



Reporter tries out the viral "Naruto Run" trend.



Miley Cyrus returns to her roots in new album.



Tennis makes CCS and aims high for NorCal.



THE saratogafalcon



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

saratogafalcon.org

Friday >> November 3, 2017
Vol. 57, No. 4

RIVALRY

Five reasons to attend tonight's football game vs. LG



BIG GAMERS

Alex Wang and Siva Sambasivam

In 2010, the Falcons welcomed Los Gatos into their territory for their annual rivalry showdown with the Wildcats. It had been upwards of 20 years since the Falcons had beaten their district counterparts, but with

an energetic team and new head coach Tim Lugo at the helm, they believed that they could win.

And they did. Led by star quarterback Kevin Smith and a stellar defensive effort, the Falcons pulled off a 21-17 victory against the Wildcats, after which students and parents erupted in joy and stormed Benny Pierce Field to congratulate their Falcon players.

In the six games since then against Los Gatos, the Falcons have not fared well, but like the student body seven years ago, we can't lose hope. Here are five reasons you

should come support your Falcons against Los Gatos tonight at home.

1. The Falcons have a chance at pulling off an unbelievable upset.

The Falcons come into this game at 0-8, recently suffering losses to the Wilcox Chargers 61-10 and the Palo Alto Vikings 42-21. With the Wildcats having a 3-5 record, the Falcons' chances seem rather bleak; however, the numbers are a little deceiving.

The Falcons have lost three games in blowouts, but they have remained competitive until the last few minutes in every other

game, down just one touchdown to tie and win most of the games.

Although the Falcons have had trouble starting their games strong, as well as closing out games when holding leads, you better believe they will bring their A-game, knowing that rivalry bragging rights are on the line.

The Falcons also are healthier than at some points earlier in the season. Two-way lineman Allie Liddle will be playing his third game of the season, and looks to be the same

>> **GAME** on pg. 12



Seniors Connor Reyes (upper left), Nathan Kang (lower left), and Nicholas Di (above) execute moves in tryouts for the new all boys' dance team on Oct. 27.

FALCON // MUTHU PALANIAPPAN

BREAKING BARRIERS

NEW ALL-MALE TEAM EXTENDS BOYS' DANCE CULTURE

BY Francesca **Chu** & Emilie **Zhou**

The crowd cheered during the seniors' Homecoming all-boys dance, impressed by their quick and synchronized moves. The dance featured not only some of today's most popular dance trends, but also advanced and original choreography.

Homecoming Quad Day dances have allowed many boys to experiment with new styles. However, after Homecoming, there have been few opportunities for boys

to showcase their dancing prowess other than the Bombay in the Bay event in February.

So when assistant principal Brian Thompson and dance team coach Kaitlyn Landeza approached senior Nicholas Di and his friends during a Homecoming practice, they immediately jumped at the idea of an all-male dance team.

"At this school, dance culture for guys is really only around during Homecoming, so we want to extend that throughout the school

>> **DANCE** on pg. 5

>> what'sinside

ELECTIVES

Class options

Why SHS lacks electives compared to some neighboring schools. **pg. 5**

POLITICS

Divisions

Long-lasting tension between China and Taiwan is dangerously close to reaching the boiling point. **pg. 8**

CULTURE

Family dynamics

Student learns over time to accept and celebrate her father's Asian accent. **pg. 18**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

New PA system presents unexpected challenges

BY Jessica **Wang** & Michael **Zhang**

On the first day of school, returning students were surprised to hear screechy and muffled voices during morning announcements.

Technology staff, including district IT administrator Tony Palma, jumped on the case immediately and discovered that the issue stemmed from differences between a newly installed digital system and old analog one.

Over this summer, the school debated whether to put in an older '60s-style PA system in the new music building like the rest of the school or invest in a newer, more modern system, Palma said. The school elected to implement the newer technology for the music

building, which led to an update to the existing technology in the office as well. Instead of using a landline phone for announcements, the new system now communicates using IP addresses over the Internet.

This has resulted in a variety of benefits for both the announcement and bell systems. For instance, it allows for specific volume control for each classroom. It also allows for a broadcast to only a specific set of classrooms in the school.

The new technology has also helped make the announcement system feel more modern.

"Last year we used a telephone for announcements," Palma said.

>> **TECH** on pg. 3

NEW PROJECTS

Campus beautification remains top priority

BY Karen **Chow** & Kaitlyn **Wang**

Students walking near the library and girls' locker room may hear the sound of running water and spot a hose lying at the bases of the redwood trees across the Thermond Drama Center. Water gushes out of the hose, sometimes throughout lunchtime, spilling out onto the tanbark that covers the trees' roots.

Because the hose seems to be left unmonitored and small pools of water begin to develop due to the sheer quantity of water, some students feel concerned.

However, according to maintenance supervisor Brian Moran, the running water is com-

pletely intentional. The four tall 60-year-old redwood trees in the quad do not get rainfall for five or six months, Moran said. An occasional deep watering ensures that the redwood trees do not die.

"With the unusually warm weather, they suffer a little bit because they're used to having a little more moisture in the fall than hot weather like this," principal Paul Robinson said. "We love having our redwood trees around because they add so much to our campus, so whatever we can do to try to get them the water that they need so that they can survive is important."

Robinson said that what may

>> **MAINTENANCE** on pg. 5



Robotics boots up, begins building season

The First Tech Challenge (FTC) competition kicked off on Sept. 9 with the full release of the rulebook, which lays out the requirements of the contest. This year, the SHS teams are using 3-D printing technology to custom craft each component of their robots.

The theme of this year's games is "Relic Recovery" and each robot will compete to sort and place items, often in specific configurations, into sections of a game field. The four teams of 15 students each have been busy working to build their robot.

The team has six returning members as opposed to only two from last year, so more work is being done per day. "I am personally very excited because the parts on our robot are a lot cleaner," junior Derek Chiou said. "The building is going much smoother than last year."

The use of 3-D printing also allows the team to create most of their design digitally. It also makes the robot much easier to assemble. The robot will be automated for part of the competition and controlled by a driver for the other part.

The team's score will be largely determined by how many "glyphs" or 6-inch cubes, they can collect from a section in the center of the field. Awards will also be given for innovation and robot design, as well as motivation, inspiration and connecting with others.

With the competition set to reach San Francisco in March, the team has a lot of time to program and make changes.

In the past, the team succeeded at regional tournaments, taking awards in every tournament for the past two years.

This year, the team hopes to not only build well, but to reach out to the community and inspire others to join.

"While incorporating engineering skills, marketing, and community outreach, the team can strive to its fullest potential to make an impact on the community," sophomore Devin Shah said.

FRC, the other branch of robotics, begins in January with a steampunk-themed competition.

— Allen Chen

Senior reaches regionals in science competition

Senior Sohini Kar's project related to number theory impressed judges enough that she was named a Siemens Science Competition regional finalist on Oct. 18.

As a regional finalist, Kar was asked to submit a presentation electronically by Oct. 30. Siemens is a research competition, in which students send in projects in a variety of STEM fields. About 2,500 competitors sent in papers to be judged this year, and out of those, 491 were chosen as semifinalists and 101 were regional finalists. Seniors Chengzi Guo and Andrew Zheng also made semifinals individually, but did not advance.

According to the Siemens Competition website, scholarships from \$1,000 to \$100,000 can be awarded to winning projects, and a cash prize of \$25,000 is awarded to all national finalists, with first place receiving \$100,000 and second place \$50,000. Out of the 101 regional finalists, there were five teams and five individuals for each of six regions. Kar project was about creating a new integer sequence that followed a pattern, along with a mathematical rule that helped define the sequence.

"Having participated in number theory summer programs, my interest drove me in my research," Kar said.

— Jeffrey Xu and Michael Zhang

>> falcononline



Top Story
Senior's interest in biology grows from summer internship at Stanford on pg. 5

Top Picture
Korean and Chinese clubs wave their flags to attract new club members during the second day of Club Fair on Oct. 4.

To use: cover the QR codes except for the one you would like to scan, then use a QR scanning app (i.e., Snapchat by long press).

>> picturethis



BOO! >> Seniors Amelia Berardo, Mateusz Kranz, Ania Kranz and Solomon Bailey dressed up as ghosts of Queen Elizabeth I, Michael Jackson, Joseph Stalin and Abraham Lincoln for Halloween.

SOCIAL MEDIA

'Gotogapower' Instagram account gaining popularity

by Esha Lakhotia & Muthu Palaniappan

The school-run Instagram account @gotogapower has gained 100 more followers this year as it tries to cover daily school events through photos and captions.

The account is run mainly by assistant principal Kerry Mohnike and attendance secretary Mandy Armes.

Mohnike and Armes have also been tagging their photos with "#gofalconpower," which has over 50 recent posts.

Though she sees these numbers as decent, Armes said the account isn't advertised well enough, so students, parents and community members are unaware that it exists.

"We had a training event about social media in high schools so we started this account after learning that social media can push out the good things that are going around on campus," Mohnike said.

Mohnike started a similar account two years ago, but someone hacked it last year and started posting spam and inappropriate pictures, forcing Mohnike to create another school-focused Instagram.

Since then, the account has been focused on documenting school spirit and offering insights into the non-academic aspects of the school.

"It's a great way to showcase what's going on campus and how busy everybody is," Mohnike said. "It shows how involved everyone is in school."

Homecoming week in late September also helped the account gain more followers, as students received recognition for their hard work and talent.

Mohnike and Armes also made sure to post behind-the-scenes photos of students decorating and practicing for their Quad Days.

"After Quad Days this year, we noticed that we started gaining a

lot more followers," Armes said. "It makes sense because it's a great way for students to see themselves or their friends in the Homecoming photos."

Mohnike and Armes also post photos of day-to-day school activities like sports games, rallies and spirit days.

Because most students communicate through the internet and love social media, posting content online allows events to "get more publicity" and lets both students and parents access photos, Armes said.

Through the "gotogapower" Instagram, parents, staff and students have been able to come together and appreciate the school's hard work to make events like Prom and Club Fair happen.

"I really love seeing the different events going on at school on the Instagram account," junior Jennah El-Ashmawi said. "It's a great way to keep up with things that I miss seeing at school." ◆

CLUBS

New additions spark interests

by Shreya Katkere & Kaitlyn Wang

As students milled about a crowded quad during Club Fair on Oct. 3-5, club officers eagerly passed out food and held up posters, excited to attract new members for the school year.

Among the clubs were 17 new additions, including Humane Society Club, Photography Club, Poetry Club, and Agriculture Club.

The Humane Society Club, created by sophomores Risa Carter, Francesca Whiting, Alex Lee, Kathryn Hamilton and Thaila Morganstern, allows students to help animals through activities and fundraisers.

The club plans to work hand in hand with the Humane Society, a nonprofit animal welfare organization.

"I have a strong passion for animals and I also help out at the Humane Society all the time, so it just kind of hit me that I should

start a Humane Society club at my school," Carter said.

Carter believes that animal protection rights are extremely important and the topic of abuse should be discussed, not avoided.

"It is critical that this is brought to people's attention so they can make sure to treat their pets better and other animals and overall just be better human beings," Carter said.

The club will sometimes volunteer at the local Humane Society on the weekends, where they will help out with the animals.

"I hope that people who go to our meetings walk out and feel motivated and inspired to help animals and feel like they made the world a better place," Carter said.

The Photography Club officers began planning far in advance by creating their club interview presentation over the summer, said the club's vice president, junior Kitty Huang.

Senior Aden Choy and junior

Muthu Palaniappan are co-presidents, while junior Usman Khan serves as secretary and treasurer.

The officers plan on hosting workshops where members can share and critique each other's photos as well as discuss techniques and styles.

"We encourage anyone who doesn't have a camera to learn to take pictures on their phones," Huang said. "But we will also teach basic tutorials of DSLR cameras and simple techniques of Photo-shop to edit the pictures."

In order for a wider audience to view members' works, the club will feature student works on social media, such as Facebook and Instagram.

"Photography is not limited to taking pictures on professional cameras," Huang said. "Anyone can take good pictures if they have a good perspective and the right angle, even with phone cameras, so we think it's a good idea to spread the knowledge of photography." ◆

TECH

continued from pg. 1

"But now we have a specialized microphone, which allows us to control the volume level a little better. It's more fitting with a PA type system — to make a call we just need to push a button."

ASB President senior Nathon Chin, who frequently delivers the morning announcements, feels that he has adjusted to the new microphone.

"Both [systems] are good; the new one just took some time getting used to," Chin said.

Additionally, the school bells can also be set to any custom sound through a sound file.

"The bell can be any sound we want, and that's the beauty of the system," Palma said.

Using the flexibility of the new technology, Palma also proposed creative ways for students to design the bell sound.

For example, he suggested that perhaps the school band could create a unique tone or the Student of the Month could pick it for the next month.

The current bell was selected because it was a softer alternative to the former bell system.

"This year's bell is more tolerable; not everyone is happy with it," Palma said. "We can always make it better, and I think it's an improvement of what we had before."

The new system that has already been implemented in the



Seniors Nathon Chin, Ishana Narayanan and junior Roshan Verma deliver morning announcements on Oct. 24.

music room also features a digital display.

This means that it can flash messages along with important announcements or silently warn students of an emergency, such as during a lockdown.

However, it has become apparent that updating such technology has induced unforeseen problems with sound quality.

While Palma did not expect to observe negative effects in the system, he certainly is not surprised

with the problems. "Was it a surprise that the quality was bad? No, because we knew that it wasn't going to get any better quality than this old system can provide," he said.

So far, quality issues for most of the school have been more or less resolved, Chin said.

The main exception has been the science and media arts buildings

Since they were built after the original PA system was installed,

their technology differs from the rest of the school.

If the volume is adjusted for the science and media arts buildings, then the audio would be distorted for the rest of the school, Palma said.

Currently, the sound quality in these buildings is being sacrificed to keep the quality high for the rest of the school.

A seemingly simple solution would be to install new PA systems in every classroom. However, ac-

ording to Palma, the cost, about \$1,000 per room, is too high.

Also, construction for installation would be necessary in every room, which further adds to the expenses and makes replacement impractical anytime soon.

"We're working on a plan to make that change and implement these devices, but it can't happen overnight," Palma said. "There's costs, there's construction, and we have to have people out of the room to do it."

As a result, Palma is working to make the best of the current situation.

So far, a complete re-wiring of the old system in addition to meticulous volume and audio adjustments have already made the sound quality much more tolerable.

The current goal is to first gain independent control of each classroom wing by installing separate devices and amplifiers so every section on campus has its own volume knobs to adjust.

However, about \$600 is required for each wing to have its own box, and prior to installation, the new device must pass multiple tests.

"Eventually we want to come to a point where all classrooms are replaced with the new system because it's more accurate, easier to repair and can send specialized notifications to each room," he said. "But I don't have a timeline of when we could get it into individual classrooms." ◆

DRAMA

'You Can't Take it With You' to debut Nov. 11

by Jessica Wang

The one-cast production of "You Can't Take it With You" will premiere on Nov. 11, the first out of its four shows in the McAfee Center. Main characters Alice Sycamore and Tony Kirby will be played by senior Katie Sabel and junior Mateo Morganstern, respectively.

"It's a really simple story of two young people trying to get married, their families going to meet each other, and by the end of act two, everyone goes to jail," said drama teacher Sarah Thermond, who directs the play.

The students are closing in on their official "off-book" day, when they are able to run through the show without a script, even before the production's move into the McAfee Center.

"Things are moving quickly," Sabel said. "Because it's a one-room play, a lot of the content is just people talking to each other,

especially the Sycamore family members, since they're onstage all the time."

The cast's rapid progress partially relates to the important aspects of the genre of the play, romantic comedy.

"A lot of key moments include families interacting, which usually means eye contact and being present in the moment."

SENIOR Katie Sabel

"A lot of key moments include families interacting, which usually means eye contact and being present in the moment," Sabel said. "That's hard to do when you're

reading along in the script waiting for your line to come up."

This year's production has the record for the largest fall play cast.

Re-enactments of radio commercials from 1937 have been added as unofficial parts of the script in order to incorporate more characters and the students playing them.

The radio commercials also play a role in bringing up significant themes for the audience, such as "consumerism and capitalism, and how instead we should be focusing on what makes us happy," Thermond said.

There is a big focus on ensuring that the set designs and costumes more realistically represent the '30s and '40s, the era in which the story takes place.

During rehearsals that take place from anywhere between 11 to 20 hours per week for lead roles, Thermond stresses the importance of retaining the unique style of American theater and film at the time of the

original production.

"There is a very high energy and quick refined speech to it," Thermond said. "So even though the play is meant to feel like a real family's home, there is sort of a style to it that keeps it moving, keeps it energetic, and keeps it understandable for the audience."

The play, filled with witty and sophisticated humor, lets audience members recognize and relate to just how ridiculous life can be, Thermond said.

In mid-October, cast members and sets were moved to the McAfee Center for stage rehearsals a month before the play's opening.

"I'm really excited for people to come in and see not only all of the funny timing and all the really strong performances by the students and the school, but also the fact that all of that entertainment and fun can add up to something, and that is a really memorable message," Thermond said. ◆

SCIENCE BOWL

Team selects key freshmen

by Jeffrey Xu & Michael Zhang

Science Bowl members think they will be more competitive this year because the team is stronger in subjects like biology, chemistry and earth science.

Tryouts occurred on Sept. 18, forming a team with seniors Anthony Ding, Chengzi Guo, Rahul Kumar and Michael Xue; juniors Joseph Li, Nathan Luk and Michael Zhang; sophomore Jeffrey Xu; and freshmen Rohan Kumar and Akshar Sarvesh.

Ding said that the addition of freshmen, such as Kumar and Sarvesh will also be good for future years.

For his part, Kumar said he enjoys the thrill of buzzing in to answer questions. With speed just as important as accuracy, Kumar has to focus and respond to science

problems instinctively.

"I think Science Bowl is the most fun thing in my schedule right now, so I'm excited to attend the practices," Kumar said.

This year, the Science Bowl regional competition will take place on Feb. 3 at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center.

The A team, which consists of the top five members, will be decided in late December or early January. Ding said. This year, members will have a semester of practice time for the upcoming competition and tryouts.

According to Ding, members of the A, B and development teams have attended practices more regularly than previous years.

"Overall, we're more committed this year and we hope to perform well at the official competition," Ding said. ◆

CHEER

Squad hosts annual Pee Wee fundraiser at football game

by Francesca Chu & Emilie Zhou

To raise money for expenses, such as new equipment and gear, the cheer team held its annual Pee Wee cheer camp from Oct. 17-19.

According to senior captain Evelyn Ha, it is the team's biggest fundraiser.

The cost to participate was \$75 per person; with a total of 16 attendees this year, the team was able to make \$1,200.

Throughout the three days, the attendees, ages 3 to 10, learned cheers, motions and jumps as well as a

full routine to perform with the team during halftime at the home football game on Oct. 20. The kids were each given their own shirt and pom poms for the performance.

Not only does the camp provide a way for the team to fundraise, but it also allows them to work with children and "share their passions with others," sophomore Emily Lubyanskiy said.

For Ha, it also brings back memories from when she participated in the camp years ago.

