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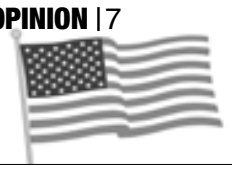

Pledge of Allegiance should not be required.

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Teacher recounts her journey to Saratoga.

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Friday >> June 1, 2018
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Senior prom to be at Exploratorium

BY Muthu**Palaniappan** & Jeffrey**Xu**

In early May, the senior class office announced that senior prom will be held at the Exploratorium in San Francisco on June 2. The class officers anticipate around 350 students will attend.

This year's theme is "The City of Stars," which, according to senior class vice president Colina Guan, was chosen in accordance with the venue's view of the night sky. The "City of Stars" theme was also inspired by the Oscar-nominated film "La La Land."

Guan said the Exploratorium was reserved by the senior class officers a year in advance. Class officers decided on the venue after visiting it on the suggestion of class adviser Arnaldo Rodriguex.

The tickets start at $185 with ASB and $205 without, with ticket pricing increasing by $10 a week. Ticket sales started the week of May 8. According to Guan, the ticket prices are expensive because of the venue's rental price of $24,700 and the fact that they were mandated to use that venue's preferred caterers.

Senior prom ticket prices have almost always been this expensive in recent years, with last year's price being $185 as well, Guan said.

Senior Sahm Rafati said he understands where the high price comes from and thinks the venue is worth it. He is excited for prom to be held at the Exploratorium

>> **PROM** on pg. 4

Congresswoman holds gun violence forum

BY Sandhya**Sundaram**

Students from Saratoga High, Lynbrook High, Westmont High and some local middle schools gathered on May 20 in the school's library for a forum on firearm safety hosted by Saratoga Vice Mayor Manny Cappello, Congresswoman Anna Eshoo and Westhope Presbyterian pastor Erik Swanson. The politicians wanted to hear student perspectives, while students learned about what happens behind the scenes in politics.

The roughly 20 students, who were invited by assistant principal Brian Safine because of their involvement with the March For Our Lives movement, were presented the opportunity to ask the speakers questions regarding mental health system improvements, legislation on background checks and other potential solutions.

Swanson organized the

>> **FORUM** on pg. 5

GLOBAL HEALTH

Club to participate in annual trip to Beijing

BY Andrew**Lee**

Last September, junior Julia Deng browsed through her Facebook feed, checking class groups and scrolling through various posts. Suddenly, the globe icon in the corner of her screen lit up, bringing with it a notification that immediately brought a smile to her face.

Deng

Xiu Xiu, an orphan girl from China whom Deng had grown attached to that summer, had just been adopted by an American family. During the summer, Deng, along with several other students from the school, had the opportunity to spend time with Xiu Xiu and many other orphans.

The program that provided Deng with this opportunity was Global Health Club's Beijing Immersion Program. During the annual program, students fly to Beijing and spend 16 days teaching and caring for 25 orphaned children. Volunteers also get a chance to visit Little Home of Children's Hope, a

>> **BEIJING** on pg. 3

END OF THE YEAR *moments*

5.24 // Music director Jason Shiuan conducts the freshman symphonic band at a concert.

5.25 // senior MAP students Angela Lee, Andreah Salazar, Mana Shimokawa and Sahana Sripadanna accept their awards during SMASH'n.

5.25 // seniors Sadhana Vadrevu and Kate Bossi draw raffle tickets at SMASH'n.

5.21-5.25 // junior Rini Vasan looks through donated clothes during the Fashion Swap, organized by the Green Team.

GRAPHIC BY ASHLEY FENG, PHOTOS BY AVA HOOMAN, AMY TANG AND SANJANA MELKOTE

>> what's**inside**

SPORTS

Power Rankings

Falcon reporters rank school's top sports teams and reveal this year's male and female MVPs. **pg. 18**

ENTERTAINMENT

Graphic design future

Senior Katrina Sung explores her journey to pursue graphic design in college and as a career. **pg. 12**

news >> briefs

Class of 2018 valedictorian, salutatorian revealed

The Class of 2018's valedictorian is senior Chengzi Guo, while the salutatorian is senior Rahul Kumar.

Guo boasts a total weighted GPA of 4.86 and took a total of 18 AP and Honors classes throughout her high school career. She is the co-president of Science club and co-captain of the Science Bowl team.

Besides schoolwork, Guo spends around 20 to 25 hours a week doing competitive horseback riding. She also rescues and fosters rabbits that may have been otherwise euthanized.

Guo's AP Biology teacher, Cheryl Lenz, said that Guo's humble nature led her to work well with other students and be an active participant in class.

"Science is her passion," Lenz said. "She read the textbook on biology on her own early on, and she's been a semifinalist for the USA Biology Olympiad from freshman through junior year. She loves biology and she's interested in the nitty gritty details that are part of the processes of living things."

Kumar, who will attend UC Berkeley, earned a weighted GPA of 4.81 for his 17 AP and honors classes. He is the president of Math, Spanish and Raising Interest in Science and Engineering (RISE) clubs. He also coaches middle schoolers for the Toga Junior Math Club (TJMC), the high school math club's outreach program.

Kumar and Guo both said that they were surprised to be named salutatorian and valedictorian.

"I honestly haven't given that much thought to my GPA," Guo said. "I just tried to do my best in every class."

— Howard Tang

Juniors honored by teachers at CSF ceremony

Bausch and Lomb Honorary Science Award: Carolyn Ma (presented by Cheryl Lenz)
Brown Book Award: Ashley Feng (presented by Natasha Ritchie)
California Mathematics Council Certificate: Michael Zhang (presented by PJ Yim)
George Eastman Leadership Award: Roshan Verma (presented by Matt Torrens)
George Washington Book Award: Madison Hartmann (presented by Matt Torrens)
Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony Award in Humanities and Social Sciences: Khiara Berkowitz (presented by Hana Chen)
Harvard Book Award: Chelsea Leung (presented by Amy Keys)
MIT Leadership Award: Annie Xu (presented by Cheryl Lenz)
Mount Holyoke College Book Award: Muthu Palaniappan (presented by Natasha Ritchie)
NCTE Achievement Award in Writing: Victor Liu, Bijan Naimi (presented by Amy Keys, Natasha Ritchie)
Rensselaer Medal Winner: Joseph Li (presented by Kirk Davis)
Smith College Book Award: Cameron Lin (presented by Amy Keys)
Tulane University Book Award: Alex Ruemmler (Nina Krammer, Faith Stackhouse-Daly)
Wellesley Book Award: Ruchi Maheshwari (presented by Natasha Ritchie)
Williams College Book Award: Kaitlyn Wang (presented by Amy Keys)
Xerox Award for Innovation and Information Technology: Jamie Hong (presented by Debra Troxell)

falcononline

Top Story
Seniors Chengzi Guo and Rahul Kumar were named Class of 2018 valedictorian and salutatorian respectively.
on pg. 2

Top Video
Environmental Club raised awareness and environmental consciousness with Earth Week.

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

>> picturethis

FALCON // AVA HOOMAN

Last Rally >> On May 18, the Rally Commission performed a skit dressed up as characters from "The Incredibles." After a performance from the dance team and various competitive games between the classes, three retiring teachers, Kim Anzalone, Arnaldo Rodrigeux and Debra Troxell, judged that the seniors won the rally.

LITERARY MAGAZINE

Soundings provides platform for student artists and writers

BY Kaitlyn**Wang**

On Friday, May 18, instead of the usual Saratoga Falcon newspapers, classrooms received stacks of the school's art and literary magazine Soundings, a 32-page publication featuring art, photography and writing by 23 students.

Three months prior, the editors and curators of Soundings began accepting submissions. Journalism students usually run the magazine because they have experience with layout and design. Seniors Kyle Wang and Lillian Zeng were the editors this year. Senior Sarah Auches was the art curator and senior Varun Viswanath was the poetry curator, while Wang was the writing curator.

This year's theme was Meraki: a Greek word meaning "to do something with soul, creativity or love; to put something of yourself into your work."

The content of Soundings — whether art or writing, whether published anonymously or under a name — all seems to reflect Meraki, as the intention that shapes a submission often requires artists and writers to leave a piece of themselves on the page.

According to Zeng, around 65 percent of submissions was writing and the rest was art submissions, including a greater number of photography submissions compared to last year. While most writing submissions were poetry, there were short stories and essays as well.

Soundings received around 120 submissions in total through email after encouraging students to submit by advertising in the school Facebook group; posts included links to the Soundings website for further submission instructions.

For the past two years, the creative writing class read and voted on the writing submissions. This year, however, because there is no longer a creative writing class, Wang sent the writing submissions to a group of seniors in newspaper and yearbook after compiling and removing author names. He then asked the seniors to vote on their top choices.

> **"The very point of creating any work is for people to be able to read it."**
>
> SENIOR Kyle Wang

According to Wang, the tentative plan was for 10 to 12 writing submissions to fill the magazine, in the hope that readers would "see a balance between the media and the writing."

Wang said the number of submissions used depended on how they decide to structure the layout, while keeping in mind how physical arrangement may affect the pieces.

"Ideally if you have a photo, or a photo selection, you don't really want any text on the photo," Wang said, describing the combination of different submissions. "Let's say you have someone's poem: you want that next to [the photo] just because you don't want to mess with the photo's composition."

Referencing last year's magazine helped the editors plan this year's Soundings, Zeng said, since they observed the formatting and various sizes of last year's work.

No matter the size, length or message of a piece, Soundings allows students' creations to become available to a wider audience.

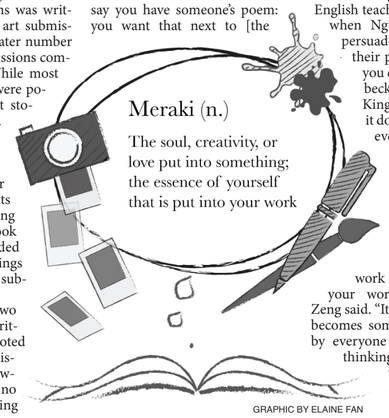
"I think it's really cool that we do something like this because a lot of people might have good work that doesn't get recognized anywhere," Zeng said. "They might not get interviewed for newspaper or be in the yearbook for it, or featured anywhere else. This is kind of an open opportunity for everyone to share what they're doing."

And this opportunity, as the character Tracy says in senior Charin Park's story "Finding Waldo," is an invitation to "Tell me your stories." The magazine invites the entire school to listen to students' stories — whether fictional, true or a mixture of both — the importance of which the editors of Soundings recognize.

"The very point of creating any work is for people to be able to read it," Wang said, recalling what English teacher Ken Nguyen said, when Nguyen was trying to persuade his students to read their poetry in class. "So if you can be the next Steinbeck, the next Stephen King, the next whatever, it doesn't matter if no one ever reads your work."

In addition to Wang, as an artist, Zeng has noticed the way different perspectives can unfurl from a single piece.

"Sharing your work with someone turns your work into something," Zeng said. "It's not just personal; it becomes something that's owned by everyone else, and you start thinking about how your work looks through the lens of someone else's eyes." ◆



GRAPHIC BY ELAINE FAN

GLOBAL HEALTH

continued from pg. 1

residence for children visiting Beijing for surgery.

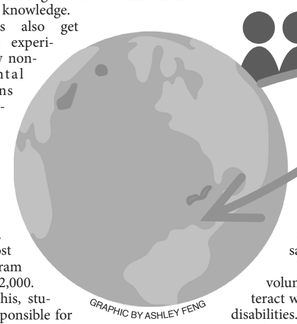
This summer's Beijing Immersion Program will take place from July 22-Aug. 6. Volunteers are provided meals, transportation, dormitory-style accommodation and tours while they tend to orphans at Children's Home.

> **"Without parental figures, the children in China love having older students there to spend time with them.**
>
> JUNIOR Julia Deng

During the program, which is in collaboration with Children's Hope International (CHI), students will help provide homes, health care and hope to children. The program is part of CHI's mission to help orphans and children with special needs.

Activities vary from keeping orphans company to creating short curriculums on any activity, allowing students to share their passions and knowledge.

Volunteers also get a first-hand experience on how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) deliver medical care and provide lasting changes in the communities they operate.



GRAPHIC BY ASHLEY FENG

The cost of the program itself is $2,000. On top of this, students are responsible for round-trip airfare to Beijing, passport and visa fees and personal expenses such as weekend and after-hour activities.

Normally, Global Health Club selects five students to represent Saratoga High in the program, but the club has only selected two students to attend the program so far.

The students who have been selected to attend the two-week program are sophomores Cameron Chow and Ivy Qian. Students who apply are encouraged to have enough prior knowledge of Mandarin to be able to have a basic conversation.

Through these interactions, volunteers will learn how to interact with orphaned children with disabilities. A positive experience volunteers gain is the ability to connect to children in difficult circumstances, Deng said.

"The children in China love having older students there to spend time with," Deng said. "Without parental figures in their lives, they only have a limited number of workers in the home that care about them."

Having attended last summer, Deng values maintaining contact with the orphans she had cared for before. She said the best part of staying in touch is following their adoption into loving families.

Qian, who is attending the program for the first time, sees it as an opportunity to gain experience in medical check-ups and care. Because she in interested in pursuing a career in medicine, Qian decided that attending the program would have been a worthwhile experience.

Even with the program a month away, Chow and Qian are looking forward to their experience in China and hope that students are inspired to provide service and care for those who aren't able to help themselves.

"I like helping people out and I'm not really good with children, so I thought it would be a good opportunity to get more experience that way," Qian said. "I'm most excited about meeting the children and helping them." ◆

AWARDS

MAP 9 Curricular Project
"Growing Up Shy" by Jasmin Reddy
MAP 10 Curricular Project
"Mark My Voice" by Adam Aribi, Joanne Fan, Sarah Hess, Julia Hoffman, Thaila Morganstern and Myles Roskoph
MAP 10 "Be the Change" Documentary
"Beat the Buzzer" by Risa Carter, Trent Glenn, Jackson Gress, Alena Jarett, Katrina Li, Sarah Rieken and Jayne Zhou
Two-Dimensional Design
"Good Night" by Samantha Yee(9)
Daveyland Logo: Liberalism by Kathryn Hamilton(10)
New France Infographic by Khiara Berkowitz Sklar, Ines Picard and Vivian Tarbox(11)
Mobie Poster: "Pills" by Laura Chaland, Jane Lee Kelly Long, Alex Metz, Leilee Naderi and John Noralahi(12)
MAP 11 Video Poem
"Caged Bird" by Kimmy Chiu, Megan Jin, Sanjana Melkote and Navid Vasseghi
MAP 11 American Issues Documentary
"Hole in the Valley" by Kitty Huang, Usman Khan, Devin Mather, JJ Wang and Angie Yang
MAP 11 Film: American Story
"Allen Carver" by Nick Burry, Colette Doyen, Martin Holum and Max Zhuk
48-hour Film Festival
"The Missing Piece" by Mihir Bettadapur, Riley Carter, Risa Carter, Kathryn Hamilton and Francesca Whiting
MAP 12 Curricular Project
Equal Pay PSA by Jake Beine, Nafisa Hussain, Jane Lee, Jeremy Randall and Mana Shimakawa
The Senior Capstone Project
Faculty Choice: "Charlie" by Joey Bruno, Angela Lee, Andreah Salazar, Mana Shimokawa, Sahana Sripadanna and Isabelle Yang
Student Choice: "Punchline" by Pranay Bettadapur, Tim Kobara, Yoon Kim, Alec Lindeman and Jack Ryan
Best Acting in a MAP Film
Jack Ryan(12) "Punchline"
People's Choice Award
"Punchline"
Industry Award
"Charlie"
Luke Salin Outstanding Service Award
Riley Carter, Chris Auches, Kate Bossi, Alec Kruka, Kitty Huang, Isabelle Rieken and Sahana Sripadanna, Isaiah Vivero
Haley Zarin Leadership Award
Cailley Bryan

MEDIA ARTS

Smash'n awards crown best of MAP

BY Ashley**Feng** & Sanjana**Melkote**

Parents and students strolled up the red carpet, pausing to take photos and congratulate award nominees. Decorative film hung from strings greeted guests as they walked into the McAfee Center last Friday night, searching for seats in the packed theater. The overhead lights dimmed, students scanned programs for their names in the list of nominees and annual SMASH'n ceremony began.

This year's event included a Media Arts Program 10th anniversary celebration in addition to the annual recognition of students' best projects.

The night also celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the program, and retiring superintendent Bob Mistele served as emcee.

