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Students throw red powder and confetti in the air near the camera recording the Lip Dub last Monday.

Bringing back the DUB

BY Andrew Lee & Muthu Palaniappan

Excited to kick off Spring Fling week, students and staff came to school Monday decked out in red and white, ready to show school spirit in preparation for the second annual Lip-Dub. Whether it be

from wearing team uniforms to just a plain red shirt, most of the school's 1,350 students rushed out of their classrooms at the beginning of tutorial to find a spot to line up along the route of the camera. Red powder and graffiti filled the

>> **SPRING FLING** on pg. 5

TALISMAN // MANA SHIMOKAWA

TOGA PARTICIPATES IN ITS SECOND ANNUAL LIP DUB TO KICK OFF SPRING FLING WEEK.

DIALOGUE

Spring World Cafe focuses on bullying, academic issues

BY Selena Liu & Jackson Green

Approximately 60 staff members, students and parents filed into the library on March 29 to attend the biannual World Cafe, where they had the chance to eat good food while engaging in conversations about important school-related topics.

"World Cafe is a community event sponsored by the school, where we talk about topics that have become either high-interest or high-need, and have discussions that are needed in the community," assistant vice principal Kerry Mohnike said. "It's an opportunity for people to sit around a small table, have a conversation, share those thoughts out, and then come up with ideas to address those issues."

This year, the main topic of discussion was the results of Speak Up for Change Week, where students reported experiencing bullying because of their ethnicity and academic ability.

To start the event, there were multiple activities in which participants had the chance to talk with a variety of other people in the room.



Mohnike

"I thought it was a very enlightening experience because we were able to uncover the many negative aspects of high school, mainly things like peer pressure and bullying," sophomore George Bian said.

Next, participants sat down at small tables and discussed stereotypes and peer pressure.

"At this school, there is an overwhelming sense that people have to achieve academically to be considered valuable, and that's just not true," Mohnike said.

Parental pressure was another topic that arose.

"There's an expression a lot of people use, 'Are you preparing your child for the path, or are you preparing the path for your child?'" said Spanish teacher Bret Yeilding, a participant at World Cafe. "I feel like many Saratoga parents want to prepare the path for their child so that nothing bad ever happens to their child. This is not realistic in life."

Overall, the event was "extremely successful," Mohnike said. "There were a lot of excellent conversations and I think a lot of barriers were broken. We were able to talk about a lot of things that people often don't want to talk about." ♦

>> what'sinside

■ PATRIOTISM

Changing sentiments

Why it is acceptable for Americans to not be proud of their own nation. **pg. 9**

■ ETHICS EXAMINED

Everyday dilemmas

Reporters give advice for common high school situations, from car accidents to breakups. **pg. 10-11**

■ STIGMAS

Speech disorder

Students reflect on experiences with stuttering. **pg. 14**

CAMPUS SURVEILLANCE

More security cameras as part of two-year plan

BY Chelsea Leung & Jackson Green

Beware, thieves, vandals, drug users or anyone else who is doing anything illegal on campus.

More security cameras have been installed on campus over the past month, and school officials can now view footage of students in hallways, parking lots and the quad. The cameras will also soon cover the tennis courts, assistant principal Brian Thompson said.

As part of the district security plan created two years ago, security cameras have been installed on both the Saratoga and Los Gatos High campuses; however, even more have been added recently because the plan is drawing to a close.

Thompson said no cameras

are installed in classrooms, locker rooms or bathrooms.

The cameras are meant to deter theft, break-ins and other issues, principal Paul Robinson said. He said all cameras are visible and not meant to be concealed.

Though the cameras are live-streaming at all times, the only people who can see the feed are district employees like Thompson and other administrators. The feed is accessed through district computers and can be recorded and replayed. Robinson said nobody monitors the feed at all times; rather, the feed is replayed whenever the administration needs to get more information about an incident at a particular time.

>> **CAMERAS** on pg. 5

ATHLETICS

Parental donations keep falling short

BY Jackson Green & Muthu Palaniappan

Despite widespread marking and appeals to parents, donations to the school's athletics program are down again this year, putting some sports at risk of not being offered next year, athletics director Tim Lugo said.

Last year, parents did not donate as much as they previously had to the school's sports program.

Lugo estimates that the athletics program will be at least \$60,000 in debt by the end of the year.

Expenses for the athletic pro-

gram include coaches' stipends, officiating costs, uniforms and equipment.

Last year, the sports program faced the same problem of having too many parents choosing to avoid paying the asked-for \$200 when playing a sport.

Yet with ASB's financial support, the program was able to pay off \$85,000 in debt.

But ASB's accounts are also lower this year, and as it stands currently, ASB won't be able to bail out athletics again.

Lugo hopes that the athletics

>> **DONATIONS** on pg. 5



Lugo

news
>> briefs**MAP organizes tour of local news station**

In January, the Media Arts Program (MAP) hosted NBC Bay Area's business and technology reporter Scott McGrew as part of their MAP speaker series presentation. Students who attended the talk were entered in a raffle, and the seven students who won were able to attend a tour of the NBC Bay Area news studios on March 23.

For most MAP speaker series talks, the speaker offers a prize that the attendees can win in a raffle.

"It was McGrew's idea, and he wanted people to experience the workplace while people worked to see a media job in the real world," said speaker series organizer Isabelle Rieken, a junior.

Rieken added that only a few students got to experience the prize firsthand from a media world professional. The five students were freshmen Ananya Senkharan, Grace Stuart; sophomores Connor Oaklander and Rayne Schulman; and senior Elicia Ye.

The tour lasted nearly two hours and was hosted by McGrew himself. The students walked around the studios and witnessed a live morning news broadcast.

"The way it works may look simple," Oaklander said. "But when you see what's happening, there's so much going on."

— Muthu Palaniappan

M-SET Fish makes it to World competition

At the San Francisco Regionals on March 15-18, the M-SET Fish robotics team gained admission to the World Championship in Houston, set to take place April 18-21.

Despite severe malfunctions of its robot during the tournament, the Fish managed to take home the Innovation in Control Award and thereby qualified for the championships.

Senior Kedar Abhyankar, who has been a member of M-SET his entire high school career, was overjoyed upon hearing the news.

"I'm super happy that my 11 years in First Robotics is ending with the World championships, which is something I've wanted to go to every year," Abhyankar said.

This is a huge moment for the team, who went above and beyond this year in terms of their robot's complexity.

"It was super stressful," Abhyankar said. "The last two or three days before, there were people in the room until 3 a.m."

Despite losing the semifinal rounds at the San Francisco tournament, the team managed to place sixth on the leaderboard. The team was busy preparing for their next tournament, set to take place from April 5-8.

— Allen Chen

Relay for Life club plans fundraiser event

The Relay For Life club will host a walk-a-thon fundraiser on May 25 from 12-6 p.m. on Saratoga's track. All profits will be donated to the American Cancer Society.

There will be food, cancer awareness and Saratoga/Campbell Relay for Life booths, a silent auction, an opportunity drawing, guest speakers and a care package assembly station.

The club will have meetings in Room 202 leading up to the event. Information will be on Facebook and on the morning announcements.

If you or your organization wishes to help sponsor by donating, please contact annaknov@gmail.com and emiliezhou15@gmail.com.

— Anna Novoselov

>> falcononline

**Top Story**

Minority representation must grow in beauty and entertainment industries to reflect America's diversity on pg. 8

Top Photo

Senior Ania Kranz leads the chant during the walkout in protest of gun violence on March 14 on the Upper Field.

FALCON // PHOEBE WANG

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 SOUTH BAY CLEAN CREEKS COALITION

FIELD TRIP FUN >> Seniors Alex Wu and Alec Lindeman waded through greenery recording the pieces of trash collected for their AP Statistics project on March 29 at Guadalupe Creek in San Jose.

ELECTIONS

More underclassmen run for class officer positions

BY SelenaLiu
& JeffreyXu

When current freshman class vice president Katie Chen heard that many of her peers were running for the upcoming sophomore student government elections, she realized that there would be a lot more competition than last year.

In fact, the competition this year is so intense that Chen is being forced to run against one of her fellow class officer members, freshman Erica Lee, for the sophomore president position. The class officer elections have seen increasing competition, especially among incoming sophomores and juniors.

Chen notes that one of the main reasons for so much competition this year is because more electives are offered to higher grade levels.

Compared to freshman year, where only two elective slots were offered, sophomores and juniors have more space in their schedules and can afford to take Leadership.

In addition to more leadership positions being available, sophomore Cameron Chow, a first-time campaigner who plans to run for junior class secretary or class representative, gives other reasons for wanting to join class office.

"Most new people running see what [class office] does, so they want to be a part too."

FRESHMAN Katie Chen

"As you grow up, you gain more confidence, and once you hit a higher grade level, you feel like you can do more," he said. "I want to help out the school, and class office has a good atmosphere."

Chen believes that competition has risen mainly because "most new people running see what

[class office] does, so they want to be a part of Leadership too."

But with all the competition, this year's elections will also result in many losing candidates. However, all commissioner positions will still be open to these candidates.

"For commissions, you get appointed by ASB in an interview," Chen said. "In a lot of commissions, it's mostly just seniors right now. They're all going to leave, so a lot of spots can be taken by different grade levels."

Even with all the competition, Chen and Chow are preparing for elections in April. They both plan to announce their campaigns on Facebook and make posters, like many other candidates have done in the past, and both of them look forward to seeing the results.

"Class office decisions are in April, so we don't really know until then," Chow said. "But I think my chances are pretty good; I just have to spread the word." ♦

PLANNING

Staff development days allow teachers to focus on issues, ideas

BY AlexandraLi
& MichaelZhang

To students, March 19 was a needed holiday in the long six-week stretch filled with tests and projects between February break and Spring break.

For teachers, the day marked the second year of being able to collaborate with colleagues in a way that each department determines — a radical change from the traditional top-down, administration-driven collaborations of previous years.

"This way, teachers are involved in the planning process and get to ask for things they know they'll utilize within the classroom, so I think that's a step better than what we were doing before," principal Paul Robinson said. "It's better when the teachers are a part of creating their own learning experience."

Staff members across the district, including ones from Los Gatos, were present at the school on March 19.

In the fall, SHS teachers visited Los Gatos High for a development day on Oct. 9.

This model of planning has become regular for staff development days, which occur once a semester and last the whole school day.

"It's essentially a day to reflect on how the teachers did so far and what some ideas and plans are for next year," Robinson said. "It's based on our goals for the district to create a culture of collaboration and innovation, to work on student wellness, balance and belonging and to make learning really relevant and engaging."

According to Robinson, goals for staff development vary widely across the departments, with some working on different

types of instruction or buying new textbooks to use in their curriculum.

For example, on March 19, English teachers focused on bringing media literacy to their classrooms.

The math department, said Algebra 1 and AP Computer Science teacher Debra Troxell, worked on vertical and horizontal alignment within the courses.

Essentially, the teachers make sure that the way they teach a certain topic stays consistent throughout the levels of a subject.

Troxell said ensuring that all teachers were on the same page has always been a constant goal.

"We spent the entire day looking at different standards and courses because it's a huge job," Troxell said. "This opportunity gives us a chance to carry out big-idea projects that we don't have time for on a regular basis." ♦

NATIONALS

Dance team places better than expected

BY FrancescaChu & EmilieZhou

Last Saturday, the 12 members of the 2017-18 girls' dance team huddled backstage for the last time as a group. They nervously went over their routine in their heads one last time before going onstage to compete at the USA Dance Nationals in the Anaheim Convention Center in front of hundreds of onlookers.

The team placed third in lyrical, fourth in hip hop, fifth in jazz and ninth in xsmall division. In a competition against more than 20 schools, the dancers were happy with how they placed.

"This was our last time doing these dances, and all we wanted was to walk off the stage feeling like we did our best," junior captain Alexandra Li said. "I think we all

agree that we did that."

Throughout the season, the team faced challenges with their coach Kaitlyn Landeza being on maternity leave.

With Landeza being gone, the team did not feel fully confident going into Nationals. Yet during the last week before nationals, former dance team officer and 2015 alumni, Madison Seagraves, helped the team clean their dances and prepare them for nationals.

"We know the teams from LA are incredibly talented," Li said. "We came with the attitude that we were trying to beat our own scores rather than other teams, and our effort paid off."

The team will have their last two performances together at the talent show and the last rally of the year later in the spring. For now, the girls will be taking a short break before auditions for next year are held from April 24-27. ♦



Courtesy of MONIQUE YOUNG

The team poses after receiving awards for their lyrical, hip hop, jazz and xsmall routines. They were pleased with their results, especially for placing third with their lyrical routine.

FIELD TRIPS

AP Euro students planning to visit art museum

BY JeffreyXu

Students in AP European History, taught by Jerry Sheehy, will miss a day of school for a field trip to the California Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco on April 18.

Last year, trip did not take place as there was not enough student interest to pay for the bus fees, Sheehy said. The field trip was a possibility this year after he was able to garner a minimum of 20 student attendees.

According to Sheehy, finding 20 students

was difficult, and he had to send multiple reminders for students to turn in the field trip forms to get enough students on board.

"Maybe I 'sold' this year's classes more on the idea of how interesting the trip can be," Sheehy said. "Every class and every year is a little different. This group seems very interested in getting everything they can out of the class."

Sophomore Abhay Manchala was one of the first to get his forms in. He attributes his early action to his interest in history.

"There are definitely many reasons why someone might take AP Euro," Manchala said. "But I took it simply because I enjoy history."

Manchala said that besides the biology field trip in his freshman year, this will be his first field trip for history, and he is excited to see what the art museum will offer.

"I'm interested in visiting an art museum, and I personally find this kind of stuff interesting," Manchala said. "Especially since they have a lot of interesting pieces from

early Renaissance Europe, and antiquities such as the "Thinker."

Sheehy expects the trip to be a positive one for students.

"The students leave Saratoga behind for a day and get to spend a few hours exploring a world class art museum," Sheehy said. "And with the docents giving us the 'inside scoop' on the various paintings, students can come to a deeper understanding of the importance of art in culture, particularly European culture." ♦

FALCON FOCUS

Sophomore refuses to let stature define her

BY MuthuPalaniappan & EshaLakhotia

Growing up, sophomore Katrina Li learned that she could not let the condition of dwarfism dictate what people thought of her. Li felt that although she may feel like she was in the spotlight while she was in public, it was no reason for her to feel uncomfortable about her own body.

Dwarfism is a condition that affects the growth of bones and results in a short stature and other potential health complications. There are no medications to cure the condition, which can either be inherited or caused by a spontaneous mutation of certain genes. In Li's case, it was the latter.

While she finds that she is still able to do many day-to-day activities like others, Li's condition often proves to be an obstacle. For instance, she is unable to participate in certain contact sports or physical activities.

"I disliked playing in teams because it felt like I was always the person who slowed down the rest of the group because of my disadvantage, and I didn't want to disappoint anyone," Li said. "But the people in any teams that I was in were really supportive and they encouraged me to do my best even if we didn't win."

But, as Li matured, she realized that she shouldn't feel discouraged when playing sports. As long as she tried her best and pushed herself to do the best she can do, her contribution would be enough.

"Some activities in PE are still challenging for me but I've learned how to handle them with support from others," Li said.

Self-acceptance has been something she has had to learn.