"My favorite thing is definitely just hanging out with the kids," Ha said. "I did Pee Wee in kindergarten, so I know how exciting it is." ◆



Ha

DRAMA

Student productions ready to tackle staging

by FrancescaChu & JessicaWang

Taking on one of the most daunting challenges in the drama curriculum, two seniors are beginning work on productions that each will direct in January and February. Hannah Yoon will be directing "The Glass Menagerie" from Jan. 19 to 21 and Amelia Berardo will be directing "Servant of Two Masters" from Feb. 2 to 4. Both will be staged in the Therman Drama Center. "The Glass Menagerie" written by Tennessee Williams, takes place in St. Louis, 1947. It tells the story of the Wingfield family, who each have their own negative way of

avoiding the harsh realities of poverty. Since the play only has five characters, it will be easier to direct than a play with a larger cast, Yoon said. "I wanted to do something dramatic that had a small cast," she said. "Since I really like the emotional impact of Williams' plays, I decided to do 'The Glass Menagerie.'" On the other hand, "Servant of Two Masters," originally performed as a commedia dell'arte, an Italian form of theater, includes a lot of improvisation and bigger characters. "It's a really funny play about a servant who decides it'll be a great idea if he has another master," Berardo said. "However, it is not; everything is a complete mess and it's

just chaotic and hilarious." Berardo is aiming to cast 10 parts, which is slightly larger than an average student production. Having been in a big production of "Cyrano de Bergerac" during her freshman year, she is excited to replicate that experience for others. Cast members were chosen following auditions in mid October, and they have already started reading their scripts and gaining familiarity with their lines. "We had auditions early because we have the fall play going on right now, and we didn't want to create any strife within that," Berardo said. Yoon plans on having rehearsals around

three times a week for two to three hours each day once everyone can invest more time. With everything else going on, she has to carefully plan and manage her time. "I'm generally able to balance everything by setting strict deadlines for myself and limiting my distractions," Yoon said. When casting main roles, Berardo hoped to bring more underclassmen on board. "Last year, only one freshman was cast in the show, and that was a bummer because as a freshman, I loved student productions," Berardo said. "Now I get to direct one senior year, so I'm hoping to involve some of the underclassmen who can really learn a lot from these." ♦

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Van driver challenges special needs stereotypes

by KevinSze & JefferyXu

Each morning around 7 a.m., a small school bus leaves the back parking lot and drives directly to homes in Saratoga, Monte Sereno and Los Gatos. The job of these drivers is to transport students in the special needs program here at school. According to assistant principal Kerry Mohnike, the van belongs to the Saratoga Community Based Instruction (CBI) program. The drivers are Barbara Straw and Lindsay Harris, aides within the program. Since Los Gatos High does not have a CBI program for special needs students, the school is obligated to provide transportation and on-campus aid to the Los Gatos

students in the program. Usually, there are two to three vans on campus each day, each transporting around four students. Aides such as Harris and Straw are crucial to students' education and shoulder multiple duties outside school. According to Harris, she drives the CBI program students every day, both in the morning and after school, taking around an hour for each trip. She works with Straw to figure out which routes to take and which kids each is responsible for. Harris said that her job is not as time-consuming and tedious as it may seem. "I enjoy driving them because I get to talk with them," Harris said. "They're funny when you get to know them outside of school and have conversations with them."

Harris has experience working with students, having been in the secondary program at West Valley Community College and having coached basketball in the past. "I love to work with children with special needs," Harris said. "They are completely different from depictions of them on TV. They have their own personalities; good days and bad days, just like anyone else." Harris observes that most people think of students with special needs as "static" people, who are unable to progress in life. This is simply not true, she said. She notes that often, her CBI students would always forget to close the van doors after getting off in the morning. When a student actually comes back after realizing and asks if they can close the door, she is ecstatic.

"I enjoy seeing their growth," Harris said. "Like the van door situation. What may be a little thing in our lives is huge in their lives." In addition, Harris realizes that due to preconceived notions from their peers, students in the CBI program can be a hidden presence on a high school campus. She challenges the people outside of the program to reach out and get to know them better. "If you just stop and say hi to a student, you'll actually learn that you guys are more common than you think," Harris said. CBI student senior Jack Elizondo hopes to make more friends at the school before he leaves for West Valley College next year. "I really like meeting new people," Elizondo said. "By talking to people, I can learn more about them." ♦

DANCE

continued from pg. 1

year," Di said. Thompson originally came up with the idea last year at one of dance team's regional competitions and got Landeza on board. "We noticed that there were a lot of other schools that had all-male dance teams," Thompson said. "so it was really interesting to see that in the program for other schools." So around Homecoming week, Landeza, with the help of Di and his friends, began recruiting.

"We want to build a foundation for guys who have a passion for dance"



SENIOR Nicholas Di

Sophomore Prosper Chiu was one of the students Di approached to join. During Homecoming, Chiu enjoyed choreographing the sophomore stunt dance and it made him want to explore dancing. "I'm excited for the new possibilities that being on the team could bring," Chiu said. According to Di, dance is becoming a bigger part of the school's culture, and he hopes the team will begin giving guys the same opportunity as girls to expand their dance experience. "Our goal is to provide a foundation for

other guys out there who also have a passion for dance," Di said. For Landeza, it is exciting to be able to spread the love of dance beyond only the girls team. "My ultimate goal for these guys is to have fun," she said. "I would like them to not worry about placing at competitions and just enjoy this opportunity." Auditions were held on Oct. 27, and the team will begin practicing soon after. They plan to compete in the all-male category at the same competitions as the current girls team. However, Landeza anticipates that there might be a difference in attitude between the boys and girls, since most of the guys have not had years of traditional dance training the way the girls have. "I could be wrong, but it's different when people are self-trained rather than studio-trained," she said. "Unlike the girls, most of them haven't been learning about discipline and fundamental techniques from a young age."

Because of this, the new team will also have to figure out how to work with the varying styles each member brings. Di has always danced for fun, but he only began getting "official" training and attending dance workshops at the end of junior year. Eventually, he auditioned for the Syndicate Dance Company, a dance crew in San Jose, and joined their youth team, Syndikidz. But due to issues with his schedule, he had to quit when school started this year. Chiu, on the other hand, has barely had any dance experience besides participating in the Homecoming dances. He hopes the team will help him learn more. "Each of us has a different style and I can't wait to see how we will complement each other as one team," Di said. ♦

MAINTENANCE

continued from pg. 1

look like waste to students is something the district has budgeted for, and the money can't be spent in other places. Another example of maintenance money work is a grassy area near the redwoods that has been fenced off to try to bring the lawn back to life, according to Moran. A modified irrigation system will water the grass more evenly.

"We want to have a good environment for our students."



PRINCIPAL Paul Robinson

"Right now it is spotty, so there are some dried out spots that are just bare dirt and no grass," Moran said. "We are trying to renovate that area and restore it. It is taking longer than I envisioned, but that is why the fencing is up." The grass may be sensitive to a lack of water, but most of what has been planted around campus is drought-tolerant, he said. For example, the lower field and softball field, which used to make up two acres of grass that needed to be watered, were changed to turf two years ago. Especially with record rainfall last year, the drought did not affect plants on campus severely, Moran said.

Not only is Moran's crew renovating the irrigation of the trees in the quad, but they are also working to transform a plot of land near the pool by the front parking lot. The maintenance team and volunteers from various churches are planning on remodeling it into an area that will look similar to Hyde Park, located behind the library, where there are a couple of in-ground tables and a sidewalk that meanders through the grass, plants and trees. "Our goal is to make it more visually pleasing and useful for both the students and staff," Moran said. According to Robinson, Menlo Church, which is across the street from the front of the school, wanted to work on a service project with the school, so Moran suggested a renovation of the area in front of the swimming pool. Menlo Church will be buying materials and sending volunteers. The front of the pool is currently a dirt patch because of the drought. The school turned off the water to about 70 percent of the grass areas around campus to preserve water. However, with the help of the Measure E bond, many plants have been re-planted near the music building and the front of the school. From watering the redwood trees to remodeling the plot of land in front of the swimming pool, the school is undergoing many small improvements to create a welcoming atmosphere. "One of the things that we take pride in is that our school looks pretty good," Robinson said. "We want to be a good environment for our students as they come in and enjoy it. We're grateful that the church and the ASB are kind of combining together on something that we think is going to make it look even nicer." ♦

togotalks

What do you think about the number of electives?

"There are enough for people who want to do more than one but not so many to overwhelm people."



freshman Logan Hoover

"I feel like we should maybe boost the amount of electives."



junior Charles Debling

"I'd say it has too few. I think we could offer more languages."



sophomore Elise Phan

The electives question: Does the school have enough?

by ShreyaKatkere & EmilieZhou

Sophomore Simrita Advani came to the district last year from Stratford, a private school in San Jose, and was disappointed to find that business classes aren't offered here. "I was really looking forward to taking a business class because my father is a lawyer, so business skills come as a second nature to me," Advani said. According to assistant principal Brian Safine, the school lacks some electives that other schools have, due to the fact that they have about twice the population of Saratoga. With approximately 1,350 students, the school simply doesn't have enough students.

"When you are dealing with a smaller student population, there is not always enough students to fill class sections," Safine said. "Therefore, we can't offer everything that students might be interested in taking." However, nearby Prospect High has a similar population to Saratoga High, but it has a range of electives that includes cooking, manufacturing, public speaking, street law, madrigals, acapella and treble clef choir. This is most likely due to Saratoga High's demand for STEM classes rather than hands-on visual and applied art electives. Los Gatos High School, with 1,912 students has most of the electives SHS does, but also others, such as cooking, agroecology, business, woodshop and Japanese.

In previous years, classes such as these were offered to students but didn't get enough sign-ups, Safine said. They were later replaced by new classes; for example, as students started to lose interest in woodshop, new engineering classes took their place. Still, some students wish that the electives offered at other schools were taught here as well. "I think that Japanese is a good [language to add] because we only offer Spanish, Chinese and French," senior Audrey Dang said. "I know that a lot of people are interested in Japanese culture." Many students also expressed interest in courses such as business, woodshop and

biomedical sciences. "I think one of the repercussions of not having a wide variety of courses is that we are not able to explore more areas of study," senior Aileen Zhang said. But according to Safine, the school is always willing to consider new interests for various classes. Ideas for new courses can either be generated by student or teacher interest, Safine said. "If there is a match of teacher credential and student interest, then we bring it to our school leadership team," Safine said. "If it is approved, then it will be moved up to the district level. And if it is approved at the district level, then we will allow students to enroll in the class for the fall." ♦

Senior's interest in biology grows from Stanford internship

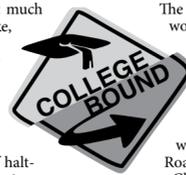
by AlexandraLi

For the past two years, senior Ananya Chakravarthy has worked as an intern under the direction of graduate student Caitlin Roake in the field of biology at Stanford University. Being exposed to this path of research has allowed Chakravarthy to set her college major and decide on a focus in biology in the future. Her journey began during the summer before freshman year, when Chakravarthy attended the Stanford Explore Lecture Series, a four-week program that includes lectures from faculty, graduate students and postdoctoral scholars with the intent of stimulating students' interest in biology and medicine. One of the lecturers was Roake. Chakravarthy emailed her at first with general questions about her research and later asked

for an internship. When Chakravarthy started working at Stanford in the summer of her sophomore year, she spent much of her time observing Roake, who focuses on Dyskeratosis congenita, a disease that mainly affects the skin but leads to bone marrow failure and early death. By studying the causes of the disease, Roake hopes to eventually find methods of halting it before it expands in patients. At the start, Chakravarthy learned to perform small steps, such as examining individual patients. However, now she is able to carry out full procedures like splitting and cloning cells on her own. "While she's still my mentor, we're on much more equal footing now that I have

experience there and have been there for so long," Chakravarthy said. "She treats me closer to an equal than an intern." The past summer, Chakravarthy worked as a full-time intern and focused on an independent research project that related to Roake's work. Due to time restrictions during the school year, Chakravarthy goes to Stanford twice a week to do basic data analysis for Roake. Chakravarthy's most memorable project at Stanford included performing assays, or tests, on cells of patients who are infected with Dyskeratosis congenita. The tests that Chakravarthy carried out on her own showed her value to the research team and reinforced her interest in biology. Although Chakravarthy has not yet de-

decided on what field of biology she hopes to go into, she's leaning toward biomedical engineering. Chakravarthy also said that her experience at Stanford has provided her with important interpersonal skills and taught her how to act in a professional environment. Besides gaining technical skills from being able to work hands-on in a lab, Chakravarthy emphasizes that her work alongside a graduate student has opened her eyes to more specific fields within biology. "I'm not sure whether I want to be a researcher or doctor when I grow up, but I know I want to be helping people," Chakravarthy said. "When doing research, the helping part can be pretty indirect. But working with actual patients' cells made the helping part feel more direct and reminded me why I wanted to go into the field in the first place." ♦



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DEPUTY

New school resource officer works to forge connections

by Aaron Choi & Stephen Ding

With so much on their minds every day, students may seldom think about their safety on campus.

And in a city that has been ranked as one of the safest in California, there may be a dangerously false stigma that "Run, Hide, Defend" drills aren't important.

That is a perception that the school's new school resource officer, Deputy Russell Davis, is working to combat.

Starting earlier this year, Davis replaced Deputy Chad Garton in the position.

Davis applied for the position and was thrilled to get the job.

"He has an extensive background working with youth," principal Paul Robinson

said. "Being a resource officer gives him an opportunity to work with [youth] in a different way, and you can see he really enjoys working with young men and women."

Contrary to the stigma around officers in uniform, administrators say Davis isn't someone to fear.

"He isn't just here to write tickets and bust people," assistant principal Brian Thompson said. "Of course, if there's an event that happens that requires some type of law enforcement he's going to be here and his familiarity of the campus will help him to keep everyone safe."

Beyond school security, Davis has many responsibilities beyond law enforcement. As implied in the name of the position, the school resource officer serves as a resource for companionship, mentor and a role

model for students.

Despite his frequent visits to Saratoga High, Davis is also assigned to other schools in the area, including Lynbrook and Prospect High, Sacred Heart, Redwood Middle and Saratoga, Argonaut and Foothill Elementary.

Because of sheriff's department rules, Davis isn't allowed to be quoted on the record in the press, but has been starting to forge relationships with faculty and staff on this campus.

"Even though he visits so many campuses, Davis tells me that he would much rather be on our campus than anybody else's," Robinson said. "He says it's because we have the most interesting students. He has significant experience and training that is essential to working at school." ♦

SPIRIT

Hundreds dress up for Red Ribbon

by Karen Chow & Chelsea Leung

After Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agent Kiki Camarena was killed by drug traffickers in Mexico City in 1985, the Red Ribbon Campaign was established by the National Family Partnership. It is a national campaign for "keeping children, families and communities safe, healthy and drug-free," according to its website.

Since 1986, the campaign's Red Ribbon Week, which involves schools and cities, has taken place every year in October. The Leadership class organized the week from Oct. 23-28.

Encouraging students to dress up each day of the week, the spirit commission promoted this year's message of "Your Future Is Key, So Stay Drug Free."

On Monday, students dressed up in their pajamas, promoting the theme of "Follow Your Dreams; Don't Do Drugs." Tuesday was Tie-Dye Day, intended to spread the message of "Peace Out to Drugs." Students wore pink on Wednesday for breast cancer awareness, reaffirming the theme of "Get Your Pink On." Sports Day on Thursday included to "Knock Drugs out of the Park" and Red Out Day ended the week with school spirit.

"We wanted to promote [not using drugs] in a way that will get through to the students that isn't super forceful," said junior Madison Hartmann, the head of the spirit commission.

The commission also decorated the quad with posters as well as posted on Facebook to get the word out.

Student reaction was generally positive, as class officers also promoted the week through Facebook posts telling students what to wear the next day.

For example, junior class treasurer Samyu Iyer posed with the other junior class officers, Hanlin Sun, Nevin Prasad, Sasha Pickard, Ashley Feng and Khiara Berkowitz-Sklar in pajamas for a photo posted before Monday.

"It provides a fun opportunity for people to think about what they're dressing up for in the process," Iyer said. ♦

MUSIC

Band finishes its marching season

by Chelsea Leung

As in past years, the band consistently placed highly at competitions throughout this marching season with the show "Find Your Voice."

Kicking off the competition season at Del Mar High's annual Feste Del Mar Band Review on Oct. 7, the marching band finished first overall in their class, 6A, with a total of 92 points out of 100. The drum majors won third in the field conducting category, the auxiliary won first and percussion was third.

Although the students had not yet learned the entire show then, junior trumpet and General Manager Matthew Graham said that the portion performed at Feste Del Mar was above standard.

"The band had an amazing run, and we had one of our highest scores in the past years," Graham said after the competition. "This show has incredible potential."

The next week's competition, the Cupertino Tournament of Bands, however, was canceled because of the poor air quality

caused by the North Bay fires. It had been originally scheduled for Oct. 14.

At Fresno State's Sierra Cup Classic on Oct. 21, the band was runner up to James Logan High with an overall score of 87.81 out of 100.

"It's been cool to be a part of the band performances because no other school has integrated choir into band."

JUNIOR Simran Mallik

As the only competition with an overnight trip, the Sierra Cup Classic was a special bonding opportunity for the show members.

"Traveling to competitions that are farther away builds up hype because we are away from our familiar surroundings and we're having a band adventure of our own,"

band General Manager and flute soloist Deyshna Pai said.

The competitive season concluded with the Bands of America NorCal Regionals at San Jose State on Oct. 28, when they won seventh overall with a score of 72 out of 100.

Even though some band members were disappointed because last year they had won second, Graham said that "regardless of what place we got, our band had an amazing last run, and you can't ask for anything better than that."

One big difference this year was that choir joined the band performances. Choir, band, directors and staff agreed that there were no problems with the addition.

"It's been really cool to be a part of the band performances because no other school has integrated choir into band," junior choir member Simran Mallik said. "It gave choir more performance opportunities outside of the regular concerts that we do."

As the marching season ends, the band, choir and Color Guard will start to focus on concert music and after-school activities like winter percussion and winter guard. ♦

DANCES

Commission faces challenges with its large budget shortages

by Ava Hooman & Patrick Li

The dance commission is seeking to raise money to help pay for the Winter Formal in December.

Head commissioner Marissa Leong and her fellow commissioners Nicole Wong, Jolyn Tran and Connor Reyes have been trying to fundraise every other week.

"I think Dance Commission will progress and get better at making dances super fun."



SOPHOMORE Nicole Wong

Having already spent \$22,000 on the down payment for the upcoming Winter Formal, they are seeking additional ways to pay for the decorations and food.

Money is generally split between Homecoming and Winter Formal. This year, dance commission had a budget of \$16,000

for Homecoming, and is planning to spend about \$30,000 for Winter Formal, but the commissioners fear ticket costs may not cover the whole expense.

Winter Formal is generally more expensive than Homecoming due to its pricey off-campus venue, since Homecoming occurs in the gym. This year, Winter Formal will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Santa Clara.

"Venues and food are super costly for Winter Formal since we have food catered, so payments are made per person or per serving we order," Wong said.

Although Winter Formal tickets are priced at a high \$50 to \$60, the dance usually still boasts solid attendance from students.

This year, dance commission planned on hiring an interior decorator for the venue, but he canceled in the last minute. As a result they are currently in search for a new one and are hoping not to spend more than \$2,000 for this expense.

In their effort to stay on budget, the commission is turning to fundraisers, selling boba tea, donuts and popsicles. They have made a few hundred dollars so far but still need more.

Besides Homecoming and Winter Formal being held in the first semester, dance commission usually hosts a Spring Fling



This year's Winter Formal "Ice, Ice, Baby" will be at the Hyatt Regency Santa Clara on Dec. 2.

dance held in the later spring months. The commission has not decided on their budget for Spring Fling as of yet, and based on student interest, they may not even hold the dance this year.

Despite the commission's struggles to cover the cost of Winter Formal, they are

still planning to create memorable dances for their classmates.

"I think dance commission will progress and get better at making dances super fun and enjoyable later on in the year," Wong said. "We're trying really hard to make sure everyone has a good time." ♦

FOURTH PERIOD STAFF POLICY

The Saratoga Falcon is published 12 times per year by the Advanced Journalism classes of Saratoga High School, 20300 Herriman Ave., Saratoga, CA 95070. Views expressed in The Saratoga Falcon are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the administration, faculty or school district.

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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 austin.wang@saratogafalcon.org. For ad information, phone (408) 867-3411, ext. 222.

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Printed by Folger Graphics in Hayward, Calif.



The plague of plastic water bottles

After every lunch period, the quad becomes a graveyard for trash.

One of the worst items left behind are dozens of plastic water bottles. Even though the heaps of trash are a result of a combination of laziness and a lack of regard for the environment, the answer to the plastic water bottle epidemic isn't simply recycling them.

People are often think that by simply recycling their plastic water bottles, they are saving the environment. This simply isn't true.

In fact, recycling is not even what it most people think it to be. Instead of being an endless cycle of being able to recreate products out of waste plastic, plastic products can be recycled only seven to nine times before becoming unusable.

Because of this, more manufacturing of plastic water bottles is needed to keep up with demand, which takes a huge toll on the world's oil reserves. This is a colossal problem because oil is a nonrenewable resource, and according to The Pacific Institute, 17 million barrels of oil are used per year to make plastic water bottles.

Some people believe that the scope of the issue of running out of fossil fuels is beyond their lifetime, having the preconceived notion that Earth still has plenty of natural resources to spare. But according to the British Company Ecotricity, the Earth is projected to run out of oil by 2052, which is not very far off.

Furthermore, according to the More Oceans Less Plastic Institute, less than 10 percent of all plastic products are even recycled properly, resulting in tons of waste plastic polluting the oceans, more specifically — 8

million metric tons per year.