Students from each grade were awarded for various outstanding projects, and at the end of the night, four judges with industry experience selected a winning project out of the night's showcased projects for the Industry Award.

Seniors Angela Lee, Andreah Salazar, Mana Shimokawa, Sahana Sripadanna and Isabelle Yang won the Industry Award for their capstone project, "Charlie." The story of a young boy's internal struggle with ADHD captured the audience with its emotional storyline, exceptional cinematography and sophisticated animations.

"It was definitely one of those moments where everything slowed down for me," Sripadanna said. "When we were waiting in the wings to receive the award, the first presenter said that he had never seen a male actor cry on screen in a student film and that display of vulnerability was so raw and open."

The group's accurate and emotional portrayal of trauma was also commended. Small details of their project like audio quality were recognized by the industry professionals.

Other awards from the night included Best 2-dimensional Design from each grade, and Best Mock Interview. The winning 2-dimensional designs ranged traditional paintings to computer generated graphics in various categories including infographics and broadsides.

Students were rewarded for a year of hard work and the MAP leadership team treated the community to a spectacular event.

The SMASH'n co-chairs, senior Alec Kruka and junior Kitty Huang, and MAP leadership had been preparing for the night since first semester in an attempt to minimize any last-minute stress.

"This year it wasn't that hectic at all because we did a lot of planning," Kruka said. "Last year we were still cutting out senior wall photos the day before SMASH'n, but this year we had almost everything done leading up to the week before."

In previous years, MAP leadership has lacked manpower in days leading up to SMASH'n, but this year, "every grade was pouring in people to help," Kruka said.

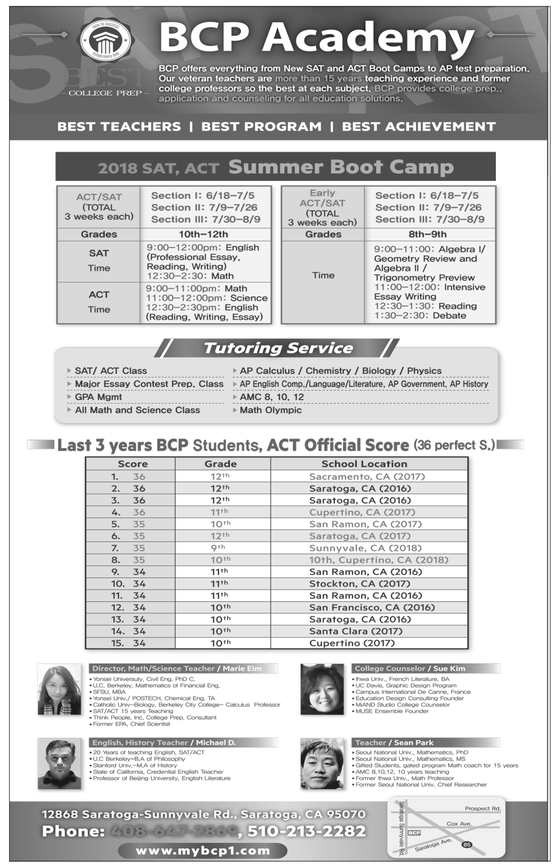
MAP student leader senior Cailley Bryan received the Haley Zarrin Leadership award as a recognition of her transformation of MAP leadership into a more involved and hardworking team.

MAP coordinator Suzanne Herzman said that Bryan inspired the leadership team to put in hours toward the event because she is "super organized and has a magic power to lead by example."

"I like working on something that so many people are invested in. It felt good. It was the most relaxed I'd ever felt the day after the event," Herzman said.

SMASH'n, a huge feat for the MAP leadership team, was a success.

"I think it was probably the best show I've seen my four years here," Kruka said. "It was very smooth and entertaining. ◆



CURRICULUM

E11H to have summer homework

BY KevinSze & JessicaWang

In an effort to help students complete the first-semester curriculum more efficiently, English 11 Honors teachers have decided to assign a summer reading assignment to incoming students.

For their assignment, incoming juniors will read the short 1953 play "The Crucible" by Arthur Miller and flag 10 to 15 passages that may be worthy of discussion and close reading, English teacher Natasha Ritchie said.

Ritchie said the English Department is always seeking to craft a curriculum that engages students and responds to a changing world, leading teachers to tweak and update their curriculum each year. Because students will begin school having already read the play, the English 11 Honors classes will start Socratic discussions and writing assignments immediately.

One of the main reasons for the summer homework is that the beginning of the year is packed with interruptions such as guidance presentations and writing assessments. Altogether the play was taking five or six weeks to complete.

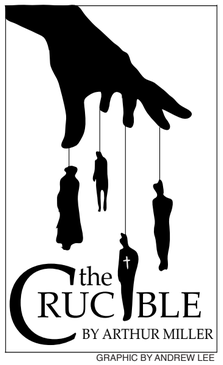
The coming year will face similar interruptions, along with a new week-long social-emotional learning program that students will participate in, so the English teachers decided to assign the reading in hopes of getting the play finished earlier than in the past. "The Crucible" is also a good introduction to American literature.

"The novel corresponds beautifully to the curriculum history classes start with," English teacher Amy Keys said. "In order to hit the ground running and match our curriculum content, we like to start right away with that play, but the beginning of the year is clouded with activities that disrupt the flow of reading."

In the past five years, adjustments were made to the English 11 curriculum, and teachers cut core texts such as "Othello" and "The Scarlet Letter" in order to create a less impacted and more in-depth curriculum. Completing "The Crucible" unit earlier will free up more time to go in-depth in other more difficult first semester texts such as "Beloved" and "Hamlet," and add more short stories and articles relevant to modern issues.

Additionally, with an immediate start to the unit, students will be able to have a better understanding of the workload and pace of an English 11 Honors class and have the option to switch to regular college-prep English if they feel the need.

"If we are just starting a text at the beginning of the year, it's a little harder for students to gauge what the class is really going to be like, and as soon as they figure it out it's past the drop deadline," Ritchie said. "That's maybe a handful of kids, though, so that's not a predominant reason, but that's something we've considered."



GRAPHIC BY ANDREW LEE

Student responses have been mixed.

Sophomore Bryan Chu said he approves of the summer reading because he feels that students who have signed up for an honors class should be ready for the work.

"It's an honors class for a reason, so you can't complain about the extra work," Chu said. "It keeps you engaged and in the academic mindset to start the school year."

Some other students, however, pointed out that jumping directly into class discussions and assignments the first week of school may be a demanding introduction to junior year.

"I don't think the reading is that bad, but I don't like how it adds to the stress of starting a new year," sophomore Ashwini Achutharaman said.

Keys, who also teaches English 10, said the incoming junior class has many talented English students and it will be a good chance to test out the changes in the curriculum.

"We have a seemingly very strong incoming class," Keys said. "We saw it as a good opportunity to revise our curriculum in response to continually evolving students' needs and interests." ◆

Competitors look back as Siemens ends

BY AllenChen & JeffreyXu

As senior Sohini Kar added the last few touches to her highly technical explanation about her mathematics-based research project for the regional finalist Siemens science competition last year, she never imagined that she would be preparing for the last Siemens science fair competition ever.

Guo

Kar

After Kar was named a finalist and seniors Chengzi Guo and Andrew Zheng were named semifinalists for Siemens in late 2017, the announcement was made that the competition would be discontinued.

On Feb. 1, after 19 annual contests, the Siemens Foundation formally announced that the 2017 competition was its last. The competition, which drew in over 28,000 young researchers since its inception, was one of the most popular high school science fairs.

According to a press release from the official Siemens Foundation website, the decision was based on the Siemens Foundation's Board of Directors' belief that the investments made in the competition could serve students more effectively through other initiatives. The website also said that more information about future programs would be released later in the year.

Kar devoted much of her junior year and summer toward preparing for Siemens and hopes that the its funds will go to other good causes.

"I'm sad about it because I think it was a great way to encourage student participation in scientific research," she said.

Guo also participated last year in the Siemens science fair after doing her research on using adeno-associated viruses as vectors for gene therapy in the summer. On top of the convenient timing of the fall deadline, which took place right after her summer research, she said she really enjoyed the simplicity of the competition's format.

"Unlike Regeneron [another science competition], which requires several supplemental essays, Siemens judges purely based on the merit of the research paper," Guo said.

Kar said that despite the ending of a major science competition, there are still many opportunities for students to do scientific research.

"I think it's a really good thing that Siemens existed and I'm really sad to see it go," Kar said. "But I hope that students will take advantage of other competitions like the Google science fair. Just because Siemens is gone doesn't mean there aren't any more opportunities, and I hope people keep doing research." ◆

SENIOR PROM

continued from pg. 1

because there are several exhibits to look at as well.

According to Guan, the senior class has already sold five and a half buses worth of tickets, which translates to 270 students attending already.

"This year, the venue is much grander; we're serving hors d'oeuvres instead of buffet style, and we have Royal Coach buses instead of yellow ones," Guan said. "It's also more expensive because we're required to use the luxury buses this time, and the ride there is an hour."

Since this is the last high school dance for the Class of 2018, officers said they have put in extra effort to make it a memorable night.

Preparations that the class officers have done for prom include planning a marketing campaign and filming and editing promotional videos. DJ Delicious will be the prom's DJ.

SOURCE: EHDD ARCHITECTURE

The "City of Stars" themed Senior Prom will be held in San Francisco's Exploratorium.

For their promo video, the senior class office used music from the soundtrack of the "La La Land" film to promote the dance's "City of Stars" theme.

"I feel pretty proud of what we've accomplished for this prom, but it's definitely bittersweet since it's one of the last school events we have before graduation," Guan said. ◆

APP DEV

ViRally:

SOPHOMORES MAKE APP TO ENCOURAGE STUDENT ACTIVISM

BY AvaHooman & EshaLakhotia

When sophomores Mita Kongetira and Sidney Hough read a writing prompt in their English class last fall — whether one person could challenge social injustice — they had an idea to inspire change in their own community by developing an app.

"We thought the prompt was an interesting question and saw it as an opportunity to create an app, especially with all of the walkouts and protests going on right now led by youth," Hough said.

The app, called ViRally, will help students who wish to take part in the movement for gun control find a more effective way to express their beliefs. The goal of the free app is for politically active teens to learn about protests near them. They can either start their own protests or join others' protests. They are still developing the app, which leaves room for other methods as well.

Kongetira and Hough began working on the app in mid-March and pitched it at Technovation, a regional entrepreneurial tech competition aimed at girls, on May 19. In the end, the pair won the contest. They are now selected as finalists and will attend a world pitch this August.

They aim to release the app this summer with the target audience in California. Over the next three years, they plan to expand it to the whole world, as well as make donations to charities and organizations with the revenue they will receive through advertisements.

The free app displays a feed of rallies near the user's location. It also gives the option to contact local social media companies to advertise rallies or protests.

"We came up with this name since it's an app that helps rallies go 'viral' in a sense," Hough said.

Both students view rallies as especially important in today's society because of recent events like the Women's March and the anti-gun protests. They hope to help students realize that their future and the futures of their friends and classmates are in their own hands.

"Rallies and protests give students the opportunity to take more control of their futures," Kongetira said. "Unfortunately, many have difficulty finding time to create or even attend rallies, which is one of the key reasons we have created the app."

Hough is designing and developing the app while Kongetira is managing the marketing and business aspects of it. Their plan is to contact investors and work to implant advertisements in the app to make revenue.

Though the app has taken months of hard work and planning, Kongetira and Hough have done extensive research and are ready for the challenge.

Hough has had a strong extensive coding background and released her first app called Earth Points on the App Store before her freshman year. She also took AP Computer Science (APCS) last year so that helped with the development of the app.

Though the app is a challenge to develop, they are looking forward to the final result.

"Young people deserve a voice in policy making and have the potential to really make a difference," Hough said. ◆

FORUM

continued from pg. 1

event in hopes that people could feel safer in their communities, schools and churches.

"The original goal was to make contact with people who I thought could make a difference in the political spectrum," Swanson said. "My continued goal now is to follow through now to make them make a difference."

Senior Ania Kranz opened the forum by saying that the National Rifle Association has a huge influence on legislation and politicians because of its huge support from citizens and ample funding. Kranz asked if there was "a better way to appeal to politicians."

Eshoo said that in order to change legislation, new Congress members who support gun control must be elected in the upcoming election of 2020. She stressed that the point is not to take the rights given by the Second Amendment away, but to have stricter regulations for who can possess weapons.

A student from Lynbrook mentioned that Americans should model their attitudes toward gun ownership after Australia's. According to TIME, after a single shooting incident in 1998, with 35 fatalities on a resort in Tasmania, Australians, including gun owners, supported stricter licensing of guns and regulations.

Just 12 days later, a bipartisan effort was made to change gun policies including a large buyback of semi-automatic weapons, the prohibition of private gun sales, and the new rule that gun owners provide a reason for their possession of their weapon. Since then, these efforts have resulted in a 59 percent reduction in gun violence in the country.

In contrast, after the recent Santa Fe shooting, Americans have continued making remarks like "guns aren't the problem," while no significant gun legislation has been approved by Congress in two decades.

Cappello and Eshoo both emphasized that "weapons of war" like AK 47s do not need to be in the hands of people who say they need guns for hunting or for protection.

Within Saratoga itself, Cappello recommended that students attend Saratoga City Council meetings, saying that student attendance would be most impactful because youth perspectives are not often heard. The next meeting will be on June 6, at 7 p.m. in the City Hall.

Safine also mentioned that with social media, students have enormous influence that politicians cannot ignore, as seen by the aftermath of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting earlier this year.

FALCON // SANDHYA SUNDARAM

Students with Congresswoman Anna Eshoo (fourth from left) at a forum for gun reform.

Sophomore Anika Prasad attended the forum after participating in prior marches against gun violence. Prasad said that it was a great opportunity for her to have her questions addressed.

"It's hard to feel like your voice is being heard when you do these walkouts," Prasad said. "But when someone from Congress is willing to come to your community, talk and listen to what you have to say, that's when you feel like your voice is actually being heard."

Eshoo said that conversations with students are important as part of the journey to bettering the country.

"I didn't like giving some of the answers that I did," Eshoo said. "Because they point to failures in our system in our government and that's not a source of pride to me."

"You all inspire me," Eshoo said. "Your voices are critical to the betterment of our country. It's your country, your future, and the power that you're exercising right now community by community, school by school is having an effect." ◆

CANVAS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

New 'Arc' tool encourages student-teacher interaction

BY DanielBessonov & PatrickLi

A new, third-party video platform that will allow more teachers and students to interact has been added to Canvas, the school's learning management system. It will take full effect next school year.

The platform, called Arc, allows students to comment on and annotate certain videos, giving them the opportunity to engage more actively with the posted content.

For instance, students will be able to add an observation to a specific point in the video, and other students will be able to reply or start a discussion.

Orre

Some teachers have already started experimenting with this new feature, including Biology teacher Kristofer Orre.

Orre uses videos as a regular teaching tool in his flipped classroom.

He said that the Arc tool will help teachers keep track of the number of students who watch videos and the duration for which they do so.

He also noted that Arc is a valuable tool in determining the level of engagement the video creates and how valuable or educational it is based on the number of students who add comments.

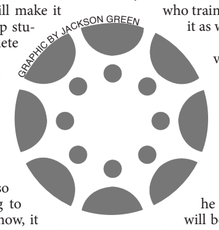
"It's very eye-opening because I can see some of my students are not watching the videos at all, or some are only watching halfway then stop," Orre said.

He also said the tool will make it much easier for him to help students who do not complete their assigned work.

"If a student comes up to me and asks me what they can do to improve their grades, I can pull up the Arc tool and say, 'You can start by watching the videos,'" Orre said.

Arc is still fairly new, so teachers are just beginning to learn how to use it. Right now, it is already fully functional. Canvas administrator Julie Grenier said that it will be heavily used in the next school year.

Orre was one of the first adopters of Canvas, and he also became one of the teachers who train other teachers how to use it as well.


GRAPHIC BY JACKSON GREEN

"Everyone is using Canvas at different levels, so next year that is a feature that we'll probably cover in our staff development sessions. Ms. Grenier or I can teach others who are interested in using it," Orre said.

Junior Andrew Gao said he thinks that this new tool will be very helpful to any class that relies heavily on videos.

"I think the Media Arts classes will benefit from this tool, and I'm excited to see it implemented next year," Gao said. ◆

PHYSICS

Blast from the past: Injured teachers lead to rule change

BY KaryleneMorrison & SandhyaSundaram

During the last two weeks of May, physics students will come together in the quad to propel water balloons with handmade catapults using physics principles. This activity has been going on for years, but no year was more memorable or significant than 2011.

