



# THE saratogafalcon



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

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

Friday >> December 1, 2017  
Vol. 57, No. 5



## A DREAM DENIED?

CHEN RECOUNTS PAST EXPERIENCES OF HELPING HER UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS TO GAIN DACA STATUS

BY SherrieShen & EliciaYe

When President Donald Trump announced in September that he would wind down the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program starting next March, Economics/AP Government and Psychology teacher Hana Chen was stunned and distressed.

Chen was teaching at



Chen

Leadership Public Schools-San Jose (LPS San Jose), a small charter school in East Side San Jose, when the act went into effect under the Obama administration as an executive order.

DACA was formed through executive order under Obama in 2012 and allows Dreamers — those who come to the U.S. illegally as minors — to be protected from immediate deportation.

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**FORMAL**

## 'Ice ice baby': chill out at Hyatt

BY MichelleLee & KatherineZhou

This year's Winter Formal has sold out with 520 students attending. After the approval of the administration, the dance commission allowed all 20 students on the waitlist to attend the dance, going over the previously set limit of 500 students.

With the theme of "Ice Ice Baby," the dance will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Santa Clara tomorrow night from 8-11 p.m. Students will meet at 6:30 in the front of the school to board buses at 7.

Head dance commissioner Marissa Leong warned that it may be the last year Winter Formal will be held off campus because of the high costs associated with off-campus dances.

Dance commissioner Connor

>> **FORMAL** on pg. 6

**LEADERSHIP**



Courtesy of ANOVAEDUCATION.ORG

The Anova School in Santa Rosa before (left) and after (right) the Northern California wildfires burned it down in early October, leaving 120 students without a school.

## SHS hosts drive to help school that burned down during fires

BY AnishiPatel & AnanyaVadlakonda

The Santa Rosa campus of the Anova School, a nonprofit program for students with autism, was destroyed during the North Bay wildfires in early October. Educators there have been working hard to hold classes at neighboring campuses and keep the program open, in addition to starting their rebuilding efforts.

To support this cause, Saratoga High's Leadership class recently held a two-week coin drive, raising \$1,300.

In thanks, Beth Giotta, an administrator from the Anova School, came to campus recently and spoke to the Leadership class. She explained the difficulties Anova's students and staff are encountering in attempting to rebuild their campus.

Giotta said that although a few of Anova's classrooms escaped the fire, its 120 students are unable to return to the campus because the city still has safety concerns.

The Anova School has also created a GoFundMe page with a goal of raising \$475,000 for rebuilding. Currently, the donations amount to just under \$150,000. But, according to Giotta, GoFundMe takes about 7 percent of the donated amount. That means Anova benefits more from direct donations, like the ones from SHS.

Normally, the school's insurance would have covered any damage, but the fires devastated so much of the campus that Anova's insurance does not cover all the costs of rebuilding.

The drive was originally scheduled to

>> **ANOVA** on pg. 3

**LOCAL**

## Crime rates drop as city, residents pursue changes

BY ElaineToh & CalliaYuan

The crime rate in Saratoga this past year has fallen by approximately 50 percent compared to the same period last year.

In 2016, there were 31 acts of vandalism and 130 residential burglaries. As of the end of September this year, Saratoga had only experienced 13 reports of vandalism and 49 burglaries.

"It's an amazing accomplishment," said Saratoga councilmember Rishi Kumar. "We're fighting crime, one home, one family one neighborhood at a time, collectively making a huge difference."

According to mayor Emily Lo, the reduced crime rate can be attributed mostly to the increase in Neighborhood Watch groups.

Following the motto "If you see something, say something," residents are working with the Sheriff's Office to stop and solve

crimes by reporting suspicious behavior, officials said.

Captain Rich Urena, who oversees law enforcement in Saratoga, explained that residents calling the Sheriff's Office to report suspicious activity "has allowed us to quickly respond to the neighborhood and search for potential criminals, before crimes occur."

In addition to Neighborhood Watch programs, the Sheriff's Office has deployed undercover deputies into the neighborhoods. These deputies drive regular vehicles instead of marked patrol cars, allowing suspects to be identified covertly.

Currently, the city cooperates with other local law enforcement agencies to fight crime — specifically, the identification of suspects, Urena said.

With keeping Saratoga safe as its utmost priority, the Sheriff's Office has been

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**IN-DEPTH**  
**Christian schools**

Why non-Christian students choose to attend religiously affiliated high schools. **pg. 19**

**SPORTS**

**Winter sports preview**

Teams prepare for winter sports season, as first practices are held and first games are played. **pg. 22**



**M-SET alters robot in preparation for regionals**

M-SET Robotics won the Inspire award for the first time at the FIRST Tech Competition (FTC) Sequoia Redwood City Qualifier on Nov. 4. At this competition, teams built robots to complete a task called relic recovery and competed for awards to qualify for the regional tournament.

FTC hardware lead junior Derek Chiou said, “[Winning the award] felt pretty great because we were a relatively new team the past two years.”

Additionally, M-SET Robotics set a California high score record of 300 points in a match.

They qualified for the regional tournament by hosting a qualifier on Nov. 19. They are now preparing for the regional tournament on the weekend of March 17 by changing their robot’s design.

Chiou said, “We’re preparing [for regionals] by redesigning our robot to make it complete tasks faster in order to compete with the other robots.”

FTC software lead sophomore Sahaj Rastogi feels that the team is in a good position going into regionals.

“I feel pretty strong about going into regionals and I think that our team will do well. All in all, I feel that we will do good at regionals,” Rastogi said.

— Phoebe Wang

**Junior class begins planning 2017 Saratoga Idol**

The school’s annual Saratoga Idol singing contest will take place on Dec. 5 from 7-10 p.m. at the McAfee Center.

According to junior class representative Usman Khan, the junior class officers are still finalizing teacher judges, with only English teacher Erick Rector confirmed to participate.

As in past years, the junior class officers began planning in late October, working with their advisers, Julia Peck and Andrew Ford, to find the best way to run the event. Audition forms were sent out on Nov. 15.

Before Thanksgiving break, around 20 students auditioned for the show, which exceeded the class’s initial expectations.

“Since there’s acts in all different flavors choosing a winner is really gonna be subjective,” Iyer said. “There’s a ton of talent so it’s not going to be easy for the judges to decide on one person.”

— Jay Kim

**Turkey competition changed to Santa dress-up**

Christmas comes early for students this year as they are treated to the sight of two teachers dressed up as Santa Claus walking around campus today.

This year the senior class decided to have teachers dress up as Santa Claus instead of a turkey because they wanted to extend the coin drive competition, as well as try something a little new.

“It’s a competition, but in the end, it’s a fundraiser for the senior class with a reward for the students,” senior class president Robert Scott said.

— Howard Tang and Alex Wang

>> falcononline



**Top Story**

Saratoga High unable to sustain numerous language courses on pg. 16

**Top Picture**

Senior Alan Lu looks in anticipation as he and his group try to get the toilet paper rolls to hit the ground at the same time during AP Physics class on Nov. 7

TALISMAN // ALLYSON CHANG

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



FALCON // FREDERICK KIM

**ROUND AND ROUND!** >> Senior Allyson Chang participates in the hula hoop Move-ember activity hosted by the science department on Nov. 17.

**DOWNTOWN**

**Village chocolate shop thriving**

by ConnieLiang & AnnaNovoselov

Fifteen years ago, Angelica Duarte was awed by the arrays of the perfectly shaped and colored hand-made chocolates, each one reflecting dedicated passion and hours of meticulous work.

Those chocolates were made by Marc Dumas, a French pastry chef and chocolatier at Plumed Horse, an upscale restaurant in downtown Saratoga. Duarte was then a server at Plumed Horse. She was fascinated by Dumas’s craft and decided to ask him to teach her the process.

To her dismay, Dumas declined, claiming that teaching the process is too difficult.

Duarte, undeterred, turned to books and the internet to learn chocolate making in her spare time. Eventually her passion was enough to persuade Dumas to guide and critique her work.

In January 2016, Josh Weeks, Duarte’s friend and the owner of Plumed Horse, informed her of a

vacant store, previously Saratoga Chocolates. He suggested they team up to open a chocolate shop.

With the opportunity to pursue her small-scale passion and turn it into something much bigger, Duarte accepted the offer and today, the Plumed Horse Chocolaterie is located right across the street from the Plumed Horse.

Every day, Duarte makes 380 chocolates, 200 for her shop, and 180 for the dessert menu of Plumed Horse, which she is in a partnership with.

She displays 20 varieties of chocolates daily \$5 a piece, and her most popular flavor, salted caramel, is often gone before the day ends.

“[Dumas] would be so proud of me,” she said. “Chocolate making is an art and a science. It is difficult to do.”

Since its opening in early October, the store has attracted numerous locals and visiting passersby.

“Everything is unique about them,” said Cathy Del Masso, who had purchased chocolates in

November. “The way they look — they’re art, and they taste like heaven.”

Duarte said that customer feedback has been positive and many have become regulars.

She attributes the success to her love for her art, which she showcases through her original recipes and unique patterns, such as swirls and colored strokes.

Choosing only the freshest ingredients, Duarte specifically uses mostly organic products and no preservatives.

She attributes the shiny texture of the chocolate shell to be the product of careful polishing and cocoa butter.

“I take colored cocoa butter, and put the designs on with either a gloved finger or paint brush,” Duarte said.

Though the fastidious endeavor reflects in her beautiful chocolates, which have turned one-time customers into regular visitors.

“Passion goes a long way, which is why I’m here,” Duarte said. “I just love what I do.”

**MAP**

**Program takes first freshman field trip**

by SanjanaMelkote & KrithiSankar

On Oct. 19, for the first time, students enrolled in the English 9 Media Arts Program classes took a field trip.

The classes went to the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas. Students got a peek into author John Steinbeck’s life and gained a hands-on and collaborative experience by harvesting strawberries and learning about organic farming.

According to Cathy Head, an English 9 MAP teacher, the MAP team had been talking about a freshman field trip for several years. The logistics of taking one third of the freshman class on a field trip was daunting, but the field trip ended up being a success.

“We had them think not like a Saratoga freshman but look outside of that,” Head said. “We had them broaden their experience by looking at the lives of other people, like the migrant workers.”

During the field trip, the students had to make a 3-minute movie consisting of a narration and still photographs from the trip to be used as illustrations for their story.

Popular project topics varied from Steinbeck’s written works to his biography to organic farming. A group even based their film on a self-written story called “Berry the Strawberry: the Life of a Strawberry,” documenting the process of a strawberry’s growth through a personified strawberry named Berry.

The overarching objective of the field trip was to teach students collaboration and to get them to appreciate the type of work done on farms.

To relate the outing back to the classroom, students gained insights on the lives led by characters in Steinbeck’s novel “Of Mice and Men” as well as learned proper re-

search documentation and source synthesis.

“Going on this field trip helped me because it relates the Salinas farm to the farm in the story,” freshman Lauren Tan said. “It also helped me understand what it was like to be farmer just like the characters Lennie and George in the book.”

Head remembers taking juniors on the same field trip during the MAP’s early years, relating it to Steinbeck’s novel “The Grapes of Wrath.” She said both experiences

were positive, because she regards field trips as essential to enhancing students’ learning and understanding.

“Just going on the field trip brings students outside of the mode filled with expectations that they’re in at school,” Head said. “When students get outside, things are different, and they start learning and appreciating.”

Senior Jack Ryan, who identifies as a



Head

**SAFETY**

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improving its skills in order to keep the trend of lower in-house burglaries.

Urena explained that within the region, law enforcement is aware of several gangs that have been committing crimes in and around the area.

“As a result, we are all disrupting the organizations in various different ways, which may be a reason for the decline,” he said.

However, not all types of crime have decreased. For instance, vehicle thefts have increased from nine last year to 12 as of September.

“Though no specific cause has been attributed to this increase, most of the cars are older models, such as a 1997 Honda Civic and a 1999 Ford Truck.

“[We’re] fighting crime, one home, one family, one neighborhood at a time, collectively making a huge difference.”

COUNCILMEMBER Rishi Kumar

Wanting to keep diminishing the overall crime rate, the city council formed a task force in February to identify ways to further reduce crime rates and aim to educate the public about means of crime prevention.

“While we may never be entirely free of crime, the city is doing what it can to make Saratoga as safe as possible,” said Lo. ♦

**ANOVA**

continued from pg. 1

end after just one week. But after having students promote the fundraiser in front of the school, the fundraiser received immense support, and the leadership class voted to extend the drive to two weeks.

“This has all been done by kids,” Leadership teacher Matt Torrens said.

“Kids helping kids, which I think is cool.”

After becoming aware of the tragedy the Anova School faced, senior Stacey Chen, a member of the outreach commission, said she and others decided to help the devastated school.

“I know that we won’t be able to immediately revive the school,” Chen said, “but I certainly know that we are contributing to helping rebuild the school one step at a time.” ♦



Courtesy of MATT TORRENS

(From left to right): Seniors Nathon Chin and Jacqueline Schwartz; junior Jennah El-Ashmawi; and freshman Lauren Tan drove to Anova with Leadership adviser Matt Torrens to conclude the drive. “It’s kids helping kids,” Torrens said. “which I think is really cool.”

**POLITICS**

**Saratoga’s Republicans remain prominent in largely blue county**

by KrithiSankar & RahulVadlakonda

According to the County of Santa Clara, 73.37 percent of the 695,619 of its residents who participated in the 2016 presidential election voted for Democratic Party nominee Hillary Clinton.

Though the results showed an overwhelmingly Democratic stance in the county overall, Saratoga stands out: The city has the lowest percentage of Democrats in the county at 37 percent, according to the California Secretary of State.

Though students at Saratoga High seem to contradict this statistic — liberal views are fairly prevalent among students — junior Maxwell Lisovsky is part of the right-leaning community on campus.

Lisovsky said the reason there is such a difference in political ideology in Saratoga is that its well-off citizens favor many of the Republican Party’s stances on taxes and other fiscal matters.

Even so, being an open conservative at the school hasn’t always been easy.

“From what I can tell I’ve gotten more [negative comments] for supporting our president than anyone who supports Hillary,” Lisovsky said.

Senior Jack Ryan, who identifies as a

centrist Democrat, said that Saratoga’s older population also contributes to its Republican support, since older people are generally more conservative than younger people.

In general, Ryan believes that the older citizens would like to go “back to the good old days.”

According to the Pew Research Center, 53 percent of the Silent Generation, who are aged 71 to 88 years old, and 49 percent of the Baby Boomer Generation, who are 52 to 70 years old, are Republican or right-leaning.

Sophomore Satvik Kaliyur, a Democrat, said the reason for this political difference results from a combination of Saratoga’s elderly residents, white residents and wealthy residents being groups that stereotypically vote more conservative than liberal.

Kaliyur said that this difference can have a positive effect on the left-leaning community since they have more to contribute through their political opposition.

“[This political status] may motivate other lefties in Saratoga High to be more active politically to help increase the pace of transition,” he said. “[Students are doing this by] working on behalf of politicians they believe represent them and waging political debates at school.” ♦

**SPEECH AND DEBATE**

**Sophomore amuses judges, places first in OI**

by AnnaNovoselov

Sophomore Anishi Patel stood in front of a panel of three judges at the CFL Speech I Leland Bret Harte League tournament on Nov. 5, struggling to appear composed despite her nerves.

She went over her speech in her head, pinpointing areas she would emphasize and mentally rehearsing the dramatic flairs she had incorporated into “Did you hear the one about the Iranian American?” by Iranian comedian and actor Maz Jobrani.

Later that night, Patel stood with a first-place medal for Oratorical Interpretation around her neck, beaming with pride. She had expected only to break to semifinals and was surprised when the judges declared her the tournament champion.

Patel thinks the humor present in her speech set her apart from the other 60 Oratorical Interpretation competitors.

Patel said that she made almost all of the judges laugh. She tried to “re-enact Jobrani’s humorous personality” while revealing the racial discrimination present in the world.

“She delivered [the speech] well, emphasizing the humorous parts and putting a lot of emotion in it,” sophomore Exempt speaker Prisha Samdarshi said.

In the speech, Jobrani presents the controversial topics of racism and stereotypes in a jocular way. He incorporates jokes and personal anecdotes to describe how his ethnicity has impacted his life.

Patel said that she found these subjects significant in the modern world and liked Jobrani’s unique way of presenting.

“It was meaningful and it made me laugh; I figured I’d be able to work with it,” Patel said.

After each consecutive round, Patel was better able to step into Jobrani’s character and perform the speech confidently and correctly.

She said that she felt proud of how she did in the semifinal round, but still did not expect to place first.

“It was meaningful and made me laugh; I figured I’d be able to work with it.”



SOPHOMORE Anishi Patel

“I was mainly just surprised,” Patel said, “so I hope the year will be full of more surprises like that.”

The rest of the team also achieved impressive results at the tournament, such as breaking to semis.

Junior Arian Raje placed 11th in International Extemp. Head Coach Chris Harris said that the team did better than he expected, for many new members competed against varsity speakers.

Harris said that he was extremely proud of Patel’s performance.

“If anyone deserves to win, it’s someone with a positive attitude who always tries her best,” Harris said. “Anishi is both.” ♦

**MAP SPEAKER SERIES**

**Renowned photographer describes path to success**

by ConnieLiang

Every four years, the Olympics are broadcast worldwide, reaching audiences of in every country. On the screen, footage of races and images of beaming athletes after victorious competitions are shared back and forth with ease.

However, the process of acquiring those pictures is a much more difficult process than it seems to us viewers at home — a process that photographer Jeff Cable, who is most well-known for photographing the last five Olympic games, is accustomed to.

The freelance photographer, who is based locally, gave a presentation on Nov. 9 for the MAP Speaker Series, sharing the unique opportunities and experiences in photography to students and parents.

For example, Cable often takes nearly a thousand photos during each quarter of sporting events and has to select, edit and send the best shots to publications within 15 minutes, since they require them for immediate social media output.

This willingness to endure what can be arduous and stressful circumstances stems from his passion for the art of photography, which developed after he received an upscale camera as a gift from a friend.

As Cable, who then worked in the tech industry, ventured into this hobby more and more during his spare time, the more his passion for photography increased. After a while, he decided to forsake his corporate job and become a full-time photographer.

Starting as an amateur shooting personal events in the local Bay Area such as Bar Mitzvahs and weddings, Cable worked his way up to his current status as a photographer by forging connections with

other photographers and soon landed into the world of Olympic photography.

From there, Cable’s passion helped propel him to the top of the photography world, and he became globally admired for his work. For example, at the 2012 London Games, Cable was the head photographer for the two U.S. water polo teams, with his photos even landing front-page covers on magazines such as Swimming World.

Cable’s success didn’t come easily. He explained that even if he did take a good shot amidst the dozens of bustling photographers on the sidelines of events, his shots are often copied, with others taking credit for a picture that he took.

As difficult as it is receiving rightful credit for shots, Cable manages to capture precise shots of teams ranging from a variety of sports such as swimming to beach volleyball.

For many students, learning about Cable’s journey from a low-profile photographer to one who shoots for the U.S. Olympic Committee and is an influential figure in photography is an inspiring story.

“Photography really is a competitive industry, and you do have to work hard no matter which field you’re in,” junior MAP student Nick Bray said, noting that it was Cable’s hard work that has enabled him to reap so much success.

For Sophomore MAP student Emma Cooper, the presentation was a testament to how far genuine passion can take you.

“From the presentation I took the cheesy ‘follow your dreams’ lesson,” Cooper said. “But Cable loved photography and he put enough effort into it to become a professional, so I guess if you really love something, don’t give up on it and you’ll succeed.” ♦

CAMPUS

# School takes measures to curb petty theft

BY Anishi Patel & Ananya Vadlakonda

During her freshman year, senior Ishana Thanawala returned to class from a rally, decked out in green. As she gathered her belongings to get ready for her next class, she discovered her wallet missing.

When she couldn't find it anywhere else, Thanawala knew her wallet had been stolen.

Despite Saratoga High's well-deserved reputation as a school with little crime, students over the years have occasionally found their belongings missing.

Because of cases like Thanawala's, students in recent years have been encouraged to keep their backpacks in class during rallies and assemblies. The classrooms are then

locked, creating a safe place for students to leave their belongings.

While instances of theft are still relatively rare, principal Paul Robinson said that students sometimes think their property has been stolen when in fact it has been lost and may even have been turned into the office. In fact, the office keeps a drawer solely dedicated to lost electronics.

The office does hold dozens of lost and found items at any one time, and the administration urges students to check the office soon after finding any possessions missing.

A few weeks ago, senior Alan Lu had a phone stolen out of his backpack in the boys locker room while he was at water polo practice. At the time, Silver Creek High's football team was using the locker room be-

fore a game against SHS.

"It's kind of my fault for not locking [my backpack] up, but they still shouldn't have taken it," Lu said.

Campus supervisor Mark Hernandez warns students who use the locker rooms to secure their items before leaving, or else run the risk of having them stolen.

To help combat instances of crime such as this one, the school has security cameras operating in all the major hallways, the parking lots and the quad. They can be used to help identify suspects, even though they are not 100 percent reliable.

Of course, the school does not have cameras in the locker rooms, and there is no way of tracking down Lu's missing phone.

Additionally, security cameras have been

placed in spots inside the new music building by request of the music teachers. However, Robinson said that even more than the threat of security cameras, students can help out by keeping an eye out for each other and help monitor belongings.

Although there have been cases of theft on campus throughout the years, the additional steps the school has taken by increasing communication and introducing security cameras in recent years have helped the already a low crime rate decline further.

"I wish I could say the school is 100 percent safe, but it's not," Robinson said.