This misplacement of plastic bottles also has drastic impacts on ocean ecosystems, resulting in the death of over 100,000 marine animals each year due to being trapped in plastic or the ingestion of it, according to The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Organization. The obvious solution to this problem is to have more people carry reusable water bottles.

On top of being more eco-friendly, reusable water bottles are much more cost effective. A one-time purchase of around \$20 for a reliable reusable water bottle is a lot more reasonable than spending \$7 a week to buy a 24-pack of Arrowhead plastic water bottles.

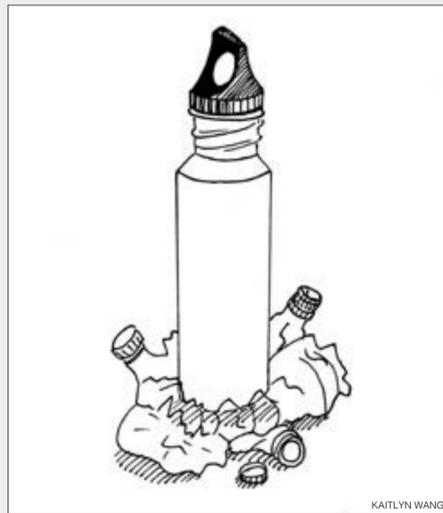
The argument that contends that disposable water bottles are more convenient doesn't hold, either. Having to buy whole cases of water bottles every month instead of relying on one reusable water bottle is much more expensive and inconvenient in the long run.

Best of all, reusable water bottles can come with many perks, such as the insulated S'well or Hydro Flask bottles that can keep any drink warm or cold for 24 hours.

This isn't to say that people should never buy disposable water bottles ever again. There are rare occasions when they're needed. But on daily basis, there is no reason they should be a person's first choice.

Also, if the school pays for more water hydration stations, using reusable bottles is more convenient than ever, allowing students to easily refill their bottles on campus.

Costing around \$5,000 per installation, the hydration station inside the school's journal-



KAITLYN WANG

ism room has already conserved 4,250 plastic water bottles in its first year and two months of operation.

Ironically, even with the implementation of hydration stations around the school in places like the weight room, the school cafeteria still sells plastic water bottles for \$1 each, a direct cause of the pollution in the quad after lunch.

The school should encourage

students to avoid buying plastic water bottles and also install more hydration stations in places where many students gather, such as the new music building, the new Media Arts Program annex and the upcoming student center in the center of campus.

This way, students will have even more reasons to carry reusable bottles rather than leave behind horribly polluting plastic bottles in the quad. ♦

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

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Opinion Editor Isabelle Yang

Reporter Jeffrey Xu

The Falcon staff voted 28-2 in support of this article.

U.S. is losing its status as world power

by Leo Cao & Michael Zhang

Looking at the rest of the world, it's becoming increasingly clear that the United States is a superpower in decline. Aspiring countries in Europe, Asia and the Middle East now hold major roles in the global economy, while sometimes ignoring and fighting against the wishes of the U.S.

Donald Trump and his policies are the main cause for this decline. However, accusations of — "he's racist," "he's sexist" and "he's anti-Muslim" — simply don't cut it anymore. Above all, his inexperience in public office have changed the world in a truly terrible way.

Rather than "Making America Great," he has further isolated and weakened America as a whole.

Whether it's dissolving important and necessary trade deals such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership or pulling out of the Paris Climate agreement, President Trump's policy has regressed the U.S. on the world stage.

Trump's style of addressing problems forces other government officials to clean up his blunders. Earlier this year, defense secretary James Mattis was forced to publicly assure Iraqis that the U.S. wouldn't seize their oil, as Trump had suggested. Often times, the anger created by Trump's inflammatory remarks is extremely

hard to assuage, making it so that America is seen as unreliable and even problematic.

One of the biggest factors of America's downturn is the regression of the country's education system. A study has indicated that the U.S. ranks 24th out of 71 countries in reading and below average in math, behind countries including Japan, France and the United Kingdom in both categories.

Health care in the U.S. also lacks when compared to other developed nations. Many large countries, such as Canada, Germany and Australia, have already established a universal health care system. Meanwhile, in the U.S., Trump has repeatedly recently of

refused to provide crucial funding to help the poorest citizens obtain reasonably priced health care — a spiteful move aimed at undoing Obamacare that will surely hurt many of the very people who put him in the Oval Office.

At this point, the U.S. must accept the consequences as it continues to fall behind other countries.

Perhaps the solution lies in Congress. By fighting Trump's policies, Congress can help limit the damage done to the reputation of the U.S. For instance, even though Trump recently decertified the Iran nuclear deal, Congress has been trying to salvage it provide the kind of competent leadership that the top office is lacking. ♦

togatalks

Is the U.S. a world power? Why or why not?

"A lot of countries follow and copy the U.S. so I would say that we are a world power."



sophomore Julia Yoo

"No, the U.S. is not a world power; are you kidding me? We have no money."



junior Usman Khan



President of Taiwan, Tsai Ing-wen addresses a crowd of supporters after winning the election.

GRAPHIC BY ISABELLE YANG

by IsabelleYang
& AlexYang

As the year comes to the end, the world will celebrate the coming of 2018. However, Taiwan, also known as the Republic of China, will soon be welcoming the year Minguo 107.

This unique calendar system, based around the country's independence from Japan, is indicative of the great amount of nationalism in the country despite slowly deteriorating and dangerous relations with China.

Although this developing problem is extremely complex and involves many culturally significant elements that have now become intrinsic to Taiwan and Mainland China's cultures, there is a relatively simple solution: the status quo, or something very near it.

Since Taiwan's 2016 election, tensions in the "Cross-Strait" relations have continued to escalate after a period of relative peace. Tsai Ing-Wen, the winner of the 2016 general election and leader of Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has since strongly advocated for the formal independence of Taiwan.

Although the country has been informally independent ever since it was expelled from the Chinese mainland, its economy as well as political system have proved to be both independent and self-sufficient.

In fact, Taiwan's Human Development

Index ranking is 65 places higher than the People's Republic's.

Yet, Taiwan still faces hurdles of being an unofficial country, not recognized in the United Nations despite its sizable global presence.

In fact, UN General-Secretary Ban Ki-Moon rejected Taiwan's re-entrance application in 2007.

One aspect that is often glossed over is the effect that this bureaucratic power-struggle has had on the peoples of both countries and immigrants from the conflicting countries.

Although basically unknown to most of the Western world, the Taiwanese people have developed distinct cultures from the Mainland Chinese people since their divergence in the mid 20th century.

In fact, this difference in customs had led to a growing dislike between the peoples of the two countries.

Residents of Taiwan generally resent being called Chinese, and residents of Mainland China generally think of self-identifying Taiwanese people as being stubborn and unrealistic.

One example of this is the controversy regarding 17-year-old K-Pop idol Chou Tzuyu, a member of the girl group Twice. This occurred after she was spotted waving a Taiwanese flag in the background of a Korean broadcast show.

Following Chinese outrage, Chou released an apology, which in turn infuriated

many Taiwanese, who recognized as it as yet another Chinese aggression.

The spat is most notable for involving younger generations, who have previously shown signs of distancing themselves from the divisiveness resulting from cultural tensions between China and Taiwan.

Realistically, even though the aggressions from China have sparked some reactions from the Taiwanese, there is actually very little risk of a true conflict arising if nothing changes.

The island of Taiwan continues to operate essentially like an autonomous country, and Mainland China gets to continue telling itself that it has control over an island that has actually been independent for decades.

However, it's become clear that many in Taiwan cannot imagine a world in which this perfect balance stays. President Tsai's goal isn't to keep the status quo — in fact, it's far from it.

Tsai, unlike her conservative counterparts in the previously ruling Kuomintang (KMT) party, wishes not for Taiwan to reclaim mainland China but instead for an independent Taiwanese state to be recognized globally.

This idea isn't new, but the fact that the head of the Taiwanese government is now spearheading the movement is dangerous for relations around the world.

Taiwan has and will remain an important asset and its relations with China are indicative of how Asian tensions will be felt by the

U.S. and other nations.

Currently, China is one of the few nations that has contacts with North Korea, a highly volatile and unstable country.

In order to ensure that China will continue to be compliant with the wishes of the UN and the U.S., the problems between China and Taiwan must be brought to the spotlight and carefully negotiated.

The fact is that Taiwan lives by staying on the fence between being compliant and resisting China, and a disturbance to this sacred balance could land Taiwan in some hot water.

It's undeniable that if a true military conflict were to arise, the Taiwanese government would surely be picked apart within weeks, if not days. To prevent this, the Taiwanese allied themselves with many Western democratic powers.

However, in a conflict provoked by a controversial move made by Taiwan against China, it's highly doubtful whether the U.S. or any other Taiwanese unofficial ally would risk starting a world war against the legitimizing Chinese government. It's simply not worth risking the loss of life to formally declare independence.

The cultural repercussions of the Taiwanese and Chinese split will continue to affect both its citizens and likely global politics for decades to come.

However, it's imperative that both countries maintain their status quo for the time being. ♦

COOL AT SCHOOL

4-day weekend

by MuthuPalaniappan

For the first time, the school decided to implement a four-day weekend stretching from Oct. 6-9. Aside from giving students a much needed break, it has also served many other benefits.

In years past, students did not have an extra day off between Labor Day on Sept. 4 and Veteran's Day, starting on Nov. 10. This created a month-long period in which many students complained of giant blocks of school days.

This year, the district's decision to add an additional long weekend in the middle of October has been nothing short of a success. Students were given two extra days to spend time with friends, catch up on

school work from days past and recharge. Additionally, seniors were given an extra opportunity to work on college applications, some of which were due the following week on Oct. 15.

The four-day weekend has additionally motivated students, acting as something to look forward to.

I already knew weeks before the long weekend what I would be doing during my long weekend: sleeping, something I really started to value after junior year started.

Between the constant flow of school work and tests with no time to relax, the long weekend in October provides students a way to take time off and relax, something few SHS usually have much time to do during the school year. ♦



Superscoring benefits colleges instead of exemplary students

by MathewLuo
& AlexWang

Superscoring is a method of scoring SAT and ACT tests by taking the highest scores in each category (math and English for the SAT; and science, math, English and writing for the ACT) from multiple exams taken on different dates and creating a composite test. Tests containing the highest score from each section are sent to colleges that superscore, who then create the superscored test.

Many colleges claim that the students who best exemplify academic and personal virtues are the ones accepted to their school. However, superscoring, which dampens academic differentiation, is hypocritically widespread among many of these same colleges.

While superscoring seems advantageous to both students and colleges, it is actually an unfair system.

For example, a student receiving a 800 in math and 740 in English on one SAT, then a 750 in math and 790 in English on another could have a superscored result of 800 in math and 790 in English.

Superscoring only changes which scores a person sends, allowing students to make up for an unfortunate circumstance on a test day, from sleepiness to sickness. As a result of this test choice, su-

perscoring is beneficial to students who take the test multiple times, since they are able to hide their lower scores.

These supposed benefits come with a fatal flaw, however: By allowing students to hide both scores they dislike and the number of times they have taken the SATs or ACTs, colleges create score inflation and reduced differentiation among potential applicants.

By taking the tests several times, students can improve their scores because some of their tests will be easier than others. The possibility of at least one "good" score granted by chance also increases greatly with each additional test taken.

Score inflation from repeated test taking causes the scores of those who scored well initially to be skewed by the composite scores of those who superscored. The original purpose with which tests are sent to colleges — to determine academic aptitude — is thereby dampened.

Additionally, superscoring hurts the students who may not have the money or time to take the tests more than once. As each SAT test costs \$60 with the essay and each ACT test costs \$62.50 with the essay, students with financial difficulties will not only have fewer resources for studying, but will also have fewer chances to retake as well.

While this is not much of a problem due to College Board waiving fees for up to two SATs for low-income students and the fact that on average, students take the SAT two or three times, it still reduces the number of options available for low-income students.

Colleges also have a somewhat questionable incentive to superscore. Since superscoring allows their students to have an overall higher average SAT or ACT score, colleges can boast this difference over competitors and improve their rankings.

Why, then, is superscoring still practiced? The answer may lie in the fact that some consider the lack of academic differentiation among applicants a blessing in disguise, rationalizing that it is better to make it hard for others to stand out than it is to stand out themselves.

Or, it may simply be that most do not care about the issue because they do not plan on taking the SAT more than once or twice anyway — when applying to a range of colleges, it is unlikely that all of them superscore.

Rather than superscoring, colleges should require applicants to submit all of their test scores. In so doing colleges can account for many factors including times taken, dates taken and whether the student shows a trend of improvement with each successive try. ♦

Reverse racism is concerning

by AlexYang

"Racism is a white problem."

It was shocking to read these words in an article about racial tensions in the Sept. 29 issue of Forbes. The article by Chris Ladd says that minorities, in specific African-Americans, should have the right to say and do whatever they want to retaliate against racism by whites. This view is mistaken and dangerous.

Racism isn't any one group's "problem" — if anything, it's all of society's. This is because racism, from any mouth, is still racism.

While historical context gives some reason for why many white people are forced to just let much of the racism thrown at them go, it's simply unhealthy for society to allow any group the freedom to step on another due to a vague moral obligation. Although saying is as become cliché, the idea that two wrongs don't make a right is an appropriate way of describing this issue.

While not as widespread as the suppression of minorities in America, much of the hostile stereotyping of white people done by minorities can be just as harmful.

It's become ominous how prominent double standards have been in mainstream media. When a white person talks badly about a minority, it's unacceptable, but when a minority does the same to other minorities or whites, it's brushed off.

This isn't to say racism by white people should be brushed off. In fact, this is more to say that no racism is ever good or OK, even if done by minorities who feel justified to do so because of past wrongs. The idea of affirmative action, which has long been a hot-button issue among American universities, shows how racial discrimination against whites is often seen as acceptable.

In one famous example from 1978, a white student, Allan Bakke, was rejected from UC Davis' medical school while having academics that put him well within the

range of accepted candidates for the graduate program. This was due to the college reserving spots in its class for underrepresented minorities.

The case was taken to the Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of Bakke and stated that racial discrimination, even against white males, was still illegal and a violation of constitutional principles.

Affirmative action as an issue has continued into present day. In fact, as recently as 2003, affirmative action, and more accurately race as a factor in college, was ruled legal by the Supreme Court.

Surely, a correct response by minorities is to try to spread awareness about key issues affecting their communities rather than taking violent action that only undermines their ultimate cause of true social justice and equality. ♦

Confederate statues represent racism, must be taken down

by AllenChen

This past year, America has become a country whipped up into the frenzy of racial tensions, with some of its attention turning toward the leftover symbols of the Confederacy.

There has been strong opposition to these removals. Thy argue that taking down "historical monuments" destroys a portion of history.

What opposers don't realize is that the majority of the statues won't be destroyed, but sent to museums and other private owners, where they can be kept as what they are: a reminder of the slavery and oppression of America's past. They will last longer but not be the divisive symbols that many have become.

In the midst of the many flawed arguments against removing confederate monuments, the inability to separate history and heritage is the most dangerous.

Although many interpretations of heritage and history have been thrown around, heritage is defined as "the collection of traditions and mindsets passed down from generation to generation within a group," whereas history is the account of what really happened.

When the statues are brought down, the celebration of the Confederacy and the tradition of white supremacy fall. The history can always be found in higher quality but in places such as museums, which can give appropriate historical context that explains the painful history behind the statues.

Furthermore, most of the statues weren't built to honor the dead Confederate soldiers. Instead, most were built in response to the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909 and the Civil Rights Movement of the '50s and '60s, roughly 100 years after the Civil War ended in 1865.

The statues were created to be symbols of white supremacy, the metal representations of the dying Confederacy, remaining only to reinforce racist ideals. For example, the controversial Robert E. Lee statue in Charlottesville, Va., was built in 1924, just three years after the Tulsa Race Riots of 1921.

Such statues weren't built to be art, but were tools used by white supremacists.

President Trump has suggested that the removals of these statues foreshadows the removals of other important statues, tweeting, "I wonder, is it George Washington next week? And is it Thomas Jefferson the week after. You know, you really do have to ask yourself, where does it stop?"

However, his point is completely invalid. The statues of the Confederacy represent something different than that of the Founding Fathers.

When statues celebrating Confederate soldiers and ideals are taken down, they represent the country attempting to move past the age of oppression. The history will be preserved in books and museums, but the heritage of the Confederacy — a past of racism and white supremacy — needs to be at long last erased. ♦

Never too old to trick or treat

byAlexandraLi

I tip-toed through the spider-webbed entrance, watching for hidden scares in the bushes. Dressed in a pig-onesie, I greeted the house owner with an excited, "Trick-or-treat!"

Contrasting my excitement, she glanced at me and responded, "Aren't you a little old to be trick-or-treating?" Although I shrugged off her comment and continued on, a part of me couldn't help slouching a bit in an effort to make myself look younger.

After this experience last Halloween, I quickly realized later that her attitude toward teens old trick-or-treating struck me as odd. Why should there be an age at which we should stop trick-or-treating?

In 2016, the U.S. Census Bureau reported 41.1 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 trick-or-treating, but did not even mention or collect data on those over the age of 14. According to a survey conducted by Today.com,

73 percent of respondents agreed that somewhere between the ages of 12 and 17, children should stop trick-or-treating.

Those who stand against teenagers trick-or-treating may be convinced that with age, people

Inside, we're not that different from the 6-year-old who stood on the same door step a decade before.

tend to get malicious intentions on Halloween night, such as destroying decorations or stealing candy.

While this may apply to a few, the majority of teens who choose to throw on a costume and trick-or-treat simply want to spend the night outside, relaxing while also getting candy as a reward.

Hash browns

by AustinWang

I love the smell of greasy hash browns in the morning. Most students would gag at the thought of eating school food, but for me, the cafeteria is an oasis of sustenance in the morning hunger pangs and sleepiness of tutorial.

Waking up at 7:40, leaving at 8:00, arriving at 8:13 and sprinting to AP Statistics at 8:15 doesn't leave much time for breakfast. But who needs a home cooked breakfast, or even a banana on the go when the hot school cafeteria food beckons to me after the painful starvation of first period.

I rush out and jump into the cafeteria line, eager to be have the first pickings at the hot morning foods. Hash browns, in particular, are a blessing sent straight from the heavens. Each 50 cent package takes me straight to flavor town while providing me with all the essential nutrients to take on the

day: fat and carbs. After all, fat is energy and carbs are power. That's just science.

Pro tip: put some hot sauce from the soup line onto the hash brown for a truly euphoric experience.

Even prouder tip: Place a single hashbrown in between a sausage and egg croissant to treat yourself to a luxurious three dollar breakfast extravaganza.

But alas, such a blessing is short lived. School hash browns run out faster than the metaphorical hotcakes the cafeteria should be serving (hint hint). It pains my heart to think that many students have not experienced the crispy starchy joy of a school hash brown.

Or maybe it's just the heartburn from all those hash browns.

Still, if I leave this school with only one major contribution, I sincerely hope it will be my tireless crusade to increase the quantity of hash browns served at tutorial. ♦

Dear administration, it's time to tailor a dress code to fit the 21st century

by Harshini Ramaswamy

One of my worst nightmares was getting dress-coded in middle school.

The teachers and administrators would often stop students in the hallway or ask them to stand up in class to measure the length of their shorts against the length of their fingertips. It was an embarrassing, and quite frankly, a demeaning process that mainly targeted girls. Gifted with long limbs, I evaded administrators during break and lunch to avoid being dress-coded for shorts that didn't go past my fingertips.

This led me to look forward to graduating from Redwood Middle School and welcoming the supposedly lax dress code enforcement at Saratoga High. Unfortunately, the dress code here isn't much more enlightened.

I recently took the time to read the school's dress code after hearing never-ending complaints about it every year. A couple lines stood out. The first: "Attire that is disruptive to the teaching or learning process will not be allowed."

Although several examples, like clothing depicting drugs, sex and alcohol, are reasonable definitions of "disruptive," other guidelines are more ambiguous, like "shirts, shorts and skirts that are an appropriate length," with "appropriate" being vague enough to cause conflicting definitions and perhaps an unfair standard of judgment between boys and girls.

The implementation of the rules doesn't always seem appropriate, either. Like Redwood, students are sometimes stopped in the hallway and during class with the potential to be sent home if they don't possess alternate clothing.

Another line that also struck me as odd was the following: "School administration has final authority on what constitutes inappropriate dress."

The wording seems to be intentionally vague and potentially allows for anything from hijabs to tube tops to be interpreted as "inappropriate" and enough to send a student home.