During lunch on a sunny day in May, physics students lined up their handmade catapults in the quad as they gleefully prepared to launch water balloons at defenseless teachers.

Expecting harmless entertainment, the students were surprised when several teachers, including AP Chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu and English teacher Ken Nguyen, appeared to be uncomfortable after several rounds of launching.

After getting an X-ray for her injury in 2011, Nakamatsu found that the balloon's impact had fractured her right thumb in multiple places.

"I was in shock first. I didn't realize that my thumb was broken," Nakamatsu said. "I remember thinking I would be able to teach after lunch, but as my thumb started swelling and throbbing, I realized [teaching] wasn't going to happen."

Since this incident, Nakamatsu has avoided participating in this annual tradition, fearful of what may happen. Nguyen was injured much less seriously; a balloon bent his finger backwards, ricocheted off and hit his eye, causing a contact lense to pop out.

The experience didn't faze him, however. He has participated every year since then and plans to participate this year as well.

The lenient regulations on the structure of the catapults were partially at fault for these injuries.

That year, a group had reinforced their project with surgical tubing, which allowed the arm to move at a greater velocity, and they had also launched larger balloons.

This, along with a limited space for the teachers to stand and the large number of catapults that were constructed that year, led to the injuries.

To prevent further injuries from occurring, the physics teachers have created certain limits on how powerful the catapults can be, as well as the size of the balloons.

Additionally, the teachers now have unlimited space to move around. AP physics teacher Kirk Davis said that the goal of the assignment is for the students to gain an understanding of the physics of catapults while also being able to have the satisfaction of designing and building something.

Senior Vivian Luo participated in the water balloon project last year in her physics class for the chance to earn extra credit.

Her group built their catapult with wood and other materials from Home Depot.

The opportunity to build the catapults reinforced knowledge learned in the course.

"We could use calculations that we've learned about launching and speed to determine where it will go and where we should position it," Luo said.

Participating students got a testing day to practice shooting at a target, and shooting at the teachers awarded her points in addition to the credit she got for building the contraption.

"Everything was extra credit, so even if it didn't work, it didn't hurt us — it was just time consuming," Luo said.

With the new regulations having been in place for several years, people haven't been as worried about getting injured. Several teachers, including science teacher Kristofer Orre, English teacher Erick Rector, principal Paul Robinson and Nguyen now try to catch the balloons and throw them back at the students.

"Usually, it's on a nice day so even if you don't catch it, the water balloon gives you a nice, cool shower," Nguyen said. ◆

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

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Closing facilities won't stop JUULers

Students who have attempted to use facilities near the gym during lunch or tutorial recently may have noticed that they're usually closed.

The bathroom and gym shutdown are part of the school's response to a recently discovered JUULing problem, in which some students head to bathrooms to smoke e-cigarettes called JUULs.

The closing of these facilities provides a short-term solution to the problem, but it also inconveniences innocent students in the process.

Students who just want to use the bathrooms during lunch have to travel across the quad to find an open one.

Furthermore, access through the gym is blocked during and around lunch hours. This means that boys in the period 5 and 6 physical fitness classes are forced to walk all the way around the gym building to get to the lockers.

It's bad enough that students who have nothing to do with the problem are being affected. But it's even more ridiculous that the administration thinks locking a few doors will prevent students from JUULing. In fact, closing parts of the campus isn't going to solve anything. The JUULers are likely to find somewhere else to feed their addiction.

The solution that the administration has come up with also ignores the actual problem: the mindset of the students involved.

Instead of striving to regulate and confront the JUULers themselves, the school is opting to cut off an entire section of campus, inconveniencing students.

There was also a lack of discussion with students about this solution. At the very least, they could have informed students about the changes through email, or even the morning announcements, but not even this was done.

The recent policies implemented by the administration reveal much more troubling issues in the way they approach different problems around campus. The only way to really solve the problem is better monitoring of JUULing, through closer surveillance.

Equally important, the school can promote anonymous reporting and continue to educate students on the huge health risks of the habit for teens in classes such as Health and during the annual the Speak Up for Change week.

DAVID KOH

In short, other steps should have been taken first before cutting off a part of campus many students enjoy during lunch. ◆

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The Falcon staff voted 30-5 in support of this article.

Don't look down on borrowing from other cultures

BY Callia**Yuan**

In one of the biggest controversies of this year's prom season, a white high-school girl named Keziah Daum from Utah posted pictures on Twitter of herself wearing a Chinese-style qipao dress, or a cheongsam, to her prom. The dress she wore had a tight fit and thigh-high slit, as described by the New York Times, causing a storm of both criticism and support.

A Twitter user of Chinese descent angrily responded to the post, saying, "My culture is NOT your prom dress," later adding that "I'm proud of my culture. For it to simply be subject to American consumerism and cater to a white audience is parallel to colonial ideology."

There are many things wrong with this statement; first, let's define cultural appropriation, which people are accusing this high school girl of.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, cultural appropriation is "the act of taking or using things from a culture that is not your own, especially without showing that you understand or respect this culture."

The fact that this girl is appropriating Chinese culture can't be denied, because she's wearing a Chinese dress but isn't Chinese. But as a Chinese-American girl with strong ties to Chinese culture, should I be offended? Has this girl demonstrated that she doesn't respect or understand Chinese culture by simply wearing a dress? If anything, by wearing a dress with Chinese elements, she's exposing more Americans to a wider range of culture and influence.

And if you follow the logic that white people aren't allowed to wear a Chinese dress, then they should not allowed to eat Chinese food or drink boba either.

Furthermore, within the given definition, technically almost everything anyone does is some form of cultural appropriation. An American using paper, which was invented in China, is taking something from a different culture and using it; do people have to understand the history and origins of paper to be allowed to use it? Should they prepare a comprehensive presentation on all the Four Great Inventions of ancient China?

The qipao itself, in fact, evolved and took its current form due to Western influence. What used to be a bulky robe that only showed the hands and face of a woman became tighter, losing the layers of cloth underneath. "There were new elements in the 1950s, like tapered waists, or darts at the bust and waist," said Terence Cheung, assistant curator of the Museum of History, in an article from The New York Times. "The qipao merged with Western dress. In the early 1970s, with the introduction of the miniskirt, there were some very short qipao."

UTAH STUDENT KEZIAH DAUM

So the qipao itself appropriated Western culture. Clearly, taking things from another culture isn't always offensive and is often beneficial.

Simply appropriating a culture isn't offensive — cultures often feed off and evolve from each other.

However, disrespecting a culture is a completely different idea, and anyone of any background can offend any culture, even their own. When we appropriate a culture, we should be careful not to disrespect that culture.

So when does appropriation become disrespectful and inappropriate? A good example of this would be "sexy" Native American Halloween costumes. Because Native American clothing isn't meant to increase sex appeal, it becomes offensive when such items are modified for this purpose.

However, what makes these Halloween costumes offensive isn't the fact that other cultures are borrowing them; rather, it becomes disrespectful because cultural items are modified and stripped of their proper history and meaning. Wearing a traditional cheongsam to prom promotes Chinese culture and emphasizes its significance as a symbol of beauty. Her personal background doesn't matter — even if a Native American girl wore a "sexy Native American" Halloween costume, it would still be offensive because it shows that she's ignorant of Native American culture, even if she might be of that background.

Rendering the qipao as a direct representation of one's entire culture is counterintuitive and belittles the true beauty and significance of Chinese culture. While people in China are praising this girl for appreciating the beauty of the Chinese dress, Americans are getting caught up trying to divide people into different categories and not allowing different cultures to overlap.

But the truth is, America doesn't owe any other country anything. The country should learn from its past mistakes and respect other cultures, rather than trying to separate people into tidy categories and never let them overlap, which counteracts the idea of America as a melting pot of cultures. ◆

togatalks

Do you think a non-Asian person should be able to wear a qipao?

"She can as long as her intentions are good. The dress itself isn't a jab towards Chinese culture."
junior Hanlin Sun

"I think it's fine because it is a pretty dress that isn't limited to just one culture."
sophomore Katie Lam

School shouldn't require Pledge of Allegiance

BY Kaitlyn**Wang**

Beginning in preschool or kindergarten, students across the nation learn to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Even if they are not old enough to understand the full meaning of what they are saying, they are expected to display their pride in America.

The local elementary schools and Redwood Middle School conduct the Pledge of Allegiance daily. But after entering SHS, students find that the flag is often absent from classrooms, and they are no longer required to say the pledge.

While students in nearby high schools such as Lynbrook continue to recite the pledge every day, the school stopped doing so decades ago — and that does not need to change.

The pledge can act against its original intentions if students feel they must participate in an act of forced patriotism.

The Pledge of Allegiance fulfills the California Education Code's requirement for "daily appropriate patriotic exercises" in public primary and secondary schools; however, it is crucial to consider whether this "patriotic exercise" actually promotes pride in America.

As the San Francisco Chronicle asks: "Does the repetition of a memorized statement encourage more love of country?" For some, it may, but for others, the pledge is more of an automatic recitation, ingrained in memory but void of meaning caused by years of reciting the same sentence over and over.

And still others point out contradictions between what the pledge says and what America truly is: Students who believe that America does not uphold "liberty and justice for all" have refused to stand and recite the pledge, an act that has generated controversy.

According to the New York Times, two high school students in Texas separately sued their respective schools last year in October, arguing that the punishment and continuous shaming they received for sitting during the pledge was a violation of their constitutional rights. In 1943, W. Va. Board of Education v. Barnette also asserted that public schools cannot require students to say the pledge.

One lawsuit reported that a student was removed from school and told not to return unless she would stand during the pledge. According to the lawsuit, a secretary said, "This is not the N.F.L.," referring to N.F.L. players, most notably Colin Kaepernick, kneeling during the national anthem in protest of police brutality and racial injustice.

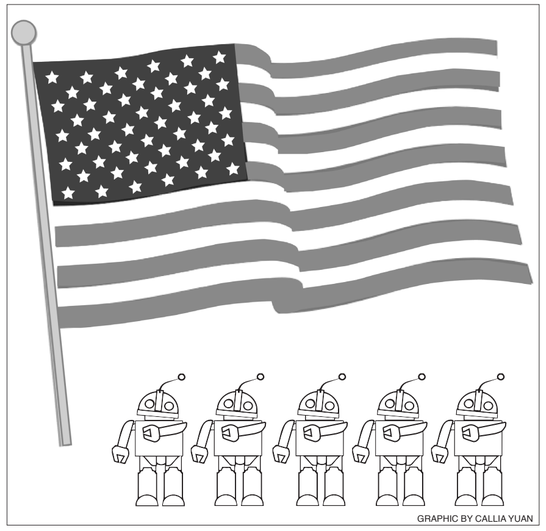
These students who refused to stand may have been a minority, but in other schools, most students no longer recite the pledge.

Writing for HS Insider of Los Angeles Times, high school student Mirabelle Chernick described how she was one of two students in her class who stood during the pledge as of October last year. If people disagree with what America appears to be now, Chernick expressed, then they should stand for what they believe America should be. For Chernick, standing and reciting is a symbol of hope for a more united America that strives to live up to its ideals.

It may be argued that the pledge helps increase patriotism in a time when the nation seems divided, and it is true that promoting a sense of unity is important.

In the end, however, the pledge can act against its original intentions if students feel that they must participate in an act of forced patriotism. If students only move their lips and emit sound without thinking about what the words mean, believing that the pledge is just another part of the daily announcements, then the act contributes little to their sense of pride.

As a result, the pledge seems to be more of a repetitive declaration of patriotism with varying levels of truth and meaning for different people.


GRAPHIC BY CALLIA YUAN

What can instead encourage students to become more aware as Americans — possibly proud, critical or hopefully both proud and critical — is knowledge. What students have learned about the nation in school over the years bears far more power than a memorized sentence in promoting change: knowing America's past and present helps reinforce what Americans hope to see occur in the future.

In class, students develop a greater understanding of U.S. history and current events, recognizing how America has upheld or failed to uphold the ideals on which it was founded. And in junior year, for example, one of the main ideas English classes focus on is what it means to be an American and how that definition has changed over time.

Bringing back the pledge to the school would ultimately have a negligible impact on students' patriotism. The pledge aims to foster pride and unity, but if it holds little meaning for students who may have recited it day after day in school for the past nine years, "liberty and justice for all" may sound like empty words.

Learning about America's mistakes and triumphs shapes students' knowledge and appreciation of their country more than a daily pledge ever could. ◆

Teachers, just let me sleep

For the last two weeks of school, I've had work periods with nothing to work on, watched obsolete movies that have nothing to do with anything and napped through entire classes.

After AP testing, there isn't any actual content taught in AP classes. Instead, I am forced to do activities that are just used to fill up time, like curve-stitching and making toothpick bridges.

I know I shouldn't complain because at least I don't have six finals to study for. I tell myself that projects can be fun and a nice break from the rigor of the school year.

If I'm not taking a final, I shouldn't have to come to school on the final day. There is absolutely no point in spending two hours watching "The Princess Bride." I made it through this entire year — just let me sleep. ◆

— Francesca Chu

It's hot... it's cold... it's hot again

I wake up to a morning of sunshine. The first thing I do is check the weather forecast.

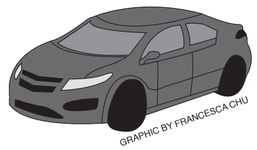
"Today in Saratoga, expect a high of 83 degrees and a low of 62 degrees," Google says.

Nice. I can finally take a break from jeans and wear some nice khaki shorts. I throw on a T-shirt and leave for school.

But as I enter my history teacher's classroom, I'm hit with a blast of cold air conditioning. Fifteen minutes into the class and I'm already sneezing and sniffling, trying to survive in the Arctic-like environment as a ironically-named lecture about the Cold War continues.

Teachers, please try to keep your classrooms somewhat not freezing so we don't have to find a way to dress for two different seasons at once. ◆

— Jeffrey Xu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100 WORD RANTS

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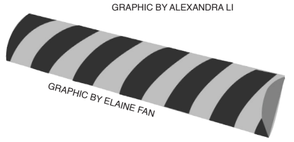

GRAPHIC BY ELAINE FAN

Be nice to novice drivers

As a beginning driver, I am not the best at driving, to put it lightly.

I'm not going to lie, I've hit a bush before, and I've mistakenly stepped on the gas instead of the brake more than once.

I'm still learning and improving my driving. Is it too much to ask for people to have a little bit of patience for student drivers?

Even after I got a "student driver" sign for my car, some people still won't take the hint, honking at me for trivial offenses like trying to correct myself after stopping too far from a stop sign.

To the experienced drivers on the road, instead of honking or gesturing rudely, please be patient with beginning drivers. We're still learning, and it isn't easy. ◆

— Jackson Green

Drive around speed bumps

Every day, as I make my way to school, cars swerve into the loading zone near the tennis courts in order to avoid the speed bumps.

Coincidentally, that also happens to be where other students and I have to walk.

It's annoying because all of us have to walk right up against the trees to avoid being hit.

Sometimes, I can even see both student and parent drivers get visibly agitated when students block their path around the bump, forcing them to actually do what they're supposed to.

It's gotten so bad that one of the speed bumps have already been extended toward the tennis courts. So please just drive over them instead of trying to save a few seconds and risking lives in the process. ◆

— Michael Zhang

Prom prices rise, food disappointing

BY FrancescaChu

Junior Ronit Dey woke up the day after junior prom to excruciating stomach pains. He was one of several students who reported feeling ill, presumably from the food that was served, after a night at the Roaring Twenties-themed prom held on April 28 at Club Auto Sport in San Jose.

Whether food poisoning actually occurred at the venue or whether students were feeling ill for other reasons, it can be agreed that the quality of food was not the best, especially for the hefty ticket price of $175 — not to mention that prices were raised $10 each week before the dance to a potential maximum price of $215.

There is no reason for prom tickets to cost that much. Simply put, students attending our proms are too often being ripped off.

The cost of the venue, catering and activities like the games and photobooth shouldn't have added up to too much money since the tickets for Lincoln High School's senior prom, which was also held at Club Auto Sport, cost only $90 at its lowest price. Other schools in the Bay Area also tend to have lower ticket prices.

Lincoln High School is closer to the venue, so transportation would cost less; however, that shouldn't raise the cost of tickets by $85.

The high prices wouldn't be as big of a problem if the quality of the event met the expectations set by the price.

The cost of catering per person was $88, which could account for the difference in ticket prices from Lincoln High's prom. Students were promised delicious food and an upscale venue to make up for the high ticket prices; however, it was clear as the night went on that students did not get their money's worth, especially with not much to do at the venue besides a car racing simulation.

