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MEASURE E

New gym won't be built; other projects will

BY ElaineToh & AnanyaVadlakonda

As workers begin renovating the 800 wing into a new Student Center that will open in the fall, school officials decided to designate the remaining Measure E bond funds to go to other refurbishments around the campus.

According to principal Paul Robinson, the school is planning to modernize several buildings. The renovations include updating the administration building and 900 wing, which houses robotics, fixing the school's ventilation systems and reroofing parts of the school.

With \$44 million available for renovations from Measure E money, administrators were forced to cut down on their wish list of projects in order to meet a budget.

Perhaps the most prominent project that won't be built is an additional gym on campus to help avoid the conflicting schedules of various sports teams and music groups such as winter guard. With the limited gym space, teams like badminton are sometimes forced have practices from 7 to 9 p.m.

>> **CONSTRUCTION** on pg. 4

ROBOTICS

FRC forges bonds of steel

BY ElaineFan & SivaSambasivam

Loud rock music thrums from the lit interior of the robotics room, echoing into the darkened music quad. Tools and parts are strewn over every available surface of the repurposed art room. A kitchen area holds snacks for the long night of work ahead, next to which sophomore Rohan Rao adjusts a 3D figure on a desktop monitor. Further into the back of the room, junior Divya Aggarwal wires an intricate circuit board, while junior Ian Le stands before a line of machines and carefully operates a lathe with the guidance of a mentor.

Every member of FRC team 649 — students, parents and mentors — has a role, and the product of their combined work comes together in the centerpiece of the room: their Magikarp robot.

Or, at least a replica of the robot the team took into competition last weekend for the first time — with mixed results.

The original Magikarp, sporting an arm and a metallic frame that extends as a lift, stands completed in the adjacent room, covered entirely in a plastic bag. After the kick-off date on Jan. 6, in which the 2018 FIRST Robotics Competition game was revealed to teams across the world through an explana-

>> **FRC** on pg. 6



SCHOOL COMMUNITY MAKES VOICES HEARD IN ONGOING GUN DEBATE

BY ElaineFan & ElaineToh

Walking down Herriman Avenue and Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road, students left the school and crossed streets holding up signs as some cars honked in approval.

Upon returning to the campus, they gathered into a large circle in the upper field and linked arms, chanting "No more silence, end gun violence."

The protest, one of thousands at schools around the nation at 10 a.m. on March 14, was held to commemorate the Feb. 14 mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., which left 17 dead and 17 wounded and call for stricter gun control laws.

Only a few days after the shooting, dozens of Marjory Stoneman Douglas students, infuriated by the lack of government response in the wake of their classmates' and staff members' deaths, spoke out at a CNN town hall on Feb. 21 in Sunrise, Fla.

They also expressed their thoughts via social media and took their arguments to the state capitol.

>> **PARKLAND** on pg. 5

Courtesy of MANA SHIMOKAWA

>> what'sinside

■ **OPINION**

Civil disobedience

Reporters urge students to realize their own strength and protest regardless of consequences. **pg. 7**

■ **LIFESTYLES**

We're better than you

Similar student activities engage in friendly rivalries with each other. **pg. 12-13**

■ **IN-DEPTH**

Sexual harassment

When a female student attended a concert, she didn't anticipate a predator awaited. **pg. 19**

news >> **briefs**

Math Club members take elite invitational exam

On March 6, 34 members of Toga Math Club took the American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME). They qualified for this more challenging test by scoring in the top 5 percent on the American Math Contest (AMC) 12 or top 2.5 percent on the AMC 10.

The AIME is a 15-question 3-hour test in which every answer is an integer from 0 to 999. As with the AMC 10 and 12 exams, all problems on the AIME can be solved using precalculus methods. Calculators are not allowed, and there is no penalty for guessing.

To qualify to the next stage of competition, United States of America (Junior) Mathematical Olympiad (USA(J)MO), an index is calculated based on the number of questions correctly answered on the AIME added to the student's AMC score. Traditionally, around 500 students qualify for the USA(J)MO; last year, seven qualified from Saratoga High.

USA(J)MO cutoffs are expected to be released early next month, and the test will occur on April 18 and 19.

— Frederick Kim and Sherrie Shen

Fourteen students participate in the science fair

Fourteen students from the school stood in a pool of over 1,000 students from schools all across the Santa Clara Valley on March 14, presenting what had been months of research and scientific lab hours that ultimately compiled into one single poster at the Synopsys Science and Engineering Fair.

Judges from high-profile companies and foundations designated winners from each category of research, ranging from Biochemistry/Microbiology to Software Engineering. The award ceremony will be held on April 8.

From SHS, the freshmen participating were Krish Chaudhary, Kaushik Jasti, Arvind Ramachandran and Alekha Vadlakonda; the sophomores were Raj Janardhan, Ashvin Maheshwar and Ananya Vadlakonda; the juniors were Mackenzie Lee, Ruchi Maheshwari, Sohil Pokharna, Kiran Rachamalla and Arian Raj; the seniors were Ayush Gupta and Sohini Kar.

"Science fair gives me a way to express my creativity through the topics I choose and through the methods that I choose to go about that research," Alekha Vadlakonda said. "Even though this year was my fourth year competing, the [level] of innovation still never ceases to excite me."

— Ananya Vadlakonda

Dance commission plans for Spring Fling events

Last year, more than 200 students crammed into the Small Gym, dancing the night away during the first-ever Spring Fling dance, as a culmination to Spring Fling Week.

The Spring Fling dance, taking place this year on April 7, replaced the longtime Sadie Hawkins dance last year in an effort to boost attendance.

The main difference this year is the theme, the commissioners said. This year the theme is called #SeaLife to maintain the trend using the hashtags for the entire Spring Fling week.

"The difference this year is the under the sea theme. We are incorporating more decorations this year and more activities to involve students and get more people to come to this dance," dance commissioner Connor Reyes said.

— Jayne Zhou

>> falcononline



Top Story

Remaining Measure E funds will be used on renovations but no new gym on pg. 4

Top Video

Senior Kyle Wang and junior Roshan Verma give speeches in memory of the Parkland school shooting victims prior to a walkout around the school.

FALCON // FREDERICK KIM

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



Courtesy of ISAIAH VIVERO

La La Land >> The Junior Media Arts Program class embarked on its annual trip to Los Angeles on March 14. In Los Angeles, they visited film studios, saw the University of Southern California's cinematic department and took in the sights and sounds that the City of Angels has to offer.

ASB

Club Rush a success despite rain

BY Sandhya Sundaram

After the school's first three-day Club Fair held in the quad last semester in October, clubs once again came together at lunch on March 16 to sell food and drinks and fundraise during the annual Club Rush.

Co-club commissioner Ishana Narayanan said that this optional event drew many sign-ups from different clubs to sell food, from Chipotle to Jamba Juice, in order to raise money to fund the clubs' activities.

This year, Club Rush didn't see any significant changes in the execution from previous years, with its goal remaining the same, to fundraise.

"Despite the rain, everyone still came out to support the 30 clubs that participated."

SENIOR Ishana Narayanan

On the contrary, Club Fair served to inform and recruit.

"This is an optional event and I understand that March is an extremely busy and stressful month for lots of students at Saratoga," Narayanan said. "My goal for this event was simply to get students involved not only in their respective clubs but to also reach out to

other students." The commissioners and administration improvised a solution the morning before the event in order to avoid the rain.

They removed the fold-out tables in the open quad to the area underneath the overhang above the area behind the quad steps, ensuring the event could go on.

Ultimately, despite the notorious school-related stress associated with March and the daunting weather challenges that afternoon, Narayanan thinks the event went well.

"I think that Club Rush was really successful," she said. "Despite the rain, everyone still came out to support the 30 clubs that participated." ♦

FUNDRAISER

Benefit honors former teacher

BY Ashley Feng & Elaine Toh

Just before intermission of the Benefit Fashion Show held on March 3 in the Large Gym, Rebeca Marshburn, the former activities director who moved to Texas two years ago, stepped onto the stage and shared her story of losing her daughter Courtney to cancer more than a decade ago.

This year, the show was held to raise money for cancer research and in honor of Marshburn by bringing her back to the school. The event raised roughly \$6,500 to donate to the American Cancer Society and had record participation with more than 200 student models.

According to head commissioner Kate Bossi, finding a charity to donate to was somewhat of a journey in itself.

"We had a lot of different ideas, but nothing seemed to work out," Bossi said. "Then, Mr. (Matt) Torrens gave us the amazing idea of inviting Mrs. Marshburn to the show. After he explained her story to us, we knew the American Cancer Society was perfect."

In order to make the commissioners' idea of inviting their

beloved former teacher a reality, they, along with the help of Leadership teacher and current activities director Matt Torrens, raised money to fly Marshburn out from Texas to visit the school — an idea which "hit him like a brick" due to his great respect for her.

In this year's show, the commissioners also added an "Design Your Own" category, where student designers freshman Carminho Moniz, junior Isabella Rieken and senior Katrina Sung produced original outfits to model on the runway, surprising audience members.

"I really enjoyed the section where students modeled other classmate's designs," sophomore Kevin Chang said. "I thought it was a really cool addition to the show since I didn't know that was an option."

Additionally, during the preparation for this event, the commissioners ran into problems with securing sponsorships from stores, especially for men's clothing.

"It's easy to see the organization as simply contacting stores and regulating the models, but many of the communication that we had

to do was much more complicated than one email," sophomore commissioner Ines Picard said.

The commissioners overcame this by asking every store within in vicinity through phone calls, emails and in-person visits.

According to English teacher and Benefit Fashion Show adviser Natasha Ritchie, the few weeks preceding the show were extremely hectic, requiring an immense amount of work: putting together the show, arranging the borrowing of clothes, collecting silent auction items, transforming the gym and managing about 200 students.

"While we encountered numerous issues with setup, the show seemed to go well," Ritchie said.

In the end, the commissioners felt this year's Benefit Fashion Show was a success, and according to Bossi, it remains one of the most inclusive and largest activities on campus.

"People get to feel confident about themselves as they walk down the runway, and the best part about it is that it's all for an amazing cause," Bossi said. ♦



Marshburn

Senior trips offer conclusion to high school adventures

BY Michelle Lee & Katherine Zhou

As summer nears, seniors prepare for traditions such as senior pranks, Senior Ditch Day and graduation festivities. But another tradition — a theme covered in classic movies such as "Taken" — is one of the most highly anticipated: taking senior trips.

Senior trips are a vacation, usually taken the summer after graduation, where seniors embark on an adventure with their friends from high school, a last hurrah for the memories they've made in high school.

"Basically, it's when you can enjoy a summer with your friends and not have to worry about academics or college applications. You can just relax and have fun," senior Vera Hsu said.

In order to organize these trips, seniors often plan months in advance to ensure that the trip runs smoothly. Cost, transportation and housing are obviously important aspects to planning a senior trip; however, another major roadblock to a lot of group's planning is parental approval.

Senior Gaurav Mohan and nine of his

friends initially faced this difficulty upon deciding the location of their trip. While Mohan wanted to travel to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico — his older sister went for her senior trip — many of his friends parents were uncertain about an international trip with a group that large. Instead, the group decided on visiting Orlando, Fla.

"We wanted to go somewhere where we probably haven't gone and wouldn't go in the near future. Orlando is similar to Southern California, but Florida has the Everglades and Disney World," Mohan said.

To avoid facing difficulties that come with going to a foreign country, some groups opt out for locations some members are familiar with; in the case of senior Vera Hsu, she and her group of six friends are going to Taipei, Taiwan, where her family owns a house, eliminating the cost of housing for the trip.

"We wanted to do an international trip but we were hesitant because of costs like hotel, food, and shopping," Hsu said. "We decided to go to Taiwan because I have a house there. Since I'm familiar with Taiwan's streets and it's [the group's] first time going [to Taiwan], it'll be fun."

Despite the difficulties of planning,



Courtesy of ERIC SZE

Class of 2017 alumni Eric Sze, Yuna Kim, Ellicia Chiu and Jenny Qian visited Southeast Asia for their senior trip. "I was already going to China and Korea," Qian said, "and Eric and I decided spontaneously to go to Japan."

seniors willingly put themselves through the stress because they know that the trip will be a cherished ending to high school.

"A senior trip [is an opportunity] to enjoy

our last time that we'll all be together by ourselves, before we go to college," Mohan said. "It basically commemorates our friendship for the last four years." ♦



GRAPHIC BY OLIVIA LU

Teachers urge seniors to 'stay focused' on classes

BY Howard Tang

Senior Ayush Gupta finally feels like he's free. He's doing his homework and test studying "at the last second," and dabbling in new activities like photography and modeling.

"I'm just chilling in the last few months before I go to college," senior Ayush Gupta said. "I'll do whatever, like attending concerts or going ham on balling."

But students like Gupta — who was accepted to MIT via its Early Action program — still face a lingering threat if they slack too much: getting rescinded. Falling completely off track and bombing all their tests can get them kicked out of the very school which offered them a spot in their incoming freshman class.

Although these such occurrences are relatively rare at Saratoga High, they have occurred in the past.

"Getting rescinded is real," AP Statistics teacher Jennifer Mantle said. "I have had students get rescinded from their top college for not having appropriate grades in AP Stats. They still went to college, just not their first choice for their first year."

To try and prevent this frightening possibility from becoming real, some teachers have come up with ways to try and convince seniors to keep up with their work and stay engaged in class. For example, Mantle sets a clear schedule of the coursework and the expectations for the second semester.

All of her seniors receive a new "contract" that they must bring home detailing their academic responsibilities as second-semester seniors, as well as the risks of failing to fulfill them.

"I encourage them to not fall off the wagon — not in a threatening way, but just in a real and honest way," Mantle said. "I try to make it fun and do a variety of activities when I can. But in the end, I remind students that it's their responsibility to stay afloat."

Although the passion and spirit of some seniors have subsided, some teachers have still seen a mixture of attitudes.

While seniors have less stress and have more time to engage in activities they enjoy,

the freedom of the last few months of high school can be a double-edged sword.

English teacher Jason Friend thinks the second semester is a valuable opportunity for seniors — saying they have a chance to learn without having to obsess about the race into college or worry about whether taking an intellectual risk will earn them a B+ rather than an A.

"I encourage them to not fall off the wagon — in a real and honest way."

TEACHER Jennifer Mantle



That said, some seniors choose to take the other path and stop learning, Friend noted. They stop doing their work just because they have nothing to do it for, essentially wasting the precious moment.

"When this happens, I find it quite sad," Friend said, "since it suggests that those students really have been so caught up in the 'rat race' to college mentality that the only thing that motivates them is jumping through hoops to get to the next thing, rather than actually being authentically intellectually curious."

Gupta agrees that he now has an extra opportunity to learn something new in second semester, but he noted that the opportunity does not necessarily have to increase academic knowledge. He hopes to try out new things, liking sneaking into random classes, and pick up the old skills that they dropped as they entered high school.

"I think the freedom to gamble with my grades and the freedom to do crazy things and get away as just a dumb kid has made me more able to go out of my way to pursue crazy or fun things I really want to try," Gupta said. ♦

Pressures ease; free time increases

BY Elaine Sun

Since his freshman year, senior Nicholas Di has been involved in a wide variety of campus organizations, from class office, to ASB, to helping start the boys' dance team, balancing his extracurricular involvement with a demanding course load. However, with college applications sent out, decisions rolling in, and academic stress significantly lower, Di, like many of his classmates, is happily taking advantage of the low-stakes semester to relax a little bit.

Di said that because there is less pressure to focus religiously on grades, he is able to spend more time with friends and can also do things like "watching YouTube in his free time" — something he seldom had time for before — without abandoning the duties that come with his positions of leadership.

Senior Tyler Wu has also found it fun to be able to hang out with friends without the constraint of a heavy homework load, but hasn't abandoned learning altogether, and appreciates how the extra time allows him to learn on his own terms, informally.

"I spend a lot of time playing basketball after school and on weekends, but I also

really like going on the Internet and learning about random stuff," Wu said.

Senior Tristan Xiao, who has played tennis on the school team all four years, decided after finishing up his college applications to get a part time job at Eagle Fuster Tennis Academy, as a tennis coach for elementary school-age children.

"It's pretty fun and interesting to get another perspective on tennis," Xiao said. "Like as a coach as opposed to as a player." Senior Jaijit Singh, a varsity athlete, doesn't neglect track and field practices, but after careful contemplation of how he could spend his extra time outside of existing commitments, has been catching up on critically acclaimed movies that he had not previously made time to watch.

His favorites so far have been "Whiplash," "Birdman" and "La La Land." Singh appreciates the light feeling that comes with college applications being over.

"Being a second-semester senior is great because expectations are pretty much off the table," Singh said. "You've already done what you can in high school, and this semester is about preparing for what's ahead and not exactly focusing on the 'now.'" ♦

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Alyssa Delaney, M.S.Ed.

CITY COUNCIL

Mayor: City offers high school students chance to witness government at work

By Kaylene Morrison & Elicia Ye

As part of its recent plan to increase civic awareness among students, the officers of the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) have been inviting members of the local government to speak at the club's lunch meetings.

Saratoga's new mayor, Mary-Lynne Bernald, attended a club meeting on Feb. 12, introducing her work on the council and the idea of a mock student council with more than 30 students. She discussed the city government makeup, the difference between the public's perception of politicians and occurrences in a local government, ups and downs in each council member's career and opportunities for the city and the school to work together to build a partnership.

"I firmly believe it will be an exercise beneficial to all of us," Bernald wrote in an email. "Now, more than ever, it is essential that our students have an understanding of how government works. Government works best when its constituents are engaged. Decisions should never be made in a vacuum."

To achieve her goal, Bernald has proposed several ideas and discussed them with city manager James Lindsay, regarding ways to engage students in possible programs. Ideas she proposed included the following:

- The opportunity to tour City Hall to learn about the professions which take place there, which would be followed up with a Q&A session, bringing to life a political science course.
- Being Mayor for a day, which would involve students shadowing Bernald part of the day and later taking the reins during

a city council meeting that evening, which would be broadcast live on Saratoga's local KSAR TV station.

The chance to be part of mock situations in which students would review the various components of a government and then determine a spending budget to address priorities for the city.

This last suggestion would take place during the summer or a school break in order to take into account students' schedules that consist of "heavy-duty academic, sports and community commitments."

By offering different options that could fit their schedules, the mayor hopes to still give them a hands-on chance to engage in "an enjoyable way to learn how government works."

FBLA secretary junior Angeli Huang thinks that any of the suggestions would be

a great learning experience for club members.

"It's a good idea. We need to get more people involved to make it work," Huang said.

Bernald looks to develop the collaboration into a long-term relationship going forward. While her four-year elected term on the City Council is coming to an end in December 2018 and she would need to be re-elected to continue her work on the council, she knows that once established, this project will continue beyond "any one Council Member's term" with full staff support.

"Policies made today will surely affect our youth in the future," she said. "The better informed an individual is, the better the voter, the better the government!"

FBLA held a second meeting with council member Rishi Kumar on Feb. 27. ♦

CONSTRUCTION

continued from pg. 1

"Since we share gym space with volleyball as our seasons overlap, and our teams consists of a large amount of people," junior badminton captain Nathan Luk said. "There's a lot of waiting for a court to open up, so players do not actually play the full time they are at practice."

As the Measure E planning process went on, administrators realized there was not an appropriate place on campus to build an extra gym, so they decided to make some changes to the original plan in favor of an alternative.

The original idea was to build a facil-

ity where the Team Room now stands, but it turned out the footprint was not big enough and would have cut into the pool.

"With our winter sports teams doing well, it's hard to find time in our gym."



PRINCIPAL Paul Robinson

With the lack of space on campus for such a facility, the overcrowding in the Large and Small Gyms will continue.

"It's hard, especially this time of year for badminton," Robinson said. "With our winter sports doing well and going into the CCS playoffs for multiple weeks, it's hard to find time in our gym, and we do try the best we can."

Robinson does maintain some hope for projects that were part of the original wish list and just didn't fit numerically into early budget projections made by district and school administrators.

One example is changing the baseball field grass to artificial turf.

"That was the very next project right below the cutline," Robinson said. "So, if there is enough money left in the budget or left in the Measure E funds to be able to do that, [the school board] would do it." ♦

>> THE bigidea

Measure E funds

What money goes towards
Updating the administration building and 900 wing, and fixing the ventilation system.

What is on the admin's wish list
Creating another gym to accommodate winter and spring sports.

Why the admin couldn't pay for the new gym
Not enough money from Measure E and the gym would have to cut into the pool.

LEADERSHIP

Senior class office emphasizes strength in numbers and unity at Saratoga Elementary School assembly

By Kaylene Morrison & Anna Novoselov

Seven senior class officers walked onstage during a school-wide assembly at Saratoga Elementary on March 9, dressed as the numbers 0 through 6.

As the children watched the seniors struggle to move in their costumes, they couldn't help but grin. Then, the skit began, and the ridiculous costumes started to make sense.

Numbers 1 through 5 bullied 0, disparaging him by criticizing that he had no value and was worthless.

Suddenly, there was a turn of events. Number 1 approached 0, offering friendship, and the two joined together to become the number 10, showing that there is strength in numbers.

"The kids laughed a lot, clapped and sang along to the song we sang," senior class representative Jacqueline Schwartz said. "When the numbers came together to make a bigger number, all the kids audibly gasped, which was really cute."