Although the school may have one of the more lenient dress codes in the area, the



vague wording is enough to warrant a written explanation explicitly stating the "disruption" the student is causing with their clothing and which parts of the dress code they may be violating.

The administration should go even further by having disturbed parties, who are mostly teachers and administrators, file a formal complaint to justify their response to students' clothing. Furthermore, the school's staff, any of whom can initiate enforcement of the policy, is composed of over 120 people, translating to approximately 120 different definitions of what "constitutes inappropriate dress."

This increases the likelihood that these definitions are conflicting and arbitrary.

The handbook lists chains and saggy pants (the likes of which I haven't seen in years) as inappropriate clothing; however, the "elastic clause" of the dress code allows staff to interpret already-written rules however they wish to in light of emerging fashion trends.

Above all, the gender inequity of dress codes is what is most disturbing.

Historically, dress codes have been known to target girls, students of color and sexual orientations that don't conform to traditional ideas of a "male" and a "female." As currently written, the school's dress code allows room for this kind of discrimination to occur.

This year would be a good time for the school to change its dress code to fit in this century.

One such dress code policy that accomplishes this is the Oregon NOW Model Student Dress Code, which states that "students should be given the most choice possible in how they dress for school. Any restrictions must be necessary to sup-

port the overall educational goals of the school and must be explained within the dress code."

The dress code aims to resolve "reasons for conflict and inconsistent discipline," "unnecessary barriers to school attendance" and relieve "the uncomfortable burden of dress code enforcement."

It also includes a video that they consider a "great tool to teach consent to students in middle school and older as well as other adult members of the community" and outlines the importance of teaching staff members and students about sexual harassment — specifically what it is, how to recognize it and how to resolve it.

If school leaders truly wish to "optimize the learning of each student" and "promote lifelong learning, personal integrity, social responsibility, and good physical and mental health," as stated in the school's mission statement, then they should bring the dress code into the 21st century and look to Oregon NOW's standards as a model for an "appropriate" dress code. ♦

ASMR: an experience inexplicable in words

by Leo Cao

For nearly 30 minutes, a young blonde woman whispers into a camera in a flow of constant gentle speech. She waves her hands at the camera, folds clothes and taps her fingernails on a wooden box.

This woman, who posts videos every week to her 1 million YouTube subscribers, goes by the username "Gentle Whispering ASMR." She is part of a growing group of people who say they experience ASMR, or autonomous sensory meridian response.

ASMR can be triggered by many different stimuli, including the sound of soft voices, people working quietly or squishing slime.

Wikipedia describes ASMR as "an experience characterized by a tingling sensation on the skin that typically begins on the scalp and moves down the back of the neck and upper spine." This feeling ap-

pears to be a soft, mellow, type of "therapy" that produces a sort of meditative state for the user.

Many people are probably dumbfounded when they first discover the ASMR community. On the surface, it can feel very personal and flirtatious, making an inexperienced watcher borderline uncomfortable.

On the other hand, those who enjoy ASMR can watch 20- to 40-minute videos regularly, finding the experience quite invigorating.

I discovered this phenomenon about two years ago by accident on YouTube. Initially, I disregarded it as something weird. But I soon started to hear about ASMR on the news as well as from friends who encouraged me to try it.

After venturing through a few more videos, I found that although I didn't always experience the physical sensations on my body, ASMR did help me relax during

times of anxiety and stress.

Many ASMR videos are essentially guided meditations, which have been proven to improve concentration and reduce stress. According to a research paper Dr. Nick Davis of Swansea University in the United Kingdom about 69 percent of people who claimed to have moderate to severe depression reported using ASMR videos to help ease their symptoms.

Additionally, these videos may improve the quality of people's sleep. In fact, the hints of therapeutic benefits are sufficient enough for the National Sleep Foundation to claim that it may help people overcome insomnia.

Aside from all the purported health benefits of ASMR, it is a free and easily accessible to experience — meaning regular use should not be a problem. It's not a drug and it won't harm anyone.

Although ASMR may sound like a magical cure for many ailments,



Gentle Whispering ASMR, or Maria, whispers into the microphone in one of her videos to demonstrate an ASMR technique for viewers.

ASMR has been quite a baffling concept for scientists. There is not a lot known about the physiology of ASMR and little evidence supporting its medical effectiveness. But the ever-increasing number of people who swear

by it should lead to further scientific inquiry.

As more and more people are becoming aware of ASMR, it's clear that although ASMR isn't for everybody, giving this relaxing experience a try is not a bad idea. ♦

Solar panels would be a huge benefit to the school

by Jackson Green

As the world moves on to more renewable forms of energy, our school is falling behind.

With renewable energy costing less than ever, many students have wondered why the school has not implemented more solar panels, especially in our parking lots.

For example, Prospect High installed solar panel overhangs in the parking lot in 2012, providing shade for the cars parked under them and clean power for the

school ever since.

If the school added solar panels in the front lot like Prospect, it would solve a multitude of problems as well as aid the fight in mitigating pressing environmental changes.

Undoubtedly, the most direct benefit of solar panels for students is the cover they provide from the sun. Seniors and juniors who have their cars parked in the front lot would not have to worry about a hot car when they drive home after school.

The most direct benefit of solar panels is the cover they provide from the sun.

Furthermore, solar panels would save money currently being spent on the school's electrical bills and could potentially earn money by selling extra energy back.

According to energysage.com,

it often takes a about seven years for solar panels to pay themselves off.

Despite the somewhat high price tag of installing panels, in reality, the money spent is not money wasted, but rather an investment.

Lastly, solar panels provide a "green" form of energy that does not further contribute to rising levels of greenhouse gases.

The school spend \$12 million on the new music building, and it will no doubt provide many

benefits for the hundreds of kids involved in music. But for me, investing in something like solar that would benefit even more students and be cheaper seems like a better idea.

The school's priorities seem to be a little bit skewed, considering the many benefits of solar panels. Although the school has experienced positive changes as it has remodeled, the process of installing solar panels in the parking lots should not be left indefinitely on the back burner. ♦



The law makes a spooky visit to Foothill Elementary



Pranav Ahuja and Roland Shen

Sprinting through the Foothill Elementary playground as sophomores in our new Captain America and Power Ranger costumes, we were ready for the 15th Halloween adventure of our lives.

As we spotted our friends playing basketball and excitedly approached them, we noticed something in the corner of our eyes. Two teens, whose shadowed faces were unrecognizable, danced on the kindergarten building roof to Drake's "Hotline Bling." In the distance, we also spotted an elderly woman peering straight at the roof through a pair of industrial-grade binoculars.

After a couple minutes of playing hot lava monster with our group of friends, we watched as a pair of sheriff's deputies slowly walked onto the school grounds. Not knowing what they were here for, we all continued playing without concern.

But they continued to walk toward us, and with each step we got more and more nervous. "Hey, could you guys come here for a minute?" they said.

We froze, then nervously complied. In

a matter of seconds, we found ourselves kneeling on the black concrete, our exciting Halloween romp across campus turning into an episode of "CSI."

"That lady over there told us that she saw some of you guys dancing on the roof, is that true?" the deputies said.

We glanced up at the dark, dancing figures, but they had vanished. Staring at the guns on the officers' belts, we could feel our insides swelling up and our minds going blank. Neither of us had ever been in such a terrifying situation before.

Slowly, the officers began asking for all of our names and addresses, ending his questioning session with a speech nothing less than memorable.

"Since none of you go to this school, you are ... wait a minute," he stopped, pointing at Roland and asked, "Do you go to this school?"

As everyone around us started laughing, including the elderly woman herself, the officer came to realize that Roland was not an elementary schooler, but just a height-challenged high school sophomore.

Seeing Roland's embarrassment, he graciously released us without any consequences. The next day, we discovered that those dancing figures were two of our close friends when we overheard them telling the story at school. We also found out that karma got them back, as their trick-or-treating endeavors ended in the greatest stomachaches of all time. ♦

One-wheeled wonder: Sophomore rides unicycle

by Michael Zhang

The vast majority of students arrive at school by foot, bike or by car — but not sophomore Daniel Robinson. While others dread the morning commute to school, he easily navigates the streets on his unicycle.

After a few months of practice, Robinson was confident enough to unicycle to school. He finds unicycling much faster than walking his one-mile commute to school. He even thinks that on days with particularly heavy morning traffic, his mode of transportation might be faster than driving. Robinson randomly became interested in riding the unicycle eight months ago.

"It just seemed like something cool and fun to do," he said. "I asked for a unicycle for my birthday, got one and just started practicing."

Learning to ride was a challenge at first. In the beginning, he struggled with a technique many may not even consider when thinking about unicycling — mounting and dismounting.

"[Aside from tricks] the hardest part of riding a unicycle is just getting on and off," he said. "It is also tough to ride on really rough terrain, but then, getting on and off would be even harder."

The hilly geography of Saratoga has

also made unicycling more challenging, making it harder to turn than it would be in a flatter placer, according to Robinson. In order to come to school, he has to ride the slope on Herriman Avenue. Like a bicycle, the unicycle is difficult to control when moving very slowly or very quickly. Since it only has one wheel, maintaining balance on inclines is also tough.

Despite the dangers of unicycling, Robinson does not wear any special protective gear. He doesn't feel the need, and so far, he has avoided major injuries.

"I only wear a helmet and long pants when riding," he said. "So far, I have only gotten a few scratches and have fallen a few times. But the worst has just been a skinned knee."

Aside from getting to school, Robinson rides his unicycle occasionally to other places, such as church or Safeway. Now, after almost a year of practice, Robinson feels comfortable and confident unicycling, and has even learned to juggle on the unicycle. But still, he notes that it is more challenging than riding a bicycle.

As for the future, Robinson has his eyes on learning more tricks.

"Eventually I hope to learn more, but right now I can't do much more than juggling while riding the unicycle," he said.

"When I fall off, I'll just get up and keep practicing," he said. ♦

Halloween Haunt will make you a hallo-weenie



Aaron Choi

For curious first-timers, the first steps into Great America's Halloween Haunt can be deceptively quiet. Streams of friends and couples pouring into the park pass by the departing, whose grim faces forewarn newcomers of the horrors awaiting.

The \$30 entrance fee gives park goers access to this year's new haunted houses: the Roadkill Roadhouse, Zombie High, the Wax Museum Chamber of Horrors, Cornstalkers and the Toy Factory. Returning to the Halloween Haunt is the Demon, which has been renamed as the Demon: Reigned.

The new and improved roller coaster features a waterfall of blood, surrounded by a red fog. Much like Disneyland's Fantasyland and Frontierland, Halloween Haunt boasts JestersTown and Feary Tales. These "zones" are portioned off, where jesters and horrific renditions of humpty dumpty reap chaos.

Having watched "The Ring," "The Grudge" and the "LEGO Batman Movie" all by myself, I'd consider myself a seasoned veteran of horror. However, no scary movie could have prepared me for Madame Marie's Massacre Manor. The wait took nearly an

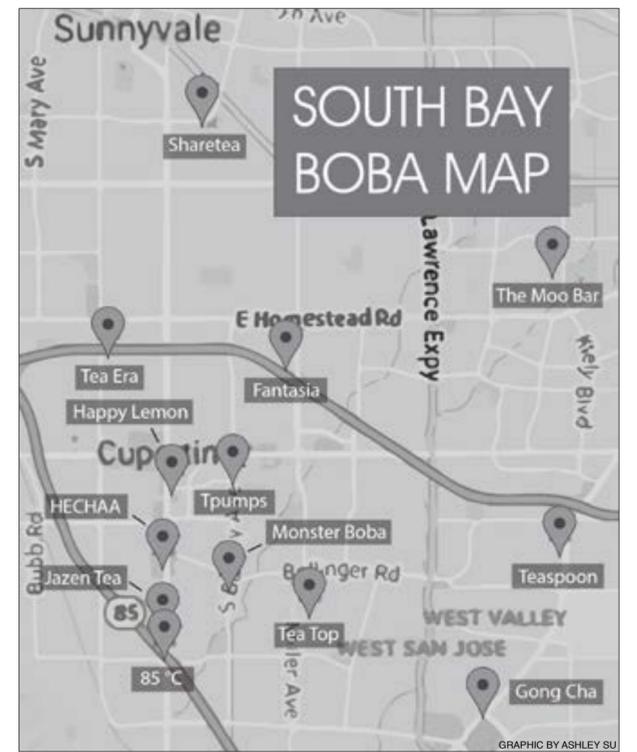
hour, and the line wrapped around a fountain and snaked between pointed fences.

Taking my first steps into the haunted house, I watched the group of four disappear ahead of me into the black hallway. A thick fog wadded from the floor, hiding my shoes and leaving my socks barely visible. Blacklights from the ceiling barely let me see a few feet in front of myself. High-pitched shrieks shot through the mist; the three girls in front of me had met their first ghoul.

I was expecting something like a werewolf or a zombie, but no. What popped out of the dark corner was something that looked like a giant egg. Except the egg had a face, and the face was WRINKLED. For three seconds, the egg creature stood and stared. I returned the gaze; my face remained still, as I was too preoccupied with telling myself that it was not a real monster.

Then the egg man charged at me like a walrus that had been possessed by Satan himself. I couldn't move. The mental preparations and scenarios I had run through my head moments ago were forgotten. I let out a scream so high pitched that would have put the girls in front of me to shame and hurdled my way out of the room. The rest is history.

The moral of this story is: Do not go to Great America's Halloween Haunt. Like me, what you might think of as an opportunity to demonstrate your scare tolerance might turn into your becoming Mike Wazowski from "Monsters INC." ♦



GRAPHIC BY ASHLEY SU

November 3, 2017

all the RAGE

Reporters explore social media trends



Spicy noodles: a pleasant surprise

lee-v me
alone

Elizabeth Lee

With my unhealthy obsession with trying new foods, I avidly watched videos of social media stars trying and reacting to the Korean Spicy Noodle Challenge on Snapchat and YouTube trying when it went viral. Wanting to take part in the fun, I got together with my friends seniors Smrithi Balebail and Elicia Ye to take on the challenge.

The spicy noodle challenge tests people's spice tolerance. It challenges people to try to finish a bowl of Korean spicy noodles as fast as

possible without the help of other foods or drinks like cucumbers or milk.

As someone of Korean heritage, I regularly eat spicy foods. Since Smrithi also has a high spice tolerance, we were confident that we would be able to finish our bowls without drinking any milk or water. On the other hand, Elicia was hesitant but still excited to try the noodles.

We began by boiling water and then placing the block of noodles into the pot. Upon pouring in the spicy sauce, we were amazed and slightly nervous at how red the noodles were turning.

We split the noodles into three bowls and poured out glasses of milk just in case the noodles were too spicy. For fun, Elicia decided to vlog the challenge and we began to chow down on the noodles.

A few minutes into the challenge, Smrithi and I found ourselves actually enjoying the food. Even though the aftertaste was pretty spicy (the spice level was comparable to that of a jalapeño), I felt no pain from the spice; instead, it just heated up our tongues. Elicia, however, picked up the glass of milk as she stuck out her tongue, panting. Determined to finish her bowl, she continued to down her noodles while laughing and tearing up.

Though Smrithi and I finished our bowls, we found ourselves together again in Smrithi's kitchen the following day to cook and eat the noodles again for fun.

While the challenge didn't result in any extreme reactions, we were excited about our new love for spicy noodles — except for Elicia, of course. ♦

My fidget spinner collection has spun out of control

fidjeff

Jeffrey Xu

Ever since fidget spinners became popular half a year ago, I've wanted one.

Fidget spinners are three-lobed toys with circular rings that spin along its axis. Twirling them supposedly helps with anxiety and boredom. However, since my parents were overly pragmatic and frugal, my dreams were shattered for the time being.

Luckily for me, my little brother also began to develop a similar interest in these spinners, and he begged my parents to get him one so that he could show them off to his sixth-grade friends.

Wanting to keep my hyper brother's

hands occupied with something other than a cell phone for once, my parents agreed to buy him one. To be fair to both kids, they got me one as well.

My very first fidget spinner was simple, with a black frame and silver and red rings that spun around. At first, I couldn't keep my hands and fingers off of my new contraption. I would play with it day and night and would even spin myself to sleep.

However, as the novelty began to wear off, I decided an ordinary spinner was not enough for me. After comparing the spin duration to that of other fidget spinners on YouTube, I began to doubt that my fidget spinner was "real." Unlike many other spinners that consistently spun for more than 3 minutes with one flick, mine did not even last 2 minutes. It was then that I knew I needed a new spinner.

Eventually, my dad gave me a flashy, all-white fidget spinner from a company

called Chillax.

The new fidget spinner brought me much satisfaction, and my record time for spinning clocked in at three and a half minutes from a strong flick.

After about two weeks of trial and error and watching YouTube videos, I learned all the fancy tricks of fidget spinner culture. I could spin one fidget spinner in each hand and balance one on my nose for a few seconds. I could even stack two fidget spinners on my desk and spin them simultaneously.

When I went to Boy Scout camp in the summer, I bought a glow-in-the-dark fidget spinner for \$8. To put that into perspective, my parents had given me \$50 to last the entire week away from home. Since there was no Wi-Fi at the camp, at night, my friends and I would shine our flashlights at our spinners and see whose would glow the brightest afterwards.

My fidget spinner adventures con-

tinued later on in the summer when I brought my white Chillax fidget spinner to the COSMOS program at UC Santa Cruz. Everyone in my cluster of 20 students wanted to try my fidget spinner. I felt like the coolest kid there.

Though I was quite furious at first when they dropped it on multiple occasions, I gradually became less concerned about the spin speed and more about sharing in the fun of spinning with my friends.

However, as summer came to a close and my sophomore year loomed ahead, I decided it was time to grow up and leave the spinners behind. Being the great older brother I am, I gave all of my fidget spinners to my little brother and attempted to move on.

From time to time, however, I still sneak into his room to play with his fidget spinners and reminisce about the summer I spent collecting and obsessing over fidget spinners. ♦

Naruto Running: strange, useful and fun hobby

e-sze
money

Kevin Sze

As I ran through the halls with my head down, arms extended straight behind me and knees slightly bent, I could not have felt more stupid. I looked similar to an airplane during takeoff and my face was like Kawhi Leonard's in a game: unamused.

I had accepted a challenge to try a new trend known as "Naruto running," a type of sprint inspired by popular anime character Naruto. I had no clue what was so enticing about this trend, but I was interested in it because of its widespread appearance in videos that became viral on Snapchat, Instagram, and other social media platforms.

So on Sept. 28 when my dad dropped me off at school at 8 a.m., I impersonated Naruto to the best of my abilities, quickly dashing through the quad to my second-period Spanish class.

Naruto running was much more embarrassing than I had imagined. I avoided the eyes and the laughs of other students as they observed my ridiculous behavior.

Up until lunch, my crazed impersonation of Naruto made me feel singled out and strange. Even worse, my friends did not want to hang out with me, resulting in a lonely Naruto run to fourth period.

Yet, there was a major upside to Naruto running. Luckily for me, the juniors' quad day began at lunch, and this was my time to shine.

When the lunch bell rang, I bolted out of my fourth-period class and sprinted for the quad. To my surprise, I arrived at the bleachers much earlier

than other students and quickly reserved the best spots for my friends. I was glad to finally be able to use this funny but seemingly pointless trend to do something useful.

This moment also happened to be the turning point of my school day. Earlier, I felt as if people were judging me. People didn't seem to appreciate my inaccurate anime sound effects — as a matter of fact, I was told that I sounded more like a racecar than Naruto himself.

In reality, people thought I was actually funny. In the morning, one of my friends came up to me laughing, saying, "Dude, this is way funnier than your stupid puns," a comment I ignored out of embarrassment.

I realized that people were laughing at me because they found my impression of Naruto so lousy that it was hilarious.

So, for the rest of the day, instead of being embarrassed of my running, I

tried to brighten as many people's days as possible.

When the lunch bell rang, instead of heading straight to my sixth-period class, I sprinted around the entire school, taking detours and random turns to show off my Naruto impersonation.

Along the way, I received laughs and even a few high-fives. When I did arrive at my sixth-period class, I was glad to have made so many other students smile and to have exercised a little.

The point is, although this trend may seem bizarre and unnecessary to the people not involved in it, it is all an attempt at comedy. If you can try new things and make fun of yourself, people will love you more than if you stay in your comfort zone.

So hopefully, if you saw the "weirdo with the tan hoodie running around like Naruto," he brightened your day. Trust me: He really did not want to burn any of those calories in vain. ♦

Hot or not: wiggly brows overlooked

ding
dong

Stephen Ding

"This is a bad idea," I thought silently in my head as I uncapped the pen. "There's no way anyone would ever have these on in public."

