the depressing atmosphere and instead, encouraged us even more," Zhang said.

The losses to Monta Vista and Cupertino were somewhat expected, since the two schools are top contenders for the De Anza League.

Assistant coach Calvin Blocker said that he would like the team to stay in the De Anza League. He uses the team two years ago, which ended the season 3-7 and barely missed being demoted to the El Camino

League, as an example. He believes that the team can do the same this season, as long as they work hard to improve.

"Last year we had a fairly good turnout," Blocker said, "and it's going to be a struggle, but that's the whole deal with the contest."

Key additions to the team include freshman Alvin Ren and Jeffrey Xu, both of whom play varsity boys' singles.

Blocker said that this season will be a good experience for players, especially freshmen, as the team's newer players have not yet seen such a "caliber of badminton," and hopes that they will all work hard and improve their game. ♦

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the match against Milpitas on March 16.

BOYS' SOCCER

Falcons rank high in league but fall short of making CCS

by Angela Lee & Michelle Lee

With their 4-3 win against Fremont on Feb. 16, the boys' soccer team placed second in the El Camino League, giving them the edge to make CCS that the team had been working hard for all season.

Right after their game, however, the boys found out that the third-place team, Gunn, had gained admission into CCS and they had not.

"It was honestly kind of disappointing, although I'm still personally proud of all we accomplished this season," senior right back player Naman Sajwan said. "We definitely deserved to be at CCS."

The Falcons, who finished with a league record of 8-2-2, traced their failure to win the CCS bid to their preseason games, during which they did not play as many upper league schools as Gunn.

In their senior game against Fremont, the Falcons beat their first-place rival, breaking the Firebirds' undefeated streak. Senior captain Kevin Yu scored three goals during the game and junior right forward player Solomon Bailey netted one.

Yu attributed their win to the team's mental strength and desire



FALCON // ISABELLE YANG

Senior captain Kevin Yu winds up to push the ball up the field with a long pass to a teammate during a 2-1 win against Cupertino on Jan. 17.

to win. "We pushed through a lot this season, and I think the reason we were successful as a team is because of the passion that everyone has," Yu said.

While Fremont proved to be a great opponent with high-powered offense and great ball possession, the Falcons worked together more effectively and efficiently.

Although the Falcons missed their goal of qualifying for CCS

this year, they feel proud that they will play in the upper league next year.

"We accomplished a lot this season," said Yu, who will continue his soccer career by playing at Carnegie Mellon University next fall. "I feel really close to my teammates and they are basically my family. We spend so much time with each other that we formed strong friendships and I really enjoy playing with everybody." ♦

SWIMMING

Duo diving team begins season

by Ashley Feng & Amy Tang

When most students are asleep at 9 a.m. on a Saturday, sophomore Kaitlyn Lee is already up and somersaulting into the chlorinated waters at the Santa Clara Diving Club, training for her upcoming dive meets.

As the only two divers on the SHS swimming and diving team, sophomores Annika Doney and Lee carry a heavy responsibility. Each of their scores weigh 50 percent of the points that SHS scores for diving meets.

Last year, Doney was the only member of the team. This year, she is excited to have a fellow diver and friend by her side.

In a typical school week, Lee practices 2-2.5 hours on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday with her team at the Santa Clara Diving Club and with the Los Gatos High School diving team on Monday and Wednesday.

Doney also dives for the Santa Clara Diving Club, but competes on a Junior Olympics level. She practices 2-3 hours most days

except for Sunday. Both divers switched to the sport from competitive gymnastics, Lee in the summer before freshman year and Doney in the beginning of 8th grade.

"I permanently injured my elbow at gymnastics, which prevented me from continuing the sport," Lee said.

Doney said she changed sports because "gymnastics was way too demanding, and I knew I wasn't going to pursue it in the future."

While the swim team participated in its first meet on March 10 against Palo Alto at the SHS pool, the dive meet on March 9 was postponed until March 15, because the Palo Alto High School pool is currently being renovated.

"(The SHS pool doesn't host diving competitions because it is too shallow.)