"It was hard to go around in public with people staring and commenting behind my back," Li said. "It made making friends a challenge for the first few years of school."

However, as she grew older, Li realized that her condition was nothing to be ashamed about. Her parents played a big role in her journey of self-acceptance, as they always encouraged her to see herself in the best light and to embrace her differences.

Additionally, Li's teachers and peers have been accepting and kind. One example occurred when one of her friends, sophomore Iris Chiu, noticed Li couldn't go on many of the rides during the eighth-grade field trip to Great America because of her stature and hung back to do activities with her that she was able to do.

Li admits that even with such support from friends and family, her condition still gets to her sometimes.

"Even when I tell myself not to, I can't help but feel different around other people or unfamiliar environments, especially in public," Li said. "I make sure to be open and proactive, and approach people in a way that will make them feel at ease with me."

Although Li sometimes feels like her friends may be embarrassed to hang out with her in public, she overcame her doubts after she realized her friends love and support her regardless of her condition.

"I am very appreciative of my friends and teachers who do understand my condition and fully support me," Li said. ♦



Li

LEADERSHIP

T-shirt gun boosts spirit

BY AndrewLee

The crowd chatters and tension builds as the players prepare for the second half of the basketball game. Suddenly, students enter the gym with a big blue launcher aimed at the crowd. Two T-shirts are launched into the stands, galvanizing fans as the second half of the game starts up again.

Occasionally making appearances at sporting events this year, the new T-shirt launcher purchased for the spirit commission has been on a roll in energizing crowds and hyping spirit.

According to spirit commissioner Jenah El-Ashmawi, the Leadership class plans on using the gun during breaks of various sports games.

Having purchased 50 T-shirts for the

new launcher, spirit commissioners plan on shooting a few shirts every game. Because of its exclusivity, catching one of these shirts makes students feel special and excites them with spirit.

Currently, Leadership is still having trouble fine-tuning the gun to make it as efficient as possible. At first, the launcher had trouble firing shirts far enough, and many adjustments were made to increase the range and to shoot more consistently.

Excited to see how students react to the appearance of the new T-shirt gun, Leadership hopes that the launcher becomes an extra highlight for fans at sporting events.

"I think the T-shirt gun will get more students to come to sports events, since they might have a chance at getting a free T-shirt," El-Ashmawi said. ♦

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Seniors face difficulty with college decisions

BY Aaron Choi
& Ava Hooman

As the days until the May 1 college decision day tick by, seniors know a life-changing decision awaits them.

Some have fewer options because of a slew of rejections, while others are overwhelmed with having to decide among their top-choice schools.

Senior Dean Stratakos, the school's No. 1 player on the boys' tennis team, said that academic rigor and athletics are the main factors he is considering.

"The first characteristic I am looking for is a strong computer science program because I prioritize academics. Next comes a solid tennis program," Stratakos said. "Once I know what my options are, I think it will be a lot trickier to narrow it all down to one school. There are so many aspects to consider such as size, location, weather, as well as intangibles such as the overall campus feel and atmosphere."

Senior Smrithi Balebail said that size, location, weather, community and local food districts are all factors for her.

"I don't think I could survive a day in a dreary-weathered and food-less place," she admitted.

For many seniors, the thought of choosing the wrong college is, in a way, even

scarier than getting disappointing admission results.

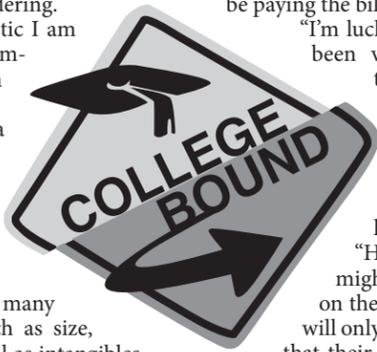
Senior Sahm Rafati said he has narrowed his choice to two colleges. "One of them has the best dental program out of all the colleges I have been admitted to, but I heard that the environment is really depressing," he said. "That's why I'm considering other options."

Yet another factor is the unbending will of many seniors' parents, which seems to dictate many students' academic careers, especially since they're the ones who will be paying the bills for the next few years.

"I'm lucky that my parents have been very supportive of me throughout the college process and they wanted (or at least pretended to want) to hear my own thoughts on each college," Stratakos said. "However, other parents might put a lot of pressure on their children because they will only be happy if they can say that their child is going to a specific top-ranking school."

Though a lesser known limiting factor for many students, the tuition cost of a college is a concern for many parents.

"I'm fortunate enough for my parents to be able to give me a lot more leeway regarding tuition," said senior Avni Madhani. "I know that most parents want their kids to go to the best college they get into, but sometimes that isn't possible." ♦



CLUBS

FBLA prepares for state competition

BY Shreya Kulkarni
& Kaitlyn Wang

As spring break approaches, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) members are preparing for this year's state competition, the State Leadership Conference (SLC), which will be held in Ontario from April 12-15.

During SLC, members compete in their respective events in hopes of advancing to nationals. Thirteen members, consisting mostly of juniors, will travel by bus with club adviser Matthew Welander and Cupertino High's FBLA club.

"We are hoping to place some members, and we have sent members as wild cards, despite not placing at Bay," said vice president Mackenzie Lee, a junior. "Some events start competition at states, so we will hope for the best."

Each school can send up to two wild card entries, which is a chance for individuals to compete in state events even if they did not officially qualify for states through the regional conference, Lee said.

FBLA recently participated in the Bay Section Conference, where three members advanced to the state finals.

According to the club's secretary, junior Angeli Huang, there are a wide variety of events, including objective tests and other judged events, which may involve giving presentations or speeches. There are also pre-judged events, such as web design or mobile app creation.

Leading up to competitions or conferences, members prepare beforehand.

"There is an excited atmosphere with everyone anticipating their event," Lee said. "The conferences are very orderly and structured with set schedules, seminar-like presentations and judges. They are meant to replicate a professional environment to prepare students to be — as the club's name suggests — Future Business Leaders of America."

News about these events spread and inspired new members to participate.

"I joined FBLA because I read in the newspaper about how senior Caitlyn Chen made her FBLA mobile app last year, and it seemed super cool," sophomore FBLA member Christine Lee said.

At SLC, Christine will be participating in website design, while Huang will be participating in business law. With a wide range of topics, members can choose which events they find most interesting.

In hopes of becoming a more coherent club that works together on holistic projects, FBLA has participated in the Government Awareness Project, which requires members to write letters to government officials about FBLA and what members have gained from their experiences.

"I am really looking forward to attending the States Competition this year because it is a new and exciting experience for me, and I want to learn more about business through the presentations and speakers," Christine said. ♦

FALCON FOCUS

Sophomore finds passion for ballet through training

BY Kaylene Morrison

For five weeks last summer, sophomore Alex Lee spent day after day pushing her body to its limit at Boston Ballet's summer program. Lee spent several hours, Monday through Friday, attending classes where she strived to improve her skills through doing barre work, dancing on pointe, learning variations (solo dances) and partnering.

When she was just 6, Lee's parents enrolled her in a ballet class at Los Gatos Ballet. She ended up loving it and stuck with ballet ever since. For Lee, the dancing gives her the opportunity to express herself and destress.

"Dancing blocks [out] the outside world and takes my mind away from all the stress at school, at least for a short time," Lee said.

Lee's list of repertoire is extensive, having danced in "The Nutcracker," "Sleeping Beauty," "Cinderella," "Swan Lake," and "Alice in Wonderland" multiple times. Recently, as her skills have improved, Lee has had the opportunity to dance some of the more prominent roles.

"A couple years ago I started dancing [the roles of] snow and flower in 'The Nutcracker,' I always saw the older girls dancing these parts together," Lee said. "I've also enjoyed



Lee

dancing soldierette doll because it was basically my first solo."

Lee hopes to have the opportunity to dance the roles of the Snow Queen or the Dew Drop Fairy by senior year, which are two of the more renowned solo roles in "The Nutcracker." Though she has improved greatly since she first started dancing as a toddler, Lee still struggles to overcome barriers in her technique.

"Everything is hard in ballet," Lee said. "Personally, I struggle with more of the artistry because I'm a perfectionist, and that's why my technique is stronger."

Not only is ballet physically taxing, the

amount of time and effort that must be put into learning repertoire and consequently, taken away from school, can be stressful. The upside of the overwhelming stress is that Lee has forged strong friendships.

"I'm close with my ballet friends because we've been through so much together," Lee said. "We're always there for each other."

Though Lee does not plan to dance professionally, she does want to keep ballet in her life as long as possible and will continue to dance with Los Gatos Ballet through her senior year.

"It's fun to watch my growth and see what parts I get each year," Lee said. "I can always look forward to dancing a new role." ♦

FACILITIES

Tutoring center allows students to work collaboratively

BY Patrick Li
& Jeffrey Xu

At first glance, the tutoring center, which is open from the start of tutorial into the late afternoon and is located within the library, looks more like a hangout spot, with a noisy environment usually filled with around 20 students socializing rather than a quiet and focused one-to-one tutoring space.

With students shouting across the room, lounging on couches and relaxing on their phones, it's hard to see how any students are being productive. The efficiency of one-to-one tutoring in such a distracting environment seems questionable at best.

While it is true that tutor-student pairs often find it hard to conduct lessons, it would be false to say that the tutoring center isn't still a learning environment. Students are learning as a collaborative, social group.

In this setup, instead of the traditional tutor to learner setup, students discuss

problems and concepts with each other, using one of the many mobile white boards.

An active user of the tutoring center is sophomore Christopher Feng, who often studies with friends there.

"Although it might not seem like it at first, it's a friendly and productive environment to work in."

SOPHOMORE Christopher Feng

"Although it might not seem like it at first, it's a friendly and productive environment to work in," Feng said. "Discussing math concepts with a small group of friends is more effective than having a single tutor."

Volunteer Sunita Bal, who supervises the center, said the tutoring available has helped students to solidify their understanding in a multitude of subject areas.

While one-to-one tutoring may be better for learning new concepts, collaborative academic discussion is more effective as a review session right before an important test.

One of the founding principles of the tutoring center is the idea that tutoring can improve a student's metacognition. Metacognition is the understanding of a person's own thought process. In the tutoring center, students are prompted to ask the question of why something is true and what significance a concept may have. This creates a thoughtful discussion among classmates and allows them to dive deeper.

According to Bal, through working with other peers and discussing the significance of concepts learned in class, a student better understands the way they work through a problem, and thus gains a deeper under-

standing on the subject at hand.

Students learn better when working in a collaborative environment as opposed to a lecture-style setting. In a study done by Learning Forward, 90 percent of teachers reported the collaboration was beneficial and boosted their students' scores.

Although the tutoring center is not a replacement for the classroom, it certainly helps students catch up with their learning and, more importantly, internalize it.

Biology and Anatomy/Physiology teacher Kristofer Orre, who helped launch and supervise the center last year, said that everyone learns differently.

"I wanted the tutoring center to fit as many different learning modalities as possible," Orre said. "It's this cool mix of collaboration space, peer-to-peer tutoring and mini-student center. It's a good place to work collaboratively, and things are comfortable enough for students to work and be with their friends." ♦

ENVIRONMENT

Maintenance crew, club work to combat littering issue

BY Chelsea Leung
& Kaitlyn Wang

The few minutes following lunch, cafeteria lunch trays, paper wrappers and juice boxes can often be seen strewn across tables and the ground in the quad, making an appetizing meal for swarming crows to pick up as maintenance staff scramble to pick up after littering students.

This daily scene is just one part of the campus's larger littering problem, mainly concentrated around where students eat lunch, say school officials and members of the Environmental Club.

"I go nowhere without my litter pick," maintenance supervisor Brian Moran said. "It's almost an extension of my arm. The hallways are kept reasonably clean, but the quad and parking lot are the worst."

Littering at school is hardly a new issue. When Environmental Club co-presidents Dasha Gousseva and Annie Xu approached Moran for advice about a recycling project, he told them the extent of the problem on campus.

Two maintenance workers pick up litter after lunch, and one or two others periodically pick up litter in the parking lot throughout the day, Moran said.

To combat students' lack of awareness surrounding which items can or cannot be recycled, the Environmental Club has been working on the recycling project this year, signaling a new willingness on the students' behalf to take action.

A main objective of the recycling project



FALCON // KAITLYN WANG

Students leave lunch trays and milk cartons, which maintenance workers will later clean up.

is to improve the sorting out of classroom recycling bins to ensure that each classroom has one in an easily accessible area for students to use.

Club officers have also applied stickers to the bins outside to identify what is recyclable or not. In addition, they have placed recycling bins next to each garbage can.

According to Moran, ensuring that there is a recycling bin next to a every garbage can on campus is crucial so that students can make a choice.

Club treasurer Kiran Rachamalla has

noticed that presenting this choice, accompanied by the signs, has had a positive effect on students.

"I definitely think it's making people more aware," Rachamalla said. "After our event at Speak Up for Change week, I actually overheard two students arguing over whether something was recyclable. Hopefully, people will be more aware and take a few seconds to think about whether something is recyclable."

Junior Edward Zhang, who is participating in the project, said that though there

has not been enough time to notice a large difference yet, "more people will learn how important the environment is and help through their own means, such as composting, recycling and picking up trash."

Moran also emphasized that it is important for students to separate recyclables from garbage.

Doing so ensures that the trucks transport certain items to the correct facilities, enabling recycling or trash disposal to run more smoothly.

Otherwise, misplacement reduces efficiency.

For example, Starbucks cups cannot be recycled because their plastic lining is difficult for recycling plants to process, slowing down the entire system.

The Environmental Club's signs around campus have helped with distinguishing between recycling and trash, but many students still throw all items away in one bin without paying heed to labels, although almost everything other than food stuffs can be recycled.

Moran said that picking up trash often boils down to the responsibility of individual students.

Even so, he said students and teachers can help encourage awareness by spreading the message through media like SHSTV, making a quick comment in class about showing respect and not littering or just reminding friends to clean up after all their trash.

"You wouldn't leave trash around at home," Moran said. "Not littering is a way to reflect that we have pride in our campus." ♦

SPRING FLING

continued from pg. 1

air as Lip-Dubbers backpedaled through the school, singing along to lively songs such as "God's Plan" by Drake and "Tik Tok" by Ke\$ha.

Students cheered as the two cameramen, David Berkowitz Sklar and Isaiah Vivero, cut through the chaos.

The second annual Lip-Dub started off in front of the McAfee Center with an introduction by principal Paul Robinson and ended on the football field.

"I think we learned a lot from last year as regards to the music being too low," Vivero said. "I think with heavy promotion and by contacting the heads of a lot of groups we've gotten everyone involved."

Spring Fling began even earlier with last Friday's rally. Because of the absence of the

girls' dance team, as they were competing in Anaheim at USA Nationals, the boys' dance team performed solo for the first time in front of the school.

This was followed by a color guard routine and short dance routines from all-male powder puff cheerleading teams from each grade.

With this year's Spring Fling theme being #SHSSpringFling, students were encouraged to participate in spirited events and to dress up each day of the week.

Spring fling commissioners modeled their daily themes after popular hashtags, such as #twinningtuesday and #workout-wednesday.

Themes like these made Spring Fling a lot easier for students to coordinate for, as they are a lot simpler and generally more popular in the media, Spring Fling commissioner Andrew Zheng said.