Over the last couple months, a strange trend has blown up all over social media.

My experience with wiggly brows was not a good one, but it wasn't as bad as I had feared. If anyone wants to try the wiggly brow out, be ready to invest time and effort into this useless trend.

In order to obtain squiggly brows, you have to get not only an eyebrow pencil but also a mirror — unless, that is, you want to look like there are worms crawling all over your face. Once you

have all these materials, it is time to start doodling over your face.

My experience with wiggly brows did not start too well. With senior Angela Lee beside me and a trusty hand mirror in my hand, I attempted to draw the first strokes of my new and improved eyebrows. With my limited knowledge of makeup, I already knew this was not going to end well.

I first attempted to draw the outline of the brow with the eyebrow pencil, only to break off the tip because I was applying too much pressure. Despite this, I persevered and continued drawing.

After a couple minutes of struggling, I looked into the mirror only to find that I had drawn something that did not even resemble an eyebrow.

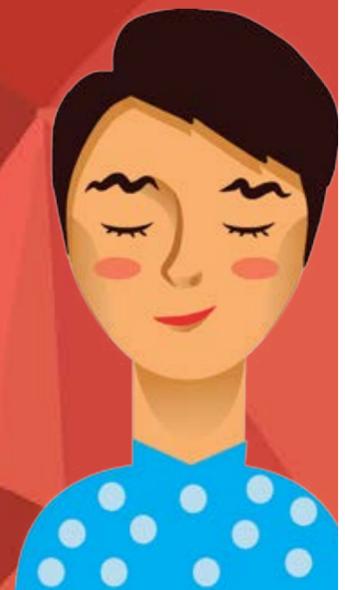
Since I was having so much trouble with it, I decided to let my friend draw them on for me. Lee finished it within minutes and I was finally ready to see the finished product.

When I turned my head toward the mirror, I shook when I saw what I had gotten myself into. Where my eyebrows originally were perched two jumbo-sized worms.

Finally, it was time to test whether people would notice the difference in my eyebrows. When I first stepped out of the classroom, I felt extremely nervous and jittery. Despite this, I continued throughout the day with my regular routine and eventually forgot that I even had wiggly eyebrows.

Surprisingly, I received few comments about my new-look eyebrows from my classmates until I specifically asked if they noticed anything different about me. Even my parents did not notice the difference anything different at first.

At the end of the day, I could not really tell if I enjoyed having wiggly brows or not. With these trendy brows, you can wiggle your way out of almost any situation. ♦





Junior learns lessons through 'Star Wars' III

Flashback to my 15th birthday, Jan. 19, 2015. I was having a great day, strolling through the aisles of Target while hunting for new things to buy on my birthday shopping spree. Suddenly, when I entered the cereal section, I heard a simple yet elegant tune that changed my life.

After hearing this song on the Target sound system, I couldn't stop thinking about it. For the next few days, I found myself singing it in the shower, humming it during tests and searching for the album, ones like "This Could be Us." I decided to add much of the album's selection to my Spotify playlist.

Although these songs may not be suitable songs for younger audiences, they led me to discover a genre of music that has consistently improved my life and happiness in numerous ways through punchy beats, fast raps or even slow tunes.

Unlike other albums or music, the upbeat, rapid base of the song was something I had never truly heard before, and I immediately fell in love with it. During times of depression or stress from school or family, I often turn to music, specifically hip-hop, to support me.

For example, whenever I have a bad day, I always make sure to blast "SremmLife" and rap along with my friends, and I always feel better.

Likewise, whenever I am feeling happy or excited, listening to the rapidly spewed lyrics from rappers, paired with the ear-pounding beats in the background, feels like a natural extension of my happiness, adding even more joy to the moment.

Though "SremmLife 2" was terrible, hopefully there will be a "SremmLife 3" that will invigorate my senses like the original did.

Without that shopping spree in Target, I may have never found my favorite type of music, and although my playlist is probably filled with over 600 songs, I will never forget the jewels I found in "SremmLife." ♦

'Sremmlife' a source of joy in senior's life



By Pranav Ahuja

Flashback to my 15th birthday, Jan. 19, 2015. I was having a great day, strolling through the aisles of Target while hunting for new things to buy on my birthday shopping spree. Suddenly, when I entered the cereal section, I heard a simple yet elegant tune that changed my life.

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I heard a simple yet elegant tune that changed my life.

up every lyric I could remember in order to find the name of the song. Nearly a week later, I finally managed to figure it out: "No Flex Zone" by Rae Sremmurd, a rap duo with brothers Swae Lee and Slim Jimmy.

I soon realized, though, that the real value of the discovery wasn't so much the song, but the artist who created it.

The two brothers of Rae Sremmurd have released an entire album called "SremmLife" with songs just as catchy as "No Flex Zone."

After sharing this song to all my friends and hearing all the other



'Hacksaw Ridge' a reminder of true courage, sacrifice

By Esha Lakhotia

As the credits rolled for the movie "Hacksaw Ridge," I finished drying my tears with my sweatshirt sleeve. Even after being cramped in the middle seat of an 8-hour airplane ride to Cincinnati, Ohio, "Hacksaw Ridge" managed to move me and make me appreciate all war heroes.

The movie came out last November, and I had seen advertisements for it, but never got to watching the two-time Oscar-winning film until this past month.

The movie follows the true story of a World War II army medic Desmond Doss, played by Andrew Garfield, who served during the Battle of Okinawa, one of the bloodiest battles of World War II.

Throughout Doss's training and battle, he refuses to pick up a gun due to his strong ties to the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which holds a belief in non-violence. This belief brings a lot of criticism from his military officials and peers.

During the battle, however, Doss single-handedly saves 75 infantrymen who were left behind and severely injured without firing a single weapon, carrying them on his shoulders and lowering them down a cliff with a contraption made from rope. While the rest of his unit fled to safety, Doss was stranded in no-man's land, looking for men who were fighting to stay alive.

After many rescues, Doss persists on, asking God to help him in his journey, saying, "Please, Lord, help me get one more."

Doss's immense perseverance and selflessness are extremely motivational. He takes all his own strength and risks his own life for the wounded and stranded soldiers who would have died without him, all while sticking to his moral and religious beliefs of his religion.

Doss's story moved me and made me realize my own problems are nothing compared to the life-or-death situation he faced. The math test I was stressing about suddenly seemed foolish and petty.

Since that plane ride, I have watched the movie three times. I have also shown the movie to my parents and a couple of my friends and they all agree that it has made them more enlightened about the reality of war, as well as be more humble and compassionate people. ♦



'Younger Now': a metamorphosis for Cyrus

By Julia Miller

Cyrus claimed she has quit smoking marijuana and is cleaning up her act by toning down her swearing and wearing more clothes. Cyrus, in an interview with Fallon on June 15, ceased her marijuana addiction, because "to sit here and talk about what I'm doing, I wanted to be really clear... I'm actually the most passionate about what I'm doing with this record than I have been."

Cyrus released the first single off her new album titled "Malibu," on May 11, which debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard Top Tracks. The pop ballad is centered around Cyrus' newfound home with Hemsworth in Malibu after owning a house in Tennessee her entire life. Cyrus and Hemsworth reunited in 2015 after ending their engagement, and Cyrus even admits in her lyrics, "I never would've believed you if three years ago, you told me I'd be here writing this song."

Fans were juggling between country and pop as the official genre for her new album when Cyrus' second single off the album, "Younger Now," was released on Aug. 18. It peaked at No. 10 on the Billboard Top 100 list, and begins with a flowing river and ribbiting frogs from Cyrus' own backyard. The song has a strong country undertone, with a slow rhythm and a bold bass guitar supporting Cyrus' fruity singing voice.

Upon the release of "Younger Now," it was concluded that "Malibu" was practically the only song without a country feel to it. Cyrus is graceful in every word she sings and has the power to calm her listeners with just her voice and an omnipresent guitar.

However, "Bad Mood" is among one of the album's few country outliers. Accompanied by echoing "ohs," Cyrus sings of the anger she holds in her heart for feeling unappreciated by someone she loves.

Cyrus was the sole writer for "Younger Now," with just one collaboration on the song, "Rainbowland," with her godmother, country icon and actress Dolly Parton. The song begins with an excerpt from a voice-mail Parton left for Cyrus about recording the track and fades into a strong electric guitar and a beating tambourine. Cyrus and Parton share their optimism for a peaceful world, akin to John Lennon's "Imagine."

For Smilers that still jam to Cyrus' pop anthems of the last five years, I sadly have to admit "Younger Now" may not be the album for you. Nevertheless, die-hard fans of Cyrus, like me, never grow tired of her no matter what genre she sings. ♦



Miley Cyrus blows the crowd a kiss while performing at the 2017 Billboard Music Awards.

Movie soundtracks do more than accompany the action

By Ryan Kim

Although movies win Oscars or other accolades for their plots and character development, their soundtracks often become their most iconic feature.

There are the serious, brooding themes of "Inception" and "Interstellar" that make the audience question the world around them. There are also more light-hearted, catchy tunes like Moana's "You're Welcome," but even these movie soundtracks have merit beyond pop culture.

Even light-hearted movies like Disney's "Hercules" have many songs focused on self-realization and courage, like "I Can Go the Distance," that inspire even the most unfeeling moviegoer.

Perhaps the epitome of great movie soundtracks is Howard Shore's "Lord of the Rings" soundtrack, a masterful blend of total serenity in the Hobbit theme and the jarring, exciting and frightening theme of Orcs. The triumphant fanfares of victory juxtaposed with the heart-tugging gentle swell of hope and determination through the perils of Mount Doom only further emphasize the sense of balance and emotional upheaval conveyed through the music.

As the musical score soars, the audience feels like charging down the field with the Rohirrim, flying on the backs of the Eagles or sitting comfortably in a small cozy living room, reading a tale and eating second breakfast next to the gentle fireplace.

Mystery and magic and horrible suffering; wonder and beauty and ephemeral peace; inspirational charges and gruesome last stands: all of these emotions are driven home with emotional gut-punch music.

Imagine watching iconic films like "Star Wars" without the John Williams' soundtrack.

The experience would be terrible. There would be no ambience, no concrete grasp on thought or feelings — just monotonous dialogue and awkward choreography among the actors.

Consider "Lord of the Rings" again: If there were no inspirational trumpet fanfare as the heroes march across Middle-Earth to save the world, most of the movie would be like a silent film or documentary of people hiking across fields and mountains.

But add in the soundtrack, and suddenly the monotonous trudging is an epic quest to persevere through the treacherous storms and hordes of orcs to protect all that is good. The noble journey through the perils of Middle-Earth is only accentuated and truly conveyed through the music.

When Samwise Gamgee, a loyal Hobbit friend of the protagonist, Frodo, wonders why they, simple farmers, embarked on this quest, he eventually comes to the conclusion that, despite the hardships of life, the good of the world is worth fighting for; the music accompanies his flow of ideas and emotions, slowly swelling from dull rumblings to a crescendo of hope and courage.

It describes the emotions of the characters, moving from sullen and exhausted to brave and re-invigorated to protect the people they love. And this simply would not exist without the soundtrack guiding the emotions and thoughts of both the audience and the characters.

Decades-long movie series are no exception. For example, when Rogue One's composer Michael Giacchino paid homage to Williams' original "Star Wars" theme, the audience in my theater went wild, giving a standing ovation as many tears rolled down their cheeks and nostalgia washed over them. Even though the first Star Wars movie was released 39 years before "Rogue One," fans young and old alike could enjoy the swelling emotion flowing through the theater.

To this day, the most memorable aspect of the greatest movies is so often their soundtracks; people hum the tunes as they live their lives, subconsciously keeping the spirit, not just the plot, of the movies alive.

Soundtracks are the fundamental backbone of emotion in movies. They bring inspiration, hope, tension, sorrow, horror, joy and peace to the audience. They are the foundation of the impact of movies. They are the punchline. ♦

Lady Gaga's new Netflix documentary comes up short

By Shreya Karkere

Lady Gaga, lifted up to the ceiling during the Super Bowl halftime show nearly two years ago at Levi's Stadium, letting her shiny high heels woven with tiny pearls dangle beneath her as she disappeared into the ceiling. The screen faded to white and the words, "Five Foot Two," appeared, cueing the start of the recent documentary about the singer.

"Five Foot Two," which was released on Sept. 29 on Netflix, gives fans an intimate look into Gaga's life. Prior to its Netflix debut, it premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival on Sept. 8.

The film is directed by Chris Moukarbel and follows Gaga through the making and release of her fifth studio album, "Joanne," in 2016 and gives a look into her Super Bowl halftime show performance, her critical hip injury and her breakup with her fiancé in 2016, Taylor Kinney, after five years together.

In addition, part of the documentary mentions the loneliness she has faced. Gaga talks about how she felt empty at home by herself after being the subject of so much attention every day.

"It's hard enough when love isn't working out the way you want it to and you have to walk down the street with somebody going, 'Are You OK?'" Gaga recalled. "I had to go into the deepest pain in my life. I had to go into the part of myself that you don't want to face."

The documentary also gives an intriguing glimpse into Gaga's challenges with a condition called fibromyalgia.

Fibromyalgia is a chronic pain syndrome characterized by tenderness and pain in deep tissues and muscle. Many people repond with skepticism and doubt that she was telling the truth about her disease, since fibromyalgia has been suspected of being brought on by anxiety and depression rather than any form of physical ailment.

"I use the word 'suffer' not for pity, or attention, and have been disappointed to see people online suggest that I'm being dramatic, making this up, or playing the victim to get out of touring," Gaga said.

The documentary about her is aimed at raising awareness and tackling ignorance about this mostly invisible illness. Furthermore, she provides a strong role since she doesn't let her suffering stop her from doing what she loves: performing on stage in front of her global fan base.

Contrary to popular belief, "Five Foot Two" does not refer to Gaga's height (which, by the way, is 5'1"). Instead, it refers to a song called "Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue" that plays during the baptism of her friend's baby.

Although "Five Foot Two" is a deeply personal look into Gaga's struggles, the documentary has received mixed reviews from the public. Some people even went as far to question Gaga's album, "Joanne," because Gaga was pictured mourning the death of her father's sister throughout the film, even though Gaga never met her.

Many of Gaga's fans were extremely disappointed by the documentary because it focused on her personal battles with depression, loneliness and fibromyalgia rather than the successes and obstacles she faced in her musical career.

Because of this, some reviews theorized that Gaga was trying to distract the audience from the downfall that was "Joanne." I support this theory because "Joanne" her second lowest-ranked album.

Critic Jessie Cooper of "Odyssey" said the documentary was "all right but didn't address what fans wanted to know about: why her songs have been somewhat unsuccessful for such a star like her."

I agree with Cooper, and I can say that I disliked "Five Foot Two," because of its depressing aura surrounding Gaga's personal problems and battles.

I would have preferred if she made her documentary that focused more on her journey to where she is today. ♦



Courtesy of PEOPLE.COM

Senior suffers panic attack in SAT



dancing queen
Julia Miller

Let's return to last winter: The rain fell, 30.75 inches dumped on California in five months. Since I live in Scotts Valley and commute with my mom to her teaching job at Foothill Elementary School, the severe weather left us facing countless road blockages, flash floods and emergency construction zones. These blocked me from going home and resulted in less sleep, foggy mornings in class and more demanding time crunches for homework and studying — all during junior year.

But it was just my luck that the worst night of them all would take place on Jan. 20, 2017, the day before I took my first SAT. Not only was I already over-studying by doing daily practice tests and SAT tutoring twice a week, but as an over-thinker, I was treating the test like Judgment Day. If I didn't

live up to my expectations of doing "well," I was convinced that every college would turn away in disgust at my "sinful" scores.

Like seemingly every other night during those five months, it was pouring rain on the way home. As my mom drove through giant puddles on Highway 17, spraying water on either sides of our car like a water ride, we suddenly came to a stop. We turned to each other and muttered, "No." The rest is five hour-long history. We sat in standstill traffic until 10 p.m., moving about half a mile in three hours. I had no practice tests to cram with, no study guide to review and no internet connection to find a practice test online. I felt the beginnings of panic.

Once we finally made it home, I got only about six hours of sleep due to my stress-induced tossing and turning. Groggy and paranoid, I drove to Santa Cruz High School, where I would be taking what felt like the biggest test of my life. Upon arriving, I immediately felt out of place. Everyone seemed to know each other except for me, making the environment extremely uncomfortable. As I stood there silently while everyone chatted about common classes, I went over and over the strategies and concepts my SAT

tutor had taught me. Once we finally began the Language Arts portion of the SAT after 45 minutes of instruction, I froze. My mind moved at an immeasurable speed as my hand was unable to process which bubbles to fill in. I began to overthink everything; I was analyzing the letters within the words, words within sentences, sentences within paragraphs. I couldn't help but forget what simple vocabulary words meant.

I began to tremble, my legs bouncing up and down in my chair. As my breathing quickened, I laid my head down on my desk and tried to take big breaths, but my heart only raced faster. I had never experienced a panic attack before, even during crucial test finals, and of course, it had to be during the SAT.

Tears stinging my eyes, I tried to continue the test to the best of my ability, but when the proctor declared that time was up, I still had 10 questions left. I bubbled in random answers, got up out of my chair and was the first to leave the room for break.

I ran to the bathroom as quickly as I could and threw cold sink water in my face. I needed to calm down, I thought as I looked at my panic-stricken face in the mir-

ror. I had to remind myself it was just a test. I went back in there and tried the best that I could.

Though I was not satisfied with the score I received and retook it in June, I learned a valuable lesson from my panic attack experience. Standardized tests are designed to test us on subjects we have been learning for years, and no amount of cramming the days and nights before the test date will significantly add to what we already know.

Stress is almost unavoidable on these tests, but I changed several parts of my routine leading up to my second test. I stopped studying a week before the test (I know, crazy!), and I turned off all electronics three hours before I slept on SAT-eve (I know! Even crazier!).

But, most of all, I changed my mindset. I told myself repeatedly that the SAT was no big deal and that I was going to crush it.

With these techniques, I scored 100 points higher on the second test. I learned that I have to have confidence in my abilities and accept that I am prepared enough to succeed. For a student making her way through the rigors of high school, that's all I need. ♦



Music program helped Shiuan; now he repays

BY MuthuPalaniappan & EmilieZhou

Jason Shiuan, who teaches and directs the concert, jazz and marching bands, is in his second year of teaching at the school.

Shiuan, a 2011 SHS graduate, grew up attending schools in Saratoga and started playing piano at age 5, later joining the band in fifth grade.

It was during the summer before eighth grade, when Shiuan's brother was going to college, that Shiuan decided that he wanted to make a career in music education.

"[My passion] always circled back to music, so I knew that was something I really enjoyed," Shiuan said. "I knew I was never going to be a performer.

I never liked to practice alone in a room, so then I gravitated towards working with people, which evolved into teaching."

His love for music continued to grow, as he continued to play in band throughout all of high school and college. He later graduated from Northwestern University with a degree in music education.

At Northwestern, he continued to play

his primary instrument, the saxophone, and learned to play other new instruments, as well as how to conduct and teach music.

Besides higher levels of performance and increased dedication, Shiuan doesn't feel that the music program has changed

"I circled back to music, so I knew it was something I really enjoyed."



BAND TEACHER Jason Shiuan

20 years later, Boitz still enjoys teaching music

BY MuthuPalaniappan & EmilieZhou

With the school's top-flight music program, it is easy to credit success solely to the hundreds of dedicated students enrolled in it.

But behind the scenes for the past two decades, the one constant force has been music teacher Michael Boitz.

When he started teaching here, Boitz was the only staff member in the instrumental side of the music department.

"There was one band and one orchestra; the orchestra was really small," Boitz said. "I basically did everything; that eventually built and built, and now it's a larger program with many more staff."

From early on, Boitz was devoted to music.

During his childhood in Minnesota, he was surrounded by three siblings who also played instruments.

He started out playing piano, but was also "forced" to learn the accordion at a young age.

In elementary school, Boitz learned to

play the cello and trumpet, and continued to play the tuba, euphonium and trombone in high school and college.

Boitz started at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn., originally thinking that he would become an engineer.

However, he soon began to feel a stronger connection with the music classes he was taking in school because of the instructors.

"I kept gravitating back to music and I would gravitate to music education specifically," Boitz said. "I tried really hard to not go into music because it was the stronger desire of my parents that I do something else."

Boitz started working as a short-term music educator in Minnesota.