The assembly was inspired by Ruby Bridges, an African American girl who was the first black student to attend an all-white public school in the Southern U.S. in 1960.

Bridges was confronted with extreme racism, with other students and parents protesting her presence by screaming insults and throwing objects at the 6-year-old child.

"Ruby handled the abuse with bravery and dignity, and her story is an important one that should be shared to ensure we don't repeat our history," said Saratoga parent Cat Leflew, a local co-leader of Project Cornerstone.

Later in her life, Bridges became a civil rights activist and established the Ruby Bridges Foundation, which aims to promote unity and tolerance within schools.

Project Cornerstone presented Bridges' story to teach students about the importance of acceptance and to instill values of self-worth and belonging in this year's curriculum.

But Leflew said that her group felt the need to go beyond classroom lessons.

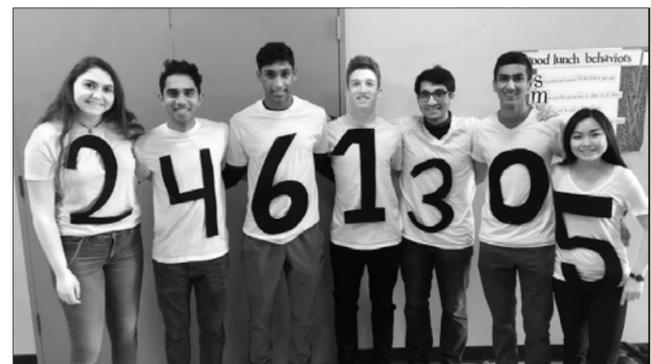
"We're called the United States of America so we need to be united. People have a lot more power if we're together."

SENIOR Lillian Zeng

"I wanted to really make a point of helping the children know their worth and that we are all equal and worthy of respect in this world, regardless of any differences we might possess from one another," Leflew said. "We want them to know that, in fact, our diversity in this community is our strength and we are really very lucky to have the opportunity here in Silicon Valley to get to know people of all races and cultures from all over the world."

Topics discussed included friendship, self-worth, empathy and equality. Schwartz said that it is crucial to instill such values from a young age and teach children the importance of "acceptance and working together despite differences in appearance."

Leflew reached out to the Saratoga High



Courtesy of ROBERT SCOTT

Seven members of the senior class office, each dressed as a different number, went to Saratoga Elementary School for a Project Cornerstone Assembly on March 9.

Leadership team, asking them in February to present at the assembly. She said that the high schoolers would have a significant influence.

"The skit had a funny spin on what they were trying to get across," fifth-grader Ana Weinstock said.

Along with the skit, the class office performed a cover of Pharrell Williams' "Happy," substituting the lyrics with those relating to the assembly's theme. The presentation was the senior class service project, which is an annual requirement of Leadership.

The class service projects aim to promote the welfare of the community and teach students the importance of service.

The senior class thought that encourag-

ing diversity and acceptance would accomplish these goals.

Leflew hopes that the Leadership students will do more assemblies in the future. She said that having high schoolers involved in team building activities for younger students works well.

Through activities and assemblies, Project Cornerstone hopes to create a more inclusive school environment in which all students can feel safe and appreciated.

"We're called the United States of America so we need to be united," senior class representative Lillian Zeng said. "People have strength in numbers, and if we stick together we have a lot more power than we do as individuals." ♦

PARKLAND

continued from pg. 1

Saratoga safety

While suburban and wealthy Saratoga may be one of the safest areas in California, a state with more stringent gun control laws than most others, Saratoga High fits the profile of school more commonly targeted in school shootings.

For example, Santana High, a school located in a large suburb of San Diego with an open campus layout like Saratoga High's, experienced a shooting in which 15-year-old student Charles Andrews William wounded 13 and killed two in 2001.

In fact, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), an accreditation agency that examines the school every few years, has repeatedly taken note of the open nature of the Saratoga High campus and advised the administration to close daytime access to the stadium and the fields to the public.

Despite WASC's suggestions, however, the school has chosen to retain the open nature of the school, allowing town residents to enter school grounds to walk and jog the track.

"It's not as easy as just saying 'Fine, we'll lock it all down,' especially because our community has been so generous through bond measures and want to be a part of some of the things that happen on campus very easily," principal Paul Robinson said.

The administration's main way of seeking to keep the campus safe has been through "Run, Hide and Defend" drills that take place early in the academic year.

One idea that hasn't received support on campus is the proposed arming of teachers and other school personnel backed by President Trump and the National Rifle Association.

English teacher Ken Nguyen was among the educators who questioned the practicality

of this idea.

"I think the moment you start offering that up as a potential solution to the problem of mass shootings at schools then you've kind of given up," Nguyen said.

For junior Shasta Ganti, the idea of having his own teachers armed with a weapon feels uncomfortable and even more dangerous, and he questions what could occur "if a student got a hold of it."

Nevertheless, there is a limit to how much the campus can be barricaded from outside threats; in fact, in many past campus shootings, including the Santana High shooting, the perpetrator was a part of the student body and not an intruder.

"And that's the unfortunate thing," Robinson said. "That's the thing that's scary cause it could be the person you're sitting next to in class. It's not necessarily like we are being assaulted from somebody from the outside that maybe we don't know."

For students near the end of the 2016-2017 school year, this scenario had the potential to become a real danger when students in a science class told their teacher about a senior's overheard threat to inflict violence.

After she reported the threat to the administration, the district's safety plan went into effect. The senior was later arrested, removed from campus, ultimately receiving a suspension on May 22 and later being expelled.

Until the end of the school year, administrators and campus supervisors stood guard throughout the day at school entrances and exits in an effort to keep the disgruntled senior from returning to campus and doing harm.

"I think we handled it very well and appropriate measures were taken," Robinson said. "There was never a risk of anybody being harmed, but there was always a suspicion. So we took care of that and eliminated even the suspicion that somebody was going to be harmed."

Robinson emphasized the importance of students immediately contacting teachers, counselors or administrators if they suspect anything suspicious or potentially dangerous on campus.

Student activism

When ASB members proposed that the school participate in the national walkout on March 14, the administration was supportive of the idea.

"It sends a message that we're a school that wants to be safe, and we want our world to be safe," Robinson said. "We are standing with those and feeling for those who have lost their lives because of this. And we want to make sure that our voices are going to be heard too."

"I was so proud to be a part of such a powerful group of students."



SENIOR Ania Kranz

Senior ASB clubs commissioner Ishana Narayanan said that organizing this school event "provided an opportunity for more kids to get involved who wouldn't have otherwise done anything."

During this event, senior Ania Kranz stood in the center of the action, holding a poster that declared "ENOUGH" in large, orange letters — the official color of the national gun violence movement — while leading various chants.

"I was so proud to be a part of such a powerful group of students," Kranz said. "So many people showed up to show their solidarity and to stand up for what they believe in."

Still, Kranz thinks students have a long

way to go. She urged students to involve themselves politically by writing to local representatives and members of Congress and vote when they turn 18.

Students are also contributing to the movement individually. Immediately after the Parkland shooting, Ganti remembered wanting to do something, but not knowing how.

Two weeks before his birthday, a notification from Facebook asked whether he wanted to sponsor a fundraiser, and "at that moment, everything clicked."

Ganti decided that he could raise money in support for gun control policies and picked Everytown for Gun Safety as his nonprofit organization, raising around \$700 through Facebook.

"We need to always be conscious of issues in the modern world," Ganti said. "Too often we forget about our priorities once the initial hysteria and shock fades. But we need to stay persistent and vigilant." ♦

>> falconfigures

48 Number of mass shootings in 2018 alone

17 Students and staff who perished in the Parkland shooting

0 Pieces of national gun legislation passed since Sandy Hook.

5 Millions of dollars spent by the NRA during the 2017 election cycle

Courtesy of ABC, OpenSecrets

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FRC

continued from pg. 1

tory animation, each team was given exactly six weeks to complete their robot.

Immediately after kickoff, the team meets the next day to go over game rules, talk out design and sketch out their goals for the season.

Design meetings continue for three to five days in one week until the team comes to a conclusion, after which members divide themselves into subsystems and begin prototyping.

During this building season, leadership members like team president Akhilesh Bellathur, hardware lead Ankur Garg and software lead Basil Shama, along with a dozen other active FRC members might toil in the robotics room until 3 or 4 a.m. to complete the robot.

Other members like junior Graham Kingston work extensively at home as well. At the end of the six weeks, the robot is bagged and members are prohibited from touching it until competition.

The game

With their first regional competition at San Francisco on March 16 behind them and the Central Valley regionals approaching two weeks after, FRC team 649 is steadily building and improving their practice bot. After their robot severely broke in the last match of semi finals, the team is planning on improving the lift and their intake mechanism, as well as making the electronics more robust and reliable, according to junior Ian Le.

If the team had made it to finals, they would have gone to the world competition.

Though less aesthetically pleasing, the practice bot provides opportunities for members to figure out errors in design and code as well as identify areas where they could improve.

In addition, the team can bring up to 30 pounds of extra parts to modify the official robot at competition.

The 2018 game is named FIRST Power Up and is largely themed around video games. Alliances of multiple FRC teams use two robots to move power cubes to different places around the field, earning points each time they do so successfully.

For example, there is a scale in the middle and two switches on each side of the competition field, on which teams place power cubes.

For every second that a team has the scale or switch tipping in their favor, that team earns one point.

Teams can also add power cubes to their vault, where they can earn temporary power-ups, or boosters, throughout the game. The force power up allows a team to control the switch and scale; the boost power up increases scoring for ten seconds. Whichever alliance has the most points after the two-minute-and-30-second competition ends up winning the match.

Trumping other options such as "Bodacious Beluga," their robot was dubbed Magikarp after the Pokemon of the same name as a nod to both the theme of the competition and the M-SET mascot, the fish.

Preparation under mentor guidance

In the weeks leading up to competition season, the M-SET FRC team constructed a replica of the course in the new Media Arts Program annex, where they often test the functions of the robot and hold meetings.

Space remains a major obstacle for M-SET, especially as their room has increasingly deteriorated in recent years. Holes in the roof often leak water into the building, damaging materials, and asbestos has been found in the closet.

"I honestly feel that we should have a bigger space to work," Bellathur said. "And it could be this MAP annex, or it could be anything. But we definitely need a bigger space to work because right now it's not enough."

Scattered among various wooden structures, including a large wooden seesaw-like scale, in the spacious MAP room, the team members discussed for more than two hours what needed to be accomplished, while consistently confiding in the team mentors.

Mentors include team coordinator Bob France, who regularly supplies advice and experience despite having passed the head mentor role to parents Sheeba Garg and Vikas Garg last year. Parent Mitchell Lichtenberg, the machine mentor, operates machinery to help students construct parts.

Although the students do the vast majority of the brainstorming, planning and execution, team mentors like Lichtenberg are always there to help when the students face technical challenges, and more often than not, get off task.

"They tend to get distracted a lot," Mr. Garg said. "The mentors are there to help them if they get stuck and to keep them on track."

But despite their sometimes lackadaisical and easy-going approach, members kick it into another gear when the competition approaches.

"Every year we are always behind schedule from where I would like us to be, but we always pull it off at the last minute," Mr. Garg said.

To pull it off, many of the 55 members on the team play an integral role. The roles include 3D modeling parts of the robot, coding, operating the machinery, hardware management and a host of other jobs that all need to be completed within a span of under two months. With the sheer amount of work that must be completed, M-SET cannot simply operate on a regimented schedule like any other club.

"There's more control," Shama said. "You get to build the robot, but there's also things like managing money, a lot of time management and group work skills. There's a lot of different things you can do. It feels like as much time as you put into it, you can still keep getting more out."

The learning curve

Although the members of FRC 649 can now speak in technical jargon without blinking an eye, things were not always this way; many students enter M-SET with little to no prior experience in robotics.

Members learn basics in FTC, which builds smaller robots that are generally simpler design wise. Entering FRC comes with a learning curve, and students must go through student-taught training on skills such as machinery, coding, wiring and 3D modeling in the off-season.

In fact, of the 55 registered members, only about 15 to 20 are active members.

"If you want to be committed in this club, it can be very time consuming," Bellathur said. "If you don't have the initiative to take on roles yourself, and to sort of learn yourself, it's harder to get more out of it. No one's going to tell you 'we need help.'"

Shama directly entered FRC as a freshman, breaking the standard path of first entering one of the four FTC teams. He found the club to be similar to a "meritocracy," where he gradually had to learn to be more self-motivated. In his experience, for students who entered the club at the insistence of their parents for the sheer purpose of adding to their resumes, "it doesn't really work out."

Rather, if the students were willing to do work and actually showed interest in robotics, there were many opportunities to get involved. Shama's key advice for prospective robotics members is to not be afraid of asking for something to do.

"Just keep asking," he said. For the students who do sacrifice the time necessary to improve their robotics skills, the improvement is easily noticeable.

"[Many of these kids] were on the FTC team in freshman year, and they have learned a lot in the last two years. They have grown a lot together," Mr. Garg said.

Competition atmosphere

Despite all the hard work and time put into preparing for the competition, things don't always go as planned when the competition date arrives. Even without last-minute dilemmas, like sparking batteries or smoking potentiometers, the atmosphere at competitions is chaotic and exhilarating. There are two main aspects to the FRC experience.

Members of the drive team like Le, Bellathur and Garg spend much of their time on their feet in the limited space of the



Courtesy of IAN LE



Courtesy of IAN LE

(Left): Junior Akhilesh Bellathur poses with "Magikarp" during SF Regionals on March 16. (Right): "Magikarp" sits on display during the tournament, before competition officials start. The team plans on making major improvements after the bot broke in semifinals.

pit, running their bot, making quick fixes or running back and forth to retrieve parts. Arriving at 7:30 a.m. and leaving late into the night, they can see their step counts reach up to 20,000 steps or 10 miles.

On the other hand, scouts like Shama and junior Jennifer Li spend hours sitting in the stands.

The job of these members is to choose other teams to pair up with for the elimination bracket of the tournament, which pits alliances of three robots each against each other. Scouts must observe matches to see who they want to work with and how other teams can fit in with their robot.

"I think that's what a lot of people don't realize about tournaments: you're not just sitting there watching robots," Bellathur said.

Another way to reach the ultimate goal of the world competition is to win the Chairman's Award, which goes beyond the pure robot-building aspect of the club. Through Chairman's, M-SET can show all the outreach it has accomplished in trying to involve people in STEM, and getting students interested in robotics. It also serves

to pass down club history to underclassmen, according to Le.

Every year, the Saratoga Robotics team ranks among the best in the area and it is their work ethic that keeps them competitive despite often difficult circumstances.

And although the team appears extremely well-established, it's important to note that M-SET was only founded in 2009 after its predecessor, the Saratoga Robotics Team (SRT), was shut down due to hacking allegations and misbehavior. While still incorporating some aspects of SRT, the new Mechanical Science and Engineering Team was formed with the aim of creating a more serious robotics team.

Nevertheless, FRC team 649 retains a personality unlike that of any other club in the school, whether they're playing the "Chariots of Fire" theme song the first time they power on the robot, blasting "questionable" songs in the robotics room on a group veto system or yelling over each other in a "polite and productive" way to make group decisions.

"There's never a dull day in robotics," Le said. ♦

THIRD PERIOD STAFF POLICY

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Prevention, not physical barriers, is key to stopping school shootings

"17 killed in mass shooting at high school in Parkland, Florida." "Sandy Hook Elementary shooting leaves 28 dead, law enforcement says."

"Kentucky school shooting: 2 students killed, 18 injured."

These horrific events have left families broken, peers saddened and the nation in dismay. The killing at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., marked the eighth school shooting in 2018.

Over the years, school shootings have become unnervingly common. A New York Times article using data from Gun Violence Archive found that there have been 240 cases of school shootings nationwide since 2014 culminating in 438 people being shot.

A school like Saratoga High is often considered very safe, but so were the schools where other major mass shootings occurred. Stoneman Douglas is a high school akin to our own, where students come from affluent families and compete for admission into top colleges. However, when a fire alarm was pulled and students poured out into the halls to become the shooting targets of a crazed gunman, it didn't matter how prestigious the school was, how secure their walls were or how many Code Red drills they had practiced.

So how can authorities keep students safe in school?

One solution is to allow teachers and staff members to carry guns on campus — a poorly thought-out idea at best.

For instance, in Kentucky, a bill that would allow teachers and staff to have weapons with a concealed carry permit is now being discussed. The guns themselves would be locked up until an active shooter situation arises.

This measure may be based on good intentions, but its effective-

ness is questionable.

In both the Florida and Kentucky shootings, there were armed guards on campus. But neither of them used their weapons against the shooter. Arming teachers and offering them a bonus for signing up to possess a gun is an especially thoughtless idea. They signed up to be educators, not law enforcement officers. Being able to shoot a gun effectively in a high-pressure situation requires expertise and constant training.

Another notion suggested by lawmakers is to further protect schools by implementing tighter security. Evaluators from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) have commented on how open the school's field and track is to the public and recommended closing it off.

However, ideas like this are an overreaction. Blocking off a valued part of the schools would be needless hassle for students and community members. Limiting community access would mostly serve to cut off the school from the valued community members who have provided the support to build facilities such as the track and new music building.

One myth is that the school was designed by the same architect who designed San Quentin. By arming teachers and putting all these security measures in place, the school would begin to feel like a prison.

Besides the obvious gun control laws needed to limit the number of deadly weapons in communities, schools can still play their part in helping to keep students safe without needing to build expensive infrastructure. This consists of adopting better strategies to identify potential shooters and stop them if such an event occurs.

It is also critical that schools work with local law enforcement and the FBI in determining pos-



HOWARD TANG

sible dangers because these agencies may be actively monitoring suspicious activity both online and in person. For example, Nikolas Cruz, the 19-year-old arrested for the shooting at Parkland, showed many warning signs that were ignored, such as comments about how he said he was going to be a "professional school shooter" and FBI tips about how he had an arsenal of weapons and "is going to explode."

But schools themselves can only do so much. The heart of the movement for stricter gun laws belongs to students like those in Parkland, who are taking action and making themselves heard. Even if we have not been impacted by such traumatic events, students should become more politi-

cally involved to prevent further tragedies from occurring.

Students shouldn't fear going to school for any reason other than having a difficult test that day. The fact that there is still debate over gun regulation is appalling, considering that the safety of all children is at stake.

As a school and community, we should focus on being aware of our surroundings and ready to report threats. In addition, individuals should take it upon themselves to learn about what is happening in the world. And if they find any injustices, they should take action. From walk-outs to marches to boycotts and eventually voting, students have the power to reshape our country and make it a safer place. ♦

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The Falcon staff voted 32-0 in favor of this article.

Students should march, support movement

By Kaylene Morrison & Anishi Patel

On Feb. 14, 19-year-old Nikolas Cruz killed 17 people in the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting, setting off one of the largest student-led movements in American history. In the weeks following, thousands of young adults all over the country rose up to protest gun violence.

Though the protests are taking place for a righteous cause, some students feel reluctant to join, not because they do not agree with the proposed policy changes, but merely because they believe demonstrations such as these are ineffective. However, in the mere month since the shooting occurred, significant progress has been made.

The marches and demonstrations have forced legislators to take stances on gun violence and schools to improve active shooter plans, in addition to memorializing the 17 lives lost at Stoneman Douglas.

For instance, a new gun control

law, House Bill 4145, was passed by an overwhelming majority of 37-23 in Oregon. The bill prevents gun violence through three main policy alterations.

The marches and demonstrations have forced legislators to take stances.

It expands on a current law that makes gun ownership illegal for people who have been charged with domestic violence as well as people who have been the subject of a restraining order or convicted of stalking.

On March 7, Florida passed a measure more impactful than the Oregon House Bill 4145.

The Florida legislation imposes a three-day waiting period on purchases of long guns, raises the minimum age for the purchasing of all guns to 21 and bans bump stocks,

devices which attach to semiautomatic weapons and enable them to fire nearly as fast as machine guns, according to The New York Times.

Additionally, the bill allocates millions of dollars to fund an increase in school security and expand mental health services.

Advances such as these prove that the marches on gun violence have not been in vain, and that a student-led movement can have a real impact.

Although there have been setbacks (most noticeably President Trump voicing his approval for an increase in the age requirement for purchasing firearms and later backpedaling), the movement still receives significant media coverage and will likely continue to make an even larger impact.

It is remarkable to think that a student-led movement has the power to change gun laws in a country where the right to own a gun is a prominent part

of the Constitution.

Nevertheless, most of the progress that has been made has occurred in Florida, where the issue has hit home; on a national level, there is much to be accomplished.

Ultimately, marches and demonstrations can only continue to have an effect if they reach local or state government; otherwise, no real progress or impact is being made.

This means that there is still work to do. An opportunity to make a difference presents itself on March 24: Make a sign and participate in the March for Our Lives!

Be as passionate as the Mount Diablo High School students who broke through a locked gate to participate in the March 14 walkout.

Keep the gun marches and demonstrations alive, and eventually, our leaders will change not just state gun laws, but nationwide ones as well. ♦



voices around campus

This guest column is written by junior David Berkowitz-Sklar.