In the past, the commissioners have noticed that students were not nearly as

spirited during Spring Fling as they were during Homecoming, and they believe that these changes helped make a difference.

One of the most popular events during Spring Fling week were the annual Powder Puff football games, which took place during lunch on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

The freshmen team played the juniors on April 3, the sophomores played the seniors on April 4 and finals are scheduled to take place at lunch on April 6.

As Spring Fling week came to an end, commissioners were impressed by the spirit on display.

"I love Spring Fling because it's so exciting to have a school wide event that boosts class participation and rivalry," Spring Fling commissioner Jishing Yu said. "I think everyone has fun with the powder puff routines and the football games and no one takes it too seriously, so it's just a great tradition overall." ♦

DONATIONS

continued from pg. 1

program will be able to repay ASB with any extra money it may have in the future. As of now, his main goal is to get donations and fund running again.

"Some options we're willing to take are not necessarily cutting sports, but telling parents, 'This is what it costs,'" Lugo said. "It might not be \$200 a sport; it might be \$600 per sport, but that's what it costs if you want to have that sport. If parents don't donate, we can't offer the sport."

Some coaching positions may also need to be cut to balance the budget.

Some sports that received lower funding from parents in the past two years could be vulnerable to cuts if the trend continues. Among these sports are badminton, track and girls' lacrosse. Another idea being floated right now is to cut transportation to away games by having parents drive instead of using vans and buses. This would save about \$40,000 a year, Lugo said. Some coaching positions may also need to be cut to balance the budget. When asked about the idea of cutting transportation, some student athletes weren't enthusiastic. Junior Tanuj Vasudeva, who is on the track team, does not believe it is a viable solution.

"I personally don't think individuals driving themselves to track meets will work due to large amounts of underclassmen," Vasudeva said.

Another possible option to boost the budget is increased fundraising, but Lugo is unsure how successful the effort would be.

"Fundraising is difficult because we have so many off-campus coaches," Lugo said. "They're not really here year-round, so it's hard to say, 'Hey, show up in February to raise money for your sport' to a spring coach."

Lugo is hoping that with more communication and urgency, donations from parents will increase, and sports budget issues will be solved. ♦

CAMERAS

continued from pg. 1

Before the two-year plan, the old security cameras recorded only when detecting motion, meaning coverage of the campus was sporadic. The recordings were also deleted from the archives after a couple of weeks, preventing administrators from retrieving data for students who reported events like a car break-in weeks after the incident.

Robinson said the cameras have already been useful this year. When the administration discovered graffiti on the mosaic Falcon icon in the middle of the quad, footage from the cameras led to the discovery of the perpetrator.

Student response to the new cameras, though, appears to be overwhelmingly negative. A recent Facebook poll posted in the Saratoga High 2017-2018 group, which comprises all grades, had 190 votes against the installation of the cameras and only 10 votes for it.

Junior Rohan Pandey, who compared the mass surveillance to Big Brother from George Orwell's "1984," said that the cameras are mostly useless because most stu-

dents don't commit illegal activities in the hallways.

He also pointed out that because it is illegal to place cameras in bathrooms, the administration is unable to capture actual illicit activity like vaping.

"Putting cameras does nothing except surveil innocent students," Pandey said. "If they really wanted to catch illegal activity, they would put them in places where bad stuff actually happens."

"I believe most people voted against the cameras because they view it as some sort of infraction on their personal liberties."

JUNIOR Abhinav Tumu

Sophomore Shivam Mani thinks the security system is an unnecessary expense since "nothing much really happens on campus." Rather, he said, the school could put the funds spent for the cameras toward new textbooks for Spanish or other classes.

However, Robinson said that the security system was budgeted as part of the Measure E facilities bond and is not taking away from classroom funding.

Not all students reacted negatively to the cameras. Junior Abhinav Tumu compared the cameras to those in airports or other public places. He argued that the cameras are a "cost-efficient equivalent" of installing a school supervisor.

"I believe most people voted against the cameras because they view it as some sort of infraction on their personal liberties," Tumu said. "While I do understand this argument, it is the school's job to make sure every student is in a safe and secure environment and I think these cameras will do that."

Tumu thinks the security system will help prevent crime and is important in the wake of recent happenings such as the arrest of a senior last spring for violent threats against the school.

Thompson said that the installation of cameras is not due to tragedies like the Parkland, Fla., school shooting in February.

"Current events have been on our mind from the beginning of this plan," Thompson said. "Having an literal vision of our campus falls right into our safety plan." ♦

DRAMA

Musical to take flight at the end of April

BY Jessica Wang

Over the next few weeks, drama students will have an intense rehearsal schedule to prepare for “Mary Poppins,” the upcoming spring musical.

The musical will premiere on April 27 in the McAfee Center, with additional shows on April 29 and May 4 and 5.

“Mary Poppins” will be the first spring musical that incorporates theatrical flying. So far, students are only able to block each flying scene since the actual equipment has not yet arrived. Measurements for students that are flying have already been sent out to the flying company, ZFX Flying Effects, which prepares custom harnesses. During Spring Break, the company will load equipment into the McAfee Center, which the main characters will be able to use in three separate rehearsals.

“We’ve started thinking a lot about those mechanics, as far as what each actor will actually be doing when they fly,” drama teacher Sarah Thermond said. “But we don’t have it totally nailed down yet.”

The theater has its limitations for stage technology, which sometimes calls for modification of certain flying tricks. For example, one of main character Bert’s original tricks on Broadway cannot be done without paying thousands of dollars for additional tracking, Thermond said.

The first few weeks of rehearsals were dedicated to learning and polishing the choreography, inspired by the Broadway production, and modified to fit the ability levels of the student and utilize a cast of 49, much larger than the original production.

At the beginning of March, vocals were integrated with the choreography and into each scene.

According to Thermond, the ensemble is

one of the most important parts of the show with an extremely large role. “Mary Poppins” is known for its iconic ensemble numbers, and the few solo songs that were written specifically for Broadway performances did not appear in the original movie.

“I think that the leads are definitely important to tell the story of the play, but the show could not happen without the ensemble,” sophomore ensemble member Surbhi Bhat said. “Not only do we sing and dance, but we contribute to the story in a way that the main character cannot since we add the extra magic, visuals and fun.”

After the music program’s concert series, orchestra teacher Andrew Ford selected students to practice for the musical’s live score. Integrated rehearsals with the cast were scheduled to begin the week before spring break.

In the movie version, Julie Andrews and Dick van Dyke play their iconic versions of Mary Poppins and Bert, which have become models for future renditions of the two main characters. Although it is necessary for actors to stay true to characters that are familiar to audiences, Thermond encourages cast members to include a personal touch to their roles in order to flaunt the strengths of each student.

“As long as our actors are interpreting the character in a way that is consistent with the script and the tone of the story, I actually encourage them to do slightly different things,” Thermond said.

Costumes were designed by Sarah Thermond’s mother Cathie Thermond, who has volunteered for the school’s drama department since her daughter was a student.

The sets will stay true to the late-Victorian era, in which the story takes place, with the exception of the scenes with more fantastical elements.



Courtesy of LISA YORK

Seniors Hannah Yoon and Matte Kranz link arms for a scene in “Mary Poppins.”

Since darker tones were more common during that time, the costumes and overall scenes are more muted in color, Thermond said.

On the other hand, bright colors and jeweled tones are used in an alternate version of the actors’ original costume during the scenes where Mary Poppins brings other characters into a nonrealistic world.

In general, musicals have fewer props than plays due to frequent scenery changes during a show, and in many cases, the stage must be empty enough to fit about 40 ensemble members that have to dance and sing.

However, the few props needed have to be very specific to the show. Special props in “Mary Poppins” include furniture that can be repeatedly broken apart and reassembled, star-shaped gingerbread cookies

that don’t crumble on stage and items that appear out of nowhere, Thermond said.

The production began its move into the McAfee Center on March 19 and 20. The first full run through took place on March 23.

The musical is intended to appeal to all audiences, with a “simple childhood story” that requires precision, skill, technical difficulty, complex themes and compelling characters.

“I can already think of several moments in the show where I think audience members might burst into spontaneous applause, or be totally in shock of something a kid does,” Thermond said. “I think people often feel that way when they come to a hardcore musical, but this one just has even more opportunities than ever, so it’s a good time, and I’m really excited for people to see it.” ♦

FALCON FOCUS

Senior develops interest in modeling

BY Harshini Ramaswamy
& Ashley Su

Senior Riley Carter is often recognized for her frequent appearances during the Class of 2018’s Homecoming skits over the past four years or her impressive list of academic achievements and accomplishments in volleyball and high jumping.

In the past year, the 5’10” Carter has added a new extracurricular to her resume: modeling.

“People had always told me I should model because I was tall,” Carter said. “I thought it would be a fun opportunity so I reached out to a local agency in San Jose that seemed laidback and not as fancy as the San Francisco ones where you needed experience.”

After sending in a few photos of herself, Carter says the owner of the agency invited her in for an interview where she told Carter she wanted to sign her immediately.

“It takes awhile to get gigs because you have to look like you have experience,” Carter said. “The agency I’m with just has all the models on the website, and anyone who’s looking for models can go on the website and hire someone.”

After being featured on the company’s website, Carter landed a spot in the San Francisco Fashion Community Week fashion show in September, where she was dressed by local designers.

Initially hesitant at the idea of modeling at a professional event, Carter was taken aback by the friendliness and the diversity in the ages and levels of experience she encountered.



Carter

“Everyone was trying to make friends with everyone else,” Carter said. “I met a lot of new people including new designers, some of which gave me their cards for future jobs to work with them. So it’s just an awesome experience to make connections, and it was super fun getting to wear the clothes and walking.”

Carter’s experience at the Fashion Week surprised her and her family. Hollywood depictions of modeling agencies and fashion shows have tended to portray them as shallow, toxic environments that focus on surface-level attributes.

“A lot of the models seem to compare themselves to other models at the agency,” Carter said. “But it’s really just about if they want a blonde person that day or if they want a brunette person. It’s not about comparing bodies.”

Though her mom initially had concerns about how models tend to worry about body image, Carter said she hasn’t been pressured to diet especially because her agency has no weight requirements.

Instead, she attributes her participation in sports, along with her high metabolism, to her overall fitness.

Carter has played volleyball and participated in track since the sixth grade, and served as captain of both teams her senior year.

In the future, Carter intends on majoring in neuroscience and has applied to schools mostly in California.

Although she is not pursuing modeling as a career, Carter said she may be interested in joining an agency when she goes to college. ♦

FALCON FOCUS

Junior finds voice in Make-A-Wish Foundation

BY Muthu Palaniappan
& Kevin Sze

When she was only 9, junior Simran Mallik was diagnosed with Ewing Sarcoma, a rare type of bone cancer. A year later, the Make-A-Wish Foundation granted her a wish and paid for her and her family to go to a resort in Maui. Her parents and sister enjoyed an in-resort petting zoo and parasailing on the warm Hawaiian waters. Mallik couldn’t have been happier.

Her cancer was successfully treated, but she will never forget the impact of the trip on her during one of the toughest parts of her life.

Mallik’s experience with the organization ties in with the results of recent studies. In 2011, researchers from San Francisco’s Make-A-Wish foundation discovered that 89 percent of doctors and nurses believed that granting wishes can influence a patient’s physical health, encouraging them to get up and come out of whatever struggle they are in. Often parents claim that it is a turning point in their children’s lives, as granting a wish makes the impossible seem realistic and fills children with optimism. The help and encouragement that these children receive are not only for the terminally ill. Anybody with any illness can request any wish, and Mallik points to herself as living proof.

“I never had a life-threatening illness, but I was still granted my wish to Hawaii and I had an amazing time,” Mallik said. “It meant a lot to me when I was granted my wish, and I realized that I should spread the same joy that I felt to other kids with illnesses.”

The program inspired her to give back to other children with illnesses and shed light on the importance of programs such

as Make-A-Wish. She has become an active voice in the Bay Area Make-A-Wish region as a freshman, and in her sophomore year of high school, she became the secretary and head of events for the foundation’s local student-run board. Mallik’s main mission is to fundraise and spread awareness through various events such as a 5k run in San Fran-

“I realized that I should spread the same joy to other kids.”



JUNIOR Simran Mallik

cisco, which costs \$35 per person, and cable car pulling, which costs \$200 per team of six, in addition to local boba fundraisers.

“Fundraising for Make-a-Wish made me step out of my comfort zone when I would talk to different people in the program and also the regular people by encouraging them to donate,” Mallik said. “It’s a really good experience for me because it makes me more outgoing.”

Mallik plans on continuing her work with the foundation, hoping to become a wish granter in her 20s and 30s. Wish granters help connect patients with opportunities to receive their wish.

“I hope to spread awareness and support Make-A-Wish” Mallik said. “People need to realize the importance and power of doing kind things to each other, and hopefully people are inspired to give back to people in need.” ♦

FOURTH PERIOD
STAFF POLICY

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Why juniors should try on SBAC

Juniors across California are participating in the “Smarter Balanced Assessment” (“SBAC”) this spring — tasked with numerous multiple-choice and free-response synthesis based questions in math and English. At the school, the test spanned two days for alternating groups of juniors over the week of March 19, replacing regularly scheduled morning periods.

However, not many took notice to the date; the SBAC, just as other standardized tests, is considered by students to be meaningless—not warranting any effort. After all, the scores are not sent to colleges, so they must be irrelevant.

My suspicion is that most students take the test nonchalantly, while some even purposefully sabotage their performances — in both cases walking in with the attitude that their individual score does not matter.

This attitude, however, is precisely what has to change.

Standardized tests, although undoubtedly another burden, are the major-determining factors in a school’s API score. The higher an API score, the more academically rigorous and competitive a school is considered to be. For instance — in 2013, Los Gatos High was reported to have an

average API score of 883, while Saratoga came in 51 points ahead at 934.

These API scores are often the only quantitative data colleges have when weighing a 4.0 GPA at one school vs. another; with the limited amount of time admission officers have to read thousands of applications, comparing one student with a 4.1 GPA at a school with a 700 API score versus a student with a 4.1 GPA at a 950 API score can often mean the difference between admission and rejection.

According to assistant principal Brian Safine, students are not being asked to take the test on their own time, but rather are taking it instead of going through normally scheduled coursework.

“All we are asking of students is for them to sit behind a computer screen and do their best work on the school’s time,” Safine said. “These scores are the only way for us to compare [the school’s] performance against other schools in the state, so it is very important that our students take the test to the maximum of their ability.”

Also, the California State University system allows students with strong performances on the SBAC to skip some college courses. For instance, if a student



CHARIN PARK

answers a certain math question correct, they are exempt from taking a high-level algebra class when they enroll at one of the CSU schools.

Although the latter does not affect that many students, it still goes to demonstrate how there are literally no negatives to actually trying on the SBAC. In case

of a poor performance, the score will not hinder you, while a solid score will bring only benefits.

If students are going to complain about how no one understands that Saratoga High is tougher than most other public schools, they might as well just put their best effort into the SBAC to prove it. ♦

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editors-in-chief
Caitlyn Chen
Eleanor Goh

Opinion Editor
Isabelle Yang

Reporter
Daniel Bessonov

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

New GPA scale causes stress, confusion

By Jeffrey Xu

At the start of the ‘16-’17 school year, the administration implemented a new grading scale starting with the class of 2020 that negates the GPA effects of plus or minus grades.