"Things happen, and when they do, I feel very secure in trusting students to let me know what's happened so that we can fix it and work together." ♦

FALCON FOCUS

## Keeping up with the Kumars: Siblings pursue competitive math

BY Sherrie Shen & Kyle Wang

Students who spend their Tuesday lunches in math teacher Andrew Shoemaker's room are often greeted with a familiar sight: Toga Math Club co-president Rahul Kumar helping members with questions. In a corner, freshman Rohan Kumar — his brother and fellow mathlete — works on problem sets with another group of teammates.

Rahul, now a senior, started competitive

math in ninth grade, when he joined Toga Math Club. Instead of attending contest prep classes, he self-studied from "Art of Problem Solving" books. Rahul began coaching as part of the Toga Junior Math Club (TJMC) coaching staff in 10th grade, a group of 17 Saratoga High students who teach Redwood Middle Schoolers competitive math.

Among the many students he has coached either directly or indirectly as a math club coach is his younger brother, Rohan.

Since former math club adviser P.J. Yin

discouraged students from coaching other family members, Rahul has more often given Rohan indirect instruction since Rohan was in middle school.

Rohan believes that Rahul's coaching has taught him "an approach to life that is widely applicable to any subject" — from speech and debate, where Rohan has begun competing in extemporaneous speaking, to math.

In 2016 and 2017, Rahul qualified for the American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME), a competition open to the top 2,000 scoring students on the American Mathematics Competition 10 and 12 across the U.S. and its territories. Additionally, Rohan also qualified for AIME in 2017.

Though both Kumar brothers plan on continuing competition math, both have branched out. Rohan is currently taking Journalism One and is an active member of speech and debate. And this year, Rahul joined the Science Bowl team, where he specializes in chemistry and math. Rahul does plan to pursue a computer science or engineering major in college, but also hopes to make the most of his last year before moving on to that next step.

"I really enjoy working with my younger brother," Rahul said. "He's a person I can always talk to, so I never feel alone. We've both learned a lot from each other, but I don't really know what's going to happen after I go to college." ♦



Rohan



Rahul

# WINTER 2017/2018

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ACT Test Dates February 10 - April 14

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**SAT WINTER BOOT CAMP**

Elite's SAT Winter Boot Camp is an intensive preparation course held over 2 weeks during the December break plus 8 more weekends in Jan - March, leading up to the March 10th exam.

**Program Dates 8 Days**

**Dec 18, 20, 26, 28 8:30 - 5:30pm**

**Dec 19, 21, 27, 29 1:00 - 5:30pm**

**WBC Extensions 8 Weekends**

**Jan 13 - Mar 3**

Friday Testing 3:00, 3:30, 4:00, or 4:30pm

Saturday Testing 8:30am - 12:30pm

Saturday Class 8:30am - 1:00pm or 1:00pm - 5:30pm

**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**

Friday Testing 3:00, 3:30, 4:00, or 4:30pm

Saturday Testing 8:30am - 12:30pm

Saturday Class 1:00pm - 5:30pm

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ELECTIVES

# Students find parallels between RMS, SHS classes

BY Mathew Luo & Anissa Mu

Freshman Emily Choi was in the Leadership class at Redwood Middle School last year and expected the Saratoga High Leadership class to be much the same. It turned out to be different from what she expected.

"The high school's Leadership is much more organized [than middle school's Leadership]," Choi said, "and responsibilities are held accountable. There's more pressure to work hard and not disappoint your classmates."

Choi said the more organized format in SHS's Leadership class is better, saying that Redwood's class could be improved if there were stricter commissions and qualifications.

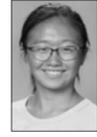
Large SHS programs like Journalism, Leadership, and the Media Arts Program may seem similar to their counterparts at the middle school.

But some question whether the electives offered at Redwood are similar enough to high school electives to prepare students who plan to continue with those areas of

elective study.

Several students who took Redwood Middle School's yearbook class also said it could benefit from more structure. Sophomore Jinsu Yim, who was a former member of the Redwood yearbook staff, said the class was "disorganized" and most students didn't take it very seriously. When Yim signed up for Journalism I for her freshman year, she was pleasantly surprised at some of the differences.

**"I took away more from the high school program than I did from the middle school one."**



SOPHOMORE Jinsu Yim

"I was happy to discover in my freshman year to have a structured journalism course that teaches you how to write stories

with the right context and info and how to properly organize the layout for a spread," Yim said. "I took away more from the high school program than I did from the middle school one."

However, although she admits that despite the RMS yearbook's shortcomings, she did appreciate what she learned through her experiences there. Students in Redwood's media arts class have also found their experiences instructive and preparative for the more advanced media program at SHS.

Sophomore Elise Coates noted some differences as soon as she joined MAP.

"They both contained knowledge about technology and editing programs," Coates said. "But in RMS it was all about videos, while in MAP there is more emphasis on photography and logo projects."

Junior Isaiah Vivero, another student who has taken both media arts and MAP, said MAP has less creative freedom, but is still preferable due to the better equipment, diverse collaborators and frequent field trips.

Despite the differences, MAP teacher Joel Tarbox said he sees Redwood's media arts class as doing well at building a foundation.

"I think Mr. Steffen (RMS media arts teacher) prepares his students beautifully," Tarbox said. "Some of the video editing software is different, but the same basic concept remains. When they come here, they already have the skills and experience."

Similarly, Redwood has its own broadcast class, GNN, that serves as a transition to SHSTV.

Sophomore Connor Oaklander, a student who was in GNN and currently takes SHSTV, said they are "fundamentally the same thing."

GNN, however, is broadcast daily and is not as news oriented, while SHSTV is shown once a week and has higher journalistic standards.

"The two are quite fun in different ways," Oaklander said. "While I miss the fun from GNN, SHSTV gives me an opportunity to work with people and to actually help run the program since there is much more autonomy."

Regardless, he said that the middle school class taught him useful skills.

"Taking GNN installed me with teamwork skills as well as media skills that are useful in SHSTV," Oaklander said. ♦

DANCE

# All-male dance team kicks off inaugural season

BY Amy Tang

Fourteen boys will now anchor the school's first all-male dance team following tryouts that attracted 30 hopefuls in late October.

Currently, the team consists of senior officers Nicholas Di and Nathan Kang, as well as seniors Varun Viswanath, Atlas Yuen, Ayush Aggarwal, Clifford Yin, Shaunak Vaid-

ya, Ryan Kim, Christopher Lee, Prashant Malyala, Aayush Gupta, and Shivaum Kumar; junior Jason Ting; and sophomores Ashwin Maheshwar and Alvin Liu.

Being part of the team comes with some perks, such as P.E. credits and a trip to Anaheim for Nationals in March along with the girls' team.

Viswanath, who was taking P.E. before making it on the team, is ecstatic that he

now has a free third period and is able to fulfill P.E. credits through dance.

"It's great having free time instead of having to suffer through P.E., and I like being able to do something that I enjoy for P.E. credit," Viswanath said. "Plus, I have lots of friends on the team, so I have a feeling it's going to be a fun year."

Captains Di and Kang are excited for the season to begin.

"This team has been something that we've wanted to create for a while, and I'm really glad that it's finally becoming a reality," Di said.

The first practice was held on Nov. 14, and the team began by learning a short combo taught by coach Kaitlyn Landeza, who also coaches the girls team. Landeza also briefly outlined the team's schedule for the year. ♦

MOCK TRIAL

## Underclassmen step into roles, gain experience

BY Ashley Feng & Katherine Zhou

At mock trial practice on Nov. 2, freshman Shahmun Jafri read from his witness statement, settling into the role of expert witness Devon Morrison, a medical examiner for the prosecution.

In this year's case, People v. Davidson, teams must follow a murder trial revolving around a murder at a political rally, involving two split political parties.

Jafri plays the medical examiner who performed an autopsy on the body of murder victim, Alex Thompson, the victim, finding that suspect, Casey Davidson, was likely the killer.

In previous years, only a few underclassmen have received roles, but this year, the team of 18 members includes six underclassmen. After losing key members from the Class of 2017 such as alumni Peter VandeVort, Jackie Han, Cassi King, Isabelle Tseng and Sarah Chang, mock trial has tried to garner interest for the club, and as a result, gain new members.

The attorney teams last year almost entirely consisted of seniors, so following their exit last June, the team made fliers and advertised to drama classes and freshmen in an effort to promote the club.

However, many new members joined simply because of their existing interests for possible careers in law.

"I was always interested in law," freshman Kaitlyn Tsai, a pretrial attorney for the defense said. "I thought mock trial would be a good opportunity to try it out and gain

some experience."

Jafri said he joined to learn more about the American court system, along with being able to hone in on his skills on "explaining and arguing against other people using evidence."

Because of the complex rules and competition system, mock trial takes a significant amount of time and is different from many other groups on campus. The team works around the week to study the case and practices for one and a half hours Tuesday nights with the help of attorneys Jing Lee and Michael Hsueh.

Tsai said that having real attorneys coaching gives more in-depth exposure to law, calling the experience "really cool."

As the season is starting, attorney-coach Mary MacDonnell is excited for the addition of new members.

"From attorneys to witnesses, just from the limited stuff we've seen so far, I think there's going to be a lot of talent this year, and it's going to be exciting," she said. "People are just more prepared and want to be here. I think it's going to be a great year."

Although there is a lot of pressure placed onto the new members, they are unfazed and looking forward to the competition season, starting with a Dec. 5 scrimmage against West Valley Middle College's mock trial team. The Santa Clara County competition season begins Jan. 23.

"I'm looking forward to the competitions, because that's where we can go against other schools," Tsai said. "I get to see how good everyone else is and what it's like to be in a courtroom with real judges." ♦

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DRAMA

Rehearsals for student productions begin

BY ColleenFeng

Each year, Drama 4 Honors students apply to be directors of their very own production.

This year, seniors Amelia Berardo and Hannah Julie Yoon were selected to direct plays of their choice next year.

Unlike the large main stage productions in the fall and spring that have a cast of over 50 students, the student productions have casts of only a 4-10.

The first show that will be screened is "The Glass Menagerie," directed by Yoon. The play is about an impoverished family whose members each find different methods of coping with their poverty.

The second show is called "The Servant of Two Masters," directed by Berardo.

Although the directors are both busy students, they have both been working to assure that their productions will be the best they can be.

Sophomore Liviya Katz is one of the actors who made the cut for "The Glass Menagerie". She has acted in the previous student production "No Exit", and the recent fall play "You Can't Take it with You" is the first main stage production she has taken part in.

According to Katz, there is a large difference between acting in a small theater for a smaller audience as opposed to acting in a large theater for a main stage performance.

In a main stage performance, one must speak loud and clear to to audience and use exaggerated facial expressions to make sure audience members in the back of the house get the full experience.

"Having a smaller cast is incredible because you know each person well."



SOPHOMORE Liviya Katz

ASB

FORMAL

continued from pg. 1

Reyes said the venue was chosen by last year's dance commission since finding and finalizing a venue is a time-consuming process that takes about a year.

"We have to reach out to a bunch of venues a year before because the venues fill up really quickly," Reyes said. "When we first reach out to venues, we ask if they can hold 500 to 600 people and a lot of the venues can't hold that many people."

Last year's dance commission wanted

to choose a venue close to last year's winter formal location, the San Jose Country Club.

According to Reyes, the commission was considering hosting winter formal at the country club again, but the prices went up.

Leong said the commission chose the Hyatt because it is considerably cheaper than the venues from the last two years, and the free space of the empty ballroom will allow plenty of space for dancing, as well as setting up a sundae bar and a photo flipbook booth.

The commission has also hired a professional event decorator in hopes that the decorations are made well to fit the "Ice ice baby" theme.

ASB

Move-ember returns to promote stress relief

BY AlexWang

To help students cope with pre-finals stress, the school's annual "Move-ember" event has returned due to popular demand from students after last year's debut.

This year, Move-ember is from Nov. 13 to Dec. 1. Each day, either the leadership class, an academic department, the special education department or the administration will host a physical activity during tutorial or lunch to help students de-stress.

These activities are open to anyone and, depending on the day, can be found on either the upper or lower field, quad or gym. So far, the class has planned the activities of: (insert activities from calendar here).

Move-ember was created last year because the administration noticed that students were beginning to feel stressed out from the middle of November to early December due to final exams and the end of

the first semester, Thompson said.

"Our community was looking at ways to reduce stress for our student population," Thompson said. "It's really healthy to work out, run or exercise when people are stressed out, so we created a three week program where every day we have a different physical activity opportunity for students."

The goal was mainly to do something to encourage our students to exercise, Thompson said. Last year, Move-ember brought about 60 to 100 students out to exercise every day and 350 students and faculty to the Turkey Trot event.

After its success in recent years, Thompson said he hopes to officially implement Move-ember into the school's annual event schedule.

"We definitely plan on having it again next year as it seems well liked by the student body," Chin said.

MEASURE E

Money still available to fund future projects

BY MichaelZhang & EmilieZhou

A new music building, faster Wi-Fi and more computers for students: All of these are among the aspirations that have been made a reality since the Measure E project was approved by voters in 2014.

Measure E, a bond that asked voters for \$99 million, has funded new projects for both Saratoga and Los Gatos High. According to principal Paul Robinson, Los Gatos received \$55 million while Saratoga was given \$44 million, because Los Gatos has a higher student population.

In June 2014, 70 percent of voters expressed support for the Measure E project,

agreeing to pay slightly increased taxes to be given to the schools for construction, remodeling and other purposes.

"It all comes down to taxes," Robinson said. "The taxes pay for all of these big projects over the years and we try to use the money as wisely as we can to fulfill exactly what we told the voters we were going to do."

The money from Measure E has been used to build the new music building, remodel the upper fields and improve air conditioning in classrooms. Measure E has also allowed for students to experience upgraded technology, such as new projectors, smartboards and laptop carts.

After all these major projects, Robinson

estimates that the school has spent about \$28 to \$30 million of the bond and has approximately \$10 million of the Measure E budget remaining for other projects.

Meanwhile, Los Gatos High is also focused on finishing its own projects with Measure E, such as building new classrooms and redoing parts of the school's theater.

The Measure E process has allowed Robinson and other members of Saratoga High's administration to communicate with students, parents and teachers to address what they want their school to be.

"It's just been a great opportunity for us to have good conversations with students, with parents, with staff members," Robinson said. "We're slowly making it into

what I think is going to be a really, really great school in the future."

Along with having these conversations, community members were able to vote on possible projects and give their input on what they wanted for the future of Saratoga High.

For instance, PTSO has supported projects that Measure E hasn't been able to cover, such as the tutoring center in the library and all the new furniture and computers available there for students.

"Our PTSO has helped to buy things that have gone into the classrooms that Measure E wasn't able to buy," Robinson said. "It's been great that the community wants this place to be a great school." ◆

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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.

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Printed by Folger Graphics in Hayward, Calif.



Move-ember provides entertainment but very little substantial stress relief

In the midst of college application season and the anticipation of finals, student stress may be at a peak at this time of year.

Saratoga High's solution? Spend thousands of dollars on a bouncy house.

Move-ember is a well-intentioned but misguided attempt at diminishing student stress. Both last year and this year, the school has decided to dedicate several lunches and tutorials to providing activities for students to exercise and destress.

Many students simply aren't interested in these participating in these school activities.

However, the problem arises when students feel forced to engage in de-stressing activities that they do not care for. While the Turkey Trot on Nov. 20 was a well-intended gesture — with staff offering free pizza to students in exchange for laps around the track — there was no reason to make the lunch a closed campus.

Many students simply aren't interested in participating in these school activities, and attempting to coerce students into school spirit is counterproductive.

The evidence is clear. Hundreds of students chose to eat

cafeteria food or to simply forgo lunch rather than participate in the Turkey Trot. If anything, going off campus and getting a nice lunch is often the only break some stressed out upperclassmen get during a school day, so these closed campuses may only worsen student stress, not to mention student hunger.

A similar problem arose during the Bouncy Castle Day on Nov. 21, when the school moved tutorial after third period to join it with closed campus lunch so students could have more time to play on bouncy castles and obstacle courses. Moving tutorial and closing the campus in the name of eliminating student stress makes little sense.

The most stressed students are the ones who need tutorial to finish their homework, talk to teachers or study for tests. While these students may have had a longer lunch/tutorial to study or complete their work, they lost out on the opportunity to do work for their third-period classes.

Even worse, no free food options were made available that day, leaving hundreds of students with no option but to remember to bring their lunch, cram into the cafeteria and hope to get food or go to class hungry. The other problem with Move-ember is trying to fix a student issue with no apparent student input.

Year after year, the school spends thousands of dollars and dozens of hours on supposedly stress-relieving activities that arguably have less of an effect on stress than a regular tutorial or



COLLEEN FENG

off campus lunch.

Why haven't students been asked about effective stress relief? If students could choose their stress-relief activities, perhaps voluntary participation in these events would actually increase and student stress may actually go down.

At the very least, ASB should have a greater voice in determining what stress-relieving activities are provided or imposed

upon students.

While the school's stress-relief efforts are well intentioned, they won't ever resonate with all students, and forcing these students to participate will only increase their stress.

Either make these events voluntary or try to gather enough student input to create an event that most students would be willing to sacrifice a lunch or tutorial for. ◆

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editor-in-chief Claire Rhee Kyle Wang

Opinion Editor Austin Wang

Reporter Victor Liu

The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 33-5 in support of this article.

togatalks

Did Move-ember help relieve some stress?

Portrait of John Kim with text: "No, because I thought that I would rather use the time better to catch up on school work." freshman John Kim

Portrait of Andrea Su with text: "If there was a separate time for Move-ember not just during usual academic time like tutorial it would be more beneficial." senior Andrea Su

Lack of streetlights in Saratoga dangerous

BY AmithGalivanche

As a busy senior working my way up the mountain that is the college applications process while balancing academic duties and social expectations, I've found a very effective coping mechanism for all this stressful food on my plate: long, leisurely walks around my block.

Worried about an AP Statistics test and early deadlines? I just pop in my earbuds, crank up the Gloria Gaynor, step outside and feel the stress melt away.

But as summer turns to early autumn and then full-on fall, it noticeably gets darker earlier in the evening. It's OK, I tell myself. I can just go for a walk and, once it gets dark, use my trusty iPhone flashlight to navigate the mean streets of the Golden Triangle. But, to

my despair, my iPhone flashlight proved no match for the darkness that consumed my locale, and I was forced to turn back after just half a lap of what was supposed to be a leisurely walk — not relaxing.

Why is it that Saratoga, an affluent community with nearly 30,000 residents, cannot offer its populace well-lit evenings?

I understand that many of our distinguished residents argue that the atmosphere Saratoga provides is that of a small village, and streetlights, much like sidewalks, which we also don't have, would shatter that vibe. But what our neighbors must understand is that safety concerns should trump the nostalgic sentimental yearning to live in a village environment in a 21st century suburb in Silicon Valley.

The safety concern isn't just for

my fellow late-evening walkers; as a newly-licensed driver, I am sure that other drivers are also sick of having to use their high beams to see more than a few feet at night because of a lack of streetlights.

Safety concerns should trump the nostalgic yearning to live in a village environment.

It's very unlikely that streetlights would even threaten the small-town atmosphere that is so characteristic of Saratoga, considering that similarly-sized cities, such as our neighbor Los Gatos, have been able to retain that envi-

ronment despite installing streetlights.

But they would make all the difference to its many, many citizens who want nothing more than guaranteed safety when they leave their homes past sundown, whether it be in a car or in tennis shoes.

Simply put, especially with total darkness setting in as early as 5:30 p.m. now, having to carry a flashlight and wear a reflective vest to walk outside your home is an inconvenience that is unique to Saratoga residents — but it doesn't have to be.

I urge you, Saratoga, give us our streetlights. I promise that, much like Gloria Gaynor in her famous "I Will Survive," the atmosphere of Saratoga that we have come to love will not be endangered.

It will survive. ◆

# Students need to look beyond college rankings

By Victor Liu

When seniors complete their list of prospective colleges each September, it's hard to determine which colleges are "better" than others.

College ranking systems like the U.S. News and World Report try to answer this question. The U.S. News and World Report is arguably the most prominent one of these systems, recording 2.6 million unique users and 18.9 million page views on a single day in 2014.

The system the U.S. News and World Report uses to rank colleges lies on a foundation of seven differently weighted variables, which consist of: graduation and retention rates, weighing 22.5 percent; undergraduate academic reputation, weighing 22.5 percent; faculty resources, weighing 20 percent; student selectivity, weighing 12.5 percent; financial resources, weighing 10 percent; graduation rate performance, weighing 7.5 percent; and alumni giving rate, weighing 5 percent.

But there are two major problems with these kinds of rankings. First, universities get caught up in a rat race in trying to improve or maintain their rankings. For students, a fixation on a school's ranking may trick them into spending their next four years at an institution that may not be the best fit for them.

For colleges, falling down the

rankings means fewer applicants and less prestige.

Looking at the magazine's criteria, academic reputation stands out as one of the biggest determinants of a college's ranking — it comprises almost one-fourth of the college's entire score.

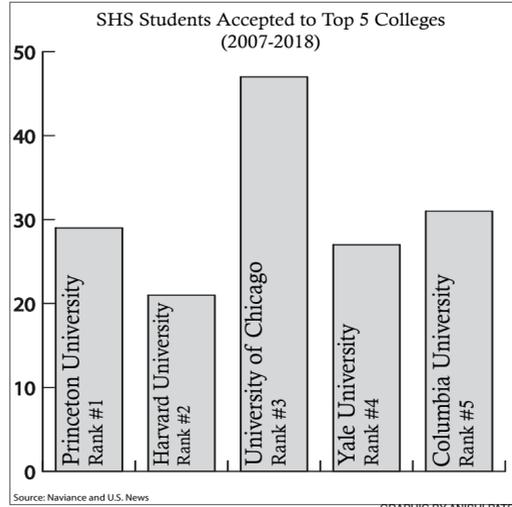
However, the methodology that the U.S. News and Report uses to determine reputation is faulty at best.

