

New hall policies overly restrictive.

CASSY to move to center of campus.

Analysis: voluntourism ineffective or useful?



Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Saratoga, CA  
Permit No. 41

# THE saratogafalcon



Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA

saratogafalcon.org

Friday >> September 14, 2018

An Independent School Publication

Vol. 59, No. 1

## FALCONS PREP FOR GAME AT Levi's STADIUM

BY Megan Chen & Krithi Sankar

The school's annual Homecoming football game will be held at Levi's Stadium on Sept. 21 against Santa Clara, the result of an outreach effort by the San Francisco 49ers to local communities. The admission ticket will cost \$25 while the cost of a bus ticket will be \$10, Homecoming commissioner senior Madison Hartmann said. Students are free to drive to the game, but they will have to pay a \$20 parking fee. Late last semester, coach Tim Lugo was approached by Jared Muela, the director of 49ers PREP, a program under the 49ers Foundation to foster better relations with nearby communities. Muela offered Lugo a

>> **HOMECOMING** on pg. 3

FALCON // KRITHI SANKAR AND ALAN ZU

## New superintendent hired after Mistele's retirement

BY David Koh & Jeffrey Ma

In anticipation of ex-superintendent Robert Mistele's retirement in late June, the district board of trustees completed an extensive nationwide search for new candidates over the summer and eventually selected Dr. Michael Grove as the district's new superintendent.

Grove, who has worked in education for almost 30 years, was selected out of a pool of approximately 50 candidates after going through several rigorous rounds of interviews.

He was most recently the associate superintendent for the San Dieguito High School District, which has 10 schools and

over 13,000 students and includes both middle and high schools.

"I'm enjoying the small size of LGSUHS because there is definitely a family feel and everyone knows each other," Grove said in email responses to questions from The Falcon.

Principal Paul Robinson said that San Dieguito District shares many aspects in common with the Los Gatos-Saratoga District, so he's "really excited about having [Grove] come [to the district]."

In the past, Grove has also been a director of curriculum and principal of both high schools and middle schools in the San Dieguito District. Grove used to teach English for nine years and also

coached speech and debate on the side.

Grove became an administrator in 1999 when he started as an assistant principal and Western Association of Schools and Colleges coordinator, eventually becoming a full-time middle school assistant principal.

After serving as both a middle and high school principal, Grove became the executive director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and soon became the associate superintendent of educational services.

Besides his experience in middle and high schools, Grove has also served as a professor in the Master's in Educational Leadership Program at California State Uni-

versity San Marcos and holds a doctorate in Educational Administration from a UC Irvine and UCLA joint program.

Grove's wife, Melissa Grove shares in his love for education and works as an AP English and Film Studies teacher at Rancho Buena High School in the Vista Unified School District.

For the time being, she is remaining in San Diego while looking for a new job in the Bay Area and working on renting out their San Diego home.

Grove officially began his tenure on Sept. 1, succeeding Mistele, who had worked in the Los Gatos-Saratoga district as an administrator and superintendent for a total of

>> **SUPERINTENDENT** on pg. 3

## Two AP social studies classes shift curricula

BY Andrew Li & Jeffrey Ma

Students taking junior and senior-level AP social studies courses have seen major changes this year aimed at making the material more accessible and relevant.

The AP U.S. Government and Politics course has shifted its curriculum moderately to match the revised AP test, while the AP U.S. History curriculum has been completely altered.

Teachers and students around the country that the AP U.S. History (APUSH) had criticized the test as too broad, leaving educators with inadequate time to cover the necessary material. In response, the College Board initiated the redesigning of social studies tests with the release of a new APUSH test in 2014.

AP U.S. Government and Politics is the third of these exam redesigns that the College Board has unveiled, following in the footsteps of changes to AP U.S. History and European History.

The College Board website outlined four goals for the new government test and curriculum: more room for teachers to cultivate understanding, more focus on students utilizing the knowledge they develop, more emphasis on the founding documents and primary sources and more emphasis on applied learning.