In 1997, he moved west and started teaching at Saratoga High, with the intention of staying only for a few years, but he ended up finding a home and building a nationally recognized program.

"I really loved the school and the administration, who were really excited to build the arts program for kids," Boitz said. "It's just been a 20-year labor of love, and I think I have 20 more left in me." ♦



Boitz

Test-y Trials Students share their SAT stories

Katy Perry grants me unwelcome test 'visit'



lowed by Perry's voice, made it not only impossible to concentrate but also impossible to stop tapping my foot. However, it was at this time when I noticed five other students beginning to tap their feet. We all looked up at each other, thinking, were we all crazy? Or even better: Telepathically connected?

Were we all crazy? Or even better: Telepathically connected? Unfortunately, no.

Unfortunately, no. Soon, the whole class looked up, and after a couple of minutes of blankly looking at each other, we all slowly and simultaneously stared at the test proctor. He was jamming out to "T.G.I.F." on his phone with his headphones plugged in, eyes closed, completely oblivious to what was happening.

Thankfully, one brave soul decided to wake the proctor up and tell him that we could hear the song through his headphones. Embarrassed, the proctor turned off his phone, but the time that was lost was never returned. On the bright side, at least I learned to never be afraid to alert my proctor about any issue during an exam. Thanks to my proctor, I also realized I needed to remove "T.G.I.F." from my Spotify playlist. ♦

Bathroom break trouble



ately noticed graffiti on the walls with racial slurs and derogatory words targeted to different sexual orientations and other profanity.

I was a bit shocked, but I didn't let it bother me. As I exited the stall, I noticed that everyone had already left and that I was the only one in the bathroom. With horror, I realized I didn't know the way back to the classroom.

I already felt like I was rushed and now I was running in the halls, trying different patterns of lefts and rights to get to my classroom. Even though I was probably lost for only six minutes, it felt like hours. I was shaking; I didn't want to miss time on the next section just because I had to go to the bathroom.

After frantically running around I found the room and burst into the class, scurrying into my seat. To my horror, four minutes of the writing section had already begun and I panicked even more, wondering if I would get to all the questions in time. I tried to quickly answer the questions to compensate for that 4-minute delay.

Luckily, I don't think the delay really affected the accuracy of my answers — I still thought carefully and managed to calm myself down when I realized I was on track with the time. What lessons did I learn? For one, it's best to sign up early to get a closer and more familiar testing location as well as arrive really early to the center in order to map out the bathroom route before starting the test.

As for myself, I know that I'm never going to the bathroom during a timed test ever again. ♦

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WBC Extensions **8 Weekends**

Jan 13 - Mar 3	3:00, 3:30, 4:00, or 4:30pm
Friday Testing	8:30am - 12:30pm
Saturday Testing	8:30am - 1:00pm or 1:00pm - 5:30pm
Saturday Class	

ACT WINTER BOOT CAMP

For students aiming for the February 10th ACT, Elite's ACT Winter Boot Camp offers rigorous preparation for 2 weeks during the December break plus 4 more weekends in Jan/Feb, leading up to the Feb 10th exam.

A four-week extension is offered for students who want to prepare more thoroughly.

Program Dates	8 Days
Dec 18, 20, 26, 28	8:30 - 5:30pm
Dec 19, 21, 27, 29	8:30 - 12:30pm

WBC Extensions **4 Weekends**

Jan 13 - Feb 3	3:00, 3:30, 4:00, or 4:30pm
Friday Testing	8:30am - 12:30pm
Saturday Testing	8:30am - 12:30pm
Saturday Class	1:00pm - 5:30pm

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African Americans examine cultural labels

BY Kaitlyn Wang
& Jeffrey Xu

As senior Solomon Bailey waited at the DMV for his license test results, he felt a policeman's gaze boring into his back.

"He watched me more closely than anyone else in the room," Bailey said. "I'm different, and that's something people notice."

Bailey often notices that people cast odd glances at him because he is African American.

Freshman Tyler Chaffin said he experienced discrimination at Redwood Middle School. According to Chaffin, while he and his friends were hanging out, a student stole his friend's phone, and Chaffin tried to get it back.

While scrambling over the phone, the student threw a punch at Chaffin, and a fight erupted. The offending student's parents later called the school administrators and blamed the fight on Chaffin.

"The kid started fighting me, and I fought him back," Chaffin

said. "But instead of him getting in trouble for fighting me originally, I got blamed for it. Personally, I believe it was because of my race."

Despite the occasional stare, Bailey, who moved from Ethiopia six years ago, said that being African American proved to not be a disadvantage during freshman year, when he was the only full African American student in the school. Bailey said that with his afro and metallic chains, he stood out in a good way.

"Kids wanted to be friends with me just because I was African American," Bailey said. "That didn't bother me."

For junior Lydia Demissie, who also moved from Ethiopia, being a minority at the school hasn't been a barrier. She said that "everyone here is really welcoming and nice."

For Chaffin, who is part Jamaican and part Norwegian, he's grown used to being a minority at school. He also sees benefits he feels his ethnic background has provided him.

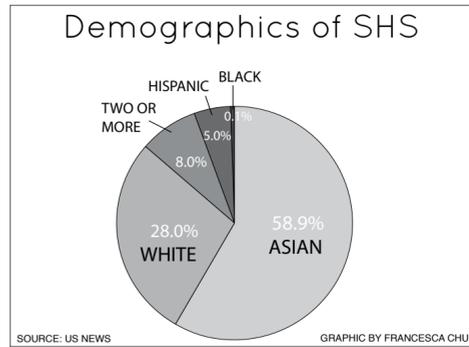
"On the Norwegian and Jamaican side, I've had a lot of family [members] who have come from rougher areas, so that has taught me how to cope with difficult situations and be more resilient," Chaffin said.

Of course, being African American in a city like Saratoga isn't 100 percent positive, especially when it comes to cultural stereotypes.

"I partially blame other African Americans for these stereotypes," Bailey said. "Sometimes, African Americans do things that make people think this way. If you see gang members wearing chains and then you see an African American man wearing chains, you may assume they are a gang member just because they dress the same way."

According to Bailey, it is important to recognize that few African Americans fall into stereotypes.

"Somebody who doesn't know me might think I'm a gangster," Bailey said. "But once you know me, you know that I'm nowhere near being a gangster."

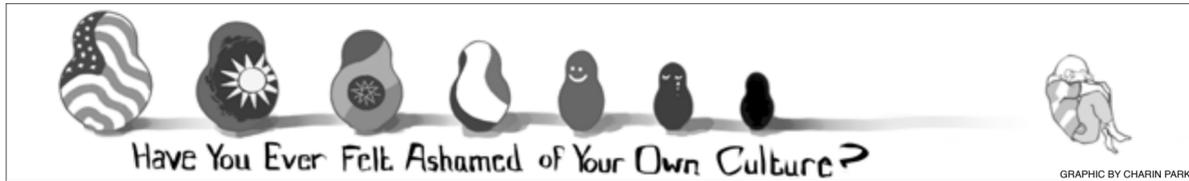


While Chaffin sees problems affecting African American communities, he also said they should "help each other out instead of fighting each other."

In the end, Bailey, Demissie and Chaffin all believe that in order to break free of society's skewed out-

look on any culture, it is important to not allow others' opinions to affect one's self-image.

"Not only African Americans are stereotyped," Chaffin said. "Everyone can be stereotyped, so just ignore them and continue doing what you have to do." ♦



My dad: a true American

BY Ashley Su

In the face of a barrage of questions, a string of mumbled words whooshes out of my dad's mouth as he struggles to form a coherent sentence: Would he like a plastic bag for 10 cents? A Safeway Club card? What about an eco-friendly reusable tote for \$2? Meanwhile, my freshman self stands beside him staring at the ground, flinching each time he stumbles over his words.

Behind closed doors, I am my dad's personal English coach. From car rides to the dinner table to the line for grocery shopping, I am there next to him, drilling unmastered words into his mind to cleanse the heavy Taiwanese accent from his speech.

Yet, as soon as we leave the security of closed doors, a façade of cold apathy blankets my supposed supportiveness. When he orders "sour cheese" instead of "sour cream" or butchers Stephen Curry's name as "Steven Curry," I grimace in embarrassment and shuffle to the side, attempting to avoid being associated with him.

"Why does it matter so much to you?" he would ask me as I'd ntipick his mispronunciation of Stephen.

"I'm trying to help you improve your English," I'd retort, but we both knew that was an excuse. My meticulous instruction wasn't an extension of goodwill. It was just a product of my shame at his Asian accent — I worried that each blundered word projects a bad image on our family.

That same freshman year, I remember going to get lunch with my older brother and my dad at a sandwich shop. As my dad struggled through his order, I glanced at my brother and snickered, attempting to relieve my embarrassment by teaming up with him against my dad. Instead, my brother glared at me and pushed me aside to help my dad order.

I wanted to lash out in annoyance. Wasn't this the guy who always mocked my dad's accent at home? When "downtown" somehow became "dawn-tawn" or "lizard"

became "lillard," my brother would roll over in laughter, mimicking the broken words that fell from my dad's lips.

And yet I realized there was a clear difference in the way we treated Dad's accent. While my brother's mockery was done out of good-natured fun in the privacy of our home, my shame was rooted in my insecurity of identity. In our home, where there is a clear divide between two different cultures, I struggled to properly adopt American culture without the stain of Taiwanese mannerisms. Because my dad could not sew together his words fluently, I rejected him as an American.

But for someone who pays American taxes, follows American politics and lives on American soil, my dad is just as American as anyone born in this country.

Even if his words don't flow as smoothly as a native speaker, my dad is just as American as anyone born in this country.

So what if his words don't flow as smoothly as a native speaker? Those words, however broken, represent the hours of hard work dedicated to learning English for his education in America. They represent the daily frustrations of a peer or professor misunderstanding his words. Those slips in pronunciation, as I have realized, cannot determine how American my dad is.

Now three years older, I feel no shame in being out in public with my dad. When his daily errands require interaction with others, I have taken it upon myself to help him translate as much as possible.

For most children of immigrants, it's almost inevitable that our two different cultures will clash, but I have learned to take pride in the Taiwanese culture that my family so fiercely values. ♦

Proving prejudices wrong

BY Kevin Size

"You are so bad at basketball!" shouted a fourth-grade teammate of mine. "Is it because you are Asian and you see everything widescreen?"

I felt the tears welling up and frustration rising from my chest. My third-grade dreams of making it to the NBA had been crushed beyond repair.

Thirty minutes prior, I had excitedly run to the basketball courts. I had dreamed about playing for the Golden State Warriors and nailing a buzzer beater to win the NBA Finals.

I joined a game of blacktop basketball with the fourth graders, playing point guard in an intense game, until one of my Caucasian teammates shot that racist comment at me. At first, his comment did not register, but soon I was furious that he blamed something that I could not control, my ethnicity, for why I could not make a proper pass.

For the rest of the day, school was a monotonous chorus. I walked away from the courts in tears and ignored onlooking friends, obsessing over what had been said. He'd shaped my future in 17 quick, ruthless and decisive words. He could have said something like, "Jeez, you need to work on your game," and I would have taken it with a grain of salt, but pinning the blame on my ethnicity shattered my confidence.

For the next few months, I woke up wanting to be someone else. I wanted to be able to make the pass on target and seal a victory, to be able to run faster, jump higher and have limitless range on the basketball court. But I never tried to achieve any of these lofty goals, because I figured that small stature and small eyes made it impos-

sible for me to excel on the court.

Elementary school was supposed to be for nap time and Fun Fridays, not bullying and derogatory remarks. I was shocked by what my peers could get away with and the ignorance or agreement of everyone else.

I stopped playing basketball after that day and for the rest of elementary school. My doubts only got worse when my parents told me that being Asian meant that I could not make it into the NBA.

Six years later, I confessed my story to a few close friends who also felt that minorities were being short-changed for their appearance.

When I let it slip that I had once been told that I could not play basketball because of my small eyes, one of them told me something that will stick with me for the rest of my life.

"When you look like a model, you only need to be OK," he said, "but as a minority, if you want to be included and loved by everybody, you have to be great."

Ever since, prejudiced attitudes have fueled my motivation to prove people intolerant of other cultures wrong.

To anybody going through any form of oppression, whether it be for your race, gender, religious beliefs or anything in between, just know that flipping the script on the ones who frown upon you is not easy, but it can be done.

In fact, I owe that insensitive fourth grader a thank-you. Although I have not played competitive basketball in six years, he is the reason why I have worked harder to improve skills that I lacked before, such as writing, and learn the intricacies of my new favorite sport, golf, to prove that being a minority can't hold me back from achieving my goals. ♦

Recognizing my dad's 17 years of sacrifice

BY Ryan Kim

"So ... you're just leaving?"
"Well ... yeah."

That was about the conversation I had with my dad when he moved away for his new job in Korea last December, leaving me, a junior struggling through mountains of homework and stress, to fend for myself.

I stumbled outside, throwing open the back door and running into the rain. I felt numb, my arms tingling with goosebumps. Blood rushed to my head. I grabbed the nearest object — one of my dad's old Crocs — and heaved it across the yard. It landed in the soaked grass, squelching a little as it sagged under the mud.

It wasn't a divorce, and it wasn't as if there was ill-will, either — my mother and 12-year-old sister, who live with me now, will join him in South Korea after I graduate next June.

Ever since I was little, I sought advice and acknowledgement from my parents. I wasn't sure how I would fare if I were suddenly alone. Even with my mother and sister with me, the house felt emptier without my father's heavy footsteps and boisterous laugh. All I could do was sit back and watch my life unravel.

But then came January. After all of those harrowing exams, after struggles in school and home, after waging war with my fears and sorrow every day for two months, it was finally time to see my father again. I didn't know how to feel or act or think. What do you say to a man you thought you once knew, a man who you depended on so much but left you when you possibly needed him most?

When we arrived at my dad's new house, I immediately recognized the faint musky smell of cigarettes. And there he was: the same father, burly arms open wide and tackling me in a hug. Squeezing me till I choked, he said over and over, "I missed you, son."

Tears flowed again, releasing the months of anger I had festering in me. All of the pent-up emotions and frustrations came swelling out. No words were spoken for the remainder of the night.

As I left Korea after staying for two weeks, I realized that although I had thought my relationship with my father had changed drastically, it was actually still the same. My dad didn't abandon me or betray me; he still loved me, and he still wanted the best for me. And as I thought about it, I realized something even more astounding.

This conflict is not about me. My dad has

been shelving his own dream for 17 years, just for me and my family. Every day he worked in America, he looked for opportunities for promotion and self-improvement. But that would mean we would have to move, which would then destabilize my sister's and my education. Until last year, he declined many opportunities to expand his career.

This conflict is not about me. My dad has been shelving his own dream for 17 years, just for me and my family, to make sure I live a comfortable life.

He has sacrificed his wants every day so that I can fulfill mine. He works all day to earn the money I spend on chips and fancy clothes. He is sacrificing still by devoting his life not only to working hard to support my family, but also to caring for all four of my aging grandparents in South Korea. He

shoulders the weight of living apart from us and the stresses of a different workload and job culture.

For 17 years, I have disregarded his dream for my own, and he has faithfully stood by my side to help me reach my goals. Only now has the weight of my father's sacrifice clicked in my brain. After graduating high school, I am supposed to be ready to face the world by myself and try new paths to find my passions. It's long past the time to hold someone's hand. My dad recognized this, so he gave me perhaps the greatest gift he's ever offered me: freedom.

I don't hold anyone's hand anymore. I walk alone, blazing my own path, finding out what I want to do by finding out what I need to do. I don't live for praise or heavily rely on the guidance of my parents anymore. I'm growing up.

My dad did not betray me. Rather, I betrayed his faith in me by turning against him for a while. We have both grown. He is now managing the stress of living separated from us much better than he originally did, and I'm working hard to make sure my dad's 17 years of sacrifice are not wasted. I'm not being dragged by the hand anymore. I walk by myself, my dad cheering me on from behind, and I'm not turning back. ♦

Exploring the gulf between us and our hired help

BY Chelsea Leung

Editor's Note: Names of sources have been changed.

The median home size in Saratoga is 2,722 square feet, with the median list price being roughly \$2.6 million, according to Zillow. So who cleans many of these large and expensive homes?

In many cases, the answer is that so-called cleaning ladies do. I've often heard other students casually mention their cleaning ladies who come to their homes every week or two; I'm no exception.

Diana began cleaning my house five years ago. She comes every two weeks. Every time she leaves, the house is spotless, with only a whiff of lemon cleanser remaining.

I knew that Diana has a daughter, Natasha, who is one year older than I am. Diana often mentions Natasha to my mom, who would later tell me of Natasha's athletic or academic achievements and Diana's dreams of sending Natasha to a prestigious university.

How do you describe the feeling when someone you respect has to ask your mom if she can have your trash for her daughter?

However, Diana has always feared that she will not be able to pay for her daughter's tuition. My mom told me once that Diana came close to tears while sharing her concerns.

The concept of financial doubt has been alien to me. After all, I've grown up comfortably in Saratoga in a big two-story house with my own debit card supplied with Chinese New Year money.

Although I felt sad that Diana's life

was comparatively difficult, I would soon forget about her troubles. They were so far removed from my comfortable world and my relatively trivial worries: I'd jokingly fret over having to attend West Valley College if my ideal college plans don't work, but not about whether my family could afford to send me to college in the first place.

The first time I met Natasha was on my staircase. I was coming down; she was heading to the second floor with the plush, comfortable rooms my brother and I never had to share.

I remember how we both stopped and stared, but it wasn't as awkward as when a year later, Diana asked my mom if she could give her daughter the crusty eyeshadow that I had thrown out.

Bought years ago for dance performances, the eyeshadow had been thoughtlessly chucked into the trash when the cover grew misty with broken pigment.

How do you describe the feeling when someone you respect has to ask your mom if she can have your trash for her daughter to use?

Months later, Natasha asked my mom how old I was. I wonder how she felt when she discovered that although we were nearly the same age, I had almost endless privilege at my fingertips while she had to help her mom clean my house. I wonder if she felt angry that the circumstances of our births placed us on opposite sides of a huge economic gap.

Other than our ages, the only similarity we share is that our parents are immigrants. Diana immigrated to the U.S. in 2001 after living on a ranch in rural Jalisco, Mexico. Natasha was only 1.

Though Diana did not have the money to own much livestock, she would wake up at 5 a.m. every day to milk the cows and support her family and would walk nearly an hour to travel anywhere past her ranch.

Since opportunities were few and women worked mainly in the home, Diana and her husband moved to California in search of a better education and future for Natasha.

From 2004 to 2006, Diana worked for a cleaning company, but then secured a government job. However, she said she was fired once she became pregnant with Natasha's sister, who is now 9.

Needing money, Diana went back to cleaning houses, but worked on her own. For the past 10 years, Diana's business, which is concentrated in the inland Bay Area, has grown through word of mouth.

Although Diana has improved her English through night classes, Natasha usually helps her out with messages, acting as Diana's secretary.

"I take a lot of responsibility knowing that my parents moved their whole life and sacrificed being with their family for my well-being," Natasha told me.

Although Diana enjoys interacting with the people she works for, as a service worker, she sometimes encounters less-than-kind clients. Natasha said that "people who are on her case about everything" or people who watch every detail of her work irritate her mom most.

For example, recently Diana was told to clean underneath a large bed, but her tools did not have the length to fully reach under. Her client then wiped an expensive and long rag on the floor, and upon finding the "smallest speck of dirt," complained to Diana in an angry phone call.

Along with phone calls, Diana often receives messages from clients after 9 p.m. To force her mom to calm down and sleep, Natasha has to take her mom's phone away, describing her as a "very stressed person."

On a typical day, Diana wakes up at 5:30 a.m. By 6:30, she has dropped Natasha off at school. Most days, Diana has three to four houses to clean and arrives home at 7 or 8 p.m. On some days, her work hours stretch until 10 p.m.

Natasha's days are no less busy. At Presentation High School, where she is a senior, Natasha plays sports and maintains a 4.0 GPA. Because her mom does not have time, she also picks up her sister after school and holds three jobs: babysitting as well as working at Levi's Stadium events and at Godiva.

"I work so hard," Natasha said. "My parents did so much for me and now it's my turn to repay them."

Any work I've done in the past 16 years seems lackluster compared to the effort they put in every day.

In fact, I never held a job, let alone three; I've never had to help my mom learn English, because she went to graduate school in America. I don't even have to clean my own house.

Natasha is currently applying to college. I'm sure she will be accepted to many excellent schools — her achievements speak for themselves.