To gather data about a college's reputation, it sends out surveys to other schools' deans and presidents to ask them about that school's renown.

But how can each dean possibly know about every other college's reputation? This uncertainty feeds into a never-ending cycle. If schools want to improve in the standings, they need to win recognition from other colleges, but they can't win that recognition if they don't rank high enough in the first place.

To solve this problem, some schools have resorted to artificially manipulating numbers to elevate their rankings. For example, Claremont McKenna admitted to inflating SAT scores of applicants (to improve their student selectivity score) for seven years in 2012 by sending incorrect numbers to the U.S. News and World Report.

Similarly, Baylor University offered already-admitted students financial incentives to retake the SAT in hopes of getting a higher



score to boost the school's scores in 2008.

For students, buying into the U.S. News and Report and other rankings is also problematic. Without looking deeper into the specifics of a college and looking just at the surface-level scores the ranking provide, students can potentially be misled into attending a school that doesn't suit their needs for the next four years.

The list also doesn't cater to the specific needs of a student. With

a rigid criterion that weighs all schools' qualities under the same rubric, an extremely important aspect of a college that a student might like gets overshadowed.

For example, affordability, arguably one of the most crucial aspects of a college during a time of constantly rising tuition, isn't even factored into the rankings. While U.S. News and Report does consider financial resources as a category, that doesn't weigh in financial aid. A college that

might perfectly cater to a student's financial needs can get buried in a pile of schools that have excellent alumni donations.

Put simply, college ranking systems such as the U.S. News and Report's don't work because they try to categorize all colleges and universities under a one-size-fits-all rubric.

The U.S. News and Report shouldn't be a one-stop shop for learning about all colleges; instead, students need to learn more about a college by doing their own research.

For starters, students need to look at what a school can specifically offer them, and not at what the list thinks they will value in the school.

Rankings can try to predict what a student wants in a college, but it is ultimately students who know what they want.

Instead of Googling "best colleges" to determine where they want to spend arguably the most formative years of their lives, students should try to look into something more nuanced, such as "most connections with ecological consulting firms" or "highest average funding per individual undergraduate researcher."

Only then can students get a solid grasp of the colleges they want to attend and not a vague understanding of which colleges have best played by the rules of arbitrary college ranking requirements. ♦

# Punishments for high school drinking should not change

By Howard Tang

Most second-semester seniors realize that a severe GPA drop or revelations of academic dishonesty are reasons that they may be rescinded from a college that has accepted them.

But another danger lurks. Being caught drinking alcohol during this "party-filled" end of high school could be the difference between going to Harvard and a community college. If a student demonstrates a drastic change in conduct, such as having inappropriate online behavior, getting arrested or getting caught doing other illegal activities, they may be rescinded as well.

Many people feel that colleges punish students caught drinking on social media too harshly, especially since according to a national survey in 2014, almost 60 percent of college students ages 18-22 drank alcohol within the last month. To some, suffering such a huge punishment for such a common activity may seem unfair or just unlucky.

But while students may be unlucky for getting caught, they should still receive punishments of equal severity as they receive now — a rescinding of acceptance.

Even if the student is caught drinking for the first time, colleges should maintain the same consequences. If they let the student have a second chance or lessen the conse-

quences, then others may try to reduce their own punishments by telling a similar story and feel that they have a valid excuse.

**Alcohol, the dangerous substance that leads to 88,000 deaths a year, is not to be tolerated.**

Colleges need to demonstrate that drinking on their campus or other types of misbehaviors are not OK. They need to show that

the alcohol — the dangerous substance that leads to approximately 88,000 deaths a year, of which 2,000 are college students — is not to be tolerated and should not be used in parties or in any other circumstances. They can only do this by punishing all violators of their rules.

Although giving harsh punishments to short-time drinkers or only a few unlucky members of the enormous body of students who drink may seem unfair, colleges do not have a choice. If they lessen the punishments, then the beverage that has caused so much chaos in late-night parties, fraternity hazings and other events will destroy students' lives even more than ever before. ♦

# UC admission cap for nonresidents should be increased

By Anna Novoselov

On average, the 62 schools that are part of the Elite Association of American Universities accept roughly 28 percent of their students from out of their state.

By contrast, admissions of nonresident students to UCs may not exceed 18 percent following a regulation approved by the University of California Board of Regents last May. The four schools with a greater current enrollment for out-of-state students — UC Berkeley, UC Irvine, UCLA and UC San Diego — will limit to the percent for the 2017-18 year.

Although this policy enforces the foundation purpose of the UC system — to provide quality education to deserving California residents — it unreasonably caps meritorious students from being admitted. A vast number of qualified individuals will be turned away for the sake of satisfying Californians, who despise the rising competition. For this reason, the 18 percent cap is unfairly low and should be increased.

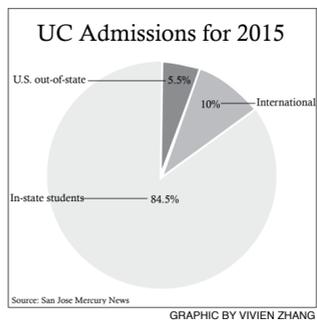
Out-of-state enrollment should be capped at a higher percentage, such as 30 percent, to provide a more significant opportunity for nonresidents while still

favoring Californians. According to the Los Angeles Times, annual tuition for out-of-state students is an average of \$27,000 more, much of which is used for construction, lowering of class size, purchasing materials and financial aid for Californians.

According to the official UC website, the extra money from nonresidents totals an average of \$550 million annually, which helps the schools handle expenses not covered by state funding. Although the number of nonresidents enrolled in UCs increased by four times between 2007 and 2016, the number of admitted Californians rose by 10 percent. This has been attributed to the campuses' ability to include more courses and hire additional faculty members with the additional money from nonresident students.

Having individuals from diverse backgrounds brings in new perspectives and life experiences to the campus. International students, in particular, contribute a unique cultural element. They can help American students understand ethnic traditions and appreciate the opportunities in the U.S.

For instance, an undergraduate from UCLA, Danny Siegel, said he benefitted from his friendship with Jack Guo, who



had lived in China before being accepted to UCLA. Siegel said that it was "great to hear perspectives from different places," which made him aware of his privileged life, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Given the UC system's prestigious reputation, it's no wonder why so many students flock to California's schools. In 2014, nine UCs ranked in the top 150 universities worldwide. UCs would be rejecting numerous qualified and hopeful individuals with the 18 percent cutoff.

Instead of looking at the checked or unchecked California resident box on college applications, UC admission officers should place a greater emphasis on each student's qualifications. To be fair, it is still important to acknowledge that residents should be given priority, as UCs are funded by in-state taxpayers who back their child's right to receive an advantage over nonresident undergraduates.

If two students have similar standardized scores, grades and achievements, the California resident should be given priority. There should be standards that nonresidents must meet in order for their admittance to be even considered. However, a much more qualified out-of-state student should be given regard and allowed a fair chance to attend a UC, even if it is at the expense of the Californian. To limit nonresident enrollment, while maintaining a reasonable opportunity for individuals, despite their citizenship status, the 18 percent cap should be increased but not removed.

To meet this goal, a 30 percent restriction is sufficient. It would honor the UCs while expanding their ability to increase campus diversity and offer a quality education to exemplary undergraduates. ♦

# Careless labeling disrespects disabled individuals

By Sandhya Sundaram

It's not uncommon to hear someone casually calling someone else a "retard" for doing something stupid. People jokingly throw around the word when they get an answer wrong on a test, trip in the hallway or make some other sort of mistake. We often use the word without even thinking about what we're saying or realizing its deeper meaning.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines the word retarded as "slow or limited in intellectual or emotional development," referring to people with cognitive disabilities such as Autism or Down Syndrome, that prevent them from being able to comprehend things the same way others can.

On the other hand, the Urban Dictionary says that it is "a word used to describe some-

one who is profoundly stupid. A type of stupidity that is an insult to intelligence itself!"

The word sped is also used to describe careless things people do in their daily lives and knowingly or unknowingly targets those with learning disabilities or differences. Although the intent behind the word is usually joking or playful, it is also important for us to think about the meaning and then make a better judgement.

People with disabilities have no control over their situations, so using labels like retard and sped advances the unfair belief that people with disabilities are inferior or even that they're not worthy of respect. Although using the words in conversations with friends may not directly impact people with disabilities, it still shows disregard and ignorance.

Since intellectual disabilities fall on a spectrum, and there are many milder cases that aren't as noticeable, it might not always be obvious if someone suffers from one. Or if they don't, maybe they have a family member or close friend who does.

Even if it is just casual chatter, people could take offense at these insults. These words are also derogatory, which leads people to view those with disabilities more negatively.

Using these terms creates a stigma toward people with mental disabilities, making people unsure or afraid to approach them or interact with them. After all, they are people too and deserve the same respect as anyone else.

Fortunately, these words are growing out of fashion, with movements having been

started to bring light to such issues.

In 2009, the Special Olympics Global Youth Activation Summit launched the "Spread the word to end the word campaign," encouraging people to pledge to erase the r-word from their vocabularies.

In 2010, president Obama signed a bill commonly known as Rosa's Law, which changed the terminology used in federal health, education and labor documents. The term "mentally retarded" was changed to "a person with an intellectual disability."

We should follow and support these changes by simply using different words. Although we most likely don't mean to degrade people with intellectual disabilities when we use certain words, we should understand who our words affect and substitute more sensitive language instead. ♦



# The anti-PC manifesto:

WHY POLITICAL CORRECTNESS CAN BE INCORRECT

By Mathew Luo

Political correctness is proclaimed by some to be a matter of simple respect. The idea of increased sensitivity is that we can make progress against racism by silencing offensive terms from our everyday speech.

The view has merit. After all, we should treat everyone with courtesy and respect. Yet, political correctness can go too far when it seeks to censor the use of unpopular words and ideas.

**The degree to which offensive language is allowed rests on the group and the context in which those words are used.**

A particular case of this concerns the use of offensive terms such as "retard," which are deemed insulting to particular groups. Much as we claim to love courtesy, these sorts of words of are used often in daily life.

The use of these words are not so bad, for two reasons: The casual use of derogatory words does not change people's beliefs about controversial topics, and the vulgarity of these words does not matter much in personal conversations.

We need to have faith in people's common sense and goodness. Someone that uses these words isn't a bad person.

In casual conversation, the use of derogatory language is almost never about the charged topic. Calling your friends "retarded," for instance, does not seek to demean the mentally disabled; it's usually just good-natured ribbing of them and nothing more.

Words like "retard" used in a private and casual conversation do no harm. They do not propagate malicious ideas. The word "dumb" does not make light of the struggle of the mute.

Racial language is another minefield when it comes to political correctness. Yet no matter what terms they use in their everyday conversation, millennials hold the most "progressive" views on race — with over 50 percent ranking racism as the No. 1 problem facing America, according to the GenForward Survey by the University of Chicago. This suggests that no matter what language they use with their friends, they understand the seriousness of the problem.

The only consequence of the casual use of these words is a change in standards of vulgarity, which is always a facet in the evolution of language. Words change connotations over time; a slow increase in the use of vulgar language only shifts the standard for what is and what isn't vulgar.

The last criticism of the casual use of charged terms is of the flouting of civility: Because society deems the use of charged terms offensive, choosing to use such words means that you have chosen to offend others, even if your intent was not to.

The use of implicitly offensive words under this argument is no different from the use of any "regular" vulgarity. The word "retard" would still be extremely offensive in a civil context, but its use would be no worse than more "generic" insults and well-known cuss words.

In this way, insults about race are often no worse than insults about intelligence or appearance simply because they are racially based.

Furthermore, in private conversations, there is no one besides those involved to be offended by these charged terms, so the casual use of offensive terms in this situation should not be cause for alarm.

This is a simple case of free speech and free thought.

The degree to which offensive language is allowed rests on the group and the context in which those words are used. As long as civility is maintained in civil situations, there is no need to denounce casual vulgarity in situations where pretty much everybody acknowledges that the words have no far-reaching effects. ♦

# Casually racist remarks and actions are not OK

By Elicia Ye

When I learned about the two racist Prom askings at Los Gatos High School last May, I was at a loss for words. The first incident involved a junior asked a girl with a poster that said, "Do u wanna be like a n\*\*\*\*r and hang at Prom?" next to a drawing of a lynching. That incident was followed by a senior boy's blackface Promposal a month later.

I expected Los Gatos High officials to take immediate action or issue a statement regarding the news that had made its way to national headlines, but I didn't hear about the incident again until August, when Saratoga High's Leadership class participated in a Diversity and Equity Training Day organized by Epoch Education. A similar program was implemented the following day at Los Gatos High School, but its impact is something I can only guess at.

In fact, someone I knew through mutual friends, a current senior at LG, Snapchat-toried a picture of the training with the caption, "One racist prom asking and this is what we get. LOL." I was shocked by this sentiment. I had expected remorse and shame or, at the very least, an apology, but instead this person's response only highlighted the enduring racism that seems rooted deep in the human psyche. Take the n-word, for example: Some of my peers use it for various occasions, from referring to their buddies to calling people out. One reason so many might find the n-word acceptable is that Saratoga has an exceptionally small African-American population. People assume that those who could potentially be offended by its usage wouldn't actually hear it, so we don't have to hold ourselves accountable.

But these seemingly miniscule words and actions accumulate day by day, from person to person until they develop a culture of inequality and apathy. The Los Gatos boy who asked the girl to "be like a n\*\*\*\*r" probably wasn't the only one who found it amusing. Chances are, he had the support of his friends and peers while those who may have been offended said nothing.

This incident was the boy's decision, but what about the ones who perpetuate a culture in which such racism is possible?

Most of us are part of the problem. When

we see casual racism online but scroll past with disbelief in our hearts, we allow it to spread. When we judge the incident with our friends but fail to point it out to the perpetrators, we add another layer of desensitization to the ever-growing bystander mindset. The only way we can possibly put an end to this is by direct interference.

**These seemingly miniscule words accumulate until they develop a culture of inequality and apathy.**

A controversy that prompts heated public debates is the double standards associated with the n-word. The general presumption is that black people can say the word in any situation without repercussions whereas people of other ethnicities would be criticized; however, Gene Demby, lead blogger for NPR's Code Switch team, holds an opposing viewpoint. Demby believes that the usage of the n-word has various meanings and consequences in different contexts. For example, he makes this analogy: The term "baby" might be affectionate at home, but grounds for a sexual harassment complaint at work." Because of the layered historical and contextual differences packed into this single six-letter word, it is worth our efforts to avoid it altogether.

Although not everyone could come to a consensus about when, how or whether the term should be used, Demby correctly asserts that "[n\*\*\*\*r]" is a slippery word, with complicated, ugly histories baked into it."

Words are our attempt at understanding this otherwise complex world. More so than emojis and pictures, language has the ability to evolve overtime to better adapt to our usages. Although we have the right to free speech, we should nonetheless be more mindful of our words. It's 2017, not 1957, and racist prom askings shouldn't be occurring in the wealthy, well-educated suburbs of Silicon Valley. What we say and write leaves behind a profound impact on not only those surrounding us but also on the many generations to come.

Let's try to make it a positive one. ♦



GRAPHIC BY COLLEEN FENG

BY MichelleLee

About five years ago, the only fears anyone ever had about Halloween were of the irrational variety: razor blades hidden in candy, getting lost in a real haunted house and being poisoned while eating candy. But fast forward half a decade, we've somehow managed to get hung up on a bigger and even more irrational fear: the fear of stealing another person's culture.

Out of nowhere, society is telling us that on Halloween, parents should be concerned about sending their kids door to door in bigoted costumes. No candy for illiberal and prejudiced kids!

Cultural appropriation, arguably one of the most popular and toxic concepts of the 21st century, is loosely defined as "stealing the collective intellectual property rights of the originating culture," and every Halloween, the same discussion about cultural appropriation goes knocking door to door.

The Moana controversy

Even innocent Disney kids' costumes are subject to these criticisms. Released in 2016, Disney's 56th animated film "Moana" was met with great applause from families for its beautiful 3D graphics and blend of music, fantasy and adventure. And as with every popular Disney animation, Disney began mass producing "Moana" costumes, specifically for the characters of female protagonist Moana and the shapeshifting demigod Maui. Eventually, though, Disney had to pull the costumes — specifically the Maui costume — which were heavily criticized as appropriating Polynesian culture.



GRAPHIC BY COLLEEN FENG

In the movie, Maui wears only a skirt of leaves, and his entire body is covered in Polynesian tattoos. To replicate the character, Disney created a brown, puffy bodysuit with the black tattoos drawn all over and a faux-leaf skirt. And it was this brown body suit that sparked outrage for "cultural appropriation and brownface." But suppose you're the costume designer for the Maui character. What are your options?

1.) You can make the bodysuit transparent which does solve the issue of replicating brown skin, but no parent will be willing to let their kids dress in a transparent bodysuit.

2.) You can make the bodysuit white, which solves the issue of replicating the skin tone of a minority group but indirectly promotes whitewashing.

3.) You can make the bodysuit a ridiculous color like neon green or rainbow so it doesn't replicate any skin type, but then the costume is no longer Maui.

4.) You can keep the brown bodysuit, which authentically represents the Polynesian people and satisfy the needs of thousands of little kids.

The best approach is the one Disney originally took. Not to mention, is it really necessary to take children's Halloween costumes so seriously? I get it, there's nothing wrong with being politically correct — but Halloween isn't the best place to promote discussion.

Double standards

Cultural appropriation goes beyond Halloween costumes too. Recently, NBA player Jeremy Lin resurfaced on social media not for anything basketball related, but because he was sporting dreadlocks. A massive debate ensued as to whether Lin

has the right to have dreads. Former NBA star Kenyon Martin even called out Lin on an Instagram post: "Do I need to remind this boy that his last name's Lin? ... Let's stop this, man."

The problem with Martin's post is that he suggests that dreadlocks should be worn by African Americans only. In fact, dreadlocks can be traced all the way back to 2,500 B.C. where the Hindu god Shiva is depicted as wearing dreads. In ancient Greece, men also wore dreads; these locks were a critical part of the Greeks' battle dress. Clearly many cultures identify with dreadlocks: who has the "collective intellectual property right" to this hairstyle? This is where cultural appropriation fails to make a clear distinction — so many different cultures share with and feed off of each other that it's both wrong and almost ironic to attribute only one culture to certain deep rooted trends like hairstyles.

In his response, Lin pointed out that Martin himself has Chinese phrases tattooed all over his body. Clearly Martin's response was hypocritical at best. It should be OK for both Lin to have dreadlocks and Martin to tattoo Chinese phrases on his body. And this example isn't isolated. As the New York Times' Bari Weiss writes, "These days, our mongrel culture is at risk of being erased by an increasingly strident left, which is careering us toward a wan existence in which we are all forced to remain in the ethnic and racial lanes assigned to us by accident of our birth. Hoop earrings are verboten, as are certain kinds of button-down shirts. Yoga is dangerous. So are burritos and eyeliner."

Finding a balance To be fair, true cultural mockery is problematic and should be called out and avoided at all costs. For example, wearing traditional ethnic garb to look "sexy" for Halloween is wrong. However, the line between cultural mockery and cultural appropriation shouldn't be so stark. The song "God Bless America" was written by Irving Berlin, a Jew born in a Russian home, who was inspired by African American Ragtime music. And, according to Weiss, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's "I have a Dream" speech was written in a Latinate language to evoke the Israelites' suffering while simultaneously quoting the writings of a slave-owning Founding Father. My point is that anything remotely great created in this country was pieced together from different cultures; no matter how truly "monocultural" we strive to be, every aspect of tradition is a pastiche of other cultures. And there's nothing wrong with that because sharing ideas is how human cultures fundamentally grow.

To me, cultural appropriation goes against this very idea; it is a phenomenon full of unclear rules and double standards. In setting up walls between different cultures, it stops an intercultural flow that shapes a vibrant society. ♦

BY KatherineZhou

When I went to Hakone Gardens in Saratoga this past spring, I saw several young white girls wearing traditional Japanese dresses. A tour guide was explaining the historical significance of the garden and they were learning about Japanese culture.

Recently, I saw a picture on Instagram. An African-American woman had ripped apart a qipao, a traditional Chinese dress, and resown it in what can only be described as underwear with straps. The caption was "sweet or sour sauce anyone?"

Can you spot the difference between the two situations?

Both can technically be seen as cultural appropriation, otherwise known as "adoption of elements of another culture." But the first situation fosters acceptance for another culture, while the second blatantly disrespects the history and traditions from another culture, stealing aspects of another culture without care or respect.

The second situation is what I would label as cultural misappropriation, or when cultural aspects are used in ways that are either adopted from a minority culture to a colonial one, or are used in contexts that are disrespectful to the original cultural context. Too often nowadays, cultural misappropriation has become synonymous with cultural appropriation.

Although clothing seems like something insignificant, there are deep-rooted issues that are brought up in cultural appropriation. While it may be "easier" to ignore them, addressing the issues will pave the way for the progression of society. There are two main aspects of cultural appropriation I want to address: 1.) the difference between respecting a culture and distorting it and 2.) how racial power dynamics can become involved.

Distorting culture

Everyone can agree that culture is beautiful and sacred, and hopefully most people agree that it is important to preserve. It is amazing to share culture and learn more about different cultures — this process helps preserve culture even further. However, when culture is distorted or abused, it defeats the entire purpose of sharing culture in the first place. Take Native American costumes.

