



SENIOR MAG

Find 2016-17 senior magazine inside.



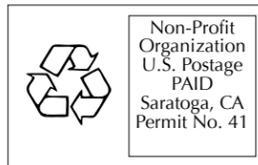
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Boys' volleyball wins Norcal finals.



THE saratogafalcon



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

saratogafalcon.org

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SUSPENSION

Student arrested for making violent threat against school

BY SherrieShen

In the last couple weeks of school, the administration has implemented heightened security around campus as a result of a student's stated threat to cause violence.

The student was suspended on May 22 after other students overheard the accused student's threat and reported what they heard to a teacher, who then notified the main office.

Principal Paul Robinson addressed the issue in an email sent to parents and students the same day. The exact nature of the threat was not specified.

Within minutes of being notified, the administration activated the district's safety plan, which entailed immediately investigating the situation, collecting evidence and working with law enforcement. A sheriff's deputy arrested the student and removed him from campus.

Since then, the school has added extra security as a short-term solution until the end of the school year.

Additional deputies from the sheriff's department have also been stationed on campus and nearby, with an increased presence during tutorial, lunch, passing periods, before and after school.

Administrators and other school employees have been patrolling the perimeter of the school much more frequently, keeping an eye on all entrances. In addition, some teachers have been locking their doors as a security measure, and teachers have been asked to try to keep their students from wandering around campus during class periods.

Students had mixed reactions to the heightened security. Sophomore Alyssa Whitman is glad that the administration caught the student before the situation escalated further, but she feels that the added security is too much.

"It's getting to the point where some people cannot even go to their car during class to drop things off like their jackets, and I think that's a little bit too serious," Whitman said.

Despite this threat and the various precautions taken around campus in response, Robinson is confident the school remains a very safe place.

"As this incident has shown, our students help keep us safe," Robinson said. "By working with our staff, students did all the right things, and we're safer today than we were before. It's all of us working together that makes the difference." ♦

COLLEGE BOARD INVALIDATES SEVEN AP EXAMS IN RESPONSE TO SEATING VIOLATIONS

MIND THE GAP

BY AmithGalivanche, KittyHuang & AlexandraLi, RolandShen

The administration received an email from the College Board on May 3 claiming that the organization had received a photo from an anonymous source of a table at the school used for testing. This photo led College Board to inquire about the seating arrangements of the AP exams that had taken place on the first three days of testing that occurred May 1-3.

Finding what they deemed a violation, College Board officials invalidated seven out of 20 exams offered by the school this year, leading to retakes that are taking place May 18-26.

The seating arrangement implemented by the school on the first

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GRAPHIC BY ANGELA LEE

>> what'sinside

■ SOLAR PANELS

Mandatory renewables

California should lead the charge in the construction of additional solar panels. **pg. 8**

■ OVER THE SEA

Foreign students

Students from foreign countries like France and South Korea come together here. **pg. 19**

■ SPORTS RANKINGS

Top 5 teams

How does your sports team rank in the Falcon this year? **pg. 21**

CLASS OF 2017

Senior prom to be held at Tech Museum in San Jose

BY StephenDing & EliciaYe

With more than 275 students set to attend Senior Prom and dozens of interactive exhibits at The Tech Museum of Innovation, the senior class officers are hoping for an event that tops last year's widely praised Junior Prom.

After taking into consideration feedback they received on Junior Prom last year, the senior class officers eventually decided on the Tech Museum as it offers a variety of other exhibits other than only a dance floor.

"It also offered an enormous space, which gave us the flexibility to bring in a lot of other things

such as flipbooks and several desert stations and a large dance floor," senior class president Rachel Won said.

The dinner menu includes an antipasto display, spinach and artichoke dip, Swedish meatballs, macaroni and cheese, salads and satays, short rib sliders, tater tots, an ice cream sundae bar and a petite dessert display. As an attempt to offer a variety of options, the officers further expanded the menu to include American comfort food and better vegetarian options, according to Won.

The officers hope to improve the experience for those who don't en-

>> **PROM** on pg. 5



Won

RACE

Controversial blackface prom asking receives backlash at LG

BY ElaineFan

In recent years, the simple question of "Will you go to prom with me?" has been asked in increasingly elaborate ways, ranging from posters and flowers to choreographed dance performances. However, a Los Gatos High School senior has been criticized for going too far with his "promposal" on May 12, when he decided to ask the question in blackface.

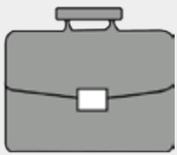
Blackface occurs when an individual paints his or her skin black to imitate an African American. It originally gained popularity in the mid-19th century and was used by white performers to propagate racial stereotypes and inferiority in blackface minstrel shows. In many cases, the show were used

to justify the institution of slavery. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s established the practice as racist in mainstream society.

According to an editorial published May 16 on the Los Gatos High School's newspaper, El Gato, the senior's prom asking was based on a Bitmoji avatar he had previously sent to the girl he was asking over Snapchat. The avatar was black, with blue hair, glasses, a tank top, bow, and holding a bright Prom poster. The senior omitted the bow, tank top, and blue hair dye, but still chose to blacken his face.

The senior's promposal pictures on Instagram were met with little protest, even garnering

>> **RACE** on pg. 6


 news
>> briefs

ASB prepares to transition to a new year

As this year comes to a close, the 2016-17 ASB officers are handing off their positions to the newly elected officers.

The new officers will be president Nathon Chin, vice president Roland Shen, treasurer Cameron Lin, secretary Roshan Verma, board representative Nicholas Di, club commissioners Ishana Narayanan, and Elicia Ye, and head commissioners Kyle Wang and Mervi Tan.

This year, ASB consisted of four juniors and four seniors, allowing the juniors to be directly offered guidance from their fellow senior officers.

For example, 2016-17 treasurer Roland Shen is mentoring upcoming treasurer Cameron Lin on the workings of the activities office such as counting deposits and signing checks.

"I'm looking forward to tackling issues that will impact a larger portion of the student body," Lin said. Junior Nick Di was also getting tips from Junior Nathon Chin for the first board meeting he attended on May 31. "Nathon is doing a great job teaching me how to summarize school events and other essential tasks," Di said.

— Patrick Li

Juniors recognized at annual awards ceremony

Bausch and Lomb Honorary Science Award: Dean Stratakos (presented by Kirk Davis)

Brown Book Award: Ananya Chakravarthy (Amy Keys)

California Mathematics Council Certificate: Rahul Kumar (PJ Yim)

Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony Award in Humanities and Social Sciences: Christopher Auches (Matt Torrens)

George Eastman Leadership Award: Robert Scott (Matt Torrens)

Harvard Book Award: Bryan Wong (Natasha Ritchie)

MIT Leadership Award: Chengzi Guo (Cheryl Lenz)

Mount Holyoke College Book Award: Daphne Liu (Natasha Ritchie)

NCTE Achievement Award in Writing: Kyle Wang (Amy Keys)

Smith College Book Award: Angela Lee (Natasha Ritchie)

Rensselaer Medal Winner: Tiffany Huang (Kirk Davis)

Wellesley Book Award: Caitlyn Chen (Natasha Ritchie)

Williams College Book Award: Andrea Su (Amy Keys)

Xerox Award for Innovation and Information Technology: Stacey Chen (Judi Heher)

Falcons place high in Physics Bowl competition

Juniors Anthony Ding and Michael Xue placed in the top 100 for scorers in the annual Physics Bowl competition held on April 12. Ding placed 14th while Xue placed 94th.

Twenty SHS students in the competition split into Division 1 for first-year physics students and Division 2 for second-year students. Saratoga High placed 14th in Division 1.

Approximately 10,000 students participated in the annual Physics Bowl competition: a 40-question, 45-minute multiple-choice test.

— Navin Tiwary

>> picturethis



BOMBS AWAY! >> Seniors Jonathan Cai and Armin Agha-Ebrahim prepare to launch water balloons at teachers in the quad on May 19. They made this catapult with a 20-foot range for extra credit in physics class.

FALCON // MUTHU PALANIAPPAN

COMPETITION

History Day: an opportunity for students to express their passions

BY Ava Hooman
& Esha Lakhotia

Then a freshman in May 2015, junior Alvin Chung and his teammates anxiously waited for the judges to evaluate the product of their hours of hard work in the annual History Day competition.

Their category, Senior Group Performance, was being called last; the tension was building every minute.

Members of the other teams that were already called celebrated with hugs, and a parent could be heard crying out of joy for their child.

The team's hopes fell as the announcement ended and they realized that they would not be going on to nationals.

Nearly half a million of students nationwide compete in History Day, and only the best of the best make it to the nationals.

History Day is a year-long educational competition that encourages students to explore local, state, national and world history beyond the classroom setting.

After selecting a topic of their choice, students spend hours starting in January researching with help from mentors and teachers.

Their hard work is then trans-

formed into a presentation, paper, exhibit, performance, documentary or a website.

"The participation really depends on the topic and if teachers offer extra credit," said librarian Kevin Heyman, a mentor and helpful guide to many of the participants.

This year, Chung, along with his fellow teammates from last year, juniors Shania Jafri, Evelyn Hoa and Hannah Yoon, made a performance about Shays' Rebellion, a topic covered in the first semester of AP United States History.

According to Jafri, the format usually starts with a primary source document, which acts as a hook, sparking the interest of the audience and introducing the time frame of the historical topic.

The group has made three projects since their start in freshman year, and they plan on making another in senior year.

The projects offer a chance to meet people with similar interests and passions.

Their project made it to the state level, but didn't make the national level this year after the com-

petition in early May.

"In my freshman year, we were one round away from nationals, and in sophomore year, we were two rounds away, so we really hope to make it to nationals either this May, or next May in my senior year," Chung said.

Chung said that not only does he learn more about the history behind past events and people, but that he and his team enjoy the process of creating original content with friends.

"History Day provides me with the resources and competition to gain more knowledge about topics we cover in class, while still having fun with my friends," Chung said.

Jafri also said that though the project started as trying to get an A in her freshman history class, it turned into a journey that she and her friends have gotten closer through.

"It was amazing because we had unforgettable memories such as staying up late performing our lines in my garage, getting distracted by musical parodies and having inside jokes that we always laugh at," said Jafri. ♦



Chung

CAFETERIA

Changes met with mixed reception

BY Christopher Lee

The school's cafeteria has undergone multiple changes this year such as additional food options and the implementation of an electronic checkout system.

Dippin' dots, which sell for \$3.50, have made their way into the freezers of the cafeteria, but they haven't been as well received as hoped. According to cafeteria manager Pamela Carlino, the novelty has worn off after they were introduced early this semester.

"They're not that excited anymore," Carlino said. "I think the kids want the regular ice cream."

Even so, she said that the ice cream sandwiches and cones that the cafeteria used to sell are not

likely to return.

"I don't have enough room for both freezers out since we got the new tables," Carlino said. "I can't put regular ice cream in the Dippin Dots freezer either. Dippin Dots is lending us the freezer, and it's really cold; I don't know if I'm going to be able to put regular ice cream back in there."

The school's leadership class has been collaborating with the cafeteria to bring about additional food options and varieties for students.

For instance, new Thai food and vegetarian options were implemented as a result of Leadership's suggestions. But even these options haven't been a hit.

"I created a dish involving Thai

chicken and a sesame chicken with veggies and some rice," Carlino said. "I also tried some stuff from Sysco; it was too salty and cost \$10 a case."

Besides offering new food options, the cafeteria has introduced a new method for students to pay by implementing an electronic debit system.

According to Carlino, the transition to electronic payment wasn't done with the intention of speeding up lines. Instead, it helps the few students who are on the free and reduced program.

The program dictates that the students on the program cannot be made obvious of the status and the electronic system serves to conceal their identity, she said. ♦

Congratulations
CLASS OF 2017!

TIME

Thursday, June 8
6:00 pm

LOCATION

Saratoga High School
Benny Pierce Field

NUMBER OF GRADUATES 342

SPEAKERS

Saya Sivaram

Zach Grob-Lipkis

Nathan Ching

Sophia Crolla &

Kanika Vora

Julius Woods

Source: Administration

GRAPHIC BY ELICIA YE

COLLEGE TRENDS

Does school's ties to private institutions help students?

BY Alexandra Li & Victor Liu

Each April, several dozen SHS seniors receive a thick, enclosed box in the mail with bolded gold letters spelling out "Welcome to the Trojan Family."

This year 22 percent of the 145 Saratoga applicants to the University of California (USC) were accepted, 4 percent higher than USC's 18 percent average.

For the past few years, SHS students have benefitted from higher rates of acceptance into USC at approximately 30 percent, averaging around 15 students enrolling every year.

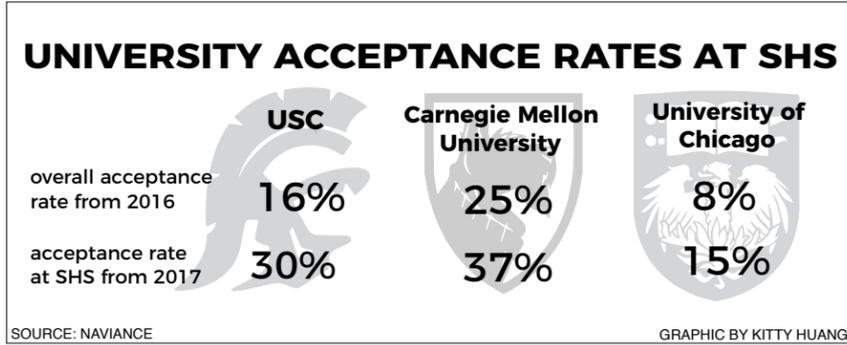
According to assistant principal Brian Safine, the school also holds one of the highest public school acceptance rates into USC, boasting rates on average 10 percent higher than the university's overall acceptance rate of 18 percent.

By contrast, Monta Vista High School has averaged an acceptance rate of 17 percent to USC over the last two years, while Lynbrook's average over the past two years sits at 22 percent.

Because of its proximity to home and the diverse range of programs, USC is high on many students' rankings.

"The fact that students can double major there, or in some cases have a major and a minor really appeals to the multi-interest nature of our students," Safine said. "I think some of our students have also heard about the strong alumni network that USC offers, and that appeals to them as well."

Current USC freshman and SHS alumna Giulia Corno chose USC because it offered



a dual degree program in both neuroscience and political science.

When asked why the school seems to have so much success getting students into the school, she said, "I think Saratoga students just fit a lot of what USC is looking for in a student: driven and smart. I do think that the Bay Area, especially Saratoga, tends to encourage those traits. Students are given more opportunities to put their minds and their drive to work."

In addition to USC's popularity among SHS students, with 164 students applying in 2015, school officials have maintained a close relationship with USC's regional admissions officer.

Amidst the flurry of around 50 teams representing different colleges that arrive every year, USC has constantly been present for the upperclassmen to learn more about, sending the same admissions officer annually.

"Whereas sometimes we see different people every year from certain universities,

USC has sent us the same person the last several years, so she's gotten to know our staff and our students," Safine said. "She's also been really responsive over email, so I think the consistency of communications has allowed us to develop a relationship with her."

Aside from USC, other schools also send admissions representatives to meet with Saratoga students individually. They reach out to guidance officer Bonnie Sheikh in hopes of attracting more students to the school.

Northwestern University, which also sends the same admissions officer annually, has an overall acceptance rate of 13 percent, while SHS holds a 15 percent acceptance rate there. According to Sheikh, Northwestern's admissions officer Stephanie Ranslow "really likes our school and comes every year."

In addition, Saratoga High's 15 percent acceptance rate to the University of Chicago, which is 7 percent higher than the school's

overall admissions rate of 8 percent, may also be attributed to the regular yearly visits of the same admissions officer. UChicago's admissions officers have also given presentations to the Saratoga guidance counselors regarding their side of the college applications process and have also held discussions with students.

"Schools like UChicago are going to come back to Saratoga year after year because they know that kids here are smarter," said 2016 alumna Helen Chen, who attends the university. "It doesn't make sense for schools like UChicago to send representatives to a rural Texas school who may only have one kid attend UChicago every 10 years."

Sheikh has noted how reaching out to representatives from different schools during sessions can be the first step in forming a connection with a school.

"Students are often timid to reach out to admissions officers," Sheikh said. "But I've found that they're really responsive and willing to help, especially if you have a reasonable questions."

According to Safine, high schools can develop these connections with colleges through different ways. Saratoga's four guidance counselors are able to visit many colleges across the country, both locally and ones where they have to fly in. In some cases, colleges will actually cover the cost of travel for counselors.

"When they're here visiting, we try as hard as we can to put a name to a face," Safine said. "It's always nice to get to know the institutions where our students will spend the next four years of their educational journey." ♦

CLASSES

Enrollment of students in AP U.S. History falls

BY Chelsea Leung & Alexandra Li

As the guidance counselors met individually with sophomores in early March, many paused as they reviewed their future schedules and realized they were conflicted on whether they would take AP US History (APUSH) or regular US History (RUSH).

The counselors advised some students to carefully examine the wisdom of taking APUSH. Their advice was that taking a combination of hard classes junior year was a mistake made too often.

Apparently, many students heeded their advice: The number of non-MAP APUSH classes is projected to drop from five sections this year to three sections next year.

Although drops in enrollment could easily be attributed to fluctuating class sizes in the past, the current sophomore class has 360 students, compared to the juniors' 302.

For sophomore Ruchi Maheshwari, taking regular U.S. history next year made sense.

"A lot of kids complain about the difficulty, and as someone who is already not that great at history, that puts me off a little," Maheshwari said. "My sister [Nupur], who graduated in 2016, also told me about the difficulty of the class."

On the other hand, sophomore Arin Chang signed up for APUSH, but he may drop to RUSH if he finds his overall workload too heavy, since he is also taking three other honors/AP classes, including AP Chemistry, English 11 Honors and Pre-Calculus Honors. He does not want to be

overwhelmed, and has heard from upperclassmen about the amount of work that APUSH requires, such as the reading and writing that many students view as tedious.

For example, junior Surya Murthy, who is currently taking APUSH, does not recommend taking the class unless the student is confident in their ability to manage the heavy workload.

Junior Ananya Chakravarthy, however, decided to take RUSH because she is already taking three other STEM-oriented AP classes and found it unnecessary to increase her burden. Now that the year is almost over, Chakravarthy is happy with her decision.

"We go slower because we don't have to finish by May, and we learn the same material but the class isn't as intense," Chakravarthy said.

Although APUSH is one of the most content-heavy AP classes, APUSH teacher Kim Anzalone thinks it does not deserve its reputation of being "overwhelming or too hard."

She has discussed the level of homework with students, and has found that most agree it is "just right for an AP class."

Other APUSH teachers this year were Faith Stackhouse Daly and Matt Torrens, who taught the Media Arts Program version of the class.

Assistant Principal Brian Safine has noticed that over the years, the number of students registered for APUSH has fluctuated, mostly as students consider whether they are able to fit it into their schedule.

"We always encourage students to lead balanced lives," Safine said. "The students in APUSH have a passion for the subject and are making a great decision by taking the class." ♦

By The Numbers

of AP U.S. History sections 2016-17: 5

of AP U.S. History sections 2017-18: 3

of Current Juniors: 302

of Incoming Juniors: 360

RETAKES

continued from pg. 1

three days of testing that occurred May 1-3.

Finding what they deemed a violation, College Board officials invalidated seven out of 20 exams offered by the school this year, leading to retakes that are taking place May 18-26.

The seating arrangement implemented by the school on the first three days of the AP testing had students sitting 4 feet apart with dividers between them at some tables. However, this system violated the College Board's guidelines that require students sitting 5 feet apart without dividers, which College Board claimed would have "provided a more secure testing environment"

No actual cheating was observed by proctors or alleged to have happened during the testing.

Junior Sarah Deng said that because of the surprising nature of the fiasco, she has become less inclined to study for her retake exams, which are taking place from May 18-26.

"I was just so mad that I was almost crying; those are my hardest APs," Deng said. "I'm mad because I don't want to study more; I almost want to protest by just not taking them but I have to."

While College Board officials first contacted the administration on May 3, the Educational Testing Services, which is partnered with College Board for logistics and security, did not confirm the invalidation of the tests until May 12. The administration then immediately communicated these circumstances to students and their parents along with a plan for the makeup exams.

The administration was able to rearrange the testing area once it was informed of the possible violation. The seven invalidated exams included AP Chemistry, Environmental Science, Psychology, Computer Science, Physics 1, Physics 2 and Spanish Language and Culture.

Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguex, whose AP Spanish Language class is among those that need to retake their test, says that the mishap has disrupted his typical end-of-year schedule for AP Spanish.

"Although not every kid in the class

took the AP, starting today [May 16th], we changed the program," Rodriguex said. "They were working on a final project but that's out of the question, so we're working in groups revising sections of the AP."

While Rodriguex thinks that the situation is unfair, he believes the best thing students can do at this point is to find a way to effectively handle it.

Since almost 300 students are affected by the situation, the administration had hoped for a more reasonable answer as to why the tests were invalidated.

"At no time has the College Board received reports of test integrity violations," assistant principal Brian Safine said. "Our seating setup was entirely secure."

Even so, the school has accepted that the College Board's guidelines were not followed exactly.

The seven retakes will take place using both the Small Gym and the library. The retakes are for Computer Science (May 18); Chemistry (May 18); Physics 2 (May 19); Physics 1 (May 24) Psychology (May 24); Spanish (May 25); and Environmental Science (May 26).

Despite the unfortunate situation, no students will have to pay to retake; instead, the administration worked together with College Board to waive testing fees for both the district and students.

"We apologize to our students and families for the tremendous inconvenience this has caused," Safine said. "We appreciate how our students are working with us to make the best of a bad situation." ♦

>> bigidea

College Board Seating Rules

- Allow no less than five feet between students.
- The use of partitions is prohibited except Chinese and Japanese Language and Culture, French, German, Italian, and Spanish Language and Culture and Music Theory tests.
- Everyone must face the same direction
- Round tables are prohibited for testing.

Note: The bolded rules were violated by SHS in the first three days of AP testing.

Source: CollegeBoard.org



Attention Saratoga Falcon Parents and Fans:

Saratoga High School is one of the top academic schools in the county, and we also have many of the top athletic teams from year to year. We can only be this successful because of the partnership between athletics and parents. SHS is able to provide excellent facilities and coaches for our student athletes. Financial support for transportation, additional coaches, supplies and other fees is always a challenge. Through the contributions that our athletes families make each year, we're able to maintain the athletic excellence we've come to enjoy.

This year we're unable to meet some of our obligations because the number of contributors has decreased even though our athletic participation remains high. SHS athletics needs your support to fill the gap this year. If you haven't contributed to your athlete's fair share please do so today. If you would like to contribute to help those whose families can't contribute, please do.

"Athletics teaches us is that everyone on the team has an important role. We all bring our talents to help the team. No matter how much or how little you are able to bring, it all makes a difference for the team. Please do what you can."

— Paul Robinson, Principal

"Donations are what keeps sports running at SHS. Our district does not fund athletics except for stipends for head coaches. Donations cover costs for referees, transportation, our league dues, uniforms, salaries for assistant coaches, and team expense accounts for equipment and tournaments. They are instrumental for us to run this department and provide a first-class experience for our student athletes."

— Tim Lugo, Athletic Director

Please make your tax deductible donation today!

Checks can be made out and sent to:
SHS Sports Boosters, 20300 Herriman Ave, Saratoga, CA 95070

Join Sports Boosters or donate directly using PayPal at:
<http://www.falconsportsboosters.com/membership/>

This message is brought to you by SHS Sports Boosters.

About Us

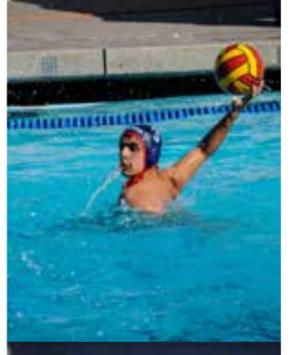
The SHS Sports Boosters is comprised of parent volunteers and school administrators who are passionately dedicated to improving the athletic experience of every student-athlete.

Our Vision

The SHS Sports Boosters organization supports athletic and academic excellence, promotes commitment to team, sportsmanship and character in athletes and builds community involvement while maintaining the history and tradition of being a Falcon for all student-athletes at Saratoga High School.

Our Goals/Purpose

- Support all athletic teams and individual athletes
- Enhance school spirit through athletic events
- Recognize outstanding accomplishments of our athletes and coaches
- Supplement school funds to provide for the needs of the athletic programs



PROM

continued from pg. 1



THE TECH.ORG

Class of 2017's Senior Prom will take place at the Tech Museum in San Jose tomorrow.

oy dancing as much with the interactive exhibits and a variety of photo options, according to Won.

"We set around engaging activities for students to explore the dozens of exhibits including a virtual reality exhibition, a wearable technology booth, a BioDesign Lab and much more," senior class vice president Jessy Liu said.

The third floor will feature the making of a flipbook, available for three hours during the event, where students could take a five second video that will be converted into a flipbook for students to take home.

To advertise the event, the senior class officers made a promotional video on YouTube and created a website where attendees could find more general information and forms they must turn in when purchasing tickets. Similar to the asking competition for Junior Prom, the best asking with the hashtag #saratogaseniorprom2017, as determined by the officers, will win two free tickets.

Bids were sold for \$150 with ASB and \$155 without ASB (\$150/155) on the week of May 8, \$155/\$160 the next week and \$160/\$165 from May 22-26.

"There are several special things being planned for prom as surprise," Won said. "Just two pieces of advice: Raise your glass and clean the lint off your shirts." ♦

Well-traveled junior moves to SHS

BY Frederick Kim & Lina Kim

Under a cloudy sky, junior Luke Roh walked to his first-period class, his shoes splashing against the puddles on the ground. He reached for the door handle, but he hesitated, wondering what his new life in America would be like. Having moved to Saratoga in early January, Roh came in the middle of what many consider to be the hardest year of high school.

Roh was born in Seoul, South Korea, and lived in Suwon, South Korea, until two years ago when he and his family moved to Japan for his father's work.

In Japan, Roh went to an international school for a year, where he was exposed to an environment dependent on the English language for the first time.

"Two years ago, I had to prepare my English for interviewing," Roh said. "I prepared for the questions that I expected them to ask."

Due to his well-traveled childhood, Roh was not particularly intimidated by moving to California, a move that was again because of his dad's work.

So far he has seen several key differences between these countries and his life here. While Korea and Japan are more urban, Saratoga has a suburban feel with many recreational spaces, such as parks, where people can relax away from the stresses of their daily lives.

Another major difference he notices is the typically busier student life in Korea compared to the students here.

In Korea, most students go to cram school, specialized schools that guide students to their educational goals, and stay

there until 10 p.m., while most students in Saratoga exercise or hang out with their friends once school ends, from what Roh has observed.

While Roh is not fully proficient at English yet, he is assimilating well into Saratoga High and the American culture.

AP Physics teacher Kirk Davis said he noticed how Roh is doing better, especially because he now has an American-style haircut.

Roh currently finds AP Physics and Pre-calculus to be his hardest classes, much like many other students. Despite the difficulty of AP Physics, Roh came to America with background knowledge of physics and doesn't find the concepts hard, although his "biggest issue is [interpreting] the style of the problem," Davis said.

As Roh's teacher, Davis has been putting extra effort into keeping the class comfortable for Roh.

"There's two fluent Korean speakers in my class, and I make sure that he has them around if he needs," Davis said. "I take care who I pair him with in lab groups."

Besides doing well in his classes, Roh is also excelling in sports. Since he played badminton as a hobby back in Korea, Roh participated in badminton as a varsity player.

Additionally, Roh is also continuing his hobby of biking. He says that he likes to do small tricks with his bike.

"When I lived in Korea, fixie bikes, a bike with a fixed gear, were popular. So, I bought one and rode with my friends, and we started to do some tricks," Roh said.

Although Roh dearly misses his friends as well as his home back in Korea, Roh agrees that he has adapted well in Califor-



Courtesy of LUKE ROH

Junior Luke Roh walks down a street in Japan, where he lived for one year before moving to Saratoga early this January.

nia. "When I heard that my family and I would be moving, I felt confused and nervous because I got bad grades in English in Korea," Roh said. "However, in aspects of living and adventure, I looked forward to going there." ♦

COLLEGE BOUND

Seniors opt to attend international colleges

BY Esha Lakhotia & Muthu Palaniappan

Senior Yianna Spirakis went to the University of British Columbia campus in Vancouver two years ago for a softball tournament. She was struck by its beauty and the vitality of the area.

Now she has committed to go to school there next fall.

"Vancouver is an amazing city and the campus is gorgeous. Our tour guides sounded like they loved the school," Spirakis said. "The campus was my favorite of all the schools I've visited, and studying in a different country became interesting to me once I realized that it could be an option."

Spirakis hadn't thought of UBC initially, but she realized it was the right fit for her after visiting the campus.

"I actually didn't think about college in a different country until I visited UBC," Spirakis said. "After that, I was seriously considering UBC, but it was the only school I applied to out of the country."

Though she loves the campus, Vancouver's urban culture is another deciding factor that led to her decision.

Spirakis loved the location of UBC as well, but admits that if the school had been located elsewhere she would still attend.

Though Spirakis has never lived outside of the United States, she believes the transition to Canada won't be as hard as most people might think it would be.

"Honestly I don't think it's going to be dramatically different from studying in the U.S.," Spirakis said. "As far as the school and the city, everything is culturally pretty simi-

lar to the U.S."

In terms of visiting her family on breaks, Vancouver is actually closer to California than East Coast schools, making traveling home even easier.

Spirakis is excited to experience a different culture in Canada, while receiving a high-quality education that will cost about \$40,000 annually, a bargain compared to many elite U.S. schools.

She also likes the international nature of the school since it attracts students from all over the world. Another student going to school outside of the country is senior Anya Herne, who will be studying History and International Relations at King's College in London next fall.

"Location was probably the primary factor for me in deciding to apply to King's," Herne said. "I had an amazing time in London last summer and could see myself living there; I honestly didn't want to leave when the trip was over."

Herne also decided on King's because it is a well-known, respected school. Although she has never visited it, Herne chose the school because of its central location in the city.

When Herne applied, the college was not at the top of her list. However, as she started getting acceptance offers, she learned that she preferred the schools in the U.K.

"I want to study history, and Britain is the ideal place in which to do so," Herne said. "It has such a rich history and in many cases is the centerpiece for much of European and world history as a whole."

The program that Herne will be attending is only three years and is only \$25,000 a year.

"It seems fairly daunting, so I hope I enjoy the work I'll have to do," Herne said. ♦



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|--------|------------------|-------------------|
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| 3. 35 | 11 th | Cupertino, CA |
| 4. 34 | 10 th | Cupertino, CA |
| 5. 34 | 10 th | Cupertino, CA |
| 6. 34 | 10 th | Mountain View, CA |
| 7. 34 | 10 th | Saratoga, CA |
| 8. 34 | 10 th | San Ramon, CA |
| 9. 34 | 10 th | Stockton, CA |
| 10. 34 | 11 th | San Ramon, CA |
| 11. 34 | 11 th | San Francisco, CA |
| 12. 34 | 11 th | Saratoga, CA |

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- UC Berkeley, Mathematics of Financial Eng. (MFE) MBA
- Yonsei Univ./POSTECH, Chemical Eng. BA
- Catholic Univ.-History, Berkeley City College- Calculus Professor
- SAT/ACT 15 years Teaching
- Think People, Inc. College Prep. Consultant
- Former EPR, Chief Scientist

College Counselor / Sue Kim

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CLUBS

Computer science members attend competition at Stanford

BY Daniel Bessonov

Members of the school's Computer Science club wrestled with highly complex problems during the annual ProCo programming competition hosted at Stanford University on May 21, an opportunity for high-school aged coders to showcase their talents.

Among the attendees were freshmen Dhruv Shah, Brandon Wang, and Ronak Pai, who all attended the contest for the first time. Albert Tseng, president of the Computer Science Club and a veteran of

puter science students will encounter similar problems in college and in their future endeavours — problems which the Computer Science Club helps people prepare for. ProCo is specifically modeled after the collegiate level ACM-ICPC, an international collegiate-programming contest.

The competition itself consists of a set of four problems, of which teams of three then attempt to solve.

Points are awarded only for complete solutions and no points are given to partial implementations.

Shah said that the event presented problems extremely similar to that of other online programming contests such as the United States Computing Olympiad (USACO), a popular contest at the school and around the nation.

"ProCo was a really great experience, and I would definitely go to again next year," Shah said. "Though my team and I didn't place too high in the leaderboards, I'm confident that with practice, I will be able to come back much stronger next year."

According to Shah, the competition was much tougher than last year, since it attracted many members of the United States International Olympiad Informatics team, all of whom are extremely seasoned programmers.

Shah, as well as Pai, believe that continuing to attend these types of programming competitions will significantly improve their skills as both problem solvers and, more importantly, coders.

"Since I am most likely going to be pursuing a career in computer science, improving my skills at competitions like ProCo is a pretty crucial step in furthering my computer science career," Shah said. ♦

"ProCo was a really great experience, and something I would go to again."



FRESHMAN Dhruv Shah

the competition, also joined the freshmen, although programming for a different team.

Although no one from the school placed on the competition's main leaderboards, Wang was able to win a prize in the "Special Round," which consisted of brain teasers and logic problems.

As opposed to other hackathons, where attendees build real-world applications for mobile or web platforms, programming competitions like ProCo require competitors to think critically by solving challenging problems.

According to Tseng, the future com-

RACE

continued from pg. 1

-ng praise from some of his peers, who called his asking "iconic" and applauded him as the "MVP." The post has since been taken down.

2010 alumnus Miles Patrick Lucey, who called out a lack of reaction from media in a May 14 Facebook post, tagged local newspapers, as well as El Gato and The Saratoga Falcon. Subsequently, the editor-in-chief of the El Gato, Danika Lyle, wrote an editorial outlining the offensive nature of blackface and criticizing students for supporting the racist practice.

While some responses to the online editorial applauded El Gato for drawing attention to the incident, others defended the senior who performed the asking, questioning the offensive nature of blackface.

On May 18, the Los Gatos High School administration released a statement concurring with Lyle's editorial, asserting that "no communication about any school event should denigrate another person or group for any reason." The administration claimed to be aware of two supposedly racist prom askings this spring and warned against any repeat of such behavior.

According to the statement, the LGHS administration is "responding to the situations as a school sensitively," keeping work with individual students confidential.

Currently, it is also pushing new programs to increase cultural sensitivity among the student body.

Madeleine Keller, another alumna of the school, addressed the asking and the administration's statement in a blog post on May 19 titled "Blackface Prom Asks Indicate it's Time to Remedy Closet-Racism," attributing the behavior to roots in the school's education itself.

The post tackled the relatively non-diverse environment at Los Gatos and the "nice bubble" it creates "where the issue of race rarely confronted."

Statistics on the U.S. News website from the 2014-15 school year estimated that 70 percent of the 1,912 students at LGHS were white, 10 percent were Asian, 9 percent were Hispanic, and 1 percent were black.

According to Keller, her English and history classes at LGHS rarely discussed racism, which was somewhat treated as a thing of the past. As a white person, Keller said she found that her education at LGHS never broke through "the blissful ignorance" she was afforded as a white person, as she "never had to go too far out of [her] comfort zone to understand other cultures, ethnicities, and racial identities."

In her post, she wrote that after be-friending more classmates of minority races in college and learning about their lives and history, her ignorance was shattered.

Lucey recounted a similar experience, noting that history courses discussed race relations in obvious places, such as slavery in the U.S. and the Holocaust, but failed to emphasize how race relations continue to impact the social landscape of the U.S. today, and continue to impact the way countries interact with one another in the modern world. For Lucey, moving to Berkeley for college meant that topics of race were handled much more aggressively and unapologetically than before.

Lucey did not recall seeing or hearing anything as aggressively oppressive as the use of blackface, but remembered students making racist remarks casually in high school. Few students actively confronted their peers after such comments were made.

"Don't get me wrong, the educational experience at Los Gatos is exceptional and it gave me many of the tools I was able to use to succeed in college," Lucey said. "But I think that the students would really benefit from courses that discuss racial sensitivity in their curriculum."

Editor's note: The Falcon reached out to the Los Gatos High School ASB and the senior involved in the prom asking for comment. Neither had responded as the Falcon went to print. ♦



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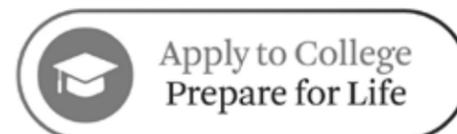


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MISSIONSTATEMENT

The staff of The Saratoga Falcon is committed to objectively and accurately representing the diverse talents, cultures and viewpoints of the Saratoga High School community.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Saratoga Falcon welcomes all signed letters of opinion, which are subject to editing for length, accuracy and grammar. Please send them to isabelle.yang@saratogafalcon.org. For ad information, phone (408) 867-3411, ext. 222.

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College Board's AP test ruling teaches lessons

The ringing of the end of school bell on Friday, May 12, did not mark the end of the AP testing season for Saratoga High students as it was supposed to.

Gathered in the McAfee Center for an emergency meeting on May 12, almost 300 students were shocked to hear assistant principal Brian Safine and principal Paul Robinson explain that the College Board had invalidated their hard-earned AP Chemistry, Environmental Science, Spanish Language, Physics 1 and Physics 2 scores.

The administrators said that although the school was looking for the opportunity to file an appeal or challenge the decision made by College Board, there were simply no officials from the organization willing to hear them out.

However, perhaps College Board isn't the mean and bullying organization such an unfair-seeming verdict suggests: After all, College Board officials wouldn't invalidate all scores unless there was sufficient evidence of a rules violation.

Clearly, there was. In their presentation to disappointed students, Safine and Robinson said there was a picture of the school's AP testing

setup that was sent to College Board officials. Although the way the administration explained the existence of the picture made the violation seem somewhat innocuous, the fact that College Board has a no-tolerance policy means schools can't mess up these seating arrangements.

The problem was that some of the tables used for testing were only six feet long instead of the required eight, and dividers were used when they weren't allowed.

Although the general student opinion on the subject is to blame every party involved — College Board especially — placing blame on the testing organization alone is flat-out wrong.

While the situation is highly unfortunate, the only ones at fault for the score invalidation are the anonymous source of the photograph and the school officials who failed to follow College Board's instructions for test center setup. Understandably, most students are peeved that they had to retake their AP tests like physics. But that doesn't mean they should be pointing fingers at College Board officials who were just doing their jobs.

While some people may think it is ridiculous that College Board is a de facto monopoly



GRAPHIC BY VIVIEN ZHANG

and enforced its rules without an investigation — after all, no cheating was even alleged to have occurred — high schools must realize the immovable force they're up against and adjust accordingly.

The only competitor that College Board has is the ACT, but even then the ACT doesn't offer replacement or equivalent exams

for AP credit or SAT II Subject Tests. Until some organization is able to break College Board's stranglehold on the testing market, schools and students will be helpless in defending against unlucky situations such as ours.

The lesson for school for future years: Follow College Board's rules to the letter no matter what. ♦

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

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Opinion Editor

Isabelle Yang
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Reporter

Alex Yang

The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 27-8 in support of the editorial.

togataalks

Do you think the school is at fault for the AP testing fiasco?

No, the school tried to the best of their knowledge to follow the regulations. The leaker should be blamed.



sophomore Ruchi Maheshwari

Yes, the school has been officiating AP tests for so long, so they should have caught the mistake.



junior Charles Qi

Business class should be restarted to promote creativity and innovation

By Victor Liu & Vivien Zhang

Although the school's Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) club is listed on the official club roster, its members have not held a single meeting this year. The club's activities stopped suddenly after a successful season last year, when five members qualified to nationals and three members won awards.

What happened? DECA did not fall into obscurity, but rather the national DECA organization implemented a new rule requiring all participating members to be enrolled in at least one business CTE (Career and Technical Education) class. Because Saratoga High does not offer any business-related CTE courses, DECA members here have been unable to attend competitions this year.

Establishing a new business class on school, however, wouldn't only restore DECA, but would help all Saratoga High students by introducing them to a new and important field.

While remaining entrepreneurship-oriented clubs on cam-

pus such as FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) and MIT Launch have fewer members than similar clubs in other local schools, there is still an undeniable interest in business-related studies on campus.

Many members of these clubs find themselves competing at regional, state and even national level competitions to demonstrate their knowledge in technology, business prowess and social skills.

Outside of club-based competitions, SHS students have shown interest and talent in entrepreneurship by creating start-up companies of their own. In the past, burgeoning student-entrepreneurs have ventured into various fields of business, such as music management, food catering, technology recycling and even curb painting. An addition of business class would help students explore infinite possibilities and opportunities, allowing them to experience the thrill of starting their own business.