Current freshmen and sophomores are subject to the new system, as will future years.

Administrators said the new system would help relieve students’ stress.

Instead, the effect has essentially been the opposite. While students with minus grades do get the benefits of having minus grades not affect their GPA, the new system has created a more noticeable burden for students who find themselves falling just short of the next higher letter grade. Namely, it is the students who are getting grades such as a B+ or C+.

For example, in the old grading scale, the difference between earning an A- in a class as opposed to a B+ only resulted in a drop from a GPA of 3.7 to 3.3, which is a difference of .4.

With the new scale, if a student earns a B+ in a class, their unweighted GPA for that class would fall to a 3.0, which is a much more

significant difference compared to being able to receive a 4.0 from an A- with a grade that is just a few percent points higher.

This causes even more stress for students who have borderline grades.

Another facet of the new grading scale that further stresses students is that in order to make a

Many students feel the need to take harder, weighted courses, perhaps creating more stress in the long run.

noticeable difference in their GPAs compared to other students, the new system has pushed kids to unwisely and unnecessarily enroll in more AP or Honors courses.

With the grading playing field being more leveled out in regular classes, many students feel the need to take harder, weighted courses, perhaps creating more stress in the long run, even if they already struggle with the class to begin with.

While it is true that the guidance department and administration have warned students repeatedly about taking too many overly difficult courses, the new grading scale seems to contradict this advice.

Additionally, the new system has caused much confusion among students and teachers alike. For example, when the new system was put into place, and students still saw pluses and minuses on Aeries and their transcripts in the mail, they were confused.

Teachers have also been thrown off by the new change. Some teachers, especially those in the science department, have manually gotten rid of pluses and minuses in the grade reporting process, most likely without realizing that Aeries already accounts for the pluses and minuses as having no effect on GPA.

While this isn’t a huge problem arising from the grading scale itself, the administration should have definitely been clearer in the explanation of exactly how the new grading scale would change how grades appear on Aeries and how teachers would not need to manually change the pluses and minuses.

Finally, the implementation of the new grading scale is unnecessary because most colleges recalculate GPA based on their own scales anyway.

For example, the University of California schools and many other private and public schools alike treat A+’s and A’s as both being equivalent to a 4.0, but with an A- counting as a 3.7. In this system, essentially all pluses and minuses affect GPA, except in the case of an A+ grade.

Another argument cited by the administration in favor of the new scale was that it would match those of other high schools in the area, but in the end, the scale that actually matters is the one that the colleges calculate, which, according to The College Board, is the same scale as used by UCs, making the 4-point scale useless.

Due to the additional stress, confusion and deviation from the accepted college norm of a 13-point grading scale, the new grading system — which, according to principal Paul Robinson, took the school half a year and \$12,000 to implement the necessary software changes for — may not have been the best, most stress-relieving idea, after all. ♦

togatalks

Do you think the new grading scale was helpful? Why or why not?

Yes, I think it was because a lot of people end up with A’s in harder classes.



sophomore Sonali Shanbhag

It clumps students in a bad way; someone with an 80% looks the same as a person with an 89%.



freshman Ajay Gupta

No company should leave out minorities

BY SelenaLiu

When Tarte Cosmetics released its new foundation set in January, makeup users were furious because less than a quarter of the shades were suitable for people of color.

Even though the cosmetics line hurriedly apologized, stating that they “made the decision to [release the foundation] before all the shades were ready to go,” the incident still represents the discrimination in the beauty industry against people with darker skin tones.

Alisha Acquaye from Teen Vogue notes that this pattern of subtle racism in the beauty industry is problematic because it “perpetuates the idea that dark skin tones are abnormal, complicated and burdensome, thus difficult to include.”

To change this discrimination, cosmetic brands must be more inclusive with their products.

To change this discrimination, cosmetic brands must be more inclusive with their products. In the makeup and fashion industry, products have historically been geared to a predominantly white audience. This is because primarily white models and actresses have been shown on television until the middle of the 20th century. In fact, ac-

ording to Becca Endicott from StyleCaster Newsletter, black women did not walk the runways until the mid-1960s, when models like Pat Cleveland and Grace Jones first broke the ice. Even then, a runway show might have featured one black woman to every 30 white women.

Compared to 50 years ago, the beauty industry is being more inclusive in attempts at racial diversity. For example, Kenyan actress Lupita Nyong’o is the new face of Lancôme, and Colombian American model Sofia Vergara is a representative for CoverGirl Magazine. Runways broadcast on public television, like the Victoria’s Secret Fashion Show, also have models representing ethnicities from all over the world.

Still, many problems with diversity exist, especially outside the beauty industry. For example, Hollywood and the movie industry have often been criticized for whitewashing their casts, even when many movies they produce are adaptations of stories originally from other countries. But recently, the movie “Black Panther” has received praise for its almost entirely African-American cast and its exceptional storyline.

More black representation, exemplified by “Black Panther,” needs to happen in both the entertainment and beauty industries.

Considering the influence the beauty and film industries have on young people, aiming for more diversity in skin products and movies would help decrease the amount of racial discrimination in America and gradually make the U.S. a more inclusive country. ♦



Social movements should not define individuals

BY LeoCao

There are numerous social movements taking place in the world right now. Campaigns such as Black Lives Matter, the feminist movement and LGBTQ social movements all have many supporters who regularly hold protests to raise awareness for their cause.

This raises the question of whether people have an obligation to be a part of a movement in which a group that matches their identity is participating in. For example, do all African American people have to join the Black Lives Matter movement? Or should all women take part in the feminist movement?

The answer is no. People do not have to support a movement simply because of their skin color, gender or any other characteristics. They should support a group because they truly believe in the cause and sympathize with victims of the injustice.

Regarding feminism, this does not necessarily mean all women must protest because they might not sympathize with the cause or are not in a position to protest. Furthermore, there are many men who participate in the movement because they also believe they should fight against the injustices women endure.

Likewise, some African Americans do not support Black Lives Matter because they don't consider racial issues to be a significant problem. Yet, there are many non-African Americans who support the movement because they genuinely believe the situation needs get better.

In the case of the feminist movement, many women are not participants. There are many reasons for this, and they do not deserve to be unfairly blamed by feminists. For example, a woman may simply be too busy and her schedule does not allow her to seriously advocate for the cause.

Another consideration is that some women may accept the status quo. Most people have grown up in an environment where gender inequality is institutionalized. Society often sends the message that women are inferior to men. There are many women who are just as immersed in that culture as men.

Similarly with the Black Lives Matter movement, not every African American should feel obligated to participate in demonstrations against racial profiling and police brutality if they are not in a comfortable position to do so.

These considerations apply to all group movements, far beyond just the two aforementioned campaigns. There are many explanations for why someone would not want to be involved with a movement that their group is involved in.

A more specific example of the segregation people observe when they don't identify

as a certain group is being a conservative at a liberal university like UC Berkeley.

Speaking out for conservative ideas at UC Berkeley will likely attract very strong repercussions. Students and even professors sometimes go out of their way to insult conservatives. As a result, many students are afraid to voice their true opinions.

When people blindly follow their group demographic out of fear, there are some consequences. Individual thinking is discouraged, so people are not inclined to question things happening at their school and even society. Also, by not speaking against the majority group, they are letting the situation worsen for the minority, who will continue to be dominated with the thinking of others.

The bottom line is that numerous factors affect people's opinions about an issue and it is important to respect their decisions regardless of whether or not it follows the rest of the group's opinion. ♦

Unjustified infantilization of teens in political roles

BY AlexandraLi

On Feb. 14, one of the world's deadliest school shootings left 17 people dead and 17 more injured at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. Following the shooting, dozens of teens from the school stepped up, with Stoneman Douglas High School's senior Emma Gonzalez delivering a viral speech at a gun control rally on Feb. 17, and freshman Christine Yared writing a moving opinion piece in The New York Times advocating for gun control.

Since then, a battle has raged between teenage activists and those opposing gun control, creating the Never Again movement in hopes of making this school shooting the last in America.

Some opponents have outrageously accused teens of being “crisis actors,” or adults hired to mobilize an anti-gun movement. It's impossible to miss the rude nature of many of the NRA's and other politicians'

responses to the teens standing up for what they believe in. However, this claim of a lack of maturity in teens, although possessing major holes, is not completely unsupported.

With such misconceptions, teens are often told that they are unable to make logical decisions regarding politics.

According to the University of Rochester Medical Center, the frontal cortex of the brain controlling reasoning develops slowly and causes teens to process information with the amygdala, or the emotional part of the brain.

Supposedly, teens are more likely to act on impulse without thinking or engage in

dangerous activities without considering the consequences.

But this does not mean that adolescents cannot think logically. According to a Wall Street Journal article by psychologist Robert Epstein, teens are as competent as adults in handling responsibility and leadership, as intelligence peaks around the age of 15.

Instead, Epstein argues that the apparently irresponsible stereotype surrounding teens originates from their carefree and unburdened lifestyles with no expectations placed on them.

Teens are often viewed as glued to the screens of mobile devices, unable to take the time to focus and understand deep topics like political issues.

With such misconceptions, teens are often told that they are unable to make logical decisions regarding politics.

In the political stage, teen-organized movements are nothing new. In October 1963, a group of 250,000 Chicago students

participated in a walkout to protest segregation as one of the largest yet overlooked protests in the Civil Rights Movement. The following year, over 450,000 African American and Puerto Rican students protested segregation in New York City's public schools.

In 2012, undocumented youths participated in sit-ins, risking deportation and arrest to plead for an executive order to stop the deportation of DREAMers.

Teenagers have been at the forefront of countless radical political movements and should not be disregarded as incapable. It is no surprise that the youth of America are again enacting change when countless politicians seem to put in minimal effort in addressing the nation's issues.

Rather than face the teenage movements with skepticism simply because of age, adults should accept the growing role of teenagers in society and face these movements with seriousness and a willingness to respond. ♦

College decisions: to share or not to share?

su-per cool



Ashley Su

As March passes by and most college decisions begin to roll out, many seniors are faced with the question of whether and how to share news of acceptances with their friends.

It might seem obvious that any acceptance is good news and should be shared; after all, you can celebrate with friends. But what if you get accepted and your friend gets rejected? When that friend has told you about her rejection, informing her about your acceptance might be seen as gloating.

While you deserve the right to be able to share good news and expect congratulations back, they probably want to

forget about their rejection and move on quickly, especially if the school was high on their list.

It's best to decide how to act after observing reactions from the friend's rejection. If they seem super disappointed, it would probably be better to hold off giving the news for a few days. Otherwise, share the news humbly and only if asked.

On the other hand, if you are in the position where you've been rejected, it's ideal to check up on others after sharing your news of rejection. If you decide to tell others that you got rejected but know that they also applied to the school, ask whether they got in so you don't put them in an awkward situation.

Lastly, while there's no right way to share college news, agreeing on a system with your friends in advance might help college decision season flow a lot more smoothly. For example, if you get in, tell your friends; if not, don't say anything, and your friends can assume that you didn't make it and avoid the topic. ♦



Your high



How do I break up with my significant other?

clam chowder



Karen Chow

Editor's note: The names below are pseudonyms and have been withheld because of the private nature of the situation.

Wiping her red, puffy cheeks, Erika sobbed at the message on her phone: "I can't do this anymore. We are over, but let's still be friends. I'm sorry."

It had been a year since Erika and her boyfriend, Eric, started dating. After admiring him from afar for a few months, she eventually landed a date.

But as months passed in their relationship, Eric did not feel the same about Erika anymore. He knew his heart was not in the relationship, yet he waited months to break the news to her.

That was his first mistake. He led Erika on, and in that time, she could have moved on instead of growing more attached and letting her feelings for him continue to build. The first rule in breaking up with someone is to do it as soon as possible because leading them on only causes more pain.

After the intense and emotional breakup, Erika stalked Eric's Instagram profile. She kept refreshing the page to see whether he had posted any updates on Instagram or Facebook. Her obsessive behavior could have been prevented if Eric explained himself fully.

On top of that, she was constantly texting his friends whether he had truly moved on, if "wanting to be friends" was real and if he talked about her behind her back.

Eric made a mistake by not explaining himself. Explain your reasons for the breakup fully, because your significant other deserves the truth. Do not

lie or talk about them behind their back. A breakup is a personal matter that should not be shared or flaunted; there is no such thing as "winning a breakup," but rather learning to accept it and move on peacefully.

Lastly, and arguably most importantly, break up with your significant other in person. The person who you dated, spent hours with, deserves the right to a personal confrontation rather than an emotionless text or a faceless call. It is unfair to the other person and it embodies cowardice.

By taking solace behind a phone screen, you disrespect and belittle the relationship, which in turn worsens the situation because on top of breaking up with them, it creates unnecessary emotional pain. It feels like they meant nothing to the person because they cannot even take an hour out of their day to have a conversation face to face, creating an even more painful breakup. ♦



HAND



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BOOK



What do I do if a friend asks me for test questions?

cool
kat



Shreya Katkere

Is the test hard? What's on the test? Is this problem on the test? What was the answer to that one? Do I have to study this?

Many high schoolers have either asked or answered these kinds of questions, prompting the dilemma about whether to discuss test questions or give hints to friends in different periods. While many may believe this isn't a problem because they are helping out a friend in need, offering such help is clearly unethical.

By giving answers to tests, students give their peers an unfair advantage. Also, they could hurt that person's learning by creating a dependency on cheating.

In addition, people could hurt their own grade by lowering the curve on the test (if one exists). Perhaps worst of all, if the students are caught by teachers, both will receive 0's on their tests and be reported to administration. So why take the risk?

Instead, when other students ask about a test, indicate whether it was hard or easy, because that is all you can say without giving an unfair advantage.

Even if someone keeps persisting, stick with saying "it was difficult for me" or "it was a breeze for me" and do not divulge details or reveal the exact problems.

When someone asks whether a certain topic is on the test, that is the hard part. It's often difficult to figure out what to tell them because you don't want to jeopardize the friendship by refusing to help.

The easiest and most risk-free option is to tell them that you don't really remember and they should study it just to be safe. This way, you are not misleading them or giving them an unfair advantage. ♦



You've hit, but do you run?

da
bess-t



Daniel Bessonov

"Mom, I scratched the car ..."

Text messages like this are common among many new drivers.

Hit-and-runs present serious moral and ethical dilemmas. On one hand, you've undoubtedly caused damage to another car, but often to such minor extent that it might not even be noticeable, much less worth the effort to leave a note.

Then there are the added dollar repercussions that will rain down onto your wallet, as well as your parents' sheer wrath.

The most common types of hit-and-runs, especially for teenagers, involve either one of two scenarios: hitting a parked

car while backing out of a parking spot, or nudging a car's mirror while driving all-too-close to the edge of the road.

The first week after I got my license, I scraped a car while backing into a parking spot. After hearing a sound, I got out of my own car to check what I had done and stared in horror at a long, silver stripe along a mint-new Prius.

My mind raced at a thousand miles per hour: "Am I going to jail? Are my parents going to kill me? What do I do?" — all questions that I had to process before making a decision. I knew I had to leave a note, but imagining my parent's reaction made me think twice about whether I really wanted to do the right thing. Envisioning the red that would envelop my bank statement wasn't necessarily helping either.

My moral compass was too strong — and I ended up leaving a note on the car's dashboard;

however, my pencil moved in uncertain lines, as I was truly unsure of whether owing up to my actions would help me in the long run.