Often times, the costumes look nothing like original clothing. Instead, they reflect just a caricature/stereotype, and are made to be more revealing and inappropriate in order to suit the wearer's own needs. The headdresses and clothing can have significant religious meaning to the Native Americans, and wearing them as a costume with little or no knowledge of the significance does nothing to spread or share their culture. This is simply degrading someone's culture into a costume.

Another example that recently made headlines is Disney pulling from production the "Maui" costume from the movie "Moana." First of all, the costume featured a brown-skinned shirt. This one has an easy

fix: Don't mimic another race's skin color.

Not only are there historical implications of mocking minorities by wearing their skin color as a costume, but other races, even other minorities, cannot understand the struggles that groups face by having their skin. The second part is the Taulima, Pe'a, Malu or Ta Moko tattoo. According to Polynesian author Emmaline Mation on the Spinoff, "These have deep cultural significance ... [they have] specific meanings [dating] back thousands of years to when our ancestors didn't have a written language but had tatau and oral traditions."

Basically, by taking this tattoo and using it for something it was not meant for (a costume) without knowing or understanding its cultural significance, "it is turning it into an accessory for your own fun or entertainment and therefore changing the true meaning of the item," Matogian said. To sum up my first point: Using someone else's culture as an accessory without learning about the culture distorts the culture and does nothing to spread cultural awareness.

Racial power dynamics

Basically, people show love for the "culture but remain prejudiced against the people," according to Everyday Feminism. Here's an example: When an African-American woman wears dreadlocks, which Africans have worn through generations (they have even excavated dreadlocks from African graves), it is often frowned upon and seen as disgusting. But once another race adopts it, such as (white male) Marc Jacobs in his fashion show, all of a sudden it becomes high fashion.

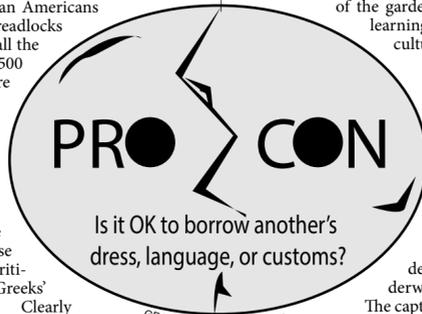
You might ask, what's wrong with that? Sure, the acceptance of an element of culture that used to be frowned-down upon is now seen as beautiful. But that's the thing. It highlights the privilege and disrespect that some people have to go through. On a black person? Not cool, or "ghetto." On another race, it is "high fashion and couture." There is a long list of other reasons that are more specific to certain cases. Historical oppression can be trivialized by cultural appropriation, like the NFL team the Washington Redskins. It makes things cool for some races and not for others. It lets people get rewarded for innovations that stem from other cultures. (See: Rock n' Roll was shaped by black blues artists in the 1950s, yet Elvis Presley gets all the credit.) Wearing inaccurate cultural costumes can cause racist stereotypes and mass lies about marginalized cultures. (See: The Disney movie "Pocahontas.")

Most importantly, cultural appropriation lets privileged people benefit from cultures without having to face the difficulties that come with being a member of that race. Again, outsiders can never feel the struggles another race has gone through, so they shouldn't take borrowing another's culture lightly.

I hope that as our society progresses, we won't have to worry about racism in terms of cultural appropriation, and we can focus more on the preserving the original cultures with respect.

Recognizing appropriation

So, the next time you want to use aspects of another culture, ask yourself 1.) What is the context? 2.) What are the racial implications? 3.) Is it distorting/destroying aspects of traditional culture? If you realize that it's disrespectful, it would be best to make another choice. ♦



GRAPHIC BY CONNIE LIANG



GRAPHIC BY COLLEEN FENG

Start your perfect holidays with this model gift guide

BY ElaineFan & AnniisaMu

With the holiday season approaching, many students are busting out their thick coats and furry boots to prepare for the chilly (yet heartwarming) season of giving. But alas, the season also brews the stressful and aggravating question: What presents should I give to my family and friends?

But fear not! Through our gift guide, not only will you relinquish your festive uncertainties, but you will have the knowledge to give your loved ones the best possible presents for a reasonable price.

First, consider the recipient: The best gifts are those that are compatible with the receiver's hobbies and personality.

No. 1 — stationery and school supplies: Drop by Maido, Hilltop Gifts or Tokyo Japanese Lifestyle to browse a huge range of inexpensive stationery, toys and other novelty gifts, ranging from origami kits to character-themed items like Gudetama face masks. Other online stores such as Kawaii Pen Shop offer beautiful stickers, pens, markers, post-its and journals to keep your friends and family organized.

No. 2 — merchandise: Fan merchandise will become Holy Grail items for your superfan friends. Watch them froth over hoodies, caps, pins and posters — printed with logos of their favorite band or television show — and revel in your ingenious gifting skills when they tear open their presents in unadulterated glee. If perusing the wide variety of options found on eBay

and Amazon yields little success, you could always turn to DIY tutorials online and design your own apparel and accessories.

No. 3 — computer games: You can also easily buy low-priced computer games on Steam and send it to your gamer friends. Popular and low-priced games include Bomber Crew, a \$15 strategic war simulation game, and Kindergarten, a \$5 8-bit horror/puzzle indie game with many dark twists. If you're wary of buying a game your friend won't like, buy a gift card from Steam or GameStop so that your friend will be able to choose a game for him or herself.

No. 4 — tech: If you're still struggling, take a step back and consider gifts generally suited for a wider range of audiences. In this Information age, many will appreciate gadgets like wireless speakers, earphones, headphones, phone cases, PopSockets and other tech accessories. Speakers and earphones will make amazing gifts for your music-loving friends, and they don't have to be incredibly expensive either.

No. 5 — DIY: Personal DIY gifts can also be fun to try. YouTube and Pinterest are great resources for various ideas and tutorials. For example, you could build a holiday survival pack and fill a mason jar with candy, fuzzy socks, candy, candles, candy chapstick and an obscene amount of candy.

Now in spite of all this, remember that great gifts are ones that come from the heart. So while you follow the guidelines we just laid out, be sure to keep your heart in the spirit of fun and seasonal giving! ♦



GRAPHIC BY ELAINE TOH

Trendy food videos: Do they live up to the internet hype?



Michelle Lee & Katherine Zhou

If you're an avid foodie like us, you're most likely familiar with Insider Food videos on Facebook. We spend hours browsing these pages, craving the mouth-watering combinations the videos show. We wanted to see if these foods really taste as good as they look.

It was extremely difficult to find any restaurants near us. Insider Food mostly profiles food spots in metropolitan areas like San Francisco. Luckily we found a Maven's Creamery located in San Jose. The video showcased machine-made macaron ice cream sandwiches looked uniformly delicious with crunchy thin cookies and creamy ribboning ice cream.

After a long day in class on a Monday, we were excited to eat some ice cream. Stuck in traffic on Highway 85, we felt our stomachs rumble as we anticipated what flavors we were going to get. Chocolate? Hazelnut? We contemplated how we would spend our \$4.95 — the retail price for one large sandwich cookie.

As we arrived at Maven's Creamery, we were surprised to see industrial buildings, construction workers and run-down structures that had graffiti on them nearby. This scenery was not social media-worthy.

As we walked toward the building, we realized that we had the wrong address

and had accidentally driven to the factory. Apparently, Maven's Creamery ice cream sandwiches are only sold in stores at retail like Safeway, Whole Foods or Poki Bowl.

Luckily, we were still able to obtain the ice cream sandwiches from the factory. We sampled five different flavors: Chocolate Toasted Almonds, Earl Grey Lavender, Salted Caramel, Coffee Hazelnut, Cookies 'n Cream and Strawberry Shortcake.

The most unusual flavor we tried was the Earl Grey Lavender. It was surprising how accurately the sandwich captured the Earl Grey flavor, but Michelle said she also tasted strong, almost spicy lavender.

It's easy to see why the company's best-selling flavor is Cookies 'N Cream, for it was extremely decadent and had an interesting blue colored cookie. Katherine's favorite flavor was the Chocolate Toasted Almonds, as it had a delicious crunch and really rich chocolate while Michelle's favorite flavor was the Salted Caramel for its interesting salty and sweet contrast and unique flavor.

Though the sandwiches are pricey, they reasonably compare to prices offered by other ice cream sandwiches. Competitors like CREAM offer much larger ice cream sandwiches for around the same price of \$5. The macaron cookie base is a unique touch that separates this dessert from the rest, but also makes the sandwich break apart easily, turning soggy as it absorbs melted ice cream.

Bullet journaling: Don't count the days; follow your dreams

BY ConnieLiang & SanjanaMelkote

As we whipped out our school-issued planners to write down our homework assignments, we glanced over at another student's Moleskin notebook, which opened to reveal a bullet journal filled with a beautiful flurry of doodles, lists and charts intertwined in perfect spreads. It left us wondering: Do our planners have the power to influence our attitude toward the work that lies ahead of us? We set out to find the nuances of bullet journaling.

Originally developed by Brooklyn-based digital product designer Ryder Carroll over years of trial-and-error, the bullet journal is a customizable planner format described on bullejournal.com as "the analog system for the digital age."

Carroll developed the format of the planner, and users can adhere to it or stray into their own creativity when laying out their spreads. Creating a bullet journal is very cost-efficient, as it only requires a blank notebook and a pen. It offers individuals the chance to create a unique organization of daily tasks, reminders, events and personal goals.

Carroll established a conventional "rapid logging" notation for bullet journalers that includes four basic components in each entry: the topic, page number, bullets and short ideas. This notation provides those who use the journal a quick and easy way to record and remember daily events; the overall framework of the journal is outlined by the index, daily log, monthly log and future log.

Students like freshman Celine Chien praise the bullet journal for the increased productivity levels and stress relief.

Having received a bullet journal starter

kit for her most recent birthday, Chien has used it for six months and finds it to be effective in helping her keep track of her life both inside and outside of school by logging in her practice hours for music, sleep and studying.

"It's relaxing for my eyes to take a break from blue light [electronics] and have a hardcopy of everything using just pen and paper," Chien said.

In an attempt to relieve our own stress, we decided to give bullet journaling a shot. However, we found that between being occupied by homework and school-related activities, we barely had time to update our bullet journals aside from quickly writing down a few notes at the end of the day.

In fact, over the weekend, we both forgot to update our journals, and for the rest of the week, we completely abandoned our journals and reverted back to jotting down notes in our school planners, on post-it notes and even off the top of our heads.

Especially when school-issued planners provide specific layouts with red and blue days, we feel bullet journaling doesn't benefit us much. On the other hand, we found that some aspects of bullet journaling can be extremely helpful when visualizing goals and long-term projects.

As we tried to keep up a future log, it helped us realize the overlooked worth of our personal goals even when we are overwhelmed by an academic workload.

Having a colorful spread of our dreams is a nice reminder and gentle motivation to give importance to what makes us happy as well as our responsibilities.

So while we can relish in the opportunity to repeatedly scratch out our everyday assignments, our long-term goals can be treated as something that's not just another task on a seemingly endless list. ♦

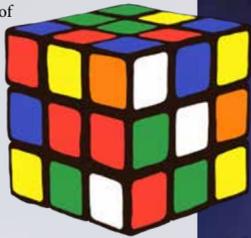


GRAPHIC BY ASHLEY FENG

December 1, 2017

### Fastest Cuber

Sophomore Grant Chen holds a record time of 4.52 seconds to solve a 3x3 Rubik's Cube, faster than the official world record, held by Patrick Ponce, who scored a 4.69 in 2017. While this makes Chen the fastest cuber in the school, he is not necessarily the fastest in the world because the time was not scored under competition regulations, which are very stringent in scrambling patterns and time measurement. "I picked up cubing two years ago because I was bored, and I spent most of that summer cubing eight hours a day," Chen said.



— by Mathew Luo

Grant Chen

### Highest Everwing Score



Ever since Blackstorm Labs released the video game EverWing on Facebook in November 2016, many people have been controlling guardian fairies to collect as many coins and diamonds as possible to maximize their score and beat their friends in various group-chats.

Sophomore Raj Janardhan is one of many who caught up in the trend, mastering the game and towering over his friends with a high score of 6,123.

"I enjoyed having 'pet dragons' and challenging other friends," Janardhan said.

— by Howard Tang

Raj Janardhan

### Chubby Bunny Challenge



The Chubby Bunny Challenge is a contest of who can say the words "chubby bunny" with the most marshmallows in their mouths. Among the third period newspaper staff, Kyle Wang, Jayne Zhou, Katherine Zhou and Ashley Feng tied for the win with seven marshmallows (after much rather gross gagging and spitting).

Katherine Zhou shared her strategy: "I didn't really care about eating them so I just smashed them with my hands and I squished them into my cheeks since I have pretty big cheeks."

— by Sandhya Sundaram

Katherine Zhou

### Most pairs of expensive shoes

According to a Time magazine survey, an average American man owns 12 pairs of shoes whereas an average American woman owns 27.



Courtesy of ALBERT LI

Senior Albert Li, however, has a whopping 280 pairs — many of them with big names and large price tags. Li started his collection of shoes after moving to the U.S. in 2015. He has 80 pairs at his house here and 200 pairs back in China.

These shoes are kept carefully in a temperature-controlled and password-protected glass cabinet. In addition, they are disinfected with UV light.

He sports a variety of Yeezys, Jordans and Supremes. A pair that he is especially fond of is his Supreme X Louis Vuittons sneakers.

"I really like those shoes because I waited a year to get them," he said.

Other sneakers in his collection include the Nike Air Mags, which re-sell for upwards of \$10,000 and Nike Air Yeezys, which also sell in the thousands.

"I have so many memories of my shoes," he said. "Each pair has its own story."

— by Alex Wang

Albert Li



Courtesy of ALEC LINDEMAN

### Oldest Car

Senior Alec Lindeman drives a red 1968 Ford F100 truck, which he purchased from Craigslist the summer of his junior year.

"I always loved the look of that car so when I saved up enough money, I bought it," Lindeman said. He said he rarely runs into issues with it, and it only occasionally breaks down.

"It's usually not too bad, since older cars are very simple and easy to work on," Lindeman said.

— by Callia Yuan

Alec Lindeman

### Fastest Typist

After taking the typing test on 10fastfingers.com, freshman Kaitlyn Tsai claimed the record for the most number of words typed in one minute: 131. Other competitors, who signed up through Facebook, came close ranging from 119 wpm to 130 wpm, but in the end, Tsai prevailed.

"I play piano, so that might have helped with my hand-eye coordination," Tsai said.

— by Sandhya Sundaram

Kaitlyn Tsai



### Most Piercings



Courtesy of LIDYA DEMISSIE

Junior Lidya Demissie has the most piercings of any student on campus with a total of eight. She got five of them on a family vacation to Ethiopia last summer, and an additional one recently in November.

Demissie got her first two piercings, located on her right and left ear lobes, when she was a baby. She then got five additional piercings over the course of two days at a tattoo and piercing shop in Ethiopia.

Four of the piercings she got in Ethiopia were on the upper lobe and cartilage of both her right and left ears, and the last on the cartilage of her right ear.

Her last cartilage piercing, which she got at Body Jewlz, is on her right ear, and totals up to five piercings on her right ear and three on her left.

Demissie said that although the piercings on her lobes didn't hurt at all, the piercings on her cartilage, which is more sensitive, hurt more than her other ones.

A source of inspiration for her piercings was Kylie Jenner. "As a teenager she had a lot of piercings and I was in love with them," she said. "Overall, I enjoy having piercings; every time I saw other people [with a lot of piercings] it made me want them as well."

— by Callia Yuan

Lidya Payne

### Most languages spoken

Junior Toshi Brands, who moved here from Taipei, Taiwan, in the beginning of the school year, speaks five different languages: English, Japanese, German, French and Chinese. Half-Japanese and half-Dutch, he learned Japanese as his first language, similar to how many American-born Chinese students learn Chinese outside of school. After living in four different countries and learning German, French and Chinese at the international schools he previously attended, he continues to study French here.

— by Amy Tang

Toshi Brands



### Tallest person

Standing at 6 foot 4 inches, sophomore Mugdh Tyagi towers over other students on campus.

"Being taller than everyone is pretty cool," Tyagi said. "But at the same time, it's not a big deal."

His height does come with advantages, Tyagi said. For one he can reach the topmost shelves at stores. However, shopping for Tyagi is not always an easy task — it's difficult finding jeans that are the right size.

In addition, his height helps when he plays basketball. "I don't know if I'm going to get taller," he said. "But right now I'm fine with my height."

— by Alex Wang

Mugdh Tyagi

### Snapchat Streak

A streak on Snapchat occurs when two people continuously send each other snaps every day, with the number increasing each day the streak is maintained. With his 1,337-day streak, junior Graham Kingston won this record by far. According to a Facebook survey, most students' highest streaks range from 300 to 600 days, significantly less than that of Kingston. "It got to a point where my streak was so high, I couldn't lose it. I've put too much time and effort into this," Kingston said.

— by Sandhya Sundaram



Graham Kingston

### Challenged Vision



With her right eye corrected with a power of -8.5 diopters and her left with -9.0, junior Sarah Meng is probably among those with the worst vision at our school. The conversion from -9.0 diopters to meters places her vision at roughly 20/1000, which is considered severe myopia.

"My vision has been getting consistently worse since I first got glasses in first grade, so sometimes I worry about what will happen to my vision in the future," Meng said. "I get migraines really often because looking at my computer or even doing homework strains my eyes."

— by Mathew Luo

Sarah Meng

# FALCON EDITION

# WORLD RECORDS

Anannya Vadlakonda



Courtesy of ANANYA VADLAKONDA

### Longest hair

For the three girls in the Vadlakonda household — freshman Alekhya, sophomore Ananya and 2017 graduate Amulya — getting a haircut is something they do once a decade or even less often. For instance, Ananya hasn't cut her hair since birth, resulting in a 4-foot braid trails her wherever she goes.

"My sisters and I love our long hair, and when my mom was growing up, she too had long hair," she said. "There's no religious reason; it's just a family thing."

For Kuchipudi, an Indian classical dance that Vadlakonda does, dancers usually wear fake hair to make their hair seem longer. But none of the three needs this hair extension.

Sometimes Ananya contemplates the advantages of having shorter hair: She might spend less on shampoo or not have worries about tangles. For now, though, Ananya does not plan on cutting her hair anytime soon. "Having long hair is all I know and I love it," she said.

— by Alex Wang

### Fastest mile

Boasting a mile time of 4:34, senior Amit Nag ran his fastest mile during the track and field season his junior year, under the instruction of coach Ian Tippetts.

As a freshman, Nag was inspired by upperclassmen such as alumni Andrew Harter, Steven Sum and Stephen Law. He has decided to pursue running in college and is hoping to run at the Division III level.

— by Callia Yuan



Courtesy of IAN TIPPETTS

Amit Nag

### Most pi digits (teacher's edition)

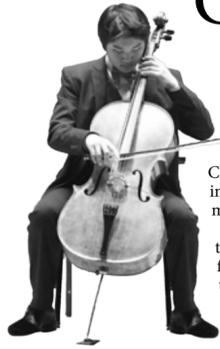


Out of the eight math teachers interviewed, Deborah Troxell was able to recite the most digits of pi. She was able to recite the first 15 digits and claims that she remembers the order of the numbers using a combination of the digits of her childhood bank account and phone numbers.

Other teachers interviewed included PJ Yim, Jennifer Mantle, Julie Scola, Andrew Shoemaker, Kelly Frangieh, Meghan Pickett and Kristen Hamilton. Many stopped after 3.14, claiming that any digits following were extraneous and unnecessary.

— by Amy Tang

Debra Troxell



Thomas Lim (10)

BY Amy Tang  
As junior Thomas Lim stared blankly at the AP Chemistry book in front of him, he made a decision. Instead of continuing to review for the upcoming test, he pulled out

his cello, tightened his bow and began to play, composing on the spot.

One of Lim's favorite parts of being a cellist and composer is the time he spends in his room practicing pieces or composing. Playing cello also helps him de-stress, especially the night before an important test.

"The great thing about music is that if I ever want to play cello instead of doing homework, I can do so without feeling like I'm wasting my time, because technically I'm practicing and becoming a better musician," Lim said.

Lim moved from South Korea to the U.S. at age 10. While there, he learned to play the instrument with extremely strict teachers, something he can laugh at looking back.

"One of my teachers used to beat my hands with her bows, and when she broke the bows, she would buy drumsticks so they wouldn't break," he recalled.

Lim thinks that if he hadn't moved here, he probably would have stopped playing because of the harsh treatment.

Luckily, his persistence and love for music kept him going. Lim has been training at

the California Music Preparatory Academy in Saratoga with his current teacher, Jonathan Koh, for six years. Koh calls Lim a "big ball of sunshine, and a very talented cello player too." Lim appreciates having a more encouraging teacher because he is now motivated to practice playing cello, and enjoys it as well.

Music has given Lim something to look forward to every day, from attending orchestra at school to practicing at home.

"If my life was a sine curve, music would be the peak," Lim said. ♦

## Rap music permeates students' lives

BY Rahul Vadlakonda

Whether he's eating lunch or finishing his homework, junior Tanuj Vasudeva often listens to rapper Eminem's "Hailie's Song" on repeat.

Many students, like Vasudeva, have fallen in love with rap music as well. Listening to this genre has also helped Vasudeva cope with his own hard times.

"When it seems like everything is going heavily south in life and nobody can relate, I would play a song like 'Sing for the Moment' [by Eminem]," he said. "Hard times would go by so much faster when I could relate to someone, albeit through my speakers."