Entrepreneurship embraces student talents and skills found outside of the conventional classroom.

While the school curriculum ensures that students are able to solve problems mathematically, it fails to teach them how to solve problems through creativity and innovation. Although the school highly values student proficiency in the traditional sense of academics, it hardly gives enough opportunities to non "book smart" students who prefer using a business mindset to think outside the box.

Unfortunately, the school places no emphasis on entrepreneurial skills and offers little guidance for those who want to acquire them. For many students interested in business, this can be detrimental.

Last year, many seniors applied for a business-related major. Although many of them already had previous experience in summer programs or other extracurricular activities, having a business class at school would not only have solidified their entrepreneurship skills, but also demonstrated their interest in business to colleges.

A business class similar to Introduction to Business, a class offered a few years ago, should be reintroduced as an elective course to not only bolster student inter-

est in business-related studies, but to also promote the educational values of creativity and innovation. At the very least, the school should allow students to sign up for the class and determine the re-addition of it based on enrollment.

Furthermore, in order to avoid a lack of student interest in the class, the business class could be split into a multiple year program — like current students in art, orchestra, or newspaper, students in this business class would become eligible for honors credit in their third or fourth years of the course. While this may be difficult due to other multiple year programs such as engineering and MAP, this idea should be considered because it helps students continue to develop.

The little emphasis placed on business inhibits students' ability to further develop this popular interest, and could easily be changed by the addition of a new class solely focused on business. A specialized class would not only revive DECA, but it would benefit a larger student population, exposing more students to the numerous merits of business. ♦

Previews for AP sciences should be enacted

BY AlexandraLi

With many students opting to focus on STEM throughout their high school career, their choice of science classes is crucial. Yet many are forced to choose a class without knowledge of the difficulty or content of the class, basing their decisions purely on what other students tell them.

In order to ensure students choose a class fit for their interests, teachers should offer previews to their classes that allow students to experience the content of their class.

Most students take both biology and chemistry during their first two years of high school, so they're able to get a good sense of whether they have an interest in these subjects.

However, the only information provided to students about the AP versions of these classes is that they all come with a "difficult" workload. Thus, the majority of students know very little about each and are unsure whether they are worth spending an entire

year studying.

In addition, for many sophomores, their most recent exposure to physics was in eighth grade — and even that was at a very basic level.

The short amount of time spent on physics does not give students an idea of whether they are interested enough in the subject to pursue AP Physics, especially because at Saratoga High, the course combines two years of materials into two semesters.

The time spent on giving class previews may seem like a waste of time, but they have clearly been successful in other areas. AP European history and World History teacher Jerry Sheehy provides previews for his AP European history class.

Hoping to draw students into the class, he chooses history classes with students ranging from freshman to junior year and takes five minutes out of each class to explain the difficulty level of the class along with the field trips, movies and activities to make it seem less intimidating. Sheehy has noticed

how the brief explanation of the class allows students to make an informed decision during the process of course selection.

In the mathematics department, choosing classes is approached differently. At the end of the year, each student receives a recommendation from the teacher on what class to take next year, but much of this is based solely on their grade in the class.

The sciences, however, cannot be approached in a similar fashion because of the wide differences between each AP class. Although science teachers may give sophomores their brief opinion on classes for the next school year, many agree with Chemistry honors teacher Janny Cahatol, who lets students decide for themselves, as the student should know their interests best.

It's common for each AP class to be accompanied with a heavy workload, but without accurate information presented by teachers, students often end up in an unbearable learning situation.

For example, many sophomores hear

from other students that AP Environmental Science (APES) is an "easy AP," even when counselors warn them otherwise. Yet in truth, the class's difficulty increases exponentially during second semester and has proven many students' original beliefs to be false.

Class structure is also an important factor that students need to be aware of before they sign up for a class. For example, AP Chemistry students take approximately two quizzes a week in the first couple of weeks, APES students face constant, time-consuming projects and AP Biology students are often assigned up to 40 pages of textbook reading a week and constantly have to memorize definitions and terminology. In addition, information regarding the coursework for each class is not told to students, leading to regret and poor decisions.

These changes cause inconveniences to both the students and the teachers, and could be more often avoided with information sessions. ♦

Global warming: Even small steps make difference

BY SherrieShen

When a powerful storm hit the Bangladeshi coast in 2009, Jahanara Khatun, mother of four, lost more than the mud and bamboo hut over her head.

Khatun was forced to sell two of her children to a brick factory to pay for the overwhelming cost of rebuilding their hut and medicine to treat her husband's deteriorating health.

Despite Khatun's family's best efforts, four years after the storm, her husband died.

Though the New York Times chronicled her story in an article published in 2014, the problems Khatun and her family faced back then still haven't gone away — indeed, they've gotten worse. If this trend continues, experts estimate that up to 50 million Bangladeshis will have to flee by 2050.

Immersed in the tech-centered hub of

Silicon Valley, we often find ourselves partaking in the ever-developing world of scientific progress and innovation. But lost in these glass buildings that continue to change the tide of artificial intelligence, virtual reality and other cutting edge technology, a key part of the future is missing: action in climate change.

Under a president who denies the existence of climate change and with only a few citizens making impactful change, progress in climate change is painfully slow. Somehow it's a problem, we say, that can be left to "other people." Worse yet, in recent decades, climatologists have noticed startling trends showing no indication of improving: Ice caps and glaciers are melting at an alarming rate of 39 percent and global temperatures are rising to an unprecedented high.

Arctic sea ice is projected to thaw to the point where it may be possible to sail across

in North Pole in the summer by 2050. Because less sea ice equates to less ice shelves that reflect the sun's light, the ocean ends up absorbing more heat into its blue depths, thereby crippling the marine ecosystem.

In addition, the melting of glaciers will also contribute to rising sea levels, intruding into rivers and turning freshwater brackish. Even routine flooding leaves behind salt deposits that can render the land barren, and unsuitable for irrigation. For us in the United States, hundreds of feet above the current sea level on average, it's not much of a problem. But Bangladesh, a country with one-third our population and a mere 7 feet above sea level, is already dealing with the consequences.

If Earth's present environmental practices go unchanged, it will lead to an irreversible and bleak future.

How can you help — at least a little? One

idea is to try using Ecosia, a web search engine that plants trees using ad revenue gained from users' browsing through web pages. Since its launch in 2009, Ecosia has helped nonprofit conservationist organizations plant over 8.1 million trees with more than 435.6 million searches, taking 56 on average to fund the planting of a single tree.

Individually, each tree creates limited progress, but thousands and millions together, they can lead to a step forward in reducing the levels of greenhouse gases and mitigating ocean acidification.

While Ecosia is a small and novel step forward, it has little impact on the reversing the entirety of global warming. In the end, only a change in lifestyle and regulation — conserving instead of wasting, reducing instead of emitting — at the national and global level will change.

But even then, it may not be enough. ♦

Solar panels should become necessities for Californians

BY FrederickKim
& AlexandraLi

California has the fourth highest solar power potential in the country. With an average of around 260 cloudless days a year, the solar industry in California has been rapidly expanding.

In recent years, as prices of solar panel installations have continued to drop, bills have been drafted in hopes of growing the solar industry for climatic benefits. When the small costs are taken into consideration, solar energy seems like the best choice for new buildings. In the past, the Green Commission, now disbanded, has advocated for solar panels on the Saratoga High campus, specifically in the parking lot.

However, they were met with doubt over the worth of the solar panels by the school administration and whether investing in such a system would be cost effective.

"The school board was resistant and refused to take any action or look into it," former head Green commissioner alumna Michelle Shen said. "It was frustrating."

Although the implementation of solar energy has not been successful here, the state has been actively pursuing the subject.

Last year the Board of Supervisors in San Francisco unanimously approved supervisor Scott Wiener's legislation, which required the installation of solar panels on all new residential and commercial buildings built in San Francisco. As the first major city to require solar energy use, San Francisco is a role model for future city development.

Last December, Wiener, now a California senator, introduced a bill that would require solar panels on all new buildings across the state. His bill gained initial committee approval by a 8-3 vote and is now working its

way through the legislative process.

The main opposition to the bill comes from a fear of installation costs for solar panels, which range from \$10,000 to \$13,000. But in most states where energy costs are already high, the solar panel buyers manage to save enough money from no longer needing to pay energy bills to account for the price of installation after a few years.

California's metering system allows a customer's electric meter to keep track of how much electricity is consumed and how much is generated by the solar panels. The excess is sent back into the electric utility grid, and the customer receives credit and is able to use this credit on days where their electric demand is higher. In California, solar panels generally pay for themselves within 10 years. When the benefits of installation for the climate are taken into consideration, the sacrifice seems worth it.

According to The Eco Guide, one household with solar panels would save roughly 16,000 pounds of carbon dioxide annually, which equates to saving 24 trees from having to balance these emissions. If a mere 5 percent of all the households in the U.S. relied on solar panels, it would prevent 90 million pounds of carbon dioxide from being emitted, which estimates around 7 million trees saved from needing to balance the carbon dioxide emitted from a normal home.

Clearly, even a small percentage of households implementing solar power would have a tremendous impact on the carbon footprint of the United States.

With the start of the Trump administration putting in power many climate change deniers, the fight for the use of renewable energy is growing in importance. California needs to approve Wiener's bill and continue to be at the forefront of clean energy. ♦

1 household using
SOLAR ENERGY
saves **24** trees annually
saves **1600** pounds of CO₂

#1 cleanest source of
ENERGY
cuts **HALF OF YOUR MONTHLY ELECTRIC \$ bill \$**

GRAPHIC BY KITTY HUANG

Child mindset beneficial for living a healthy lifestyle

BY SanjanaMelkote

When I stay up late at night, not because of homework but because of some scary monsters from a movie that have “followed” me to my room, I am often told that I should outgrow my silly childish fears. But when I write a story, one that follows an impressive plot that weaves in and out of reality, I am commended for my vivid imagination.

But both my fears and my creativity stem from that same spirit inside me — the part of me that doesn’t hold restraints to what is possible or impossible.

Immaturity and childlike wonder may seem like something that needs to be shed as we age, but holding onto aspects of a child’s mind can benefit us greatly as we face the world.

Children are born believing in magic until they are taught the rules of reality. But even after we know what is and isn’t feasible, it is important to approach life with the attitude that anything is

possible because that outlook is what feeds our creativity.

The power to create is essential to keep ourselves moving forward. If we lose the ability to think outside of what is already “real,” we will be unable to push boundaries and test new ideas.

Holding onto aspects of a child’s mind can benefit us greatly as we face the world.

It is the child inside of us that asks us what new concepts we can make into reality and push us to become innovative when we are faced with any job.

And while children may often be simplistic and naïve thinkers, their constant optimism is something adults often forget in the face of adversity.

The most complicated

problems are brought down to simple terms in a child’s mind.

Especially when dealing with personal relationships, we might fight with people we love because we’re so stuck in our own reasoning.

Children forgive and forget because every passing moment is a fresh start. They focus on the future and what will happen, rather than hold a grudge and sulk over what has happened.

It is important to have unwavering trust in the fact that people can and will change for the better, and giving people chances after they make mistakes saves people from unneeded negativity.

So many relationships could be saved if society could think towards the future and use the energy from being intolerant to looking forward.

Children are creative and have a clear view of their decisions — growing up is no reason to give up that creativity and childlike wonder. ♦

Rights of transgender athletes can’t be determined by simplistic rules

BY ChristopherLee

On Feb. 18, controversy erupted at a girls’ Texas state wrestling competition after a transgender boy Mack Beggs, at the time undergoing testosterone treatments to transition from female to male, won the competition.

Some argued that the testosterone treatment gave him more strength and an advantage over the girls.

But because Texas state law designates that athletes are allowed to compete only with opponents of their biological sex, Beggs had to compete as a female.

Was this the right decision? The answer is maybe. The truth is that it’s hard to say how much testosterone therapy increase someone’s strength.

Some females are much stronger than some men despite having less testosterone. And there are no scientifically accepted standards expressing the acceptable range of muscle mass to be feminine.

This means there should be no one-size-fits-all law to handle these situations.

Additionally, with transgender males, the distinction between testosterone use as a hormone treatment and as a performance-enhancing drug is blurred.

This is because any muscle mass a trans male gains as a result of hormone therapy would be the result of a drug that an equivalent

biological male would be banned from.

Even under the assumption that the trans male takes the testosterone therapy solely for the transition to become more masculine, any increase of muscle mass is not earned through hard work and instead a result of drugs.

This poses the question: What levels of testosterone exceed the territory of hormone therapy and into the area of illegal drug driven muscle mass growth?

After all, any muscle mass gained from steroids is classified as unfair by numerous sports organizations, so muscle mass gained from hormone therapy would be as well.

Athletes who work to build up muscle over their lifetime without the help of supplemental hormones have their efforts wasted when others can do the same with hormone therapy in a few years.

According to new Olympic regulations approved in 2015, transgender women will not be required to undergo sex reassignment surgery in order to participate under their new gender but will be required to maintain levels of testosterone under 10 nanomoles per liter of blood for at least a year.

Furthermore, testosterone varies wildly from men to women according to the American Association for Clinical Chemistry, as some biological

females have testosterone levels mirroring that of males and thus have anywhere from seven to eight times higher levels of testosterone compared to the average female.

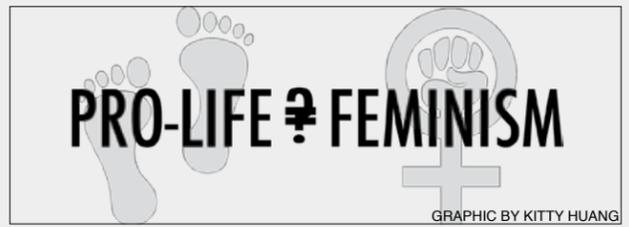
As such, even transgender females may have less testosterone than masculine biological females, making it nearly impossible to draw a line between the qualities that transgender athletes need to fulfill to compete with their transitioned gender.

In the end, these decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis with the authorities of sports organizations and doctors of transgender patients determining whether it is fair for the athlete to participate.

In other words, whether an athlete has too much muscle mass or too little to participate should be a conclusion drawn by those with authority and knowledge of the subject, not simple legislation.

If a doctor along with a sports official determines that a male transgender athlete has gained too much muscle mass relative to his body weight, then he should not be allowed to participate in the men’s division, and vice versa if a transgender woman retains too much muscle.

Our society is entering new territory when it comes to gender identities, and we need to be prepared to compromise on the new gray areas that cannot be governed by a legislature stuck in the age of yea or nay social politics. ♦



GRAPHIC BY KITTY HUANG

Pro-life: Pro-birth without foresight

BY HarshiniRamaswamy

President Donald Trump hadn’t even been in office for one day when the largest single-day protest in American history took place on Jan. 21.

Although the worldwide protest was named the Women’s March, it spanned several topics that Trump has neglected or disrespected. These hotly debated issues included immigration reform, health care reform, racial equality, freedom of religion, workers’ rights, environmental protection and LGBTQ rights.

However, organizers of the march, which included Planned Parenthood, did not allow pro-life groups to join the March. To critics, this controversial decision seemed to resonate with today’s perceived definition of feminism: one that places a large burden on reproductive rights and does not account for the several components of equal rights for women.

Yet pro-lifers fail to recognize that they are in fact “pro-birth”; they support the birthing of children but fail to take in count what comes after birth.

When it comes to equal rights, everything narrows down to choice. Women want equal opportunities and equal chance to choose what their futures to look like. Yes, pro-birthers may have a legitimate case that unborn women could have rights too, but ultimately, their platform supports policies that cut the funding that will help these unborn women grow into healthy adults with a support system, thus suppressing this choice for women.

In his first 100 days Trump reinstated the “global gag rule,” otherwise known as the “Mexico City Policy,” which cuts off all U.S. funding to international nongovernmental organizations that “perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning in other nations,” according to the New Yorker. While pro-lifers may have celebrated this victory, this policy will have unintended global consequences that will be a detriment to women everywhere, especially in developing countries.

The loss of funding to clinics that offer abortions as one of their many services, such as

health care, birth control and cancer screenings, will have effects that go beyond this pro-choice and pro-life debate.

Policies that restrict funding to family planning services have shown to increase unplanned pregnancies, which in turn increases unsafe abortions and maternal death. A 2011 study by the World Health organization concluded that women were 2.73 times more likely to have an abortion under these policies.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, the United States — through its Agency for International Development (USAID) — has been a global leader in enhancing women’s access to contraceptive services in the world’s poorest countries for more than 45 years.

Eliminating U.S. assistance for international family planning and reproductive health programs would result in 433,000 fewer women and couples to receive contraceptive services and supplies; 128,000 more unintended pregnancies, including 57,000 more unplanned births, to occur; 55,000 more abortions to take place and 250 more maternal deaths to occur.

Different opinions are the basis of democracy, and everyone should respect that there are legitimate and personal reasons for different situations. But don’t pretend to “protect” women if the your platform rallies for the exact opposite.

A common argument against pro-choice is that they discourage women from starting families because of the perception that a family “weighs down” a woman’s potential from being reached. But to those who tout this statement, this is too simplistic of a claim and does not address every situation that can occur or the complications that can arise.

To pro-birthers: If you are truly a feminist, you believe women should have the opportunity, the choice, the right to decide things for themselves. You do not get to pick and choose when you advocate for human rights. You do not get to pick and choose being a feminist. You either believe in this or you don’t. ♦

togatalks

Should transgender athletes compete with their identified gender?

“Yes, because they can affiliate with the gender they desire to be.”



junior Elora Pradhan

“Yes, because then they’d be competing for what they identify as.”



freshman Rohan Rao

“It depends on what their physical capabilities are. I don’t know if there’s a right answer at all.”



sophomore Usman Khan

Juniors question value of Snapchattable food



yin, yang & wang

Austin Wang and Alex Yang

As we scrolled through pictures and videos of sushi tacos, Hot Cheeto bagels, burgers bursting with cheese and all sorts of rainbow-colored foods on Facebook and Instagram, we couldn't help but wonder if these gimmicks taste as good as they look.

After watching a dozen videos of rolled Thai ice cream on our Facebook Feeds, we decided to find out ourselves.

We went to Icicles, a rolled ice cream shop in Cupertino that opened in March, where a constant line of social media savvy teens excitedly took videos of the rolling process. As we entered the cramped shop, our eyes were drawn to the menu on the chalkboard where they listed odd flavors such as "Bravocado" and "Nutella n' Chill" without any prices.

At first we thought the lack of prices was just another part of the hipster food experience, but after we reluctantly paid \$7 for a Gotcha Matcha ice cream, which turned out to be boring, regular matcha, we realized that the hippy-esque atmosphere of the restaurant was yet another gimmick for scamming unsuspecting teens.

As we walked up to the window to watch the ice cream being rolled, we realized that we had made a grave mistake: we forgot to take our phones out to record the less than

exciting experience.

Given the fact that we were paying \$7 for what appeared to be run-of-the-mill Haagen-Dazs, melted, refrozen and rolled on a cold metal plate, the Snapchattable experience was worth at most half the cost.

While those around us were putting the trendy rolled-ice cream process on their Snapchat stories and Instagrams, we simply stood there trying to avoid awkward eye contact with the man who struggled to scrape the ice cream mixture off the cold plate.

After receiving our cup of ice cream, we walked to the topping station where we were told we could request as many toppings as we wanted.

Unfortunately, this was yet another marketing scam. We asked the worker at the toppings bar for brownie bites, mint oreos and cheesecake but were left with a meager amount of food.

The small size of the cup, which could barely even fit the ice cream, meant unlimited toppings was just another empty promise. The taste, however, actually exceeded our expectations.

Although the flavor wasn't too different from store-bought ice cream, the rolled ice cream was noticeably creamier and denser, if not a bit too frozen.

Despite our first lackluster experience with Snapchattable food, we decided to try another food trend: the sushi burrito.

As avid lovers of poke, sushi and Japanese food in general, we were extremely excited when we learned that a Sushirrito had opened at the Valley Fair Mall in November.

After an entire week of cramming for

our AP exams, we enthusiastically rushed to Sushirrito on a Friday night for dinner. To our surprise only two of the menu options actually had raw fish in them while the rest of the burritos were filled with other Japanese foods such as seasoned beef or fried pork katsu.