First, the food wasn't available right away, and for the first 30 minutes or so, most students were just standing or walking around waiting to eat.

When the food finally did come, it tasted simply mediocre. The sliders, mac and cheese, chicken tacos and salad were unsatisfactory. The dessert and fruit were decent but weren't brought out until much later.

Catering shouldn't have resulted in the unreasonably high ticket prices that the junior class paid, and most students would probably be happy with something cheaper like pizza and fries.

Senior prom tickets for the Exploratorium in San Francisco are even more expensive, starting at $185.

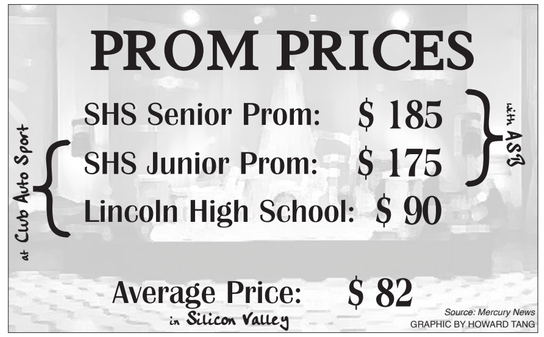
It is true that it's extremely hard work to organize and figure out costs for prom, but with dress or tuxedo purchases, the $25 for a corsage and boutonniere set and the photo prices, prom spending is now often running to around $300 for just one person.

However, instead of only complaining, students should work to come up with solutions for following years. They should be more active in deciding things like venue, food and activities for prom by communicating with ASB.

With everyone discussing their opinion, students will hopefully be able to come to a ticket price that isn't too high but still translates to an amazing prom experience.

In the case of junior prom, it seemed like many students didn't get their money's worth.

Hopefully, senior prom won't make students regret the voids in their wallets. ◆



Don't let college paranoia dictate summer schedule

BY FrancescaChu

It seems like every year, students follow a template for their summer plans — some summer program or internship, a few volunteer opportunities and maybe a week or two of vacation. It's a widespread belief that this is the optimal way to spend summer to be competitive in the college application process, but if you really think about it, how impressive is it to be the same as everyone else?

Students are often brainwashed to believe that attending prestigious summer programs or volunteering abroad will make their college application stand out.

If that is what you are interested in, there's nothing wrong with pursuing research or volunteering opportunities. But for a lot of people, there are better options out there that won't break the bank.

Plus, after spending the entire school year focusing on academics, students should break free from their comfort zones and use the 10 weeks of summer to explore, discover or improve talents and passions.

For those lucky people who have already found what they are passionate about, summer is the perfect time to fine-tune those endeavors. For example, for someone who knows they want to pursue directing, just picking up a camera and spontaneously producing a home-made movie could be an extremely fulfilling summer experience.

Summer is a great time to start a more ambitious and time-consuming project because students finally have the time to put their complete effort into what they're passionate about and produce something to be proud of. Also, it saves thousands of dollars compared to certain programs and still demonstrates passion and talent.

Most students, however, don't really know what they want to do. Summer is the perfect time to find out.

Rather than competing among tens of thousands of hopeful high school students for a spot in a prestigious summer research program, students could take college-level classes, travel to a new place, teach a class for children, get a job or anything else as long as they are interested in it. These are options that provide a different but equally rewarding experience as a summer program.

Students shouldn't feel obligated to tailor their summers just to get into a certain college. Variety is healthy.

Obviously, the goal is not to spend the entire summer lying on the couch watching Netflix, but students shouldn't feel obligated to tailor their summers just to get into a certain college. Variety is healthy. If something is interesting, do it. But don't be afraid to relax.

For those who don't know what they want to do, try new things and find out. Break free from the grasp of parents or college counselors.

Even though there is a widespread belief that students' entire high school experience is defined by the college they're accepted into, it's not worth it to spend summer doing something they don't want to do. There isn't a template for college acceptance, so students might as well spend their summer doing something they enjoy. ◆

New E11H summer homework not hurtful, might even be helpful

BY AllenChen

When an English 11 Honors summer assignment was announced back during schedule signups, I was just as skeptical as everyone else in my English 10 class. But as the gasps and light cursing made their way into the air, I realized something that surprised even me.

This might not be a bad thing.

Those of us taking English 11 Honors next year are all probably aware of the summer assignment: to read Arthur Miller's "The Crucible," a play about the Salem witch trials.

English 11 Honors is an intensive class, and assigning summer homework is how the English department is showing us the workload that we have signed up for next year.

Some students have said that they don't have time to do the assignment or complain that summer is meant for vacationing and relaxation.

They miss the point.

"The Crucible," a short play, is hardly "War and Peace," and we are given two months of summer vacation to read and think about it — even more if we start early.

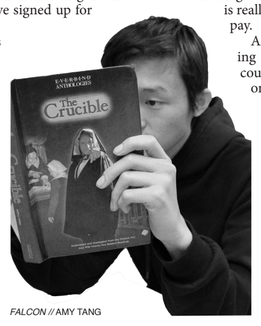
This makes it clear that the point of the assignment isn't necessarily to test our reading ability or our writing skills. It's a test of whether students are willing to take time and read the book carefully.

In other words, it's a participation grade. Students who can't complete such a straightforward assignment are not going to enjoy English 11 Honors. Those who have their summers completely booked to the point where they can't afford to do a simple summer assignment shouldn't even be signed up for E11 Honors.

Furthermore, the class is an opportunity to greatly improve our writing and analytical skills. Taking the class is a privilege, and reading a book over the summer is really quite a small price to pay.

Also, any student taking an advanced English course should be reading on their own time anyway. The summer assignment is simply a way to make official what students should be doing anyway.

Judging by the planning shown through their current curriculum, we should trust and respect the decision of the E11 Honors teachers to assign summer reading. ◆



FALCON // AMY TANG

Garcia's family life inspired her to teach

CHEMISTRY TEACHER EXPLORED CAREER OPTIONS AT STARTUPS AND AS A PHLEBOTOMIST BEFORE SHS

BY ChelseaLeung & JeffreyXu

When honors chemistry and physics teacher Jenny Garcia was a kid growing up in Palo Alto, her mom, who taught elementary school, would come home and tell stories about her students. Through twists and turns, these stories laid the groundwork for Garcia's entering the profession.

"I thought it would be nice to have that type of relationship with a lot of different people," Garcia said. "As it turns out, now I have 150 students instead of just 25 so I don't know my students as well, but I do get a lot of energy off them every day."

Originally, though, Garcia's career path was not teaching. After graduating from Gunn High, Garcia studied biology at UC San Diego (UCSD) and originally wanted to pursue a PhD in nursing.

After graduating from UCSD, Garcia began working as a phlebotomist — someone who makes incisions on veins in a process called venipuncture — while taking night classes at Foothill College before applying to nursing school.

But after seeing a guidance counselor at UCSD, Garcia realized that she had not received the proper nursing hands-on experience from her undergraduate courses and therefore continued her phlebotomist career instead.

After seven years of being a phlebotomist and then getting married, she decided that she did not want to continue with the work.

"[Sick people] complain a lot," Garcia said. "I'm not a Pollyanna, but it wears on you if folks are always sad. When you're drawing blood and not necessarily seeing people get better, it's a drag on your soul."

She soon became part of a startup company that dealt with using shape memory alloys, a metal with interesting properties including flexibility, in a variety of unique applications such as the metal in eyeglass temples.

While working for the startup, Garcia gave birth to both of her children. Her older son Adam, now 29, is working in emergency management for a local company, and her younger son Zach, 27, works for Cruise Automotive as part of the development team. She became the stock administrator at the startup but quickly realized that the work-style wouldn't suit her role as a parent.

"I loved the job and the people, but life in a startup doesn't really complement life with a family," Garcia said.

While on the search for yet another job opportunity, Garcia decided to go back to school to pursue her teaching credential right after giving birth to her second son and leaving the startup.

At first, she wanted to be a math teacher, but given her diverse science background of biology, chemistry and physics at UCSD, she decided to pursue a career in teaching science instead.

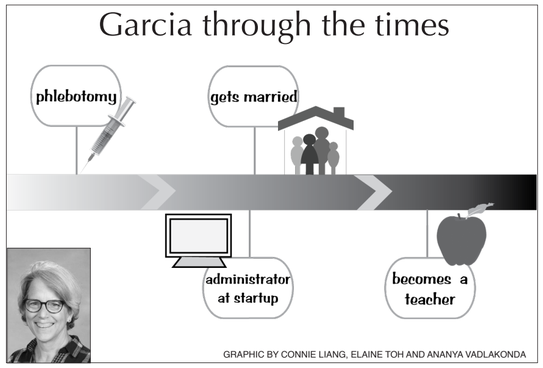
Garcia said that one of her main reasons for pursuing this career path was her AP Biology class at Gunn High. Garcia described the class as very difficult because it included many technical concepts and required students to "recall the concepts at the drop of a hat."

While they practiced during lunch, Garcia's teacher, seeing what they were having trouble with, critiqued them. During the actual presentation, the teacher then asked Garcia and her partner multiple questions about the material they had struggled with during lunch.

"It was awkward, but we got through it and I learned not to always try to take the easy way out," Garcia said. In order to satisfy the requirements for her credential, Garcia began student teaching under that same AP Biology teacher at Gunn High and was also a student teacher for one semester at Jordan Middle School in Palo Alto.

Then, 24 years ago, Garcia started teaching at Saratoga High, where she has taught Biology, Chemistry, Chemistry Honors and Physics ever since.

"I knew that teaching would be more conducive to a good family life," Garcia said. "So that, along with my mother's example, convinced me I wanted to be a teacher. The rest is history!" ◆



BY KayleneMorrison & SivaSambasivam

As legend has it, at age 6, billionaire Warren Buffett had already begun to show an aptitude for making money. After purchasing a six-pack of Coca Cola from his grandfather's grocery store for 25 cents and reselling each can for a nickel, Buffet was able to acquire a 5 cent profit.

As an adult, he developed his value investing philosophy and later became the CEO of Berkshire Hathaway, becoming perhaps the best known investor in history. While age 14 isn't exactly the same thing as 6, several Saratoga High students seem to be following the same approach as Buffett — start young.

Chris Lee

Julian Lee

Zhang

Senior Chris Lee, his brother freshman Julian Lee and freshman Cynthia Zhang all have decided to tackle a particularly precarious form of accumulating an income — investing in the stock market. In addition to the money that they earn, it also helps them learn about money management.

Due to the market's unpredictable nature, they have experienced both the thrill of success as well as the disappointment of failure.

The Lee brothers have also been very involved with stock market trading, continuing the family business. They represent two ends of the spectrum — Chris is a conservative, meticulous investor looking to make safe trades while Julian is a risk taker and searches for the one or two stocks with high growth potential.

Both their parents are well informed about the stock market and were willing to give both their children money to experience the intricacies of the market from a young age.

"A lot of my family is really into investing," Chris said. "They were supportive in giving us money because they thought that letting us invest would help us develop useful life skills. Money management is a good skill to have because even if you end up making seven figures annually, if you know how to invest it, you can do so much more with your money."

Chris invests mainly in large and stable corporations such as Amazon, Apple and TSMC (Taiwan Semiconductor).

But the money that he has left over, he mainly puts into index funds and other small companies that he finds interesting.

Chris implemented his love for clothes and games into his portfolio by investing a bit of money in Adidas and several up-and-coming gaming companies.

"Amazon has been my best investment," Chris said, "and it's just been going up for a while now. I'm usually pretty safe in my investments, so I sometimes lose a little bit but I never really lose too much though."

By purchasing shares that have been consistently increasing in value, Chris has been able to make fairly accurate predictions. However, with the small amount of risk comes only minimal opportunity for reward. For Chris, this isn't a big deal; it is an essential component of his strategy. However, his younger brother Julian aims to strike gold with investments.

"My brother likes to play with really risky stocks with small companies, and that stuff can go down really quick. He lost a few hundred [dollars] because of it," Chris said.

But Julian's style of investment has its upsides, too. Although most of the stocks he invests in aren't as stable and have much more risk, they also offer a lot more reward than big companies with steadier prices.

He started off with a MarketWatch stock market simulation game without real money to get a grasp of what he needed to do to succeed and make money. He was able to make $4,000 after starting with $10,000, proving to his parents that he was capable of holding his own.

"My parents are generally really helpful whenever I'm curious about something, and they were willing to give me some money after I had proved that I was able to succeed," Julian said.

Since then, Julian has invested in numerous tech companies, including Apple and Amazon, as well as EndVid, and an AI company that makes stock market investing easier. His investment in EndVid has been his most profitable yet, earning him $500 since he purchased it.

While the Lee brothers invest in a variety of shares, Zhang has invested solely in Nvidia, primarily because her mother works for the company.

"I'm usually pretty safe in my investments, so I sometimes lose a little bit but I never really lose too much though."

SENIOR Christopher Lee

Nvidia, whose share price has shot up from around $20 back in 2015 to $220 today, has been so successful due to its invention of the GPU, or graphics processing unit, which allows for more complex graphical animations in video games and the like.

"I persuaded my parents to buy the stocks, and then they did," Zhang said. "And then when the stocks dropped, they were planning to sell, but then I did some research and told them not to. They almost did, but then they didn't, and then the stocks grew like thirty dollars." ◆

THE saratogafalcon
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Turning the Page...

students reflect on high school experiences

Not participating in school events is my biggest regret so far in high school

sel-liu-lar data

Selena Liu

"Focus on your studies. Good grades will get you into a good college."

That was the mantra I followed growing up, and it was a mantra my parents and my relatives fervently supported too.

I went into freshman year determined to follow my relatives' advice to study hard for the next four years.

Unfortunately, I soon realized that was a mistake. Opting out of school sports, school-organized events and multiple four-year programs like marching band prevented me from enjoying high school .

While good grades are important, there are so many other things a student can gain from high school that I didn't actively seek in my freshman year.

One of the most important advantages is meeting new friends. Extracurricular school activities almost guarantee making new friends, which not only leads to better social connections but also better opportunities, such as recommendations for a new job or internships.

While my classmates were busy building their social networks, I was studying at home and missing out on all these opportunities. By far, this was my biggest mistake in freshman year.

In all honesty, while I branched out later than most, I'm glad I decided to participate in school programs and events during my sophomore year.

Starting last August, I've tried to become more involved with the school. I've joined more clubs like FBLA and Interact, participated in winter percussion and attended both Homecoming and Winter Formal.

In junior year, I hope to be part of even more school events, like Bombay in the Bay, the Benefit Fashion Show and even the spring musical. Although I will be much busier with schoolwork, I think that participating in these fun events will also bring benefits.

So far this year, I've exposed myself to different kinds of activities and have met many amazing people in the process, like my peers in winter percussion and newspaper. I hope that in my last two years of high school I can participate more activities and continue immersing myself in the high school community. ◆

Procrastination: A problem that should be changed now, not later

oh xu-t

Jeffrey Xu

The problem with homework, or any work for that matter, is that I don't feel any pressure to do it until there is an immediate deadline. And that's why I almost always procrastinate.

When I volunteered to be a defense lawyer for the mock trial of Kaiser Wilhelm II in World History back in early February, I knew how much work it would take to gather all the facts, prepare all the witnesses and come up with the examination questions. And yet, I still allowed the generous two weeks of preparation Mr. Sheehy gave us to fly by without enough work done.

Thanks to my procrastination, I stayed up until 3 a.m. the night before the trial and throughout the trial, calling the witnesses to brief them and finding additional evidence to support our case — all the while juggling my other homework and extracurriculars.

In the end, the defense won unanimously on both charges, but it felt like a Pyrrhic victory for me. All those sleep-deprived nights took a toll.

The irony is that in freshman year, when my Biology teacher Mr. Orre assigned us a 20 Time project in which we could choose any topic of our interest to conduct research on, I chose to find a way to "cure" procrastination.

In my experiment, I asked my subjects, who were just a couple of my friends, to test specific methods that I thought would counteract the dark force of procrastination.

These methods included not eating, not sleeping or even not using the bathroom until finishing homework. I asked my friends to report the times at which they finished their homework, but the self-control required for these tasks makes me think that they didn't actually implement these methods and failed to report their accurate data to me.

However, this inconclusive project still taught me a valuable lesson: Combatting procrastination is not a matter of using slick tips or tricks; rather, you have to be disciplined to actually get things done.

According to Forbes, some powerful sources for motivation and discipline to combat procrastination include goals with deadlines and rewards for getting things done.