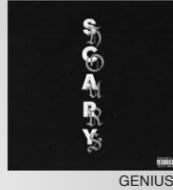
To be honest, I didn't know whether I had made the right decision until a silver stripe appeared across my own car two weeks later— accompanied by a green post-it-note that read, "Sorry! 408-234-5814." Had the person not left the note, my day would've been completely ruined and my bank account drained for an accident not even in my control.

Although I had to endure the entirety of my parent's wrath the night of my minor accident, knowing that I made the right decision empowered me to sit through the hours of monotonous yelling calmly. Throughout this experience, I can now confidently attest that if you've hit, no matter how small the scratch, you should most definitely not run. ♦

Top 3: SONGS TO PUT ON REPLAY



“God’s Plan” : Drake
The combination of its hypnotic beat and Drake’s rapping and singing makes the song addictive. Not to mention — Drake gave away this song’s million dollar music video budget to those in need in Miami!



“Havana” : Camila Cabello
This remarkable song ties together both Latin and American pop. It has a catchy upbeat tune that is impossible to get out of your head. (It also happened to be Barack Obama’s No. 1 song of the year.)



“Finesse (Remix) [feat. Cardi B]” : Bruno Mars
The original version of “Finesse” in 2016 displayed Mars’ unique modern funk, but its re-release on Jan. 4 featuring rapper Cardi B gave it new life. It’s one that will surely make listeners want to get up and dance!



-Shreya Katkere

Top 3: INDIE ARTISTS



Lauv
Originally from San Francisco, Lauv started his career making tracks in his bedroom. His 2017 single, “I Like Me Better,” garnered attention and put the singer in the spotlight, receiving over 100 million streams on Spotify. His tracks are airy and smooth, his voice an instant relaxation.



Billie Eilish
Although only 16 years old, Eilish has already made a name for herself. Her most famous song, “Ocean Eyes,” received over 35 million streams on Spotify. Eilish’s music has a light feel and is comparable to artists like Lorde and Ella Vos. She was recently named Apple Music’s “UpNext Artist” and also was a part of Netflix’s “13 Reasons Why” soundtrack.



Jaymes Young
Young, a Seattle native, gives a new feel to pop music, his songs varying from slow to upbeat, yet staying somehow melancholy. Young’s music is meaningful and modern, a contrast to most mainstream pop songs. Yung released his EP “Dark Star,” and first album, “Feel Something,” under Atlantic Records.

-Muthu Palaniappan

The Falcon's



Top Picks

Top 3: TWEEN DRAMAS



“Wizards of Waverly Place” (2007-2012)
It is a Disney channel teen sitcom centered on three siblings born into the Russo family of wizards. Starring Selena Gomez as Alex Russo, David Henrie as Justin Russo, and Jake T. Austin as Max Russo, the three try to navigate the real world without revealing their secret powers. Watch this classic show to feel nostalgic and within another universe.



“The Vampire Diaries” (2009-2017)
This CW drama follows the seemingly ordinary girl, Elena Gilbert (Nina Dobrev), and how her world transforms when vampire brothers, Stefan (Paul Wesley) and Damon Salvatore (Ian Somerhalder) move into town. This dynamic love triangle captivates audience members, but only one ends up with her, so don’t miss out on this heart-wrenching series.



“Pretty Little Liars” (2010-2017)
A thriller and mystery teen show, the series follows four high school girls as they get tormented and stalked by the mysterious “A” after their clique leader is supposedly kidnapped and murdered.

-Esha Lakhotia

Top 3: YOUTUBERS TO BINGE-WATCH



iiSuperwomanii

Lily Singh, better known by her YouTube username, iiSuperwomanii, makes short sketches that comically illustrate her struggles and her experiences as an Indian girl raised in Canada.

SUBSCRIBE 13M



DanAndPhilGAMES

Daniel Howell and Phil Lester are the British dynamic duo of YouTube. As roommates and best friends, the two create sarcastically on-point vlogs, challenge videos and DIY projects.

SUBSCRIBE 3.1M



nigahiga

Japanese-American YouTuber Ryan Higa, a.k.a. nigahiga, has been the king of creative content since 2006. His channel features hilarious commercial and song parodies, as well as fake movie trailers filled with clever jokes and puns.

SUBSCRIBE 20M

-Selena Liu

April's National Poetry Month inspires

BY Kaitlyn Wang

April showers bring decent poems. That's what I hoped when I first learned of NaPoWriMo, or National Poetry Writing Month. For around a year, I've experimented with writing poetry, but I've often felt dissatisfied with what I've created.

To celebrate National Poetry Month and to pursue my typically sporadic hobby, I decided to participate in NaPoWriMo this year. Participants strive to write a poem a day in April, resulting in a total of 30 poems.

During the weeks leading up to the event, I pushed myself to practice writing at least a haiku or a handful of words daily, despite being a chronic procrastinator. Setting a schedule has enabled me to accumulate a body of work. Recently, I've read and reread more poems, mulling over the varied ways poets evoke a reaction or illustrate an idea. As I develop greater appreciation for the poets I love, I hope to slow down and notice more of the nuances found in poetry, fully absorbing what poets have to say.

I've also written more poems of my own. After gathering pages full of lines and stanzas that no one has read or heard, I'd like to share a few of the poems that I too often stow away.

Whether April showers bring decent poems may remain unclear, but spending more time pursuing something I love has reinforced my knowledge that while I might not do it on a daily basis, I will continue to write poetry. ♦

Sign Here

I never knew how to respond when people asked where I was from. Would it be cliché to say: Aren't we all made of stardust? Not if we forget. Not if we insist on cutting the earth into here and there and there and there, where people don't seem like people and therefore aren't our people. After all, we've got regulations here. Here, you pass our test — check a certain number of boxes before we consider your claim that you are human.

Brush

off the dust — no, use a damp paper towel because you can't breathe in neglect. Let it lie encased because now is not the time. Forget the precise poise of your fingers, the confident strokes that push you farther from the middle shore — forget the dotted grins and the boundaries, the sea — forget the words

that call for you, call for you, cry for you because there is nothing to return to except for everything you left behind. Let it lie encased because now is not the time.

Listen

We never wanted to be fortune cookie children. Yet there we huddled: curled inside our shells, our futures already written and pressed against our bodies. The ink wet and viscous. The letters hollow, ringing. Your lucky numbers are: But listen now — to the crackle of plastic, to the snap of a splitting sky spilling light into the corners of our home. Eyes smolder like swollen suns as you scabble at a scooped horizon. Hurry — there you go. Keep clinging. Your toes swing beneath you as you watch shingles, walls, a chimney tumble below. Your fortune flutters, sprawls unconscious across sidewalk. You don't let go to save it — you let go because we must fall and hit the ground limping before we pave a real road.

Origami Girl

Ask if you can sit down, but not if she is okay. The answer already soaks her palms translucent. You don't need to bottle it, stopper it, label it yours. Give her an unwrapped hug, word-less and unadorned. Years dissolve until two figures remain: you & you. You comforting younger you with your shared presence.

Arms wrap around stubborn shoulders standing guard, flanking a chest folded hollow to shelter pain. But alone together we speak; we listen; we smooth crisp creases into the wrinkled corners of here and now. Let us return to an open square. One by one our fingers uncurl and our breath slips free at last — hovering, hesitating, floating up

while together we huddle below, watching the sky unfold.

Movie soundtracks with prominent artists provide attention

BY Kevin Sze

The highest grossing non-sequel superhero movie. The seventh biggest superhero movie ever. The generator of \$900 million in revenue in its first three weeks in theaters. These are just a few of the accolades "Black Panther" has collected so far this year.

The movie stars some of the biggest names in the film industry, with lead roles being given to Chadwick Boseman and Michael B. Jordan, both of whom entice the audience in a plot full of action.

Going along with this movie-making excellence has been the stellar, star-filled soundtracks from "Black Panther."

Kendrick Lamar, hip hop mogul and icon, is producer of the movie's soundtrack, which included artists like Khalid, 2 Chainz, SOBxRBE and SZA. The album quickly topped Billboard's 200.

My favorite track is one by SOBxRBE, a promising rap quartet, who recorded the song, "Paramedic!."

It became an instant hit on people's gym playlists, due to its fast verses combined with its clever rhyme scheme. It even includes a subliminal message dedicated to NBA superstar LeBron James.

The soundtrack and the movie raked in \$746.8 million in the box office on a \$175 million budget.

"King's Dead," another song in the soundtrack, combines the styles of Lamar, Jay Rock, Future and James Blake to create a song with multiple flows and beat changes. Lamar raps from the perspective of Killmonger, the movie's villain, pointing out Killmonger's relatable struggle for identity. The soundtrack also switches from hard-hitting flows to a laid-back vibe in

songs like "All The Stars," featuring SZA, or "The Ways," by Khalid and Swae Lee. Both songs were huge successes on the Billboard 100.

Well-known soundtracks promote a movie more effectively, leading to better numbers in the box office.

Take "Suicide Squad," for example. The movie was one of the first to line up a star-studded soundtrack mixed with rap's legends and upcoming forces, creating a successful stand-alone album.

Paired with a decent superhero movie that contained stars Will Smith and Margot Robbie, the soundtrack and movie raked in \$746.8 million in the box office on a \$175 million budget.

Yet film critics have labeled it as one of the most disappointing superhero movies of all time. IMDb gave the movie a 6.1/10, while Rotten Tomatoes gave it a mere 26 percent. Clearly, the movie's best selling point was the soundtrack, which features Lil Wayne, Wiz Khalifa, Imagine Dragons and Logic. Their song, "Sucker For Pain,"

which combines a catchy and smooth chorus with lyrically sound verses, skyrocketed to No. 15 on the Billboard 100 and No. 1 on Billboard's Hot Rap Songs.

Songs such as "Sucker For Pain" undoubtedly lured in extra viewers, and the soundtrack's high praise promoted the movie effectively.

Will Smith's Netflix blockbuster "Bright" took a similar route by enlisting the help of Logic, Marshmello, Migos and Future to create an impressive five-song soundtrack.

Despite a dismal Rotten Tomatoes rating of 27 percent and a negative review by The New York Times, which wrote that "true enchantment [was] in short supply," Nielsen ratings revealed over 11 million views in a three-day span.

There is no end in sight to this trend of well-known artists being featured heavily in movie soundtracks.

And for music lovers, it's a good thing. They are treated to songs that bridge the one- to two-year gap between artists' individual album releases. ♦

Improved 'Tomb Raider' is still an emotionally inadequate film

BY Leo Cao

Since she first appeared in the video game "Tomb Raider," adventurer Lara Croft has established herself as the product of an ideal straight male imagination: gorgeous, intelligent and wildly athletic.

Her physical appearance and complexity have drastically evolved since the release of the game 22 years ago.

In that game, as well as two "Tomb Raider" films released in 2001 and 2003 that starred Angelina Jolie, Croft was portrayed as a sex symbol, noted for her buxom bosom and tight clothes.

Starting with the reboot of the video game in 2013 and continuing through this most recent movie, Lara Croft, who is played by Alicia Vikander, has transitioned into a more realistic grown-up action hero, as opposed to a teenage fantasy. Gone are the absurdly disproportionate dimensions and skimpy outfits; in their place is a real woman: strong and uncertain.

The 2018 reboot of "Tomb Raider" focuses on Lara Croft's search for her missing father. Croft lives a peaceful life as a bicycle courier in London.

But when she uncovers clues to her father's whereabouts, Croft embarks on her journey to explore the mysterious tomb of Himoko, which translates to "mother of death."

The film is an effort to wipe the slate clean and incorporate a well-developed story, characters and emotional core.

Sadly, the result is extremely average. The movie is not uniquely clever or innovative.

By paying respects to the previous movies and games, but moving in a distinctly different direction, "Tomb Raider" depicts Vikander as an action star.

However, a major problem for this franchise is that the concept of "tomb raiding" is simply not very interesting to many audiences.

And this movie is more of a predictable retrieval quest that doesn't involve

any "real" tomb raiding.

Another downside is one that almost all movies that are based on video games fail to overcome.

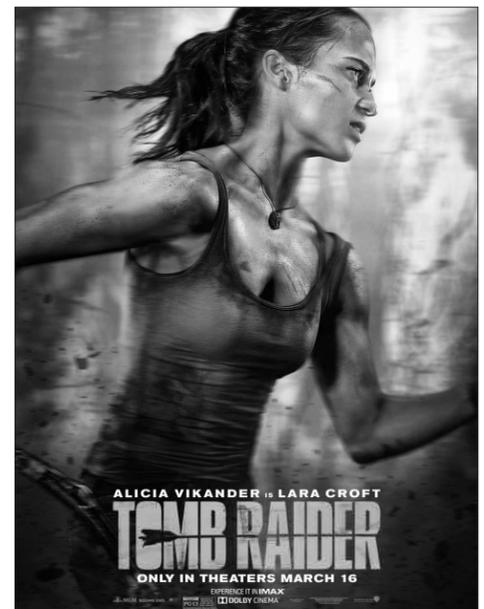
Since video games are fun because the player directly participates in the plot by exploring worlds and solving puzzles, it is difficult for the audience to sit back and watch the action passively in a movie.

To solve this, the story needs to be even more emotionally appealing to keep the audience engaged.

Director Roar Uthaug attempts to do this by incorporating a large part of the storyline from the video game and throwing in big, unexpected plot twists.

But by focusing on the recovery of an artifact from a tomb, he gives away too much of the plot from the outset. This makes the interesting parts of the movie fall short of true excitement.

This "Tomb Raider" movie is certainly new and refreshing, but as an adventure film, it does not rise above the level of being moderately entertaining. ♦



Courtesy of GAMESPOT



BY Karen Chow
& Kaitlyn Wang

His pulse thudding and his throat constricting, Kiran Rachamalla, then a fourth grader at Argonaut Elementary School, stepped onto the stage. He looked out at the hundreds of students gathered below, bracing himself to deliver a speech about why he should be the school treasurer.

Years later, Rachamalla's fellow students would remember the eloquence and persuasiveness of his speech, but what they did not see were the hours Rachamalla, now a junior, had spent behind the scenes, practicing his speech over and over in hopes of controlling a stuttering condition he has battled since his earliest years.

Thanks to hours spent in front of the mirror practicing his enunciation and asking others to correct him if he begins talking too fast, Rachamalla has made huge inroads against a condition that the National Institutes of Health says afflicts 3 million Americans. In addition, as many as 1 in 10 children has experienced the condition at some point, even if it doesn't become chronic. Around 75 percent of children outgrow stuttering.

According to Health Line, there are multiple causes of stuttering, including a family history because of an inherited abnormality in the brain, a stroke which causes neurogenic stuttering, difficult family dynamics or an emotional trauma.

For Rachamalla, "stuttering happens when you're nervous, so if you take out the nerves, it works out just fine. Whenever your anxiety goes up, you start to stutter more."

Rachamalla remembers his anxiety during presentations in elementary school.

"I would have to redo the presentation because I just got so nervous and had to sit down, and the teacher would later call me again to restart," Rachamalla said.

Growing up, Rachamalla did not know many other people who stuttered and felt isolated.

"When I was younger, I assumed that it was a problem that only I had, but now I realize that a lot of people have it," Rachamalla said. "It's not uncommon."