We ended up ordering the Sumo Crunch, a tempura shrimp and crab burrito, and a Geisha's Kiss, a yellowfin tuna burrito, based on their positive Yelp reviews.

The Sumo Crunch had a surprisingly good combination of flavors. The salty crunchiness of the tempura shrimp paired



FALCON // ELICIA YE

Pictured is the 'Gotcha Matcha' from Icicles.

Overall, these unique food creations didn't live up to the hope for us, and we aren't planning on returning for overpriced food and a 10-second Snapchat story.

that the burrito medium hardly did the flavors justice.

The large size of the sushi burrito made it nearly impossible to enjoy the flavors as a cohesive bite. The lack of tuna also meant my last few bites were just rice, seaweed, and taro.

Overall, these unique food creations didn't live up to the hype for us, and we aren't planning on returning for overpriced food and a 10-second Snapchat story.

What we did take away from that experience, however, was that expensive, trendy food isn't about the flavor — it's about the Snapchattability.

But for not-so-social-media-savvy users like us, having a feast for our mouths sounds much more appetizing rather than having a feast for our Snapchat followers' eyes (and also an extra \$5 in our pockets). ♦

New Korean supermarket delivers first-rate food



discerning duo

Ryan Kim and Navin Tiwary

Although extremely popular, Korean markets haven't found their way to Saratoga yet. So when H-Mart opened on April 5 in the De Anza Shopping Center in San Jose, hordes of local residents lined up, making the waiting time to get in more than half an hour long and parking in the plaza nearly impossible.

After we heard about how popular H-Mart was, we decided to check it out, hoping to find Korean food and products near and dear to our hearts. We waited two weeks before we went to H-Mart, expecting the initial hype to have died out by then, but we could not have been more wrong. Even after weeks of opening, the store and its parking lot were extremely crowded.

As soon as we entered the supermarket, we noticed rows of fresh produce, ranging from purple sweet potatoes to yellow Korean pears.

The market itself resembled a hodgepodge of different grocery stores. The entrance and aisles of fruits and vegetables reminded us of a fusion of Safeway and Super Kyo-po Market, another more traditional Korean market in Santa Clara. The free samples resembled those from Costco, while the food court in the corner paralleled Lawrence Plaza food court.

The market's interior design also combined old and new architectural styles. While the food court walls were made of vintage-style wood, electric neon signs glowed throughout the fish and meat section. We were not only awed by the design of the store but also by the number of quality packaged meat products that lined two

walls and a middle aisle, far better than the meats found at other markets.

The store is still in its early phase, as evidenced by the piles of boxes littering the already cramped pathways and obstructing the long lines of people and carts.

The only major discomfort is the cramped aisles; it's difficult to maneuver shopping carts around when there are boxes and shelves everywhere. However, even with its tight spacing, the market was well organized: Products were easy to find, and the flow of customers moved with efficiency despite its cramped interior.

As for pricing, most H-Mart pre-made products like soy sauce and red chili paste are more expensive. The meat pricing at H-Mart is similar to those at other Korean supermarkets like Super Kyo-po Market, but H-Mart meat is of much higher quality.

Aside from the market's great variety of products ranging from Korean food to Japanese and Chinese snacks, it also features a food court area that sells varieties of Korean food such as Korean BBQ and Korean-Japanese fusion hamburger steaks. We were surprised at the exquisite sauces and high quality meat of the Korean BBQ bar, especially the marinated beef and rice.

It's clear that H-Mart fits the bill as the standard inexpensive but quality-goods Asian supermarket. With cheap products that more than satisfy consumers' needs, the market is the perfect local place for great deals.

Our prediction is that this market will become a major competitor to the Koreatown in Santa Clara. It's easily accessible for Saratogans — albeit having very cramped parking — and combines the best characteristics of other markets in the Bay Area. With its fusion of both Western and Korean cultures, H-Mart appeals to Koreans and non-Koreans alike. ♦

NORCAL VS. SOCAL food edition



sourdough -NORCAL-

"Manresa Bakery in Los Gatos is the best," junior Jarod Kim said. "You also have creative sourdough and a nice view at Boudin on Fisherman's Wharf [in San Francisco]."



churros -SOCAL-

"Churro and ice cream at the Loop was a new combination and Instagram worthy," junior Ian Kim said.



dole whip -SOCAL-

"Dole whip is the best food in Disneyland," sophomore Chloe Peng said.

"There are more [boba] options in SoCal, like more flavors, different toppings and ideas," sophomore Kaitlyn Lee said. "I went to a place called 'Half and Half.'"



boba -SOCAL-

GRAPHIC BY ELICIA YE



FOOD CHIA

Reporters t



Testing Chipotle tricks to get more greens and beans

BY Daniel Bessonov
& Ava Hooman

April 14 was almost another ordinary day at school — lunch was held at the same time, school ended right as the bell rang, after-school sports started right on time — until we discovered the BuzzFeed-proclaimed “Chipotle Hacks” and changed our lives forever.

Chipotle, a renowned chain restaurant, specializes in serving “authentic” Mexican cuisine, ranging from burritos to rice bowls. In contrast to other fast-food restaurants such as McDonald’s, Chipotle claims to use fresh ingredients and guarantees quality to their customers.

However, with basic meals costing up to \$10, Chipotle is pricier than some of its popular Mexican fast-food rivals like Taco Bell and Rubio’s.

After reading a BuzzFeed article titled “This Guy Used Science to Get An 86% Bigger Burrito At Chipotle,” we decided it was finally time to get our money’s worth.

The article claims that using special orders, such as requesting a complimentary tortilla with a bowl, allows customers to receive nearly twice the amount of food as opposed to a normal burrito bowl order.

Eager to test the theory, we lined up at the Westgate Chipotle after school on April 14. After waiting for the large group in front of us to finish their order, we stepped up to the cashier.

Following the article’s instructions, we both ordered bowls with tortillas on the side.

According to the article, a bowl holds 15 percent more food

than a burrito.

Unfortunately, we were only able to get one tortilla instead of two because the servers refused to give each one of us more than one.

For the rice and beans, we ordered half white rice and half brown rice to obtain about 93 percent more rice for the price of one. Similar to the rice and beans, the writer of the article ordered half and half of two different types of meats.

Midway through, however, we realized that we would be charged for the price of two meats, so we decided to stick to one meat only.

When choosing the toppings, the employees looked shocked as we asked them to grab every single topping and place it into our bowls.

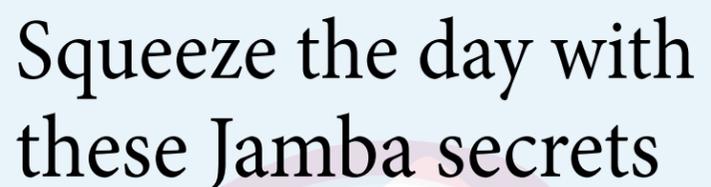
Trying their hardest to close our bowls, the frustrated employees earned some giggles from the rest of the customers in line. The bowls were bursting with food — it was as if we had bought three bowls each and piled everything into one colossal order.

Accordingly, our stomachs threatened to burst after eating only a third of our bowls, and every bite after was met with agony.

Although the hacks allowed us to buy nearly three times the amount of food for the same price, we left Chipotle questioning their necessity.

While we had walked in thinking the more food the better, we realized that we are better off buying our normal bowls instead of wasting nearly half the food we got with the hack.

But if you are planning to share your bowl with another person, the hack is golden. ♦



Squeeze the day with these Jamba secrets

BY Alexandra Li

After our usual 3-hour dance practice ended early, five of us realized that we had at least an hour before any of us were expected home. Excited, we piled into junior Caitlyn Chen’s car and headed to Jamba Juice.

We already knew our orders: one medium Strawberry Surf Rider, one medium White Gummi Bear and one small Mango-A-Go-Go to share among us.

However, upon realizing the store offered a Saturday deal of buy 3 get 1 free, we decided to make the most of it and ordered two medium White Gummi Bears, one medium Mango-A-Go-Go and one medium Caribbean Passion.

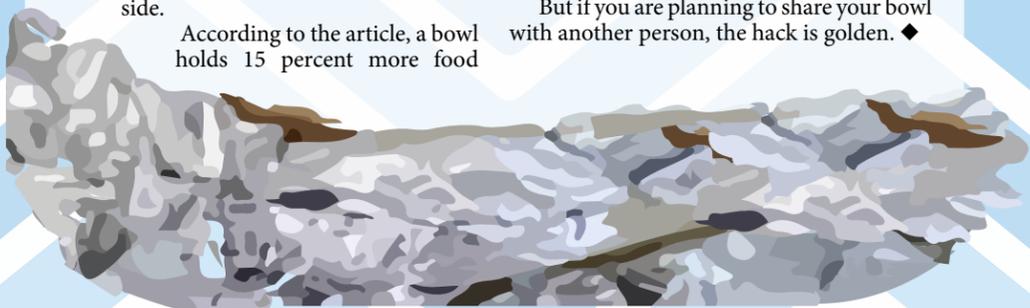
After we ordered the four drinks, we felt that they weren’t enough for the five of us. Yet, eight would be too many, so we also put to use a commonly known hack: ordering a medium and asking them to split it into two cups. For only \$5.29, we got two small cups that were almost full, as the workers were usually nice and

tried to fill the cup. Had we bought the two small cups individually, it would have cost \$4.79 each.

The deal of the day and our idea of splitting cups encouraged us to order what we never would have thought we could finish, but it turned out six drinks were no match for us five girls.

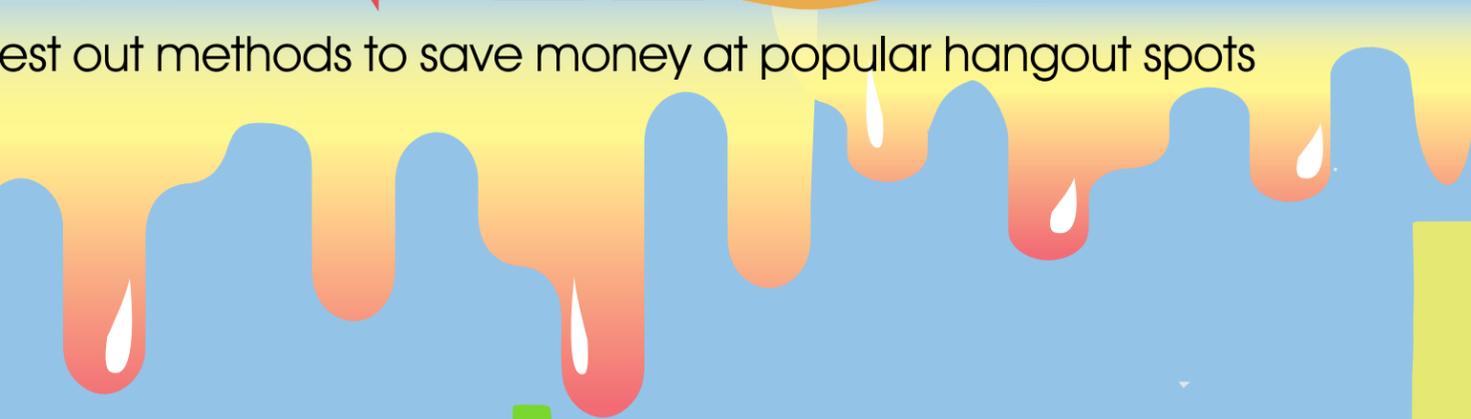
Around the entrance, a small sign lists the “Value Days.” Mondays offer a baked good for \$1 with the purchase of a drink, Tuesdays allow customers to buy a medium for a price of a small and a large for the price of a medium, Wednesdays sell energy bowls for \$6, Thursdays present the same deal as Tuesdays, Fridays offer a medium for \$5 and a large for \$6 and Saturdays and Sundays provide a buy 3 get 1 deal that we were able to take advantage of.

While Jamba Juice may not be the cheapest place for a quick break, putting these hacks to use has helped my friends and me save money many times, and it has kept our love for Jamba Juice alive. ♦



WIN HACKS

Best out methods to save money at popular hangout spots



Getting more bang for our (Star)bucks

BY EshaLakhotia & MuthuPalaniappan

With so much school work every night, we resort to caffeine to cope with stress and sleep deprivation. We often have to go on a quick Starbucks run at 8 p.m. to stay awake for the rest of the night; however, as the number of drinks we order adds up, so does the cost.

Starbucks is indisputably expensive for the simple drinks they serve. For example, one of our favorite drinks, an Iced Caramel Macchiato, is \$5.25 for a Venti size, the largest size. The drink itself consists of just a shot or two of espresso, milk and caramel, yet it costs more than \$5. Similarly, a Tall Frappuccino costs about \$4. A frappuccino is made with blended ice and different flavors of syrup depending on what the customer orders.

As our wallets become emptier with every visit to Starbucks, we decided to test some money-saving hacks from a YouTube video called "STARBUCKS LIFE HACKS YOU'VE GOTTA TRY!!!".

We first tried to lower

the price of Iced Coffee by ordering two shots of espresso over ice in a Venti cup, which was only \$2.25, instead of a Venti Iced Coffee, priced at \$3.25. Then we filled our espresso to the top with milk from the serving station.

At first glance, our drink looked identical to the original Iced Coffee with milk. After trying it, we found that the modified Iced Coffee actually tasted as good as the original since the recipes for both were almost identical.

Next, we tried to reduce the cost of a tall frappuccino. A tall frappuccino is exactly half the size of a venti. Instead of ordering two tall frappuccinos, we ordered a venti frappuccino and asked the baristas to split it into two different cups. In theory, we had bought two tall frappuccinos for the price of a Venti, saving us about \$3.25.

We may have sounded annoying to the baristas, but it was well worth it. So if you find yourself spending dollar after dollar for a simple coffee and need a way to save money, these hacks will do the trick. ♦



T-pumping it up with boba-licious deals

BY NeilRao & PhoebeWang

Relaxing at a local tea shop has become an after-school tradition for many students. The boba craze, fueled by a range of popular vendors such as TeaTop, TPumps and Gong Cha, has led to the flood of friends racing to indulge in the delicious drinks.

However, the increasing variety of different teas made us question how to make the most out of our bucks. Since the average price for milk teas and flavored teas is around \$4, we have discovered small hacks that can help keep these refreshing drinks cheap.

In most tea shops, adding toppings such as pearls and flavored jellies results in an extra charge, but we managed to sidestep this problem. At TeaTop in Cupertino, where extra additions cost an additional 50 cents each, most drinks don't come with toppings. But to get "free" toppings, we ordered drinks that included preset toppings, such as the Passion Green Tea Medley or Earl Grey Milk Tea with 3Q, and substituted them with our preferred toppings or a different tea base.

A milk tea that doesn't have toppings at TeaTop costs about \$3.50. If we were to add an extra three toppings, the drink would cost \$5. Earl Grey Milk Tea with 3Q only costs \$3.95, so we saved an entire dollar by substituting bases or toppings.

Away from the drink itself, we saved

the most money through the vendors' promotions and rewards systems, allowing us to have more benefits by simply keeping up with their advertisements. For instance, most boba stores use a marketing app called FiveStars, which offers discounts and free gifts after reaching a certain number of points.

Gong Cha, located in Westgate Center Mall in San Jose, also offers a secret student discount. When we told the cashier that we are students at SHS, we received a free upsize or 50 cents off the purchase.

In addition to point-based rewards and student discounts, many stores such as TeaTop and Gong Cha utilize stamp systems that reward returning customers with free drinks. For every 10 drinks purchased, customers can receive a free drink by presenting their stamp card.

Another common promotion is through a store's limited time deals. For example, Fantasia offers a buy-one-get-one-free option every few weeks to promote a new drink. To publicize their strawberry mojito in April, they offered a free regular PMT along with the purchase.

As tea connoisseurs ourselves, we have found that these small tricks have helped us uncover the best way around the businesses.

Although tricky at first glance, these pricey options can be worked around, helping us make the most out of our money. ♦

Past Saratoga student writes for CBS' 'Scorpion'

BY EliciaYe

When Aadrita Mukerji, an economics major, decided to enroll in a screenwriting course in her second semester as a freshman at the University of Southern California (USC), she had no idea that she would be writing for the hit CBS show "Scorpion" seven years later.

"I only took the introductory level class for fun because I loved writing and TV and didn't want to study just one topic," said Mukerji, who went to Saratoga High through her junior year. Fortunately, thanks to the breadth offered at USC, she was able to find her love for screenwriting.

Mukerji came back to the school on April 20 and spoke to Media Arts, journalism and creative writing students about her eight-year journey that took her from being a member of the Falcon staff to a writer in Hollywood at the age of 24 — one of the hardest jobs to get in the writing profession.

Mukerji attended SHS as a part of the Class of 2009 until her junior year. She graduated from the American School in London at age 16 because her dad had a job transfer before her senior year.

As an economics major with a double minor in screenwriting and French, choosing a career unrelated to economics meant straying away from her family's traditional career paths, both holding MBAs.

Before graduating from college, Mukerji interned at five to six networks and companies including Disney, Fox, HBO and Bad Hat Harry.

"I didn't have a car, so I relied on pub-

lic transportation to take me to Disney and back," Mukerji said. "My parents ended up being really supportive because they saw me getting those internships myself, but it was still a leap of faith on their part."

Mukerji's talents in writing showed as early as high school, and newspaper adviser Mike Tyler had chosen her to be an editor-in-chief of the Falcon newspaper for 2008-09. Her experiences in newspaper publications over the years further nurtured her passion for writing.

"Somewhere in between giving assignments to other reporters and writing about what I was interested in, I discovered that I loved to write," she said. "I am so comfortable in the writers' room of a television show now because I spent so much time in the journalism room at Saratoga High."

Having been on the Falcon staff her sophomore and junior years, Mukerji joined a British underground newspaper her senior year in London. She also wrote for the Daily Trojan at USC her freshman year in college, but she realized that she wanted to move toward screenwriting.

During her time in London, Mukerji had an English professor who had told her she could be a perfect writer.

"It was a crazy thing for somebody to say, especially when for another year or so I didn't even consider writing to be a career," she said. "But to have that vote of confidence from him that indicated I could potentially be suited for a career in writing eventually meant a lot."

Later she went on to be the valedictorian of her class at USC. Looking back, Mukerji's



A hospital scene from the show "Scorpion" is depicted above. This episode, "Arrivals and Departures," was written by former SHS student Aadrita Mukerji with Nicholas Wootton.

ji's climb to officially becoming a part of the 10-person "Scorpion" writing team was anything but easy.

After two years as a writer's assistant on "New Girl" and working alongside older writers for "Scorpion," Mukerji finally received an opportunity to write her first episode after the show director approved three out of six of her episode ideas.

The very next day as she stood in front of a room full of experienced writers at least 10 years her senior, she was anxious yet eager to realize a dream she had nurtured for seven years.

Usually, Mukerji has three days to draft a 20-page outline and five days to write the script for an entire episode. In the two week-long "pre-production," the writer and the director work together to figure out casting, location, props, stunts and special effects to get ready to shoot. After finally joining the

Writer's Guild, Mukerji knew that she had to accept the level of uncertainty working in Hollywood as a writer.

"I was very worried because the entertainment industry is very unstable — a lot of it is chance and luck and coincidence," she said.

With only a 29 percent female and 13 percent minority TV writers population in Hollywood, Mukerji is grateful to have found an accepting team in "Scorpion" and has learned to fully commit to what she works on, one show at a time.

"I'm not a super competitive person in general, and I think someone else's success doesn't mean another's failure," Mukerji said. "I work with such a nice group of people, and I've learned so much from working in a room full of accomplished writers. Having everyone doing well means you have people you can rely on in the future." ♦

Urban Decay stirs up controversy in black community

BY LinaKim

"The black person is the protagonist in most of my paintings," late artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, an African-American artist who strived to challenge the status quo, said in his biography. "I realized that I didn't see many paintings with black people in them."

Recently, Urban Decay, a well-known American cosmetics brand, stirred controversy with the release of its exclusive col-

lection, featuring the late artist's work and Ruby Rose, a gender fluid model, as the face of the collection.

Basquiat frequently exhibited the black community's experience and advocated the Civil Rights movement, as he fought racial oppression through spotlighting publicized murders of black men. Urban Decay has decided to portray his artwork through two eyeshadow palettes, one blush palette, three lipstick shades and three pencil eyeliners.

All three palettes are based on Basquiat's paintings, detailed with a small cutout in the back for hanging.

Although the products themselves don't evoke controversy, many believe that one of Basquiat's main values, representation of the black community, wasn't respected since Ruby Rose, who is Caucasian, was chosen to be the face of the collection.