So next year, I plan to set concrete goals and reward myself when I get the work done to combat the nightmares of junior year.

Hopefully, these strategies, rather than the ones I used in my 20 Time project, will motivate me to have better self-control, which is what will finally propel me out of the void called procrastination. ◆

Social anxiety is not shameful

kai-ke pop

Kaitlyn Wang

Sometimes it seems that not much has changed since my glorious elementary school days, when teachers and classmates asked why I was so quiet and expressed surprise that I could talk. (Shocking, I know.) Today, dread still overwhelms me when I speak in front of crowds, and I often avoid talking to people I do not know well.

So at the start of the school year, I told myself it was about time for a new and improved Kaitlyn.

But as the year progressed, I fell back into my habit of simply listening during class discussions, particularly in English class. I felt uncertain if I interpreted the text "correctly" or if my thoughts would make sense.

Half of me huddled inside my comfort zone, arguing that it was cozy, safe and stocked with hot chocolate powder, while the other half criticized myself for not contributing in class and for surrendering to an illogical fear.

But I've come to realize that beating myself up for my reticence is a mistake. Pursuing my interests has helped me address my fears, despite not consciously realizing it at times.

After conducting interviews this year as a newspaper reporter, after pushing myself to ask questions and insist on receiving responses, I have grown much more comfortable with talking to people.

Other activities have also helped: being a Green Team officer, reading my poetry at open mics and joining the lacrosse team, cheering for my teammates on and off the field.

I've also discovered that feeling anxious is more common than I thought.

In March, Book Club invited a guest speaker named Eric Lindstrom, who was the author of "Not if I See You First." His shared experiences about social anxiety helped me recognize it is OK to feel nervous about speaking to people.

"There are lots of people with social anxiety — they're just hard to find — but they're out there and make a lot of memes online about it," Lindstrom joked in response to an email I sent, thanking him for presenting. "It helps to see that because it makes you feel like a member of a small and secret tribe, not a mutant, not broken."

If only I could have heard those words earlier — if only I could tell my past self that diffidence should not be tied to shame.

Next year, instead of growing frustrated with myself, I will strive to be patient and not become too caught up in moments that seem like backtracks or only tiny steps forward from progress. I'll continue to participate in activities that challenge me to improve at what I simultaneously enjoy and fear, all the while recognizing that my senior year will be my last opportunity to do so in high school. ◆

Video games prevented me from succeeding in my schoolwork

E-sze money

Kevin Sze

I glanced at the clock in my first period class. 9:44, almost time for me and my friends to play the viral mobile game "Player Unknown Battlegrounds," also known as "PUBG."

Once the bell rang, I hurried out of class, found my friends, and we made our way to the Tutoring Center to play "PUBG."

The game is played in a battle royale format, in which squads of four jump out of a plane onto the warzone below. The warzone is filled with various guns, ammunition and armor that players collect to defeat the other teams. The last team standing wins the game.

After seeing an advertisement on YouTube, I decided to try out the game. When the game released in March, I downloaded it with my friends and we began to play.

The game became addicting. When we lost we got extremely frustrated and blamed the game, but when we won we celebrated like we won the Super Bowl.

Eventually, I realized the fun I was having with my friends was at the expense of my productivity, and ultimately, my grades.

The game took up precious time during tutorial, and eventually I began to slack off on things that tutorial was supposed to be used for, like meeting with teachers. I realized that the benefits of quitting the game outweighed the costs, and I decided to get off the game.

The problem was that the game was a time for me to relax after first or second period and bond with my friends. Stopping to play the game meant that I would distance myself from my friends, especially when they would talk about those tutorial's game during lunch.

I argued with myself that if I used tutorial to meet with my teachers or get my work done, I could then sleep earlier. That extra sleep would make me feel refreshed and eager to learn in the morning, which would raise my grades.

The biggest hurdle for me was accepting that I would miss out on some of the fun. It was tough to sit through conversations about the game without relating to any of it.

In mid-April, I discovered that quitting the game was actually a blessing in disguise. My friends quit the game with me, and I discovered that my friendships ran much deeper than just the game, and we began to talk about more meaningful things in life.

Learning to give up video games made me realize that there's so much more to life than my phone. Sure, a game can give you a small dose of fun, but none of that ever lasts. You should invest your time in building relationships, not improving meaningless skills in video games.

Besides, with the heavier burden of junior year right around the corner, I can't afford to be at anything but my best in school. ◆

GRAPHICS BY KAREN CHOW

Senior plans to pursue graphic design at UCLA

BY Kevin**Sze**
& Kaitlyn**Wang**

Crowds milled around booths featuring design elements and products at San Francisco Design Week last June. Admiring the different works on display, senior Katrina Sung, an aspiring graphic designer, would remember the event as a moment that reinforced her desire to pursue graphic design and digital art.

For Sung, this convention was an opportunity to learn how popular products become successful and explore the possibility of a career in product design.

"It was a formal event and most of the people who attended were adults, and it had a professional but fun atmosphere," Sung said. "I got to see all the elements I've learned in classes being put to use in all these organizations or companies, so that was exciting. It made me realize that I could look forward to more events like this in the future."

Sung has always had a passion for art. She began drawing in second grade and used took traditional art classes involving still life and figure drawings. But it was not until she joined yearbook during her junior year that she realized pursuing design and digital art could be a serious future and not a hobby.

Starting second semester junior year, she also began attending a class with an emphasis on conceptual art, stressing ideas more than the technical execution, a main aspect of design portfolios, according to Sung.

"There are people who say, 'You're going to art school; that must be easy,'" she said. "But I really don't care what they have to say."

While Sung's friends and peers in art classes have been supportive, she did face initial opposition from her own family.

"Coming from a traditional Asian family, my parents were a bit against it to start," Sung said. "But I think they realized I wasn't going to change, and they decided that if I was going to pursue this, I might as well become good at it."

Sung had been concentrating more on graphic design, but she recently grew interested in fashion design after designing clothes for the Benefit Fashion Show.

She also sewed her own prom dress, using gold, floral fabric to create a long dress with a leg slit over the course of three or four days. Sung said that it was "just an experiment," but she's glad that she took the initiative to create it.

Aware that only a few individuals can make a viable living in fashion, Sung remains unsure of what she wants to do in the future. According to Sung, expressing one idea in variety of styles in fashion is difficult.

"It's a lot of dedication because you have to keep working on your collections and how to be the next big thing because you can have a bunch of other designers who can do similar work," Sung said.

Even so, Sung will attend UCLA's Design Media Arts (DMA) program in the fall. Over the summer, she took a design camp at UCLA, which helped her become more familiar with what to expect from the school's offered program.

During the camp, Sung found the accomplishments of her counselors, current UCLA students, inspiring.

"That was really a pivotal moment for me, just sitting in that room looking at these people only several years older than us with the ability and creativity to create what they have created," Sung said.

Now looking back on the college application process, Sung recognizes that while her focus on artistic exploration has taken a toll on her academics.

"My grades definitely have suffered from my incessant need to find inspiration, but it's honestly been worth it because of the experiences you get from those moments," Sung said. "I know a lot of art students who are being told that their grades are not competitive enough and that their GPA is a priority, but I want people to know that that's not true."

Katrina Sung explores abstract art concepts.

According to Sung, it has been worthwhile to sacrifice time and effort on exploring art instead of focusing solely on academics.

"Pursuing artistic endeavors by buying new materials, going to art classes and conventions or going places to look for inspiration is what's going to make you stand out, not the numbers," Sung said. "As long as you stay confident in your character, your ideas and your artwork, you will be guaranteed a great future in design or art." ◆

Students explore whether meet and greets are worth

BY Shreya**Katkere**
& Esha**Lakhotia**

It took two hours of waiting last fall, but sophomore Katie Lam had finally made it to the front of the line at Full Screen, an entertainment company in Cupertino.

In front of her stood YouTube stars Alicia Marie and Mia Stammer.

Within seconds Lam greeted and took photos with them.

Though many people dream about meeting their favorite singers, movie stars or YouTubers, some students have made this dream a reality by attending meet and greet events, sometimes paying hundreds or thousands for the privilege.

In Lam's case, the event was free. She learned about it from Instagram and Snapchat stories the day before and was able to meet Marie and Stammer, who run their own beauty channels.

Because there were hundreds of people waiting in line, time with the stars with limited, Lam said, but she felt that the experience was worth the time spent.

"I see them online all the time, and it was cool to be able to meet them in person," Lam said. "I have been watching videos from Alicia Marie and Mia Stammer for at least a year now and am a big fan. It was cool to have them come to Cupertino since it's so close."

Like Lam, sophomore Chloe Lahijanian also met one of her celebrity idols, Justin Bieber, in March of 2016 on his Purpose World Tour.

The concert was at the SAP center at San Jose and her concert tickets came with a meet and greet pass and cost around $1,000.

"I was a huge fan, and my friend and I wanted to go," Lahijanian said. "The experience was pretty cool and the tickets were actually a birthday gift from my parents."

The meet and greet took place in a large room with food, games and movies.

After waiting for about 30 minutes, Lahijanian's group, consisting of herself and two of her friends, was called to meet Bieber.

"We went into the room he was in, and we only got to see him for five seconds and take a picture," Lahijanian said.

Courtesy of KATIE LAM

Sophomore Katie Lam poses with Alicia Marie and Mia Stammer at Full Screen.

Though the once in a lifetime interaction was brief, Lahijanian was thrilled with it at the time.

Now, two years later and more mature, she said she isn't such an avid Justin Bieber fan and doesn't follow these celebrities as closely.

Meet and greets vary in size and type depending on the celebrity.

For example, since Lahijanian visited mainstream artist Bieber, the meet and greet was more crowded than Lam's meet and greet because Bieber has a larger following.

Bieber's event was also part of a concert, while Marie's and Stammer's was announced last minute.

Celebrities who host meet and greets gain not only money but also the chance to meet fans.

For the big stars such as Beyoncé and Britney Spears, tickets average around $2,000 — a cost that is shocking to some but worthwhile to others. ◆

Charlie Puth excites fans with Voicenotes album

BY Muthu**Palaniappan**

Singer-songwriter Charlie Puth released his second album Voicenotes on May 11 — an effort that shows he is not afflicted with a sophomore slump.

There is a good balance of tempos and melodies on Voicenotes, and all the songs work together to create a meaningful and catchy album.

After launching his career in 2015 with the release of his hit single "See You Again," Puth began to make a name for himself in the music industry.

All 13 of the songs are different in their own ways, yet they still express Puth's personality.

In 2016, his first album Nine Track Mind impressed fans, but Puth did not think it accurately represented his persona as an artist. Puth explained in an interview with Zach Sang that while Nine Track Mind was more of a way for him to explore his voice, Voicenotes is a true representation of his talent.

In his new album, Puth explores a R&B sound infused with pop music. His tracks are self-produced and filled with layers of his recognizable vocals. The album also includes three artist features: Kehlani, Boyz II Men and James Taylor.

Over a year before Voicenotes was released, Puth released his first single off the album, "Attention," an upbeat song that describes an unfaithful relationship in Puth's past. The song has over 650 million streams on Spotify and is among Puth's most successful songs.

The single gave fans a good idea of where Puth was headed with his second album. As expected, Voicenotes is filled with lively songs about emotional breakups and sporadic relationships based on the singer's own experiences.

Puth also adds variety to the album with a more serious song, "Change" featuring James Taylor. The song was inspired by the March For Our Lives movement and debuted at the Los Angeles march in March.

The slower-paced song includes lyrics like "Why can't we just get along" and "We've got to make a change," expressing Puth's frustration with the lack of change taking place in the country amidst violence such as school shootings.

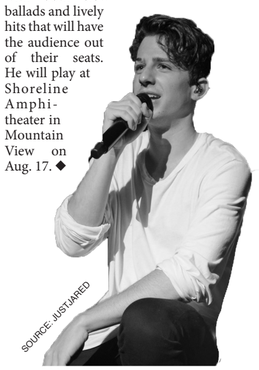
Voicenotes is a great display of Puth's unique sound. All 13 of the songs on the album are different in their own ways, yet still express Puth's personality.

To me, Voicenotes is a better overall album than Nine Track Mind. Singles like "Slow It Down" and "Empty Cups" surround listeners with high energy, whereas singles like "Change" and "Patient" bring a calmer vibe to the album.

On the other hand, Nine Track Mind includes songs that all sound pretty similar. All of the songs were on the slower side, and Puth did not explore his vocal range fully on the tracks.

In just seven days after its release, the album had sold over 500,000 copies and its catchy singles fill listener's summer playlists. Puth is going on an album tour in the fall with opener Hailee Steinfeld.

Fans can expect an exciting show filled with both slow ballads and lively hits that will have the audience out of their seats. He will play at Shoreline Amphitheater in Mountain View on Aug. 17. ◆



2017 alum finds place in music world

BY Daniel**Bessonov**
& Ava**Hooman**

It hasn't even been a year since Class of 2017 alumnus Julius Woods walked on the graduation stage at Benny Pierce Field, and in that time he has begun to forge his path as both a performing artist and music promoter.

Woods remembers walking into a sold-out Catalyst club on Dec. 22, 2017, in Santa Cruz and proudly watching as artists from all around the globe performed songs from their debut albums.

The event, called Lucid Monday, is Woods's brainchild — an opportunity not only for the performing artists to showcase their music, but also for Woods to bootstrap his career in music production and management industry.

These performances are held every third Monday of the month.

What started off as a side-project in Kristofer Orre's physiology and anatomy class during a 20 Time project has now grown into a nationwide event — with Lucid Monday hosting shows across the country.

One show was in Denver in April, while others are planned for Brooklyn, Los Angeles and San Jose.

In 20 Time, students spend 20 percent of their time in class pursuing their interests and connecting their research to what they are learning in class.

Woods said that Lucid Monday, however, is more than an event; Woods's main goal with the show is to not only build a popular show, but a brand.

Doing this, Woods believes, is the most effective way to both mold a name for himself in the music industry, and at the same time give other up-and-coming artists the opportunity to showcase their work and pursue their passion.

Woods has always had a passion for music, learning to play the drums at the tender age of 4 and DJing at parties since middle school.

Since Woods wasn't able to attend as many classes as he would have liked due to his booking schedule, he recently dropped out of the University of Colorado-Denver to pursue his passion full time.

"Although myself and other smaller artists have produced for some of these famous artists, it doesn't automatically give you a ticket to success."

ALUMNUS Julius Woods

According to Woods, deciding to pursue music was a difficult choice, especially coming from Saratoga where college is viewed as being as necessary to life as water.

Even so, Woods said, the people he surrounds himself with are completely supportive of his decision.

"As long as I had a solidified plan on how to bring in income and work 100 percent on Lucid Monday and not attend school, my parents were OK with the decision," Woods said.

With over 400,000 plays of his content on YouTube and Soundcloud and 5,000 followers on Soundcloud, Woods has opened for renowned rapper "Waka Flocka Flame" at a concert and Woods is well on his way to making a name for himself in the music industry.

Dubbing himself "sui.luj."—Julius spelled backwards —Woods has even performed alongside artists such as Gucci Mane and Post Malone.

Even so, Woods said, his success has been difficult. A large barrier in the music industry, Woods said, is a concept known as "leverage."

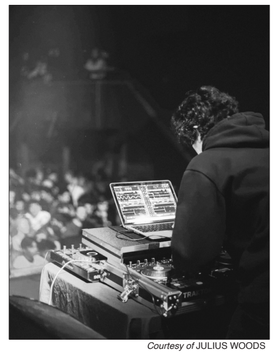
This step is critical because it is ultimately about how much fame artists can acquire and how that can help open doors.

Although a smaller artist such as himself can have a multitude of gigs working for the likes of Lil Pump, Gucci Mane and others, these larger names can often not even credit him for any work that he does. As a result, Woods said, he prefers to work on his own music.

"Although myself and other smaller artists have produced for some of these famous artists, it doesn't automatically give you a ticket to success," Woods said. "I've found that it's always best to create your own gravitational force for other people to join and want to be a part of. It is generally more effective for your own career and just more fun."