Famous stutterers include England's King George VI, singer Elvis Presley, golfer Tiger Woods, politician Joe Biden and actress Emily Blunt. Stuttering is more common in males than in females, the National Institutes of Health reports, as boys are three to four times more likely than girls to keep stuttering as they grow older.

"Now I realize that a lot of people have it ... It's not uncommon."



JUNIOR Kiran Rachamalla

Although the knowledge that he had to present in front of the entire school was nerve-racking, Rachamalla recalled, his stuttering did not deter him from pursuing his goals.

"I had to practice a lot, so there was definitely a lot of added time," Rachamalla said. "It made me concerned at first because I knew I had to say a speech, but I was old enough to understand that if I put in enough practice, I would be fine."

APUSH teacher Kim Anzalone said that while she did notice Rachamalla's stuttering at the beginning of the year, she thinks that he barely stutters now.

"He has matured so much and gained so much confidence because he is a really stellar APUSH student," Anzalone said. "And I think he feels so comfortable in the class that I don't think he stutters much anymore. If he does, it's very minimal."

Anzalone does not remember Rachamalla stuttering once during simulations such as the Constitutional Convention. According to Anzalone, during these simulations it is especially clear that Rachamalla is articulate and thoughtful.

"One of the reasons I think he looks or presents himself as being so thoughtful is maybe he's slowing down, thinking about what he wants to say, and then that way it's smoother when it comes out," Anzalone said.

Another student who has dealt with stuttering is junior Tiffany Pi. In her case, she recalls struggling with stuttering as a child because her thoughts got jumbled in her head, making it harder to articulate sentences.

"Ever since I was a kid, I always had trouble with stuttering and people would make fun of me for it," Pi said. "I didn't realize I stuttered because my older brother talked just like me."

Stuttering is something that Pi and her brother had to overcome together, practicing to slow down and pronounce words fluently.

"Whenever I wanted to give up and just accept that I would stutter for the rest of my life, my brother encouraged me to keep working at it," Pi said. "When people called me names, saying I'm stupid or that I don't know English, it only fueled my drive to

prove them wrong."

In elementary school, Pi was terrified to raise her hand or be called on in class to speak or read because as she spoke, she heard quiet giggles, which increased her embarrassment and added to the severity of her stuttering. She thinks her classmates would not choose her for group projects as a result of the condition.

"People called me names ... it only fueled my drive to prove them wrong."



JUNIOR Tiffany Pi

Junior Colette Doyen, a long-time friend of Pi's, remembers when Pi was misunderstood because of her stuttering and says that although it was hard to understand her sometimes, people easily could have if they took a bit more time.

"I think it is really incredible how far Tiffany has come with her stuttering," Doyen said. "If I did not know her when I was young, I would have never guessed she used to stutter."

Although Pi rarely stutters anymore, she still has to remind herself to slow down and focus on her words.

"Stuttering is something that I used to be ashamed of and tried to hide," Pi said. "But now, I realize that it is something that I should embrace and be proud that I overcame it." ♦



'Prodigies' find few shortcuts to mastery

BY Jeffrey Xu

As a two-time Math Olympiad Summer Program (MOSP) Qualifier and current prominent contender for the U.S. International Math Olympiad team, sophomore Brandon Wang is among the elite teenage mathematicians in the nation.

Some would even say he is a prodigy in the subject, a term most often associated with musicians like Mozart and athletes like golfer Tiger Woods, who both showed awe-inspiring talent in their respective fields at an early age.

Yet like other seeming prodigies, Wang disclaims that he has God-given abilities beyond what many normal people have and instead believes that his success has been the result of endless hours of work.

Wang started focusing on competitive math in sixth grade, which is quite late compared to some virtuosos in fields such as music or sports where elite performers can begin their mastery at age 3 or 4.

To reach such a high skill level so quickly, Wang took a deep dive into the subject and made multiple sacrifices.

In Wang's case, he has chosen to take only six classes this year as opposed to the seven he took in freshman year to have more time to focus on math and other activities.

Wang has found time to excel in other extracurriculars such as history and literature Quiz Bowls and be a part of the school's badminton team.

Another seeming prodigy is junior Rohan Pandey, who excels in economics, IoT technology and the study of genetics. He is also an avid participant in Quiz and Science Bowl competitions, wowing his own teammates and competitors with his knowledge.

In pursuing coding, politics and science, Pandey said he has made sacrifices of his

social life, admitting he rarely spends time with friends outside of an academic atmosphere.

"I didn't know that hanging out was a thing until a year ago," Pandey said. "I guess I unknowingly sacrificed my social life preparing for Quiz Bowl and gaining knowledge in obscure areas that are only described on Wikipedia."

Pandey concedes his sacrificing of social activities has come easily since he doesn't care much for parties or other types of social activities.

"I never really went to parties," Pandey said. "But that hasn't really bothered me since I don't think I'd especially enjoy that kind of stuff."

His passion for knowledge began in elementary school when he often watched science channels on YouTube. In his thirst for scientific and political knowledge, Pandey feels that

he has left behind an understanding of pop culture, which he believes has ties to his restricted social life.

"I think it's much more common in Saratoga to not know what's going on in the music, acting or sports worlds, but not being able to talk about those topics has restricted me from a lot of conversations," Pandey said. "It's also a bit harder to find people who want to talk to me about things I'm interested in, since they might not know much about them."

Nevertheless, Pandey is happy with the people he has met and become friends with through his array of extracurriculars.

While many may believe that in order to excel at something, life would become burdensome and full of exhausting work, this was not the case for Pandey because curiosity drove him to read more about topics he enjoyed in his spare time.

Likewise, Wang said qualifying for the MOSP was not the result of tireless "work"

but rather him doing an activity that he found engrossing.

"I don't really do math in the sense that I spend a set amount of hours doing math every day," Wang said. "I work in waves. This is similar to people who binge-watch shows, so I guess you could say I 'binge-math.'"

Wang sees this form of learning as beneficial for him because it helps prevent burnout and boredom, which is usually a bigger issue for those who aren't truly interested in a subject.

So instead of gradual improvement in math, Wang said that he experiences "plateauing most of the time with sporadic jumps in ability."

"There are times where I won't do any math at all for over a month," Wang said. "Then there are times where I end up simulating a MOSP-like environment in which I do four to five hours a day of math."

While those around him may consider him to be a prodigy, Wang disagrees. In fact, he believes that there is not such thing as a natural-born prodigy in competitive math.

Wang's views are supported by passed University of Exeter Professor in Cognitive Psychology Michael Howe, who has argued any child has the potential to become a prodigy, given "sufficient energy and dedication on the parents' part."

However, more recent studies done by researcher and University of Michigan Professor in Psychology David Z. Hambrick have shown that being a prodigy does have roots in genetics. Basic cognitive abilities play a large role, such as the ability to accurately recall given information in a short period of time.

Rather than having a natural tendency to excel at math, though, Wang thinks his talent is something that is "acquired." Additionally, Wang has found his late start in competitive math hasn't hurt him.

"Some people start at a really young age, but for math specifically, this isn't actually that big of an advantage," Wang said. "Imagine an elementary schooler trying to sit for a 4.5-hour long Olympiad. It would be hard to get anything done given the little patience a child has at that age."

Sophomore Christine Lee was exactly that elementary schooler, except her focus was on the violin. Having started the instrument when she was just 5, Lee has gone far in the world of music, having been accepted into the prestigious Music at Menlo summer program for three consecutive summers starting with her summer into freshman year.

Lee practices two hours a day at minimum, and puts in even more time prior to competitions. This kind of commitment has come at a price.

"I still clearly remember when I was in fifth grade, my friends had a sleepover birthday party, but my mom said I could only go a couple hours because I had my first competition the next day," Lee said. "I was so mad and cried a lot and threw a hissy fit."

But her mom was right. Well rested, Lee went on to take first place in the competition.

Lee said the sleepover episode taught her that she had to sacrifice certain pursuits in order to achieve others.

Thousands of hours of practice, not innate talent, have led to her success.

"A prodigy is someone who is a total genius at a craft innately, and I feel like I got to where I am though a lot of hard work," Lee said. ♦



Lee



Pandey



Wang

>> **bigidea**

Are talents learned or innate?

Commitment builds prodigies from talent

According to Cognitive Psychology professor Michael Howe from University of Exeter, any child can become a prodigy if they put in dedication and energy.

Dependence on genetics

University of Michigan professor in Psychology David Z. Hambrick has conducted studies that show that prowess is partly determined by genetics.

Student opinion

Sophomore Brandon Wang believes that there are no natural-born prodigies for math, and rather they are acquired through hard work.

Social media can foster or undermine self-identity

BY Selena Liu & Michael Zhang

At the start of high school, senior Katrina Sung was someone who cared about everything from likes to comments to captions on social media.

Yet over time, Sung felt like her posts no longer reflected her real personality. So in addition to her main Instagram account, Sung created a new art account, where she could start showing her talents to her peers.

"I've always found it hard to keep my ideas and thoughts to myself," Sung said. "I really appreciate having multiple platforms to express myself."

Social media platforms are a core part of the American lifestyle, especially among teens. A survey conducted by the University of Chicago found that among teens aged 13-17, 76 percent use Instagram, 75 percent use Snapchat and 66 percent use Facebook.

Students here are no different. At school, social media accounts, most notably Facebook, have become almost universal.

On the platform, students can ask each other questions about homework, collaborate on group projects or even form study groups.

However, many students don't realize that what their peers post on social media are often far from reality. On many online platforms, people tend to put on a "mask" to hide their true personalities. Filters and picture-editing tools produce flawless photos that fill social media with content so heavily distorted that it is no longer an accurate representation of real life.

"Social media allows me to see the contrast between the personalities of people I know in real life and the personalities they

portray to the rest of the world," sophomore Ashvin Maheshwar said. "This contrast is intriguing because it shows just how easily one can pretend to be the next cover of Vogue by having nice photos when, in reality, that same person is really not as 'cool.'"

Since social media provides the rare opportunity to connect with more people, freshman Isaac Sun said he uses social media as a way to learn more about his classmates.

"I feel like social media is an outlet for many people to express themselves when they otherwise wouldn't," Sun said. "It lets me have a glimpse into the lives of other people that I otherwise would've never seen, and that makes me more inclined to interact with these people."

Unsurprisingly, studies have shown that social media also plays a key factor in making teenagers feel envious of other people and even worse about themselves.

These findings are supported by a study mentioned in an article by Peter Walker, a journalist from The Independent newspaper. The study shows that people who used Facebook rated their life satisfaction a 7.74 out of 10 average, but those who didn't use the app rated their satisfaction at 8.11.

"The effect of quitting Facebook on well-being was greater for users who feel 'Facebook envy' than for users who do not," Walker wrote. "To make things clear, one should use Facebook less to increase one's well-being."

Assistant principal Kerry Mohnike, who has dealt with many students' problems on social media, relates this jealousy online to students' feelings of their own incompetence.

"Often, students are distraught or over-

come by feelings of inadequacy or humiliation because of someone posting an unflattering image of them or thinking that they simply aren't as good as someone else," Mohnike said.

Sophomore Christine Lee has experienced this feeling of incompetence when using social media.

"I've felt inadequate when seeing somebody's post about what they've accomplished or where they went on vacation during break," Lee said. "It makes me so sad when I see a lot of people doing things while I'm just staying at home."

What can students do if they feel under siege from social media?

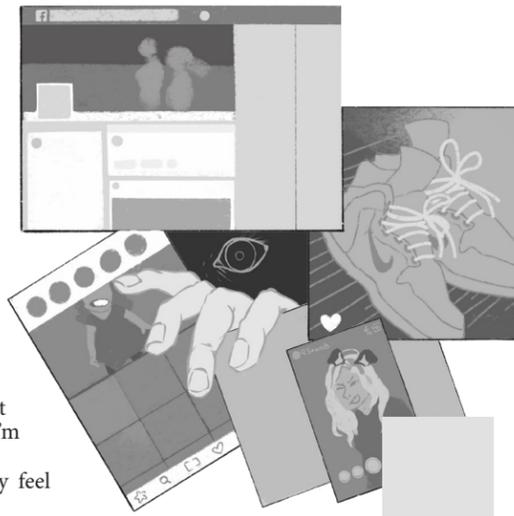
For one, school officials recommend talking with on-campus CASSY therapists or guidance counselors.

One of those CASSY therapists, Kaitlin Eastland, said about 50 percent of students talk to her about something related to social media, and an even higher proportion acknowledge that being on a screen in general interferes with academics.

One of the most prevalent social media issues Eastland has seen are the altered expectations teens have of themselves.

"The way that students compare their lives to the ones that they see on social media can be problematic," she said. "Each student knows all the good stuff and bad stuff about their own life, but they're only seeing the good stuff in other people's lives."

To combat this, Eastland suggests disconnecting from social media every day by



GRAPHIC BY CHARIN PARK

taking at least an hour-long break.

"In the past, we couldn't access social media at our fingertips," she said. "Students would go home and have some time to decompress. The brain needs that kind of space to think and reflect on the day, but now we're not getting that — it's just constant updates."

Nevertheless, Sung believes the best way to use social media is to use it for self-improvement.

"It's definitely hard sometimes not to compare yourself to the people you see on social media," Sung said. "But again, it should be about who you are and how to capture an honest image of yourself and use those moments to motivate yourself to be a better person." ♦

While on the road to becoming a doctor, Thomson made a 180° turn into teaching

BY Alexandra Li

As students held on to the flippers of a sea turtle in Costa Rica, the turtle began to lay its first out of hundreds of total eggs. Biology and AP Environmental Science teacher Kristen Thomson stepped back and watched the students appreciate nature.

Since 2015, she has worked with the Berkowitz family to coordinate a trip that takes students to turtle hatcheries near Tortuguero, for several days in January.

When one of the students offered a flipper to Thomson so she could also experience the moment, Thomson felt valued and grateful for her students' willingness to make a difference.

While the role of a teacher may seem to fit Thomson perfectly now, she said teaching was not her first career choice. Instead, she wanted to be a physician like her father, who was an internal medicine and pulmonary disease doctor at a hospital in San Mateo.

Having been an outstanding student, she was accepted into the pre-medical program Stanford University, where she began taking the required courses to receive a bachelor's degree in biology.

But her plans about becoming a doctor were about to drastically change.

During the summer of her junior year, Thomson took a summer job in San Francisco as a sixth-grade science teacher, creating a curriculum for children from low-income families.

The experience totally changed her career ambitions. Looking back, Thomson re-

alizes that her love of teaching really wasn't a surprise.

The majority of the jobs she sought were related to education, like volunteering at a zoo and educating the public about animals or coaching swimming.

While becoming a doctor had seemed reasonable because she wanted to help others, she never liked to see blood and felt nauseous at the sight of sickness.

For Thomson, the experience of working with children from different backgrounds was especially eye-opening, since she realized how lucky she was to have grown up in a well-off, loving family.

"Knowing their backgrounds, their successes become even more impressive," Thomson said. "I wanted to give these kids a fair future and give them all that I could. I never forget those first kids."

The experience also provided valuable lessons for Thomson — for instance, she learned when she should and shouldn't take kids' responses personally.

Instead, it became clear that their home environment plays a large role in dictating their behavior, especially for children.

"I was exhausted and it was frustrating at times but I loved everything about it," Thomson said. "That got me thinking of what I would really enjoy doing when I grow up."