Think before you eat

We sure love animals in this proud age of compassion. We admire the majestic creatures on the Discovery Channel, eagerly take in dogs from the shelter, and sleep right next to our adorable teddy bears. We watch fondly as birds take flight over our heads, in awe of their adventurous spirit. We respect the deers of the forest, observing their elegance from a distance. We, humans of the 21st century, are kind and caring. That is, until we're hungry. Then, of course, animals are no longer our friends, no longer those majestic creatures of nature. At the table, animals become the inanimate, unfeeling things we call bacon, steak, burgers and all those other meat-based foods we savor. We eat without the slightest regard for the previous existence of these animals.

Isn't it ironic that we should convince ourselves we care about animals, yet don't ever ask where our foods come from? Shouldn't we care about how farm animals were treated before they were brought to our plate?

It's time we did. The reality for tens of billions of animals in the livestock industry is far from the tale of Old MacDonald's farm. Most of the animal products we eat come factory-like farms in which thousands of animals are cluttered into very small areas where their most basic needs are often disregarded. Pigs, for instance, are usually raised in pens without even enough room to turn around. In many factory-farms, pigs are placed in tiny crates — imagine living your whole life in an airline seat! Chickens are often raised in cages where they can't even stand up, and even when they are raised cage-free, they are cluttered in pens with hundreds of thousands of other birds. Many die from being trampled, and there are corpses blanketing chicken factory-farms. Cows live their whole lives in barren fields, standing on their own excrement, and sometimes penned in with no room to exhibit their natural behavior.

There is real suffering going on, and it's right on our dinner plate. If only we loved the animals on our menu as much as those on the Discovery Channel.

When was the last time one of us said, "Hey, I wonder if this chicken ever had some space to move around?" Have you ever heard a kid say, "Gee, I sure hope this pig I'm eating wasn't locked in a cage it's whole life"?

There is a huge disconnect between our morals and the way we consume food. Don't we all agree that animals are feeling beings, that they have a capacity to feel pain and suffer? Why is it then, that the needs of tens of billions of animals in the livestock industry are continuously disregarded? Why don't we care whether animal products we eat come from facilities that treat their animals humanely?

It is because we have forgotten that the food we eat was once alive, that every piece of meat comes from the flesh and bones of feeling beings. In our race to create a bigger and better civilization, we have left our animals behind. Now, it is easy for us to disassociate what we eat with the reality of the situation, but we must force ourselves to see the bigger picture, to see the suffering. We must hold ourselves accountable for the animal crisis in the livestock industry, for we, the blind consumers, are it's greatest proponents. Our generation will soon inherit the animals in the livestock industry and with them the responsibility to ensure that the these animals raised for our consumption are given a humane life. So, let's start caring about the food we put on our plate. Let's extend our love from the monkeys in the zoo, the birds in sky, and the deers of the woods to the pigs in crates, the chickens in cages, and the cows in crowded pens which end up in our stomachs. The next time you sit down for a meal, ask yourself how your food was treated. Know where your food came from.

Easy ways to be a more conscientious eater:

- Less meat, more veggies!
• Vary your protein by eating more beans, nuts and whole grains.
• As an added benefit, studies show that eating green can have enormous health benefits
• Check labels
• Check to see if your meat is certified humane
• Buy cage-free eggs
• Buy organic meat from local farms
• Buy organic milk from local farms
• Change the little things
• How about fruit instead of ice cream tonight?
• Why not switch that milk-chocolate bar for some dark chocolate?
• Spread awareness
• Let your friends know what's up
• Call your local restaurants/grocers and ask them to buy from humane sources
• Vote for policies that advocate for animal rights
• Donate to animal rights groups

End your echo chamber: Respect opposing views

BY Katherine Zhou

In the age of Trump, political polarization is arguably one of the main reasons America is so divided. We see this in Congress, which is more divided than ever, and even in everyday interactions. People are feeling more pressured to take extreme stances, and follow party lines. Since the aftermath of the 2016 election, I have seen people being directly shamed and their character being torn apart for their political views, even if they are moderate.

For example, the day before the March for Our Lives, I saw a post on my Instagram that read, "If you don't march tomorrow, you're a disgrace to your generation."

This message greatly upset me: directly shaming free speech. This is the direction both the right and left wing movements are moving towards, crazy polarization and silencing the other side. Thinking about the message of free speech, it's sad that the tool once used to protect Americans is now used to silence the opinions of others.

Besides listening, people from both sides should really make an effort to actually understand the other's positions and the humanity that is in all people, no matter what they believe. (Of course, there should be some limitations such as hate speech.)

For example, in my daily life, I have implemented change to try to understand others. Scrolling through my YouTube feed, I see videos from right-wing conservative and more moderate commentators: Lauren

Southern, Ben Shapiro and Milo Yiannopoulos, while I used to only follow more leftist media, which clearly was only affirming what I already believed, sometimes even twisting facts so that they followed my own belief agendas. I identify myself as a liberal, yet I realize that watching biased media, that only props up your own beliefs, is not only the easy choice, but leads to an issue that I feel occurs much too frequently in today's society — political echo chambers.

You should never try to silence another's opinion, but rather be open to civil discussion.

A political echo chamber occurs when people only surround themselves with those who hold the same political views. This is problematic because people start repeating the rhetoric of others without thinking for themselves. Instead of defending their views or holding them up to criticism, their views are simply reinforced — often times, people do not even research their positions and base them on what others tell them, leading to positions that are sometimes based on false facts and rumors.

In an age when people can seek out news sources that match their political stances and choose to only see social media posts that are based on their own political preferences, it's rare for individuals

to go out of their way to try to understand the other side instead of simply classifying them as "ignorant" or "wrong." I've seen many videos where people, when confronted, cannot explain why they're a feminist or why they support a protest they're attending. Obviously, people should base their opinions on their own understanding and research, and not follow the mob mentality.

In our school, a great divide separates conservatives and liberals. Often times, liberals continue to propagate their own ideas, while conservatives are largely shunned and left to congregate with themselves in the corner. Instead of doing their own research, conservatives and liberals create echo chambers, with both sides unwilling to listen to the other. Clearly, there needs to be discussion between the two.

So, how can people combat political echo chambers? In evaluating their own opinions, people should not jump to conclusions: everyone should always fact-check and research on their own through reliable sites that are as unbiased as possible and constantly question their own views by listening to others.

But mostly, it is important to respect the opinions of others, or at least respect that people have the right to another opinion besides your own. You should never try to silence another's opinion, but rather be open to civil discussion. Maybe this way, people can actually reach reasonable middle grounds, or realize that their opinion is not always what is correct. ♦

Noise in library and tutoring center defeats purpose of rooms

BY Connie Liang

Like a lot of students, I procrastinate. Unfortunately.

And oftentimes, tutorials are the most highly prized 30 minutes any school day can grant.

So when I walk into the library or tutoring center, hoping to finish my work on time and avoid the disappointed head shaking of my teacher next period, I expect a quiet environment in which I can focus on and finish the task at hand.

After all, being the library and tutoring center, the two facilities are there precisely to provide students with an environment in which they can study.

But walk into these two places on any given day and you're sure to find a rowdy crowd of students rivalling that of a group of monkeys discovering a new-found banana plantation.

It sounds ridiculous, but so does the piercing cacophony of obnoxious chatter and laughter filling the one place I was hoping to settle down and focus.

Usually, I find myself annoyedly putting on earbuds and blasting my classical piano Spotify playlist in hopes of drowning out the overwhelming noise. But even then, their voices and laughter still manage to find a way through the Chopin symphony playing at the highest possible volume.

Chopin isn't even meant to be played so loudly. And it's not like a noisy library or tutoring center is some rare occasion.

Every single time I enter one of these two places, I'm greeted with this same constant noise that only ends when I walk out, deciding to settle for a quieter classroom instead.

During a recent tutorial, using my trusty decibel measurement app dB Meter, I recorded a peak of 88 decibels in the library.

According to industrialnoisecontrol.com, a "propeller plane flyover at 1,000 feet" also comes in around 88 decibels. The same website states that a "quiet, suburb, conversation at home" is around 50 decibels.

The last time I checked, Saratoga was a suburb; and the library, with its frequent visitors, might as well be considered a home for many students.

Here's what librarian Kevin Heyman had to say about the issue: "We don't have any set rules about how noisy students are in the library. I do talk to some students who seem to be getting a bit too loud and ask them to lower their voices."

These efforts might help some students, but they haven't helped me. Try as I might, it is impossible for me to concentrate in some of the few places on campus that provide

resources such as textbooks and computers all in one setting.

It's unfair for those who are genuinely attempting to finish homework to be so distracted by others who have no reason to be in the library or tutoring center in the first place.

That isn't to say students who talk or laugh with the slightest raise of volume should automatically be thrown out. Nor is it to say students finding an escape from the heat or meeting with their group members should be silenced. It's just that when unnecessary and over-the-top chatter gets in the way of people who are trying to study, there is a problem.

If your sole reason for being in the library is to laugh at profane Urban Dictionary definitions or even to blast rap music and rap along with your friends (two scenarios I have both witnessed), please go outside and give others the chance to concentrate.

In any case, be mindful of those who are around you, especially if it looks like they are trying to get some work done. If you are receiving curt glances from the girl with the earbuds in, it's time to lower your volume or simply head out outside.

Because that person is probably me.

And I probably have a chemistry packet to finish. ♦

Rethinking the way we LEARN

Is a strength-based curriculum the best way of teaching for the U.S.?

Pro: Specialized curriculum improves student outcomes

BY Siva Sambasivam & Callia Yuan

In almost every K-12 American school, students are required to take core classes in math, science, history and English. Although learning these subjects at a basic level makes abundant sense, students beyond middle school often take advanced classes in subjects they just aren't interested in, particularly at competitive high schools like Saratoga High.

This flawed system often allows students who struggle at any one of these core subjects to spend so much of their time focusing on these subjects that they are not able to learn about the subjects that they are naturally talented in.

Specialized strength-based teaching schools offer a solution to this problem. Rather than taking a wide range of classes, students are able to focus more on developing their interests in a particular subject or field with only basic supplement courses in other subjects. Giving students a chance to find what they're not only naturally talented at but also enjoy doing at a young age is crucial, and students statistically do better.

For example, the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT) in New York for high schools such as Hunter College Prep and Bronx Science, allows students to apply for and rank their choices of specialized schools. Students can apply for these selective public schools specialized in subjects such as math, science, American studies and engineering.

Attending schools like these allows students who already have a general direction of their career focus more on finding specific jobs they're interested in or things they want to learn more about.

By contrast, at most high schools, many students end up spending a lot of their time in their high school years on subjects that they do not consider enjoyable nor subjects that they are good at. This creates a cycle in which students are constantly spending the majority of their time completing work for subjects that they aren't good at, forcing them to put the few areas that they enjoy learning on the back burner. ♦

BIG IDEA: Innovation is key to reform
The core of our education system was developed almost a century ago; for over a hundred years educators have mainly taught core subjects like math, science, history and English. It's no secret that, as the rest of the world has developed, our education system has fallen behind. In 2015, the Program for International Student Assessments (PISA) measured high school math literacy scores across all developed countries and found that the U.S. ranked 40th. Furthermore, the education system has done little to promote either meritocracy or equity; in the U.S., public schools can get money from property tax which means wealthier areas get far more resources. Thus, our pre-collegiate education system sets up the impoverished, those who need higher education the most, to fail. The often-criticized secretary of education, Betsy DeVos, has one thing right: the education system desperately needs innovation. While DeVos's ideas of publicly funding charter and religious schools are hardly the proper approach, there is no lack of good ideas; the problem is the U.S. isn't willing to change. For example, Susan Wu, a Silicon Valley tech executive, has piloted her own school system that focuses on inspiring entrepreneurship rather than standard subjects. She argues that, with AI and automation fast on our heels, the economy will soon transform into an "innovation economy" where the primary driving force behind the GDP will not be blue-collar or even high skill work, but rather innovative businesses. Our world is changing, but our politicians are not. It's time to open our minds and look for innovative ideas to solve our educational deficit.
— Austin Wang
GRAPHIC BY ELICIA YE

Con: Holistic curriculums key for exploring interests

BY Anna Novoselov & Sandhya Sundaram

As early as elementary school, children in some private schools and public school districts are given specialized quizzes and assessments to isolate their natural talents and interests. Using the results of these exams, educators develop a personalized path for the child's education, which focuses on developing their strengths.

This approach, called Strength-Based Learning, claims to improve student outcomes and engagement by allowing students to focus on areas in which they excel. Although the idea is well-intentioned, there is a negative aspect to this teaching style: students lose the opportunity to explore a wide variety of fields to discover a passion which may or may not be a natural talent.

Schools often pay for an online strength system service, such as Thrively, where students take an assessment and are monitored through their progress in the school's courses.

Using this data, the service creates a personalized learning program, claiming to be geared towards the students' strengths. According to the Victoria Department of Education and Training, the types of intelligences and learning styles of students include verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical-rhythmical, body-kinesthetic, visual-spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal.

Although this knowledge provides a specific path to a practical career, it deters from the actual point of school.

Educators and parents, influenced by these test scores, can push specific courses onto children, such as engineering, advanced mathematics and computer science. A student might feel pressured to enroll in those classes despite having no interest in them.

The purpose of school is to provide children with a well-rounded education, where they can dip a foot into numerous subjects. This allows students to decide for themselves what areas they want to focus on in high school, college and their careers. ♦

As children grow, their interests and mindsets often change. Consequently, students should receive a standard education without being pipelined into different fields through tests and experiments before they have a chance to discover their calling.

Additionally, strengths do not always correspond to passions. While one may have a tendency to perform well in a given field, a completely unrelated subject may bring him or her the greatest sense of self

Students should receive a standard education without being pipelined into different fields

fulfillment. At such a young age, it is hard to determine whether students truly have special abilities in certain areas. For instance, most kids aren't born being good at math or science; rather, they enhance their abilities through a rigorous schooling and upbringing. What might be tricky in the fourth grade could get easier with time and become a strength.

Although it hones skills that student have a knack for, strength based learning dismisses subjects that require extra effort, claiming that they don't lie in the students "strengths" before the student even has the chance to thoroughly experience the class.

By administering exams at such a young age and claiming to know students' aptitudes, administrations permit students to give up early on areas that are not their natural strengths.

This encourages a culture of quitting things that do not come easy, which disrupts values of grit and hard work that are important for people of all ages and professions.

There will be a time for students to use their talents and go down specific paths in life. But they should be given the flexibility to pave that path for themselves without relying on tests and experiments. ♦

Housing prices force out young workers

BY RahulVadlakonda

According to the Mercury News, about 44,100 residents of the Silicon Valley left from July 2015 to July 2017, in pursuit of cheaper housing and living conditions in other areas like Oregon and Idaho.

Ever since the early 2010s, the Valley has been experiencing a steep, sustained rise in housing prices which, according to Zillow, has resulted in the median home value in Santa Clara County being about \$1.2 million as of February.

Pairing this with the continually rising competition for good jobs, it's not hard to see why people are leaving for more promising areas. The amount of competition in the area for housing and jobs has proved to be brutal and will likely grow worse over the next few years.

Although the Mercury News

finds that there has been a deceleration of job creation in the Valley, individuals continue to come without prior knowledge of the challenges they will face.

Though the median pay for a tech employee is \$100,000, according to the Huffington Post, the high housing prices offset the higher pay.

As many other parts of the country generally have lower costs of living, a job with a lower salary in a different area would still give workers a better quality of life than in the Silicon Valley. With this surge of people comes rising prices, a phenomenon exemplified by housing costs in cities like Saratoga. According to Zillow, the median housing price in Saratoga is about \$2.9 million as of February, a 19.3 percent increase over the past year.

Many families also travel to the Silicon Valley to take advantage

of its excellent schooling system. However, for young adults without children, the public education system only means higher property taxes, which further adds to the ridiculous costs of living in the Silicon Valley.

Instead of alumni aiming to make it here, where an empty wallet might soon be a norm, it is in their best interest to aim for cheaper areas. Cities such as Sacramento, Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland and San Diego tend to be targets for former Bay Area residents due to costs in those areas being generally lower. With a smaller rate of immigration to these areas, housing prices are cheaper while job prospects are higher.

As the rising prices discourage possible hope that is had by many of them, alumni should look for cheaper areas in order to find themselves in a place where success will seem more attainable. ♦



Courtesy of VISIT CALIFORNIA

Companies like Google have brought a near-unprecedented era of growth to the Silicon Valley. But as the Huffington Post and CNBC report, even though the median salary for tech employees stands at approximately \$100,000 per year — double the national average for all employees — rising housing prices more than offset the higher pay. The spikes in housing prices have been especially pronounced in neighborhoods like Saratoga, where the median home price rose 19.3 percent over the past year alone, according to Zillow.



GRAPHIC BY COLLEEN FENG

China will rise — with or without America's help

BY KyleWang

When I was 8 years old, my grandfather tried to convince me to become a Communist. I was visiting him as he recovered from his chemotherapy when he turned on CCTV (China Central Television) and began explaining to me — in words that I mostly couldn't understand — why China's totalitarian, nominally Communist system of government was infinitely superior to American democracy.

"Look at your Congress," he said, jabbing one trembling finger at the TV. "So inefficient. At least we can get things done."

I will admit I judged him at the time. I thought it was ridiculous for anybody to so wholeheartedly accept a system that had thrown so many into poverty. How could he worship and glorify dictators who had caused so much suffering?

Earlier this year, Chinese President Xi Jinping abolished the term limits on his office. China had never been a democracy to begin with, but to many — my parents included — this flagrant power grab came as a shock. I don't know what my grandfather had to say about this, but in the weeks after he was oddly quiet whenever we Facetimed.

I didn't bother to ask. I will admit now that I will never support China and its political system. Any government that so systematically crushes dissent — to the point where my own parents hesitated to speak about their own experiences as students during Tiananmen in 1989 — is deeply flawed.

But I will say that my own be-

liefs about China and its politics have changed radically over time, thanks in no small part to my grandfather. No longer do I think it necessary or even intelligent to attempt to coerce or persuade China's government to change.

Even containment, through mechanisms like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), is a flawed strategy, premised on the assumption that China's rise can somehow be constrained.

I will admit that I once believed that containment was the best solution, but my grandfather, who had served in China's military, had warned me long before I formed any conclusions of my own.

He told me, even when I was 8, that China's military would soon surpass America's. He told me this as grainy footage of Chinese aircraft carriers slid across his 30-inch TV screen.

In spite of this, I would spend the next eight years dreaming that my grandfather would someday live to see democracy.

The irony I did not realize at the time is that he already had — albeit a bastardized, twisted form of it. I found this out when I was a rising sophomore, late one night during the summer of 2015 as I sat in my grandfather's living room.

He told me he once lived on a farm, with a younger sister and younger brother who worked alongside the rest of the family in the rice paddies of South China. They were poor, he told me, because China's failed experiments with democracy on the eve of the second Sino-Japanese War had seized his father's assets.

When he was 4 or 5 years old,



Courtesy of WhiteHouse.gov

Chinese president Xi Jinping receives President Trump in Beijing. Despite international condemnation of its political activities, China's GDP grew 6.8 percent in 2017, according to Reuters.

they arranged an early marriage for his sister. They needed the money.

"You couldn't imagine how poor we were," my grandfather said.

He was crying. My grandfather had seemed destined for a life of poverty, of toiling in rice paddies until his feet blistered. But then Mao's revolution began. At age 9, my grandfather began his schooling. Though he still trekked miles each day to sit in the cramped, one-room schoolhouse, he was infinitely grateful for the opportunity to study. With a government-sponsored scholarship, he attended medical school and then was conscripted into the military as a doctor.

Years later, my father — the

intricacies of China's fraudulent shadow banking system. Its tone was ominous, and though it did not explicitly state its hopes for collapse, it foreshadowed a distant but eventual economic collapse from financial insecurity.

Two years after, China's economy remains as strong as ever. Its apparent slide into authoritarian rule has done little to impede its rise as a global superpower. My conversations with my grandfather are ultimately insignificant from a foreign policy standpoint, but they do, at minimum, offer some perspective. Just as America's citizens today hail democracy as the savior of their country, so, too, do China's citizens embrace their government. Millions of farm boys like my grandfather found opportunity and hope in a changing system that stifled their free speech.

But China is not "backward" or "developing" any more than America is wholly poor or misinformed. China's rise as a global power will inevitably continue, even as the country's government slides further into totalitarian rule.

My grandfather told me one that Communism was the smarter solution. But I understand now that he was not trying to proselytize me any more than I could convince him that democracy was the ideal government. All he wanted for me was to understand that, flawed as it may have been, China's politicians did follow their own logic — a logic that had given rise to a power rivaling America's own global supremacy.

On his TV, two fighter jets soared higher into the sky, tracing diverging paths on the screen. ♦

Put your phones down and enjoy Saratoga's best views

BY AustinWang & FrederickKim

Over the past month, we've almost driven off a cliff three times and we've trespassed onto private property at least four times.

Why? Because, after more than a decade of living as shut-ins in Saratoga, we've finally decided to exit our homes and explore our somewhat rural surroundings (from the comfort of a heated car).

Saratoga is one of the most scenic and beautiful towns in California, but few students have truly explored it. As second-semester seniors with a lot of time on our hands, we've found Saratoga's best scenic views so you can finally get off social media to explore our unique nature-filled haven.