"I'm really excited for this season and hopefully everything will go well," Lee said. "Our first meet is being delayed, but I'm honored and looking forward to representing SHS at my first high school diving meet" ♦



Doney



Lee

Advertisement for ELITE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE. Features sections for SAT SUBJECT TEST PROGRAMS, AP PREPARATION, and contact information for San Francisco, Cupertino, San Ramon, and San Jose locations.

Advertisement for Saratoga Library Presents 'Thinking Money: A Financial Expedition'. Includes a list of panelists (Komal Ahmad, Manny Capello, Carl Guardino, Alex Lofton, Evan Low) and event details for a Grand Opening Panel Discussion and Reception on Saturday, April 1, 2017.

>> snapshots



FALCON // ASHLEY FENG



FALCON // DEREK CHEN



FALCON // VIVIEN ZHANG



FALCON // ISABELLE

Junior Nathan Peng hurls a pitch during a game against Abraham Lincoln High School on March 4.

Stanford Professor John Perry speaks front of a group of AP Language students in the library on March 9.

Senior William Chen sings the National Anthem for his pageant performance in Mr. Saratoga on March 1.

Senior Abigail Taloff pies math teacher Debra Troxell at the Pi(e) Day senior fundraiser on March 14.

We can all relate to ‘Cash me outside’ and other memes

my life is amyme



Amy Tang

Scrolling down my Facebook timeline, I’m bombarded with memes with flashing bold white letters that read, “Cash me outside, howbow dah?” At school, it becomes almost impossible to go a day without somebody saying or referencing the “cash me outside” meme.

When 13-year-old Danielle Bregoli and her mother from Florida appeared on “The Dr. Phil Show” to discuss her behavior last September, nobody expected the girl to rise to internet fame: one teen with attitude, one anxious mother and Dr. Phil produces somewhat trashy television. “I Want To Give Up My Car-Stealing, Knife-Wielding,

Twerking 13-Year-Old Daughter Who Tried To Frame Me For A Crime,” proclaims the “The Dr. Phil Show” website entry.

The segment likely would have faded into the abyss of daytime television had it not been for one perfect moment. “All these

The phrase is now used to describe any slight annoyance or disruption, and it has become addictingly catchy.

hoes laughing like there’s something funny,” Bregoli says, gesturing to the audience. “Did you say,” Dr. Phil responds, dramatically pausing and moving his hands as though attempting to sort through Bregoli’s meaning, “the hoes are laughing?” The audience be-

gins to applaud, and it is at that point where Bregoli unleashes the line that would soon make her an internet star: “Cash me outside, howbow dah?” she yells at the audience.

The phrase is now used to describe any slight annoyance or disruption, and it has become addictingly catchy. It seems to be used all over the place after it became an internet hit.

But why do we care so much about this rebellious teenager, with her dyed red hair and thin eyebrows?

For me, it’s because she’s relatable. It’s undeniable that people like Bregoli make for quality entertainment. All around the world, including thousands of meme pages on Facebook and news websites, seem to agree that she has entertained the masses of people.

Her candor is so out there that it draws many people in. People cannot imagine themselves saying something so crazy in front of live TV, which makes her that much

more special in the eyes of the public. appreciate her authenticity, since completely honest and blunt now are too often considered rude and unacceptable.

Truthfully, it can be difficult to be dial to people when internal frustration is building up, and “cash me outside” be an entertaining and lighthearted way to ease feelings of annoyance without crossing as, well, annoying.

Got 57 minutes of math notes and less homework assignments due tomorrow? Tell Mr. Yim he can cash me outside.

The phrase has taken on a second life as a meme, beating out some of 2017’s iconic memes so far, including side Michelle Obama, salt bae and the internet best worst source of advice (the guy who puts his finger up to his head). The phrase is like every other viral trend, will fade its hype after a month or two, but you bet there will be dozens of relatable memes to come. ♦

Fourth time’s the charm: It’s easy to be addicted to ABC’s hit reality show

dancing queen



Julia Miller

“Oh my god, did you see ‘The Bachelor?’” Those are the first words out of my mouth every Tuesday morning, since every night before, there has most likely been yet another shocking turn of events on the hit ABC reality dating show.