In particular Vasudeva said that the lyric

"And this load is like the weight of the world. And I think my neck is breaking should I just give up, or try to live up to these expectations," from "Hailie's Song" has affected him in a positive way.

He also said the genre's diverse nature has positively affected society. He pointed to the songs from the Lin Manuel Miranda's "Hamilton" as examples of rap's positive nature. Though rap music has stood for different ideas through many generations, Vasudeva said that the way people might view it currently, associating it mainly with Drake and Kendrick Lamar, does not represent rap music as a whole.

Subsequently, controversies associated with rap music range from the spread of

such as "gangster rap," a style of rap that stereotypically portrayed gangs, guns, violence and sexism, changed rap music's image in the eyes of its listeners.

Nevertheless, even he admits that it can negatively affect younger listeners.

"There is no doubt that modern music has a direct impact on the vernacular of the time, and currently, our language is being shaped by what's in style," Vasudeva said.

Another student who is heavily invested in the genre is senior Revel Sisco. "I like the cleverness of the genre," Sisco said. "Some rappers really bring their music towards poetry and I love that."

Like Vasudeva, Sisco said that he listens to rap music at almost anytime in the day,

doing anything from eating to playing games.

"Listening to rap music is like my natural state. So it's crucial to how I function," Sisco said.

Though many people have varying views on rap, Sisco said he likes how artists put their own spins on society and politics. Despite its numerous controversies, Sisco wants more people to listen to rap music, as he says it is a "rich and vast part of human culture." ♦



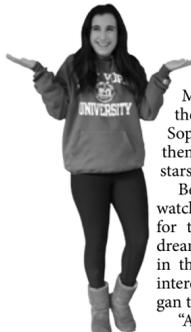
Tanuj Vasudeva (11)



GRAPHIC BY SANJANA MELKOTE

## Following 'Hamilton,' enthusiasm for Broadway musicals spreads

BY Kaylene Morrison & Ananya Vadlakonda



Marly Feigin (10)

Musical numbers from Mary Poppins echoed off the walls in the theater. Sophomore Marly Feigin, then just five years old, was starstruck.

Being in New York City and watching a show on Broadway for the first time made her dream of one day performing in the same theater, and her interest for musicals soon began to grow.

"As soon as the curtain opened and when Mary began singing, I knew that one day,

I would be up there performing," she said.

Feigin has grown to love a variety of musicals because of their lively nature.

Over the past couple of years, Broadway musicals' popularity has grown substantially. The musical "Hamilton," for one, has become a cultural phenomenon. With increasing demand, "Hamilton" spread across the country. Many students have attended the show in San Francisco's Orpheum Theater, among them sophomore Sarah Hess.

"The Hamilton experience was truly incredible, with all

the added dance moves and body language," Hess said.

She enjoys listening to the shows' musical numbers over any other genre.

"When the music gets slower you can tell something important or emotional is happening, like in the middle of a 'Hamilton' rap when the music slows or cuts off completely and a character says or sings something serious," Hess said.

Of course, actually attending a musical live allows for all these different aspects to come together — the musicality, the acting and the set. It makes the entire experience much

more satisfying and meaningful than presenting a story in purely a musical or an acting form.

Feigin noticed this when she saw the musical "Dear Evan Hansen" live. One aspect that appealed to her the most was the message it conveyed.

The protagonist, Evan Hansen, is a high school senior with social anxiety; the musical deals with topics which hit close to home for many teens.

"Dear Evan Hansen" is very appealing because it reminds everyone that we can all get through [struggles] together," Feigin said. ♦

Although Feigin knows that Broadway isn't for everyone, as she hasn't even found every single song to her liking, she still believes that everyone should give it a try.

"I would tell them to not just judge musicals by a few songs they have heard, and at least try it out," Feigin said. "I mean theater isn't for everybody, just as long as they try it out before deciding that they don't like it, that is OK." ♦



Sarah Hess (10)

## Junior spends free time songwriting & creating electronic music

BY David Koh & Howard Tang

"Wake up take a look up at the sky, so absorbed you don't see the birdies fly."

These are the lyrics of the most recent song created by junior Kiran Illindala. He was listening to his music as he jogged along the dirt paths leading up to the Montalvo Arts Center during a fall cross country practice. Ignoring his aching muscles and the hot sun bearing down on him, he focused on the steady rhythm of the jazz music playing through his earbuds, contemplating about what he should change about his newly created song. Two hours later, Illindala sat at his table making the revisions.

Illindala's love for music began when he was 5 and took his first guitar and choir classes. From there, music has played a major role in his life — even as a distraction at inconvenient moments. He remembers being sent to the principal's office in third

grade for constantly humming and singing in class, which often interfered with other students' learning.

"I'd always listen to music, and at a certain point it actually became a coping mechanism," Illindala said. "Out of the time I'm awake, I spend at least a quarter with my earbuds in, if not half."

Despite an intense course load of junior year, Illindala has continued to devote much of his time to music. Illindala is now a member of the chamber choir and creates his own music outside of school.

Illindala began creating his own music in fifth grade but quit until he took it up again this year. Illindala is currently experimenting with electronic music that he creates using Fruity Loops Studios, an online digital audio workstation, and produces hip-hop pop hybrids inspired by artists like Jon Bellion, and Bryce Vine. Illindala also draws a lot of inspiration from the swing genre.

In the future, Illindala hopes to share

his music publicly through Soundcloud. Illindala is aiming to have five songs completed by the end of the year, but has found himself bogged down by school and other extracurriculars.

"It takes an extremely long time to put something together," Illindala said. "For me, unless I'm in the zone, I can't put a song together, but usually when I do, it takes about 3-5 hours. For some people, it takes months."

Illindala thinks his songs are never truly done.

"There's always something to change and ways to make my songs better," Illindala said.

In addition to helping him focus and serving as a creative outlet, music serves to cheer him up and help him study, de-stress, prepare for tests and competitions, and cope with hardships in life. Illindala said that he adjusts his music to different activities. For example, he plays faster-paced electronic

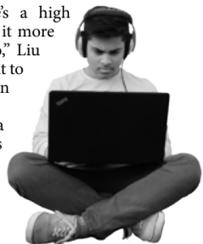
music while running, but plays slower more laid back swing music while studying.

Illindala's passion for music has rubbed off on those around him. Illindala regularly shares both the music he creates and the music he listens to with his friends, including junior William Liu.

"The fact that he's a high school student makes it more interesting to listen to," Liu said. "It makes me want to get FL studio more than I used to."

Ultimately, being a music enthusiast has made Illindala into who he is today.

"Music is really part of my identity. It has value because it has helped shape who I am as a person," Illindala said. ♦



Kiran Illindala (11)  
FALCON // PHOEBE WANG, SOPHIA ZIVANIC & COURTESY OF THOMAS LIM

## A closer look: Why are movies memed about?

BY Lina Kim & Elicia Ye

Emojis have evolved to become such vivid characters among their users that Sony Pictures Animation even brought them to life in the "Emoji Movie" that premiered in July. Indisputably a full-on meme-worthy movie, it received a 6 percent rating on Rotten Tomatoes and a score of 1.7 out of 10 on IMDb.

With scathing reviews, the movie collected a variety of memes from its audience, becoming a meme itself. Earning the titles of "garbage" and "well-written, structured, original joke," the movie is perhaps best represented by its very own poop emoji.

As various characters represent different emotions, "it's obvious within 20 minutes that 'The Emoji Movie' is ... a knockoff of 'Inside Out,'" according to a Variety review. "'The Emoji Movie,' though, is more than a bit lazy. It's all on the surface, all movement and hec-

tic situational overkill."

The watered-down plot along with the movie's cringey, low-rated scenes inevitably received various roasts posted on social media.

Additionally, the premiere of "Shrek 2" in 2004 made \$919.8 million at the box office and gave rise to ShrekChan, a shrek-themed imageboard that featured Shrek memes and fan art labeled "Shart." But after the viral series named "Shrek is love, Shrek is life" (we highly recommend you not search it up), which features sexually explicit conversations between Shrek and children who pray to him, the site was shut down. With a combination of Shrek's designedly funny face and the movie's fancy cinematic techniques, it was near impossible for the movie to avoid the internet's obsession of making memes out of the green ogre.

Recently, "The Bee Movie," an animated film revolving around a bee and his female human companion, who sue the human race for the sale and consumption

of honey, has resurfaced due to memes.

But the audience instead found their focus diverted to the strange romantic relationship between protagonist Barry B. Benson and his female human companion. A meme made from a sassy Benson peeking out from behind his sunglasses has since gone viral, exemplifying the Internet's obsession with these special bees who had a film made about them.

In 2010, "Despicable Me" was released, characterizing the struggles of supervillain Gru. However, instead of obsessing over the three adorable children or Gru's unproportional nose and legs, the audience response focused on the small, yellow, pill-shaped Minions who work as Gru's grunts. Wearing henchman overalls and goggles and speaking squeaky gibberish, Minions undoubtedly formed an incomprehensible, completely foreign cult that people couldn't get enough of, even if stemmed from hatred or annoyance.



THE DREAM SCENE BETWEEN BARRY AND A FEMALE HUMAN FROM "THE BEE MOVIE" IS ONE OF THE MOST MEMED ABOUT, INSPIRING THE PUN, "BEE-STIALITY."

In 2015, these creatures even got their own movie depicting their history. From Minion phone cases and Minion-shaped Tic Tacs to Amazon packages and Super Bowl ads, their presence never left us. As Minion memes propagate all over the Internet and infiltrate various aspects of our lives, we couldn't help but sing along to "Ba-ba-ba, ba-ba-banana."

With its rising prominence, meme culture is utilizing various

films and movie characters as inspiration to increase its appeal. While some memes stem from movies that failed to escape unsparring criticisms due to the movies' low ratings or cringey content, others are a result of a movie character's popularity and widespread presence. Either way, memes alone can generate relatability and, as a result, spur massive profits for the studios which (often unintentionally) create them. ♦

## Disney's live action remakes build on animated classics

BY Anna Novoselov & Anishi Patel

In March, a tale as old as time got a fresh, new look as Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" live-action remake starring Emma Watson as Belle and Dan Stevens as the Beast. The film broke multiple records after its release, raking in \$1.2 billion in worldwide ticket revenues.

Compared to the original animated classic from 1991, which made \$450 million, the live action "Beauty and the Beast" is far superior.

Although original animated movies will always have a place in Disney fans' hearts, live action films have established themselves as an integral part of Disney's world.

"I think the remakes show more feeling," sophomore Simrita Advani said. "I love the classics, but now that I'm older, it's just more interesting to watch live action."

Disney released its first live action remake in 2010: "Alice in Wonderland." The film grossed \$1 billion worldwide.

Motivated by positive reviews and box office success, Disney began creating more live action films. "The Jungle Book" made \$960 million worldwide, making it the third most successful Disney remake to date. The 2016 live action film "Maleficent" became the fourth most successful, at \$760 million.

The success of live action movies is based on many factors, one of which is the casting of real-life actors. Actors in live action movies are able to convey emotions more effectively than animated characters, making the films more appealing to larger audiences. Special effects and classic song lyrics combine to form an all-inclusive experience for the viewer.

Fans applauded the casting of Watson as Belle. She had already

created a name for herself through her role as Hermione Granger in the Harry Potter films, and was renowned for her wit and acting abilities.

In another move to appeal to larger audiences, Celine Dion's original rendition of the song "A Tale as Old as Time" in "Beauty and the Beast" was replaced with a cover by popular artists Ariana Grande and John Legend.

Although some fans claim that Disney is simply

commercializing nostalgia — that is to say, making money off the classic tales viewers already know and love — live action films are far from mere copies of the animated movies.



GRAPHIC BY KATHERINE ZHOU

Live action films incorporate familiar storylines, mixing unique twists with the bare necessities of the beloved classics to create captivating plot lines.

For example, "Maleficent" is told not from the princess's point of view, but from the villains', allowing the viewer to experience the story from a different angle.

Additionally, the live action "Cinderella" gives more insight into the characters' backstories, allowing viewers to

better understand personalities and motives for actions. The story begins with Cinderella's upbringing, and uncovers her dedication to preserving her home.

Unlike the animated version, the Prince falls for Cinderella's heart rather than her beauty. The

two first meet in the woods, where he conceals his royal identity, and is attracted to Cinderella's kindness and lighthearted spirit.

As a result, the Prince's character is given deeper meaning, intensifying the chemistry between the protagonists and showing that love does not simply come at first sight.

In addition, live action films better resemble real life, embodying powerful themes of compassion, perseverance and bravery. While animated classics contain noteworthy messages as well, remakes are better able to convey ideas to modern audiences.

But Disney's collection isn't complete yet. The multinational mass media company will continue its remake trend, with many more live action movies already in the works, including "Mulan," "The Lion King," "Aladdin" and "Ariel." It's a whole new world out there, and live action remakes are about to take it by storm. ♦

## Actors speaking Chinese: Do not attempt without prior experience

BY Callia Yuan & Jayne Zhou

According to Business Insider, Mandarin Chinese is one of the hardest languages to learn, so it isn't surprising when the many American actors and actresses try to speak Chinese fail.

Miserably. For example, the film, "The Great Wall" gave us a Cantonese-speaking actor, Andy Lau, speaking the most lines in Mandarin Chinese — and not succeeding. It is obvious that the casting directors often don't evaluate language ability when choosing actors.

This becomes evident when we hear their broken Chinese, degrading the overall quality of the movie. "The Great Wall," which was released last year, disappointed us with not only a terrible story line but also terrible Chinese. Lau sounded incoherent and disoriented with his incorrect pronunciations.

Another popular movie, "Kung Fu Panda," about a funny panda

named Po, was set in China as well. Sadly, Po was voiced by American actor Jack Black, who took it upon himself to create "new" Chinese words. The infamous "Wuxi finger hold" that Po used, despite popular beliefs, is not an actual move. In fact, the phrase "wuxi" itself has no meaning in Chinese.

When a famous actor like Jack Black uses his platform to mock

### The phrase "wuxi" itself has no meaning in Chinese.

and mimic the complex language of Chinese, it sends a disappointing message to the Chinese viewers at home. It is extremely disrespectful that an actor, who has no prior knowledge of Chinese, has the audacity to create new Chinese phrases without even knowing what those words mean.

In contrast, when Chinese actors are cast to portray Chinese

speaking people, the authenticity of the film or show improves.

For example, in "Fresh off the Boat," which is airing its fourth season on ABC, stars an entirely Asian-American cast playing a Chinese family in Orlando.

The Chinese on the show is authentic and natural. Actor Randall Park, who plays the role of the father, is an American-Korean actor and never speaks Chinese on the show.

Instead, most of the Chinese is spoken by Chinese-American actors Constance Wu, the mother, and Lucille Soong, the grandmother, allowing Chinese speakers across the country to appreciate ABC's effort. Since most of the spoken Chinese in the media is inaccurate, it's no surprise non-Chinese people think Chinese is as simple as "ching chong chang." So here's a bit of advice to those actors and actresses out there considering taking up Chinese for their next role: Get it right or leave it up to talented Chinese actors who can actually speak the language. ♦

### HOLIDAY MOVIE MARATHON

- 1 **LOVE ACTUALLY**  
This movie is a definite classic. As a warning, it is rated R, but is one of the only "multiple storyline" rom-coms worth watching. This movie will leave you smiling, crying, and feeling good.
- 2 **ELF**  
A hilarious work of genius by comic legend Will Ferrell, "Elf" follows the story of Buddy the Elf as he navigates through New York. A great watch if you want a funny family movie or if you just want to see Zooey Deschanel as a blonde.
- 3 **HOME ALONE**  
Who hasn't watched Home Alone? A perfect movie that never loses its charm. Home Alone is a staple for the holidays. Don't we all wish we could fend off
- 4 **NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CHRISTMAS VACATION**  
If you want to see a family that is likely more dysfunctional than yours, watch "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation." This #relatable movie will make you laugh hysterically.
- 5 **HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS**  
Want an entertaining but still kid-friendly movie? "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," will make your heart grow two sizes after you watch it.

GRAPHIC BY SANJANA MELKOTE, REPORTING BY KATHERINE ZHOU

## Inspired by MAP, Ching pursuing minor in film

BY SanjanaMelkote & KrithiSankar

At the height of his junior year, current USC freshman and 2017 alumnus Nate Ching was working diligently on his American Story project along with his group when he faced a major roadblock.

His four group members had opposing ideas on the development of the protagonist and the ending.

"My group went through several complete rehashes of the script until we could settle on something that we somewhat agreed on," Ching said.

The Media Arts Program, created in 2007 with the goal of being a school within a school, has helped hundreds of students find a way to integrate media into their future careers, and for some, find a career based in media.

Ching is majoring in biochemistry with a pre-dental emphasis, but with four years of media arts experience, Ching is now trying to combine his prospective professional interests with media arts through his minor in film production.

For Ching, an essential reason for enrolling in MAP was the social environment that came with it.

Ching fondly remembers the bonding experiences with his MAP friends, most vividly when they embarrassed themselves on the streets of Los Angeles during their junior year field trip.

Being in MAP not only provided Ching a community within the school but his friends exposed him to various activities and encouraged him get involved with programs that further explored his interests.

"As a freshman, I really wanted to find my place in the school," Ching said. "Although throughout the years I found myself involved in plenty of programs at school, I probably wouldn't have been as excited and involved without the energy and passion my friends in MAP had."

When deciding on a college major, Ching said he always wanted to pursue dentistry, but because of his experience with media throughout high school, he also chose to pursue film alongside biochemistry.

Ching said his senior project contributed to his decision to minor in film.



Courtesy of NATE CHING

Over the summer, class of 2017 alumnus Nate Ching filmed a music video for rapper Leeway's single "Do Not Disturb." MAP was undoubtedly one of the greatest things to have ever happened to me in high school," Ching said.

He found that planning a project plan that could fit most people's schedules was the most difficult part. The diverse roles that each person filled were all important so they had to learn how to manage their time and value everyone's contributions.

While Ching was mostly interested in filmmaking at first, but he was able to pick

up skills in Photoshop, Illustrator, Flash, as well as storyboarding and professional screenwriting through the program.

"Even in college I'm getting involved in so many different programs and organizations, but I don't think I would have been able to do as much as I had been able to now had I not joined MAP," Ching said. ♦

## Substitute finds joy in teaching teens

BY AnniisaMu & MathewLuo

For Helen Jarrett, standing before an unfamiliar group of students as their substitute teacher still feels "nerve-wracking, yet exciting" even after five years of on the job.

Jarrett is a regular at Saratoga High but also works at Los Gatos High as well as Redwood Middle School. She said she enjoys subbing here because of its close proximity to her home and because her daughter Alena attends Saratoga High.

Alena, a sophomore, said she reaps many benefits when her mom substitutes. For example, when the weather is cold, she feels especially welcomed to stay in her mother's classroom. However, because her mom has become well known around the school, she is often known as "Mrs. Jarrett's daughter," which she sometimes find mildly vexing.

Jarrett said she decided to become a substitute teacher due to the job's flexibility. This allows her to spend more time with her daughter and also be around age groups she is fond of. Her previous job experiences all required public speaking, helping her tremendously as a substitute teacher.

"I love seeing all the students, hearing about their day and being a listening ear if they need to talk," Jarrett said. "I also love walking across the quad or the hallways and having students say hello or smile at me. It

means a lot to me when someone takes the time to do that."

Jarrett also enjoys observing the different teaching styles. She said it's interesting to see how teachers here all work hard but approach their job differently for a common goal.

In addition, she often finds amusement in the entertaining moments she has with students. Last year when she substituted for English teacher Suzanne Herzman, a student got confused and couldn't tell that Jarrett wasn't Herzman because they have a similar appearance. So when the student questioned Jarrett about an assignment that she didn't know much of, it caused much confusion.

"In fairness it was towards the beginning of the school year," Jarrett said, "and was first thing in the morning but it made me laugh so much."

At other times, subbing can be tough, especially when students show little respect or think it's OK to bend rules just because their regular teacher is absent.

"I know all of the students are good people deep down and I try not to take it personally," Jarrett said. "I think it is just easy to forget that even though most of us subs have not necessarily gone to college for teaching, it doesn't mean we didn't work hard for the degrees we did get and that we have something to teach and share with students."

In addition, she said that the occasional lack of information from teachers can be stressful. Because some teachers have to leave urgently due to an emergency, they may not have enough time to leave adequate plans, which leaves substitutes in a tough spot in terms of directing students.

Teaching a class of unfamiliar students can also be a challenge because it forces her to create a good rapport quickly.

**At other times, subbing can be tough, especially when students show little respect or think it's OK to bend rules.**

Despite these struggles, Jarrett remains positive about being a substitute, having always been one who "likes a challenge."

Her temperament has made her one of the most loved substitutes on campus. Sophomore Sejal Sripadanna said that students love her because she's fun and light-hearted, but also knows how to get the class's attention.

"Everyone always gets excited whenever we hear Mrs. Jarrett is subbing," Sripadanna said. ♦



GRAPHIC BY ANISHI PATEL AND JAYNE ZHOU

## School unable to sustain numerous language classes

BY AnnaNovoselov

On one side of the classroom, 10 AP French students work quietly while teacher Elaine Haggerty explains a concept to the 19 French 3 students.

After assigning her French 3 students a task, Haggerty reverses her attention to the other side of the class and starts a lesson for her AP French students.

Because of the low enrollment in both advanced French classes, French 3 and AP French have been combined in the past years into one class as a way of keeping the program alive.

"It's not ideal," Haggerty said. "Logistically, it means that the students get half as much instruction."

Such a compromise shows the struggles the school's world language department has in trying to maintain multiple offerings.