Many African Americans, in particular, are incensed at this choice.

David Stark, the president of Artestar, the creative firm that sells and licenses Basquiat's work, defended Rose as the face of the artist's collection.

"Even though he grew up in a middle-class black family, his family was Caribbean," he told New York Magazine. "They didn't have the African American experience; he was Haitian and Puerto Rican."

Nonetheless, Urban Decay's Basquiat collection remains questionable to many. ♦

Marvel's 'Iron Fist' entertains despite extensive criticism

BY RolandShen

In 2013, media giant Marvel struck a deal with Netflix to create multiple web series following the unrealistic but ever-fascinating adventures of their many heroes. For the past few years, Netflix has been producing popular shows including "Daredevil," "Jessica Jones" and "Luke Cage," which are all set in New York City and fall under the umbrella show "The Defenders," to be released in August.

Netflix once again released another of these highly anticipated series called "Iron Fist" in March. The show follows protagonist Danny Rand, in his journey of reacquiring the wealth and power that he originally had as a powerful CEO while also fighting a secret organization of ninjas.

Viewers had high expectations for "Iron Fist" due to the popularity of the past superhero shows, but many critics and viewers alike don't think the show has lived up to the hype.

With a Rotten Tomatoes rating of just 17 percent, "Iron Fist" is the lowest rated show in the entire Marvel-Netflix franchise.

In spite of the tepid reviews, the show does have merit and is thoroughly entertaining, as Rand transforms from rags to

riches and faces a legion of ninjas at every corner.

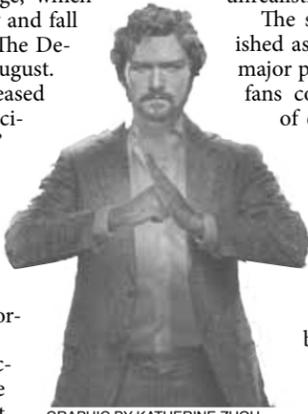
Despite the many positives the show had, the show received its low ratings for a reason. In the comics, Iron Fist is a master martial artist, someone who can defeat almost anyone in the Marvel Universe. In contrast, the choreography in the show seemed unrealistic and even dull at times.

The story itself also isn't as polished as it should have been. A few major plot holes in the storyline left fans confused about the timeline of events, and some aspects of the story are introduced but never concluded.

For example, mid-season, the show introduces as a cliffhanger a massive, seemingly endless hole in the middle of New York that could have only been created by the show's main antagonist; instead of following up with the cliffhanger, the hole is never seen from again.

Even with these negative aspects, the show deserves a chance.

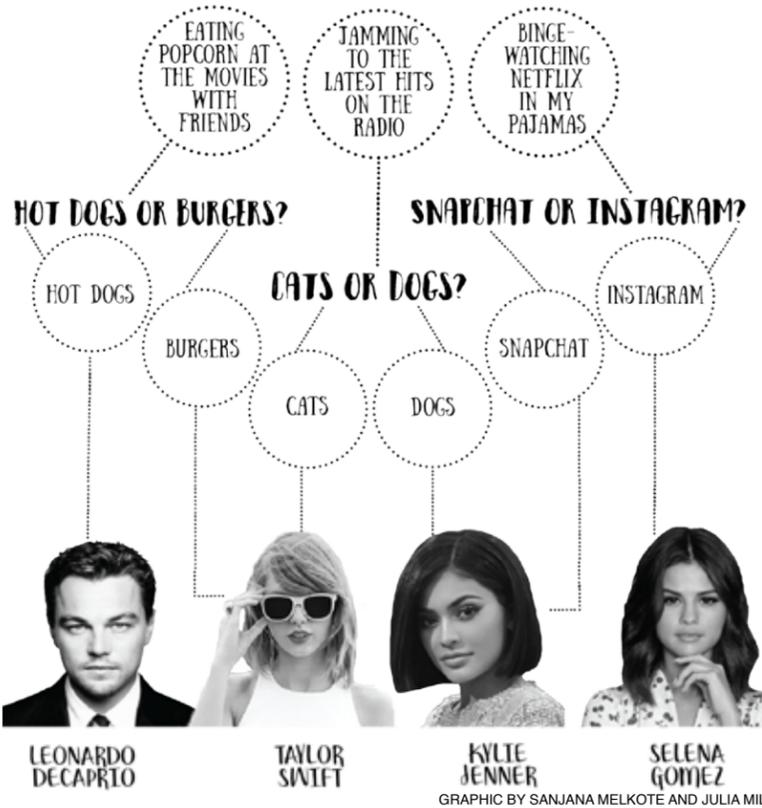
Every television show comes with mistakes that lead to criticism, but because "Iron Fist" is only in its first season, these mistakes can definitely be fixed in the highly anticipated second season projected to be released in mid 2019. ♦



GRAPHIC BY KATHERINE ZHOU

WHO IS YOUR CELEBRITY BFF

WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON A FRIDAY NIGHT?



GRAPHIC BY SANJANA MELKOTE AND JULIA MILLER

Netflix documentary 'Casting JonBenét' a letdown

BY Alexandra Li
& Chelsea Leung

In 1996, a 6-year-old beauty pageant queen, JonBenét Ramsey, was killed in her home in Boulder, Colo., leading to a media frenzy and shock across America.

False leads, multiple suspects, rookie police mistakes and a three-page ransom note confused the police and dragged the case on, resulting in it being still unsolved today.

The Netflix original documentary "Casting JonBenét," which came out on April 28, seeks to examine the case in a new light by bringing in the public's opinion. Director Kitty Green decided to experiment with a new genre, creating a movie that mixes a normal documentary with actors auditioning for specific roles.

Although the previews intrigued us, the actual documentary is lackluster and fails largely because of its baffling disorganization.

The film begins with seven little blonde girls, all wearing the exact same blue dress and red shoes, running on the screen and sitting down. Confused at first, we soon realized that these girls were auditioning to play the role of JonBenét Ramsey. We could already tell that it was no standard documentary, which usually explains facts through real footage and photos.

The movie then shows prospective actors holding their clapperboards as they introduce themselves and what they have in common with the characters whose



Girls line up for a casting call, wearing identical outfits, in a scene from "Casting JonBenét."

roles they're hoping to fulfill. Actors audition for the roles of JonBenét Ramsey; JonBenét's parents, Patsy and John; JonBenét's brother, Burke; a Santa Claus impersonator who knew JonBenét and John Mark Karr, a pedophile who falsely confessed to killing JonBenét.

The auditioning actors are from Boulder and therefore have at least tangential connections to JonBenét; for example, one woman auditioning for Patsy recalls driving past the Ramsey house on her daily commute to work.

The documentary strangely blurs the line between JonBenét Ramsey's case and the ac-

tors' own lives as the actors draw on their own experiences, such as the murder of a close family member or witnessing parental abuse, to examine the people related to the JonBenét Ramsey case.

This type of documentary, in which people surrounding the case are explored instead of the main people involved, is a trademark style of Green, who wanted to make the documentary more about the public's fascination with this case rather than the case itself.

Unfortunately, we sometimes couldn't tell when the actors were in character and speaking from the audition script or speak-

ing as themselves. Additionally, some of the actors' words are completely unrelated to the case and inappropriate, which made us very uncomfortable.

Information about the case is gleaned from the actors' words as they tell the story they heard in the news: the three-page ransom note, JonBenét's injuries including a broken skull from a blow to head, her cause of death being strangulation and the whereabouts of certain characters.

Occasionally, the actors act out a scene like JonBenét's father finding her body in the basement, but this is also confusing since we didn't know whether we were watching a documentary about JonBenét or a documentary about the actors.

As the movie progresses, we hear of the different theories that each of the actors has. Some strongly believe that Patsy killed her daughter by accident and out of anger; others believed the murderer was Burke, who was 9 at the time. Most believed the murderer had to be within the family because the lengthy ransom note was written with pen and paper from within the Ramsey house.

In the end, we found that watching the documentary to be a waste of time. In fact, reading a quick Wikipedia article would have given us the exact same information, with less random rambling by the actors.

Although the film attempts to use an innovative method of storytelling to make up for its lack of new insight on the case, we didn't see a point in listening to inexperienced speculations for an hour and 20 minutes. ♦

Logic's new album release is an interesting listen for 'Everybody'

BY Navin Tiwary

It's no wonder people have been calling 2017 the "Renaissance" of Hip-Hop, with new albums from Kendrick Lamar, Joey Bada\$\$ and Logic.

Hoping to leave his mark, rapper Logic released "Everybody" on May 5, his first full-length album since 2015.

Following the style of his previous works, the album incorporates a wide variety of elements from both modern-day rap and the traditional old-school rap. Logic often gets credit for not being "a talentless, sell-out rapper" and for his unconventional style. Because he speaks about common problems, he appeals to many types of fans.

But "Everybody" is not a groundbreaking Hip-Hop album like Tupac Shakur's "All Eyez On Me." It did not receive as much praise or sell as many copies as the latter album. It is, however, not a bad album in any way. It pushes the boundary of what topics are acceptable to talk about in rap and discusses themes that have rarely been covered in hip hop.

In this album, Logic tries to address emotional, serious themes such as suicide, but delivers in a simple way that lacks depth. In "1-800-273-8255," for example, he raps in the chorus "I finally wanna be alive / I finally wanna be alive / I don't wanna die today / I don't wanna die."

While the repetition of this idea emphasizes his message, the lyrics can feel repetitive and lack depth. Rap songs need more variation, and the chorus of this song does not have particularly interesting lines as it is fairly monotone.

There are certainly better ways to portray the theme of depression and suicide than simply repeating "I want to be alive." Logic could have talked about a certain experience or used clever wordplay and symbolism as other artists often do.

Yet the rapper redeemed himself in the way he rapped about his personal problems, such as being a light-skinned biracial man in his song "Black Spiderman," which has a catchy beat and unique lyrics, showcasing Logic's robust flow.

On his last mixtape, "Bobby Tarantino," Logic was more versatile, incorporating auto-tune into one of the songs. Although he has lost lyrical originality, he compensates for it with his thematic ambition.



VISIONARY MUSIC GROUP AND DEF JAM RECORDINGS

If Logic incorporates original rhyming schemes like the ones found in Kendrick's "Backseat Freestyle," he can bring his flow to a new level while also having many different "types" of voices so people do not get bored.

Logic undoubtedly addressed about personal topics that many listeners can relate to such as biracialism and depression. And he does not try to be something he is not — something which more rappers nowadays desperately need to understand. He is confident in his abilities and is not afraid to express himself.

He rapped, "Black is beautiful / Be black and proud / ... I'm biracial so bye Felicia." Logic talks about how people should be treated as equals regardless of what they believe in, therefore highlighting how proud he is of his biracialism.

Logic also brings light upon unique social issues such as racism and LGBTQ rights in this album.

Here, he takes another artistic leap by talking about normally taboo topics in the rap industry.

He talks about more than just violence, women and money, making this rap album an emotionally conscious one.

Specifically, on the song "Take It Back," Logic revisits how he persevered through these hardships to become the great rapper he is today.

Critics generally agree that his previous album, "The Incredible True Story," is far better, but "Everybody" stands as one of the best albums released in 2017 so far. My rating: four out of five Falcons. ♦

Alumnus pursues production career

BY Ava Hooman
& Muthu Palaniappan

2011 alumnus David Mandell was nervous as he walked up to renowned actor Kevin Pollak. In Mandell's hands was a script that he had been working for the past several months.

With the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work alongside an actor such as Pollak during an internship, Mandell decided that it would be beneficial to ask Pollak to take a look at his script, because he had worked in the industry for so long.

After persistently asking for suggestions to improve his script, Mandell began to feel that he was bothering Pollak, but he learned an important lesson about the entertainment industry.

"Everyone in this town will tell you when you're bugging them. No one will ever tell you that they forgot about you. Keep bugging me," Pollak told him.

After graduating from the school the school six years ago, Mandell went on to the University of Southern California (USC), studying acting and the entertainment business.

During his time here, he was the ASB president, drum major, a speech and debate captain and the director of the student production "The Woman in Black."

His exposure to the arts in high school encouraged him to pursue his passion later.

Since then, Mandell has worked for companies like ICM Partners, the agency of actors Samuel L. Jackson and Jodie Foster, and Leverage Management, the production company behind the 2015 movie "Entourage." He has also worked for Appian Way, Leonardo DiCaprio's production company.

Mandell said that he was drawn to the

field because entertainment allows him to truly express himself.

"The entertainment industry is truly a place to express some of the most prevalent issues and make vulnerability a strength, shining a light on the stories that need to be told," Mandell said.

Mandell said that the business side of the entertainment industry is nothing like what he expected. He realized that projects take a long time to complete, some spanning several years.

One of the many unexpected situations that he has had to tackle was during a short film that Mandell recently scripted called "Laughing Along the Way." After deciding on a \$3 million budget for the project, Mandell met with Indomitable Entertainment.

Although the company managers saw potential in Mandell's script, they were only looking to back films with budgets ranging from \$15 to \$35 million. Therefore, instead of submitting his script that he had worked over three years on, Mandell was forced to use a script which he had only started working on a week prior.

Even after working on one project for several years, executives wanted something produced quickly for a script.

In the future, Mandell hopes to make more films that spark social commentary.

Mandell has learned that putting his work out into the world and being vulnerable to criticism has made him a stronger writer, so he advises other students at Saratoga High to be brave and go for their dreams.

"Don't be afraid to fail. I'm still working my way and paving my path," Mandell said. "But at the end of the day, I'm doing what I love, and not everyone gets to say that." ♦



Mandell





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Editor's note: The Falcon sought out freelance writing for this issue. This story was written for English 11 Honors, where students were assigned to imitate Tim O'Brien's style in the short story, "How to Tell a True War Story." The following satire describes the steps to take to become the "most popular girl in school."

pop-u-lar-i-ty
noun

The state or condition of being liked, admired, or supported by many people.

An ideal state, by anyone's judgement.

To stand out as the most popular girl in school, you must, ironically, blend in. It's a game of charades: camouflage in the jungles of high school social circles at a moment's notice. Think nighttime recon.

Popular girls must maintain their appearance. On the lazy days, strive for the "cute girl drowning in her boyfriend's hoodie" look. On the regular days, dress to subtly impress. Throw your hair up into a sexy bun to showcase all that milky smooth skin. Flaunt just enough to keep the boys wondering.

School-wide popularity is grounded in approachability. You must have one foot in the doorway of as many social circles as you can. Form a true connection with one group of devoted friends, and you'll risk alienating yourself from the rest of the teenage population. Better to exist as a transparent figure.

Ace your classes, but while juggling your studies and AP classes, make sure to join the cheer team. This will give you a direct route to the hearts and other body parts of the athletes and future frat boys.

Bend but do not break the cheerleader stereotype. Boys will covet the attention of the girl who can act like one of guys, while pulling off a short skirt. Tease, but do not please. Do not lecture him about the trials and tribulations of upcoming AP exams.

Soon you will be respected and admired by all of your peers - from the superior nerds to the hot jocks. Guys will cast admiring glances your way, and girls will yearn for your ability to blend beauty with brains in both your coy looks and mischievous grins. Popularity at its finest.

Seen by all; understood by none.

You will know you are the most popular girl in school if you have a crowd of people eager to eat lunch with you, and no one to talk to when the burden of exposure becomes frightening. It reinforces your social status, and destabilizes your true character. Popularity will suffocate, keeping you in the shark-infested waters of high school ridicule, forcing you into an tireless doggy-paddle of public adaptation.

You will know you are the most popular girl in school if every day, you find yourself laughing along with the people you despise. You will know you are the most popular girl in school if you spend nights searching for who you really are.

Never stand up for the bullied; maintain the status quo. Forego feminism because activism means overbearance in their eyes. Feel yourself disintegrating in the acidic vats of artificiality.

A toxic state, by anyone's judgement. ♦

— Michelle Low

Clubs allow students to enjoy cultural diversity on campus

BY Patrick Li & Muthu Palaniappan

As the curtains lifted on the McAfee Center stage on Feb. 17, blue and pink spotlights illuminated a group of 30 freshmen excited to participate in their first-ever Bombay in the Bay performance as part of the Indiana Cultural Awareness Club.

ICAC is one of seven cultural-related clubs on campus, but it is the most visible and most numerous with 258 participants.

The club started during the 2001-2002 school year by alumni Swati Balakrishnan. The annual Bombay in the Bay show brings in hundreds of participants from inside and outside the school Indian community. This year, there were as many as 100 students who performed in the show from all grades.

Senior club officer Karan Desai also noted how the show brings other ethnicities together to learn and share Indian culture through the Bollywood music, cultural costumes and quirky skits surrounding Indian folk tales.

Junior Andrew Zheng participated in the performance. He enjoyed spending time at practices with his friends and found it as an outlet to relax. In addition, Zheng did not let the cultural barrier stop him from participating, but rather found it as a way to learn more about Indian heritage.

"The fact that [Bombay in the Bay] mostly consists of students of the Indian heritage doesn't bother me," Zheng said. "I still enjoy practicing and performing with my friends."

Another club that strives to celebrate its culture is Chinese Club, founded last October by juniors Nathan Chin and Nicholas Di.

To teach students about the Chinese culture, the club sets up projects such as



TALISMAN // KEVIN COUCH

Several students participate in one of Korean Culture Club's New Year activities in the quad. Chinese Club and Korean Club worked together to plan the Lunar New Year festivities.

making Chinese calligraphy and playing with "jian zi," the Chinese version of hacky sack.

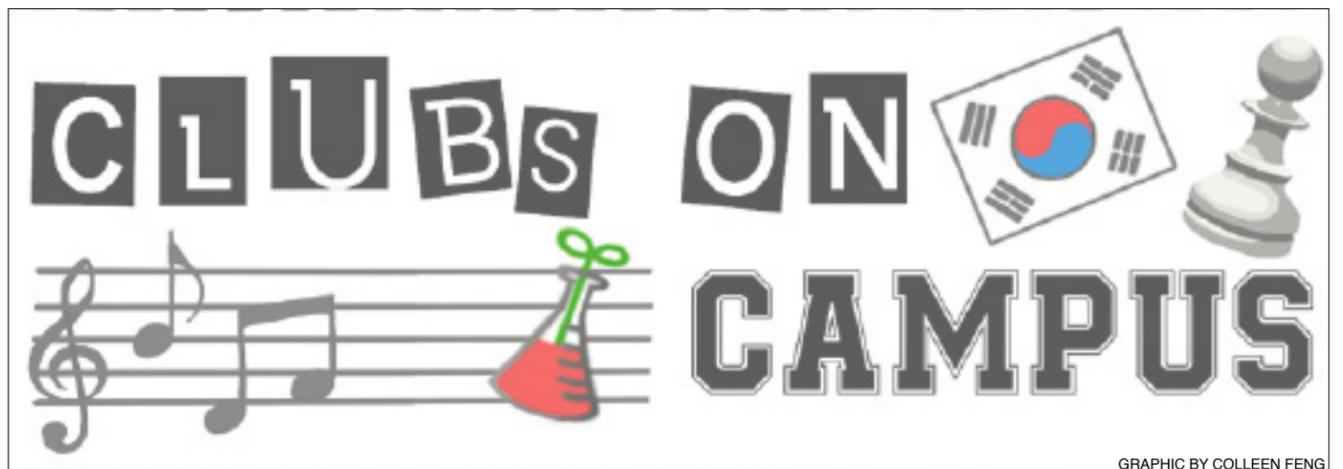
The club attracts members by giving away free "Asian jellies" every meeting. Chin and Di also plan to make club T-shirts to give Chinese Club a bigger presence on campus next year. For its part, Korean Club is relying on weekly meetings where members learn Korean music and language and play traditional games. The club attracts members through word of mouth and the many fundraisers they have throughout the year. Members meet weekly and discuss trends in Korean culture like K-Pop music or K-Dramas.

Besides talking about what's hot in Korea, junior member Jane Lee said the

club examines traditional foods and games as well. In January, Korean Club teamed up with Chinese Club to create a school-wide festival celebrating Lunar New Year. During the Lunar New Year celebration, students were able to participate in traditional games like "tuho," where participants throw javelins into a bin. The winners were awarded with Korean snacks.

The event showcased the unique aspects of Asian culture that many students are unfamiliar to and allowed them to learn more.