Even though she had become convinced that teaching was a much better fit for her than becoming a doctor, her father was not as easy to persuade.

"He was going over all the finances and telling me how difficult it would be to make

it as a teacher," Thomson said. "When a parent hears their kid is struggling in school and the kid says they want to change career paths, they want to make sure it's not because they're giving up."

Her father eventually accepted that Thomson would not be following in his footsteps.

Thomson said her dad later realized that Thomson's grandmother had also been a teacher, allowing him to acknowledge her new career path.

studies in biology.

From there, she received her teaching credential from San Jose State University and went on to do student teaching at schools like Independence High.

After completing her teaching credential, she attended a college fair with a friend, and both decided to put their names down as interested in the Los Gatos Saratoga Union School District.

Incidentally, her friend was hired at Los Gatos High while Thomson was chosen for the job at Saratoga High, where she has been teaching for 20 years.

As a teacher, Thomson values the connections formed with students the most. For example, the Costa Rica trip allows her to get to know students better and share memorable real-world experiences with them.

Thomson recalls the final night of the 2015 trip, when she and a group of students sat on the beach under the pitch black sky enjoying the weather.

One of the students spoke up and protested against going home, saying she realized that they were actually making a difference, saving animals from poachers and protecting the species.

Because so much is still needed to be done in Costa Rica, the student wanted to stay instead of returning to school. This moment really impacted Thomson's perspective on the effects of her work.

"It was so special just to be with the kids and have the sense of just wanting to keep helping," Thomson said. "For me, it's all about creating experiences for students and helping them find themselves." ♦

"It was so special to have the sense of just wanting to keep helping."



TEACHER Kristen Thomson

Thomson also recalls how she rarely saw her father growing up because he was always working at the hospital. Her first-hand understanding of the nature of a doctor's profession also contributed to her decision to choose teaching.

"There are some things that you just can't put a price on," Thomson said. "Becoming a doctor was something I was willing to sacrifice to be able to spend time with my own kids, so that's something I don't regret at all."

After having decided to pursue teaching, she quickly finished her undergraduate

GRAPHIC BY KAREN CHOW

Teacher Trivia

Two Truths One Lie

<p>Kirk Davis Physics teacher</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He grew up in Wyoming. 2. He was an all-state football player. 3. He was captain of his high school rodeo team. <p>Davis</p>	<p>Amy Keys English teacher</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. She rode a motorcycle up a volcano in Indonesia. 2. She runs five to six times per week. 3. She worked with award-winning author Ursula K. Le Guin for four years. <p>Keys</p>
<p>Todd Dwyer History teacher</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He has four grandchildren. 2. He wakes up at 5 a.m. every Saturday to run five miles. 3. He flunked out of high school and joined the military on his 17th birthday after his father signed a consent form. <p>Dwyer</p>	<p>Natasha Ritchie English teacher</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. She lived down the road from Robin Williams. 2. She worked at Murphy's Pizza through high school, restocking ingredients and making pizzas. 3. She has 2 tattoos of surfboards. <p>Ritchie</p>

ANSWERS (LIES): DAVIS 3; KEYS 3; DWYER 2; RITCHIE 3

ALL REPORTING DONE BY AVA HOOMAN AND MUTHU PALANIAPPAN

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL

Team continues winning streak, surges to first place in league

BY KarenChow & ChelseaLeung

Having won eight of their last nine matches, the boys' volleyball team is currently first in the De Anza League.

At a home game vs. Mountain View on March 30, they beat Mountain View 3-1.

Even so, junior libero and outside hitter Derek Chiou called the team's overall performance mediocre. Though the team played well in the first set, the second set included many missed passes and out-of-bounds attempted kills. After losing the third set, the Falcons barely won the fourth set 25-23.

The team is not as strong offensively as it was last year with star outside hitter Joel Schneidmiller. This loss showed that it is difficult for the team to win sets quickly this year, and the average time spent on a point has increased. As a result, the players have been forced to improve their defense as other teams are able to return their offensive efforts easily, and the lack of their stellar outside hitter has taken a toll on the team's kill ratio.

"If we were playing in a long point, we could just set Joel and the play would be basically be done," Chiou said. "We can't play as sloppily as we did last year because we don't have Joel to bail us out."

Additionally, junior opposite hitter Joshua Lee injured his ankle during a lunch March Madness game during the week of March 12 but will be back before the season ends.

Junior outside Usman Khan said that

although the Falcons lost their "best offensive weapon" in Lee, he trusts Li and Ye to step up and take on the role. As a previous setter, though, Li has had to adjust to the new open position.

Even with the loss of Lee, however, the team continued their win streak this year in a match against Monta Vista on March 28, winning 3-2.

After losing the first set, the team's morale sunk, and the Falcons trailed behind by nine points. However, Chiou said that the boys managed to find their footing and built up enough momentum to dominate the next three sets.

The Monta Vista victory was especially exciting, as Monta Vista is ranked No. 5 in the nation in its division compared to Saratoga's national rank of No. 69, according to MaxPreps. Monta Vista is also ranked No. 5 in California while Saratoga is ranked 54. Saratoga had not beaten Monta Vista in years, even with Schneidmiller on the team.

The Falcons played Homestead at an away game on March 21. Having played Homestead before this season, the team knew to concentrate on blocking Homestead's star outside hitter senior Josh Bockholt and took the game 3-2.

Earlier, the Falcons crushed rival Los Gatos 3-0 at a home game on March 17. In the first set, senior middle hitter Harrison Fong dominated the offense with around 15 kills and the set was won 25-17.

The second set was led by Ye and Li's serving streaks, and the boys took the second set 25-16. Maintaining momentum,



FALCON // MUTHU PALANIAPPAN
Senior Harrison Fong serves the ball in a game against Monta Vista on March 28.

the Falcons closed the match with a 25-15 win in the third set.

The team remains optimistic for CCS prospects and the rest of the season, even seeing hope of defending its NorCal crown for the third straight year.

"At the beginning of the season we thought we were going to be pretty bad," Chiou said. "But our recent win against Monta Vista has raised our hopes, so hopefully we can win CCS and NorCals again." ♦

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the Los Altos game on April 4 and the Los Gatos game on April 6.

SOFTBALL

Falcons start to pile up victories

BY KevinSze

The girls' softball team has struggled to start the season as a result of their inexperience as playing as a unit. The team is much younger than last year, comprised of six underclassmen, and this inexperience led to four tough losses to start the regular season.

Although the losses took a toll on the team's morale, they gained valuable experience — a factor that has gone a long way in improving their play under pressure and in game situations.

The team seems to have smoothed out

various bumps in their performances as they held a strong Fremont offense to only five runs and claimed another victory, this time 7-5 on March 29.

After a 17-0 blowout loss to Capuchino on March 24, the girls came back with a solid performance and won 11-9 on March 26 against Prospect.

"I think we've begun to play better than a lot of people expected," senior catcher Eryn Lee said. "We have some girls who have very little playing experience so in order to improve our standing we need to bring those girls in on how the game works and work out strategy."

After a tough start, the team is also excited for what is to come for the rest of the season.

The recent wins have boosted team spirit and has shown that the girls hard work has begun to turn their season around.

"We expect a great season with a steep learning curve," senior pitcher Chancee Gaskin said. "It's good to see our efforts making a difference and we should have a lot of fun." ♦

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the Cupertino game on April 3, the Lynbrook game on April 4 and the Los Altos game on April 5.

TRACK AND FIELD

Coach increases event participation

BY AlexandraLi & FrancescaChu

With several injured athletes, including freshman sprinter Isaac Sun, senior long distance runner Keon Roohparvar and senior sprinter Leilee Naderi, and a smaller team than the previous year, members of the track team are being asked to compete in more than their usual events in an attempt to keep events full.

On March 29, the team competed at Cupertino. The varsity boys lost 80-46 and varsity girls won 64-63, resulting in a 3-1 win.

On March 22, the varsity girls lost 80-50 and the varsity boys won 66-60 against Monta Vista. Overall, the team tied 2-2, with varsity boys and JV girls winning.

At Cupertino, the team struggled slightly

due to the hot weather and several injuries. According to senior long jumper Valerie Yang, athletes were more focused on individual improvement since the whole team was not there.

Despite being ill, Yang was able to close to her season records, placing second in long jump and triple jump. As for the team, coach Archie Ljepava is focusing on getting everyone healthy and able to compete again.

"In order to avoid more injuries, we've set aside more time before and after our workouts to really stretch and warm-up or cool down our muscles," Yang said.

At Monta Vista, the conditions were better, and the team competed well. With Monta Vista being a top competitor in the league, the team knew they would have to put in extra work to stand a chance.

"Overall, we fought hard even though we knew they were going to be a tough competitor," senior high jumper Riley Carter said.

Carter placed second in the 400 meter run. Carter said her results for high jump were disappointing: She jumped 5' compared to her record of 5'4". She attributes this to the fact that she ran a 400 meter right before the jump, an event she usually doesn't compete in. Her overall goal this season is to reach or surpass her past records.

"I want to keep working on my approach and form," Carter said. "I'm also working on getting stronger in the weightroom because once I get the form down, it's all muscle strength."

The team has two more meets in the season to finish off six meets in total. This will be followed by Leagues, SCVAL and CCS. ♦

BOYS' TENNIS (4-1)

6-1 (W) Homestead

4-3 (L) @Homestead

"Even though we lost to Homestead after beating them initially, it has only motivated us to further improve our lineup." — senior Tristan Xiao

BADMINTON (7-1-0)

18-10 (W) Los Altos

29-1 (W) Mountain View

30-0 (W) @ Santa Clara

"Our team is clearly at the top of the division. I think this year is a good year for the team to rebuild on both skill and confidence before rising to the upper division next year." — senior Stephen Ding

BOYS' LACROSSE (3-4)

2-5 (L) Leland

5-3 (W) Gunn

2-5 (L) @ Sequoia

15-3 (W) Hillsdale

12-2 (L) @ Gunn

9-3 (W) Christopher High

10-2 (L) Scotts Valley

"As a young team we are playing together well and becoming a hard team to stop. We are battling really hard against teams with more numbers and more experienced players." — senior Niko Rositano

GIRLS' LACROSSE (1-6)

13-1 (W) @ Wilcox

8-7 (L) Willow Glen

18-4 (L) Gunn

13-3 (L) @ Palo Alto

14-11 (L) Pioneer

15-4 (L) Los Gatos

18-4 (L) @ Gunn

14-13 (W) Santa Clara

"People have been having recurring injuries and been on academic probation so we've been playing with one man down. And I feel like we can get better as the season go on but everyone needs to be in the right mindset for that." — senior Laira Bhurji

BOYS' GOLF (5-2)

210-213 (L) @ Palo Alto

201-203 (W) @ Monta Vista

198-219 (L) @ Mountain View

"We practice our long game to so we can be more accurate. More importantly, we want to improve our focus so we can sink more putts." — senior James Parden

BASEBALL

Falcons hone their offense in lower league

BY Patrick Li
& Michael Zhang

With a league record of 5-1 and an overall record of 5-3 as of April 2, the baseball team is erasing memories of last year's 8-19-1 season. The Falcons hope to re-qualify for the more competitive De Anza division next year.

Last week, the Falcons played back-to-back games against Santa Clara. At a home game on March 29, they won 13-4, with senior pitcher/outfielder Chris Auches leading the charge with three runs batted in and with junior pitcher Matt Jacobs securing the win. Playing at Santa Clara two days earlier, they won 2-1 behind the pitching of senior Robert Scott.

On March 24, the Falcons lost at Los Altos 11-4. Although the Falcons scored four runs in the first two innings, the Eagles rallied from behind with four runs in the fifth.

The Falcons defeated Lybrook 4-0 at home on March 23. Jacobs and senior Nathan Peng were able to hold the Vikings to just two hits.

So far, Peng believes that most of the team's struggles have been on defense.

"Out of the games we've played, we haven't had much trouble on offense," Peng said. "It's our pitching and defense that have been holding us back."

Additionally, this year, two of last year's JV coaches, Tyler Derby and Travis Velo, have moved up to assistant positions on the varsity team, changing the team dynamic and implementing a new style of coaching.

According to sophomore pitcher-first baseman Mihir Bettadapur, the coaches are keeping in the starting players in for the whole game rather than substituting frequently.

"In JV I played every game and batted in the front of the order, but now I have to earn my minutes and it's a pretty stark contrast," Bettadapur said.

Despite some of the younger players not being in the starting lineup, Peng trusts that the new additions to the team, including Bettadapur, will be able to perform when the time comes.

"[The new players] have a lot of potential and can be right there with the veterans and provide good play when called upon," Peng said.

The Falcons still have a series of games to



FALCON // MUTHU PALANIAPPAN

Senior catcher Nathan Peng readies to bat against Santa Clara at a home game on March 29.

play as a result of rescheduling due to rain-outs in March. They will be taking on teams such as Gunn, Santa Clara, Santa Teresa and Los Gatos.

Scott believes their success in league play

will translate over to their CCS prospects.

"We're going to be in CCS because the plan is to win league and that's going to put us in, and I think that's very attainable," Scott said. ♦

Teams brace themselves for losses to graduation

BY Karen Chow
& Patrick Li

This year, four out of the five starters on the boys' basketball team are seniors. According to coach Patrick Judge, returning players freshmen Tyler Chu and Cameron King, along with juniors Sehij Dhindsa, Kyle Yu and Hanlin Sun, will have to step into larger roles in the '18-'19 season.

"I love having underclassmen on my varsity team because it gives us a solid core to work with and build on for next year," Judge said. "I have high expectations for both of our freshmen from this past year — they spent every day in practice going against guys that were better and stronger than them."

According to Sun, the juniors

hope to take their experiences and use what they learned to improve their defense. The team hopes to avoid a rebuilding year in which the losses pile up, but Sun acknowledges the work remains to be done.

"I think we're just going into the season with a no-regrets attitude and play as hard as we can," Sun said. "We should be happy with whatever the results are as long as we can say we couldn't have done more."

In the off-season, JV and varsity players lift weights and work on building their skills as one unit, but Sun thinks it's better for the two teams to stay separate during the season.

"We do a lot of game planning against opposing teams and having JV there would slow us down,"

Sun said.

According to senior Neal Iyengar, a similar situation occurred the previous year when alumni such as Joel Schneidmiller and Kevin Couch graduated, but the team was still able to succeed this past season by getting used to the dynamics of new players with new skills.

Similarly, the boys' soccer team is losing a huge portion of their players with 16 seniors graduating in June. Most of the team's starting line as well as goalkeeper Neil Rao will need to be replaced.

"We are losing a lot of strength in every position," junior Owen Keogh said. "Next year, every player will have to step up in their positions and possibly play in positions they aren't used to or haven't played before."

The nine returning players will not be enough for a full team, so the team will have to rebuild the bench and several starters for next year from JV and perhaps incoming freshmen.

In addition, they will be in a higher division than this year, and the team hopes to have a smooth adjustment to the harder competition.

Boys' volleyball also has six out of 12 players graduating this year. Luckily enough, the team includes two freshmen on varsity, Dylan Li, who plays setter and opposite hitter, and Oliver Ye, who plays libero.

"Taking them on the team this year will give them plenty of time to improve," junior opposite hitter Joshua Lee said. "Since most of our team consists of juniors and

seniors, they'll definitely help out in the future as they're playing at a higher competitive level."