AP Government and Politics teacher Kirk Abe said that to match the changes, greater emphasis will be placed on documents earlier in the school year to help students better prepare

>> **CURRICULUM** on pg. 2

## New rules to curb JUULing enforced by administration

BY Ananya Vadlakonda & Christine Zhang

Following a steep increase in JUULing on campus last year, the administration began the school year with several new policies aimed to better monitor students outside of the classroom.

Each classroom has been given its own set of flip-flops, color-coded by area on campus, which students must take with them when they use the restroom. Additionally, the administration has strictly prohibited students from bringing their cell phones with them when leaving the classroom during class time.

According to assistant principal Brian Thompson, the administration tightened up the rules to keep students from disrupting other classes by socializing with their friends during class time in

the bathrooms, or by JUULing and vaping, which were problems noticed by the administration last year.

Thompson said the color-coded flip-flops are intended to keep students in their designated area. He also justified the prohibition of students taking their cell phones with them out of class with his observation of students texting or calling their friends to encourage them to leave their classes as well.

"We've had students go outside the classroom and wait outside the door, texting their friends to meet them," Thompson said.

Although Thompson is aware of the loopholes in the new system, he said he would rather focus his energy on rebuilding a healthy relationship between the students and administration.

>> **HALL RULES** on pg. 3

### >> what'sinside

#### STAFF

##### Six new teachers

A diverse group of teachers, including two Saratoga graduates, is hired to fill vacancies. **pg. 4-5**

#### OPINION

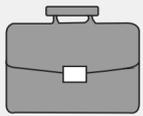
##### Summer homework

Reading "The Crucible" over the summer for English 11H was not as bad as students expected. **pg. 6**

#### ENTERTAINMENT

##### Homecoming movies

Review of "Narnia," "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," "The Wizard of Oz" and "Alice in Wonderland." **pg. 14**



## news >> briefs

### This year's National Merit Semifinalists announced

It was particularly tough to become a National Merit semifinalist this year, with the selection index increasing by one point. However, the Class of 2019 rose to the challenge, with a grand total of 25 National Merit semifinalists.

National Merit is a corporation that identifies top scholars based on their PSAT scores from junior year. To be a semifinalist, a student must be in the top 1 percent of all test-takers.

Despite the higher test scores required this year, the following seniors were able to qualify for the honor:

Nirav Adunuthula, Victor Chen, Francesca Chu, Elaine Fan, Ankur Garg, Jamie Hong, Ethan Ko, Alexandra Li, Thomas Lim, Victor Liu, Nathan Luk, Carolyn Ma, Srishta Munukutla, Kiran Rachamalla, Yashwanth Rachepalli, Arian Rajee, Alex Ruemmler, Blake Smith, Justin Sun, Amy Tang, Tanuj Vasudeva, Merrick Wang, Catherine Wu, Annie Xu and Michael Zhang.

— Jackson Green

### Junior class officers host back-to-school drive

Junior class officers organized the second annual back-to-school supply drive to help out Sunday Friends, a non-profit organization in need of school supplies to give to the children in their program, from Aug. 16-24.

By the end of the drive, two whole bins were brimming with school supplies.

According to Hsu, the junior class office also wants to reach out to Redwood Middle School and the three local elementary schools (Argonaut, Foothill and Saratoga) if they decide to host the drive again and get help from the students there.

"I believe that it is important for us to give back to children who are less fortunate than us because we live in such a small bubble and we never interact with people in need," Hsu said.

— Shreya Katker

### Newly hired DJ plays at Back to School dance

Students gathered in the quad on Aug. 17 for the annual back to school dance, themed "Welcome To The Jungle."

ASB dance commissioner junior Nicole Wong said it was an overall success, even if attendance wasn't as high as she had hoped.

Along with the general festivities, the dance commission also ran a costume contest; the prize was two tickets to winter formal. The winner was senior Rachel Bakke, who was dressed as a tropical bird.

According to Wong, the budget for the dance was a total of \$1,657.46 and the amount made was \$1,572.46. About 150 to 200 students attended, she said.