1. Pierce Road: For those of you who don't like to hike or drive up precariously steep and windy roads, there are still great options for viewing. Saratoga's majestic scenery. Go all the way down Big Basin, turn onto Pierce Road and drive straight until you see reach a narrow road marked by a long black fence. From there you can clearly see Saratoga's rolling green foothills. The green grass looks like a clearing straight out of Middle Earth and offers a welcome change of scenery for residents accustomed to views of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

~ Estimated time to drive from Saratoga High: 10 minutes



FALCON // FREDERICK KIM

2. Mountain Winery: Continue driving straight down Pierce Road and you'll find a large black gate to the left that leads straight to the Mountain Winery. If you are willing to roll over numerous deer grates and ride up the blind-turn filled roads, you'll reach a huge hill with ample parking. To the right you'll be able to see surrounding vineyards as well as a clear view of the nearby hillside mansions, and to the left you'll be able to have a great panoramic view of the forested Santa Cruz Mountains.

~ Estimated time to drive: 20 minutes

3. Bohlman Road: From Los Gatos Saratoga Road, near downtown, turn left on Oak Street toward Saratoga Elementary and you'll end up on Bohlman Road. If you keep following the long, bumpy road, you'll be greeted with a beautiful view of the Mountain Winery and the other cloudy mountains below you.

Once you can see the clouds below from your car window, stop at any small gravel private road and hope no one sees you. At half a mile up, the elevation is so high, you'll be able to clearly see San Francisco Bay and just about every city in the Silicon Valley. If you are truly brave, come at night, bring a flashlight and drive carefully. On dark nights you can clearly see the bright lights of far away cities and the twinkle of constellations above.

~ Estimated time to drive: 25 minutes ♦

No, the MBTI isn't psychic — it is actually very inaccurate

BY KayleneMorrison & VictorLiu

In an attempt to escape academic responsibilities and procrastinate, many of us have been guilty of spending hours taking BuzzFeed quizzes that supposedly inform us more about our personalities instead of doing practice quizzes that will most likely help us out on our upcoming tests.

These quizzes, with names like "Choose Some Condiments And We'll Tell You What Job You Should Have" and "Which Ex-Trump Administration Official Are You?" are clearly not intended to be taken too seriously.

But while it's obvious that these BuzzFeed quizzes aren't based on any science or verifiable truth, even some personality tests marketed as credible are actually similarly unreliable. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test (MBTI) is the most commonly known and widespread example of these allegedly

reliable personality tests. Through a series of questions that deduce whether someone is introverted or extroverted; sensing or intuiting; feeling or thinking; and judging or perceiving, test-takers are able to determine their own personality type out of a possible 16.

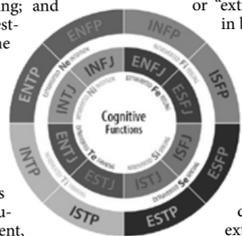
At first, the characteristics measured by the Myers-Briggs Test come across as quantifiable human qualities. As it turns out, while the tests bears some semblance to an authentic scientific experiment, it's more pseudo-science than real science, predicated on faulty studies that are methodically unsound.

For example, 50 percent of test-takers who retake the test after five weeks draw different conclusions. Much of this discrepancy can be explained by the way the Myers-

Briggs test separates people into categories; the test can only classify people in binaries, strictly labeling them as either "introverts" or "extroverts" without any room in between.

Someone who responds to the test's questions in an extroverted way 51 percent of the time will be classified as a functional extrovert on the MBTI spectrum — even though an individual who exhibits slightly extroverted tendencies may not be strongly extroverted at all.

Moreover, inconsistencies like these permeate the MBTI: For instance, studies have shown that the thinking/feeling spectrum may not actually be a spectrum at all, as people who have strong cognitive skills also have high emotional intelligence. Some personality



ENFJ.MJUSINGS.TUMBLR.COM

Pre-ripped clothes: fashion trend or JUST A RIPOFF?

BY AlexWang & SophiaZivanic

Oklahoma City Thunder superstar guard Russell Westbrook sent waves through social media in late January after showing up to a game wearing a yellow sweater with a majority of the fabric missing, including a gaping hole below his chest.

Distressed clothing like Westbrook's sweater was already on the rise, but he took it to another level. This trend has been around for decades but has recently gained popularity. Although this type of clothing is meant to appear as old and worn-down, it can still be very pricey. For example, Givenchy, a French luxury fashion company, sells a "destroyed hoodie" — essentially a hoodie with cuts and rips in it — for \$1,320. You would think the large chunk of missing fabric throughout the hoodie would make it cheaper, but it turns out to be just the opposite.

Last year, Nordstrom enraged the internet when it came out with mud-caked jeans called "Barracuda Straight Leg Jeans," another example of charging unreasonable prices for distressed clothing. Described as "heavily distressed" jeans with "a cracked, caked-on muddy coating that shows you're not afraid to get down and dirty," they went on sale for \$425. Some criticized the attire insulted those who actually have "dirty jobs."

Although students at SHS do not wear this extreme of distressed clothing, they do have a fair share of ripped shirts and jeans in their closets. Sophomore Derek Shay has been wearing distressed clothing since the beginning of this year because he has always bought clothing from PacSun, which started selling ripped clothes recently.

Shay said he likes wearing the distressed clothing, such as hoodies with small tears and jeans with splattered paint, for their aesthetic.

"It kind of makes you more rugged," Shay said. "It's satisfying seeing that everyone is starting to like distressed clothing."

However, there is a limit to the distressing for Shay. He claims that too many rips is "too much," but "a little here and there" is good. He also likes the cuts that are placed on an outfit where people do not often look, so he can stay "low-key."

Besides PacSun, he also sports clothes from Urban Outfitters, Nokwal and Hollister. He said that because bigger name companies like these have been promoting distressed clothing, people have hopped on the trend.

Although distressed clothing from stores comes pre-ripped with thoughtfully placed holes and scuffs, there are some who consider it overpriced. As a result, many have tried making their own ripped jeans and shirts.

"I need to know how to sew a certain way and make the distress strings a certain width so they don't break," Shay said. "It might take a lot of work, but when I have time this summer I'll try to buy some like plain clothes and cut them myself."

With athletes and students embracing the distressed clothing culture, it seems to be a style choice on the rise.

"I think it's a new trend that could be the next big thing in clothing," Shay said. ♦

Color trends in popular culture over the years

BY ColleenFeng & AnnissaMu

Walking down the hallways, one can notice that students are donning a variety of trendy colors in their everyday attire: millennial pink, mustard yellow, arcadia teal, pastel mauve, among others. But a couple years ago, the trends were completely different — wearing all black was the norm. The same thing is reflected while scrolling through social media feeds: The bright hues of 2016 eventually faded into the muted colors of 2018.

In the '80s, according to Complex, an entertainment news site, neon colors were new and fresh, sparking a boom in neon-colored fashion. Back then it was common to see slews of people strutting in their fluorescent socks, skirts and tank top in the streets.

More recently, metallic colors like silver and gold have dominated the red carpet in 2016 and 2017. Famous actress Emma Stone, who starred in "La La Land," was seen wearing a dazzling gold fringe dress to the Oscars, and a glittery fringe dress to her "La La Land" movie premiere.

According to The Cut, millennial pink, a toned-down hue of Barbie pink, became the popular color of choice in 2017. As seen in places like the Ice Cream Museum in San Francisco, the pink shade took over Instagram feeds, often in a wall backdrop for a photo. The '50s movie set Pink Motel, located in Los Angeles, or Capitola Village, near Santa Cruz, have been popular destinations to take photos with millennial pink.

Fall 2017 brought forward Bright Red —with brands like Supreme emerging in the fashion scene, the color was prevalent in the expensive branded clothing on many high fashion individuals. In the past, the brand was meant for those who wanted to be edgy and defy the typical fashion rules. But it has now blown up — to the dismay of its old fans — into a fashionable worldwide fad.

Sophomore Caroline Lee has noticed these new trends as she follows many trendy fashion gurus on social media and goes shopping often. "I saw a lot of these trends in stores like Zara and Forever 21," Lee said. "But they also tend to be late on fashion trends in order to wait for people to catch onto them."

In this new season, contrasting the bright pop of colors from before, warm fall colors like maple, pumpkin, maroon, beige and especially mustard yellow have taken over fashion blogs.

Even so, Lee says that the changing trends do not heavily affect the way she dresses on a daily basis, with the exception of choosing to wear brighter colors occasionally.

"My current favorite color trends are those in yellow hues," Lee said. "It's more refreshing and rare than the other fall colors that I have seen before." ♦

March 23, 2018

BAND VS. ORCHESTRA: *friendly* MIXED ENSEMBLES

BY Elaine Fan

As the two giants of the music program, band and orchestra sometimes butt heads over superior ability or difficulty.

"I think there's a playful rivalry: We like to rag on each other, but we know it's not serious," said junior Judy Yang, a violin player in Philharmonic Strings.

According to Saratoga Strings violin player junior Elizabeth Hung, orchestra members might insult the brass and woodwinds for constantly being out of tune. In turn, some band members call them "dorkestra" — in their case, used as a term of endearment rather than an actual insult.

Yang says that jabs are often section-specific, targeting an individual instrument or a family of instruments.

"Like brass have one volume: Fortississississississimo. And you always know when band has been somewhere because of the 'water hazards,'" Yang said, referring to the saliva-soaked carpets band leaves behind.

The rivalry between the two extends further than music alone. Band members claim that orchestra has it far easier without a marching season stacked with 9-5 weekend practices; other times, orchestra members turn this fact against them, pointing out that orchestra is better because they can "sit in air conditioned rooms while band runs around on the field getting hella tan," according to Hung.

Competition also sometimes stems from more serious issues such as facility usage and recognition. According to Hung, band is often acknowledged more because they go out to attend competitions, but in reality, she said, "Orchestra just plays better." Furthermore, band

players are often assigned the melody lines in Saratoga Symphony Orchestra (SSO), so orchestra tends to be "salty" toward them sometimes.

Despite their friendly rivalry, students in band and orchestra say they enjoy and appreciate the musical abilities of their "adversaries," especially through ensembles such as SSO that combine top orchestra and band members.

According to junior Caroline Okuno, groups like SSO can help build respect and appreciation between players who usually don't see each other because they play in different ensembles.

"The rivalry isn't necessarily over musical achievement," Okuno said. "We can respect and appreciate each other as musicians, especially since there are so many great ones like Arin Chang and Thomas Lim."

Rather, Okuno found that there was more comparison and competition over the "personality of the ensembles." Since different branches of music make music in different ways, they tend to have different values and strengths, especially considering students have different teachers and often hang out in different groups.

"The camaraderie between the two creates some really nice music without the overpowering nature of the band or the meekness of the orchestra," senior band major Austin Shi said. "I guess we joke about it, but whenever we have SSO, it's always really fun just to have different people to hang around with." ♦



WHICH GROUPS ON CAMPUS HAVE BEEN COMPETITIVE WITH EACH OTHER?



THE FALCON VS. THE TALISMAN: "Theft"

BY Anna Novoselov

Every few weeks, community members can be seen devouring a freshly printed copy of the Saratoga Falcon, soaking in indispensable news, passionate opinion pieces, entertainment scoops and eye-opening tales. Similarly, at the end of each year, jaws drop from seeing the beautiful photos and graphics in the Talisman yearbook and recall the highlights of the year.

While readers enjoy both publications, a "friendly" rivalry exists between the two staffs since they occupy the same room and use the same computers. "We usually make fun of each other by saying things like 'nobody reads the newspaper' or 'yearbook is so easy,'" Talisman editor-in-chief senior Charles Qi said. "We joke with each other by comparing our work loads and importance in school."

Tensions sometimes break out during newspaper deadline nights, late Thursday nights the week before the issue comes out, when newspaper staffers finish stories and layouts. Viewing the night as their own, newspaper staffers have complained of the yearbook staff invading and stealing delicious, hard-earned food paid for by the Falcon staff.

"We pay for our food. So they have no right to steal it," Falcon editor-in-chief senior Kyle Wang said. "When someone from yearbook walks into newspaper, we don't want them here."

However, Talisman editor-in-chief senior Lillian Zeng said that yearbook ultimately funds the newspaper and therefore deserves something in return. While newspapers are distributed for free, earning only a small amount of money from ads, the yearbook makes money from selling senior ads. The \$15,000-25,000 it generates per year mainly pays for the printing costs of newspaper, which can run as high as \$20,000 annually. By contrast, the Falcon earns only about \$4,000-5,000 per year in advertising.

"Yearbook makes all the money; we pay for newspapers to be printed. So they can't get mad at us for stealing their deadline night food," said Zeng. (Zeng and

the three other editors-in-chief all do pay the asked-for \$75 contribution for the deadline night food since they attended most of these sessions.)

Qi also unsuccessfully attempted to abate the theft, stating that yearbook students "don't fight for food because there's always enough to go around."

Apart from accusations of stealing food, Wang said that the Talisman has robbed the newspaper of valuable staff members. For instance, a junior graphics editor Kitty Huang, whom he jokingly refers to as "traitor," left newspaper for yearbook due to its increased emphasis on visuals.

"I want to clarify that I transferred from newspaper not because I betrayed it, but because yearbooks suits my interests and graphic abilities," Huang said.

Qi claims that newspaper students are the real thieves.

"In the newspaper, 'take a pic from the yearbook' is heard pretty often. In yearbook, 'take a pic from newspaper' is heard only once in a blue moon," Qi said. "If you're going to steal from us, then at least pay us back."

The split between the publications heightens at the end of each year when beginning students in the Journalism One students are faced with a life-altering decision: newspaper or yearbook?

They are forced to choose their side in the battle for the status of the superior publication.

In the newspaper, individuals with various interests can all find something to captivate them in the glorious 24 pages. The Falcon covers a wide array of topics, ranging from localized accounts to reports on trends and political matters. The range of story possibilities and the chance to produce a top-quality publication every month is what draws numerous students to sign up for newspaper.

"With newspaper you can be more opinionated," senior School Scope editor Michelle Lee said. "You have more options on choosing what you want to write about and who you want to focus on."

However, others are drawn to yearbook for its emphasis on layout and visuals. "You get to work with colors, art and design," Qi said.

Additionally, yearbook snapshots important events during the school year, capturing memories that might otherwise be forgotten.

"Everyone keeps [the yearbook] and cherishes it for a long time," Zeng said. "It's pretty special to document those special moments."

In spite of the differences and the competition between newspaper and yearbook, the two are united through a love of journalism.

"Despite [the rivalry]," Zeng said, "I think we all have respect for each other in our hearts." ♦

WORLD HISTORY CLASSES: THE COMPETITION FOR *donuts*

BY Anishi Patel & Sandhya Sundaram

Amidst learning about Totalitarianism and World War I, sophomores in World History teacher Jerry Sheehy's classes spend time at the end of every week for the class competition.

Sheehy says the competition is a weekly trivia showdown between his three world history classes in order to "spice things up." He asks the class questions that range from American history and presidents to topics such as boy bands or baseball. Each individual period must collaborate to answer questions and earn points for the class's overall score.

In the past, Sheehy has asked questions like "What's the rapper Snoop Dogg's real name?"

"We've done positive things with the competition — one year, I had pitted the classes against each other in the canned food drive," Sheehy said. "Between my three classes, we brought in more canned food than the rest of the school."

For sophomore World History student Claire Smerdon, the trivia contest is nice break from the routine.

"When you're stressed and have a lot of things on your plate, it's nice to be able to forget that for a few minutes and be competitive," Smerdon said.

But the class competition isn't always about productivity or even relaxation; Sheehy likes to stimulate his students' competitive nature.

"It's always fun to have bragging rights over your classmates," Sheehy said. "The whole mantra of 'We beat you!' or 'We're ahead of you!' is enjoyed by all the students."

At the end of the semester, the winning period is prom-

ised the alluring prize of doughnuts, and according to sophomore Abhay Manchala, the first semester winning class, Sheehy's fourth period, is still waiting for their prize.

Regardless, Manchala said that the class competition is a great way to engage the class, and for him to hear from students that he would not speak to otherwise.

"It really makes the class come alive," Manchala said. "Although it does get loud, and it's not really school based or curriculum based."

Even when contests get competitive in the heat of the moment, Manchala has not encountered students who are extremely set on winning.

"If we miss a question or something, it's annoying, but I'm not going up to people in second period saying, 'hey guys, we're totally gonna beat you in the class competition!'" Manchala said. ♦

MOCK TRIAL: LEARN *real-life* SKILLS

BY Katherine Zhou

There's nothing like walking into the Santa Clara County courthouse and putting on your game face to present your case for another round of trial.

This is mock trial, an organization that teaches students to learn about the law, challenging them to think within the confines of the evidence presented to them.

But there is another organization on campus that has a rivalry with mock trial — and you have definitely heard of it. Their cult-like members are often adorned with unattractive team sweatshirts and an attitude that can be spotted from miles away: speech and debate. Speech and debaters have bred quite a reputation around school for their fast-talking-with-no-substance arrogant ways.

I have three major gripes against this organization, with examples of why mock trial is better.

1. As hyper-competitive individuals, speech and debaters definitely don't know the definition of "team." (But they would make one up when put on the spot: more on that later).

Unlike its rival organization, mock trial is truly a collaborative team effort. All of its members, including understudies, work together to build the case.

Mock trial is an organization that helps students foster their belief in justice and working together toward a common goal (skills invaluable in the real world) while speech and debate teaches its competitors to knock each other down and get to the top. (In short, mock trial prepares students to become humanitarians, social workers, lawyers, while speech and debaters are prepared to be sleazy, fast-talking scammers.)

In any classroom, you are sure to spot a speech and debater trying to assert their righteousness. Sure, some speech and debaters are very successful, but arrogance can stem from that. The lack of inclusivity and the cutthroat nature even within its own organization has garnered the club infamy on campus. Case in point: As I was writing this story, the speech and debaters who were trying to tell me that they had the better organization ended up arguing between themselves: about what event was more difficult.

2. Speech and debate competitions are usually judged by parents who often don't understand the rules and rely on their personal bias. Each judge has complete liberty to use their own judgment as there are very few definite standards.

The National Speech and Debate Association hosts many types of competitions across the country nearly every week-end, so there are obviously many judges of lesser quality.

Of course, there is sometimes bias in mock trial, but at least the judges know the law and have expertise with handling cases.

3. My third and final point is also my most important: Many speech and debate events are not useful for real life and can actually foster negative habits.

For example, for the speech event Dramatic Interpretation, where you perform another's work dramatically, when will you be ever be put in a situation where you need to perform another person's written speech again? (Unless you are Melania Trump). If you really want to practice acting, you should join drama.

And for debate: Being able to make up facts during competition, without having a reference point such as a case packet may prepare you for a career as a lying politician, but is not a positive trait someone should learn.

As the saying goes around campus, "Speech and debate teaches you how to B.S."

Here's a summary for all you crazy S&D speed-readers who skimmed to the end: Mock trial teaches students more practical skills — learning to handle the law and work with evidence instead of being able to make up arguments that sound believable. ♦

SPEECH AND DEBATE CAMPUS PRESENCE *outweighs* THAT OF MOCK TRIAL

BY Connie Liang

Strolling down the halls, students couldn't help but eye the golden letters decorated on the richly contrasting black fabric, permeating every corner of the school and defining the very essence of club attire. These, of course, are the prided speech-and-debate sweatshirts.

Simply put, our slogan "#WEBREAK, #WEPLACE, #WEWIN" may be synonymous with the consistent success the team has seen. More importantly, however, the prevalence of these shirts reflects the influential presence of the club on campus, a presence that few other groups can rival.

Some might have heard of mock trial, where students compete in a simulated courtroom setting during one February tournament. Some might have even compared this group to speech and debate (where we also wear fancy suits may I add); but truth be told, mock trial just doesn't stand to the same prestige or breed the same rewards that speech and debate does.

To give an example of how little presence mock trial has on campus, beginning of my freshman year, I wasn't even aware of the group's existence. I didn't see its stand

during any of the three days of Club Rush, didn't know who was involved and never saw any mock trial apparel.

Speech and debate, on the other hand, was (and still is) a much more renowned organization that I was immediately drawn to, a group that has rightfully cemented its status as a top program on campus.

Some argue that speech and debate is a breeding ground for arrogance and cockiness. This is true but only to a certain extent.

That debaters are arguing with assertiveness is only a testament to the fact that through this activity they have found the confidence to voice their opinion, a necessary confidence in these times.

Additionally, while mock trial may be a good place for aspiring attorneys, speech and debate provides a much more well-rounded approach for gaining communication and research skills relevant to a larger world beyond the confines of the courtroom.

From practicing how to captivate audiences in "Dramatic Interpretations" to thinking on their feet in fast-paced Policy debates, students develop skills in speech and debate that form the basis of what all people, even lawyers, fundamentally need first.

How can you defend a criminal if you can't clearly

enunciate each word? How can you step up to the stand without knowing how to refute every possible loophole to an argument first?

As for critics who say speech and debate breeds bad habits, including "cheating one's way to victory" or even that it teaches no real skills, talk to some debaters and you'll be astonished by how much they have learned.