In the meantime, the dominant languages on campus are Spanish and Mandarin Chinese. Currently, 535 students are enrolled in Spanish, 174 in Mandarin Chinese and 111 in French, according to Registrar Robert Wise.

The world language department considers teacher availability, student interest and a language's global impact when choosing which language classes to offer, said both Brian Safine and the head of the department, Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguex.

The school tries to offer languages that are in demand in Saratoga and reflect world demographics, Rodriguex said.

Statistically, about 400 million people consider Spanish their native language globally, including 40 million in the U.S. and 15 million in California. Rodriguex speculates that due to this prominence and the language's parallels with English, Spanish currently has the highest rate of enrollment

among students.

In a Facebook survey of 110 students, only 25 percent of student respondents said they were completely satisfied with the school's current language offerings: 19 percent of respondents expressed interest in German, 18 percent in an Indian dialect and 15 percent in Japanese.

Japanese, which was cut after the 2011-12 school year, was once taught on campus by current PE teacher Yuko Aoki. Long before Japanese, German was offered.

Sophomore Ranna Zahabi said that she is interested in taking German — she has family living in Germany and her mom grew up in the country. Although Zahabi enjoys taking Spanish, she wishes that Saratoga had more language options. Zahabi has visited her family in Germany twice, and said she felt like she was missing out because of her lack of knowledge of the language.

According to Safine, adding a new lan-

guage course like German would be extremely difficult. There would need to be a qualified teacher and an outpouring of student interest. Additionally, the program would have to include levels so students can take it through all four years in high school.

"Choices in language courses are good because interests vary from student to student," Rodriguex said. "But we want to have a program we can fully support rather than trying to pull from everywhere"

For those seeking more options in language classes, students still have a choice of enrolling in a foreign language at West Valley College, Safine said. Students have taken Farsi, ASL, Korean, and others, at the community college.

"We encourage students to pursue their passions," Safine said. "There are different options for students if there's not a program at our school. I would never want a student to feel limited." ♦

### DACA

continued from pg. 1

According to The Washington Post, the Department of Homeland Security revealed that the 690,000 Dreamers could face deportation once their work permits expire. From August 2012, when the program began, through March 2017, 787,580 people had been granted DACA status, as shown by the most recent data from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Chen aided undocumented students in the process of applying for the Dream Act.

For her students, the most terrifying part of the application process was often the first stage: filling out the DACA paperwork. In doing so, undocumented students exposed their names, identities and residences, making them vulnerable to deportations.

Because Chen, along with teachers at her previous school, wasn't legally authorized to process the students' applications, an immigration attorney was hired to work with families to enroll as many kids into the DACA program.

"All we did was help the families feel more comfortable with the process," Chen

said. "Our school gave them information on what it was, offered translation and reassured them it wasn't an open invitation for deportation, which was something a lot of families are concerned about."

With increased opposition against undocumented students going to college and getting jobs, Chen understands the fear her former students experience as every day is full of uncertainties.

One of her students, Luca, who graduated from UC Davis this June, is starting his Masters' degree at San Jose State University. Like many Dreamers, he made his fair share of sacrifices in his quest for education.

Luca arrived in the U.S. alone at age 15 in 2010, leaving his parents and brothers in Mexico in pursuit of a better future for his family.

As senior year of high school approached, Luca faced the choice of either attending college or returning to Mexico to stay with his parents. Since he chose to attend UC Davis, visiting his family Mexico wasn't feasible — DACA alone doesn't let recipients leave and return to the country freely.

Fortunately, after five years of not seeing his parents and brothers, Luca was able to set up a GoFundMe page to raise enough money to fly his family in for his college

graduation. A friend of his, a film student at UC Davis, made and posted a film on Facebook about Luca's family reunion.

"I don't know if he'll ever go back to Mexico," Chen said.

Tori, another of Chen's students who applied to the Dream Act, came to the U.S. under an active Visa in December of 2001 at the age of 7.

**For her students, the most terrifying part of the application process was often the first stage: filling out the DACA paperwork.**

After the school introduced the benefits of the Dream Act to undocumented immigrants, Tori told her parents she wanted to apply in order to continue her education in the U.S.

Since all of her friends are U.S. citizens, Tori found the application process somewhat difficult, as she was not able to share her experience with her peers.



GRAPHIC BY HOWARD TANG

BY HowardTang

On the ordinary night of Aug. 15, as she was preparing for the start of school, freshman Emily Choi received a message from a member of an organization called HOSH, asking to meet her at the cluster of trees in the quad.

Following her curiosity, she walked to the designated meeting place, surprised to find a photographer waiting. After taking a picture and answering questions about her leadership experience, Choi later saw her photo and story published on the Humans of Saratoga High Facebook page.

Humans of Saratoga High (HOSH), which was started in 2013 by Class of 2016 alumnus Luke Salin and several others and has gained 2,365 followers since then, is currently run by four upperclassmen. Following tradition, the four try to operate the site anonymously and agreed to be interviewed only on the condition that their anonymous.

The group was inspired by Humans of

New York (HONY), a photography project designed by Brandon Stanton to create "an exhaustive catalogue of New York's inhabitants." Though he started only with photographs, Stanton soon began to include quotes about each featured person. Similarly, the photographers for HOSH take pictures of different students, posting them on the page with a short story.

Due to the increasing popularity of HONY at the time, assistant principal Kerry Mohnike, the ASB adviser at the time, and a couple of ASB seniors decided to start a page to catalogue students of Saratoga High.

"We all agreed that it would be a really interactive, positive and supportive way for students, teachers and the SHS community in general to get to know each other a little better," Salin said, "and to put stories to the faces they see in the halls every day."

According to a senior boy who is part of HOSH, the purpose of the group is not about being exclusive — as some have claimed it to be because many recently fea-

tured students are part of the Leadership class — but to delve deeper into the lives of the student body and find interesting moments of people on campus.

HOSH photographers try to post weekly, but due to their busy schedules, the four took a break from posting since the start of the school year. The posts resumed starting the week of Oct. 23.

Drawing further inspiration from HONY, HOSH has tried to group together stories that are related to each other, forming a series. For example, the HOSH photographers decided to profile four freshmen at the beginning of the school year, resulting in the "Freshman series," of which Choi's story is the first.

Another senior who is participating in HOSH this year said she had heard that the team was looking for non-graduating students to join. Consequently, she asked one of the members if she could apply.

"They mainly base it on how well you can communicate with the student body and make them comfortable enough to

open up about their experiences," the senior said. "Photography skills are also important, but you definitely don't have to be a professional."

After being incorporated into the team, photographers start finding people to interview, organizing ideas of features with the group over Facebook. As soon as the photographers discover an interesting story, they will seek the individual out and ask if he or she could be interviewed.

While having to organize meetings with students that they might not know can be difficult, the photographers do believe that running the HOSH page is not as complicated as many might think.

In addition, many students have felt that HOSH has helped them get to know other students better.

"When people share their stories, you find out that we're actually a lot more similar to each other than we are different," senior Chengzi Guo said. "We all have felt the same feelings even if it's from different experiences or events." ♦

## Physics teacher earns legendary status from students

BY ElaineToh & AnanyaVadlakonda

"Tony Chestnut knows I love you," echoed throughout the halls of the science building. Inside Physics teacher Kirk Davis' room, drowsy students danced, after yawning and almost dozing off during a grueling lecture on quantum mechanics.

This children's song's silly lyrics and hilarious movements wakes his students up as they point to their respective body parts: toe, knee, chest and head.

Davis' "Tony Chestnut" dance can only be described as "hard to explain" by senior Keon Roohparvar.

Throughout his 10 years at SHS, Davis' class traditions like "Tony Chestnut" have made Davis a student favorite. Because his physics classes are among the most rigorous courses the school has to offer, Davis incorporates many lively moments to make

it more enjoyable.

Once in a demonstration for his AP Physics class, he threw a 90-pound ball at a student who was sitting in a cart. Much to junior Justin Sun's surprise, he didn't budge.

These entertaining yet educational labs that Davis presents are most students' favorite part of the class.

"It was always refreshing to see physics principles coming to life," senior JR Im said.

For instance, during Davis' toilet paper lab for his AP Physics class, students have to determine the distance required for two toilet paper rolls to touch the ground at the same time: one fully rolled up and the other unraveling as it falls.

"It's a sophisticated calculation, and it makes its point [about rotational inertia]"

Davis said. "But it is kind of fun since we are using toilet paper. I'm kind of a 16-year-old at heart in a way, and I like to do that stuff."

Other than his innovative labs, Davis is also known for the many personal stories he tells to his class.

For instance, Davis has frequently told the story about being locked in a parking garage with his girlfriend at the time. Unable to escape, he had to break out since his girlfriend needed to be home at a certain time.

Senior Charles Qi remembers another time when Davis told his class about fixing a water pipe in his swimming pool at 2 a.m.

"Most of his stories aren't super eventful," Qi said. "It's just the way he says things that makes them super funny."

By sharing some of these personal and memorable experiences with his students,

Davis is able to build close bonds with his students. He believes that these connections lead to his students caring more for the class, and as a result working harder.

"I think that if you have some sort of relationship or you feel like you've let a teacher down by not studying or completing the homework, that is really good for the teacher," Davis said.

Seeing the lengths that Davis goes to, students appreciate efforts that go beyond normal classroom.

According to Im, she once went to his classroom after school and Davis showed her how to make a homemade record player out of a piece of paper, a push pin and a rotating stand.

"I haven't seen anything like that before and it was exciting to learn how record players work," Im said. "He was a welcoming teacher after school and his classroom is full of things that will arouse your curiosity." ♦



Davis

# Madronia Cemetery preserves Saratoga's stories

BY Krithi Sankar & Elaine Toh

Driving to Madronia Cemetery in the Saratoga foothills, AP U.S. History MAP teacher Matt Torrens began telling us about the history of downtown Saratoga. What was once supposed to be a tour for the cemetery turned into an insightful lesson of the city's historical relevance.

Eyes bright with eagerness, Torrens entered through a red brick arch that framed the cemetery's park-like interior. Among the well-kept grass and large trees, the tombstones' shades of gray, brown and white freckle the expansive plots of land.

These tombstones, inscribed with symbols and characters from different languages, each encapsulate remnants of a deceased life.

"I tell my students, every tombstone has a story to tell," said Torrens, who occasionally gives tours at the cemetery. "These stories are sometimes sad and by looking at the dates you can tell a person died young. Some of them have an Army cross on them, meaning they died in a war."

The 12.5-acre cemetery was established in 1863 as a graveyard for residents of Saratoga following the death of a young boy named C.B. Buckman in 1854.

Though cemeteries are commonly associated with the stereotypical horror

movie image of ominous fog and haunting shadows, Madronia maintains a quaint and calming atmosphere.

"I've had people in the business who travel around, like salespeople, say this is the most beautiful cemetery in the whole state," said Steve Albright, the general manager of Madronia Cemetery.

Today, Madronia not only serves as a final resting place for the first residents of Saratoga, but also of those of later generations and different ethnicities; even the trees encircling the gravestones come from various parts of the world.

For senior Cailley Bryan, Madronia is a place with deep meaning. Both her grandfather and great grandparents were laid to rest there.

"I was really close to my grandpa, so my mom and I frequently go there to put down flowers and walk around," Bryan said. "It's a gorgeous cemetery and they do a great job maintaining it. I'm glad my family was buried there."

While the cemetery is marked by its cleanliness and serenity, the people laid to rest there are the most fascinating part.

Torrens pointed out that one notable person who rests in the cemetery is Mary Ann Day Brown, wife of famed abolitionist John Brown. After her husband's raid on Harper's Ferry in October 1859 and execution later that year, she came to San Francisco and lat-



Mary Ann Day Brown (1817-1884), wife of abolitionist John Brown, rests in Madronia Cemetery. After John Brown raided Harpers Ferry in 1859, Mary came to Saratoga.

er to Saratoga following her two daughters.

In 1884, Brown was buried in Madronia Cemetery; however, according to Albright, her story still lives on in the "scores of students that come here every year just to see her grave."

Another historical figure resting in the cemetery is Riley Septimus Moultrie, one of the surviving members of the Donner Party rescue mission in 1847.

Media Arts Program senior Nafisa Husain remembers Torrens mentioning Moultrie during a tour of downtown Saratoga for AP U.S. History MAP.

"We learned about the Donner Party's expedition in APUSH MAP and even watched a documentary on it, so it was cool to learn that Saratoga has a small connection to the history we learned in class," Hussain said. "It was something I never realized until that visit, even though I had visited the cemetery earlier on in the year when my group went to film for our video poem project."

Torrens said many students may never visit historical sites in their own towns and lose opportunities for understanding.

After all, as Torrens says, "Every community has great stories." ♦



# Longtime residents reflect on city's modernization

BY Ananya Vadlakonda & Jayne Zhou

When Saratoga residents and siblings Jim Parden and Nancy Badgett were born in 1958, a great deal of Saratoga still had orchards and undeveloped lots. Nearly 60 years later, areas that had once been covered in vineyards and orchards have been converted into Highway 85, West Valley College and new houses.

With the influx of people Saratoga has experienced through the years, the drastic differences span from the community's closeness and growth to the advancement of downtown and the education system in Saratoga.

Despite all the changes, lifelong residents like the Parden-Badgett family think Saratoga has stayed true to its small-town vibe.

### Family history

In 1950, the population of the city was a mere 1,329. By 1970, it had mushroomed to 27,110. In the most recent census from 2010, the population was 29,926.

The growth of the population changed the tight-knit community dramatically.

"When I was a child, there were more children who played in the streets, rode their bikes to school and to play," Badgett said. "The neighborhoods were filled with more activities and community involvement."

Badgett recalls how when she was growing up, most mothers stayed at home and talked to neighbors on a regular basis, allowing for more interaction within the community. Because people rarely moved in and out of the area back then, most families knew each other well.

However, with a spike in population

and increased focus on work, the lack of family-to-family relationships has become increasingly common.

Since the Parden-Badgett family has been in Saratoga for decades, their tightly-knit family has grown significantly, with branches of their respective families living here as well. For them, the thought of moving out of Saratoga has never crossed their minds.

"I have been in Saratoga my whole life," Badgett said. "I married the guy down the street and we bought the house up the street from my family home."

Due to the closeness of the family, they often meet for holidays and have very large events, sometimes with over 100 people attending family celebrations.

"I am fortunate that my extended family lives in Saratoga," Nancy Badgett said. "Today, I have 10 family members who are raising their families in Saratoga like my brother and myself."

### Downtown

Over the years, the two siblings have watched Downtown Saratoga transform into a hub of Saratoga culture, boasting fine dining and small boutiques among a spread of locally owned establishments.

However, they said Saratoga hasn't always been a restaurant row.

"Downtown is where we did all the shopping," Parden said. "Downtown had everything we needed — Whitlow's clothing store, Saratoga Hardware, a hobby shop, Saratoga Buy and Save grocery store and banks."

Downtown Saratoga was previously "more the center of town," with a Post Office, banks and stores all compiled in one place, Badgett said.

But as the years have gone by, their family has watched downtown modernize from nurseries to shopping centers and orchards to business parks.

And many favorite stores have closed. Among Badgett's favorites was Shaw's Ice Cream, where "they knew you and your favorite ice cream."

Taking their place have been establishments like Starbucks and Yolata.

Another small shop that closed recently was Gene's Fine Foods, located in the El Quito Plaza on Cox Avenue. This store, whose illustrious lifetime spanned 47 years, was a huge part of the Saratoga community.

With the rents increasing and the preference for online shopping growing, traditionally strong businesses have a tough time surviving.

**"When I was a child, there were more children who played in the streets, rode their bikes to school and to play."**

SARATOGA RESIDENT Nancy Badgett

### School System

Both Parden and Badgett attended Sacred Heart until sixth grade and then Congress Springs for a year, before transferring to the Saratoga's public school system.

Both then attended Santa Clara University, and after creating a life for himself building custom houses in the Silicon Valley, Parden decided to send his children through the same school system.

Their children, current SHS sophomore

Grant Badgett and senior James Parden, attended both Redwood Middle School and Saratoga High School.

"I think the schools are fantastic here and [it was] one of the reasons my wife Lisa and I wanted to raise our family here," Parden said.

Throughout the family's many years here, Parden has seen the improvement of its school systems, from the advancements in technology used in the classroom, to the structural renovations the schools have experienced.

Schools in the Silicon Valley and the Bay Area have also seen a large influx of Asian-American immigrants as tech companies have grown to be the dominant force in the economy and highly skilled workers have become in high demand by the tens of thousands.

In 1960, when Parden and Badgett were children, the population in Saratoga was 99.1 percent Caucasian and nearly 0 percent Asian. In the 2010 census, the population was 53.9 percent Caucasian and 41.5 percent Asian. When the next census occurs in 2020, that trend is sure to increase further.

In part because of the schools' reputations, housing prices have also seen a huge increase in the last couple decades with housing prices currently at an average \$2.56 million, according to statistics from Zillow.

Having been in Saratoga for more than half a century, the Badgett-Parden family has no plans leave.

"Saratoga still has a small town feel to me," Badgett said. "I know all the back roads and can move around the triangle very easily. I can run into a friend at Safeway, Starbucks or downtown. I know I will have family here and ties to the community for years to come." ♦



BY Mathew Luo

Christian schools were founded with the purpose of educating students in God's way by integrating religious teachings and ideals into their curriculum, not only in classes and activities, but also in all secular academic studies.

Interviews with students who attend these schools show that schools like Bellarmine and Valley Christian are moderate in their adherence to Christian missions and visions. They have secularized to the point that Valley Christian junior Ruby Qian claims that "some of the religion teachers don't really teach because they don't want to force Christianity on you," and according to CAPE, Council for American Private Education, 1 in 4 students who attend Christian schools is not Christian.

Even Bellarmine, often considered one of the most religious schools in the Bay Area, readily accepts non-Christians and converts few of them; this trend is also prominent among other Christian schools.

Auches grew up agnostic and had little religious training before starting there. While he found religious class interesting, the weekly masses, daily school prayers and religious classes did not lead to a conversion to Christianity, but it did teach him respect for it.

"I think Christianity is really good for Christian schools and for society," Auches said. "At Bellarmine, they taught you not only to succeed, but to grow as a person. Religion helped with that."

He said the teachers at Bellarmine encouraged students' disparate faiths, and only sought to impart a history and philosophy of Christianity on their students.

**"They taught you not only to succeed, but to grow as a person."**



SENIOR Chris Auches

### A community at Bellarmine

SHS senior Chris Auches attended Bellarmine College Preparatory for his freshman year, and found Bellarmine to have a warm atmosphere, one that is oriented more toward character growth than at a public school like Saratoga High. He enjoyed his time there but transferred to Saratoga High sophomore year because he did not make any sports teams at Bellarmine, which has some of the best and most competitive teams in the state.

Auches said he chose to join Bellarmine for an environment more focused on community than academic perfection.

While Auches's reason for choosing Bellarmine, a more well-rounded environment, was not explicitly religious, Christianity is key to the creation of that environment. Community service and the annual study of a different facet of social justice, Auches's two favorite takeaways and experiences at Bellarmine, were both religion-driven.

Bellarmine teacher Paul Spitzmueller, the head of the religious department at Bellarmine, said the purpose of the school's religion class is to align students' personal philosophies with Catholicism and show the path to Catholicism.

"Our department serves both academic and formational purposes," Spitzmueller said. "We bring the hard lessons learned in the Bible of a people struggling with faith and injustice back into our student's worldview. We attempt to deliver hope and compassion to our students, particularly when the world's values seem to go against that fabric."

### Valley Christian: academic opportunities

Qian has attended Valley Christian, a non-denominational Christian school, since sixth grade and considers herself a non-Christian. Her mother decided to enroll her

in Valley Christian because of its strong art and sports facilities.

Qian said she has found Valley Christian's academic rigor to be somewhat lacking, saying that teachers are too laid back and care more about student happiness than teaching their difficult material.

She views Bible studies with the same academic mentality, saying that the greatest virtue of the class was that it is an "easy A."

Despite this, through her weekly chapel attendance, religion class and 10 required annual community service hours, Qian has developed more understanding and respect for Christianity.

"Before I came to Valley Christian I really knew nothing about Christianity, only that there's a dude that dies on a cross," Qian said. Now she said she has an understanding of the Trinity and a respect for Christianity.

### Faith as a concept

Bellarmine sophomore Justin Cai is steeped in this kind of religious schooling. He attended St. Andrews from K-8, and chose to go to the all-boys' school for high school. Despite over a decade of Christian indoctrination, however, Cai considers himself non-religious and calls his faith only a concept.

Cai isn't sure why he chose his school, though he had quickly found a love for Bellarmine after starting there.

"Even though people hate on me for going to an all-guys school, it's a huge relief to not be around girls. It's a good school with lots of good classes and good people," Cai said.

Cai found the sense of community and the bond between himself and his friends, his favorite part about being at Bellarmine.

On the other hand, he disliked the required religious activities. "Sometimes I have to wake up early for mass and I think, 'why the hell am I doing this?' but every once in awhile you have to dress up and go to mass and worship a saint or something. I still find that annoying. I could sleep during this time! Why do I have

to dress up in a suit?"

Yet his philosophy also betrays Christian overtones. Through religion, Cai had found a kind of solace. While he does not pray or attend church, Cai said he "thinks about God and his message and about how God is love" whenever he is depressed.

Through his experience at Christian schools, Cai has become Christian in everything but name.