Some students complained about a new DJ Sir Edgar, who replaced DJ Delicious.

"I personally found some of the songs he played hard to dance to," sophomore Charlotte Shewchuk said. "I didn't know a lot of them."

— Marisa Kingsley

## >> falcononline



### Top Story

Junior recalls the pressures and perks of junior year. on pg. 12

### Top Picture

Hundreds of parents converged on campus on Aug. 22 to meet their students' teachers, with students to direct them. Courtesy of TALISMAN



To use: cover the QR codes except for the one you would like to

## >> picturethis



FALCON // ALAN ZU

**DECORATION >> Senior Anisha Byri paints a cartoon of Alice Liddell from the 1951 film "Alice in Wonderland" on Sept. 10 for her class Homecoming decorations, which will be put on display this weekend.**

### CURRICULUM

continued from pg. 1

for the test. The number of units has decreased to five and throughout them, essential documents will be covered.

Abe is also following one of College Board's goals by reviewing Supreme Court cases more often than in the past.

Unlike AP Government, the APUSH test isn't changing this year; instead, the course is being altered due to longstanding issues with the previous curriculum.

After a re-examination of the course, APUSH teacher Faith Stackhouse-Daly and APUSH MAP teacher Matt Torrens decided this year that a complete overhaul of the curriculum was necessary.

The central problem lay in the reading-paragraph assignment pair that was central to the old curriculum. Students were expected to read through chapters from the textbook "The American Pageant" and respond to key ideas and interpretations in the form of a homework paragraph.

The time-consuming nature of the assignment was overwhelming for many students, leading to a lot of cutting corners and turning in substandard work. The two teachers also thought the homework took the focus away from the actual learning.

"The paragraphs were not only writing intensive and time intensive for students, but they were also grading intensive for us," Daly said. "It took so long to get through them that by the time I got through a set of them, students had written one, two, three more, making the exact same mistakes."

While the intent behind the assignment was originally to hone students' skills in writing and interpreting, it simply wasn't serving its purpose, even though every year the teachers changed the length, content and frequency in efforts to improve it.

"We tweaked them again to try and make them a little more focused," Daly said. "And then we tweaked them again. And then we tweaked them again."

However, this summer, Daly and Torrens "decided that no amount of tweaking was going to put [the paragraph assignment] where [they] wanted," so they elected to completely remove it, leaving only reading and optional notes as homework. Writing is emphasized during class periods instead, when teachers can provide more direct feedback.

But the paragraph isn't the only part of the reading-writing duo to see major changes during the re-vamping of the curriculum.

The textbook itself, "The American Pageant," is also finally being retired in favor of James W. Fraser's "By the People: A History of

the United States."

The biggest issues surrounding "The American Pageant" were due to its age. First published in 1956, the textbook was already on its 16th edition.

"Because it is old and because they're just revising and not re-writing, there are some pieces of historiography that have not kept pace with current changes, particularly in how it treats non-white populations," Daly said.

"The American Pageant" gave limited historical agency to non-white actors, and often painted them as only victims. Further criticism of the older textbook was in its length: Its 1,008 pages and 31 chapters made it a challenge for both educators and students.

In both these regards, "By the People" is an improvement. Not only does it cover more material in its 938 pages, but the textbook also provides a broader and more well-rounded treatment of non-white populations.

The new textbooks will be ready for distribution in the coming few months; currently, APUSH students are reading from PDFs of it. Daly said that "By the People" will help the course "right-size the requirements."

With all these changes in the course, Daly emphasized that there's still one important thing to remember: "APUSH is still APUSH. It's still one of the hardest APs out there." ♦

## Freshman class votes for officers

BY Allison Hartley & Muthu Palaniappan

The Friday after Labor Day, freshman class office held their first fundraiser for their high school careers. They sold boba after school raised over \$100 to add to their class bank, the first of several fundraisers they will hold this year.

These kinds of jobs await the recently elected freshman class officers: president Derek Hsu, vice president Apurva Chakravarthy, secretary Cheryl Wu, treasurer Weilin Sun and class representative Esther Luan.