Taxes, foreign policy and government legislation are only a few of the nuanced topics debaters research inside and out in order to prepare for tournaments; and while mock trial members are preparing to prosecute a fake defendant aligned with a fake political group and who supposedly assassinated a fake opponent, debaters are understanding vital information applicable to the world around them, one case at a time and during multiple competitions through the year.

While both groups involve public speaking, the simply more prestigious speech and debate team builds fundamental skills that even mock trial fails to. Nowadays, the ability to speak up knowledgeably and fight for what is right is more crucial than ever before. Ultimately, the verdict in this case is indisputable: Speech and debate's influence and practicality in today's society clearly outweigh that of mock trial. ♦

by Lina Kim & Alex Wang

As viewers flocked to the theaters to watch hero T'Challa and villain Erik Killmonger clash in a fury of claws, blades and ideals, "Black Panther," smashed film box office records and scored a 97 percent certified fresh rating on Rotten Tomatoes. The film has been lauded for its portrayal of racial identity and celebration of black culture.

Besides the action-packed fight scenes and futuristic technology, the glamorous reviews and social media hashtags, the core of "Black Panther" reveals pressing injustices in the U.S.

In the beginning of the movie, "Black Panther" portrays images of a poor Oakland community filled with crime, death and poverty, which offers a unique, relatable perspective to those who have lived in crime-ridden lower-class neighborhoods. But now, these young people have a superhero in Black Panther whom they can idolize.

With recent movements such as #OscarsSoWhite striving to incorporate more minority roles in films, "Black Panther" broke barriers by being the first primarily black superhero movie with lead

actors Chadwick Boseman as the Black Panther King T'Challa; Michael B. Jordan as Erik Killmonger; and Lupita Nyong'o, T'Challa's ex-girlfriend Nakia.

In addition to the casting, the setting of the movie draws on a variety of elements from different African cultures. Coogler drew from his experiences visiting Africa to research for the movie. The futuristic society of Wakanda consists of five tribes, each featuring African tribal clothing, face paint and jewelry.

For example, the rings worn around the necks of the Dora Milaje (female warriors), were inspired by those of the South African Ndebele tribe; the lip plates worn in the Wakanda throne room are also found in Mursi culture. The rhythmic drum beats and chants heard during fight scenes also have African origins.

Furthermore, Director Ryan Coogler reached to his own roots to create one of the most intricate backstories seen on screen. The movie shows Killmonger's growth as a young boy in Oakland, where Coogler himself grew up, and his eventual return to Wakanda to overtake the throne. Killmonger faces death and poverty so much



that when he finds his own father dead he doesn't cry because he has grown so used to the violence.

This experience in a poor black neighborhood, a parallel to numerous other neighborhoods in the U.S., inspires Killmonger to devise a plan to supply black people worldwide with Wakanda's technologically advanced weapons to overthrow governments and create a Wakandan empire where currently oppressed minorities have more freedom.

The movie makes another real-life connection as Oakland was also the birthplace of the Black Panther Party, a political organization that operated in the 1960s and 70s to protect African-Americans from



police brutality. These aspects of the movie send many messages about empowering black communities. Killmonger's plan, although described as evil in the movie, is a call to action to help minorities in need. In the movie, King T'Challa takes this to heart and sets up an outreach center at the end to provide for the Oakland community where Killmonger grew up.

The movie is an acclamation to those in black communities as well. Already, movements such as #Wakandathevote (which encourages African-Americans that come to watch Black Panther to register to vote) and #WhatBlackPanther-MeansToMe (a hashtag where people explain the importance of a

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black superhero) show the movie's significance to viewers.

Not only is the movie itself shaking up the film industry, but its accompanying album produced by rapper Kendrick Lamar is also making rounds.

Currently sitting at number one on Billboard's Top 200 Albums list, "Black Panther: The Album" is the perfect complement to the multitude of black empowerment ideas that Black Panther presents.

Appearing on the album are South African, American and British artists.

The choice by Lamar, to gather artists from different backgrounds and different genres, demonstrates the unity among black individuals highlighted in the movie.

In addition, the album showcases racial prejudice and cultural identity. Speaking out is the embodiment of both the movie and the album. They spread ideas of change and equality, but also give minorities a sense of identity. In the end, Black Panther is much more than just a 97 percent rating or the hottest album on the Billboard Top 200. It's not just a fantastic film but a defining moment for the entertainment industry. ♦

Asian rappers bring diversity to the world of hip-hop

by Jayne Zhou

When Indonesian rapper "Rich Brian" released his first single, "Dat Stik" in 2015, he puzzled many with the comedic hip-hop hit. But it was clear he had an undeniable talent for wordplay and production. His self-released music video racked up over 80 million views.

Shortly after his sudden popularity, he was signed by record label 88rising.

Though this seems like the story for any up-and-coming artist, Rich Brian's success as an Asian stands out in the music industry, especially in the rap genre.

He credits some of his success to the label he is signed with, 88rising.

88rising is a primarily Asian company whose focus is promoting

Asian cultures worldwide, primarily through music.

The founder, Sean Miyashiro, is a Bay Area native of Japanese and Korean descent. According to Pitchfork, the management and media production company's core artists are hard-hitting rappers out to obliterate expectations set by "hyper-polished K-pop stars."

88rising has signed and helped several up and coming Asian artists enter the mainstream. Along with Rich Brian, the company's clients include, Joji, the Higher Brothers, Keith Ape and more. There are several more Asian artists who aren't signed with 88rising such as Kris Wu, George "G" Yamazawa, Dumbfoundead and Jin.

These Asian artists are changing the industry with the integration of

their own culture into their music.

"It's nice that instead of this generic mainstream rap all the time, we are able to hear like a new style that will definitely become more trendy later," sophomore Alyssa Pantaleeva said after watching their show in San Francisco on Feb. 7, but the second stop on the 88rising tour.

This "new style" of hip hop that these artists are introducing often incorporates their own language in it. For example, The Higher Brothers often rap in Chinese to set themselves apart from the popular "mumble rappers."

In an interview with Forbes Magazine, Miyashiro said, "We are clearly filling a void, which is a pan-Asian, East-meets-West approach. I think we're doing it in a very cre-

ative and cool way."

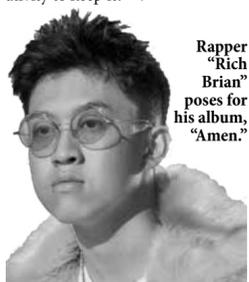
Indeed, they are incorporating and integrating Western artists with their own Asian artists. For example, Rich Brian, who is from Indonesia, hadn't even been to America before at the time the song was produced, Oct. 2016, but had the opportunity to collaborate with Ghostface Killah.

He continues to collaborate with several Western, mainstream artists like 21 Savage.

The number of Asians in the hip-hop/rap industry is only growing and it isn't nearing an end anytime soon.

"[Asian presence] is long overdue because the fact is, most ethnicities are going like something Asian, whether it's Asian cuisine, a pop star, a movie," Miyashiro told

Forbes. "There's a lot of influence going back and forth, especially in entertainment. The world has been waiting for a company like us to deliver it. Yeah it's needed, but who's going to have the DNA and the creativity to keep it?" ♦



Rapper "Rich Brian" poses for his album, "Amen."

88RISING

Fanfiction gives writers a medium to fine tune their skills

by Mathew Luo & Anissa Mu

To fanfiction writers, the genre gives them a chance to exercise their wacky imagination and express their love for an author's characters.

While fanfiction is often dismissed as amateurish writing, it is still an art nonetheless. Although it borrows from another work's characters and worlds, its stories are still woven with the author's original plots and characters.

Sophomore Elodie Torres, who enjoys writing "Alternate Universe" fanfiction, said that when writing a new story, she first decides what source material to base her story on and then starts thinking of how the characters would interact with each other.

She believes that it's important to keep the canon [material accepted as officially part of the story] characters as close to the original story as possible.

Sometimes, she engages in research sessions when necessary, de-

pending on the story she is writing.

After completing a chapter, she revises and edits it twice once immediately after completion, then again before publishing it on a fanfiction platform such as Archive of Our Own the next day.

"I write fanfiction because I think it's a great way to improve your writing," said Torres. "It also makes readers happy to see new scenarios with their favorite characters in it."

Another fanfiction writer, junior Cheryl Wang, started writing in fifth grade and continued up to eighth grade. During this time, she has often published 4,000-word chapters weekly about book series like "Percy Jackson."

"Writing with characters I love and are already well fleshed-out is much easier than working with original characters," Wang said. "That's why I think many people prefer to write fanfiction over original fiction."

She noticed that fanfiction also attracts much more readers than

original works do. For example, Wang said she once wrote a "really bad" Percy Jackson fanfiction, which got 300,000 views, while all of her original works, no matter how good, got only a handful.

In fact, one of the shortcomings to writing fanfiction, according to fanfiction writer sophomore Jacqueline Lo, occurs when she updates a story and receives little to no feedback.

"It makes me feel unmotivated to continue writing the story," said Lo, "because I feel like nobody actually wants to continue reading my story."

Even with such disappointments, there are many reasons for young writers to keep plowing forward.

Writers often put the characters in alternative universes (AUs), Wang said, where they can overcome the original creators' limited world and set designs to expand on the possibilities of their imagined story arcs.

According to Torres, this freedom of expression that fanfiction allows often becomes emulated in a

sub-genre called "crack-fic" where writers put the characters in ridiculous and outlandish situations.

"You can literally go 'Hey! What if this character was dating a potato?' and while that would be trash in actual fiction, it's completely acceptable in fanfiction," she said.

In general, these writers all believe that writing fanfiction has granted them a many benefits, like a "bigger imagination" and "writing practice."

Although Wang is no longer writing fanfiction, because she has outgrown the younger demographic, she still writes creatively and is currently creating her own novel.

She said writing fanfiction has "created the base" for her "strong" and confident writing, and she encourages others to continue writing for the exercise.

"I remember back in seventh grade a guy made fun of me for writing fanfiction, but I didn't care," Wang said. "Don't let what others think stop you from doing what you want." ♦

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SARATOGA'S Hollywood

Sophomore lives out acting dream

Sophomore Liviya Katz has always had a flair for the dramatic. When she was 4 years old, she began leaving her mother dramatic and enthusiastic voicemails, frequently catching her off guard with her melodramatic imperfections.

In elementary school Katz would spend time with her friends researching popular Disney Channel stars to find how they got auditions. Katz would joke with her parents, constantly mentioning how amazing it would be for her to have her own agent or manager. What Katz didn't realize was that her parents had actually taken her seriously and started looking.

Katz is now involved with acting through multiple aspects of her life, whether through plays, commercials, films or even volunteering.

At age 10, Katz began going to Kids On Camera, an acting school based in San Francisco. It was there that she found her Los Angeles-based current manager, Linda Defilippo. Katz got the opportunity to perform scenes and send the videos to managers and agents, later signing with the Marla Dell Talent Agency.

Katz has acted in numerous plays through the school and California Theater Center, most notably playing Macbeth in "Macbeth," and Laura in "The Glass Menagerie." She also starred in a De Anza College student film called "Irrevocable," which was about a teenager committing sui-

cide due to social pressures. Most recently, Katz acted in a commercial for a social media app.

"I love acting because I love people and trying to understand them, figure out their motives and how they react in any situation based on their past life experience," Katz said. According to Katz, the process of getting a role is full of complications. After submitting an application, Katz must wait for the casting director to review her headshot and resume before even getting a call for an audition.

"If you don't look interesting enough in your headshot, they won't even look at your resume," Katz said.

Although many actors in Los Angeles get auditions regularly, Katz has to balance acting with school and her social life, getting about four auditions per year.

Katz is compensated for her roles, but hopes to land a more substantial role to build up her resume. Ideally, Katz would like to see her lifelong dream of being an actress become her career. But as a second option, she wants to pursue a career in environmental science or social work.

Katz knows that pursuing acting professionally will not be easy and said that her biggest take-away from acting has been learning to stay true to herself.

"You have to have thick skin to be in the business and put yourself out there, but that shouldn't discourage you," Katz said. "For me, there's just nothing else like acting." ♦

Junior creates YouTube channel

In a YouTube video uploaded Feb. 9, junior Hannah Chang flips through her sketchbook: 20 pages of cartoons of people, animals and food. Some illustrations are shaded black and white while others boast a variety of colors. This sketchbook is a culmination of Chang's art in the past year.

She created her YouTube channel "HeyIt'sHannah" two months ago. It currently has five uploaded videos — four art-related.

In addition to a sketchbook tour, she has uploaded time-lapse sketches: one a self-portrait and the other two paintings of women in honor of the Women's March.

To expand further into the art community, she created a mini movie with snapshots of National Portfolio Day in San Francisco on Jan. 14, where high school artists around the Bay Area received feedback from art schools they are interested in. Chang also has a baking video of her making dog-shaped macarons to celebrate the Year of the Dog and Chinese New Year.

She said each art video takes her at least five hours to create and edit.

"I usually do mini illustrations of things that have a deep story behind them," Chang said.

After watching videos from artists like Julia Kuo and Jing Wei on Instagram, Chang decided to create her own channel.

Chang has been drawing ever since she can remember but didn't specialize in illustrations until her freshman year. Since then, she has dabbled in screen printing, clay making, fashion and animation.

"I did take some art classes, but I never really followed what the teachers told me," Chang said. "I'm mostly self-taught. Art helps me de-stress and tell my stories."

She has also entered numerous competitions like Scholastic Art and Writing, winning several regional gold keys, and Be the Whale, where she won a \$1,000 scholarship for her art.

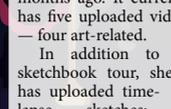
Next year, Chang sees herself creating new pieces for her college portfolio. She plans on applying to the Rhode Island School of Design, School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Pratt Institute.

"I really like creating cartoon-style illustrations and telling my story through art people will enjoy," Chang said. ♦

—Sherrie Shen and Elicia Ye



Liviya Katz (10) "The Actress"



Hannah Chang (11) "The Artist"

Senior techs for drama department

On Nov. 11, as the actors exited the stage for intermission for the fall play, "You Can't Take it with You," students donning dark clothing and headsets rushed onto the stage and started rearranging props and sweeping the stage. In-

visible to the bustling audience, the stage crew, usually a group of 3-5 students, works to make the play run smoothly.

Being a tech is low-profile role, but the techs who are dedicated to their craft see it as their world.

They do everything from using power tools to operating lights, and, this spring, they are helping set up flying sets during the spring musical, "Mary Poppins."

One person who has done tech all throughout her high school career is senior Quinn Chermak.

She has formally teched for every single musical since her freshman year, but she also assists the tech crew during the fall plays despite her commitment as an actor during the plays.

"I joined because I enjoyed being with the people, fixing the problems in unexpected ways," Chermak said. "Seeing a set I had helped make and all the blood, sweat, tears and time that went with it is rewarding."

Sophomore Ritika Kuppam has acted in two of the shows that Quinn has teched.

According to Kuppam, the events in tech are fairly unknown within the actor community because it's not publicized. In her opinion, the techs don't get enough credit.

"Everything the techs do is crucial. Without them we wouldn't be able to do our productions [as] we wouldn't have lights or props," said Kuppam. "They clean up the McAfee, and they stay later than actors."

During the months before productions, the techs pour into their work. The spring musical requires 10 a.m.-6 p.m. hours every single day of spring break, and the two weeks before opening night calls for 2 p.m.-10 p.m. sessions daily as well as regular three to four hour after-school sessions in the weeks leading up to crunch time.

Techs spend those several hours after school in the tech room next to the old band room.

After the main pieces of the set are built, they are moved to the McAfee Center.

When the sets are close to completion, the techs dedicate their time to rehearsing beside the cast with all of their light and set cues.

Of all the technical work, Chermak said her favorite is painting the sets, though she also enjoys resolving problems that pop up during productions.

"I love how unexpected [the problems are], and seeing the effort both the techs and actors have to do to make it right," Chermak said. ♦

—Colleen Feng



Quinn Chermak (12) "The Stage Tech"

Read the rest of the stories (featuring sophomores Alex Lee, Ananya Krishnan, Tarun Krishnan, juniors Jason Ting, Miya Uenaka, Kimi Uenaka, and Isaiiah Vivero) at our website, saratogafalcon.org. Use a QR scanning app (i.e., Snapchat) to view.





Sophomore gamers jump into Fortnite craze

By Callia Yuan

Sophomore Megan Chen was video-calling sophomore Prosper Chiu. Her homework was laid out on her desk, but her eyes were fixed on her laptop screen as her avatar from the game Fortnite moved through the tall grass. She waited as Chiu told her where to go and what to do.

Battle royale games — or last man standing shooter games — have become increasingly popular as people have lost interest in first-person and team-based shooter games. One battle royale game in particular is gaining more and more traction in both the professional gaming world and among teens: Fortnite.

Rapper Drake and professional Fortnite player “Ninja” recently set a record playing Fortnite on Twitch, a streaming service that allows people to watch others play video games. On March 15, they were able to attract over 600,000 viewers on their livestream, smashing the record of 388,000.

Chen had started playing Rules of Survival, another battle royale game, on her

phone after her friend sophomore Ravina Patel introduced the game to her. But while Chen was playing Rules of Survival, many of her friends told her that it’s very similar to Fortnite and suggested that she try Fortnite instead.

Released the summer of last year, Fortnite’s basic gameplay is simple: Players are dropped into a map and must find their own weapons. It is available on the Xbox, PlayStation, PC and Mac.

Sophomore Brian Fok, who also plays Fortnite, attributes its success to its smaller map, which leads to far more interactions with other players and opportunities to fight.

“Unlike other battle royale games, Fortnite has a smaller map and allows you to build,” said Fok. “Building adds to the skill gap because now, it’s not just about shooting — it’s about building around someone. The smaller map means you find people more often than in other battle royale games, so you fight more.”

Chen revealed that rather than shooting, she enjoys the building aspect of Fort-

nite more because she lacks experience playing shooter games.

Fok enjoys the building aspect of Fortnite as well, and often likes to “build around people and make them confused.”

However, unlike Chen, Fok plays with students from Los Gatos High School that he’s met through playing other games like Overwatch, which — unlike Fortnite — is a standard first-person shooter game. The key differences between Overwatch and Fortnite, as well as team-based shooter and battle royale games in general, is that in team-based shooter games, players respawn after dying and are ranked based on the number of wins their team has and individual performance compared to other team members. Fortnite and Overwatch both have various modes in which players can individually or in a team; however, only team games in Overwatch are ranked.

In addition, Fortnite is free while the standard edition of Overwatch can cost \$20 to \$30, so many students opt for other games. Both games are also very time consuming and many students ultimately quit

after a while. Because of Overwatch’s lack of popularity among SHS students, Fok plays video games in general with Los Gatos students who help increase his rank in Overwatch more.

“In Fortnite, there’s no direct result of getting better and you can’t push your rank further like in Overwatch,” said Fok. “On the weekends, I play mainly play Overwatch but frequently play Fortnite as well, because Fortnite is more casual and less about winning.”

Chen, Patel and Chiu often play Fortnite together on weekends and with other sophomores from their classes. While Chen says that “[her] friends stopped talking to her for a while because [she] was playing [Rules of Survival on her phone] too much,” Fortnite can’t really be played at school so she’s now able to maintain healthy relationships with her friends.

“Fortnite takes up way too much time, but it’s still really fun,” said Chen. “For now, I only play on the weekends, but the mobile version of Fortnite just came out so my friends might stop talking to me again.” ♦



Game: Fortnite Battle Royale
Price: Free
Type: Battle-Royale
Unique features: Building, smaller map
Teams: Individual and Teams



Game: Overwatch
Price: Around \$40
Type: First Person Shooter
Unique features: Various skills, Fantasy
Teams: Team-only

Student-led effort raises money to help teacher’s wife

By Elaine Toh & Ananya Vadlakonda

During a casual conversation with first-year Algebra 1 and Algebra 2 Honors teacher Andrew Shoemaker where he detailed his life outside of the classroom, freshman Jonah Noralahi was immediately taken aback hearing about his teacher’s situation: Mr. Shoemaker’s wife, Diane, was recently diagnosed with Lyme Disease, though she had unknowingly suffered with it for two decades.

After telling Noralahi about how his wife’s health issues had led to the two being unable to travel, Mr. Shoemaker showed Noralahi a picture of an RV from Craigslist that he and Mrs. Shoemaker had dreamed of buying.

Immediately, Noralahi told Mr. Shoemaker that he wanted to help, and on Jan. 17, a few days later, he started a GoFundMe page.

Though at first uncomfortable with the idea, Mr. and Mrs. Shoemaker ultimately decided to accept the help because of the severity of her situation.

For several years, Mrs. Shoemaker has struggled with sleep issues and multiple coughing fits that have spent most of her energy. These symptoms led to her feeling sick for approximately three weeks out of every month.

It was only until last year when doctors finally diagnosed Mrs. Shoemaker with Lyme Disease, along with several other conditions — sleep apnea, insomnia, leaky gut syndrome and Hashimoto’s disease — that the mysterious illnesses finally began to make sense.

Lyme, a debilitating disease that can potentially become chronic if left untreated, is most commonly transmitted by a black-legged tick. The disease often goes undiagnosed as a result of its inconsistent symptoms.