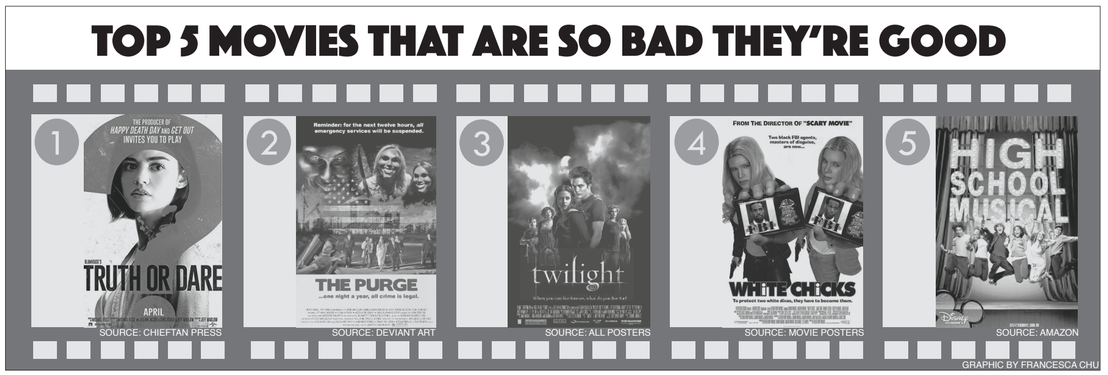
Aside from the these struggles, however, Woods said that he could not be more excited for the future.

"I'll be moving to Los Angeles and starting something new under Lucid Monday, which will be dubbed 'LMTV,'" Woods said. "Although I can't speak too much of it, what I can say is that it will be a reality show and media series about hip hop producers around the country. This whole experience has so far been amazing, and I can't wait to continue down this path of making a name for myself." ◆



Courtesy of JULIUS WOODS

Julius Woods DJs at the Catalyst Club during his Lucid Monday performance on July 10, 2017.



Review: Original content makes YouTube Red worth cost

BY Jackson**Green**
& Patrick**Li**

In October 2015, YouTube launched YouTube Red, a subscription-based service allowing people to watch exclusive series.

YouTube Red costs $10 a month, which is $2 more than Hulu and the basic plan for Netflix.

YouTube Red also includes access to Youtube Music, which rivals competitors like Spotify and Pandora. Users currently have access to 36 original series on YouTube Red; to compare, Netflix has upwards of 190 and Hulu has 35.

Another major selling point of YouTube Red is that it removes ads from regular YouTube videos.

Some of the content of YouTube Red's original series is made by popular YouTube channels, such as CollegeHumor, Good Mythical Morning, Vsauce and Game Theorists. These series are typically departures from the YouTubers' normal fare.

YouTube Red's series are clear attempts to compete with Netflix, so we decided to look at a few YouTube Red series to see if they make the service worth paying for.

The first series we watched was "Rhett and Link's Buddy System," a Good Mythical Morning series.

The series is a scripted comedy series in which Good Mythical Morning hosts, Rhett and Link, play fictionalized versions of themselves.

This is different from their usual fare, as "Good Mythical Morning" is a primarily unscripted comedy show involving various challenges and skits.

Their usual videos are usually on trying new trends, covering certain news topics or simply performing some goofy gimmicks.

The series focuses on the two trying to find Link's lost phone, which is being used to hack the duo's YouTube channel for the purpose of uploading infomercials.

"Rhett and Link's Buddy System" is ultimately very entertaining and humorous. It matches their free videos in raw humor, but is a lot more structured. The banter between Rhett and Link feels very natural, which helped us appreciate the humor more.

Each episode also features an original song, with its lyrics matching the slightly strange sense of humor that the show carries throughout.

For these reasons, we highly recommend "Buddy System" for anyone looking for some laughs. If you're a fan of Good Mythical Morning or Rhett and Link's other content, it is definitely worth paying for.

The second series we watched was "Escape the Night," a series featuring Youtuber Joey Graceffa, who has 8.7 million followers.

The show follows a group of YouTubers invited to a dinner party at a mansion in the 1920s that Graceffa supposedly inherited.

When they get there via time-traveling car, they discover that someone or something in the mansion is attempting to kill them all, and that they must find a way to escape back to the present before it's too late.

We felt that "Escape the Night's" premise just didn't make sense.

YouTube Red costs $10 a month, which is $2 more than Hulu and the basic plan for Netflix.

The mansion that Graceffa inherits apparently only exists in the 1920s, and then everyone has to escape back to the present while something kills them off one by one.

Another issue is roles. Each YouTuber at the mansion is assigned a role to play, such as "Jazz Singer" or "Gambler," in an effort to make them fit into the 1920s theme.

However, this only led to the series feeling forced and inauthentic. In the end, we do not recommend "Escape the Night," due to its inauthentic and confusing storyline.

The last series we saw was "MatPat's Game Lab," The Game Theorists' series.

In the series, the host and a few other famous YouTube gamers attempt to learn about some of the skills in popular video games and then play through a real life re-enactment of the game.

Some of the games used in "Game Lab" include Rocket League, Mirror's Edge, Five Nights at Freddy's and Watch Dogs.

However, the show can feel rigid and structured at times, and the episodes require a level of understanding of the games they are based on.

Game Lab is a good series, and watching the games translate to real life is an entertaining experience.

All in all, we think YouTube Red beats Netflix on the premise of seemingly unscripted comedy.

While Netflix has more structured TV shows, YouTube Red offers laid-back videos of your favorite Youtubers doing funny stunts, challenges and games.

If you watch a lot of YouTube and want to see original content from YouTubers or you just want ad-free YouTube, YouTube Red is for you. ◆

BY Howard**Tang**
& Jeffrey**Xu**

Saratoga resident Charles Liu, father of junior Ferennie and freshman Ferrano Liu, still remembers his experience finding his first job in America.

After graduating from USC in 1998 with a master's degree in electrical engineering, Liu searched the Silicon Valley for a job. As an immigrant, he was under a tight deadline: If he was unable to find work within a month after graduating, he would be forced to leave.

"Staying in China sounds like a normal, easy life, but you have to know the big environment," Liu said. "During that time, the U.S. economy was strong, and although China's economy was booming, it was still not as attractive for the engineering job and living environment."

With the frenzy in tech, Liu was able to find a job opening in at a company called CellNet Inc., which gave him the key to someday obtaining U.S. citizenship: an H-1B visa.

The H-1B visa was created under the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 and grants specialized foreign workers the ability to be employed into U.S. firms. Without this, many Saratoga parents would not be here today.

Not all workers who apply for this visa get them. Only around one-third of them are selected by a lottery system, due to the limited supply and high demand. In 2017, close to 236,000 visa applications were received — and only 85,000 were selected.

Since the beginning of the Trump administration, there has been concern about a decline in both the applying for and issuing of H1-B visas. In financial year 2014, 124,000 were issued, which increased dramatically to 172,500 in 2015, jumped to 233,000 in 2016 and edged upward to 236,000 in 2017.

However, there has been a sharp decline in the 2018 fiscal year, the fiscal year immediately after Trump took office, with only 199,000 applications sent in before applications were closed, according to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The number of H1B visa approvals has also taken a severe hit since the Trump administration took over. Prior to 2017, the approval rate percentages ranged in the mid-70s and low-80s; however, in 2017, when the new administration began handling applications, the approval rate fell to 59 percent.

From these statistics, some employers have begun noticing a crackdown in the immigration sector — an unusually large number of these applications were being challenged by the USCIS. In addition, Trump called for the elimination of other visa programs, such as the Diversity Visa Lottery, based on the belief that immigration should be merit-based, more like the system in Canada.

Trump also says he wants to limit family-based migration, which he also calls chain-migration. These efforts may someday cut the number of foreign workers in the U.S.

> **"It's hard to say where I would be without the H1-B visa, but I have no regrets."**
>
> PARENT Charles Liu

According to Bloomberg, such factors have led many companies, especially information technology companies like Infosys and Tata Consulting Services, which have previously relied heavily on immigrant workers, to cut down their reliance on the visa. As a result, the number of applications received in 2017 has decreased for the first time in five years.

Despite the low chance of getting visas, skilled workers of all professions from foreign countries apply for them each year, hoping to give their children the opportunity for a better life. Some — Asian-Americans in particular — who took this chance and moved to America have become well-paid engineers, doctors, professors and other professionals.

Although Liu's tech background provided for easier job-hunting, for therapist Claudia Gao — cousin of SHS alumnus Steven Fan — the process of getting the visa proved considerably more difficult.

Even with a master's degree in organizational psychology from Columbia University and a bachelor's degree in psychology from UCLA, the Chinese citizen struggled to find a company that would sponsor the visa.

"When I was searching for job, I felt anxious and desperate," Gao said. "Besides the normal feelings most job seekers encounter, I also felt that I didn't belong to this country, since I was a foreigner."

Gao said that as a foreigner, she was at a disadvantage compared to many of her native-born job seekers. He had to go through additional "screening processes" like the H-1B visa selection, as well as other difficulties.

"I was treated differently because of my country of citizenship," Gao said. "While it is understandable that the country needed to protect its own citizens first, it still felt like unfair treatment."

Eventually Gao landed a job as a therapist with the Jersey City Medical Center in Jersey City, N.J., and received her visa. She is hoping to get permanent residence in the U.S., so that she is no longer a foreigner.

Immigrants, like Gao, who hold H-1B visas are still far from being permanent residents, let alone a citizens. They can apply for an I-140 petition, an immigrant petition to permanently work in the U.S. After this is approved, the petitioner receives a green card, a proof of permanent residency for non-U.S. citizens. The applicant is not allowed to change jobs during the application process, but that usually does not hinder the process.

"Usually, the company that sponsors the H-1B visa will sponsor you to apply for a green card," Liu said.

In order to become a citizen, Liu needed to satisfy several requirements, including being fluent in English and having a green card for five years.

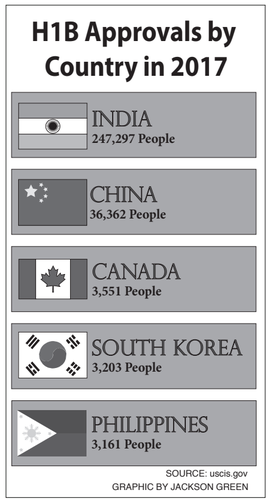
After taking these steps and earning a U.S. citizenship, Liu kept exploring. After a couple of years working in the U.S., Liu decided to move back to China. Although he needed to take care of some family issues and wanted his children to experience different cultures, there were other reasons for his return.

"The Chinese internet business was booming, and as an adventurer, I wanted to go there to look for opportunities, such as starting a company on my own," Liu said. "But after three years, I failed. None of the things I tried for the last 10 years really flew as I wished. So we moved back to the U.S.."

Currently, Liu is working on a facial recognition system for his startup company that he believes will commercialize within the next year. He has been working on this project for the past two years, ever since he quit his job at Samsung.

Liu was able to move to America to both pursue a better career and to give both of his children access to better education. It helped him explore much of the field of engineering that he wouldn't have experienced if he had stayed in China, and it brought his children to a coveted school system. In essence, Liu believes that the H-1B visa changed his life completely.

"Without [the H-1B visa], I would have never even been able to work in the U.S.," Liu said. "It's hard to say where I would be without it, but I have no regrets." ◆



toga**talks**

What is your opinion on the Trump immigration policy?

"It's a bit tighter than it should be, but also Trump has a point, so I'm pretty neutral."

sophomore Bikrant Das Sharma

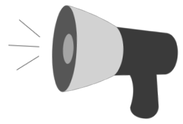
"There is nothing inherently wrong with lowering the number of approved visas."

sophomore Jeffrey Ma

"The U.S. should admit skilled immigrants from diverse backgrounds."

junior Rohan Pandey

Students in speech and debate overcome public speaking fears, reflect on growth



BY Patrick**Li**
& Emilie**Zhou**

Her hands started to sweat and butterflies filled her stomach, as junior Ruchi Maheshwari, then an eighth-grader, waited for her round at the speech and debate tournament to start. She took a few deep breaths to calm the anxiety growing inside of her.

Maheshwari had to face her fear of public speaking when she started speech and debate in middle school. She is not alone in her fear, as according to a survey conducted in 2014 by the Washington Post, a quarter of Americans admit to fearing speaking in front of a crowd, making public speaking the most common phobia in the country.

Maheshwari began speech and debate in sixth grade, because her parents wanted her to get an early exposure to public speaking and overcome the fears most people have.

In the first two years, her fear of public speaking still persisted, but as she became more involved and spent more time practicing, her confidence grew with her abilities.

Maheshwari's main event is Extemporaneous speaking, a 30-minute preparation for a 7-minute speech on current events. She believes this elongated preparation time calms her nerves because she has an idea of what to talk about going in to the speech.

"Other events have acting and improv, whereas my event only centers around facts," Maheshwari said. "It was easier for me to overcome my fear about public speaking because I could hide behind the facts when I ran out of what to say."

In addition, Maheshwari believes that her coach at Redwood, Aditya J. Ullal, helped her overcome her fears. During practices, Ullal forced her to complete her speech no matter what happened. He didn't take any excuses and would push her to keep going in her speech even if she messed up or wanted to start over. He was "super supportive" and by making her overcome her discomfort, he was able to help Maheshwari improve.

"My middle school coach was the first person to really push me to speak in front of people," Maheshwari said. "I wasn't super timid to start off, but I definitely was not the most outspoken person, so his encouragement was the push I needed."

Maheshwari remembers a specific tournament during eighth grade at Stanford where she took a major step in overcoming her fear of public speaking. She had entered in both the international extemp and national extemp events, and her busy schedule had kept her distracted from all of her fears and anxiety.

"It was such a busy day with three or four rounds of each event that I didn't even have time to eat that day," Maheshwari said. "I didn't have the time to build up anxiety in the waiting room before the round started."

To Maheshwari's surprise, she learned to control those feelings of fear and anxiety more and ended up doing well at that tournament, placing first in National Extemporaneous Speaking.

As time went on, Maheshwari slowly became more comfortable with public speaking and also saw improvements in her in-class presentations. By the time freshman year rolled around, Maheshwari had become "super comfortable" with public speaking and since then has continued to see improvements in her abilities.

"I love speech and debate because it's a great way to improve your public speaking skills while keeping up with current events," Maheshwari said.

Sophomore Prisha Samdarshi shares a similar experience of facing her fear of public speaking. Like Maheshwari, Samdarshi main event is extemporaneous speaking.

Before joining speech and debate at the beginning of sophomore year, Samdarshi struggled with public speaking and would always become nervous when talking in front of crowds.

> **"Speech and debate showed me how to be confident in front of an audience."**
>
>
>
> SOPHOMORE Prisha Samdarshi

"In class, I would be terrified of big presentations or speeches," Samdarshi said. "I would also get really nervous to play any role in school plays. Because of this fear, I often held myself back from leadership positions."

Samdarshi's event did not have a coach during the first semester, so the team's captains — Kyle Wang, Arian Raje and Maheshwari — had to fill in for that role. The trio captains played a big role in helping Samdarshi overcome her fears.

At one of Samdarshi's first practices of the year, the captains asked her to give an impromptu speech. She had two minutes to prepare and then had to speak for long as she could afterwards.

"I failed the impromptu speech really badly, but they gave me a lot of good advice on how to become a better speaker and how to think of things to say in a short amount of time," Samdarshi said.

Not only did the captains help Samdarshi improve, but they also made practices fun and educational. For example, they held a mock tournament among the extemp students and promised Chipotle to the winner.

Even so, Samdarshi faced many obstacles.

"At my first speech and debate tournament, I did horribly, and it lowered my confidence a lot," Samdarshi said. "I thought that I hadn't been speaking that badly, but when the judge's comments came back, they all said that I needed to improve on my fluency and eye contact."

Despite the setback, Samdarshi feels more comfortable during public speaking and doesn't get as nervous when addressing a large audience. Speech and debate has helped her overcome some of her fears for public speaking, and she has grown willing to "voice her opinions in class discussions."

"Speech and debate showed me how to be more confident in front of an audience I had never been in front of," Samdarshi said. "I practiced speaking for four hours every week, and after a while it didn't feel like a burden, but more like something I enjoyed."

Although Samdarshi and Maheshwari sometimes still feel the butterflies before a round, they know that they can overcome any fears they have.

"The major tip is to force yourself to do it and not allow yourself to get too psyched out," Maheshwari said. "Go in and eliminate all the factors that can go wrong so that you can just focus on yourself and how you are presenting." ◆

Generation gap leads to differing attitudes on music

BY Kevin**Sze**
& Kaitlyn**Wang**

Junior Sora Ebrahimi has always had an interest in music. He has been singing, playing the drums and Persian instruments, learning the guitar, composing music and attending music classes ever since he was 4 and considers music something he will never grow tired of.

After attending an Avenged Sevenfold concert last July, Ebrahimi said, he knew for certain he wanted to pursue music.