"I think if we lose out on our cultural identity, we lose part of who we are," Lee said. "It's definitely important to represent one's culture, especially in a school where there's so much diversity." ♦



GRAPHIC BY COLLEEN FENG

STEAM Club: A new style of learning

BY Ava Hooman & Patrick Li

As pink goo oozed out of a Jack-O-Lantern's gaping mouth, a wave of amusement passed through the crowd in Chemistry teacher Janny Cahatol's classroom.

The goo was a result of mixing Hydrogen Peroxide with a catalyst, speeding up the decomposition process and producing a large mass of water and oxygen.

This was just one of many demonstrations by the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) Club during their meetings this year.

Juniors Ashna Panchmatia and JR Im founded the club after they saw that the school lacks a place where students can create hands-on science projects that are both fun and informative.

"I was exposed to a lot of science activities as a child, but as I was growing up I realized that not every kid got the same opportunities as me," Im said.

Im and Panchmatia planned to create

this club in last year, but did not make the deadline to make STEAM Club. Over the summer, the two started planning events and activities, and also applied for funding from the American Chemical Society, which has become their primary sponsor after donating \$300 to the club. Wednesdays during lunch, the club meets to work on projects.

"I realized that not every kid got the same opportunities as me."



JUNIOR Je-ryong Im

To make each one as meaningful as possible, STEAM has six other club officers that represent its different departments: science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics. (Art has two officers.)

Sophomore Colleen Feng, who regularly

attends club meetings, plans on pursuing a STEAM-related field when she is older and finds the activities highly beneficial.

"The activities are interactive and, and the club never repeats anything, so there is always something new that we learn," Feng said.

In addition to maintaining an active presence at school, STEAM also tries to reach out to the community by holding programs for children.

Recently the club hosted an event at the Academy of Sciences in San Francisco where they spoke to over a thousand children.

At the event, they performed two science experiments: a coffee filter chromatography demonstration and another involving the exploration of weight distribution via a miniature boat.

"It was extremely rewarding to do the experiments because I could see the children really enjoyed them," Panchmatia said.

In the future, STEAM club plans to expand beyond Saratoga into cities such as San Jose and even seek to receive a non-profit organization status. ♦

Students compete for perfect Promposal

BY Esha Lakhota
& Muthu Palaniappan

Before Junior Prom, junior Sahn Rafati slipped into junior Anaka Negin's room at her house, nervously managing last-minute balloon set up as he prepared for her to enter. His friends helped him rush to tape streamers to the ceiling and blow up balloons.

Rafati put in extra effort to surprise Negin with a unique promposal in an attempt to win free prom tickets. One week before his asking, Rafati had talked to two of his friends and Negin's mother.

Rafati's idea for his prom asking was to decorate Negin's room and surprise her in the afternoon with a bouquet of flowers and a quirky poster with a slogan he knew Negin would find funny.

While many put in the effort to pull off the best "promposal" for the sake of impressing their peers, others try with the incentive of receiving free prom tickets.

It has been a tradition among class offices to create competitions where the couple with the most popular prom asking will get free bids. Due to the high prices of prom tickets, holding the asking competition was a success as students were greatly encouraged to get creative.

"When she walked in the room, she



Courtesy of VISHAL NARAYAN

Junior Vishal Narayan used two Disney-themed posters to ask senior Nimisha Devanagondi to Junior Prom. Narayan chose his theme after learning that Devanagondi liked Disney.

immediately started laughing and I think she was really surprised," Rafati said. "The promposal went really well."

Likewise, junior Nicholas Di aimed to ask junior Sarah Lo in an extraordinary way. Since Lo is a golfer, Di surprised her at the golf course where she was practicing and had posters lead up to the word "PROM?" spelled out in golf balls.

"I wanted to somehow include a golf

theme in my asking to surprise her because she puts in a lot of time practicing golf," Di said. The asking itself took a lot of planning to set up and execute, requiring Di to start planning it a week before with her golf team friends, who knew when and where the asking would be most suitable.

In the end, it was juniors Alan Xiao and Nathon Chin, not Rafati or Di, who won the competition. Nonetheless, they both

enjoyed asking their dates.

For senior prom, senior Austin Cai was among the first to ask his date, senior Kelsey Kinoshita, by spelling the words "Will You Go To Prom With Me?" in glass bottle messages on the beach.

Two days before his asking, Cai decided to settle on the glass bottle idea and ask his date during the annual Media Arts Program trip to Asilomar on May 14. The night

"I wanted to include a golf theme in my asking to surprise her."



JUNIOR Nicholas Di

before, Cai drank several glasses of soda to stay up and finish his poster.

Kinoshita's friends, including seniors Kanika Vora, Rachel Davey and Julia Vita, also helped coordinate with Cai to make sure his asking was everything he wanted.

"I was nervous during the asking because there were so many people and it was my first asking, but it was great that I did it with supportive people I knew," Cai said. ♦

Rally tryouts seek to reach out to underclassmen

BY Elicia Ye

As Spongebob, Mermaid Man, Jimmy Neutron, Dora the Explorer, Cosmo and Wanda made their way across the quad onto the lawn, the eight current rally commissioners asked the dressed-up applicants to imitate their characters, do wheelbarrows and perform acts on the spot to show their creativity.

Their assignment: Act like farm animals, pretend to eat grass and find random strangers or friends to carry them.

This year, the rally commission hosted tryouts for potential new commissioners on April 20 and 21. With six students applying for an advertised three open spots, the competition and pressure to showcase their spirit made the process even more challenging.

Applicants were expected to attend the first day of tryouts dressed up as a Nickelodeon character of their choice and complete tasks designated by current rally commissioners.

"The whole tryout process is quite nerve-racking," said senior commissioner Emma Kovac. "We ask some tough questions during the interview and make them do some pretty embarrassing things. The commission spends a lot of time to select a group of students who meet the criteria but also will get along with us."

By the end of day two, the veteran commissioners decided to add four additional members. Said Kovac: "It was hard to deny one of them just because [they] had a number [they] were previously set on."

The additions include sophomore Justin Chao and three freshmen: Payton Stokes, Risa Carter and Liviya Katz.

When commissioner junior Allison Borch tried out for rally as a freshman, she was initially concerned that the commission consisted mostly of upperclassmen.

"I was really intimidated, and there were

a lot of seniors who I didn't know at all," Borch said. "But [Class of 2016 alumna] Isa [Berardo], who was head commissioner at the time, made me more confident and brought out my outgoing personality."



Borch

Marking a major change from the 2016-17 school year, the newly amended ASB Constitution states that the commission will not be part of the Leadership Class in order to avoid conflicts with the senior-level Media Arts class.

With this change, more students were motivated to apply since they wouldn't have to experience potential schedule conflicts, according to Borch.

On the second day, applicants dressed formally for an interview and were asked questions such as "Do you have time for rally practices and setups?" "What are your other extracurriculars?" and "Can you make us laugh in 10 seconds?"

As all current rally commissioners will

be upperclassmen next year, the commission looked to reach out to more freshmen through younger commissioners sophomores Sasha Pickard and David Berkowitz-Sklar.

Because the current commissioners knew many underclassmen personally, and because both Pickard and Berkowitz-Sklar have siblings who are freshmen, they asked their underclassmen connections to help spread the word about the openings.

Since rally has previously advertised its tryout process by encouraging their friends to join, the commission has mainly consisted of the same social groups.

As the commission reaches out to more underclassmen, current members attempt to build a more inclusive commission in the future.

"We aim to involve not only people of all ages on campus, but also connect people different cliques and social groups in order to further extend the feeling of school spirit," Berkowitz-Sklar said. ♦

Students collaborate on website for Spanish program

BY Daniel Bessonov
& Patrick Li

Coming home from the Spanish program's Mexico trip last year, junior Ryan Anderson searched for a way to get in touch with the friends he had made while on the trip.

After unsuccessfully trying to find them on social media sites, Anderson quickly realized that existing means of communication available to him are by no means accessible or efficient to serve his needs.

With the approval of the school's Spanish program, Anderson set out to create a website called World Without Walls, along with the help of seniors Kha Nguyen and Kyle Seid-Phan.

In an attempt to bring the age-old concept of pen-pals into the 21st century, the website makes communication between students of different linguistic backgrounds easier.

Instead of following an outdated letter and email system, the website centers

around texting as its main communication format.

The website holds the same premise as a generic messaging service, but provides in-website translation features in order to make communication between students who speak different languages easier. In order to use the website, users simply add the email of their respective pen-pal, and are then able to chat away.

Although the messages are in the user's original language, each student has the option to copy and paste the text into the site's integrated translation service to see what their pen-pal had written.

According to Anderson, World Without Walls differentiates itself from services such as Facebook's Messenger by providing a centralized user-experience, revolving around the site's integrated translation features.

"Sending letters in the mail was too time-consuming, and the messages could have easily been lost," Anderson said. "On the other hand, emails, although faster, were

just kind of boring."

In order to solve this problem, Anderson followed the Silicon Valley solution of programming his own website rather than looking for a third-party solution.

"If it is successful, this is definitely a project we would love to pursue later on in high school and college."

JUNIOR Ryan Anderson

Inspired by Google's material design concept and the simplicity that a service such as Facebook Messenger provides, Anderson ultimately set out to create a website that implements both of these popular websites, a design he thought would speak to teenagers in a way emails simply couldn't.

As soon as they finished a prototype during mid-April, Anderson, Nguyen and

Phan introduced their product to Spanish 4 Honors teacher Arnaldo Rodriguex.

They plan to get the website live and operational before the school year ends. In addition, they plan to speak to both Spanish and Linguistics Clubs in order to spread word about the website.

If all goes well, Anderson said that Rodriguex will be able to offer cultural credit in return for certain milestones accomplished on the website.

"We are working on implementing a feature where Mr. Rodriguex will be able to see how many messages students have sent, giving him the ability to somehow convert that into class credit," Anderson said.

All three hope to pursue the project in the future if it meets success in the Spanish program. In the long term, their goal is to expand World Without Walls to as many schools as possible to truly connect students with various linguistic backgrounds.

"We are extremely excited to see how the website will perform, and if it is successful, this is definitely a project [we] would love to pursue later on in our high-school and college careers," Anderson said. ♦



Nguyen



Students gain independence behind the wheel

BY KarenChow & ElaineSun

With white-knuckled hands gripping the steering wheel, junior Nathan Kang drove his Toyota minivan through an empty parking lot, his mother yelling in his ear.

“Drive slower! You’re going to die!” This was Kang’s first experience driving during his sophomore year, a moment shared by many as they first set out to drive.

When a teen presses the gas pedal for the first time, a rush of nervousness and anxiety results. However daunting, driving is a rite of passage into adulthood for most teens.

“Adulthood is what all of us are going toward in our transition out of being a teen,” Kang said. “Responsibility falls solely on us and we can say we’re independent.”

Aside from being a step toward maturity, Kang feels that driving was a time-saver for both himself and his parents. Coming from a family whose motto is “own up to your own mistakes and actions,” Kang found that gaining independence from his supportive parents became less and less daunting.

“My parents want me to try to go my own way, to find myself, and I love the idea of being able to make decisions for myself, de-

spite the consequences,” Kang said.

As he gets older, looking for work and getting his license has eased him into adult life. In his journey toward adulthood, Kang believes that an important aspect in this process is still respecting his elders and other people who have “guided him in the right path.” Kang said that it is important to stay humble and recognize that others have lived much longer than he has.

Freshman Julia Yoo, who got her learner’s permit in December, feels that driving is “a necessary part of living” because it became easier for her to get to activities after school without “bothering [her parents].”

When Kang first got his license, he ignored a stop sign in order to save time; consequently, a car almost crashed into him. Luckily, it stopped in time. Afterward, Kang realized the gravity of driving and the importance of following the rules. Kang has “never ignored a stop sign after that.”

According to Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention, 2,333 teens (ages 16 to 19) in the United States were killed in 2015, and 221,313 were treated in emergency rooms for injuries crashes in 2014. In 2013, teens age 15 to 19 represented only 7 percent of the U.S. population, but they accounted for 11 percent, or \$10 billion, of the total costs of vehicle injuries.

On April 17, junior Alex Vaziri was one of the teens involved in an accident.

Vaziri was driving down Beaumont Avenue passing the intersection as he approached a two-way stop sign. Even though he had right of way, a car on his left rolled through her stop sign and was about to hit him on the left. Trying to avoid a collision with the car, Vaziri swerved out of the way and crashed into a brick fence.

“The one thing I learned from my experience is that you never know what can happen on the road,” said Vaziri. “I would always tell my parents that I would never

crash, and although it wasn’t my fault, I still ended up crashing.”

After the accident, Vaziri went to the emergency room and luckily did not have any serious injuries. Vaziri now better understands the dangers of driving and was “definitely scared to get back on the road.” Despite this fear, he forced himself to drive again, knowing he would need to face his fear eventually to get where he needed to be.

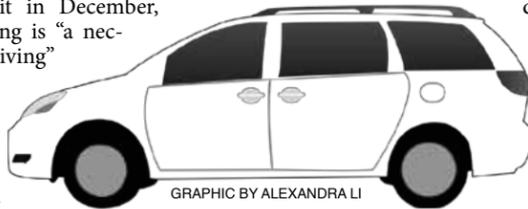
Even with risks, for most, driving means more freedom, responsibility and independence. However, senior Daniel Liu does not feel the need to drive — at least not yet.

“I got my permit as a sophomore but I never had the time to practice it so it expired in my junior year,” said Liu. “I didn’t feel the need to retake it, especially since APUSH was killing me at the time.”

He is actually happy he doesn’t drive yet, arguing he feels privileged to be given rides in the way that millionaires and billionaires are driven around by chauffeurs.

Seemingly the more typical view is the one held by Kang:

“I feel like driving is a privilege that comes with age. In that sense, you become an adult and it is a step toward becoming your own independent person.” ♦



GRAPHIC BY ALEXANDRA LI

The significance of a Bar and Bat Mitzvah

BY AaronChoi & EshaLakhotia

In accordance with Bar Mitzvah tradition, senior Zach Grob-Lipkis, then 13, screamed with excitement as he was lifted up in a chair in the middle of the dance floor. Looking down, he saw his uncle smiling up at him. His parents wore proud smiles.

The “Bar” or “Bat Mitzvah,” or “son” or “daughter of the commandment” in Aramaic, the mother language of Hebrew, is a Jewish religious ceremony that recognizes boys as men at age of 13 and girls as women at 12.

The tradition dates back to the sixth century C.E. Bar and Bat Mitzvahs originally developed as a public recognition of one’s legal and religious status, but it was not until the Middle Ages that a fully developed ritual emerged.

Around the 13th or 14th century, the custom of calling a boy up to the Torah was established as the way of recognizing entry into manhood. Though the tradition is old, Grob-Lipkis tied his Jewish heritage with a modern-day casino theme to highlight the start of his adulthood.

Before a child reaches Bar Mitzvah age, parents are held responsible for their child’s actions. After this ceremony, the new “adults” are said to bear their own responsibility for Jewish ritual law, tradition and ethics, and are regarded as ready to observe religious precepts and eligible to take part in public worship.

“Bar Mitzvahs are cool because it’s when I became a man, accord-

ing to Judaism, so several relatives got me masculine gifts like pocket knives,” Grob-Lipkis said.

Preparation for the event can require years of learning to read and sing hymns in Hebrew. Senior Aaron Vogel practiced his Hebrew with a tutor twice a week for two years, and Grob-Lipkis studied for nine months before his Bar Mitzvah.

The long study period pays off in the week of the ceremony, when they lead the Shabbat services at their synagogue. They give a speech about a specific portion of the Torah, a series of five books scripting the law of God, including its personal importance and relevance in modern society.

That evening, relatives of the speaker host the Bar Mitzvah party. The eldest family member recites prayers and blessings over “challah,” a braided bread

served among other cultural foods. Eighteen is a lucky number in the Jewish community, coming from the 18th letter, which means “life” in Hebrew. Grob-Lipkis enjoys the money and gifts from friends and family that come in increments of 18, as more and more money is accumulated this way.

The preparation is not only a significant learning experience, but it also fosters appreciation for the Jewish culture.

“The whole process meant a lot to me,” Vogel said. “My dad got Bar Mitzvah’d, my grandpa got Bar Mitzvah’d. Almost all of my relatives got one. I felt like I was finally a part of something my entire family is.” ♦



Vogel



Courtesy of KELSEY KINOSHITA

Girls smile as they enjoy the Senior Recognition Event hosted by NCL to acknowledge their charity work.

NCL organization honors seniors

BY ChelseaLeung

After the speeches of seniors Kelsey Kinoshita, Hannah Leonard, Grace Rothschild, Maxine Parr, Sophie Parr, Makenna Seagraves and Sophia Crolla were played, each greeted their parents. As their moms gave them special necklaces, their dads scooped them into tight hugs.

This “parent greeting” is a tradition of the National Charity League’s (NCL) annual Senior Recognition event, the ceremony for graduating seniors.

The event celebrates the work graduating seniors have done with their mothers over the past six years with their chapter of NCL, a mother-daughter philanthropic organization. Chapters are determined by family residence and separated by grade. Seven seniors from Saratoga High are actively involved with the Saratoga-Los Gatos Chapter’s Class of 2017. Their recognition event took place on March 18 at the Fourth Street Summit Center in San Jose.

It began with a cocktail hour and a ceremony, in which the NCL chapter president Gail Kepler, class president Crolla and members all gave speeches about

their experience in NCL. The ceremony concluded with dinner, dessert and dancing.

“Recognition had a bunch of my friends, so although it was sad, it was a really memorable way to end it,” Leonard said.

According to parent Jeanine Seagraves, the Senior Recognition Event began in the 1990s when founding members Mimi Ahern and Reiko Iwanaga started a tradition called “Presents.” In 2005, NCL renamed the celebration “Senior Recognition,” which now includes many customs such as long white dresses.

Of the 23 girls in the graduating class, 13 attended the optional event with their invited friends and family.

“My favorite part of the event was getting to share memories of the past six years [in NCL] with my mom,” Crolla said.

Every chapter of the National Charity League works with different local organizations to provide service opportunities for members and their moms. Kinoshita’s favorite volunteering experience was at the Book-Go-Round, a secondhand bookstore in downtown Saratoga that funds the Saratoga library.

“I got to share my love of read-

ing with the community and met all kinds of people living in Saratoga,” Kinoshita said.

Members must work at least 25 hours per year, but most girls in the Saratoga-Los Gatos chapter reach up to 75 hours a year. Over the past six years, the Class of 2017 members collectively worked 7,503 hours, Crolla said.

Parents agree that working with NCL has influenced their daughters’ growth in many ways. For example, Ms. Seagraves has seen her daughter Makenna develop leadership skills as well as “discover what it means to volunteer in your community.”

“[Makenna] has learned that the big picture is all outside of the bubble where we live,” Ms. Seagraves said. “Compassion for others is the most important growth anyone can hope for.”

Although her work with the NCL is over for now, Crolla can see herself rejoining as a mother if she has a daughter of her own.

“Being able to work with people with special needs has really opened my eyes to how privileged of an area I live in and how lucky I am to have what I have,” Crolla said. “It has made me closer with my mom and the girls I worked alongside.” ♦

Students reflect on overseas school differences

BY Ashley Su & Katherine Zhou

The bell rang, signaling the end of class, but instead of packing up to go to her next subject, senior Ally Kim, then a second grader at Jun Nong Elementary School in Seoul, South Korea, waited patiently in her seat for the next teacher to enter the room.

Unlike American schools, where changing classrooms in between subjects seems only natural, most schools in South Korea and other parts of Asia traditionally have teachers change classrooms instead. Students remain in the same classroom throughout the school day, even for lunch, only leaving to go to the track for P.E. class.

The transition between classes is just one of the many differences between schools in America and South Korea, where Kim lived until third grade.

Another big difference is the academic load foisted upon young children by the society. Kim doesn't ever remember being assigned homework, but instead would do work for supplemental studies and tutoring, a common practice in South Korea.

In South Korea, students are expected to pursue more academically centered subjects — the arts are typically frowned upon by parents, leading to a focus on subjects like math and science.

Socially, Kim noticed that because of the small sizes of South Korean communities, parents allowed their kids to be more independent, letting them travel around by themselves. Although most people don't have much free time for social events because of tutoring programs, they are very close to those that are in their classes.

Junior Daniel Ryu, who came to the U.S. from South Korea during his sophomore year, said his school there rarely held school events, like prom or Homecoming, except small festivals. Furthermore, although his school also had spring break, winter break

and summer break, summer break was only two to three weeks long.