The most prominent indication of the disease is the formation of a red bull’s eye-shaped rash on the skin; however, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, only about 70 to 80 percent of people develop this mark. This leads to a considerable number of infected individuals



These are photos of Mr. Shoemaker with his wife, Diane. Before she was diagnosed with Lyme Disease, Mrs. Shoemaker worked as a consultant for Ecology Action in Santa Cruz.

— like Mrs. Shoemaker, who did not show any of the telltale symptoms — who remain unaware that they have the disease.

After her doctors diagnosed Mrs. Shoemaker with Lyme, the two speculate that she had most likely been living with the disease for approximately 20 years, causing the condition to turn chronic.

And while Mrs. Shoemaker’s immune system had been battling Lyme Disease, a slew of other diseases developed. For instance, the onset of her Leaky Gut Syndrome came as a result of her immune system’s inability to fend off certain parasites that would generally be shielded from a healthier immune system.

“All of these conditions are spawned from this chronic Lyme issue over potentially 20 years, which is really intense,” Mr. Shoemaker said.

Discovering Lyme Disease

Before Mrs. Shoemaker’s diagnosis of Lyme, the couple lived in Santa Cruz, where they grew accustomed to and fond of the outdoors. Mrs. Shoemaker once kept an active lifestyle and often they would enjoy hikes or go surfing.



Courtesy of ANDREW SHOEMAKER

However, over time she started to become sick and unable to carry out tasks that she had once been able to do.

Mrs. Shoemaker had previously worked as the founder and director of the Kekaha Community Garden and Resource Center in Kauai, Hawaii, the consultant for the company Ecology Action in Santa Cruz, along with working on her own business called Grant Solutions. But when the symptoms of her condition started becoming more prominent, she could no longer work and, as a result, she been unemployed for four years.

As the two started noticing her health deteriorating, they realized something else may have been adding to her problems — toxic black mold had spread throughout their house. Since black mold is quite costly to remove and could still further result in a large range of health problems, such as chronic coughing and sneezing, the couple was forced to move.

Living in a one-paycheck household, the Shoemakers struggled with finding a new place, especially since Santa Cruz’s housing prices and rentals are difficult to afford. Luckily, after applying for jobs all over California, Mr. Shoemaker was hired by Saratoga High last year, allowing him to earn enough

money to find another home in the city.

In the meantime, the Shoemakers were forced to throw out every piece of furniture they owned in order to prevent any mold from spreading to their new home.

“We didn’t want to bring any of those microscopic mold spores with us to our new place,” Mr. Shoemaker said. “So, this past year we have had to re-purchase everything we own.”

The two had to buy the bare necessities: a new bed, couch, tables, clothes, sheets, coats, shoes and many more. As a result, the pair went fairly deep into credit debt, Mr. Shoemaker said.

A hope for the future

The pair’s plan to buy an RV ultimately emerged after realizing the extent to which Lyme had debilitated Mrs. Shoemaker — even a simple trip to family in Michigan for the holidays had become impossible.

With Mrs. Shoemaker needing to lug around her sleep apnea machine along with other supplements, they thought about buying an RV, which could act as a kind of “mobile home” for them when traveling.

“We had this idea of that being our new dream, to save up for a van,” Mr. Shoemaker said.

But after the two finally found a used RV, which was fitting for the couple’s circumstances in terms of space, the vehicle proved to be far too expensive. Hoping to keep their dream alive, the two explored other options and even applied for a bank loan that they were denied from.

Noralahi wanted to aid his teacher in accomplishing his goal of purchasing the van. Currently, after two months of launching the fundraiser, Noralahi has received solid support for the cause, raising slightly over \$3,000 so far.

“I almost feel uncomfortable taking the money in a sense,” Mr. Shoemaker said. “There’s 10,000 more needy people and better charities out there. I didn’t expect any of this. It’s so kind; it makes me emotional. It’s really amazing.” ♦



A SECOND FAMILY

KOREAN TRANSFER STUDENTS FIND A WELCOMING HOME AT SHS

By Anissa Mu & Michelle Lee

When Senior Yunho (Luke) Roh first pictured his new high school, he expected something “stereotypically American”: tall lockers and an indoor campus, like in “High School Musical.” But when he arrived at SHS with his younger sister sophomore Jin Roh two years ago, he was surprised by how different the campus looked from the image he had built.

“Saratoga High definitely didn’t look like what I imagined,” Roh said. “Beyond physical attributes, when I read about how many different activities and events SHS had, I was extremely attracted — it was immediately different from a typical Korean school.”

Over the past few years, a handful of Korean students have moved to the area and chosen to attend the school. Its strong academic

reputation, smaller student population and existing Korean community seem to be the three main reasons behind this trend.

Senior Daniel Ryu moved here as a sophomore after his father’s company recommended the city and school. He said that because of Saratoga’s smaller student body, his family felt that counselors and resources would be more focused on individual students, which is something important for Ryu as a foreign student.

For transfer students like Roh and Ryu, having a strong Korean community here has helped make the transfer much easier. For whatever reason, several of the Korean students have transferred during second semester, when school is already in full swing and many cliques have already formed. These students have nevertheless found a home with a tight-knit group that often hangs out APUSH teacher Kim Anzalone’s classroom.

“I met Ryu in my Spanish class where he approached me first,” Roh said. “He later introduced me to my group and we’ve all been friends ever since. Our group is expanding: we started out with maybe four or five students and in one year, its grown to around 10 students.”

Not only did this group of Korean transfer students help Roh assimilate to his new American lifestyle for the first few months, but it also reminds him of his life back at home. Even though everyone in the group can maintain a high level of conversational English, Roh said that the group still communicates in Korean out of comfort, talking in slang understood only by native speakers.

“Might be kind of a surprise but we actually don’t talk about K-pop that much,” Ryu jokes. “That was actually something that surprised me a lot coming to America — groups like BTS are far more popular here

than in Korea.”

The group also gathers every Monday in AP European History teacher Jerry Sheehy’s room for Korean Club where they help senior club president Ryan Kim with the different cultural activities like watching Korean News Years video, or teaching traditional games.

Having been at this school for over a year, Roh’s role in the group has changed; he is currently helping introducing the ins and outs of the school to two students who just transferred from Korea a couple months ago: sophomores Kiseok Lee and Minha Choi.

Lee, who expected there to be only one or two Korean transfer students on campus, said he is extremely thankful for the second family he immediately found at SHS.

“Because there are a lot Koreans here,” Lee said, “it was easier to get used to a school environment where not everything is about listening to lectures and solving workbooks.” ♦

Transfer student exposed to different education system

By Connie Liang & Mathew Liu

When sophomore XuBin Liu’s family told him he was going to move again in 2014, this time crossing an ocean from his hometown in Guangzhou, China, to America, Liu was more than prepared. This was his fourth move, and he had gotten used to the scramble of picking up all his belongings and adapting to a new lifestyle.

“Leaving my home behind each time is not necessarily too bad,” Liu said. “I do feel a sense of nostalgia; I call three countries my home and that does make my life a little bit different.”

For the first four years of his life, Liu, who goes by the name Charlie, lived in Guangzhou, until he moved to Canada for two years while he attended kindergarten. Liu’s family then moved back to China where Liu attended a private school until sixth grade.

Finally, after heavy considerations about finances, education and the environment, Liu’s family packed up to move to the Bay Area in 2014.

“My dad likes change. He also thinks the living standards and the environment is better [in America],” Liu said. “Mainly the air quality around here is more better and my dad thought the education would be better for my family.”

Liu considers his experience atypical for transfer students from East Asian countries. Having previously learned English in

Canada, Liu did not face the same language barrier that many other transfer students have to work through.

For Liu, the difference in the education systems of Western countries versus East Asian countries was — and still is — the most difficult change. Contrary to the generally accepted belief that being a student in America is far easier than being a student in countries such as China and Korea, Liu said being “successful” as an American high school student is far more challenging than excelling as a Chinese high school student.

“A lot of people say that when you move from countries like China to America, America is a lot more relaxed,” Liu said. “But I really don’t feel that way because here in America, you need to be far more well rounded in both your studies and extracurriculars.”

Liu also said Saratoga High students have a certain drive that he believes come from the freedom American students are given to pursue their interests beyond academics. By contrast, in China, the track to success was well defined for students, with everyone taking the same level classes in a fixed curriculum.

And, while China is accepted as more academically rigorous than America, Liu has found the need for self-motivation needed to pursue extracurriculars unfamiliar and daunting.

“Three months ago my mom made me go to a college counselor, and my counselor just looked at my transcript, then asked for my



Sophomore XuBin Liu, who goes by Charlie, plays badminton to help adjust to the new culture. “The most important thing is that I’m still myself,” Liu said. “What affects me most is my personality rather than my background.”

extracurriculars,” Liu said. “She concluded that I need to join more clubs, attend summer programs, sign up for more AP classes, and that playing badminton for the school alone wasn’t going to cut it.”

While this sudden push for more and more extracurriculars is difficult to maintain, Liu said it keeps him grounded in many ways.

Liu plays badminton for the school team, an activity that has helped him the most in learning how to adjust to the social climate

at the school. Through this sport, Liu is able to form new friendships based on a common experience.

Not only that, but the influence of self-motivated SHS students forces Liu to keep up with the crowd to ensure that he too has the opportunities he wants.

“The most important thing is that I am still there; I am still myself,” Liu said. “What affects me most is my personality rather than my background.” ♦

Chinese company Weee! delivers foods from home to Asian Americans in the Bay

By Colleen Feng & Connie Liang

As you drive through the more commercial parts of cities such as Cupertino and Saratoga, a barrage of strokes and Chinese characters outline windows and line restaurant rooftops.

Once a minority in the Silicon Valley, Chinese immigrants have found ways to share their distinctive culture and identity with one another, whether it be through the establishment of foreign language schools or even the formation of mini-worlds, such as Chinatown paralleling their home country.

In Saratoga, where the Chinese community has an especially strong presence, one way immigrants perpetuate their ethnic culture is through the spread and sale of traditional foods that are either difficult to find or unavailable in the U.S.

The online grocery store Weee! specializes in authentic Chinese foods and offers residents traditional Chinese foods not sold by supermarket chains like Safeway or Whole Foods.

Campbell resident Larry Liu founded the business three years ago, following the rise in popularity of the Chinese messenger app, WeChat. Because of this software, Chinese people on both a small-scale and national level now have the ability to connect with one another.

"I noticed an interesting trend at that time," Liu said. "All these WeChat users were gathering together to decide which foods they wanted to eat but couldn't get, and some people started to organize everybody to buy these foods together."

After immigrating from Wu Han, China, 15 years ago, Liu himself experienced the same struggle in finding foods fit for his palate. When Liu used to live in Sacramento, the scarcity of authentic Chinese groceries forced him to drive an hour to Berkeley for the nearest Chinese grocery market, 99 Ranch Market.

"It was very inconvenient, and I had to just go to Walmart to buy produce that I didn't really like," Liu said. This experience, along with his realization of the shared difficulty many Chinese American immigrants faced, prompted Liu to found Weee!.

The website offers a wide range of authentic Chinese foods, ranging from cooked salted duck eggs to Manchurian wild rice. Specialty goods that are hard to obtain, such as the signature mille-feuille cakes from Lady M cafe, are also available. This spares the customers the struggle of having to wait in line for the coveted desert; instead, they can get it delivered to their house for about \$80.

Unlike most grocery stores,

Weee! operates entirely online.

"All the brick and mortar stores are established. That's their turf," Liu said. "For a newcomer to be able to compete, you have to come up with something new and disruptive."

This disruptive approach to an online business has found popularity with users all around the world. There are 20,000 to 30,000 visitors to the website on a monthly basis and 1 million registered users all over the world.

Liu describes his company as a "complement" to WeChat. Using their existing WeChat credentials, users can automatically register with Weee! and connect with individuals in the local area planning on purchasing similar products.

From there, these groups can organize "group buys" on the Weee! website and order items together in bulk quantities, creating a higher demand for a unique product that otherwise wouldn't have been up for individual sale or even reducing the shipping price.

"It's basically community-based shopping," Liu said. This community-centric element to Weee! has permeated the Saratoga culture. Over the last couple years, parents here have involved themselves with this online shop. They run these businesses

from their own residences, having friends drop by to pick up goods.

In Saratoga, junior Judy Yang's mother, Lucy Liu, runs one of these pickup locations.

"There are a lot of people doing it," Mrs. Liu said. "I am just helping out."

Since 2015, Mrs. Liu has helped directly deliver products from supermarket suppliers to the homes of Weee! customers. Usually, she and other deliverers allow close friends and neighbors to come to their houses and pick up products if their total amount doesn't qualify for free shipping.

According to Mrs. Liu, Weee! has 20,000 to 30,000 monthly customers in the Bay Area. The population of Saratoga alone is about 30,000, and the number of Weee! customers is gradually increasing. "A lot of people do not understand the business model of Weee!," she said. "We don't have any fake or bad quality items; if our supplier is good we stay with them, and if they are bad, we stop using their services."

Currently, she said a large majority of Weee!'s customers are first-generation Chinese im-

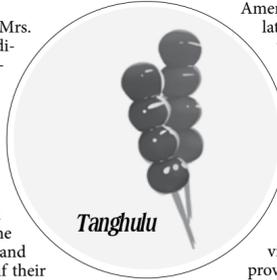
migrants, although some people from came from India use the site too.

"Today, our customers are primarily Chinese, but that's not our vision," Liu said. "We want to target the whole Asian American population because we see that these ethnic groups are not adequately served by their [local grocery stores]."

The service that Liu provides allows Asian Americans to adjust to new lives in a country that is overrun by Americanized supermarkets.

Although there is an abundance of Asian supermarkets in the Bay Area, Weee! allows for the Asian community to have access to the goods even Chinese supermarkets can't get their hands on. For example, there is a popular street food in China called tanghulu. It's a skewer stacked with fruits that is coated in hard sugar and rice paper. Although it is a common dessert in China, it cannot be found in Chinese supermarkets in America. But Weee! has managed to ship these desserts to America for Chinese-Americans to enjoy a taste of home.

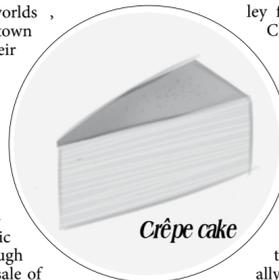
"I think food is a big part of every culture, so with our business we are able to provide people the authentic Asian foods and make them feel they're closer to where they come from," Mrs. Liu said. ♦



Tanghulu



Shenjianbao



Crêpe cake



GRAPHIC BY COLLEEN FENG

JUNIOR SHARES EXPERIENCE WITH SEXUAL HARASSMENT

By Krithi Sankar & Ananya Vadlakonda

Editor's note: Jordan and Peyton are pseudonyms to protect the sources' identities.

The older man's eyes were fixed on her body as Jordan walked through the hallway of a concert while her favorite artist sang on stage during her freshman year. The venue was packed: people were gathered in every corner of the hall. In spite of the audience, he continued to tiptoe toward her.

Music blared through the speakers, silencing his every step as he came closer. Unaware that the man was standing behind her, she continued down the hall. But before she reached the end of the hallway, he hit her head against a wall and rubbed his body up against hers.

Unable to escape, she felt his hands travel up her ripped jeans and he proceeded to feel her up over her black tank top before he finished and she was able to run away.

Although she squirmed and tried to fight back, Jordan tried to maintain her composure throughout the incident, but soon after, the gravity of what had happened hit her.

"It made me feel weak and it was infuriating because I hated feeling weak," Jordan said. "I absolutely despised it."

Later that night when she had gone home, tears streamed down her face as she cried for an hour all alone, before trying to completely put the incident behind her. She decided not to tell anyone except for two of her friends.

This wasn't the first time that Jordan, currently a junior, was sexually assaulted. When she was younger on a bus with her family, another older man made advances toward her and discreetly touched her back inappropriately. Her family was standing to the side, com-

pletely unaware of what had just taken place.

Jordan's experiences — though disturbing — are common: 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18, according to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center.

"As women, we have to support each other and stand together and say, 'That's it. We're done. No more.'"

ACTRESS Alyssa Milano

In the past six months, allegations of sexual harassment and abuse have embroiled almost every industry. High-profile figures such as producer Harvey Weinstein to Pixar executive John Lasseter and politicians such as Al Franken and John Conyers have all been outed for various degrees of sexual offense, from inappropriate sexual behavior to forced sexual actions. Even the cloistered world of gymnastics has undergone trauma with revelations of serial abuse by Dr. Larry Nassar of dozens of young girls and women, for which he is now serving a life sentence.

The upward spiral of accusations led to the growth of the #MeToo movement, which has led to a surge of harassment victims coming forward with their experiences.

Social activist Tarana Burke, who works to educate others and eradicate sexual violence, coined the phrase #MeToo in 2006, inspiring many survivors to come forward with their stories. The #MeToo movement has gained popularity over the past few months, reaching over 85 countries according to CBS News.

Actress and fellow activist

Alyssa Milano endorsed the movement, using the phrase #MeToo in a public post last October. Facebook reported that within 24 hours of Milano's post, 12 million posts and comments surfaced with the phrase #MeToo. Additionally, Twitter confirmed that by the end of November, 1.7 million tweets had been sent worldwide about the subject matter.

"As women, we have to support each other and stand together and say, 'That's it. We're done. No more,'" Milano said in an interview with Time Magazine. "It's vital to me that we really set in some actionable things that we can do to continue this momentum."

Jordan responded to the prominent sexual assault scandals and the #MeToo movement by sharing her own experience.

"Hearing the horrible things on the news inspired me to reach out, even if I'm doing it anonymously," Jordan said.

Jordan spoke about the difficulty she faced trying to grapple with her experiences. From burying her head in her blankets, trying to muffle the sound of her silent tears, to being engulfed in a feeling of inferiority, Jordan spent her time listening to music and "convincing herself she was more than a pretty thing."

Jordan's experience is far from unusual. In an interview with NBC News, Dr. Helen Wilson, a licensed clinical psychologist, detailed the struggle individuals will most likely face after dealing with an incident of sexual harassment.

"Ninety percent [of people] who experience sexual violence in the immediate aftermath exhibit symptoms of acute stress," Wilson said. "For many people, these symptoms dissipate over time through social support and coping strategies, and many people totally recover and move on; others will be so distressed that it really interferes with their work and life."

As a freshman, Jordan dealt

with these incidents by herself and didn't reach out for help, which took a toll on her grades and mental health.

"It took a few months for me to forget about it and not let him into my head," Jordan said. "Even so, my grades suffered a little bit. I'm hard on myself when it comes to school and grades, and it really hurt when I got a B+ first semester of my freshman year."

Although it's been two years since the incident at the concert, she continues to deal with the aftereffects. She finds it especially tough on that day every year, saying it's "hard explaining to teachers why I walk into or out of their classroom crying."

Though Jordan tries not to think about it, she has found it difficult to move on from these experiences. With her parents currently unaware of both incidents, she relies on a couple friends for support.

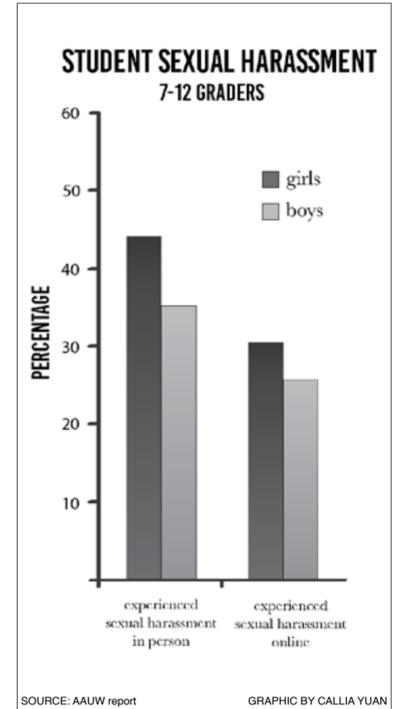
"I think it's because she still doesn't want people to think that she's broken or hurt in any way," Peyton, one of her friends, said. "I love that about her because she just keeps going and holds this weight but doesn't let it drag her down." In trying to move on,

Jordan thinks she has become a stronger person.

"I feel like I've recovered enough that I can speak about it to the newspaper," Jordan said. "But I'm not brave enough to face the judgement and pity that I'd receive if my name was published."

She's also aware of the many people who dismiss the ugly reality of sexual harassment and assault and despises those who don't take the issue seriously.

"Being harassed isn't a joke," Jordan said. "It sticks with you no matter how fervently you try to get it off." ♦



Mother's life path altered by Korea's high-stakes test

By Elaine Toh

Sitting in the car, my mother asked me to define English words for her, some of which I could barely put into words as I thought they were such simple words with no need to know its formal meaning.

I quickly resorted to Google, typing rapidly to ease my mother's curiosity and partly as I jokingly asked her how she could not know these words if she was an English major in college.

That moment has been repeated in many conversations with my mother. I could never understand why, since I ignorantly thought that studying English in a foreign country — South Korea in my mother's case — was synonymous to being fluent in the language. But my mother's story was different — it was dictated by one test.

Around the end of November 1984, my mother, Suk Toh, then a high school senior, walked into the most important test of her life: the College Entrance Strength Test, a Korean standardized test. Feeling extremely drowsy, my mother was unable to fully concentrate on the problems in front of her.

As it turns out, the culprit of her fatigue was a medicine she took the previous day for her aching stomach.