However, losing strong seniors is something they are getting used to this year, as last year they lost their two best players, alumni Joel Schneidmiller and Vincent Man. In response, the team plans to work on improving their hitting and consistency.

According to Lee, the team still has a lot of potential and hopes to win their league and possibly even win another CCS championship. They are currently 8-1 in Division I De Anza League.

"Even though we took on two freshmen, we're still treating them like the rest of the team," Lee said. "With the losses, each player just becomes more accountable for their actions." ♦

Vegetarian athletes challenge diet perceptions

BY Karen Chow
& Jeffrey Xu

When senior volleyball player Daria Gousseva plays, teammates and spectators alike often marvel at her form and stamina on the court.

Off the court, Gousseva has made a choice that is increasingly common for athletes: She is vegetarian and believes her diet had a positive impact on her play this past season.

Gousseva became a vegetarian right before starting girls' varsity volleyball in the fall.

"I wanted to make the change in order to decrease my environmental footprint because meat releases a lot of carbon into the atmosphere," Gousseva said. "I don't want to hurt animals, and it would be hypocritical of me to eat them."

For a while, though, she found it difficult to get enough protein on a daily basis.

Without a doubt, one of the key components of an athlete's diet is protein. Protein is necessary for building muscle mass, keeping energy levels high and maintaining their immune systems, and typical teenage athletes need 52 grams of protein a day to fuel their exercises and games, according to National Academies.

Despite having a meatless diet, Gousseva, who was the captain of the varsity volleyball team, said she felt better on the court during the season since there was "nothing weighing her down" despite weighing the same before her vegetarian diet. Gousseva was the team's lead setter, which meant she ran the most throughout the games. She is glad she became vegetarian and attributes her increased stamina to the fact that meat is harder to digest.

"It's totally possible for an amazing athlete to be vegetarian or vegan."



SENIOR Daria Gousseva

Indeed, studies done by One Green Planet have shown that a vegetarian diet can result in less internal body clog-up and greater overall endurance.

It reduces additional fat, allowing muscle in form more easily. Becoming vegetarian also has many health benefits such as a low-

ered risks of heart disease, diabetes and certain kinds of cancer.

In order to make up for the protein lost from her previous diet, Gousseva is consuming proteins such as nuts, beans, quinoa and tofu. She makes sure to eat meals before and after playing games in order to get enough protein throughout the day.

Unlike Gousseva, sophomore water polo player Ashvin Maheshwar has been a vegetarian since birth because of religious reasons. He has noticed that his diet has negatively impacted his gameplay, where physical contact occurs constantly.

Maheshwar believes that his meat-deficient diet has contributed to making him weaker than some other players.

When Maheshwar was part of the San Jose Express Water Polo Club in his freshman year, he was the only vegetarian on the team. Maheshwar still does his best to include protein in his diet, eating tofu and protein bars. But he believes that if he consumed meat, he would be able to grow muscle more easily.

On the other hand, Maheshwar said that his comparative lack of muscle has strengthened him mentally.

"Although there was no way I could muscle them out, I got better at anticipating plays and fastbreaks," Maheshwar said.

This was what he thinks led him to become the leading scorer of the JV water polo team, scoring 27 goals this past season.

Ultimately, Maheshwar views being a vegetarian — and consequently, his small muscle mass — as one of his weaknesses that he has been able to convert into a strength.

"I obviously still get muscled out a lot," Maheshwar said. "But I've been able to show them [other players] that they can never count me out for just being small."

Gousseva does not see meat as key to athletic performance and recommends people to take small steps into alternative ways to get protein.

In fact, Gousseva uses professional tennis player Venus Williams as her example and role model. Williams was diagnosed with Sjogren's Syndrome, an autoimmune disease that causes dry eyes and joint fatigue. But after switching to a vegan diet, along with other medications, Williams was able to step back onto the court and is currently ranked fifth in the world and first in the U.S.

"For the people who argue that vegetarians can't be pro athletes, I would say Venus Williams is a vegan and she competed in the Olympics," Gousseva said. "So it's totally possible for an amazing athlete to be vegetarian or vegan." ♦

Mental toughness is key to athletes' success

Looks like cao szen



Leo Cao and Kevin Sze

In a Nov. 4 football game vs. Los Gatos, freshman JV defensive lineman Tyler Ouchida lined up against the Cats' offensive line.

The Falcons were down 37-34 with little time left in the fourth quarter, and they seemed exhausted and ready to give up.

But to Ouchida, exhaustion did not matter. His attention and focus was on stopping the man with the quarterback.

As the ball was snapped, the LG quarterback made an awkward handful attempt to his halfback, and the ball fell on the ground. Ouchida snatched it up and ran the ball into the end zone, leading the Falcons to a 41-37 victory.

When asked if he had been tired at this point in the game, Ouchida responded, "For sure. But when you're in those moments, you're so focused on the ball and the play that none of that really matters."

The play displayed his drive, grit and determination.

History of mental toughness

The same focus is often on display in professional sports.

Before a pivotal Game 5 of the 1997 NBA Finals, Michael Jordan experienced flu-like symptoms, and reporters were told he might miss the game.

But Jordan's determination led him onto

the court, and he supplied the Chicago Bulls with 38 points and a two-point victory, eventually leading them to an NBA championship over the Utah Jazz.

In the 1996 Olympics, U.S. Gymnast Kerri Strug had two attempts in the vault portion of the games, and a chance to clinch gold for her country. On her first vault, Strug fell awkwardly and painfully, but got back up knowing she had a second opportunity.

Strug landed her next vault and won a gold medal for the U.S.

Later reports revealed that she had landed on two torn ligaments in her ankle, and it seems that the only thing that led her to such a feat was her aspiration for gold.

As these improbable victories all of a sudden seemed a regularity, star athletes supplied a reason: their mental coaches.

Athletes had begun to see mental coaches in an effort to learn how to peak their performance in crunch time, and it worked.

Kobe Bryant, an all-NBA great, credits George Mumford, a sports psychologist, with his ability to step up in the clutch.

Mumford taught Bryant mindfulness, a state in which Bryant was "neither distracted or focused, rigid or flexible, passive or aggressive," and that he "just learned how to be."

This ability takes time to acquire and master, but many Falcon athletes are well on their way.

Senior Charles Qi, a runner for the cross country team, points out the importance of mental toughness in his sport.

"Cross country is a sport that people think solely depends on how long your legs are and how fast you can move them," Qi said. "In reality, your body wants to give up a lot of the time, but your mental strength

has to push you through. The more you push yourself and the tougher your mentality is, the better of a runner you become."

When asked about the training he puts in to his mental game, Qi said that it's "all about getting used to the exhaustion and learning how to cope with it mentally."

Senior James Parden, who has played on the golf team since freshman year, said a lot of the players try to toughen him up through trash talk and he does the same for teammates.

"It's a win-win situation in which we all get better," he said. "When we play matches, it seems easier literally because of our trash talk."

Last year, the Falcon golfers faced a formidable Palo Alto team that had not lost a match in five years, a streak of around 60 wins.

The mental toughness that Parden described would be tested as the round neared an end. Players on both sides began talking trash to each other, both teams vying for a victory.

Parden and the rest of the team's mental toughness and grit, which was so often tested in practice, proved instrumental in providing the biggest upset of the year as the Falcons pulled out a 201-200 victory against the Vikings.

But perhaps the most daunting mental challenge is to come back from injury.

Dealing with disappointment

Senior Daphne Liu played soccer her whole life, but during freshman year Liu suffered a concussion that had repercussions involving nearly every aspect of her life.

The incident occurred on the field when

an opposing player made an illegal slide tackle from behind her, and she fell hard. Stunned but unwilling to let her team down, Liu played through the pain and finished the game.

But after the game, Liu began to feel nauseated and after going to a doctor she was informed that she had a concussion.

"It was hard for me because I didn't have a lot of confidence as a freshman and I had to take easier classes which made me feel not as smart," Liu said. "Worst of all, I couldn't play soccer for nine months. Soccer gave me an identity, and when I got injured, I felt like that was taken away from me."

For the next nine months, Liu was not allowed to take to the field with her teammates, and in that period, she went through a period of mental growth and an increased sense of self-belief.

"When I got injured I felt pretty disappointed," said Liu. "To gain back the confidence that I once had, I had to keep reminding myself that I was better than I thought I was and that belief eventually translated onto the field."

Three years later, Liu is one of the star players on the girls varsity soccer team and feels that anyone can get through adversity if they believe in themselves enough.

Athletes' experiences prove that anyone possesses the ability to win tight matches or overcome injury, as long as they put in the work and have undaunted determination — there is no secret formula to greatness, no "clutch-gene" and no superpowers involved.

As Qi says, "Dreaming about something takes little to no effort, but dragging that dream out of the dream world and into reality takes time, determination and hard work." ♦

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Sophomore Alvin Liu is front and center in the boys' dance team rally performance on March 30.

Junior Isaiah Vivero and David Berkowitz and senior Nathon Chin show their spirit at the Lip Dub on April 2.

Senior Jake Beine and sophomore Harrison Perfect practice lacrosse skills.

Freshman Priscilla Widjaja practices for the winter percussion show, Stand Out.

buzzworthy >> YouTube content quality declines

BY Austin Wang & Alex Yang

In the past few years, the number of YouTube channels surpassing 1 million subscribers has mushroomed.

However, with this explosive growth comes many low-quality creators who seem to have played the system to find success.

One name that comes to mind is Daniel "Keemstar" Keem, a YouTube drama reporter who has often used racial slurs and had public outbursts of cringe-worthy ranting over his friend not asking for money during a bad financial situation.

After being banned from YouTube several times already, it appears his new channel Drama Alert takes advantage of his status as a host rather than the owner as a loophole.

In fact, the hate for him has recently become mainstream. One example of poor public opinion of him occurred when his

song "Dollar in the Woods" was publicly roasted by Jimmy Fallon during a segment showing off the worst songs Fallon and his team could find online.

Still, sitting at a cool 3.6 million subscribers, the growth of Keemstar's channel is not being slowed by YouTube's rather weak regulations.

Another channel or couple of related channels that are obviously items of controversy in the YouTube community are the brothers Jake and Paul Logan.

While we will avoid beating the dead horse of Logan Paul and his suicide forest offense, the Paul brothers have still created a library of cringe-worthy content to appeal to their mostly preteen audience.

One example is Logan Paul's overdramatic and hilariously unironic video using

a "colorblind correcting" set of sunglasses. Starting a fake cry near the end of the video, Logan makes it seem like he's reacting to a close family member's death rather than seeing red a little more clearly.

In another example out of many, Jake Paul filmed a Halloween video of him and his friends flinging pumpkins off of the top floor of his Los Angeles mansion onto the street below toward a basketball hoop. It was a mess.

Unfortunately, it is no surprise that Jake's army of middle schoolers would eat this content up and bring it to the top of everybody's YouTube feeds.

Lastly, there are the toy review channels. The problem with these channels is that they often end up being really creepy and unsettling.

These channels often make videos at an extremely quick rate, leading us to question whether these channel operators do anything other than purchase kids' toys and play with them all day long.

Also, the narration that often comes with these videos is nothing short of terrifying in many cases.

Clearly, it is a requirement for toy review YouTubers to have really high pitched and childish voices to accompany their slow and careful stroking of Disney merchandise.

With the amount of low-quality channels flooding the trending bar on YouTube, it's no wonder that advertisers are eager to pull money out of the system.

Why would a PR-conscious company want to play an ad to someone tuning into a video of a 35-year-old woman cracking open a Kinder egg? ♦



Early April Fools' pranks go wrong

LITTLE BROTHER'S ATTEMPTS ON OLDER BROTHER BACKFIRE

szeling hot



Kevin Sze

For me, the first day of April has always been filled with disappointment.

Starting when I was 6, my older brother Eric began pranking me on April Fools' Day. Even though I knew his pranks were coming, I still fell for his antics each year.

I remember my excitement when he handed me a gift bag, only to pull out a Ziploc bag full of pencil shavings, or the time we had an Oreo eating contest, but my Oreos were filled with toothpaste.

Needless to say, my older brother was a cruel person, and I had to get him back for all those years of embarrassment. Since my brother is in college in Missouri, I decided to prank him on March 11, a Sunday during his Spring Break.

My brother is not a morning person. I decided to wake up at 6 a.m., get a bucket of cold water and dump it on him. I was going to do this for every hour until he got up.

Once he got up, I would do the classic prank of taping the bottom of the faucet

closed and spreading Vaseline all over his towel. I also got the genius idea of Saran Wrapping the toilet bowl from YouTube. I decided to catch him off guard again at night.

After dinner, I was going to put a bucket of water on top of his door, so when he opened the door, the water spilled on him. I would re-tape the tape on the water faucet and respread Vaseline on his towel. When he needed to use the bathroom, I would wait outside the door with a horn and scare him when he came out.

When the day came, I woke up at 6 a.m., grabbed a cup, and filled it with water. Then I tiptoed into my brother's room, dumped the water on his face, and sprinted out of the room.

Immediately, my brother screamed, "Kevin, what the" followed by a string of expletives. I repeated the same thing each hour until 10 a.m. and each time he got angrier, letting me know that I had achieved my goal.

I had already taped the faucet and spread Vaseline on his towel, but forgot about it while catching up on chemistry homework. When I heard another string of expletives, followed by the classic "this is not funny anymore!" I laughed until my stomach hurt.

The only failure of the morning was the

Saran Wrap. I had set up my trap at 8 a.m. and then went to do my math homework.

So when I had to use the restroom at 8:45 a.m., I forgot all about the prank and instead was thinking about math. Needless to say, I ended up falling for my own prank and the result was quite embarrassing.

But other than that, the morning was a huge success and it was time to prepare for the night.

Sadly, the night went much worse than the morning. When my brother went to hang out with friends, I attempted to set up the bucket of water on the door prank. I had always been a clumsy person, and as I tried to set the bucket of water on top of the door, it flipped over and spilled on my own head, drenching me from head to toe.

After enduring this humiliating failure, I re-taped the faucet and re-spread the Vaseline, but my brother discovered both of them and without my knowledge switched our towels.

At 9 p.m. after my shower, my brother was the one laughing at me as I covered my entire upper body in Vaseline.

Annoyed, I called it quits and did not even try the horn prank.

Another year has gone by, and another time my brother has gotten the last laugh. I guess I'll need to think of a better plan for 2019. ♦

topten

APRIL FOOLS' PRANKS

- 10 Wear a shirt that says "Life." Hand out lemons on the street corner.
- 9 Go into a crowded elevator and say, "I bet you're all wondering why I gathered you here."
- 8 Change your name to Simon. Start speaking in third person.
- 7 Run into a store, ask what year it is. When someone answers, yell "it worked!"
- 6 Go trick or treating at midnight. If the cops come, run away!
- 5 Take out the cream inside an Oreo and replace it with toothpaste. Their breath will be fresh.
- 4 Go to your friends' phone autocorrect settings. Replace hello with "I'm pregnant."
- 3 Pretend you can't speak english at a fast food drive-thru. They can't hang up.
- 2 Wear a red shirt and khakis and start walking around Target. You'll be employee of the year!
- 1 Replace your victim's shampoo with Nair. Watch the magic happen.

>> Ava Hooman and Jay Kim