"Watching them on stage triggered something in my brain, and I felt like that was what I wanted to do," Ebrahimi said. "Music is a really personal thing for me, and I began to compose music, got really into it and decided that this was my thing."

But he's learned this path won't always be easy. Ebrahimi's taste in music, which leans in the direction of rock and metal, causes some people to lash out at it. He especially remembers a performance that resulted in trouble.

> **"Don't blame the music for how a kid behaves. It's not the reason they're behaving a certain way."**
>
> JUNIOR Sora Ebrahimi

"Our band was performing at a venue and these adults came over to fight us because they found their kids at the concert," Ebrahimi said. "We told them it's not our fault; we're just here to play music."

Fortunately for him, his parents and friends are more supportive. Although Ebrahimi's mom does not fully like what Ebrahimi is doing because of the genre of music he plays, she is also a musician who plays Persian music and encourages Ebrahimi's own endeavors in music.

The support has fueled Ebrahimi's drive to continue composing, and over the summer he will attend UC Berkeley's College of Music summer camp.

Ebrahimi said he has also struggled to pursue his passion for music fully on his college-preparatory schedule. He wishes he could devote more time to music within the school day.

In the past, Ebrahimi took Winter Percussion but felt like he didn't fully fit in.

Other students have seen negative reactions from adults regarding the music that they love as well.

Sophomore Raj Janardhan grew up as a huge hip hop fan, listening to rap ranging from the sentimental story-telling of J. Cole to the braggadocious and arrogant music of YBN Nahmir.

Janardhan's love for hip hop began when he discovered "Dreams and Nightmares," a popular song by Philadelphia rapper Meek Mill.

"I liked 'Dreams and Nightmares' because it was different from the mainstream music at the time," Janardhan said. "A lot of mainstream stuff was soft and about love or whatever. 'Dreams and Nightmares' was about Mill's life experiences and his success."

On the other hand, Janardhan's parents do not see the appeal of rap music. They believe that the music has too many curse words and talks too much about money and getting women, leading Janardhan to limit the amount of rap he listens to.

"They aren't big fans," Janardhan said. "But they're OK with it as long as I continue to get good grades and I don't use curse words or excessive slang around the house."

Other students find that their parents do not mind the music they listen to.

Senior James Parden listens to similar music to Janardhan, adding artists such as Drake, B.o.B. and 2 Chainz, but his parents are all right with his taste in music.

"My parents think the beat's cool, and honestly I think rappers rap too fast for my parents to even understand what they're saying," Parden said.

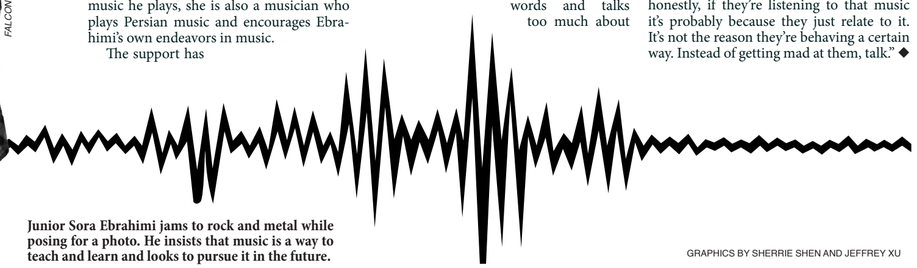
Rock, metal, hip hop, rap and other genres may differ from the music parents are accustomed to, as they grew up listening to the vocals of Michael Jackson, Madonna and Prince instead. Songs of parents who came of age in the '80s talked more about peace, love and positivity instead of money and women.

For parents who dislike the music their children listen to, Ebrahimi said that it does not have as large of an influence on their children's actions as they may think.

"Don't blame the music for how a kid behaves because the music isn't what raised them, for one thing," Ebrahimi said. "And honestly, if they're listening to that music it's probably because they just relate to it. It's not the reason they're behaving a certain way. Instead of getting mad at them, talk." ◆

FALCON // AVA HOOMAN

Junior Sora Ebrahimi jams to rock and metal while posing for a photo. He insists that music is a way to teach and learn and looks to pursue it in the future.



GRAPHICS BY SHERRIE SHEN AND JEFFREY XU

BASEBALL

Improved team wins league; mistakes lead to loss in second round of CCS

BY Patrick**Li** & Michael**Zhang**

Following a disappointing 2017 season, the baseball team was able to make a turnaround and capture first place in the less competitive El Camino Division.

Because of this first-place finish, the team qualified for CCS and will return to the tougher De Anza division for the 2019 season.

In their first CCS game against Leigh High School on May 16, the Falcons were able to score three runs in the bottom of the sixth inning (of a seven-inning game) and hold on to the lead to win 3-2.

"That game was basically a pitcher's duel, where both pitchers were not giving up hits at all," said senior Nathan Peng, who picked up the victory after pitching the entire game for the Falcons.

In the top seventh Peng popped out one player and struck the next two out. Earlier, junior Charles Debling and seniors Chris Auches and Peng had scored the team's three runs.

On May 19, the Falcons lost their CCS game against Soledad 3-1. However, the team does believe that they could have won the game.

"[Soledad] was right around our level, maybe a tiny bit worse, but we just had unfortunate hits and we often would get a hit and just not follow it up," Peng said.

Despite being eliminated from CCS, the team is proud of what they accomplished this season because it was a massive improvement from the previous year, Peng said.

The team finished with a record of 18-8 and two-way star pitcher and catcher Peng won the Triple Crown, an award bestowed to players who lead the league in batting average, home runs and runs batted in.

He also led his team and the league in almost every pitching category, including ERA, complete games and shutouts, with a batting average of .524, 12 home runs and 40 runs batted in.

With Peng's accomplishments as both a pitcher and position player, the UC Davis commit won the league MVP.

Last season the Falcons got last place in league and didn't even make CCS. This year was a complete turnaround: They won league, made CCS and won the first game in the tournament.

Senior pitcher Chris Auches attributed this success to the environment of the team this year.

Courtesy of NOW & FOREVER STUDIOS

Junior Charles Yun stands at the home plate in a game earlier this season.

"This season has been a lot more fun and relaxed," he said. "We're a lot closer as a team this year. But our coaches have been harping on us that we're goofing off too much."

The team hopes to carry the momentum from this season to the upper division next year.

"This year we played against people who were below our level, and the upper division has teams at or above our level, so the team will definitely need to work harder next year," Peng said. ◆

BADMINTON

After undefeated season, varsity Falcons fall at League Finals; star player Ding sits out

BY Jeffrey**Xu**

After a perfect 12-0 season in the El Camino Division, the varsity badminton team competed in the annual Santa Clara Valley Athletic League (SCVAL) tournament, which was held at Gunn High on May 3-4. None of the team members were able to qualify for CCS in the end.

While the Falcons attended the event as a team, all players competed individually or with their partners. Instead of just playing with regular season opponents in the second division, the Falcons also faced stronger players from the upper division.

The team entered the tournament without their star player senior captain Stephen Ding, who plays varsity boys' singles, since he was ill that day.

Each school sent their top two players in each category of boys' singles, girls' singles, boys' doubles, girls' doubles and mixed doubles.

The top male players included freshman Ryan Hsiao and sophomore Daniel Ning for boys' singles and sophomore Alvin Ren with sophomore Jeffrey Xu and senior captain Austin Wang with freshman Wilson Fung for boys' doubles.

Zhang

For the girls, it was freshman Katie Chen and Christine Zhang for girls' singles and senior Isabelle Yang with senior captain Mana Shimokawa and sophomore Joanna Wang with sophomore Rachel Yamamoto and Joanna Wang for girls' doubles.

Finally, for mixed doubles, sophomore Cameron Chow with senior captain Catherine Zhang and junior captain Nathan Luk with junior Mackenzie Lee competed.

Catherine Zhang attributed her loss at SCVALs to her lack of communication with Chow, saying that they weren't able to cover for each other's shots throughout the court.

"Cam and I both expected each of us to cover different shots so that created some conflict on court," Catherine said. "Doubles players especially should communicate, and rather than blaming each other, they should try to find a solution."

She also said that by implementing different approaches to team practices next year, the team will be able to win many games in the upper De Anza Division in the future.

The problem, she said, was that the team this year mostly only practiced within the team instead of scrimmaging others. By playing only within the team and with teammates they are already familiar with, players start forming habits for where they hit their shots, and create vulnerabilities in their game.

In order to practice against people with different players, Catherine Zhang said the team should try to organize more scrimmages with other schools.

"Even though none of the players on our team made CCS this year, we still had a great season," she said. "There's no denying that we're a much stronger team now than before, and our perfect record proves it. If our team does more conditioning and scrimmages, we'll be sure to excel in the upper division next year." ◆

TRACK

Team sends two senior runners to CCS finals

BY Francesca**Chu** & Alexandra**Li**

At CCS finals on May 25 at Gilroy High School, senior sprinter Jaijit Singh placed fourth in the 400-meter race with a time of 49.99 seconds while senior thrower Paige Hansen placed seventh in discus with 113"8'; both barely missed qualifying for NorCals, which requires a top-three finish.

"I feel pretty good about the progress I made this season, considering I reached my goal of getting [past 120 feet] and beat the school record," Hansen said. "But by the time CCS came around, I had already peaked, so I didn't exactly throw as far as I would have hoped."

Also qualifying were senior Chloe McGhee in the 300 meter and sophomore distance runner Julia Hoffman in the 1600 meter. Neither advanced past the preliminary round on May 19. While only some members made it to CCS, the entire team competed at the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League (SCVAL) meet on May 11 at Santa Clara High School. Singh qualified after placing first at SCVAL in the 400 meter with a time of 50.25. He spent the next few weeks preparing for CCS by ramping up his workouts and increasing the reps of each of his exercises.

Hansen also qualified for CCS after placing third in discus at the meet, throwing 113"7', yet felt that it was not her best performance.

"I've done better," Hansen said. "It was pretty windy, so two out of my six throws went out, but I was able to throw far enough to progress to CCS."

To prepare, Hansen continued to train during the weeks leading up to CCS but took the day off on May 24 to ensure that she was completely rested. In practice, she focused on keeping up her speed in the ring and finishing her throw with power.

According to Singh, the team did not do as well as they hoped, since only a few members were able to advance to CCS. However, many were able to set personal records.

Although sophomore sprinter Emma Hsu did not qualify for SCVALS in an individual event and instead competed in the 4x100 relay, she said her team, consisting of Hsu, McGhee, junior Sasha Pickard and freshman Alyssa Pinai, did better than they expected, placing eighth. She hopes for more individual success next year and a more connected team.

The team did not do as well as they hoped, since only a few members were able to advance to CCS.

"We have a super young team, so we're hoping we'll all improve next year," Hsu said. "Right now, our team has a lot of cliques and we rarely interact with other people, so I hope that next year, our team will be more like a family." ◆

THE FALCON FIVE

HOW DOES YOUR TEAM RANK IN THE FALCON FIVE THIS YEAR?

REPORTING BY DANIEL BESSONOV, SIVA SAMBASIVAM, RAHUL VADLAKONDA, ALEX WANG

Courtesy of Talisman, CF Diwng, Boys' Tennis Team

1. Boys' Volleyball (1)
Campus Presence: **9**
Improvement: **3**
Winning Score: **24**
League Score: **4**
CCS: **4**
Star Factor: **M. Duvvuri**
Total: **44**

After back-to-back NorCal championships, the volleyball team didn't meet their regular standards. However, a CCS semifinal appearance without their star player from a year ago is enough for them to keep their spot atop our annual rankings, for a third consecutive year.

2. Girls' Tennis (2)
Campus Presence: **6**
Improvement: **4**
Winning Score: **25**
League Score: **4**
CCS: **4**
Star Factor: **M. Stratakos**
Total: **43**

With a season record of 9-3, the girls' tennis team, led by sophomore Monica Stratakos, finished off second in the De Anza League and had numerous strong individual CCS performances—securing their place in the Falcon's top three for the second year in a row.

3. Boys' Golf (15)
Campus Presence: **4**
Improvement: **5**
Winning Score: **25**
League Score: **4**
CCS: **4**
Star Factor: **K. Sze**
Total: **42**

Due to the persistent efforts of strong underclassmen talent, including sophomore Kevin Sze and freshman Albert Jing, the Falcons placed second in the league tournament and as a result qualified for the CCS playoffs for the first time in four years.

4. Boys' Tennis (6)
Campus Presence: **6**
Improvement: **3**
Winning Score: **22**
League Score: **4**
CCS: **3**
Star Factor: **D. Stratakos**
Total: **38**

Placing second in the higher division De Anza league, the boys' tennis team performed on-par with previous seasons. However, faced with numerous issues, the boys were not able to advance far at CCS. Nonetheless, the boys take number four atop our annual rankings.

5. Badminton (21)
Campus Presence: **5**
Improvement: **5**
Winning Score: **20**
League Score: **5**
CCS: **1**
Star Factor: **S. Ding**
Total: **36**

After a one-win year that ended in a league demotion, the badminton team responded with a 12-0 season. However, their star player Stephen Ding, who had only lost twice all year, couldn't play in CCS, causing the badminton team to end their season with only a league title.

Sport (last year's ranking)	Campus Presence (1-10)	Improvement (1-5)	Winning Score (+10 for upper league)	League Score (0-5)	CCS (0-5)	Star Factor	Total	Evaluation
6. Baseball (24)	7	5	13	5	4	N. Peng	34	After a rough 2017, the baseball squad put together one of the best seasons in recent memory.

>> Focus

MOST IMPROVED

Baseball

After struggling throughout 2017, the baseball team, led by UC Davis Commit Nathan Peng, rebounded with a strong regular season, giving them a first place league finish. They also qualified for CCS, and made the semifinal, giving them the nod at #6 in our rankings.

Star Factor: Nathan Peng

The future UC Davis star not only led his team in every major category, but also the league as well. He won both the hitting and pitching triple crown, leading the circuit in batting average, home runs and RBIs at the plate, while finishing first in ERA, strikeouts and wins on the mound. He also threw two shutouts, and showed up in the clutch, throwing his sixth complete game during the team's first playoff game, giving the teeam their first CCS victory in the last five years.

Courtesy of TALISMAN

Senior Nathan Peng pitches against Monta Vista, during his second complete game shutout of the season.

T-6. B. Cross Country (10)	4	3	22	3	2	A. Nag	34	The boys cross country team was able to place top ten in league led by star runner Amit Nag.
T-6. G. Golf (22)	4	3	22	3	2	S. Lo	34	The team enjoyed a successful season, and sent star player Sarah Lo to the CCS playoffs.
T-6. G. Basketball (14)	8	4	16	3	3	J. Loo	34	Led by freshman guard Jane Loo, the Falcons were able to qualify for CCS for the fourth consecutive season.
10. B. Basketball (5)	10	3	12	4	4	H. Fong	33	Following a season with a NorCal Appearance, the Falcons' didnt meet expectations, but still made CCS
11. B. Soccer (16)	8	4	11	3	4	N. Rao	30	Led by a strong defense and a superb goalie in Neil Rao, the boys were able to make the CCS semifinal.
12. G. Swimming (4)	6	3	13	1	3	L. Otsuka	26	The girls' swim team, although struggling through a rough regular season, sent two individual athletes to CCS finals.
13. G. Track (17)	5	3	10	4	3	P. Hansen	25	The girls track team had a successful regular season and playoffs, sending two players to the CCS finals, including star senior Paige Hansen.
T-14. Football (12)	10	1	12	1	0	H. Fong	24	After losing their three-year quarterback to graduation, the Falcons struggled mightily, and didn't qualify for CCS.
T-14. G. Volleyball (8)	6	3	8	4	3	R. Carter	24	The girls' volleyball team, led by seniors Riley Carter and Hannah Fan, qualified for CCS for the third straight year.

Honorable Mentions: B. Track, B. Swimming, Softball, B. Water Polo, B. Lacrosse, G. Soccer, G. Water Polo, G. Cross Country, G. Lacrosse, Field Hockey, Wrestling

Freshman swimmer excels on varsity team

BY SeanOh & EmilieZhou

Unlike many top swimmers, freshman Tomasso Morini Bianzino didn't begin swimming competitively at age 4 or 5. Instead, he has been swimming competitively with De Anza Cupertino Aquatics (DACA) for only four years after being introduced to the sport by a friend.

Since then, Morini Bianzino has become one of the best swimmers in his age group and is on the school's varsity team. He currently swims for the school, practices with DACA and attends meets for both teams.