"The day before, I ate tteok (a type of rice cake) that gave me a digestion problem, so I could not sleep at all," my mother said. "My mom gave me some relief medicine, but it was actually a sleeping medicine."

Because of this, my mother received a much lower score than she expected, greatly decreasing her chance of getting into her first-choice college.

The Korean college scholastic ability test, an assessment infamous for its gruesome questions and life-altering effects, is now most commonly known as the Suneung. It contains information from 16 subjects, ranging from mathematics and English to home economics.

"We had one test, one day and only one time. If we failed, then we had to study for another year without going to school."

PARENT Suk Toh

Staying true to its reputation, the Suneung's results play a huge factor, along with a student's GPA, in college admissions. This places great amounts of pressure on Korean students to perform well, resulting in stress and depression.

"We had one test, one day and only one time," my mother said. "If we failed to get into college that year, then we had to study for another year without going to school."

According to my mother, it was common to study for the Suneung every day for the entirety of high school. My mother and her classmates took their regular school classes from 7 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and self-studied for the Suneung until 9 p.m. most days.

My mother planned to retake the standardized test, hoping to have a stronger chance to get into her first choice business school. But at her father's advice, she ended up applying to and entering another college for its most well-acclaimed subject, a teaching credential in English, so she could attend college while preparing for her Suneung retake.

Unfortunately, my mother never changed colleges and ended up graduating from a college she did not want to enter with a major she disliked.

"When I got into my second-choice college, the students there were extremely smart, and I did not want to study extra," my mother said. "So, I decided to continue going to that college."

Though she received good grades for her major, she disliked English education, which dealt with reading, analyzing literature and studying phonetics and linguistics. "If I had the chance to have time to study again and go into the business college, I would have preferred it," my mother said. "It was my first choice after all."

As of now, my mother, while watching my sisters persevere through America's own standardized tests — SAT or ACT — that

are critical for college admissions, learned the prominent differences between the two tests.

While Korean students can only take the Suneung at one specific time during their senior year and once more the following year, American students are able to take the SAT or ACT throughout their entire high school and middle school career, having seven chances each year.

In addition, the SAT and ACT primarily centers around English and math ability, while the Suneung covers a wider array of topics that is much more in depth than the two standard subjects.

"You have to be more prepared and it's definitely more stressful," she said.

Yet, for my mother, the American system is much more effective for colleges since it tests only for the basics. In Korea, the test is an accumulation of everything a student learned in school: thus, he or she must do well in all subjects to get into a top school.

"To go to college, you only need to know the things fitting for your major, making America's system nicer and easier," my mother said. "But, for Korea's system, even if you do well in subjects that you're interested in, you can't go to college if you aren't good at everything else."

Now, as I take that step forward into the world of SATs and ACTs, I cannot help but remember my conversations with my mother, feeling extremely lucky that my future will not be decided by just one test. ♦



"Fifty-six percent of girls said they were sexually harassed at least once in the past school year."

SOURCE: USNews

FANTASY SPORTS

Students compete for pride, bragging rights

BY AlexWang

As sophomore George Bian watched Todd Gurley, running back for the Los Angeles Rams, rack up more 200 yards and two touchdowns on week 16 of the NFL season, he was ecstatic. Bian knew that with Gurley's stellar performance, he had secured the win and title over sophomore Leo Cao in their fantasy football league.

In fantasy football, participants form leagues of eight to 14 people on websites such as NFL.com, ESPN and draft a roster of real-life NFL players.

Everyone in the league chips in a certain amount of money to form a small cash pool; for instance, everyone in Bian's league contributed \$5. The winner takes all the money, and it also gives "extra motivation for everyone to

keep competing," Bian said.

Throughout the season, fans act as managers of their own team, and they can trade, add or bench players.

Fantasy sports represents another way fans can be more connected to a game they love.

Every week, teams are put against each other in head-to-head matchups. The team that scores the most points, based on the performances of its players in real life, wins that matchup.

There are strategies for which players to play and which players to trade or add, based on what happens around the NFL that week. For Bian, this means reading articles on the NFL app about breaking news or expert opinions.

"I read the articles when I'm bored because not only do I enjoy following football, I also want to get an edge in my fantasy league," he said.

Near the end of the NFL season, there are playoffs where the winner of the final matchup is crowned champion.

In his league, Bian nabbed the title after defeating his 13 other friends by an overwhelming margin. He had assembled a star team by trading "overhyped" players

and finding "hidden gems."

"It was a great feeling to win fantasy football because I like following what goes on in the NFL," he said.

Besides fantasy football, another popular fantasy sport among students is fantasy basketball.

Fantasy basketball is similar in many aspects to fantasy football. Fans manage teams of players from the NBA and matchups are also played on a weekly basis, with the total points calculated as a cumulation of the players' points from their games that week.

Because of this similarity, students like junior Anuj Changhavi and sophomore Shyam Nugehalli began playing fantasy basketball

after experience in fantasy football.

Changavi and Nugehalli both said that they enjoy playing fantasy basketball because it gets them more involved with the sport.

"As a fan, fantasy basketball gets you way more invested because you are always watching out for other players," Changavi said.

On the other hand, Nugehalli said that he likes the aspect of simulating a general manager. In addition, he said that managing a fantasy team helps educate him on the strengths and weaknesses of each player. To him, fantasy sports represents another way fans can be more connected to a game they love.

"If you like sports and want to compete with friends for bragging rights and money, then fantasy is for you," Nugehalli said. ♦



Bian

SWIMMING

Talented freshmen dive in and strengthen team

BY ConnieLiang & KayleneMorrison

Freshman Jessie Zhou shivered nervously behind the blocks on March 2 during an away meet against Monta Vista. The rain fell in sheets and the wet conditions were unsuitable, so much so that when Zhou climbed out after her swim, she was less than satisfied with her result.

"I was kind of tired so I didn't do that well," Zhou said. "I feel like if I had gotten more rest or tried harder during warm up, I could have gotten better times."

Zhou is only one of the talented new

freshmen to have joined the varsity team this year.

Due to the number of new swimmers, girls' swimming is seeing a potential in filling the void left by star graduates such as Stefanie Ting and Anna Zhou.

Jessie happens to be Anna's sister and said she feels the pressure to live up to her sister's reputation.

"I'm not as fast as [Anna] or the other people on varsity," Jessie said. "I feel a lot of pressure on me to be that fast."

Though her times have steadily been inching closer to her sister's, fellow varsity swimmer freshman Neeti Badve may just be

fast enough to fill the gap left by Anna and others like her.

Though Badve has only been swimming for five years at the club level, she has already qualified for CCS multiple events.

Though achieving fast times comes with lots of praise and privileges, Badve has to deal with the stress of being expected to break her previous records and score points for the team.

"[Being one of the fastest freshmen] is really cool and exciting but kind of overwhelming because I'm still trying to get the hang of high school meets too, like all the other freshmen," Badve said. "Luckily,

I have really great older teammates who help me and make sure I know what I'm supposed to do."

Though Saratoga lost the meet against Monta Vista, varsity coach Christian Bonnor thinks that the swimmers did fairly well, especially considering the rainy weather and the fact that Monta Vista has some of the strongest athletes in the league.

Regardless, the team has shown great promise for the new season.

"I definitely see a few of the freshmen as leaders, and I have no doubt that they'll carry the team with spirit and positive energy," junior Maddie Stuart said. ♦



Chow

BADMINTON

Key addition helps Falcons seize early victories

BY SherrieShen & CalliaYuan

Then 10-year-old Cameron Chow stood in the middle of the court, racket ready, at the 2012 Pan Am Junior Badminton Championships in Puerto Rico.

After having placed second in boys' singles at the Junior Invitational Trials earlier that year, Chow was invited to represent the U.S. team at the Pan Am Games.

"After placing 10th in the nation [in Under-13 boys' singles], I hit a plateau and stopped improving," Chow said. "I decided to try volleyball instead, since my sister plays it and I wanted to try a team sport."

In his freshman year, Chow played volleyball for Saratoga. However, after a sprain to his right foot that summer, Chow, now a sophomore, decided to play badminton, which is less straining on his injury. He currently plays varsity No. 1 mixed doubles with senior captain Catherine Zhang.

Despite taking a hiatus from the sport for two years, Chow is still one of the best players on the team. In the Falcons' first conference game against Los Altos on March 8, Chow and Zhang quickly won an early match 21-7, 21-14. The Falcons ended

up beating Los Altos 23-7. JV won 8-7.

On March 13, the Falcons faced the Firebirds at Fremont High with varsity winning 25-5 and JV winning 14-1. On March 15, the Falcons faced Homestead High at home, varsity winning 21-9 and JV 14-1.

One key player missing from the Falcons' lineup in these three games is freshman Ryan Hsiao, a nationally ranked player. Since Hsiao transferred from King's Academy this semester, the administration is still processing Hsiao's transfer forms. Hsiao anticipates being able to play in conference games starting March 20.

As a result, the Falcons hope to take first in the lower El Camino League and move back up to the De Anza league next year. Senior captains Stephen Ding and Austin Wang have promised to dye their hair if the team goes undefeated in their league.

"Even though our team is still pretty young and we have a lot of underclassmen, everyone's been improving really quickly and I think we're going to have a pretty strong team for next year in the upper division," Zhang said. ♦

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon could not cover the results of the conference games against Los Gatos on March 20 and Mountain View on March 22.

SOFTBALL

Freshman finds varsity team tougher than anticipated

BY PhoebeWang

Starting at age 8, much of Bela Chauhan's free time has revolved around playing softball, starting with her participation on the Los Gatos Magic recreational team.

As she slowly progressed as a player, she joined other more competitive club softball teams, such as Campbell Crush and South Bay Quakes. Today, the freshman is a starting player for the varsity team, with second base and pitcher being her primary

positions this year. Though they aren't her usual position, Chauhan had to play these positions to compensate for the loss of seniors last year, such as last year's star pitcher Rachel Davey, who is now in her freshman year at Emerson University.

Even with these challenges, Chauhan believes the experience in high school softball so far has been rewarding and essential for her to adjust to a higher level of play.

"It's a bit of a step up playing with older girls, but it's nice because I'm learning a lot

from the more experienced players," Chauhan said.

As difficult as it has been to adjust to being on varsity, Chauhan said the biggest difference she has faced between club softball and high school softball has been the intensity and the number of practices and games. For high school, there are practices every day and roughly two to three games every week. On the other hand, her club South Bay Quakes normally holds a few practices every week with weekend tournaments ev-

ery weekend.

Chauhan anticipates a successful year due to the relentless work ethic of the team.

"I think we've got a great group of players who work hard and play harder," Chauhan said. "We are committed to giving our best, and having fun along the way."

Currently the team has played no league games but had three preseason games with a record of 1-1-1. The team will play their first two leagues games on March 20 and March 22. ♦

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL

Falcons adapt to new season and new team

BY SandhyaSundaram & JayneZhou

With a new coach and a rebuilding team following the graduation of four-year starter and star player Joel Schneidmiller, boys' volleyball has started off the season with three wins, one loss and one successful tournament.

Because the team did not have a preseason, players had to adjust with only two practices with the

full team before their first game. The Falcons won against Los Altos 3-2 on Feb. 28. Junior captain Derek Chiou is struggling to make up for a lack of offense with the loss of Schneidmiller.

No longer able to count on his consistent spiking, they are unable to end points easily, resulting in longer, more drawn-out games. "It was a little closer than we would have liked," Chiou said.

According to Chiou, the new

coach, Chad Kingi, is giving more play time to players who were benched in previous seasons. "We get a different perspective because our last year coach liked playing some people more than others, but this year, it's like a chance to improve yourself," Chiou said.

On March 2, the team lost to Harker 3-0, a loss they attributed to poor defense and a lack of communication. According to senior

outside hitter Harrison Fong, the team improved in these areas the following weekend when they played in the Washington-Fremont tournament. The team made it to the semifinals of the tournament with a record of 3-1.

"We played much better and got closer as a team," Fong said. Sophomore co-captain Mohan Duvvuri said that unlike last season, where the team would focus on trick plays for the opposing team, Kingi's style is more old school, focusing on the fundamentals of individual skills. This season, they are also focusing on making up for the key players they lost. "Since we lost [Schneidmiller], I feel like this year, we're working a lot harder," Duvvuri said. "We have pretty good hitting even without Joel. But we have to work a lot on our defense — that's our main thing this year." ♦

BOYS' GOLF

Freshmen help bring early-season victories

BY AlexWang & KatherineZhou

The boys' golf team's season started off strong with three defining wins against Gunn, Cupertino, and Mountain View along with a close loss to Monta Vista. Key additions to the team this year, freshman twins Albert and Geoffrey Jing, freshman Michael Burry and junior Daniel Kraft, proved valuable to the team, clinching the team's victories with their clutch performances.

With one of the youngest teams, the players are still building experience and learning from older members like sophomore No. 1 player Kevin Sze and senior Charles Qi, Geoffrey said.

Although they are less experienced than some others they're competing against, the Falcons are proving to be a tough opponent. On March 15, the team beat Mountain View 198-219, advancing their record to 3-1. Sze shot a 34, making it his second under par round of the season.

The day before, the team lost to Monta Vista 198-201. Sze, Qi and the twins started off well that match. The team closing in on the win, when on the last hole, Burry and Kraft both hit the ball out of bounds. This seemingly minor turn of events eventually led to Monta Vista slipping away with the win by three strokes.

"It was a good try for us; it was just on the last hole that got us,"

Albert said. Another contributing factor to the loss was the course itself, Coyote Creek, which is vastly different from the boys' home course of Saratoga Country Club.

The Falcons' home course is relatively short, so it is mainly based on strategy and effective course management, Albert said. On the other hand, Coyote Creek is a much longer course and requires players to hit solid shots with their driver.

The boys managed to pull off their second win against Cupertino on March 13, with a score of 195-201. Burry posted a 38, and junior Daniel Kraft posted a 36.

"We weren't expecting to win, because they're a really good

"It was my first match ever. It was incredible. We were so happy."

FRESHMAN Michael Burry

team," Albert said. "I did pretty badly that round, but everyone else stepped up and played well."

Against Gunn, Burry ended up posting a 38 for nine holes at the Saratoga Country Club, and with the addition of Albert's score of 44, the boys' team managed to outscore their opponents by 20 strokes.

This year, the team hopes to make CCS, or at least have top

players Sze and Burry (No. 2) qualify individually, Burry said. Tryouts to determine the team's rankings were held starting Feb. 26, over four days, with nine holes each day.

Senior James Parden said interest in golf at this school has been rising.

"My freshman year, only 13 kids tried out and now, in my senior year there's 23 kids," Parden, a veteran player, said. "I think golf is growing [at Saratoga]."

With underclassmen leading the team and veterans guiding them, the team's outlook is hopeful. After a defining win against Gunn, the team looks to improve and make CCS as a team, something they failed to do last year. ♦

BOYS' SOCCER CCS

SH Cathedral ends Falcons' historic run in semis

BY JayKim & NeilRao

Sliding into the penalty box, senior captain and forward Jack Isacke kicked the ball in a last-minute desperation shot to try to equalize the 2-1 deficit against Sacred Heart Cathedral in the CCS semifinal match against Sacred Heart Cathedral on Feb. 27. The shot didn't reach the net, and the Falcons' season was soon over.

Through the back and forth action played on a field at Sequoia High in Redwood City, the two teams consistently showed equal strength. The Fighting Irish opened the scoring in the first minute of the game with a quick counter attack beating out the Falcons' excellent defense.

However, with a sharp corner kick from Isacke, the team found themselves tied 1-1 before the half. As the second half dragged on, it was clear how fatigued both teams were becoming. The Irish took advantage and with an unexpected short cross, were able to slot the ball into the net.

The loss ended their unexpectedly successful season. They ended with a conference record of 9-2-1 in the El Camino Division and won the league title.

"Honestly, I think the team played to our expectations," senior center back Sahm Rafati said. "In the beginning of the season we had key players getting injured and we were underdogs going into it and nobody expected us to make to CCS."

It was the first time in over two decades the team has made this far in CCS action. On Feb. 24, the boys beat Santa Cruz High 1-0. Earlier, they beat Westmoor 2-1 on Feb. 21 after a long, over-time match.

With the new captains for next year expected to be juniors Debling and Jules Ducrot, who consistently showed strong potential as key players of the team, the leaving seniors have no doubt that the team will continue to thrive.

"The team is going to get pushed to the upper league next year, so it's definitely gonna be a bigger challenge," Rafati said. "But I am very confident in the team and I think that they can play great next year."

As the El Camino league's lead-



FALCON // MUTHU PALANIAPPAN

Senior Scott Moriarty steals the ball during a 1-0 win against Lynbrook at home on Feb. 9. Following this season's success, the Falcons are expected to move into the upper league for the 2018-19 season.

ing goalscorer, Debling is expected to drive another successful season by both the coaching staff and players.

"Next year, if we carry on having the right leaders in the team, we'll do well, so I'm excited," Debling said. ♦

WRESTLING

Liddle's final CCS cut short by injury; Blom pushes forward

BY MathewLuo & RahulVadlakonda

Although the wrestling team initially struggled throughout this season due to a lack of participants, two of its members, senior Allie Liddle and freshman Linus Blom, made it to the CCS Masters Championships on Feb. 23 and 24, a tournament for the top 32 wrestlers in CCS.

Blom, who wrestles in the 108-pound weight class, went 2-2 in the tournament, getting injured in his last match due to a pinched nerve; Liddle could not wrestle as

he sustained an injury before CCS. Despite not being able to wrestle in CCS, Liddle's commitment to wrestling allowed him to finish his high school wrestling career ranked No. 22 out of 60 statewide competitors in the heavyweight division. Though Blom is not ranked this year, as this was his first season on the high school team, he nonetheless attained success during the regular season, achieving a record of 32-12.

As an experienced wrestler even before coming to the school's wrestling team, Blom looks back proudly at the amount of work he

put in leading up to and during the season.

"I attribute all the hard work that we put in the [wrestling] room to making it this far," Blom said.

Blom credits coach Daniel Gamez for much of his success, as Gamez pushed them hard during practices and trained them to counter any opponent they came up against. In addition to physical training, Blom also said that the mental preparation he went through allowed him to progress.

"[Coach Gamez] motivates me to do more, and that is how you move forward in wrestling,"

he said. "He always has my back, teaching me to learn from my mistakes after tough losses."

Junior Victor Chen, a teammate of Blom's and Liddle's, credits the dedication the two give to the sport in order to attain such a level.

"I attribute their success to how hard they work," he said. "They have the drive and motivation to get better at each practice."

For Liddle, the bulk of his off-season training occurs through the lifting he does in order to prepare for the football season; for Blom, the year-round training he

does at wrestling clubs around the area, keeps him prepared and in shape for upcoming seasons.

Through this training in the offseason, Chen says that the two wrestlers are in better shape than many of the other wrestlers.

As Blom has aspirations set on making it to the state tournament next season, he aims to continue training during the offseason.

"For the next three seasons, I will set up higher expectations for myself," Blom said. "I will train super hard during the offseason, to be ready to go in the [upcoming] season and lead the Falcons." ♦

With top four seeds out, South region provides intrigue

This season, the South has shown itself to be a bracket of upsets. After seeing DeAndre Ayton and his Arizona Wildcats blown off the floor at the hands of No. 13-seeded Buffalo on March 15, the 16-seeded UMBC (University of Maryland, Baltimore County) Retrievers defeated top seeded Virginia in a historic upset.

But with all the momentum that the Retrievers had after pulling off the 20 point upset, their Cinderella story came to an end against 9-seeded Kansas State Wildcats.

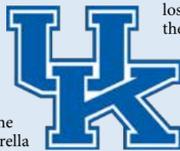
The Wildcats will now face No. 5-seeded Kentucky in the Sweet Sixteen, in what will most likely be an offensive shootout. Although the freshman-heavy Kentucky team has been inconsistent all year, they have the talent and the ability to dominate in the post, which should likely

be the deciding factor in their chance to make it to the Elite Eight.

But the Sweet Sixteen in the bottom half is where this bracket gets fascinating. Both the two and three seeds, Cincinnati and the Tennessee respectively, lost in dramatic fashion during their Round of 32 performances. Cincinnati was upset by 2 at the hands of Nevada, while Loyola Chicago topped Tennessee on their second game winner of the tournament.

This sets up an interesting matchup between the Ramblers and the Wolf Pack, but it hardly matters. The winner will most likely have to play Kentucky and neither team can match the size or talent of the Wildcats.

Kentucky will come out of the South, but their lack of experience will prevent them from going any further in the tournament.



Michigan will fall short of much-needed redemption

Although the top two seeds — including the defending national champion — in this bracket have been eliminated, this bracket is still the most interesting in the tournament.

The Michigan vs Texas A&M Sweet 16 showdown will provide fans an amazing opportunity to see two teams who have been tearing it up recently with two different styles of play battle it out.

The Wolverines come into the game having won 11 straight, including two amazing wins in the Big 10 Tournament against Michigan State and Purdue, to claim the third Big 10 Championship in school history. Meanwhile Texas A&M Aggies are also on a hot streak after taking down both the Providence Friars as well as the defending champs North Carolina Tar Heels.

But at the end of the day the Wolverines defense should prevail; they'll have their third Elite Eight trip this decade.