"The thing about being at a Christian school, is that you start to accept Christianity," Cai said. "You start to interpret what you learn ... I interpret Christianity as a concept and a way to live my life." ♦

## Christian Upbringing

TOP EDUCATIONAL GOALS ACCORDING TO CHRISTIAN SCHOOL PRINCIPALS:

**68%** RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

**13%** BASIC LITERACY

**12%** ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

**6%** SPECIFIC MORAL VALUES

**1%** VOCATIONAL SKILL AND SELF-DISCIPLINE

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS GRAPHIC BY HOWARD TANG

# Dogs provide emotional support for students

BY Anna Novoselov & Vivien Zhang

Senior Jessica Goldman, then 7 years old, gently stroked her Ruby Cavalier King Charles Spaniel aboard a plane. Although Goldman was excited about traveling to visit her family in Florida, her fear of flying would have caused unbearable anxiety if not for Tyler, her furry companion.

She took deep breaths as the plane rose into the air, suffocating from scenarios of everything that could go wrong. Tyler, however, stayed unruffled, and in turn alleviated her stress.

Dogs like Tyler are referred to as psychiatric service or emotional support dogs: specially trained dogs that assist people with psychiatric or mental health needs. They often help their owners manage the symptoms of anxiety or panic attacks through physical contact.

Goldman adopted Tyler when she was 7. He relieved a lot of her stress at home, and when she started traveling more often, she realized taking him on trips would also help with the stress that came with flying.

Tyler has a certified card that allows him to be a passenger on a plane, rather than being stored in a carrier. Unlike most certified service dogs, though, Tyler has no formal training. To Goldman, Tyler acts as a reminder of home and serves as a "comfort item" that relieves a lot of tension.

The Fair Housing Amendments Act (FHAA) and the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) permit individuals such as Goldman to travel with an emotional support dog. The United States Dog Registry recognizes the ability of pets to provide comfort through emotional hardships.

"I feel more comfortable going through anxious situations with him," Goldman said.

According to a study done in 2017 by UC Davis, psychiatric service dogs are the fourth most common use of service dogs in North America, ranking behind guide dogs for the blind, physically disabled and hearing-impaired. In earlier years, most ser-

vices dogs were only used by individuals with physical disabilities, but since then, the category has grown to accommodate a variety of conditions such as PTSD, autism, diabetes, anxiety and depression.

But even if a dog is not officially recognized as an emotional support dog, it can still help reduce stress and provide comfort.

Sophomore Malika Ahuja said that her Labrador Retriever, Cooper, helps her get through bad moods and cheers her up after long days.

"It's hard to stay upset about something when you have a cute furry little guy trying to get your attention at home," Ahuja said.

Studies have shown that dogs have become attuned to recognizing human behaviors in order to interpret their owner's emotional state. According to AnimalSmart, contact with an animal can reduce the production of cortisol, a stress-inducing hormone, while

increasing levels of oxytocin, a hormone associated with relationship building and affection.

A connection with a pet can ease loneliness, provide comfort and relieve emotional pain. Additionally, the presence of a pet in a household can lessen family tensions.

Ahuja said that Cooper has brought her family together. When someone yells, Cooper starts barking, which helps bring arguments to a close.

A survey conducted by The Harris Poll claims that 95 percent of dog owners display strong relationships with their pets and consider them to be a part of the family.

"We treat Cooper just like a person," Ahuja said. "If anything happened to him, everyone in my family would be heartbroken."

Ahuja said that Cooper is like the smallest sibling in the household; he has comforted her and brightened up her mood countless times.

"He has been there for me when I had nobody else," Ahuja said. "He had gotten me through so many tough times and I don't know where I would be without him." ♦



GRAPHIC BY ELAINE FAN

FALCON FOCUS

# Senior returns to soccer after concussions

BY Elaine Fan & Jayne Zhou

When the doctors confirmed that she'd been concussed for the second time, nearly one and a half years after her first severe concussion, Daphne Liu was forced to make several sacrifices.

At first, they were just academic: She dropped Algebra II Honors due to her shortened attention span that resulted from her concussion.

Then, gradually, she realized that she couldn't continue to play soccer for a smooth recovery, so she was forced to sit out for the season of varsity girls' soccer.

Now, as the girls' soccer season rolls into place, the senior is back on the field as a midfielder.

Liu suffered her first concussion in March 2015 when she was knocked backwards in a club tournament during her freshman year. Despite the dizziness, she continued to play, heading the ball and falling several more times throughout the game, only exacerbating the problem.

In July 2016, Liu received her second concussion after a dropkick from an opposing goalkeeper contacted with her head. With the looming risk of permanent neurologic disability, Liu sat out almost the entire season of her junior year.

She said the biggest impact on her daily life has been having trouble focusing and becoming more sensitive and emotional after her concussion. Although she sometimes still cannot focus for more than 30 minutes, Liu has seen gradual improvement

in her condition since freshman year, when she sometimes had trouble concentrating for only five to 10 minutes.

"I've had these symptoms for a long time and the most important thing for me is learning how to adjust to the challenges," Liu said. "Of course, I'm not happy that school is harder for me and I wasn't able to take as many AP courses, but the most important thing is just knowing your limits and not letting others define who you are."

Despite the barrier, Liu still attended almost every practice and game, wanting to be a part of the team as much as she could.

"She was really good at lifting people up and always being positive," senior outside forward Allison Borch said. "She came to every practice and she helped set up drills, take them apart, talk with our coach. She was on the team; she just couldn't play."

In turn, Liu appreciates her teammates' attitude toward her and is grateful to have such caring people around her, she said.

Naturally, her eventual decision to return to the team prompted concern from her parents, who were uneasy about Liu's health.

"They were scared," Liu said. "But they knew that soccer made me less stressed. They just don't want me to get hurt."

Gaining considerable free time when the team was not in session, Liu said she "felt really lost without soccer" but took the opportunity to make time for other interests such as volunteering. She helped underserved middle schoolers learn social and emotional skills to go through high school



Liu



Courtesy of DAPHNE LIU

Senior Daphne Liu attempts to steal the ball from the Los Gator player in her freshman year.

at the Boys and Girls Club and at Palo Alto Housing Corporation.

Liu is also the top leader in the SHSTV program, which she first experienced as a part of the newspaper staff in her sophomore year. She switched to the program because "it was fun to work hard," and this year became editor in chief of the staff. According to Liu, the program has helped her to develop an identity, and she feels more confident because of her experience.

"Daphne is one of the best students I have ever worked with in my career," teacher Joel Tarbox said. "She is an effective leader,

mentor and collaborator. The vast majority of success and improvements at SHSTV this year are a direct result of Daphne's efforts."

Having waited so long to play, Liu has trained on her own before the season with drills and conditioning in an effort to keep up with her teammates. Though she needs to work on a rusty skills, she hopes to be up to game speed soon.

"I would tell anyone else [with a concussion] a lot of things, but the main thing is that it's OK to go at your own pace," Liu said. "You are in control, and as cheesy as it sounds, you have to believe in yourself." ♦

CROSS COUNTRY

# Nag finishes 21st in state meet, team sees progress

BY Neil Rao

The cross country team closed out a successful season with several Falcons placing at both CCS and the State meet.

Senior captain Amit Nag was the only to place at the state meet on Nov. 18 at Woodward Park in Fresno, ranking 21st in the Division III race.

Along with Nag, seniors Anirudh Rao and Charles Qi as well as junior David Berkowitz, sophomore Kole Tippetts and sophomore Shivam Verma attended CCS this past month.

At CCS, the Falcon's finished sixth in the CCS Division III race on Nov. 11 in Salinas. Nag led the pack, placing fourth out of all runners.

Qi attributed the success this year to changes in training regiment throughout the season.

"We trained much harder this season, incorporating morning practices and weekend runs," Qi said. "The increased distance and practice time pushed us to adapt and when meets came we always performed better."

The boys' team also credits the addition of coach Ian Tippetts with improving team unity and collaboration as well as individual performance.

"Despite any mistakes we've made, I believe we performed very well this season and although I am graduating, I believe our team is well prepared for future years," Rao said. ♦

# American sports teams combine talent and coaching

BY Siva Sambasivam & Alex Wang

NFL

The Eagles are the only team with just one loss as of Nov. 15. Young quarterback Carson Wentz is carrying the high-flying offense with precise throws, sharp reads and key third-down conversions. He is an MVP candidate this year, leading the league in touchdowns and ranking third in yardage. The Eagles' run game is strong with the help of an excellent offensive line; in addition, the defense is playing good football.

Most importantly, though, the Eagles know how to win games. Even though some of their games were closer than they should have been, they can finish off opponents and should find more success in the rest of the season.

The defending NBA champions, Golden State Warriors, may have tough competition this year. While most people still regard the Warriors as the best team in the league, a couple of other teams are catching up. The Celtics are emerging as the best team



Stephen Curry

in the East, led by major offseason acquisition Kyrie Irving, who seems to have no problems leading a team without the help of King James.

After losing arguably their second best player in all star forward Gordon Hayward (also acquired this offseason) to a severe leg injury in the first game, the Celtics lost their first two games to the Cavs and Bucks.

Since then, they have been able to overcome this adversity and have been nearly unstoppable going on a 13-game winning streak, beating teams like the Magic, the Spurs, and the Thunder, sometimes without Irving.

The Celtics, though, have really no solid bench players and their second unit will be a serious question all season long going into the playoffs. On the other hand, the Warriors have one of the deepest lineups in the game, and are positioned for another long run into the playoffs.

Despite their ups and downs and the great play of some other teams, the Golden State Warriors still have the most talented roster in the NBA, with two former NBA finals MVPs and two more All Stars to boot.

MLB

This year's world champions, the Houston Astros, boast a formidable young core with veterans sprinkled in, leading the team to its first title ever over the equally talented Dodgers.

Their offense, headlined by MVP candidate Jose Altuve and All-Star shortstop Carlos Correa, was one of the best run producing offenses in MLB history as well as one of the teams that stuck out the fewest. In the current home run or miss era, the Astros' ability to put the ball in play was what many experts attributed their championship run to.

Their pitching staff was anchored by Justin Verlander and Dallas Keuchel, two previous Cy Young Award winners, the former being one of the few pitchers to ever win the MVP award. Verlander was acquired by the Astros 2 seconds before the waiver trade deadline, and turned what was an already strong team into a championship favorite.

In a thrilling seven-game series including two extra inning affairs, the Astros outduelled the Dodgers, led by Clayton Kershaw, to win the Fall Classic and will look to con-

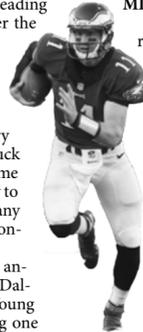
tinue their success into next year with their core of position players and most of their pitching staff returning.

NHL

Toronto FC is easily the best team right now, coming off a record-breaking season that is in competition for the best season ever. Over the regular season, they had the most goals in history with 69, are tied for most games won and are second in best goal differential.

Their forwards, Sebastian Giovinco, who is in MVP conversation, and Jozy Altidore, are two of the best in the league, and defender Justin Morrow is a defender of the year finalist. Toronto has the highest chance of winning the championship.

The Pittsburgh Penguins are skating circles around the rest of the league. The defending Stanley Cup champions are atop the Metropolitan Division and second in the Eastern Conference. Led by captain and two-time Hart Memorial Trophy winner Sidney Crosby, the Penguins look to be like the team that won it all last year and continue to be the favorites for this year's Stanley Cup. ♦



Carson Wentz

# You should play soccer while you still want to

## victoria's secret



Victor Liu

Dear Younger Self,

You're spending your Saturday morning on one of your teammate's living room couches instead of a plastic Chinese classroom folding chair, and today's probably the only day you'll enjoy out of the entire season.

You've spent the previous night pining over the number 7, and you want it for one reason: you'll be 7 years old for the remainder of the season as you languish over 2-hour practices and suffer losses (which luckily, you don't care about yet) in the sweltering sun against other unfortunate boys whose parents signed them up for AYSO.

You tell yourself that at least you get to partially miss Chinese school for laps around the Redwood Middle School dirt field.

You don't get No. 7. The kid who gets 7 says that's what Ronaldo wears, but you don't recall Ronald McDonald having a number on his back. You'll have to settle for No. 6 because that's how old you were last season.

You will hate soccer. After the seventh consecutive loss into the season, you'll find out that you actually prefer studying for Chinese tests over sore ankles and losses so bad that the opposing team takes pity by passing the ball amongst themselves while you and your team fruitlessly chase it.

You begin to care more about the losses — your coach's pep talks and picking the ball out of the net get boring, and you think some variety in the team's record would be nice.

The waning months of fifth grade are remarkable. Sure, you'll be making your historic transition from fifth to sixth grade, but more importantly, the end of the school year marks your retirement from a five-season AYSO career, and you won't miss it one bit.

At that point, not even wearing No. 7 would have made soccer enjoyable or worth it.

Three years will pass between fifth grade and eighth grade before you, like Landon Donovan, will come out of your retirement; however, unlike Donovan, you were never really any good.

And no, the AYSO consolation trophies you received don't say anything about your skills as a soccer player. It's a mystery as to why you choose to return to soccer. Maybe a combination of playing FIFA and a watching highlight reels taught you that there was

more to the sport than dribbling the ball around plastic cones and waiting for water breaks in between sprints.

You'll learn that you want to play games for the fun of it and you'll also find out who Cristiano Ronaldo is. Apparently he's named after Ronald Reagan, not Ronald McDonald.

It'll be your last year in

middle school, and you decide that you'll remember the school year by being a member of the soccer team.

You're more concerned about even making the team than having enough playing time.

## You'll spend most of the season playing left-bench, but you're not complaining either.

Miraculously, you find your way onto the roster after two grueling tryouts. Well, technically no one will get cut from the team, but you can relish in your ability to not be the only exception.

You're given No. 19, and it's not because you're a 19-year-old eighth grader. But hey, even Lionel Messi wore 19 for two seasons. All legends start from the bottom rung of the ladder; only this time, you're on a ladder you actually want to climb.

You'll spend most of the season playing left-bench, but you're not complaining either.

You will probably get less than an hour of play time by the end of the season, but you've learned how to enjoy soccer, something you right now, a 7-year-old kid who still goes to bed at 9 p.m., will not be able to wrap your head around.

So, as I'm closing off this letter, I want to tell you to play FIFA and spend time on YouTube watching soccer highlight reels instead of Annoying Orange. Maybe then you'll be able appreciate soccer while you still can.

From, Future Self

# How I learned to swim past the desperation to succeed



Connie Liang

Dear Younger Self,

Many years ago, you screamed under the rushing water, desperately shaking your head and tilting your face back for a gasp of air.

Mother was forcing you to wash your hair, and you were terrified of the strange liquid, the liquid that

you believed was going to consume and devour you.

A few years after, in 2008, you stood in front of the flat-screen TV, hands plastered on the screen, exulting alongside Michael Phelps as he victoriously rose from the pool and accepted one of his many gold medals at the Beijing Summer Olympics.

A few months later, you managed to persuade your parents to let you take swim classes. Eventually you joined your first team,

creating new friendships as well as new competition along the way. One year ago, you decided to quit club swimming.

Looking back, you should have known that swimming isn't about being the fastest.

Sure, Ryan Lochte makes dolphin kicking look easy, and Katie Ledecky radiates joy after each and every one of her outstanding races, but in the end it doesn't matter if you win as many races as they do or if you find as much success as that other girl has.

If you had allowed yourself to block out the pressure and the voice gnawing inside your head, the voice that resonates most loudly when you are staring at the black-tiled line and glancing at your teammates from the side of your eye, it would have made swimming that much more fun.

The sheer momentum carried on swiftly as you dove in and the camaraderie formed with teammates, who pushed you on through the hardest (and conveniently bracketed) set of the day, are the true beauties of the sport.

Of course, placing first in your heat and winning a couple of medals here and there never hurts.

But when the race to be the fastest member of the team with the most ribbons blinds you from the sport itself, the drive for success becomes a problem.

It's true that so many before you have traveled to Far Westerns, Western Zones, Sectionals and to the National Junior Olympics, but your single 2015 Pacific Swimming JOs shirt doesn't have to sit stuffed ashamedly in the bottom chest of your drawer.

Being proud of your capabilities doesn't depend on the speed or your ranking compared to everyone else.

## Being proud of your capabilities doesn't depend on the speed or your ranking compared to everyone else.

A few seconds at a time. After all, many years ago, you were terrified of the water and pleaded to climb out of the shower; a few years later you learned how to swim longer distances at faster rates.

One year ago, you were drained and decided to climb out of the looming pool.

Your fear of the competition and eventually the sport itself drove you away from the pool, overshadowing the years of hard work and self-improvement.

That's a little ironic, don't you think? From, Future Self

# Tennis more fun when I was bad



Anissa Mu

Dear Younger Self,

You must be enjoying yourself now. With so much free time on your hands, you have the luxury to try out any sport you wish.

I know that you enjoy ballet and are an apt DACA swimmer, but I also know the sport you currently love the most is tennis.

Back in those elementary school days, it was all fun.

Whenever people asked if you loved tennis, it was an immediate and obvious "yes." I don't remember exactly why you loved it so much, but I do remember the genuine happiness and enjoyment you got out of it.

Your bliss reached a peak when you turned 8 and started playing in competitive tournaments.

At first, it was only once a month. You lost often, but it never bothered you. You didn't even care to check your own ranking, and whenever you did win, your exhilaration shot over the moon.

Soon, you began to practice daily, partially because your dad began to push daily lessons, but also because you genuinely loved

to play the sport. Every day after school, you looked forward to an hour of good practice with your coach.

Unfortunately, the story went downhill from here. Later, school became more time-consuming, and you were forced to commit to just one sport.

Naturally, you chose your favorite.

Pretty soon the ones who were in charge of the finances of your tennis career began to try and coach you. The first time was ironically in a vacation in Aruba.

You were pretty determined to refuse the advice, but they insisted you listen and continued to do so when you got home. You knew that they only wanted to help, so you allowed yourself to at least try, but soon the "coaching" became controlling. One thing led to the next, and now all of your decisions regarding tennis are heavily regulated.

You weren't allowed to choose what you believe was best for your game, and you couldn't even choose your own racket and coach. This was very disheartening, but you still liked the feeling of triumph and satisfaction when you won. And honestly, many of the things enforced did show good results.

However, as you began to improve more and play higher level tournaments, the pressure to win

began to pile higher and higher. Now, you attend tournaments almost every weekend in order to gain more points and move up the ladder.

Although you loved knowing that you were showing improvement, tennis gradually became all about winning, and it sucked any kind of enjoyment out of the experience.

People will start to get angry with you when you don't meet expectations. And you'll come to realize that the sport doesn't allow any kind of team or companion who can give you emotional support.

Now, when you win tournament matches, you can't feel anything but relief. And when you lose, especially to those to whom "you're not supposed to lose," your ego and mental state gets thrown into the dirt.

The reason I, your future high school self, is still holding onto tennis is because I don't have other special extracurricular activity. Thankfully, because of our hard work, tennis is something that can be useful for college application.

Despite its loneliness, I have met many great people through this sport that have become some of my closest friends. However still heed my warning: Quit tennis, or play while you still love it.

From, Future Self

**GIRLS' BASKETBALL: YOUNG BASKETBALL TEAM HAS HIGH AMBITIONS**

**Head Coach:** Danny Wallace  
**2016-2017 record:** Overall 14-11, League 5-7  
**2016-2017 recap:** The girls finished fifth in their league, losing 61-37 to Palo Alto in the De Anza League Championships.  
**Key Additions:** Freshman guard Iris Lee, freshman guard Jane Loo and freshman guard Kaitlyn Wu  
**Key Matchups:** Homestead, Los Gatos  
**Star Players:** Senior point guard Chloe Fung and senior post Harshini Ramaswamy  
**Key Losses (graduated athletes):** Rachel Davey, Aryana Goodarzi  
**League:** De Anza League

**Prognosis:**  
 After a successful 2016-17 season ending in a loss to Sobrato High in CCS quarterfinals, the varsity girls' basketball

team will remain in the more competitive De Anza League.  
 The players expect an uphill battle this year.  
 Out of the 13 girls on last year's roster, only four are returning: senior point-guard Chloe Fung, senior post Harshini Ramaswamy, junior post Kristin Kruka and sophomore post Ella Parr.  
 Despite this setback, previous JV coach Danny Wallace, who is switching places with longtime coach Mike Davey, is confident in the team's motivation and skill to achieve its ambitious goal of winning league and hopefully CCS.  
 Ramaswamy had been working on her post moves and will likely be a leading scorer.  
 Wallace said that the players will have to get used to playing with each other and get comfortable with their moves and

team dynamics.  
 "We are going to be spending a good month learning how to be like a team," Wallace said. He hopes the players will have a "phenomenal bond with each other."  
 Wallace, said that he will have to adapt to his team.