So when she finally fulfills her dream of becoming a lawyer, I will be proud to say that she has been one of my biggest inspirations. ♦

togatalks

What role do domestic workers in your house play in your life?

"The gardener just does his job and leaves. There is really no interaction between us."



sophomore Alex Mah

"I have known my house cleaner since I was little and when she comes over we always talk."



sophomore Eman Ahmad

"Our old house cleaner Hannah was really nice, and I considered her a part of the family."



junior Graham Kingston

GIRLS' TENNIS

Falcons aim for NorCals

BY Elizabeth Lee

With a season record of 9-3, the girls' tennis team finished off second in the De Anza League and qualified for CCS, which will take place on the week of Nov. 6.

The girls played Lynbrook on Oct. 26, finishing their league season with a victory against the Vikings with a match score of 4-3.

"Since it was the last league match of our season, we all played well and worked together to make the most out of our last one," No. 2 doubles player sophomore Vivian Lin said. "Our singles and doubles put up a tough fight through all their matches and we are excited to play at CCS."

Because of poor air conditions on Oct. 12 due to the fires in the North Bay, the girls' match against Los Gatos was postponed to Oct. 25.

In the match, the girls took home a 7-0 victory against the Wildcats, a team they lost to 4-3 earlier in the season. The Wildcats were without several top players, a significant factor in the lopsided result, but the Falcons took pride in it nonetheless.

"Going into the match, we were all really excited and determined to take home the win, especially because we lost against



Courtesy of NOW & FOREVER STUDIOS

Senior Stephanie Ren readies her racket during warmups earlier this season.

them the first time and since this match determined whether we were going to be seeded in CCS," No. 1 doubles player freshman Alyssa Pinai said. "Each of us played our toughest game to beat our biggest rivals."

On Oct. 24, the Falcons beat Palo Alto High 6-1. The girls took home wins against Cupertino on Oct. 19 5-2 and beat Homestead on Oct. 17 5-2. Because the team had

no injuries, the girls were able to maintain their strongest lineup for the matches.

"Overall, the team has been working really well together and we are growing closer together not only through tennis, but through team bonding as well," Lin said. "We are looking forward to finish off the season placing high in CCS and hopefully even qualifying for NorCals." ♦

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

Team readies for post-season

BY Michael Lee & Kelly Liu

The frustration of a losing league season faded away for one night on Oct. 24 when the Falcons defeated their biggest rival, Los Gatos High, 3-1 during an away game on the Wildcats' senior night. This ended their season with a huge win and a 2-10 record.

Even more significant, they will be competing in Division III CCS on tomorrow night at 7 p.m. against Prospect High, despite finishing in last place in the De Anza League.

"I think our high energy and spirits will carry us through CCS and we will do really well," co-captain senior outside Riley Carter said. "I think we are finally clicking on all levels and our energy is the highest it's ever been."

During the game on Oct. 24, senior libero Hannah Fan carried the defense with 24 digs, while Carter had 15 digs and junior

outside Katie Hulme dug out 23.

"I think Los Gatos put up a really good fight, but we were ready to take it to them and beat them on their own senior night," Carter said.

On Oct. 23, the Falcons played Palo Alto High at home on their senior night, celebrating their five seniors as they played their last volleyball game.

The ceremony consisted of a dance and speeches by the rest of the team, honoring seniors middle hitter Belle Strawn, opposite hitter Paige Hansen, co-captain setter Dasha Gousseva, Fan and Carter. The night ended with a 3-0 loss to the Vikings.

"The underclassmen put on the best senior night ever for us," Carter said. "It was really heart-felt and was one of the best nights of my life."

On Oct. 19, the Falcons lost 3-0 to Homestead at home.

Although the girls fought their hardest and played aggressively, they fell short in all

three sets 25-17.

During an away game at Lynbrook on Oct. 17, the Falcons lost 3-2. The first game ended in a 25-20 loss, but the girls bounced back, taking the second set 26-24 with Carter and Gousseva leading the team.

The Falcons' defense broke down in the third set, which ultimately led to a 25-20 defeat.

In the fourth set, Hulme dominated with not only her quick hits, but also her consistent passing, resulting in a 25-23 win.

Despite Hulme's dominance and 18 kills in the match, they fell short in the fifth set 15-8.

An away game on Oct. 10 at Monta Vista resulted in a 3-0 loss. The girls lost the first set 25-15, but continued to fight on in the second in third set. Inconsistent serve-receive passing led the Falcons to lose 25-20 and 25-21.

"Every game was extremely close and we played well as team," junior defensive specialist Michelle Vu said. "Moving forward I think we have to continue to improve our defense." ♦



Carter

BOYS' WATER POLO

- 10-7 (W) @ Milpitas
- 14-13 (W) @ Santa Clara
- 12-13 (L) @ Fremont
- 20-2 (L) @ Mountain View
- 9-10 (L) @ Santa Clara
- 1-16 (L) Wilcox
- 4-13 (L) @ Fremont

Though the boys did not qualify for CCS, they were able to come together as a team and pull off surprising wins during league. The team succeeded in defeating higher seeded Santa Clara with a last second lob shot, placing them 5th in leagues.

"Everything just began to click," junior attacker Andrew Gao said. "We just had this explosive energy in all of our league games, and that let us do what we thought was impossible."

GIRLS' WATER POLO

- 10-4 (L) @ Palo Alto
- 14-3 (L) Los Altos
- 12-1 (L) @ Los Gatos
- 13-6 (L) @ Mountain View

The girls had a rough season finishing last in the upper league, but that hasn't stopped them from improving.

"No matter how many losses we had, we continued playing hard until the last game," senior Aileen Zhang said.

CROSS COUNTRY

- Lynbrook Invitational (Oct. 26)
- Girls — (7th of 9)
- Boys — (4th of 8)
- Baylands Park (Oct. 17)
- Girls — (10th of 13)
- Boys — (5th of 13)

"I think that the team needs to work on communication and actually make use of what we learn during practice," sophomore star Cole Tippetts said. "By group running, we can improve our team ranking for sure."

GIRLS' GOLF

- 201-229 (W) @ Palo Alto
- 224-343 (L) @ Los Altos
- 186-188 (L) @ Lynbrook
- 221-221 (T) Gunn
- 216-232 (L) Monta Vista (Cupertino)
- 215-215 (T) @ Los Gatos
- 215-216 (W) @ Gunn
- 200-231 (W) @ Palo Alto

Girls' golf currently holds a 4-3-2 record. Players attribute this to the team's hard work and dedication.

"We've been working hard at every practice and we've helped each other throughout the day," senior Sarah Lo said. "We've also done many drills together and it's clearly paying off. It's nice that we have two new players this year because we lost four of our seniors. The two new players have filled the gap beautifully."

Adidas, Nike's closest competitor, simply does not live up to the same affordability, hype and quality that Nike boasts. Upon

ferent.

Additionally, the Wildcats starting running back, Will Fordyce was ejected in the Milpitas game, and as of early in the week, it was unclear whether he will play due to a suspension.

3. Come to support your seniors in their final home game.

The varsity team has 28 players, 16 of whom are seniors. The seniors have played their hearts out and fought through 38 games, and this is their final home game.

Senior captain and quarterback Niko Rositano, who has taken over the team this year, has proven that he can make a large variety of plays. He leads the De Anza League with 2,092 passing yards and 18 total touchdowns on the season.

Senior receivers Harrison Fong and William Turpin have also shown their playmaking ability throughout the season and their

careers. Fong leads the league in receiving yards with 700 yards and five touchdowns. Turpin is third in receiving yards with 543 yards and has three touchdowns.

On defense, senior safety Pranay Bettadapur is tied for second in the league with two interceptions, more than any single Los Gatos player, in addition to a whopping 43 tackles. Turpin and senior linebacker Alec Lindeman have also racked up 61 and 50 tackles respectively. Senior lineman Jake Beine is tied for fourth in the league with 5.5 sacks.

With this being the last home game of their high school football careers, make sure to come support your seniors, as their high school football journeys come to an end.

4. JV won last year at LG, and players from that team play on varsity this year.

Last year, JV shocked the league by beating Los Gatos 41-37. The game came down

to the wire as a fumble returned for a touchdown by now sophomore Tyler Ouchida put the Falcons up by four points. Then, the Wildcats final drive was stopped by now linebacker Justin Yagobi at the 1-yard line, sealing the victory.

The game went largely unnoticed because it was played at Helm Field and the varsity lost that same day, but it still shows that a victory is in the realm of possibility.

5. Make sure your team has a true home-field advantage, and you'll get to rush the field if the Falcons win.

The last time the Falcons beat the Wildcats in 2010 at home, players, cheerleaders and fans all celebrated the hard-fought win. The fans' constant enthusiasm and support helped the Falcons come up on top.

If the Falcons manage to pull off the upset tonight, you'll get a front row seat to a glorious moment in Saratoga history. ♦



GRAPHIC BY LILLIAN ZENG

REPORTERS DEFEND THE SUPERIORITY OF THEIR FAVORITE SPORTS BRANDS

e-size money



Kevin Sze

Michael Jordan, LeBron James, Kevin Durant, Tiger Woods, Roger Federer and Cristiano Ronaldo. Four different sports, 10 NBA championships, 79 PGA Tour wins, 33 majors and 4 FIFA Ballon d'Or victories split between the six.

So what do all these champions have in common?

They are sponsored by Nike. Whether it's posting on social media about giveaways or handing out free merchandise in person, these stars elevate the Nike brand to unequalled status. Besides this, Nike's top-flight designers also have much to do with the company's success. The simple clean lines and wearable colors and patterns perfectly balance with stylistic touches.

In addition, Nike's affordable prices make the brand much more enticing than Adidas' ridiculous costs. Adidas' popular UltraBOOST shoe is priced at \$180, while Nike's popular Free Run Flyknit goes for \$120.

Nike's simplicity but flair combined with its wide range of athletic gear for various sports such as basketball and golf allows people of all ages, genders and interests to sport the swoosh. I own countless Nike T-shirts, from specific athletes' gear to simple shirts with just the iconic swoosh on it.

From kindergarten on, I have always had a pair of Nike shoes. Every pair of basketball shorts I have worn are also made from the brand.

All great outfits start from the ground up, and Nike's signature all-white Air Force 1 Lows, priced at \$90, are the perfect beginning to endless possibilities.

The Air Force 1 was an instant hit after its release in 1982.

In later years, pop culture king and fashion icon ASAP Ferg elevated the shoes to even higher heights after wearing them in multiple concerts and red carpet events, cementing their place among some of the most iconic shoes of all time.

The obsession with the Air Force 1 is for good reason. The comfortable fit matched with the timeless look has been the prize of athletes, sneakerheads and fashion moguls alike.

Adidas, Nike's closest competitor, simply does not live up to the same affordability, hype and quality that Nike boasts. Upon

further examination, Adidas' overpriced shoes seem even more ridiculous. Pharell Williams' "Human Race Family and Friends" sneaker is mostly sought after by lavish spenders, reselling at a whopping \$9,000.

The dark purple shoes are widely unknown to the average consumer and look extraordinarily out of place in a standard outfit.

As important as shoes are, a company's shirts offer consumers an opportunity to speak without saying a single word, unknowingly forming connections with people we see walking down the street.

Nike boasts a large variety of team-inspired products including San Francisco 49ers gear. When I wore my Niners T-shirt at the Westgate Mall, a stranger walked up to me, gave me a high-five and we started talking about the new Niners roster and management team.

Another shirt that I wear on a regular basis is the USA Men's Basketball Team T-shirt, priced at only \$11 during the 2016 Olympics. It combines a black and white eagle seamlessly with the all-black shirt itself, making it clean but not outlandish.

In the 2016-2017, Adidas made all the NBA team uniforms and merchandise. But starting this season, Nike has taken this role too.

The new NBA jerseys and designs have received positive reviews in looks, and although they have ripped a few times, Nike should be cut some slack due to their inexperience in jerseys.

Adidas simply cannot compete with Nike on a marketing basis either. Adidas' marketing is subpar, with attempts to sell signature products from Damian Lillard and Andrew Wiggins, relatively unknown basketball players who have yet to win a single championship. Already, Nike trumps Adidas in its affordability, style and quality. Even the meanings behind the names of the companies suggest Adidas' inferiority to Nike. Nike is named after the Greek goddess Nike, who symbolizes victory.

On the other hand, Adidas' name is inspired by a man named Adolf Dassler. If you have never heard of Dassler, it's no surprise. Dassler is no athlete of any kind — he is simply the founder of Adidas.

In fact, the meaning behind Adidas was so inferior to the meaning of Nike that Adidas fans pretended the company's name was an acronym for "All Day I Dream About Sports."

Try as Adidas might, Nike's fresh look will undoubtedly stand up to the test of time. The Nike swoosh is more than just a logo: it symbolizes hard-earned success, victory and, most importantly, a brand that inspires young athletes. ♦

holycap



Leo Cao

The Germans are sports stars. They're the reigning World Cup champions in soccer, they dominated the 2016 Rio Olympics and, recently, they have been outperforming the competition in the sportswear industry as well.

Adidas, headquartered in Germany, may have fallen behind Nike throughout most of the past decade, but Adidas has experienced a powerful resurgence in the past couple of years due to releases of timeless classics, collaborations with designers and impressive new technologies implemented on their clothing and shoes.

The top-selling shoe on the market in 2016, according to SneakerNews.com, doesn't have revolutionary technology. It doesn't have collaborations with LeBron James, Drake or Cristiano Ronaldo.

But what keeps the brand relevant is the Adidas Superstar. Retailing at \$80, the shoe sells for a reasonable price tag, which is one of the factors that propelled the Superstar past Nike's most popular but expensive sneakers, such as the "VaporMax," which retails for roughly \$190 at most outlets. Adidas' iconic shell toe is an essential part of streetwear that first released in 1969, emphasizing the longevity of the brand's design compared to Nike. Regarding the U.S. athletic footwear market this summer, Adidas' sneaker sales rose 74 percent while Nike dipped a couple of percentage points.

Although Nike is still the wealthier company, Adidas' market share surpassed Jordan Brand. Decades before Nike rolled out its first sneakers, Adidas was already writing sports history. The German brand of the Dassler brothers dates back to 1949, 15 years before Nike was founded. It's not the oldest sports brand out there, but no other sports apparel brand has been producing quality sportswear for athletes for so much time. Recently, "Boost," a cushioning system that was meant to aid high-performance runners, has come to define an era of Adidas shoes. Given that "Boost" is part of almost every one of Adidas' most popular shoes, it is clear that it has become what many athletes consider to be the

most comfortable cushioning system on the market.

A couple of years ago, I purchased Derrick Rose's sixth signature shoe, a mostly gray model and full-length "Boost" on the bottom. I was skeptical about the seemingly exaggerated effects of "Boost." However, after playing basketball in the shoes a couple of times, the difference in terms of support and stability was apparent.

I found the \$150 shoe from Adidas much more comfortable than the previous Nike shoes I had worn. In the "Boost," I did not feel any pain in my joints after long periods of play. The shoe was also much more durable than my old Nikes, whereas my previous Nikes all experienced significant wear-and-tear in months. Pleased with the purchase, I invested in a pair of "Crazy Explosive" shoes, "Ultra Boost" running shoes and a number of the Adidas' shirts and pants the following year. Again, I was delighted with the quality.

Based on these experiences, I am now a believer in Adidas.

Adidas' sneaker business isn't the only area of the company on the rise. It has also been dominating in terms of clothing — many students on campus own Adidas' signature black track pants with three stripes along the side.

The classic performance pants, which were first introduced in the '60s, has ridden the athletic leisure wave perfectly. On menswear runways all over the world today are styles inspired by these pants, like Kanye's "Calabasas" version, which is essentially a higher quality version of the same track pants.

Adidas is garnering a lot of attention from the hip-hop crowd by working with Kanye West, and others. Kanye's patented "Yezy Boost," are easily the hottest commodities on the sneakers market. Even with the expensive price tag of \$220, they sell out within minutes anytime a new colorway drops and then resell for up to 10 times the original price.

Not only is Adidas a formidable presence in the hip-hop sphere, but its reach in high fashion is being amplified with the help of designers Raf Simons, Rick Owens and Alexander Wang, in sharp contrast to Nike's less successful efforts with Kim Jones and Olivier Rousteing.

Without a doubt, both Adidas and Nike are popular, but by sticking to its athletic roots, engaging with today's society and culture and combining performance with style, Adidas now reigns supreme. ♦

Teachers find balance through exercise

BY Daniel Bessonov & Jeffrey Xu

Ask almost any high school student to describe a teacher's life outside the classroom and most will picture someone sitting behind a desk grading papers. This, however, is not the case for many teachers at the school, who often have much more to show for their after-school agendas than stacks of graded tests and assignments.

In fact, the school has at least a dozen teachers who participate in highly active fitness activities, ranging from lunch-time basketball to marathon running to skiing and surfing to intense CrossFit training.

Biology teacher Kristofer Orre is one such example.

"Although I am relatively busy during the day, I workout during my sixth-period prep," Orre said. "I follow the 'CrossFit' pro-

gram and do the daily workout that is featured on their website."

According to Orre, the daily workout is basically a combination of weightlifting, gymnastics and classic cardio exercises that range from 7 to 45 minutes.

This includes lifts like deadlifts and conditioning work such as rowing or running. Orre said this exercise allows him "to cope with stress and more generally have a better outlook on life."

Kirk Abe is part of a group of teachers who play basketball at lunch on Fridays. The group of regulars includes special education teachers Brian Elliott and Danny Wallace, history teacher Mike Davey, journalism teacher Mike Tyler, P.E. and history teacher Rick Ellis, English teachers Erick Rector and Jason Friend and principal Paul Robinson.

According to Abe, he also works out two to three times a week in the weight room

with Ellis because "Mr. Ellis is such a great motivator."

Abe said that he and Ellis mainly do CrossFit workouts designed by Ellis that he described as "tough."

"I exercise because it makes me feel good and more energized," Abe said. "When I skip a day, I tend to feel like a slug."

Both teachers said that exercise is what helps them balance out their already stressful work schedules with their outside-of-school lives, allowing them to create less stress throughout their days to ultimately take the edge off of what often seems like a never-ending cycle of lecturing and grading.

"Exercising gives me balance in my life," Orre said. "It's the one time during my day when I can focus on myself and try to get better. It allows me to forget about my other commitments and activities to relax and get ready for the upcoming day." ♦

UP YOUR GAME

Senior athletes recruited to Division I colleges

STEPPING UP YOUR GAME

GRAPHIC BY KAREN CHOW

UC IRVINE: Dasee Carter

by Chelsea Leung

When student athletes become injured, they usually sit out practices to recover. But after senior tennis player Dasee Carter injured her right wrist last October, instead of sitting out, she learned to play left-handed.

"Dasee is an all-in kinda gal," said Tim Sunderland, coach of the Bay Club Courtside Anteaers, which Carter has played with for the past seven summers. "Still, at only a fraction of her best level of play, Dasee keeps fighting back."

Her passion for tennis has now propelled her to a college level. Carter recently committed to playing on UC Irvine's Division I tennis team while majoring in biology. She plans to go into either sports medicine or psychiatry someday.

Carter said that though she had spoken to other coaches from the University of Chicago, NYU, UCSD and Claremont McKenna for the past two years. But since Irvine was her top choice as well as a Division I school, Carter said that she felt "so excited and relieved" after receiving the offer. Although Carter still has to apply to Irvine, she does not need to apply to other schools.

Carter has played tennis for nine years. She mostly plays individually and trains privately with Brian Eagle, co-founder of the Eagle Fustar Tennis Academy.

Under the mentorship of Eagle and her

previous coach, Byron Nepomuceno, Carter was a 2016 Stockton Championship winner and a Stockton Excellence semi-finalist. Carter is ranked 163 out of around 5,000 potential recruits nationwide on the college recruiting rankings.

Her success has not always been a smooth ride. Carter sustained many injuries, her biggest being to her wrist last October. After unsuccessful recoveries using casts and physical therapy, Carter underwent surgery this April and was able to restart playing.

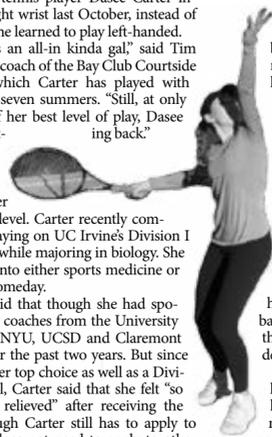
Although still not completely recovered, Carter went with Bay Club Courtside to the U.S. Tennis Association national championships in Florida this summer; her team came in second.