In the other half of the west, the defending runner-up Gonzaga Bulldogs

will be taking on the Florida State Seminoles. The Bulldogs lost a lot of their roster from last year's Final Four appearance, but still have veteran leadership in guards Josh Perkins and Silas Melson.

The Seminoles, on the other hand, are a relatively inexperienced team and they don't rely on one particular scorer. This is not a recipe for success against the well-coached and experienced Bulldogs, and Gonzaga should be able to move onto the Elite Eight to take on the Wolverines.

However, against Michigan they might have some trouble. Forward Killian Tillie will likely be matching up with Wagner, and the Bulldogs lose a ton of size and strength in this matchup, and as is the case in most years, the Bulldogs are not at all battle-tested coming out of the weak WCC. In the end, the Wolverines should take down the Bulldogs, giving them their 8th Final Four appearance in school history.



Villanova Wildcats will be the last No. 1 seed standing

This year March Madness has lived up to its name. However, the bit of normalcy that remains almost all exists within the East region. Four of its top five seeds are still in the Sweet Sixteen and fans are most likely going to get to see the well-anticipated Purdue Boilermakers vs Villanova Wildcats matchup.

In the top half, Villanova will have to beat the West Virginia Mountaineers, and this game will probably be the biggest challenge all tournament for the Wildcats. The Mountaineers live and die with their press-heavy defense, but either way, No. 1 ranked Nova should be able to come out on top.

In the other half of the bracket the Purdue Boilermakers will take on the Texas Tech Red Raiders. The Boilermakers had a 19-game winning streak during the season and always looked to be a

strong contender from the East. With the emergence of sophomore Carl Edwards in the Big 10 Tournament, he Boilermakers now have the scorer they need to top the veteran-heavy, defensive-minded Red Raiders.

But as good as the Boilermakers can be on the offensive end, they don't nearly have enough firepower to compete with the Wildcats.

Nova's backcourt of Jalen Brunson and Mikal Bridges will be too much for Purdue giving Nova another Final Four appearance.

In a Final Four matchup against Duke, they will meet their match. The Wildcats just don't have the solidified big man to matchup with Marvin Bagley III on the offensive or defensive end. Grayson Allen should be fine against Brunson, and the Blue Devils will return to the championship game.



Che-Chef-ski's Recipe: Midwest Region is Duke's to lose

Thus far, the Midwest division has been relatively uninteresting, primarily because the region is extremely top heavy with experts only really considering two teams as even remote Final Four possibilities: No. 1 seeded Kansas and 2-seeded Duke.

After blowing out Penn in the first round and beating Seton Hall by 4, the Kansas Jayhawks will only have to dispatch Clemson to cement their cakewalk to the Elite Eight. They won the Big 12, and the conference tournament without a single lottery pick, by featuring a terrific small-ball, four guard lineup, led by Devonte Graham, the Big 12 Player of the Year.

The Duke Blue Devils should also have a cakewalk to the Elite Eight after the Syracuse Orange surprisingly took down the No. 3 seeded Michigan State Spartans with their trademarked zone defense to prevent the Spartans from scoring once in the final 5:41.

However, don't expect them to do this against Duke. Led by 6'11 freshman Marvin Bagley III, the ACC player of the year and a surefire top-5 draft pick, along with freshman forward Wendell Carter Jr. and senior guard Grayson Allen, Duke should have no problem against Clemson despite its zone defense.

Assuming Duke does prevail, it will set up the most interesting Elite Eight matchup of the entire bracket — Kansas vs Duke. Two universities that have been near the forefront of college basketball almost every year for the last two decades will battle it out for the chance to go into the Final four. And whichever school does win will automatically become the championship favorite. In the end Duke should be able to easily handle Kansas, but their title run won't stop there.

When you have the best player in the tournament on your team in Bagley III, there is really no excuse for Krzyzewski not to win his sixth national title.



Falcons fall short of second trip to NorCal Tournament

BY Siva Sambasivam

After making CCS for the fourth straight season, the boys' basketball fell in the Division III quarterfinals on Feb. 24, to No. 1-seeded Sacred Heart Cathedral 79-60.

One year removed from making the CCS Finals for the first time in school history and earning themselves a trip to the Northern California State Championship Tournament, the boys came into the season heavy favorites to win the SCVAL league. Though they still qualified for CCS with a 15-11 record (6-6 in league) despite a fourth-place league finish, the Falcons fell short of their initial expectations.

"We didn't do so well in league," senior forward Neal Iyengar said. "We lost to Monta Vista and Lynbrook in our first two games, which was really bad in setting the tone for the rest of the season. Those two losses should have easily been wins."

Iyengar primarily attributes the Falcons' early season struggles to their difficulty developing team chemistry. After losing senior center Joel Schneidmiller to graduation, their entire defensive scheme had to be changed.

"Defensively it was really tough. Back then [forward Harrison Fong] would go running out because Joel would get every single rebound. If you have a 6-6 guy in the paint nobody else would be getting those rebound. But for us this year everyone had to rebound," Iyengar said.

But soon into the season the Falcons were able to put aside their defensive troubles and learn that they could still play at a fast pace if they all rebounded and played team defense instead of relying on one rim protector.

Once they were able to change their mentality, the Falcons went on two four game winning streaks, with the first one capped off by a win against the rival Los Gatos Wildcats. "Los Gatos was a really good highlight for us. It was one of the best points of the season," freshman guard Tyler Chu said.

Although they figured out their teamwork nearing the end of the season, the hole they dug themselves into at the start

of the year was just too big to climb out and win the league championship.

In their first CCS game on Feb. 22 the Falcons blew out Ann Sobrato, leading throughout the entire game. They carried a 30-point lead into halftime, primarily due to their high flying offensive pace, and were able to get their entire team involved nearing the end of the game.

However, this came with its challenges because some of their inexperienced players made mistakes during the second half.

"We subbed in our freshmen in the second half, and it didn't go so well. We ended up only winning by 15 with a 30 point lead at halftime, which was really bad," Iyengar said. The team ended up winning 67-52, but Iyengar also believed that because of their second half let up they were not able to send their intended message to the rest of CCS that Saratoga was a team to be reckoned with.

Thus, the Falcons went into their second CCS game against Sacred Heart with confidence but a bit demoralized after the ending to their last game. They came out a bit slow and put themselves into an early double digit hole.

In the end, Sacred Heart was too tough, and the Falcons season came to an end.

"It was definitely a great experience, I will



Junior Hanlin Sun brings the ball upcourt against Santa Clara on Feb. 7. The Falcons ultimately lost the game 76-73 and took 4th overall in the El Camino League. "We didn't do so well," Iyengar said. "Losing our first two games set the tone for the season."

never forget the memories I made throughout my high school basketball journey," Iyengar said. ♦

— SIVA SAMBASIVAM

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Grueling Army test brings reporters to their knees

BY Alex Wang

Thanks to two years of intensive football and badminton training, I am more than a little proud of my physical well-being. My finely muscled calves are the envy of all, and my rock hard abs would make even Cristiano Ronaldo jealous.

Feeling up for a challenge, when the sports editors proposed an idea to attempt the Army's Basic Training Physical Fitness Test, I decided to sign up. To further raise the stakes, as two people have died after finishing the test, I challenged one of the Falcon's editors-in-chief, Kyle Wang, to see who could do better.

The test was comprised of three events: 2 minutes of push-ups, 2 minutes of sit-ups and a 2-mile run. It is designed to test the strength and endurance of soldiers in the Army. Each part is graded on a scale of 100, and a score of 50, which corresponds to 35 push-ups, 47 sit-ups and a 16:36 2-mile run, is the minimum requirement

in each category to attend Army boot camp. On the other hand, a good score is a 90 or above in each category, which is 64 push-ups, 72 sit-ups and a 13:42 2-mile time.

On a sunny Sunday afternoon, Kyle and I met up at the track to attempt this test. Before we started, I thought passing all the standards would prove an easy task because I had played a grueling season of football last semester. During the football season, we lifted twice a week and ran wind sprints to improve our stamina.

But then again, since football season was three months ago, I might have been overestimating my abilities.

Kyle had been bragging about his sophomore year 6:30 2-mile split in cross-country before the test, but midway through the challenge, his endurance failed him, and it was quickly evident that his confidence was severely misplaced.

The first two events, the push-up and sit-up tests, were relatively

FITNESS

easy. We both finished the required number of push-ups and sit-ups in time.

Then came the run. The first lap was a breeze, but on the second lap, Kyle started to show signs of fatigue, proving himself a shadow of his former "glorious" cross-country self.

It soon turned out he was all talk and no action, dropping out after the second lap because he was "trying to teach me a lesson about the importance of perseverance."

I struggled through the next six laps, breathing hard with each step and trying not to think about the two people who died after this portion of the test.

My 2-mile time ended up being 13:44, which was enough to pass, but not enough to beat sophomore Kyle, so I received some unwarranted snide comments about that.

Playing football helped me to stay in shape, at least during the season. Although I had not really



Senior editor-in-chief Kyle Wang and reporter Alex Wang demonstrate "model push up posture." Both went on to pass the push up and sit up tests, but Kyle's supposed "insane cardio" failed him during the run.

worked out much recently, I feel that the wind sprints and exercise I did previously contributed in letting me do well on this fitness test.

The Army test was not just a test of physical ability, but also mental endurance in the face of adversity — both attributes critical to the role of a soldier. After struggling

through the two miles, I reflected on how tough it is just training to be a soldier and was more grateful for their service.

The basic qualifying examination was already incredibly difficult for me; I couldn't imagine the effort training for combat would take. ♦

FALCON // FREDERICK KIM

SPORT COMMITMENT

Coaches, players weigh in on expectations for athletes

BY AnnissaMu

Varsity girls' water polo coach Jerome Chung believes firmly in the importance of practicing the sport daily during the season — regardless of the other commitments his players might have.

"It develops habits and team chemistry," Chung said. "It's hard to work on new or advanced concepts if all players are not present."

He added that practicing is most effective as a team rather than individually, for it helps players develop chemistry and "creates

a comfort level" among teammates.

Sophomore Ananya Krishnan, a varsity girls' soccer player, said that by practicing together as a team, players learn how to pass to each other in different situations, improving the team's overall performance in games.

Varsity tennis coach Florin Marica said high school sports also serves as a transition or gateway to college teams and can be especially useful to players of individual sports like tennis and golf to practice and

learn how to be part of a team.

On his teams, players can skip practice only if the school contacts him about another activity that the students needs to attend.

Outside activities like additional tutoring do not grant a leave from practice.

"When you sign up for tennis season I expect kids to be part of the team from the beginning to the end," Marica said.

Krishnan's coaches are generally very understanding to problems like family

emergencies or illnesses. But skipping because of homework or a test will likely beget larger consequences like less play time or extra sprints.

All in all, Chung said sports are a supplementary activity, so an athlete's priority should be their schoolwork over their sport.

However, he asks that communication be made ahead of time, so that the best circumstances for each individual can be created.

"Water polo players will be expected to do three things," Chung said. "Be on time, give 100 percent of what you have that day and have fun." ♦



Krishnan

BASEBALL

Falcon team looks to bounce back after rough 2017 season

BY Siva Sambasivam & Rahul Vadlakonda

After last season's losing record, the baseball team is trying to re-establish a winning tradition — or at least take steps in that direction.

Though they lost some key players due to graduation such as alumni Jonathan Yun and Tony Ramirez, the team still features plenty of talent, most notably two-way senior star catcher and pitcher Nathan Peng, who is already committed to play at UC Davis next year. The boys hold a 2-1 conference record as of March 15, winning against Monta Vista 6-0 on March 6, losing to Wilcox 6-1 on March 10 and defeating Wilcox 14-4 on March 15. Despite the boys playing Monta Vista again on March 8, the game was inconclusive due to an absence of sunlight.

Peng has placed the team in the stat sheet, owning a 2.00 ERA on the mound and a 2-0 record; at the plate, he holds a .500 batting average, five RBIs and one home run. Though the team still has 22 games left in the season, they seem confident in their abilities to achieve a better record than last season.

"As a team we hope to play better this year," junior outfielder Zachary Li said. "We play to win a title but most importantly play for one another."

Li said that the team has improved significantly from last year, with the addition of players such as freshman shortstop Ryan Gilligan, sophomore pitcher Mihir



Senior catcher and pitcher Nathan Peng swings his bat against Monta Vista on March 8; the game was left unfinished due to darkness affecting visibility.

Bettadapur and sophomore catcher Justin Loconzolo. The three underclassmen newcomers, along with fellow sophomore returner double Payton Stokes, have hit a combined .386, giving the team a much needed talent boost across their lineup.

"We definitely have more depth this season with the addition of several underclassmen," Li said. "Their versatility to play multiple positions and the energy they bring to the team are the key to our success."

Li said that the team is working more hours and watching more film to strengthen their chances of achieving their goal. ♦

TRACK & FIELD

Falcons tie with Fremont; members prepare for league

BY Anna Novoselov & Elaine Sun

The track team tied with Fremont 2-2 at an away dual meet on March 6. The varsity boys won 64-63, varsity girls lost 79-48, frosh-soph boys lost 67-60 and frosh-soph girls won 66-60.

"Talent-wise, I think this year we're a little bit stronger than last year," head coach Archie Ljepava said.

The team competed against Wilcox at an away meet on March 14. However, the final scores were incomplete at the time this story was written. Senior sprinter and jumper Alex Metz hopes to bring the team together and set personal records in the events he competes in.

"I'm going to improve by not missing practice and giving it my all whenever I'm training," Metz said. "I'm also going to focus on what the coaches tell me so I can really stick to a plan and use that to my advantage."

At the March 6 meet, Metz completed a distance of 18' for long jump, 38"7" for triple jump and 5'6" for high jump. His win in high jump was the difference between the varsity boys losing or winning by one point. Senior sprinter and jumper Riley Carter hopes that the team will be more unified. Her personal goals are to continue her high jump training, set personal records and make CCS again. At the meet, she high-jumped 5'. Her goal for this season is 5'6", 2 inches more than her personal best of 5'4".

"During the preseason we had hard weeks training so that we are in shape for the meets that we have now," Carter said.

Distance coach Ian Tippetts plans on having athletes set goals for themselves and work on strength and flexibility. Tippetts said that the main concern is to "get them where they want to be and challenge themselves."

Sophomore Julia Hoffman won first in the mile and two mile for varsity girls, finishing with 5:37 and 12:31 respectively. Her personal record is 5:14.

"Everyone is starting where they left off last year, so now we don't have to build up to where we were. Now we can just focus on improving," Tippetts said. ♦

>> bigidea

Individual Highlights: Fremont

Senior Alex Metz: sprinter; long, high, triple jump

Metz completed distances of 18' for long jump, 38"7" for triple jump and 5'6" for high jump. His victory helped clinch the victory for the varsity boys.

Julia Hoffman: one mile; two mile

Hoffman placed first among varsity girls with times of 5:37 and 12:31 respectively.

"I was really happy with that first meet. Almost everyone is starting where they left off last year, so we can just focus on improving."

—Head Coach Archie Ljepava



Senior Michael Xue

FALCON // MANA SHIMOKAWA

>> snapshots



FALCON // PHOEBE WANG



FALCON // PHOEBE WANG



FALCON // PHOEBE WANG



FALCON // MUTHU PALANIAPPAN

Senior Allison Borch holds up a poster in support of gun control during the walkout on March 14.

Environmental club officers seniors Dasha Gousseva and Isabella Bradley sell fries during Club Rush on March 16.

During a home game against Pioneer High on March 14, senior midfielder Milan Nguyen brings the ball upfield.

Seniors Varun Meduri and Pranav Ahuja walk the Benefit Fashion Show runway on March 3 for the theme of "Bromance."

buzzworthy >> Re-thinking Daylight Saving

BY HowardTang

In the early hours of March 11, most of the country experienced the dreaded loss of an hour of sleep.

This moment marks the start of what is commonly known as daylight saving time (not "daylight savings time").

This annual eight-month time period was first proposed by entomologist George Hudson in 1895 and first established by the federal government on March 19, 1918, during World War I.

use daylight instead of electricity for light. However, much of its original intent was forgotten over the years as people became accustomed to the cheaper electricity costs.

"Going from a four hour nap to a three hour nap is going to be tough, but I think I can pull through," senior Aayush Gupta said.

Although many have been bothered by the untimely change in time, many have also found solutions to help.

"We're lucky to have smartphones with clocks that switch automatically," sophomore Amelie Yang said,



I have to do to prepare besides remembering that I have one hour less to submit my assignments on Canvas."

The history between the start of daylight saving time and now remains very convoluted. Not all states have decided to adopt this time system, for they don't all experience the great shifts in daylight over the year.

In addition, the U.S. Congress ordered states to go on year-round daylight saving time between January 1974 and April 1975 due to an energy crisis.

After all, that extra exposure to daylight can get you some additional vitamin D.

"Who need vitamin D's when you can have D's on Biology quizzes instead?" Gupta said.



>> thebigidea

Daylight Saving

When does daylight saving occur?

Daylight saving started this year on Sunday, March 11 as people lost an hour at 2am. It will end in November when the clocks go an hour back at 2am.

When was daylight saving first established?

The idea was first proposed in 1895, and the federal government established the annual eight-month time period in March 19, 1918.

What is the purpose of daylight saving?

Its original purpose was to conserve coal during wartime by using less electricity for light during the day.

Are there any exceptions to this system?

Hawaii and most of Arizona, as well as U.S. territories like Guam and Puerto Rico do not observe Daylight Saving.

Perfect 18th birthday gift: jury duty

SENIOR DISCUSSES HIS ATTEMPT TO PREVENT JAIL TIME

Lawyer-in-training



Austin Wang

For my 18th birthday, I got the greatest present of all: a jury duty notice. Two days after my 18th birthday, I received my notice in the mail, which likely means it was sent on my birthday.

Yes, to celebrate my recent adulthood, the Santa Clara Court system decided to give me a firsthand taste of adult responsibilities by sentencing me to a two-week call period where I would be expected to drive to downtown San Jose for a full day of jury duty anytime.

To make matters worse, the court also exposed me to the harsh realities of being tried as an adult.

Apparently, not going to jury duty or forgetting to fill in a survey on time lead to two days of jail time. This was particularly problematic because my call period was from March 26 to April 6, during both school time and badminton practice.

Because the court is about a half hour drive from the high school, there was a legitimate chance I would miss a jury duty session and run afoul of the law.

I always thought my greatest chance of getting rescinded would have come from

a low AP physics grade, not potential jail time. Being the procrastinator I am, I turned in my jury survey and request to be excused two weeks before my call period.

After two days passed and no response came to my request to be excused, I began to worry about how a scrawny 18-year-old "adult" would fare in the slammer. As the deadline to commit to the jury duty wound down, I decided that the possibility of being excused wasn't worth risking jail time. Ultimately, I was able to postpone my jury duty to June 18 and escape a potential "Get Hard" scenario.

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So I guess I know what I'll be doing my senior year summer.

While I have heard that they likely won't call an 18-year-old to actually serve on the jury, it's questionable why California even wants high schoolers to serve jury duty. Many other states accept being a full-time high school student as an excuse to get out of jury duty. After all, jury duty is

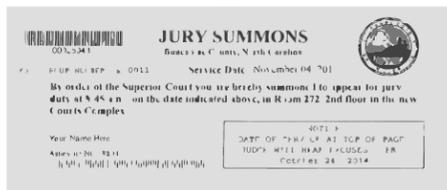
an enormous burden on the average high school student, who will likely have to miss class to attend jury duty and may not even be able to drive him or herself to the court.

Furthermore, I don't believe 18-year-olds have enough life experience and decision-making ability to decide the fate of people in trial. I can't even decide what to eat for lunch every day, so how could I decide whether or not Mr. Harris stole money from his boss or if Mr. Storm planned to kill his ex-wife?

Perhaps I will be able to put my decision making skills to the test this summer. Maybe I'll even get a mob murder case and spend the rest of my summer in witness protection!

Of course, the most likely scenario is that I will have to cancel all my plans for two weeks to accommodate a jury service that I will likely never have to attend. On the off chance they do select me for a tedious case, I'll just pretend to not speak English and hope to be excused.

On the bright side, once I sign up for the draft (which I was supposed to do 6 days ago, whoops) I'll be completely home free and far away from the slammer.



ALL GRAPHICS BY COLLEEN FENG

topten

THINGS TO DO TO WIN MARCH MADNESS BRACKETS

- 10 Get off the Trae Young bus. Too bad the Rhode Island Rammers rammed most of your brackets.
9 Pray for UPenn. Our president's alma mater lost faster than his administration loses cabinet members.
8 Make three brackets. It increases your chances to 3 in 128 billion.
7 If you don't know anything about college basketball, just use Obama's bracket. #thanksobama
6 Support your parents' alma mater. Especially if they didn't go to school in the U.S.
5 Pick the "dark horse." Where even is Buffalo State anyway?
4 Choose your favorite teacher's favorite team. Syracuse is going to go all the way this year.
3 Know who the refs are. You'll need someone to blame when your team inexplicably loses to the underdog.
2 Cheer for UCLA. Oh wait, Lonzo Ball isn't in college anymore, and UCLA lost a play-in game. Whatever that means.
1 Watch the women's games. Trying to figure out which team will inevitably lose to UConn will provide hours of entertainment.

>> Jay Kim and Victor Liu