Unlike last year, there was not enough time for elections while the class of 2022 was still in eighth grade at Redwood Middle School. In upcoming years, elections commission hopes to hold elections while the students are still in middle school, elections commission-

were 10 candidates for the elections. Out of the 342 freshmen, 227 voted through the online voting process before Aug. 22.

**"We hope to help make the transition from middle to high school much smoother."**

FRESHMAN Derek Hsu

Many candidates campaigned through the end of their eighth grade year through Instagram. Chakravarthy said she mainly gained support by spreading her campaign picture via Instagram stories. Posters, visible in the halls around SHS during the beginning of this school year, were another common method.

wood Middle School, she ran for office because she wanted to help organize events for her class.

"My main goals that I have for class office are to organize fundraisers that will be fun for our class and to make sure that homecoming goes smoothly," Chakravarthy said.

Similarly, Wu has not been a part of student leadership before, but wanted to contribute to her class after helping set up for the eighth grade graduation party. She hopes to continue helping the school through such planning and has a lot of ideas for class office this year, building stronger communication and leadership skills in the process.

Ultimately, the freshman class officers said they will try their best to guide their class through the first year of high school.

"With my other officers, we hope to help make the transition

# Rodriguex returns to teach class after 'retiring'

by Christine Zhang

During Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguex's official retirement in June, students and staff alike thanked him for his work and bid him well in retirement. Little did they know he would be returning, yet again, to teach one class of Spanish 5 AP, making it his 39th year at the school and 45th in the district.

Rodriguex did not originally intend on coming back to teach at Saratoga High. In fact, by a requirement set for California public schools, he was not supposed to teach in a classroom until at least 180 days after his retirement.

Despite this rule, when Rodriguex discovered that Saratoga High still needed a teacher for one period of Spanish 5 AP, he volunteered to return. He applied for and managed to receive special permission from the State Teachers Retirement System to teach before his 180 days were up.

"I was lucky that the requirement was waived, and they allowed me to come back," Rodriguex said. "I'm really very thankful to our district for making that possible for me, because that's something that is not common practice."

Rodriguex was warmly welcomed back to the school's staff, and because he had taught all of the Spanish 4H classes in addition to Spanish 5 AP last year, some of his previous students became his current AP students.

"It was like a normal transition," he said. "I know all the students, and it was like I never left them — like going back to business."

Senior Justin Sun, a student in Rodriguex's AP class, said many upper-level Spanish students were sorry to see him retire.

"A lot of students cared about him because he was a pretty down-to-earth teach-

er," Sun said. "Because he was also so close with the students, it was upsetting for both [him and the students when he retired]."

Fellow Spanish teacher Sarah Voorhees, who has known Rodriguex for 19 years, did not expect his official retirement to happen last year.

"I was actually surprised, even though he had been talking about [retirement] for a long time," Voorhees said. "He kept saying he was going to, and then he didn't."

Rodriguex said he had been contemplating retirement for the past six years, but never managed to make the decision officially.

Voorhees, now the department chair for world languages, said she and Rodriguex worked together to ensure that he could return to the school.

Rodriguex is on campus only on Red days and is teaching fifth period only. He has also moved into Matt Torrens's class-



Rodriguex

### HALL RULES

continued from pg. 1

"Consequences and loopholes aren't really something that I'm interested in," he said. "I'm interested in trust, and I think last year our student body violated the trust of the adults on this campus."

In particular, Thompson said that many students severely infringed upon the administration's trust by JUULing in the school bathrooms. He hopes that in the near future, the administration will be able to go back to simply trusting students to make good decisions for themselves. He acknowledges that students are still able to sneak JUULs into the bathrooms, but said JUULing is more of an individual choice.

"If people really want to try and do something against the rules, they can always try and do it," Thompson said. "I would hope our students would decide to make the right choice for our school community, knowing that [JUULing] is a problem."

Nonetheless, the new policies have faced

### SUPERINTENDENT

continued from pg. 1

15 years. Robinson, who was hired by Mistele, praised Mistele's work in the district.