**"I think our team will be successful because we have good communication."**

FRESHMAN Iris Lee

Due to the team's small size and

quickness, he hopes his players will push the ball up and down the court.  
 "I really believe in my girls," Wallace said. "I think they can win every game they play. Incoming past JV members and freshmen have already started adapting to the more competitive level of varsity.  
 Open gyms and other training sessions in the off season have offered players a chance to improve their skills.  
 The team will consist of 11 players and a team manager, Sirisha Munukutla. Freshmen Iris Lee, Jane Loo and Kaitlyn Wu are key additions.  
 "I think our team will be successful because we have good communication," Lee said. "Everyone trusts each other." ♦

— Anna Novoselov and Vivien Zhang

**BOYS' BASKETBALL: TEAM LOOKS TO BETTER LAST YEAR'S HISTORIC RUN**

**Head Coach:** Patrick Judge  
**Last season's record:** 21-6  
**Key losses to graduation:** Center Joel Schneidmiller, forward Kian Ghelichkhani, and guard Jonathan Cai  
**Key additions:** Junior point guard Hanlin Sun, junior wing Sehij Dhindsa, freshman guard Tyler Chu  
**Star players:** Senior guards Harrison Fong and Will Turpin; junior guard Kyle Yu  
**Key statistic:** Moved up to the most

competitive division (De Anza/A Division)  
**Prognosis:**  
 The Falcons are coming off perhaps the best finish for a boys' team in school history, when they reached the SCVAL Division CCS championship game last spring. However, they fell short against Monterey, and they return without three of their best players from last season.  
 "Last year we were able to go further

than any other basketball team in Saratoga High History," senior forward Neal Iyengar said, "but we still did not reach our goal of winning a CCS championship.  
 For this year, our main goal is to win two league championships at the JV and varsity levels."  
 This will likely prove to be a tough task as the team lost 6'5" center Joel Schneidmiller along with Kian Ghelichkhani and point guard Jonathan Cai, three of the team's

leading scorers.  
 Despite their losses, Iyengar believes that the Falcons have new players such as Hanlin Sun and Sehij Dhinsa this year who can all contribute in significant ways.  
 "I think we have the talent on this team, to do even better than last year, and win CCS," Iyengar said. ♦

— Siva Sambasivam

**GIRLS' SOCCER: GIRLS LOOK TO BUILD CLOSER RELATIONSHIPS AMONG PLAYERS**

**Head Coach:** Ben Maxwell  
**Last season's record:** 1-10-1  
**Last season recap:** The team performed well in the preseason but struggled in the regular season due to multiple injuries.  
**Key additions:** freshman Leila Chaudhry, junior Jennah El-Ashmawi and sophomore Claire Smerdon  
**Key matchups in the upcoming season:** Los Gatos, Homestead, Los Altos and Santa Clara.  
**Star players:** junior right centerback Sasha Pickard, senior midfielder Chloe McGhee, senior midfielder Daphne Liu  
**Key losses:** Emily Chen  
**League:** SCVAL De Anza league

cant loss of players, including 2017 graduate Emily Chen. Her sister, senior Caroline Chen is currently out with a torn ACL and sophomore goalkeeper Adrienne Chan has opted out of playing this season.  
 Senior Christina Walb will be filling the goalie position for the upcoming season. The Falcons anticipate challenges from losing so many key players but expect to compensate with a lot of hard work.  
 "Losing Emily Chen will be tough for us. Emily was a great communicator and hard worker," coach Ben Maxwell said. "Luckily, we have many good players and some decent incoming freshmen, so we will be working hard to replace her."  
 Citing a lack of team cohesiveness that contributed to disappointing results last season, senior Allison Borch hopes to

build team chemistry and build closer relationships with the freshmen on the team.

**Maxwell stresses the importance of the players' mentality at practice and at games.**

"I think some people's attitudes were kind of not super focused," Borch said. "In terms of team chemistry, not everyone knew each other super well, and that translates onto the field, and we didn't play as well because of that."

Maxwell stresses the importance of the players' mentality at practice and at games.  
 "We look to commit ourselves fully to the job we have, and to make sure we treat every game like a cup final," Maxwell said. "The only way to accomplish making this is to be the best possible versions of ourselves every day in training. Ultimately, our training mentality will transition into games, so we will set our standards on training and maintain them in games."  
 The Falcons will play their first game today against Half Moon Bay High School at home, and then begin their regular season on Jan. 1 against Palo Alto High School after a total of four non-conference games in December. ♦

— Elaine Fan and Jayne Zhou

**BOYS' SOCCER: BOYS ADJUST TO LOSS OF KEY PLAYERS**

**Head Coach:** Chris Stott  
**Last season's record:** Overall: 10-2-3  
 League: 8-2-2  
**Last season recap:** The team had a successful season, placing second in the El Camino League, relying on senior starters.  
**Key Additions:** senior defender Alec Kruka, senior goalkeeper Neil Rao, junior midfielder Kick Poelmann  
**Key Matchups:** Los Gatos (Dec. 11), Gunn (Jan. 12, Feb. 2)  
**Star Players:** senior forward Solomon Bailey, senior midfielders Jack Isacke and

Keon Roohparvar, senior goalkeeper Neil Rao and junior striker Charles Debling  
**Key Losses (graduated athletes):** Brennan Wu, Kevin Yu and Jonathan Yun  
**League:** El Camino League  
**Prognosis:**  
 After placing second in the league and making it to CCS last year, the team must overcome the loss of key players who graduated and work together with their new additions.  
 Last year, the team heavily relied on

star striker Kevin Yu, who scored 25 goals. This year, the team is planning to recuperate from this loss by placing junior Charles Debling in the same position.  
 "When we were on the field and we'd get the ball, the first thing we'd do is look out to him, pass him the ball and hope that he'd score a goal somehow," senior forward Solomon Bailey said.  
 This year, the team must work on maintaining their possession of the ball instead of solely relying on one player.  
 Another disadvantage they face is the

relatively small size of the players.  
 "We're going to be knocked around on the field so before we start the season, we've got to go to the gym and work out," Bailey said. Despite these challenges, senior center back Sahn Rafati is confident in the team's abilities.  
 "I think our team is pretty well matched with other teams so, we should have a chance of making CCS," Rafati said. ♦

— Sandhya Sundaram

**WRESTLING: COACH CONFIDENT THAT FRESHMEN WILL DO WELL FOR SMALL TEAM**

**Head coach:** Daniel Gamez  
**Last season's record:** 2-5  
**Last season recap:** Senior Allie Liddle and junior Clayton Murabito were the only members of the team to qualify for CCS. The team ended the season with just six members from an original roster of 15 due to people dropping the sport.  
**Key additions:** Freshman Linus Blom  
**Key matchups:** Lynbrook on 1/18 and Homestead on 1/25  
**Star players:** Senior Allie Liddle  
**Key losses:** Junior Clayton Murabito, who

now lives in another state.  
**League:** El Camino  
**Prognosis:**  
 Although the Falcons had a losing campaign last season, they are looking to rebound this upcoming season with the addition of freshman Linus Blom, who wrestles competitively outside of school.  
 Blom has competed in tournaments all over the state and



Blom

in an international tournament in Mexico, performing well at several of these tournaments.  
 At the 2016 SCWAY Kids State Tournament in March, for example, Blom placed fourth as an eighth grader in his weight class.  
 Even with the addition of Blom, however, the team is still dealing with minimal signups for the sport.  
 Although the team now has

ten members on the roster, surpassing their member totals from last year, they are still struggling to win tournaments with so few members.  
 Junior Victor Chen, a returning member of the team, said that the consequence of having a small team is the increased likelihood of losing tournaments because the team has to forfeit so many weight classes. ♦

— Mathew Luo and Rahul Vadlakonda

**WRESTLING**

**Team struggles with lack of participation**

by Mathew Luo & Rahul Vadlakonda

Each year, the struggle is the same for the school's wrestling team: They can't field a big enough team, sometimes ending up with fewer than 10 members.  
 Schools around the area such as Monta Vista, Gunn and Lynbrook all had more than 20 athletes participating last year.  
 Since most schools in the El Camino League have more than 15

members, the SHS wrestling team can't fill its weight classes and loses dual meets because of the forfeits that result. Each forfeited weight class out of the 14 possible ones costs the Falcons 7 points..  
 Last year's team fared particularly poorly in terms of membership, with 15 wrestlers starting the year but only five on the roster at the end.  
 Junior Victor Chen, a returning member of the team, said that the causes of the drops varied for each

team member. Some quit after injuries; one parent pulled a female wrestler out because she did not like the idea of her wrestling with boys. Another factor is the sheer difficulty of the sport.  
 "Our coach [Daniel Gamez] is very hard on conditioning; most people can't handle it," Chen said. "If you are just a regular person, they condition you hard and you can't stand it. And especially, if you don't win, you feel like you are conditioning for no purpose."

Athletic director Tim Lugo said many other schools seem to be struggling with the similar challenges. In fact, he said Santa Clara High School dropped its wrestling program altogether because of these struggles with numbers.  
 Though the number of team members has seemed to shrink in the past couple of years, Lugo said that he is nonetheless hopeful about the team's recovery in future years.  
 "I went by the wrestling room

on Nov. 16 and we had 13 students working very hard, so I am optimistic about the future, as all but two members were underclassmen," Lugo said.  
 For his part, Chen said he likes wrestling on a small team because it strengthens the bonds between the team members.  
 "There's more fun to being on small teams because everyone knows everyone and the coaches pay attention to everyone," Chen said. ♦

**WEATHER**

**Outdoor sports adjust to extreme conditions**

by Sandhya Sundaram

In September, local temperatures reached 108 degrees, and the National Weather Service issued heat advisories. Last winter, the rainy season hit hard, drenching the fields and and sometimes making them unplayable.  
 With fluctuating weather conditions throughout the year, outdoor sports have to adjust by rescheduling games and finding officials, while also trying not to interfere with students' academic schedules.  
 When games aren't cancelled, athletes often play in poor or uncomfortable conditions.  
 In September, cross country and football teams experienced record heat during practices and games.

Junior cross country runner Elizabeth Kardach said that it was is very tiring to run in the heat, and the runners needed frequent water breaks to stay hydrated.  
 "One time, when it was 105 degrees we just ran to a pool," Kardach said.  
 Athletic director Tim Lugo said that the athletic department gets advice from CCS officials on whether to play or not, but the school ultimately makes this decision.  
 Coaches have the right to ask to reschedule games, but if the other school disagrees, the teams must play.  
 On Sept. 1, the Falcons played Silver Creek on a Friday night when the temperature was over 100, perhaps the hottest football game in the history of the school.

By contrast, during the winter and spring, soccer, baseball and softball sometimes face cold and wet weather.  
 The general rule in soccer is to play unless there are large, standing puddles on the ground or lightning, both of which pose safety issues.  
 Soccer has the most difficulty with the weather since it is often cold and rainy in January and February. "I admire what they do out there.  
 I think they clearly have the worst season to play in," Lugo said. A few years ago, a soccer playoff game couldn't be rescheduled, so he said the teams were forced to play in "torrential downpour."  
 Lugo said that although there was no standing water on the field, the situation was uncomfortable

for everyone.  
 Lugo said that weather problems were made worse with the school's previous bell schedule when games had to be rescheduled due to rain.  
 This particularly impacted baseball players, whose parents and teachers got frustrated because they were missing the same classes every day.  
 The schools are also in charge of scheduling the referees, but this is not as simple as it seems — since most sports are short on officials, there is not much flexibility for rescheduling, Lugo said.  
 For this reason, the school tries to let the referee association know by noon on the day of the game whether it will take place if there are any doubts, he said.  
 However, this isn't possible

sometimes: The weather can clear up, or schools can alternatively groom fields to be playable.  
 Although weather makes it challenging to play games, there are also some unexpected perks.  
 Senior soccer player Chris Auches said that sometimes playing in the rain can actually be fun.  
 "When you slide you go a lot further and it's easier to score because the ball skips a lot faster on the ground," Auches said.  
 The coaches also train their players to get used to these conditions.  
 "The soccer coaches do a really good job of warming players up behind the bench," Lugo said. "Once your body starts to warm up internally and your muscles get loosened up, you're going to be fine." ♦

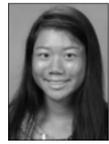
**GIRLS' TENNIS**

**Falcons face narrow defeat in CCS semis**

by Jay Kim & Anissa Mu

After winning in the CSS quarterfinals against Monte Vista, the girls' varsity tennis team lost 4-3 to Saint Francis in the semifinals on Nov. 11.  
 The match against Saint Francis was extremely close.  
 The teams were tied at 3-3, and it was up to the No. 3 doubles team of freshman Juhi Patel and junior Khara Berkawoots to determine whether they win or lose.  
 "Those people were also pretty good and we got very tired before facing Los Gatos in the finals."  
 According to Ren, they didn't expect to win easily or get through the draw without some tough matches.  
 They were about to face many top-ranked players from high-level USTA (United States Tennis Association) tournaments.  
 "I always love playing doubles with Monica," Ren said.  
 "I think individuals was a really fun way to close out my last season and I'm happy we ended on such a great note." ♦

in the finals on Nov. 14.  
 Since this is Ren's last year playing for the team, participating at CCS took on a new meaning.  
 It was the second year where only Stratakos and Ren qualified for CCS.  
 This made the loss against Los Gatos especially disappointing because they were CCS winners last year.  
 "Our first two rounds were easier and then in the semi-finals we played Menlo-Atherton, which was really challenging," Stratakos said.  
 "Those people were also pretty good and we got very tired before facing Los Gatos in the finals."  
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Ren



Stratakos

**BASKETBALL**

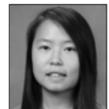
**Shooting machine helps players improve form and accuracy**

by Kaylene Morrison & Elaine Sun

Usually parked in one corner of the gym is a machine with a large net. This machine, called the Gun 6000, has become a tool all the basketball teams are using to hone players' shooting skills. The machine slightly resembles a tennis ball machine with a funnel made of netting planted on top.  
 When in use, it is positioned underneath a basketball hoop. It works this way: Players will arc basketballs over the lip of the net. Whether or not they go in the hoop, the balls funnel in the contraction where they eventually make their way to the front of the lineup and are shot out through a hole back to the shooter.  
 Though it is not nearly as dangerous as an actual gun, the machine's constant spewing of basketballs can result in embarrassing accidents.  
 "I'm not naming names," varsity girls' basketball coach Danny Wallace said as he aimed a light-hearted glance at freshman varsity player Kaitlyn Yu, "but sometimes if they're not focused, the ball comes and they freak out for a second."  
 Yu has experienced this first hand.  
 "When I was shooting once I turned around and thought I was done, so I went to the shooting machine to turn it off and the ball

shot out and almost hit my face," Yu explained.  
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Courtesy of KBACoach.com

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retrieve their own rebounds and can practice shooting from anywhere up to half court. This, plus the ability to program intervals at which the machine releases balls, allows players to practice shooting on the move at intervals that allow anything from a dribble, to a pass then shoot scenario.  
 "It makes things so much easier. You can have your best player or any player work on their own without any coaching," Wallace said.  
 Senior point guard Chloe Fung uses the contraption around once a week.  
 "It's good to shoot on the machine and then practice without it so it can translate into real game situations," Fung said. ♦

WRESTLING

# Team struggles with lack of participation

BY Mathew Luo & Rahul Vadlakonda

Each year, the struggle is the same for the school's wrestling team: They can't field a big enough team, sometimes ending up with fewer than 10 members.

Schools around the area such as Monta Vista, Gunn and Lynbrook all had more than 20 athletes participating last year.

Since most schools in the El Camino League have more than 15

members, the SHS wrestling team can't fill its weight classes and loses dual meets because of the forfeits that result. Each forfeited weight class out of the 14 possible ones costs the Falcons 7 points.

Last year's team fared particularly poorly in terms of membership, with 15 wrestlers starting the year but only five on the roster at the end.

Junior Victor Chen, a returning member of the team, said that the causes of the drops varied for each

team member. Some quit after injuries; one parent pulled a female wrestler out because she did not like the idea of her wrestling with boys. Another factor is the sheer difficulty of the sport.

"Our coach [Daniel Gamez] is very hard on conditioning; most people can't handle it," Chen said. "If you are just a regular person, they condition you hard and you can't stand it. And especially, if you don't win, you feel like you are conditioning for no purpose."

Athletic director Tim Lugo said many other schools seem to be struggling with the similar challenges. In fact, he said Santa Clara High School dropped its wrestling program altogether because of these struggles with numbers.

Though the number of team members has seemed to shrink in the past couple of years, Lugo said that he is nonetheless hopeful about the team's recovery in future years.

"I went by the wrestling room

on Nov. 16 and we had 13 students working very hard, so I am optimistic about the future, as all but two members were underclassmen," Lugo said.

For his part, Chen said he likes wrestling on a small team because it strengthens the bonds between the team members.

"There's more fun to being on small teams because everyone knows everyone and the coaches pay attention to everyone," Chen said. ♦

WEATHER

# Outdoor sports adjust to extreme conditions

BY Sandhya Sundaram

In September, local temperatures reached 108 degrees, and the National Weather Service issued heat advisories. Last winter, the rainy season hit hard, drenching the fields and sometimes making them unplayable.

With fluctuating weather conditions throughout the year, outdoor sports have to adjust by rescheduling games and finding officials, while also trying not to interfere with students' academic schedules.

When games aren't cancelled, athletes often play in poor or uncomfortable conditions.

In September, cross country and football teams experienced record heat during practices and games.

Junior cross country runner Elizabeth Kardach said that it was very tiring to run in the heat, and the runners needed frequent water breaks to stay hydrated.

"One time, when it was 105 degrees we just ran to a pool," Kardach said.

Athletic director Tim Lugo said that the athletic department gets advice from CCS officials on whether to play or not, but the school ultimately makes this decision.

Coaches have the right to ask to reschedule games, but if the other school disagrees, the teams must play.

On Sept. 1, the Falcons played Silver Creek on a Friday night when the temperature was over 100, perhaps the hottest football game in the history of the school.

By contrast, during the winter and spring, soccer, baseball and softball sometimes face cold and wet weather.

The general rule in soccer is to play unless there are large, standing puddles on the ground or lightning, both of which pose safety issues.

Soccer has the most difficulty with the weather since it is often cold and rainy in January and February. "I admire what they do out there."

I think they clearly have the worst season to play in," Lugo said.

A few years ago, a soccer play-off game couldn't be rescheduled, so he said the teams were forced to play in "torrential downpour."

Lugo said that although there was no standing water on the field, the situation was uncomfortable

for everyone.

Lugo said that weather problems were made worse with the school's previous bell schedule when games had to be rescheduled due to rain.

This particularly impacted baseball players, whose parents and teachers got frustrated because they were missing the same classes every day.

The schools are also in charge of scheduling the referees, but this is not as simple as it seems — since most sports are short on officials, there is not much flexibility for rescheduling, Lugo said.

For this reason, the school tries to let the referee association know by noon on the day of the game whether it will take place if there are any doubts, he said.

However, this isn't possible

sometimes: The weather can clear up, or schools can alternatively groom fields to be playable.

Although weather makes it challenging to play games, there are also some unexpected perks.

Senior soccer player Chris Auches said that sometimes playing in the rain can actually be fun.

"When you slide you go a lot further and it's easier to score because the ball skips a lot faster on the ground," Auches said.

The coaches also train their players to get used to these conditions.

"The soccer coaches do a really good job of warming players up behind the bench," Lugo said. "Once your body starts to warm up internally and your muscles get loosened up, you're going to be fine." ♦

GIRLS' TENNIS

## Falcons face narrow defeat in CCS semis

BY Jay Kim & Annessa Mu

After winning in the CSS quarterfinals against Monte Vista, the girls' varsity tennis team lost 4-3 to Saint Francis in the semifinals on Nov. 11.

The match against Saint Francis was extremely close.

The teams were tied at 3-3, and it was up to the No. 3 doubles team of - freshman Juhi Patel and junior Khiara Berkawoots to determine whether they win or lose. The pair fought hard and took their match to a third set but lost.

In the quarterfinals on Nov. 11, the team pulled out a strong win in against rival Monte Vista, winning 5-2.

In their first CCS match on Nov. 2, the Falcons delivered a crushing defeat against Aptos High, sweeping them 7-0.

Following the team's CSS elimination, sophomore Monica Stratakos and senior Stephanie Ren played doubles in individual CSS tournament.

Beating Menlo in the semifinals, but losing against Los Gatos

in the finals on Nov. 14.

Since this is Ren's last year playing for the team, participating at CCS took on a new meaning.

It was the second year where only Stratakos and Ren qualified for CCS.

This made the loss against Los Gatos especially disappointing because they were CCS winners last year.

"Our first two rounds were easier and then in the semi-finals we played Menlo-Atherton, which was really challenging," Stratakos said.

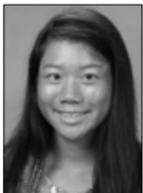
"Those people were also pretty good and we got very tired before facing Los Gatos in the finals."

According to Ren, they didn't expect to win easily or get through the draw without some tough matches.

They were about to face many top-ranked players from high-level USTA (United States Tennis Association) tournaments.

"I always love playing doubles with Monica," Ren said.

"I think individuals was a really fun way to close out my last season and I'm happy we ended on such a great note." ♦



Ren



Stratakos

BASKETBALL

## Shooting machine helps players improve form and accuracy

BY Kaylene Morrison & Elaine Sun

Usually parked in one corner of the gym is a machine with a large net. This machine, called the Gun 6000, has become a tool all the basketball teams are using to hone players' shooting skills. The machine slightly resembles a tennis ball machine with a funnel made of netting planted on top.

When in use, it is positioned underneath a basketball hoop. It works this way: Players will arc basketballs over the lip of the net. Whether or not they go in the hoop, the balls funnel in the contraction where they eventually make their way to the front of the lineup and are shot out through a hole back to the shooter.

Though it is not nearly as dangerous as an actual gun, the machine's constant spewing of basketballs can result in embarrassing accidents.

"I'm not naming names," varsity girls' basketball coach Danny Wallace said as he aimed a light-hearted glance at freshman varsity player Kaitlyn Yu, "but sometimes if they're not focused, the ball comes and they freak out for a second."

Yu has experienced this first hand.

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shot out and almost hit my face," Yu explained.

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Courtesy of KBACoach.com

The Gun 8000 shooting machine

retrieve their own rebounds and can practice shooting from anywhere up to half court. This, plus the ability to program intervals at which the machine releases balls, allows players to practice shooting on the move at intervals that allow anything from a dribble, to a pass then shoot scenario.

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