Some of Morini Bianzino's biggest achievements include setting two DACA records last summer in the 13-14 age group for 200 meters freestyle and 400 meters freestyle with times of 1:58.69 and 4:15.38, respectively. In addition, he cracked the top 50 in the U.S. for his age group in the 200 free event last summer when he was 14.

"I realized I had potential when I began catching up and beating some people in my team that had a history of being faster than me," he said.

"My experiences taught me how to control my nerves and perform."

FRESHMAN Tomasso Morini Bianzino

Racing and participating in relay races are Morini Bianzino's favorite parts of swimming. He especially remembers one relay where he surprised many of his teammates with his unexpected speed.

"It's great when you manage to catch up to the people that had underestimated you for so long," Morini Bianzino said.

Coming this far in his swimming was not easy and required hard work. Not only has Morini Bianzino grown as a swimmer, but his participation has also made him feel more confident out of the pool.

"My experiences taught me how to control my nerves and perform in front of others without panicking and messing up," Morini Bianzino said.

In order to continue to improve, Morini Bianzino practices six days a week in preparation for the various meets.

His training includes practicing for two and a half hours in the afternoons, one hour in the mornings on Tuesdays and Thursdays and another hour and a half on Saturdays. His practices also consist of about half an hour of different dryland exercises, totaling up to around 16 hours a week of training.

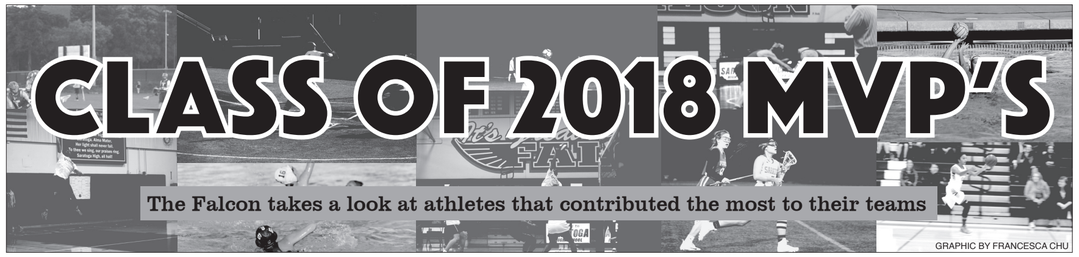
Despite the demanding practices and frequent meets, Morini Bianzino has been able to balance his schedule between swimming and school by "focusing on one at a time rather than being overwhelmed by both."

Being a member of a team also motivates him throughout the season.

"I have a lot of friends in the group and every relay is really fun with them," Morini said. "Just being with them and practicing with them makes me want to do it more."

Even though the sport has become a constant in his life, Morini Bianzino is uncertain about continuing swimming throughout college. He would like to have a career outside of swimming, but will continue to love the sport and the memories he has made.

"My favorite part about swimming is just being with your friends, cheering for them, watching them race and seeing all the hard work put into practice pay off," Morini Bianzino said. ◆



GRAPHIC BY FRANCESCA CHU

WILLIAM
Turpin
Male Runner-up

Sports: football, basketball

Team Accomplishments: basketball — CCS runner up (2016), two other CCS appearances ('18 basketball, '17 football)

College: Aurora University (basketball)

Evaluation: Turpin was a huge contributor for the football and basketball squads for the last two and three seasons respectively. Turpin finished his senior year second on the team to Harrison Fong in receiving yards and receiving touchdowns for football, as well as points for basketball. He will go down as top-15 in total points for basketball over his career.

HARRISON
Fong
Male MVP

Sports: football, basketball, volleyball

Team Accomplishments: volleyball — two NorCal Championships (2016, 2017), CCS Championship ('16), basketball — CCS runner up (2016), 3 CCS appearances ('18 basketball, '17 football, '18 volleyball)

Personal Accomplishments: team leader in receptions (football 2018), team leader in scoring, assists, Team MVP, first Team All-League (basketball 2018)

Evaluation: Over the past three years, Fong has been a spectacular three sport athlete. He will go down as top 10 in football receptions, and top 10 in scoring for basketball in SHS ranks. Fong has also been to the CCS playoffs 6 times, appearing in the finals in half of those trips. He is undoubtedly Class of 2018's best player, and will look to walk on to Oregon's football squad this fall.

CHLOE
McGhee
Female MVP

Sports: soccer, track

Team Accomplishments: soccer CCS appearance (2017), track CCS appearance (2016, 2017)

Personal Accomplishments: two time team leader in goals scored, points (soccer '16, 17). 300 meter hurdles CCS Championship semifinalist (track '18)

College: Northwestern University (soccer)

Evaluation: During her high school career, McGhee has been the best female athlete of the school. In addittion to leading her team in almost every major category for soccer, she led them to a CCS appearance in 2017. She has also been a huge athlete for the track and field team over the past three seasons, finishing her senior season as a semifinalist for the 300 meter hurdles.

PAIGE
Hansen
Female Runner-up

Sports: volleyball, track and field

Accomplishments: CCS volleyball appearance (2016) 3 time CCS appearance Track and Field ('16, '17, '18)

College: Cal Poly SLO (discus)

Evaluation: Hansen has been one of the most prolific track team members in school history. In addition to holding numerous school records for the discus, she has also made CCS three consecutive years, finishing her senior year as a CCS finalist. She has also been a major factor on the volleyball team, which has also qualified for CCS .

GRAPHICS AND REPORTING BY SIVA SAMBASIVAM

Hard work and time commitment help college athletes Chen and Liddle succeed

BY LinaKim & KaryleneMorrison

2017 alumnus Will Liddle was about to take off down a slope at the Boreal Mountain Resort in Lake Tahoe when his phone rang. Fumbling to remove his gloves, Liddle finally managed to pull his phone out, but the caller had already hung up.

In the midst of the college recruiting process last year, Liddle could sense the call's importance. He called the number back immediately, finding it was a defensive coordinator and recruiting coach on the line who had seen tapes of him playing at Saratoga High. A few months later, Liddle committed to playing quarterback for the football team at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon.

Every year, as seniors prepare to choose their school for the next four years, a select number of them juggle multiple recruiting offers to play a sport in college.

2017 alumna Emily Chen is another graduate who received such an offer and is playing field hockey at UC Davis.

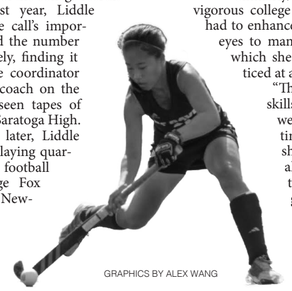
"I wanted to play field hockey in college I love," she said. "I had a great experience in high school and wasn't ready to give up playing field hockey competitively."

Students like Liddle and Chen choose to continue playing sports college for a multitude of reasons: honing skill, sharing a sense of camaraderie among team members and feeling the excitement that comes with the increase in competitiveness.

"I love the team competition at the collegiate level," he said. "There are eight or nine quarterbacks on my team and so I am battling every single day for the starting job."

Similarly, in order to keep up with vigorous college field hockey, Chen has had to enhance her skills and open her eyes to many nuances in the sport, which she had previously not noticed at a lower level.

"There's a good number of skills and tactical details that we can't spend that much time on in high school," she said. "And learning it all can be tough, but these things add more to the game to make it more interesting."



GRAPHICS BY ALEX WANG

Along with trying to polish their sports skills, college athletes have hours of challenging school work to complete daily.

A typical day for Liddle starts with him attending all his academic classes and completing his assignments prior to football activities. Then from 4 p.m. until 6:30 p.m., Liddle watches recordings of the previous day's practice along with the team's other quarterbacks, noting specific important aspects in order to prepare for a film study session with all the offensive players, which takes place at 7 p.m. From 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., the players lift weights in addition to conditioning.

Likewise, Chen also has a busy day, being on the go from 7 a.m. to around 7 p.m. Chen's schedule fluctuates each day depending on her classes. Generally, she attends classes in the morning, goes to practice for three hours, attends yet more classes and then completes her homework.

On game days, her team gathers for sprints to increase their heart rates a few hours before the game. Then the team will either load onto the bus and head off or warm up on the field an hour prior to game time, depending on whether the game is being held at UC Davis or another school.

In terms of advice for current juniors or seniors planning on doing a sport in college, Chen suggests that they stay organized; she has adopted a strategy in which she writes out her daily schedules hour by hour.

"Be ready to time manage and be efficient with your time. Collegiate sports are a much larger time commitment than high school sports," Chen said.

Additionally, both Chen's and Liddle's description of what is required of them debunks the stereotype that athletes do not need to be as intelligent as non-athletes.

"As a quarterback, the mental strain is tremendous because you must be the most intelligent man on the field at all times," Liddle said. "Everything hinges upon your performance and you must be able to recognize coverages, slides, blitzes, missed routes and pocket presence all within a four second window."

With their freshman year almost over and additional playing time in their belt, both Chen and Liddle have gained more experience with on-the-field action.

"I played in every game and started most of the games in the second half of our season, maybe around 8 or 9," Chen said. "On the field, it was at first pretty intimidating because the pace of the game felt so fast and so many of our opponents were very skillful and physically strong. As the season went on, I got more used to our team's structure and adapted better to the pace of the game."

Liddle, as well, was able to participate much in on-the-field action in JV games, as freshman do not yet get to play on the varsity level.

"Football in college is set apart from high school in so many ways. It is faster, the athletes are better, the windows to throw are smaller, but you as an athlete are better as well," Liddle said. "I played extremely well, averaging a touchdown every series I went in, and I did not throw any interceptions all year.

Despite the difficulty of juggling school work and sports practice and the mental and physical strain of playing a college sport, both athletes said their enthusiasm for their respective sport has not decreased.

"Being able to achieve something I dreamed about when I was younger means a lot to me," Chen said. "It's been so fun to continue to be a part of a team and represent my school." ◆

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>> snapshots

TALISMAN // SAHANA SRIPADANNA

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FALCON // AVA HOOMAN

Superintendent Bob Mistele shows pig dissection while subbing for biology teacher Kristen Thomson on May 25.

Senior Servant Day features senior Lyra Bhurji pulling junior Jennah El-Ashmawi on May 25.

Sophomore Risa Carter and senior Chloe McGhee dress as "The Incredibles" characters during the rally.

Sophomore Joelle Compeau participates in Fashion Swap Day on May 24.

buzzworthy >> The raw truth behind the juice cleanse

BY Ava**Hooman** & Esha**Lakhotia**

We used to think that a juice cleanse was simply a type of dieting that celebrities used. Since it's not backed by a ton of scientific evidence and since word of mouth offers mixed opinions about the practice, we were skeptical about trying it ourselves. But after watching BuzzFeed's YouTube video titled "What's a Juice Cleanse Really Like," we were inspired to take on the challenge.

In essence, a juice cleanse is a diet where someone only drinks blended fruits and vegetables for several days or even weeks on end. The purpose of this is to "cleanse" their bodies of all the toxins and bad bacteria; however, the main goal for many is to lose weight and gain more energy.

The video exposed the reality of the juice cleanse to people who have never tried it by documenting the experience of four different adults. The people in the video either gained or lost energy, and we were curious to see how it would affect us.

To start off our juice cleanse, we headed to Pressed Juicery in Los Gatos and bought two of their three-day juice cleanse packages. Eighteen juices were included in each package for $90 with a membership, and $104 without one. We chose the "Cleanse 1 Package," which included more vegetables than fruits.

The price was ridiculously expensive, but we went with it since many people on YouTube recommended Pressed Juicery. (We didn't make the juices ourselves because we felt it was too much work, which probably would have led us to quit.)

We were expecting the cleanse to be the most difficult on the first day and become easier on the second or third, since we would have adjusted to it by then. We also expected to be full throughout the day due to drinking all six juices. The first day was not too challenging since we felt our stomachs being filled up with consistently drinking all day. To finish all six juices, we planned to drink one every time we would normally eat a meal and drink the other three as a snack between "meals" to keep us energized. It was difficult to see others around us indulging in solid foods, but we kept reminding each other and ourselves that this would better our health at the end.

The second day was the most challenging. The reason: We both woke up starving. Neither one of us usually feels hungry in the morning so this was a strange feeling. We made the mistake of having three out of the six juices all before lunch time due to our hunger. It was hard not to eat anything during the afternoon, so we drank a lot of water to fill up our stomachs.

The third and final day was actually much easier than the second. Our bodies had gotten used to the cleanse by this point and we learned from our mistake in day two to evenly space out the juices.

By the end of the cleanse, we were excited that we had successfully only drank juices throughout those three days. The cleanse had its upsides, the biggest one being that it reduced our craving for junk food in the days following. We also lost two to three pounds each.

The drawback was that we found ourselves less energetic due to our hunger and constant craving of healthy food. Throughout the days of the cleanse, we felt distracted and were constantly thinking about food, rather than feeling more energetic.

Even though it can be tough, an occasional juice cleanse seems worth the hassle for its health benefits. We would do the cleanse again after a vacation or after eating a lot of junk food. Though it is a bit on the pricey side, we concluded doing the cleanse is worth it for your health and body — but only every once in a while. ◆

Ipsy, the new makeup solution

REPORTERS REVIEW A MONTHLY MAKEUP SUBSCRIPTION

Lava

Ava Hooman and Esha Lakhotia

Buying makeup can get expensive. Just a concealer, mascara and eyeshadow can cost upwards of $100. Luckily, there is a solution to this craving for new products: Ipsy.

Ipsy, a makeup subscription company, provides its subscribers with five makeup samples and a makeup bag for $10 each month. The products in the company's metallic pink package include skincare items, perfumes, nail products and makeup.

Ipsy was founded in 2011 by Michelle Phan, Marcelo Camberos and Jennifer Jaconetti Goldfarb. Phan, a beauty YouTuber, knew the dynamics of the makeup industry and used that to capitalize on consumer greed with the help of her two partners, who specialize in that area of marketing. Because the makeup market relies on the constant release of new products to maintain customer interest and profits, Phan, Camberos and Goldfarb created a business that fed into this mass consumerism.

New products are being released constantly and at increasingly high prices. Companies also tell consumers that their products expire within a few months and that they need to always stay with new trends by buying all new releases.

Ipsy's goal is to provide customers with makeup without the chaos of constantly trying to find good products. With an array of different samples, customers get to try new products for only ten dollars a month when in reality the individual products would add up to much more.

We were highly satisfied with our products. The subscription gave us the freedom of trying new products for a cheap price.

When we heard about this service a few months ago from YouTube, we could not wait to try it out for ourselves. After signing up for the monthly deal, we answered 15 multiple choice questions to see what our style of makeup and skincare was. When we finished, we were sure that they would send us the right products.

The first package we received included a sample of the Too Faced's "Better Than Sex" mascara, a foundation sample from Laura Mercier, a contour palette from Anastasia Beverly Hills, Shawn Mendes' "Signature Perfume" and an eyeshadow sample pot from Benefit Cosmetics.

Needless to say, we were highly satisfied with our products. The subscription gave us the freedom of trying new products for a cheap price. We both are not heavy users of makeup but find the products we received useful for parties and events. We also tried to follow YouTube makeup tutorials with these new products and found them to be useful in achieving some of the looks.

The second box included a small size of Benefit's "Roller Lash" mascara, a glittery gold eyeshadow pot from Nomad cosmetics, a brown eyeliner, a hair oil and a red lipstick.

We really liked the Roller Lash mascara and decided to buy the full size one after using the sample. The product showed immediate growth in our lashes when we applied it.

But after the second month, we decided to terminate our subscription since we are not heavy users of makeup and already got the basics from these samples.

Overall, we highly recommend the products we received for the first month and this service is really useful to both makeup addicts and beginners. ◆

topten

THINGS TO DO THIS SUMMER

10 **Exercise.** Your fingers will make the Rock jealous after putting in work on that brand new Princeton Review SAT prep book.

9 **Visit colleges.** West Valley and De Anza have never been closer.

8 **Go on a safari trip.** Open the web browser and you'll have access to a whole other world.

7 **Travel.** To your fridge.

6 **Pay a visit to Jökulsárlón.** It's the deepest lake in Iceland, where you can bury your regrets of the past.

5 **Get a hot beach body.** The body of a beached whale.

4 **Host a fried butter eating contest.** That way, you won't feel guilty about downing 3 of those suckers in a span of 27 seconds.

3 **Get a boating license.** Even though you won't be pulling into the parking lot in your motorboat next year.

2 **Do some required summer reading.** That is, reading subtitles on Netflix.

1 **Make a bonfire on the beach.** Use unfinished homework as tinder.

>> Victor Liu & Muthu Palaniappan