"Even though she would lose to significantly lesser players than her normal level of play, she would battle on and helped her team become the second best in the country," Sunderland said.

Currently, she practices 10 to 12 hours a week, and increases to 17 hours when preparing for tournaments, which occur almost every weekend.

Carter said that in college, she looks forward most to living on her own and traveling with her teammates.

"Everyone says that your best friends are the people on your team," Carter said. "Being on the team is always going to be fun." ♦



Northwestern: Chloe McGhee

by Julia Miller

The stress most seniors are feeling about college applications is something senior Chloe McGhee has not been able to relate to. She has known her future since the beginning of the semester.

McGhee has received a scholarship to play Division I soccer on the Northwestern University team as an outside defender. McGhee said it has been her dream to play soccer in high school and college ever since she played for the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) starting at age 6.

McGhee has had her eye on Northwestern since freshman year, and it would have been her No. 1 school for academics regardless of soccer. "It all fell so perfectly together and I know I am going to be so happy following through with my decision," McGhee said.

McGhee was introduced to Northwestern when she was at a tournament with her previous team, De Anza Force. She describes Northwestern as a "home away from home," specifically pointing out the lakeside campus and soccer field, the university's close proximity to downtown Chicago and its strong psychology program that offers the chance to take part in local research projects.

At Saratoga High, McGhee has been

a key part of the varsity soccer team's two recent CCS tournament appearances, once during her freshman year and again at the semifinals her sophomore year. Additionally, McGhee has played on the club soccer team, the California Thorns, throughout high school. The Thorns are nationally ranked and became Elite Club National League (ECNL) Champions last May.

In addition, DePaul University in Chicago, and St. Mary's in Moraga expressed their interest, but McGhee has her heart set on Northwestern.

McGhee's varsity teammate, junior Sasha Pickard, said she cannot think of anyone who is more deserving of the scholarship than McGhee.

"She has worked so hard and so I'm so happy for her to be able to finally achieve her dream," Pickard said. "She's one of the sweetest and most supportive people I know and an amazing leader on and off the field."

As far as her senior year, McGhee still rigorously commits herself to her classes as she did before her scholarship offer, since the amount of class work at Saratoga High is nearly the same at Northwestern. McGhee will savor her senior year, but could not be more eager to go to Northwestern in the fall.

"Every time I think about how I am committed to Northwestern, it amazes me and makes me so excited for what is to come," McGhee said. "I'm so happy that my years of soccer have finally paid off to accomplish my dream of playing college ball." ♦



Berkeley: Kyle Abe

by Patrick Li

Senior Kyle Abe began participating in gymnastics even before he started attending elementary school. Since then, he has put in thousands of hours in the gym.

All this hard work paid off recently when he was offered multiple Division I scholarships from top tier gymnastics schools like the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the University of Minnesota. In the end, Abe chose to attend the University of California, Berkeley.

"I started doing gymnastics because I was a really energetic kid, and my parents didn't know what to do with me so they just put me in a gymnastics class," said Abe, the son of history teacher Kirk Abe.

His training regimen is intense, to say the least. Abe practices three and a half hours every day except Sundays.

Throughout his career, Abe has been to so many competitions that he recalls most of it as just a "blur." He estimates it to be more than 30 gymnastics events.

Abe didn't realize he could go so far in gymnastics until last year when he qualified for the Junior Elite Program, an extremely selective training program aimed at preparing athletes to represent the U.S.

He eventually captured the attention of top-tier colleges, and several of his

coaches reached out to him.

"I had a personal meeting with the Berkeley coach, talked over the phone with the University of Minnesota coach and talked over email with the University of Illinois coach," Abe said.

But after attending a three-day camp with other Cal gymnasts this past summer, he decided to select Berkeley as his home for the next four years.

These sorts of camps serve as recruitment platforms for potential college-level athletes.

This Berkeley camp introduced Abe to college-level competition and rules, which are more "complicated" and the judges grade "harsher."

One reason he chose to attend Berkeley was the strong bond he formed with the team's coach, J.T. Okada.

"The coach knew what he was doing and what he was coaching me," Abe said. "When he was coaching me, I really understood all the tips he gave me."

It also didn't hurt that Berkeley's gymnastics program has propelled multiple gymnasts to the Olympics and on several world teams. Abe believes it would be beneficial for him to be around an environment with so many top athletes.

"Hopefully, I can place in an event in NCAA," Abe said. "The Olympics may be a little far down the line, but maybe." ♦



DAVIS: Nathan Peng

by Alexandra Li

In July, senior Nathan Peng, who plays both pitcher and catcher, received a phone call from the baseball coach for the UC Davis Division I team.

Right away, Peng could tell the tone of the call was different. He had been invited to take an official visit to tour the school, during which the coach would present him with an offer to play for the team.

"The moment I found out I was getting offered was really happy and exciting for me and my whole family," Peng said.

After touring the school with the coach, Peng was offered to play for the team, most likely both as a catcher and pitcher. Within six hours, he accepted and was verbally committed.

Peng, who has been playing baseball since second grade, is on both the school team and the California Club team.

Last year for the Falcons, Peng batted an amazing .467, had 44 hits, including 12 doubles, and walloped three home runs. He led the De Anza League in most offensive categories.

On the mound, his top fastball speed averages 87 mph. Peng recognizes that Davis most likely became interested in him for his arm strength and batting power, which teammates have also seen in abundance.

Senior Chris Auches described seeing Peng play sophomore year and being surprised by the strength he had gained since

freshman year.

"He's so well rounded. He has power, fielding, defense, and a strong work ethic," Auches said.

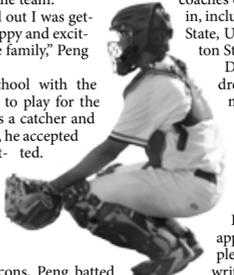
The path to Davis began for Peng in sophomore year, when his coach told him he was skilled enough to continue baseball beyond high school and be recruited by a top-tier college. In the summer after sophomore year, Peng began emailing coaches of schools he was interested in, including UC Davis, Santa Clara State, UC San Diego and Washington State.

Davis had long been Peng's dream school. He plans to major in mechanical engineering. According to collegefactual.com, Davis is ranked 38th nationwide for mechanical engineering.

His commitment to Davis has made the college application process much simpler. Although Peng still has to write his essays, he only has to do so for Davis. He can also apply with the comfort of being fairly certain of his acceptance, which now mostly depends on him maintaining his grades.

Peng plans to sign the letter of intent in early November, making the entire process official.

"I know that with sports in college, I'm going to have much less time to do homework or fun stuff because I'll be training or in practice," Peng said. "But I'm just excited to play baseball." ♦



Senior pits skills vs. world's best overseas

by Jeffrey Xu

Senior Stephen Ding is the school's best badminton player. Recently, he had the chance to match his skills against some of the best youth players in the world.

Ding was invited to represent the U.S. World Junior Team in the Badminton World Federation (BWF) Junior Championships, held in Indonesia from Oct. 9 to Oct. 14. Ding left for Indonesia on Oct. 6 though, in order to prepare for the tournament.

Even with the tough competition, such as China's team, which ranked first, and Japan's, which ranked second, according to Tournamentssoftware.com, the U.S. team still came close to being in the top 16 teams and advancing to the elimination round.

The team barely missed 17th, losing a critical game that Ding said should have been theirs, if one of his teammates had not gotten injured in the middle of it.

Ding, who played mixed doubles, went 2-3 over five matches. He said he "underperformed a bit" on the last game he played, but thought he played pretty well.

Although he played doubles, Ding believes that by practicing singles, he could be a more versatile member for the team since he would be able to play in any category.

The U.S. World Junior Team consisted

of the top four boys and four girls from the Junior International Trials (JIT), which was held in Seattle last spring.

At the BWF Junior Championships, the U.S. team matched up against India, Sweden, Hungary and Australia in a round-robin style tournament.

Each match consisted of five different events: boys singles, boys doubles, girls singles, girls doubles and mixed doubles. In order for a national team to beat another country, it had to win at least three out of the five events.

Not every player on the World Junior Team was guaranteed a spot in one of the events. According to Ding, the U.S. national coach ultimately decided which players would be benched and which players would compete in more than one event, based on their practice performance and teamwork.

The lineup decision was also based on player input about what event they felt they could play best in, which motivated Ding to speak up for himself.

"As players, we had to tell the coach what we were most confident in, so from that I learned to be more outspoken and be more firm with my opinion," Ding said.

Ding said he was glad to showcase his hard work and represent his country.

Before the tournament, Ding put in



Courtesy of C.F. DING

Senior Stephen Ding lunges for a defensive shot on Oct. 11 during the BWF Tournament.

hours of practice. In addition to his three-hour sessions at Bintang Badminton Academy four days a week, Ding attended the two-hour U.S. team practices, where building team coordination was emphasized.

In Indonesia, however, the U.S. team trained in normal gyms, where they conditioned by running and weightlifting.

Despite the results of the tournament, Ding still views his experience in Indonesia in a positive light.

"Even though we didn't advance, I think we did pretty well as a team," Ding said. "It was lots of fun taking a break from school and competing in the sport I've been playing for eight years." ♦

A torn meniscus can't tear my passion for basketball

I'm a Be-li-ever

Patrick Li

At first, I didn't know it was that bad. Don't get me wrong, it was definitely painful, but nothing much worse than the normal knee agony after basketball practice.

It was last year. I was practicing with the varsity basketball team one night during preseason. During layup lines, I leaped to finish my shot and landed with a straight leg, feeling a small tweak in my right knee. The next thing I knew, I was on the ground holding my leg in pain.

Two weeks after the awkward landing, I went to a sports medicine doctor who told me I simply had a "tibia bone bruise." I thought nothing of it, believing that the pain was resulting from my "Osgood Schlatter",

a growth-related condition that I was diagnosed with that causes a painful bump near the front of the knee. Foolishly ignoring the symptoms and not consulting a second doctor, I unknowingly played through the injury for the entire season.

I probably would have continued to play if not for the overtime game against Santa Clara High, where my knee swelled nearly to the size of a basketball. The sports trainer, Liz Alves, suspected I had a torn meniscus and advised me to consult an orthopedic surgeon. I hoped she was wrong. A torn meniscus would mean that I would have to sit out the rest of the season.

Leading up to this injury, I had never had any surgeries or serious fractures, so I was nervous as I waited for my MRI results.

The moment I heard the news, my heart dropped. The report confirmed my worst fear: The injury was indeed a torn meniscus.

The next step was surgery. I always had a fear of it, due to the way it is shown on television. But looking back, I shouldn't have been so afraid because it wasn't very painful.

The most painful part of the surgery was the I.V., which took the nurses three tries to poke a hole in me. After that, all I remember is rolling into the operation room and waking up with a pounding headache.

I was scheduled to be on crutches for the first two weeks and a knee brace for the following four. The estimated recovery time: six to nine months, but it felt like centuries. The first few weeks of the recovery were the hardest. I was forced to keep my knee brace on at all times and couldn't move around without crutches. It was also annoying to take a shower — the slippery floor and the fact that I had to stand on one leg didn't make it any easier.

I began a vigorous strengthening program with my therapist. My right quad had shrunk a third of its original size, and I had to do a list of exercises every day.

The worst part about the injury was the inability to play basketball for six weeks. Before, I would shoot around on my driveway every day and play with my friends on the weekends, but after, I was confined to

watching my teammates from the sidelines and devastated that I couldn't be in the game to help my team.

The standard recovery process should have been six weeks, but my meniscus tear was slightly different. My doctor had repaired it in a way that there was only a small chance that blood flow would continue to circulate in the torn region and heal it. If not, I would have to get a second surgery cutting out part of the meniscus, which would lead to more problems like arthritis down the road.

Because I could not run for a long time, I developed better shooting to compensate for my lack of speed. I still have not played a full game, but when I do, I hope that I will be a stronger player.

Although I did not wish for this injury, it has taught me perseverance and patience, and it gave a better ability to adapt to adversity.

I still have more recovery to do, but I can't wait to go back to crossing up amateurs on the court. ♦

Trump bashes professional athletes; no one wins

by Leo Cao & Kevin Sze

Every fall Sunday for the past few years, the NFL has offered moments of relief from the daily political, economical, racial disparities and disagreements that have plagued the nation. The league has acted as a relief from the issues of the day and has allowed viewers to enjoy their free time.

This changed last year. That's when people noticed then-San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick taking a knee during the national anthem to protest a flag that he claimed "oppressed people of color." Kaepernick's kneeling is the suspected reason the quarterback has yet to be re-signed by any of the teams in the NFL.

Recently, the league and the rest of the sports world were thrown into further controversial political territory with the inflammatory and unnecessary involvement of President Trump.

Trump's wild episode started in late September when he encouraged NFL owners to fire any "son of a bitch" player who knelt during the national anthem.

He followed this up with a series of 22 sports-related tweets directed at the NFL as well as other athletes such as Stephen Curry,

who had said he was hesitating to go to the White House for any kind of ceremony.

In a 22-word tweet, Trump rescinded his invitation to Curry and the rest of the champion Golden State Warriors, saying that they were no longer invited to celebrate their achievement in the White House.

This compelled LeBron James to call Trump a "bum," fitting for the man who doesn't understand the power he has.

For the following weekends, Trump's offensive Twitter account changed the way the NFL was covered.

Pre-game shows and even live commentaries were filled with talk about the political implications of race and protest.

Photos of owners linking arms with their players, players kneeling or holding a fist up were all covered as much as the game itself. After this back and forth, many NFL players refused to take the field during pre-game ceremonies.

Trump's disrespect for professional athletes and their rights shows once more why he is unfit to be the president.

There is no rule stating that NFL players must stand for the national anthem. Athletes are simply exercising their free speech rights as U.S. citizens to address a social injustice.

Even worse, Trump has focused on sports rather than serious matters such as averting nuclear war with North Korea.

Trump is recognized not as a leader, but as an arrogant fool who cannot keep his mouth shut and his opinions to himself. ♦



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Spanish teacher Bret Yeilding talks with his class dressed up as a nerd on Halloween.

On Oct. 26, seniors Aayush Gupta (left) and Shaunak Vaidya (right) try out for the new all-male dance team.

As part of a schoolwide Red Ribbon Week campaign, junior class office poses in pajamas to promote anti-drug awareness.

Freshman Megan McMahon plays the xylophone during band practice on Oct. 26.

buzzworthy >> The scoop on tasty Japanese treats

BY Austin Wang & Alex Yang

Curry Lemonade, Roasted Baby Crabs and Candy Squid. These are only some of the things we saw in a BuzzFeed article with what seemed like a never ending list of weird-sounding yet curiosity-sparking Japanese snack foods.

Filled with questions, we went to the nearby Mitsuwa Japanese Supermarket to look for some of the most unusual looking snacks. As a rating system, we decided to give each snack two A to F scaled grades. One for taste and texture, one for the weirdness of the snack.

The first thing we picked up was something called “Cabbage Taro” flavored snacks. Shaped like little cheese puffs, they ended up tasting OK. Nor did they end up being that weird. Sure we couldn’t put our finger on anything that tasted similar, but still the flavor and presentation just weren’t in any

sense “weird.” Although the slightly creepy frog mascot put on the packaging was interesting, it needed more depth in the taste and texture department to earn a place as an odd Japanese snack.

It ended up being a C in both taste and

It actually tasted extremely close to corn despite looking more like a weapon than a snack food.

weirdness.

Next, we picked up “Corn Potage” soup flavored, tube-shaped snacks with images of Doraemon, a Japanese anime character who looks like a robotic cat, plastered on the wrappers.

This one wasn’t bad — it actually tasted extremely close to corn potage despite looking more like a weapon than a snack food. The yellow color made the snack look deceptively salty, yet it was surprising to find that it was actually more on the sweet side. In the end, it wasn’t unpleasant at all. This was more like a B for taste and weirdness.

Our second to last item was a bag of soybean, or edamame, shaped and flavored snacks.

Although containing an interesting looking mascot on the bag, the snacks themselves left a lot to be desired. They were mostly tasteless other than a little hint of bean flavor. Although the taste was a C, the weirdness was around an A-.

With our wallets close to empty, a display filled with barbecue rib flavored cheeto-like chips caught our eyes; five bags only cost \$2.50.

The chips had a texture like that of Cheetos, but they were lighter and crispier with a

strong meaty flavoring. It was exactly what you would expect from a Japanese snack creator whose only experience with American barbecue was a bag of Lay’s barbecue flavored chips.

Although a bit off the mark of being “barbecue ribs,” it still tasted really good. This one scored an A for taste, but it was likely a C- in weirdness. Simply put, unless they put a Japanese Chester the Cheetah on the label, it ended up being a lot more normal than the packaging suggested.

Unfortunately for us, it seems that although many online sites tout Japanese snack foods as being both weird and delicious, it seems like it’s unlikely any time soon that some chef in a lab perfectly balances the tastes of cabbage and taro. ♦



Becoming a true maze runner

REPORTER TESTS HIS WITS DURING ESCAPE ROOM PUZZLE



Greenie Panini

Jackson Green

“This should be fun.”

That was my first thought as I stood outside of a giant warehouse with a little banner labeled “Omescape” flying outside.

My friend Eric had invited me to an Escape Room in San Jose with four of his family members, where we were supposed to solve many puzzles and escape a series of rooms.

I had heard all about these types of experiences and was pretty excited.

My pre-puzzle pep talk was something along the lines of, “I’ve played a few puzzle games, so I should be fine, Right?”

Right.

As I walked into the facility, I noticed slightly creepy posters advertising each of the different challenges.

One had a biohazard symbol, and another had a rather creepy clown on it that appeared to look up to the Joker as a role model.

I asked Eric’s mom if this was any sort

of horror experience. She laughed and told me to relax.

We entered the puzzle with the biohazard poster, known as “Pandemic X.” This was a moderately difficult puzzle.

During the introductory video, the narrating voice told us that a deadly virus infected the majority of the human race, and the key to a cure was within a top-secret lab hidden in the sewers.

The only thing we got was a walkie-talkie to communicate with the staff. They told us we got one hint per room, and there were around five rooms, each with its own puzzle.

Half of us didn’t hear the “per room” part, leading to us having an argument over whether or not we wanted to use our one hint.

A whole bunch of incredibly confusing and difficult puzzles later (let’s just say that we definitely used the one hint per room), we were faced with an incredibly difficult puzzle.

There were a bunch of plastic boxes with plastic bugs in them, and we needed to find the right ones according to the in-

structions, which were a welcome novelty.

After finding the right bugs, we needed to use images on the other side of the cases to know which buttons to press on a nearby kiosk.

To make matters worse, one person had to do the whole thing blind, with a friend guiding them.

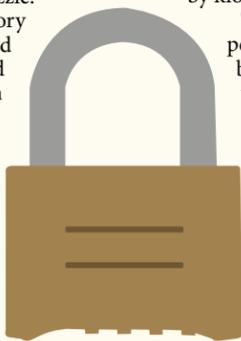
We were failing miserably, until Eric’s mom decided to just press some random buttons at the kiosk. And that somehow gave us exactly what we needed to pass — I guess button-mashing doesn’t only work in fighting games.

At the end of the allotted hour, an employee had to come in and spoon-feed us the answers so that we could actually exit the rooms and finish the puzzle.

And so, we clocked in 17 minutes over time.

I guess that’s why we ended up naming our team, “Doomed but Determined.”

To all survivors of the deadly virus that we failed to cure in the allotted one hour, I sincerely apologize for dooming you to a life of sitting around in sterile disease bunkers and hope the vaccine works soon. ♦



GRAPHIC BY FRANCESCA CHU

topten

WAYS TO SCARE YOUR PARENTS

- 10 **Do the “Get Out Challenge” at a police officer:** Hold a knife in your hand for an extra challenge.
- 9 **Go out and stand on the street with a sign:** See what it’s like to be homeless.
- 8 **Pierce your sibling’s ears:** Make sure to wash your hands first.
- 7 **Be a newborn baby for Halloween:** No clothes needed!
- 6 **Get a tattoo on your forehead:** Preferably an inspirational quote.
- 5 **Run away from home:** See how long it takes the police to find you!
- 4 **Start an American doll collection:** \$100 per doll is chump change for them!
- 3 **Purchase a pregnancy test:** Even if you’re not about that life, it never hurts to be careful!
- 2 **Tell them you want to drop out of school to pursue your dreams of become a rapper:** Rapping is easy.
- 1 **Get a C in driver’s ed:** Your grade is just a number.

>> Aaron Choi and Pranav Ahuja