Ryu also recognized a difference in the way history is taught in South Korea. Ryu said that the teachers there did not go into as much detail compared to American schools.

For example, when learning about specific events, students were expected to study only the event's background and the people involved, rarely writing essays about them, which is a common assignment in Saratoga.

Furthermore, Ryu said the curriculum in his Korean history class did not teach Korean wars, focusing only on other aspects of Korean history.

Junior Mathilde Rouffineau, a one-year exchange student from Lycée Benjamin Franklin High School in Auray, France, has also noticed vast differences in the academic culture between her French high school and Saratoga. Despite her home school having a longer school day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Rouffineau has observed that academics are much more relaxed in France than at SHS.

"[Students in France] are less into having good grades than here; they work less and are not graded on homework," Rouffineau said. "When you study for six hours for a

"When you study for six hours for a test, people in France look at you like you're crazy, but here it's normal."

JUNIOR Mathilde Rouffineau

test, people in France look at you like you're crazy, but [in Saratoga] it's normal."

Along with the academic culture, Rouffineau also noticed that students here are much more focused on a linear path toward



FALCON // AVA HOOMAN

Junior Daniel Ryu, who emigrated from South Korea in the middle of sophomore year, talks to fellow classmate Yunho Roh during English class during fourth period on May 26.

college, while people in France are more open to different opportunities, such as trade schools or apprenticeships.

"In France, college is not really important," Rouffineau said. "You don't really take college as [seriously] as [people do] here; here, everyone has to go to college because it is very important. [People believe] if you don't go to college, you have no future."

Originally, Rouffineau became interested in traveling to America as an exchange student after watching TV shows about American teenagers, developing an interest in the American culture and language. When she arrived in America her junior year, Rouffineau noticed a huge contrast in social interactions between teachers and students.

"In France, the teachers are very formal.

For example, a teacher [in France] is not going to tell you that [he or she] likes your outfit or your hair," Rouffineau said. "In French we have two different 'you's, the formal and the friendly, so we have a different 'you' for the teacher."

From her experience at Saratoga High, Rouffineau said that she prefers the friendly environment of Saratoga and the shorter school days. Kim also believes that moving to Saratoga has provided her with more freedom in choices.

"We have the leisure to pursue media arts, filming, journalism and music [in America], and more people have the dream of becoming an artist," Kim said. "For my interests, I think I got a lot more opportunities in America." ♦

Some bookstores thrive, some die in age of Amazon

BY Daniel Bessonov & Victor Liu

It's an unusual sight in the 21st century: a quaint bookstore nestled between Kim's Nail Care and Mac's Smoke Shop in downtown Palo Alto. Inside, a banner stretching across the store's second floor reads, "Bell's Books, Established 1935, Celebrating 80 years!" a testament to owner Faith Bell's dedication to the book-selling business.

Bell's Books has withstood the test of time and is now the last independent bookstore operating in the city's downtown.

The store has an antique feel — its 14-shelf-high walls house more than 375,000 books, with the oldest ones dating all the way back to the 15th century, according to Virginia Kean, one of two employees in the store.

There are many reasons for Bell's unlikely success in the era of Amazon and eBooks: the unique experience the bookstore offers to customers, Bell's curation of the store's stock and her familiarity with the book retail business.

"People like to browse and find things that they haven't even thought of or dreamed about," Kean said. "People of all ages come in and spend time browsing and find unusual things tucked away."

Chris Storer, Bell's husband, also attributed the store's success to an affinity people have for old-timey books.

"When eBooks first came out, there was this faddish devotion and everybody wanted to try it, and now that's going away and those people are coming back to the store," Storer said.

Located 18.6 miles away from Bell's on the corner of Saratoga Los Gatos Road, the Saratoga Book Go Round has also stood its ground — but for different reasons.

Though considerably smaller than Bell's, it has a homey atmosphere, with classical music playing in the background as custom-

ers pick through books from all 55 categories the used-book store has to offer. The Book Go Round has maintained this serenity for more than three decades.

"Our store is special because the price here is much cheaper than online," said Sophie Qian, a volunteer at the Book Go Round. "We are able to sell books at a discounted price because books are donated."

Despite its cheap prices, with books going for as low as 50 cents, the store still manages to generate a profit. In 2015 alone, the Book Go Round was \$144,000 in the black.

These numbers, coupled with the fact that everyone working for the store is a volunteer, help keep the store afloat and able to keep donating its proceeds to the Saratoga Public Library.

"For the last couple of years we have had good business," Qian said. "Especially during the holidays, we have almost-new books and there are people waiting in lines outside — it's like Black Friday night. Our profit during that time may be around \$1,000 in a couple hours."

One reason for its high sales is that the Book Go Round has many regulars. In order to keep them happy, volunteers at the Book Go Round constantly restock their bookshelves to provide a wider variety of books.

"There is a set of regular customers that always come every weekend or every week," Qian said. "They might not necessarily get a

book depending on what books are on the shelf because they are always different. For this particular bookstore, we still have a future because we still have customers coming over."

At the other end of Saratoga Los Gatos Road lies a bookstore that hasn't fared so well against its online competition: the Village House of Books.

The store's co-owner, Cheryl Hare, said the business could not compete in the modern marketplace

against online books and Kindles.

Opened in 2013, the Village House of Books went out of business on March 21. In order to stay in business, Cheryl and her husband Steve, the store's other co-owner, sold sunglasses, children's toys and even their own brand of candy.

"The book store wasn't a hobby; it was a business decision because Los Gatos didn't have a bookstore, so we thought it would do really well," Cheryl said. "We've sold sidelines (other merchandise besides books) from the beginning, because we realize that you can't make a living based on just books."

The Hares agree that while physical books are still in demand, eBooks and Kindles have advantages that traditional brick-and-mortar stores can't compete with. And despite the couple's best efforts, the Village House of Books still couldn't success-

fully beat digital media. Right before closing down, they averaged 20 customers per day.

"People still want to read books, but this location is just too expensive," Cheryl said. "eBooks don't have to pay the overhead and maintenance fees. To compete with eBooks, we have done a lot of other events, such as meet-and-greets for both adults and children."

However, while bookstores have struggled against Kindles and eBooks to varying degrees of success, the Saratoga Library has opted to embrace digital media instead.

The Saratoga Library has expanded its online resources to give library users free access to music, eBook downloads, various live streams and databases such as EBSCO.

"The library has increased reference collections online," said Birgit Spring, the teens' librarian at the Saratoga Library. "If you go to the libraries' website you will find hundreds of online resources."

Spring believes that in addition to the online resources the Santa Clara County Library District offers to users, many library goers still find solace in printed books, despite the presence of online media.

"Teens especially still like to read paper books, since they can just take them anywhere," Spring said. "If you are reading outside, I think a paperback book is still easier because your screen doesn't have glare and you might not have a connection."

Furthermore, Spring credits the library's success to the study spaces and programs for teens it provides. According to Spring, the Saratoga Library has actually seen an increase in visitors in the last few years.

"There are some things you can do in a physical building that have nothing to do with eResources," Spring said. "If we have new technology coming up, we try to incorporate and use it. But a library is more than a building where you come to check out physical books. It's a community and a place where you can meet, study and learn." ♦



Dance team thrives as staff offers support, organization

BY Francesca **Chu**, Jay **Kim** & Amy **Tang**

"Go Toga!" voices cheered, as the 10 girls on dance team hit their final pose of their jazz routine at the national Contests of Champions competition in Orlando in March.

Even though the girls were hundreds of miles away from home, they knew they could always count on assistant principal Brian Thompson to be in the stands, cheering for them and repping his "Team Dad" jersey that the team gave him during their trip.

When the dance team members showcase their talent, students often forget the chaperones who commit immense amounts of time behind the scenes.

Thompson's involvement with dance team started this

year when his daughter, freshman Kaitlyn Thompson, joined the team. Last March, Thompson committed to drive the girls in the school van to their overnight dance competition in Sacramento, where they placed third in jazz, fifth in X-small and sixth in lyrical.

"I was there to support the girls so they could have a school representative at their dance competitions," Thompson said. "They did a great job and I wanted to be there in case anything went wrong, but my main role is always to be their loudest fan."

Besides Thompson, attendance secretary Julia Peck also helps the dance team by assisting them with logistics, such as scheduling competitions, booking hotels and taking care of money. Peck has been involved with the school's dance team ever

since her own daughters danced here back in the '90s, helping the dance team compete ever since.

Though the dance team has evolved significantly in the past couple of years, both Thompson and Peck agree that the group is important in promoting school spirit.

"I think the dance team is a big part of our school culture and community," Thompson said. "The dance team has become an active and positive influence."

For the girls on the team, Peck and Thompson's impact has been integral to their success.

"They definitely helped with organization because there's a lot of things that could have gone wrong," senior officer Chih-Hsuan Hsu said. "It's always great to have them because they are always able to step in and handle all the logistical things." ♦

Sports in College

| | |
|--|--|
| BASKETBALL Rachel Davey: Emerson College | SOFTBALL Natasha Ramakrishnan: Washington University |
| FENCING Eric Pei: Duke | SQUASH Aarushi Lakhota: George Washington University |
| FIELD HOCKEY Emily Chen: UC Davis | SWIMMING Stefanie Ting: Columbia University |
| LACROSSE Aiden Peck: Gonzaga University | TENNIS Andre Xiao: Middlebury College Kailas Shekar: Carnegie Mellon Matthew Kermin: UC Santa Cruz |
| ROWING Hannah Payne: San Diego State | TRACK AND FIELD Tristan Bush: North Dakota State |
| RUGBY Daelan Deneberg: University of Arizona | VOLLEYBALL Joel Schneidmiller: UC Irvine |
| SOCCER Kevin Yu: Carnegie Mellon | |

GRAPHIC BY VIVIEN ZHANG



TEAM PARENTS

the driving force behind the team



GRAPHIC BY KITTY HUANG

Team mom provides food, beverages for multiple teams

BY Chelsea **Leung**

To make sure every JV basketball team member got to be the DJ in car rides to sports games during the 2014-15 season, team mom Heather Metz bought an extra long AUX cable so the boys could play Katy Perry and sing at the top of their lungs.

"I love driving the team to games," Mrs. Metz said. "The boys always put on really loud and probably questionable music to get their minds right for the game."

As mom to senior Chris Metz and junior Alex Metz, Mrs. Metz is actively involved as a team mom for all the sports they play in.

She managed the water polo team, which Chris played on this year, but has also managed the basketball, swimming and football teams at some point in her sons' high school athletic careers.

As team mom, Mrs. Metz does most of the administrative behind-the-scenes work so that the coaches can focus on the athletes.

Her work involves communicating with the athletes, coaches and parents through TeamSnap, a web tool that displays statistics and schedules.

She also collects paperwork and payments, works with vendors, food and transportation for travel tournaments.

Additionally, she works with other parent volunteers to complete all the communication and coordinates all the volunteer efforts, which include finding help with carpooling, scorekeeping, planning Senior Night and other events.

"It takes a team to build a team," Mrs. Metz said.

She has taken many volunteer roles since her sons were in preschool, such as class mom, PTA positions and field trip chaperone.

When Chris and Alex started playing organized sports in AYSO and Little League baseball, she naturally felt the need to help

out and has been a team mom for almost every team her sons have played in. Mrs. Metz said she "truly loves everything about being a team mom."

Junior Harrison Fong, who plays football and basketball with Alex, appreciates everything Mrs. Metz has done for his teams.

Mrs. Metz thinks these difficult tasks are balanced out by her opportunity to watch the athletes play.

"She's always there to support, no matter what happens," Fong said. "She always travels with us, she's always making sure we have enough food, and always getting all the parents on board."

Every job, however, has its downsides, and Mrs. Metz's least favorite part is coordinating and collecting money for the end-of-season banquet because families often RSVP late. Since she must work with a caterer that needs to know exactly how many people are coming, she said she is often "left scrambling" to complete reservations.

Still, she thinks these difficult tasks are balanced out by her opportunity to watch the athletes play.

She sees her role as a wonderful way to watch her kids and their teammates grow up.

"Seeing the kids that were once picking dandelions on the field and throwing temper tantrums in the dugout grow and develop into genuinely talented athletes and amazing young adults has been a privilege," Mrs. Metz said. "In a year my kids are both off to college, so I'm trying to enjoy every last minute I can." ♦

Spirakis aids softball and basketball girls

BY Lina **Kim**

Behind every team is a team mom — the one who takes care of snacks, carpool and communication between coaches and parents. For the girls' basketball and softball teams, that mom has been Kerri Spirakis.

With her older daughter Eleni having graduated last year and her younger daughter Yianna about to graduate, Mrs. Spirakis was a willing volunteer.

According to sophomore left fielder Ruhi Christie, Mrs. Spirakis has not only provided both softball and basketball teams with refreshments, but also has gone out of her way to make sure the team is always able to compete at the top of their game.

"It is very satisfying to know that the players and coaches appreciate the role I play in helping the team be successful."

PARENT Kerri Spirakis

"I started helping because I like to help," Mrs. Spirakis said. "It lets the players and coaches focus on the game and not have to worry about details that are important, but not directly relevant to the game."

Mrs. Spirakis, in addition to providing refreshments for the teams, also sent out weekly emails, organized banquets and team dinners and coordinated the transportation for games.

Senior Yianna Spirakis said that having

her mom fulfill the roll has been a pleasant experience.

"She always has snacks and stuff for softball and is really organized, which I know helps the coaches out a lot," Yianna said. "She is able to keep practice times and game times and carpool so I know it helps everyone out a lot."

For the girls in both basketball and softball teams, Mrs. Spirakis is seen as an important part in the team's organization and function.

"She definitely plays a vital part of our team and without her, it wouldn't have been as organized," sophomore center player Kirstin Kruka said. "She really helped the coaches communicate with parents so they knew what was going on, which the parents really appreciated."

As for when Yianna graduates, Mrs. Spirakis does not plan on not returning as team mom and will instead focus all her attention toward working at her original job in the elementary school district.

"It is very satisfying to know that the players and coaches appreciate the role I play in helping the team be successful," Mrs. Spirakis said. "I feel like the players become like an extended part of my family. I got to celebrate all the good things and hopefully helped manage things that may not have been so good."

The girls on both of the teams said that they could not be more grateful to Mrs. Spirakis for all that she has done throughout the years.

"I would want to thank her for all the emails she sent out, as it helped keep everything organized and everyone knew what was happening and when," Christie said. "I'd also like to thank her for providing us with snacks during games because they were practically lifesavers to the entire team, especially in the intense heat we sometimes play in." ♦

THE FALCON FIVE

HOW DOES YOUR TEAM RANK IN THE FALCON THIS YEAR?

REPORTING BY ASHLEY FENG AND HARSHINI RAMASWAMY
 Photos courtesy of Kevin Couch, Caitlin Ju, Muthu Palaniappan, Natasha Ramakrishnan and Phoebe Wang



1. Boys' Volleyball (1)
 Campus Presence: **5**
 Improvement: **2**
 Winning %: **19**
 League Titles: **0**
 CCS: **5**
 Star Factor: **J. Schneidmiller**
 Total: **31**

The team finished second overall in league and CCS, ending their season in the first round of NorCals on a high note.

2. Girls' Tennis (2)
 Campus Presence: **2**
 Improvement: **3**
 Winning %: **20**
 League Titles: **2**
 CCS: **3**
 Star Factor: **C. Ju**
 Total: **30**

The Falcons upheld their title as league champs for the sixth consecutive year, ending their season in the CCS semifinals against St. Ignatius.

3. Girls' Softball (10)
 Campus Presence: **3**
 Improvement: **3**
 Winning %: **19**
 League Titles: **1**
 CCS: **3**
 Star Factor: **N. Ramakrishnan/Rachel Davey**
 Total: **30**

The team took first place in the league and beat 2nd seed Carmel in the quarterfinals, finishing their run in semifinals against Hillsdale.

4. Girls' Swimming (18)
 Campus Presence: **4**
 Improvement: **3**
 Winning %: **16**
 League Titles: **0**
 CCS: **5**
 Star Factor: **S. Ting**
 Total: **28**

The team exceeded expectations throughout the season, winning more dual meets than the last year's season and sending multiple swimmers to CCS finals and ultimately CIF.

5. Boys' Basketball (20)
 Campus Presence: **5**
 Improvement: **3**
 Winning %: **14**
 League Titles: **0**
 CCS: **5**
 Star Factor: **Joel Schneidmiller/Harrison Fong**
 Total: **27**

The team finished second overall in league and CCS, ending their season in the first round of NorCals.

| Sport (last year's ranking) | Campus Presence (1-5) | Improvement (1-3) | Winning % (1-15 for lower league, 1-20 for upper) | League Title (1 for lower league, 2 for upper) | CCS (0-5) | Star Factor | Total | Evaluation |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---|--|-----------|--------------|-------|--|
| 6. Boys' Tennis (4) | 3 | 3 | 18 | 0 | 2 | D. Stratakos | 26 | The boys' tennis team sent multiple players to CCS individuals including Dean Stratakos and Kailas Shekar but lost to Bellarmine in CCS quarterfinals. |
| 7. Field Hockey (5) | 2 | 2 | 16 | 0 | 3 | C. Miller | 23 | The team finished second overall in league behind Los Gatos and lost the CCS semifinals to St. Francis, managing an entire season with low numbers. |
| 8. G. Volleyball (11) | 3 | 3 | 13 | 1 | 3 | J. Vita | 23 | The team excelled in the lower league, finishing their season as League Champions, but lost in the CCS Semifinals to Burlingame. |
| 9. B. Swimming (16) | 3 | 1 | 14 | 0 | 4 | O. Khowong | 22 | The team, despite losing many stars, was able to rally together and send a team to CCS, including many first-time attendees. |
| 10. B. Cross Country (6) | 2 | 1 | 17 | 0 | 1 | A. Nag | 21 | The boys had strong performances this season, led by key runner Amit Nag, who made it to states. |
| 11. G. Water Polo (26) | 4 | 3 | 14 | 0 | 0 | S. Sellers | 21 | The team improved heavily from the 2015-2016 season but fell one game short of making CCS. |
| 12. Football (12) | 5 | 3 | 12 | 0 | 1 | W. Liddle | 21 | The team entered CCS for the second time in the last three years, but lost in the first round to the Palma Chieftains. |
| 13. G. Cross Country (24) | 2 | 3 | 14 | 0 | 1 | J. Hoffman | 20 | The team, although losing a number of key athletes, was able to rally together and improve from the last season. |
| 14. G. Basketball (3) | 4 | 1 | 13 | 0 | 2 | R. Davey | 20 | The girls ended their season in the CCS quarterfinals against Sobrato. The team will move down to the lower league next year. |
| 15. B. Golf (14) | 2 | 2 | 10 | 2 | 4 | W. Liu | 20 | The team did not qualify, but Kevin Sze, William Liu and Trevor Leung individually made CCS, with Liu making CCS finals. |
| 16. B. Soccer (25) | 3 | 3 | 12 | 0 | 1 | K. Yu | 19 | The team took second place in league but did not participate in CCS. |
| 17. G. Track (19) | 2 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 4 | J. Hoffman | 16 | With the addition of numerous key athletes, the girls' track team improved significantly. |
| 18. B. Water Polo (9) | 3 | 11 | 11 | 0 | 0 | W. Lew | 15 | The boys' water polo team lost multiple key players and started the season off unsteadily, gradually improving throughout the season but falling short of CCS and placing fifth in the league. |
| 19. Wrestling (22) | 1 | 3 | 9 | 0 | 1 | C. Murabito | 15 | Despite the team's low numbers, the Falcons pushed through the season and sent two wrestlers to CCS. |
| 20. G. Lacrosse (23) | 3 | 1 | 10 | 0 | 0 | J. Vita | 14 | The team exceeded expectations for their season but did not make the cut for the league tournament. |
| 21. Badminton (8) | 4 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 5 | S. Ding | 14 | Although the team placed last in the league, athletes Stephen Ding and Josh Li won doubles in CCS. Despite the major victory the Falcons will be moving down a league for next year's season. |
| 22. G. Golf (15) | 2 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 1 | S. Lo | 13 | The girls' golf team struggled but saw strong individual performances from Sarah Lo, Janelle Jin, and Cynthia Yang. |
| 23. B. Lacrosse (17) | 2 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 0 | A. Oliveri | 11 | The team will be moving down a league for next season. Sadly, there was no JV team this year. |
| 24. Baseball (21) | 3 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 | N. Peng | 11 | Although the Falcons went on a season-best three-game winning streak during their last four games, they did not qualify for CCS. The team will be moving down to the lower league next year. |
| 25. B. Track (13) | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 | J. Singh | 11 | The team focused on rebuilding this year, managing to send runners such as Jajit Singh to CCS. |
| 26. G. Soccer (7) | 2 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | C. McGhee | 7 | The girls had to recover from the loss of many key players, which contributed to their slow start. In the end they were unable to pull through. |

SOFTBALL

Team reaches CCS semis, upsets Carmel

BY Stephen Ding
& Neil Rao

Assistant softball coach Mike Davey watched from the dugout as his daughter, senior pitcher Rachel Davey, took the mound for her final high school game on May 23 in the girls' softball CCS semifinal against Hillsdale. The team's 3-1 defeat to the Fighting Knights marked the last time he would coach his daughter after years of coaching basketball and softball for Rachel and her sister, 2015 alumna Samie.