In the meantime, I spend time strategizing about all the possibilities of how this insane rollercoaster of a season could end for Nick Viall, this season’s Bachelor, and his vast array of women vying for his heart.

For those of you who live under rocks, “The Bachelor” is one of the most watched programs on TV, airing Monday nights at 8 p.m. Even if people aren’t a part of #BachelorNation, they’re still bound to hear about it endlessly from those who immerse themselves into the craziness of this show.

I’ve been watching “The Bachelor” for eight years, and never in the past seven seasons have I seen such a pathetic contestant as Nick. He cries in self-doubt at least once an episode because he thinks his quest for love isn’t working out. I wouldn’t believe much in love, either, if I’d stuck around this franchise for the past two years. He fell in

love twice on “The Bachelorette,” picked out the engagement ring each time, but right before the proposal, he was sent home.

Nick isn’t the only one who’s outside “The Bachelor” norm. Most women this season seem either deranged or desperate.

Take, for instance, Corinne, the obnoxious rich girl gone villainous. This 24-year-old woman from Miami was possibly my least favorite contestant in history. Her immature personality and interactions with the other women made my mouth drop.

Corinne’s everlasting feud with 23-year-old contestant Taylor about Corinne’s constant napping and lack of “emotional intelligence” led to a season packed with exchanges of petty comments, accusations of lying and even Taylor’s mental breakdown.

Though I relished the crazy times with Corinne and Taylor, I was excited for the final three: Rachel, Raven and Vanessa. Since Rachel was officially announced to be the star of this year’s “The Bachelorette,” so it isn’t a surprise that Raven and Vanessa were the final two.

Raven is a spunky Southern belle who is the epitome of a sweetheart. Her thick accent and corny jokes make her kindness and humor so much more enjoyable, and I’ve been rooting for her since the beginning.

On the other hand, we have Vanessa. Though her chemistry with Nick is undeniable and their emotional connection is intense, their relationship would make no

sense in the real world. Still, in a predictable, 2 hour long show, Nick successfully proposed to Vanessa.

The episode showcased both of the girls meeting Nick’s family. Raven was an instant hit, charming Nick’s mom and sister with her sweet demeanor. Vanessa, on the other hand, used the opportunity to vent to Nick’s mom about all of the insecurities that she had about her possible engagement.

To be honest, Vanessa’s constant indecisiveness about what she wanted to come out of the relationship was nothing but frustrating, especially as Raven expressed certainty about marrying Nick throughout the entire episode.

In the “After the Final Rose” special, Vanessa and Nick were noticeably tense, with Vanessa even citing problems that she and Nick had been having with their relationship so far.

Fifty bucks says that they don’t make it another six months. ♦



The Bachelor Nick Viall

Courtesy of TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

topten

THINGS TO DO DURING MARCH

- 10 Start off St. Patrick’s Day with a bowl of Lucky Charms. Not that you’re getting to the table with In-N-Out, but a bowl of crispy marshmallows.
- 9 Start training for Club Run. Getting to the table with In-N-Out is gonna require you to be fit.
- 8 Brainstorm creative Prom assignments. You’re hoping for a “yes” with that piece of binder paper.
- 7 Practice your Powderpuff cheer routine. Work tirelessly to perfect your hip gyrations. No one wants to watch mediocrity.
- 6 Go to the Spring Fling Dance. “Dance through the decades” but to a time when Stanford had a 50 percent acceptance rate.
- 5 Make some baked goods. Celebrate Pi Day by rewarding yourself with a slice of pie for every digit of Pi you can memorize.
- 4 Start getting your performance for “Toga’s Got Talent” ready. There’s no such thing as practicing too early.
- 3 Make a leprechaun trap. Collage is expensive, and a pot of gold could really help pay that tuition.
- 2 Start practicing for college applications. Some practices include facing rejection and lowering your expectations.
- 1 Celebrate St. Patrick’s Day the most authentic way possible. Dublin, California, is only 500 miles worth of gas away.

>> Amith Galivanche & Kyle W