"I think, as a team, we will carry this past year's faith for our skills and teammates."

FRESHMAN Ella Parr

Despite the tight — and controversial — loss to Hillsdale, the Falcons probably never envisioned going this far this season, and Rachel was one of the keys to the Falcons' surprising season of success.

They finished atop the El Camino league and were seeded seventh in CCS Division II. Their run to the semifinals was one of the best finishes in recent school history.

Despite starting with the team's only run

scored by freshman Morgan Woolley, the game remained tense and tight. In the end, the girls attributed their loss in large part to a bad call by an umpire that allowed two runs to score for the Fighting Knights. The girls finished the year with an overall record of 19-6.

To get to the semis, the team upset second-seeded Carmel High on May 20 in Salinas. Trailing 4-2 in the sixth inning, the girls surged forward with a clutch hit from junior Kate Bossi to tie the game. The team then began to gain momentum as a double by junior Eryn Lee and singles from Davey and junior Chancee Gaskin led the team to a 7-4 win. Senior Natasha Ramakrishnan also sparked the team with a solid double to come back from being down 2-0.

"[Our game against Carmel] wasn't exactly a turning point, more like it was us proving to ourselves that we could play on that level and beat a higher seeded team," Lee said. "We went into that game not expecting to win and yet we still played hard and worked as a team."

Lee credits the team's success this year to a lack of true star players. Rather, Lee said that they worked together as a group. And achieving this success came as a surprise. That's because pitching was an unknown in February after the loss of star pitcher Eleni Spirakis to graduation last year.

"We lost Eleni last year, but [Rachel] this year has been tough as nails," Ramakrishnan said. "She has pitched almost every single



Senior Maxine Parr and freshman Hannah Beine play against Hillsdale High School during the CCS Semifinal game on May 23. The Falcons lost 3-1.

game and has done a great job."

Ramakrishnan also attributed their unexpected success to their support of each other in tight games.

Ending the season so strongly, the girls are hoping to do well next year despite the loss of key seniors such as Davey and Ramakrishnan.

"I think, as a team, we will carry this past year's faith for our skills and teammates," freshman Ella Parr said. "We all really support each other, and that will definitely carry on into this coming season and we will carry the leadership onto the seniors coming in, which will help us continue the softball success." ♦

BASEBALL

4-10 season drops boys to El Camino division

BY Navin Tiwary

Although the Falcons went on a season-best three-game winning streak during their last four games, they were unable to pull themselves out of the cellar of the De Anza Division, finishing with a 4-10 record.

In addition, they were also eliminated in the first round of the DAL Playoffs on May 6 against Homestead and consequently failed to make CCS.

As a result, they will be competing in a lower El Camino Division next year.

Junior catcher/pitcher Nathan Peng attributed the disappointing record to the team's inconsistency.

"On days when we had good offense, our defense lacked and vice versa," Peng said.

Likewise, junior pitcher/outfielder Chris Auches said that the team's end to the season stemmed from overconfidence and bad play.

Peng said players recognize the need to

seriously reflect on what went wrong against Homestead.

The Falcons lost the May 5 game 17-4 to the Mustangs, followed by a frustrating 9-6 defeat the next day.

"Many of the things we failed to improve upon came back to haunt us."



JUNIOR Nathan Peng

"We only needed to win one more time [to advance further], but we became overconfident because we beat [Homestead] three times in a row prior," Auches said. "Also,

our pitchers threw more walks than usual. These free bases led to runs that ended up really hurting us in the end."

Had the boys won these games, they would have advanced to the second round of the DAL and most likely made CCS.

On May 5, Peng said many controversial calls, walks and other miscommunication between the players led to the lopsided result.

"We had a 2-0 lead up until the fourth inning. Then they scored many runs and we lost bad," Peng said.

In the May 6 game, the Falcons were leading 6-4 going into the seventh inning. Homestead rallied and scored five runs to grab the victory.

"Many of the same things which we failed to improve came back to haunt us in this game. It is a bitter end to a fun season," Peng said.

This year the baseball coach changed to

Sean Hudson, whose main focus was on offense much more than the previous coach.

Despite the disappointing conclusion, Peng said that he really enjoyed this season and looks forward to next season.

"I think there are many key issues we need to work on such as communication, and not giving up," Peng said. "We need to train harder so these same mistakes don't keep hurting us game after game."

Auches said that next year the Falcons will be able to do better in a lower league, as well as continue to refine the skills they had been lacking on this year.

This includes teamwork and communication.

"We have the skill; we just need to improve on our defense and approaches at the plate," Auches said. "I am confident that if we train the right way and avoid miscommunication between players during the game we can go far." ♦

GIRLS' LACROSSE

Injury-plagued Falcons fail to qualify for playoffs

BY Lina Kim
& Elicia Ye

A strong Los Gatos team beat the Falcons 11-7 on May 5, ending their season but not dampening the pride they took in their team and season.

"Toga on three! One, two three, Toga!" they shouted as fans cheered.

The loss was a huge improvement from their 19-5 drubbing at the hands of the Cats earlier in the season. The Falcons finished with an overall record of 6-7 and did not make the league playoffs. When the season ended, the team experienced a multitude of emotions, especially the underclassmen who had looked up to their senior teammates as leaders during the season.

"I will miss the team bonding sessions and seeing my teammates everyday for hours," sophomore goalkeeper Jennah El-

Ashmawi said. "I'm going to miss the seniors so much as they had helped us grow as players, and most of all, I will miss playing alongside them."

On May 2 in a key conference game against Mountain View, the girls lost 14-5, with some players having to fill in for positions that they've never played before, due to key players, sophomore midfielder Ines Picard, senior defense Lily Fontanilla, senior defense Lilah Foster and junior defense Anya Srivats not being able to play because of injuries.

"Since these players weren't playing some people had to play new positions that they don't usually play," sophomore attacker Natalia Denenberg said. "For example, I had to step in for the midfield position. For one play I was quite nervous and didn't really

know what I was doing so I ended up dropping the ball, causing it to be turned over when it otherwise could have been one of our own goals."

El-Ashmawi said she was happy about her accomplishments during the season, especially since she was nervous at the start of the season and afraid the upperclassmen would judge her for her mistakes.

Instead, those upperclassmen became her friends and supported her development.

Looking back on the season, many players were also grateful for the bonds they forged with teammates.

"The team worked super hard and played much more as one unit on the field as the season went on," junior defense Anya Srivats said. "It was so fun bonding with a completely different group of people than the

people I talk to in class. I'm super pumped for next season."

As lead scorer and star of the team, senior midfielder Julia Vita scored a total of 84 goals and led her team in ground balls.

"I've been on varsity all four years so going into this season I knew I had a lot to live up to," Vita said. "Walking away from this season, I felt really good and proud of what I did and accomplished."

While the underclassmen can look forward to future seasons, for some seniors it is their last year playing the sport.

"I'm going to miss my lax dragons. I've played with them since the first time I ever picked up a stick my sophomore year," co-captain and senior Emma Kovac said. "It's been a wonderful three years getting to know all their spunky personalities and I can't wait to come back next year to watch them as seniors." ♦

Kovac

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL

Falcons beat PCS, repeat as NorCal champs

BY Karen Chow

After a hard fought season, the Falcons defended their NorCal title last Saturday against Pacific Collegiate School (PCS), a charter school in Santa Cruz that had edged them out in five sets for the CCS title earlier in the month.

Having previously lost to PCS, head coach Jason Cardoso made sure his team's blocking defense was strong and decided to switch up his starting line-up to throw the Pumas off guard.

"The strategy was to stop their middle attack," said Cardoso of the game played at Dublin High School. "I tried to make sure our middles got up to block quicker and not be caught watching."

"We knew we could beat them. I was pretty excited to play them again, so we could get our revenge, which we did."

SENIOR Joel Schneidmiller

With the improved blocking defense and the line-up change, star outside hitter senior Joel Schneidmiller was able to get more kills because PCS blockers were now not only focusing on him, but also trying to break through defense and dealing with powerful hits from sophomore opposite Joshua Li, a player who had been brought up from



Senior Joel Schneidmiller jumps high for a spike against Bentley on May 23. The Falcons won 3-1 to advance to the NorCal semifinals.

the JV team to balance the Falcons' attack. Li had a total of 14 kills, second only to Schneidmiller, who totalled 33 kills.

With PCS concentrating on stopping Schneidmiller, Li had many opportunities to hit the ball, ultimately leading the Falcons to win the match 3-1.

Li led the offense in the first set with his strong opposite hits and junior middle Harrison Fong led the defense with his quick blocks, winning 25-19. However, in the second set, Schneidmiller was free to score as PCS blockers turned to focus on Li, allow-

ing the Falcons to win 25-21.

In the third set they fell short 25-21 because PCS was catching on to their strategy. The last game was also led by both Schneidmiller and Li's strong hits. The decisive game captured by the Falcons 25-19.

On May 25, the Falcons played Campolindo during the NorCal semifinal game. Though Campolindo was the second seed, the boys persevered and won in a tough 3-2 battle.

Schneidmiller led the team with his hard hits and great blocks. The Falcons came

into the match strong, taking the first two sets 25-23 and 25-21, but fell short in the next two sets 25-16 and 27-25. Luckily for the Falcons, Schneidmiller was able to get through their defense, winning the last set 15-7.

The boys played Bentley High on May 23 in the NorCal quarterfinals, winning 3-1. The Falcons lost the first set 27-25, but regained their footing in the next two sets, winning 25-19 and 25-20.

The game was led by great passes by sophomore outside Usman Khan and hard blocks by Schneidmiller. The Falcons played Pacific Collegiate School (PCS), who they faced once again in the NorCal finals, on May 17 for the chance to defend their CCS title from 2016.

The Falcons started off strong in the first set, winning 27-25, but were unable to get past PCS's solid defense, losing the second set 20-25.

The team won 25-23 with Schneidmiller's hard hits in the third set but fell short in the last two sets, losing 25-17 and 15-12.

"The CCS game was really close, so we knew we could beat them," Schneidmiller said. "I was pretty excited [to play them again] so we could get our revenge, which we did."

In order to make it to the finals, the boys won 4-1 against Mount Madonna in the CCS semifinals on May 13.

The boys' victory against Junipero Serra High in the CCS quarterfinal match on May 11 also contributed to their momentum going into the final games of CCS after they won 3-2. ♦

BOYS' GOLF

Freshman misses CCS final round by single stroke

BY Aaron Choi & Christopher Lee

Although the Falcon golf team was not able to advance past leagues as a team, senior Trevor Leung, freshman Kevin Sze and sophomore William Liu were all able to qualify individually for the CCS tournament that took place on Wednesday, May 10 at Leguna Seca.

At CCS, Liu shot a 75, Sze shot a 77 and Leung shot a 90. Only Liu managed to reach the final round; Sze ended up missing the cut by only one stroke.

Said Sze: "I missed the cut by a shot because of how poorly I hit my driver. I hit

one 40 yards off line into a hazard I didn't even know existed. That cost me a shot."

According to Sze, the only factor keeping him in the competition was the fact that he had been putting so well.

Leung thought he had also underperformed at CCS.

"The greens were a lot faster during CCS than during the practice round we played the day before because they cut the grass," Leung said. "Regardless of that, I played badly at my short game."

Liu shot a 75 in the first round, which allowed him to progress and an 83 in the

second and final round of CCS, but that score was not enough for him to make NorCal.



Sze

Each of the three players had set their own goals and expectations for the competition, using them as learning tools and assessments of their skill.

"Going into CCS, I knew that I still had many things to work on," Liu said. "I didn't have a set score for myself to meet — I just wanted to feel like I played my best."

For Sze, CCS was a significant accomplishment, but as only three players qualified, Sze said that he would miss the

others while at CCS.

"Not having everybody there definitely sucked. Obviously you want to have them all with you and having fun. I think I felt more motivated to represent my team as a whole," Sze said.

At the League Championships on April 25, often viewed as the qualifying competition for CCS, Liu shot 73, Sze shot 75 and Leung shot 77.

For Leung, qualifying for CCS was a dream come true.

"It was thrilling to make it to CCS in my last year because it surpassed the expectations I had of myself at the beginning of the year," Leung said. ♦

BOYS' TENNIS

Season finishes prematurely after losses at CCS

BY Ryan Kim & Ethan Ko

Throughout the season, the Falcons competed with their main rival, Monta Vista, on two separate occasions and lost twice. As it turned out, these were their only two league losses of the league season.

In the CCS tournament that took place from May 5-8, the players had hoped to play Monta Vista again and exact revenge.

After defeating Fremont High in their first match, however, their plans were cut short when the Falcons were knocked out of the competition 4-3 in the quarterfinal match against Bellarmine at home on May 8.

"We all wanted to settle our season-long rivalry against the Matadors, but things didn't turn out as we hoped," junior doubles No. 1 player Tristan Xiao said.

Against the Bells, the Falcons were unable to win any of their doubles matches,

which contributed heavily to their overall loss. Senior singles No. 1 player Andre Xiao partly blames the loss on Bellarmine's decision to stack its doubles lineup, a controversial move in which better players play down from their usual slots to help ensure victories. He called the Bells' move "shady."

Another factor in the loss was injury. For example, the No. 1 singles player, senior Kailas Shekar, injured his wrist earlier, so for CCS, he was moved to No. 1 doubles with Tristan. Senior Matthew Kermin took Shekar's place in singles.

Nonetheless, Shekar's injury was difficult to overcome. "Our opponents picked up on Shekar's weakness and kept hitting to his backhand. He couldn't really do anything about that," Tristan said.

In the individual CCS competition, senior singles player Andre Xiao made his way up to the CCS singles final on May 17 but was disappointed when he lost to a friendly rival, junior Mukund Madhabushi

from Leland High School, with whom he often practices. The fact that he usually beats Madhabushi in club tennis added to his frustration.

Andre attributed his loss to being tired after some long matches earlier in day.

"We wanted to avenge our previous losses to Monta Vista."

JUNIOR Tristan Xiao



"I made a lot of unforced errors and didn't convert on several opportunities," Andre said. "If I had played at a higher level, I would have beaten him. But that happens, and you just have to learn to deal with it and

solve problems to turn things around."

Doubles players junior Varun Meduri and sophomore Derek Pinai also lost in the first round against Stevenson 2-1 on May 16.

Even with the underwhelming results from CCS, junior singles player Dean Stratakos has faith in the team's performance next year, saying that the doubles pairings this year gave a lot to look forward to next season.

The team primarily hopes to improve their doubles pairs to be solid at the baseline and aggressive up at the net. Tristan added that communication between the players about strategies is essential.

"Our team played well and I don't view the match against Bellarmine as a loss despite what the result says on paper," Stratakos said. "Next year will be tough as we are losing three of our four singles players, so I believe we [will need to] improve altogether as a team in terms of team chemistry, as well as general play." ♦

>> snapshots



FALCON // SOPHIA ZIVANIC



FALCON // SOPHIA ZIVANIC



FALCON // PHOEBE WANG



FALCON // JAY KIM

Senior pitcher Rachel Davey pitches against Hillsdale on May 23 at the San Jose Police Activities League stadium. Senior Suraj Mididaddi poses for a picture wearing a “poke me and I’ll dance” sign on May 23 for Bid on a Senior Day. Science teacher Kristofer Orre waits to hit at the staff softball game on May 26. On May 26, assistant principal Brian Safine presents at SMASH’n where MAP students showcase their productions and gain awards.

buzzworthy >> Basketballers find the Earth deflated

wang-yang fusion

Austin Wang and Alex Yang



Recently, a number of prominent sports stars as well as flat-Earth-believing organizations have been gaining a huge spike in media attention in what can only be described as a renaissance of the flat Earth movement.



GRAPHIC BY CHARIN PARK

The explanation for the start of this development is quite simple: Several former and current NBA players recently said the Earth is flat.

In other words, they believe that it is im-

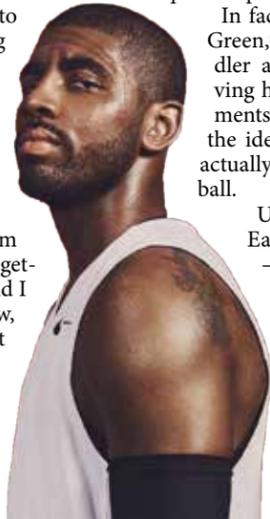
possible to travel from the North to South poles by going around the Earth due to an impassable ice wall surrounding Antarctica.

Their reasoning looks totally sound, though. In fact, retired star NBA player Shaquille O’Neal stated in late March, “When I’m in my bus and I drive from Florida to California, which I do every summer, it seems to be flat. When I’m in my plane, and we’re getting ready to land, and I open up the window, and I’m looking at all the land that we’re flying over, it seems to be flat.”

While O’Neal might seem like an isolated case, the sheer number of NBA players who agree with the outrageous claim of flat Earth is

quite surprising.

In fact, Warriors’ Draymond Green, Nuggets’ Wilson Chandler and Cavaliers’ Kyrie Irving have made similar statements speaking in support of the idea that the Earth is not actually shaped like a basketball.



Cavalier Kyrie Irving

Unfortunately, these flat-Earthers are flat out wrong — like the namesake item for their favorite sport, the Earth is in fact spherical.

In fact, well-known astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson has formulated a response to Irving’s tweets.

“If he wants to

think Earth is flat, go right ahead — as long as he continues to play basketball and not become head of any space agencies,” Tyson responded to Irving on Twitter. “My point is if you have certain limitations of understanding of the natural world, stay away from jobs that require that.”



Tyson’s passive-aggressive comments are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the backlash these players have received for their comments.

Saying that “we just care that when Kyrie has the ball that the ball is round and not flat,” Ohio Gov. John Kasich took a stab at the player and his scientific inaccuracies on an improvised interview with MTV.

With all these flat-Earthers appearing out of the woodwork recently, it begs the question: Is ball really life? ♦

2017-2018

NEW

leaders

DRUM MAJORS

Austin Shi (11)
Alex Tran (11)
AJ Lee (10)

NEWSPAPER EICS

Eleanor Goh (11)
Caitlyn Chen (11)
Claire Rhee (11)
Kyle Wang (11)

SHSTV HEAD BROADCAST EDITOR

Daphne Liu (11)

ASB

Elicia Ye (11)
Mervi Tan (11)
Cameron Lin (10)
Ishana Narayanan (11)

YEARBOOK EICS

Sarah Auches (11)
Charles Qi (11)
Lillian Zeng (11)
Jisheng Yu (11)

GRAPHIC BY OLIVIA LU

- topten**
- THINGS TO DO OVER SUMMER BREAK
- 10** Go to the beach. Gear up that beach boy look with dreadlocks, muscle shirts and a surfboard.
 - 9** Travel to other countries. But remember, it is illegal in Spain to wear flip flops while driving.
 - 8** Go to summer camp. Will the \$6000 your parents paid be well worth the additional line on your college resume?
 - 7** Plan ahead for your college apps (the possibility of failure included). You can't possibly get rejected by all 8 Ivy League schools you apply to, right?
 - 6** Heal yourself and bounce back. Too many L's this year, will take more L's next year.
 - 5** Restock on summer apparel. Scratch that, flash those rock-hard abs.
 - 4** Get a job. More money, more boba.
 - 3** Plan a diet. Trick yourself into believing that salad dressing is actually healthy.
 - 2** Study for that last-minute SAT. Will the fourth time be the charm?
 - 1** Get ready for the barbeque. The barbeque from our sizzling muscles.
- >> Stephen Ding and Jay Kim