"Under Mistele our school district addressed a lot of social and emotional issues," Robinson said. "Students were well and healthy while they were continuing to achieve academically. He set the district on a really good path."

Since his appointment to the district's

some backlash from many students.

Junior Ava Riazat said she found it "insulting" to treat high schoolers like this.

**Nonetheless, the new policies have faced some backlash from many students.**

"They clearly haven't thought it all the way through," Riazat said. "If there's a medical emergency in the bathroom, we can't really do anything without our phones, and if there's a school shooting, we can't get in touch with our parents."

However, Thompson said the administration works with families of students with medical conditions who have to keep their phones with them at all times. He believes the new system has proved effective.

"We have kids returning to class in a timely fashion, and we're going to continue to monitor the hallways and make sure that students are in class," he said. ♦

top job, Grove has been frequently asked about the goals he hopes to accomplish in the district.

"My first priority is to spend my first few months meeting and listening to our students, staff and community while also asking a lot of questions," Grove said. "It's important to listen to multiple perspectives before developing any sort of assessment of a school district."

He added that "it's not my job to impose my own goals upon the district, but rather to facilitate the creation of collective goals" and "develop those shared goals." ♦

## Orre moves into new role by helping other teachers

BY Jeffrey Xu

Science teacher Kristofer Orre is no longer teaching freshman biology and anatomy/physiology in room 1021 this year, but he is still deeply engaged in what is going on in classrooms all over campus.

For the next two years, Orre will be a Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), mostly focusing on helping teachers with technology such as vodcasts, Canvas, Blogger and Google Apps. He remains as the school's after-school fitness coordinator.

As Orre puts it, instructional technology is "leveraging technology in a way that makes our classes more robust, collaborative, and relevant in the 21st century."

His role also takes him to the Los Gatos High campus half of the time and he is working in all subject areas. In addition to his focus on technology, he is helping implement Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and Common Core at both schools. NGSS is a set of science standards that revolve around teaching core concepts in each

discipline.

"One of the things I'm most excited about is being able to help teachers with whatever they need help with," Orre said. "Whether that's designing a new lesson or activity or project or helping implement technology or observing and giving feedback, I can help them in any step of the process."

As for NGSS and Common Core, Orre guides teachers in aligning their curriculums with those of the new standards. According to Orre, most teachers have already begun the process of changing what they teach to meet the standards, and Orre is helping them plan new activities and assignments to finish the change.

Orre said he first found out about the job opening at the end of May, when a previous TOSA, Nicole Dalesio, took another job. With Orre's familiarity with technology, especially from implementing the "flipped classroom," in his own classes, where students would watch video lectures at home and apply their newly gained knowledge during class in the form of projects and blog

posts, he decided to apply.

"The district advertised it, and with particular focus on instructional technology and NGSS adoption, it seemed like a good fit for me," Orre said.

**"One of the things I'm most excited about is being able to help teachers with whatever they need help with."**

TEACHER Kristofer Orre

Special education teacher Brian Elliott said that Orre has helped out his department with Canvas. This year, special education teachers are implementing mini-lessons with a weekly focus, some of which include time management, learning styles and understanding accommodations.

Elliott also said that Orre is adjusting

room, room 506, to teach; Voorhees now occupies his former room 601 of so many years.

As for the future, Rodriguex is still unclear what lies beyond this year. If the school does not have a section for him to teach next year, which he acknowledges as a possibility, he plans on looking for part-time teaching options elsewhere, but he hopes to continue his current gig.

"Next year, if they have another period hanging in there and they need one teacher for it, I'll be more than happy to take it," Rodriguex said.

He added that he feels glad to be back this year, and that he doesn't regret his choice to not dive fully into retirement.

"Even though it's only the second week of school, I don't think I made the wrong decision," Rodriguex said. "I have always liked teaching, and it just makes me happy and gets me out of the house to do something that I really like." ♦

ing court will walk on the field instead of riding around in vintage cars. Additionally, the event will follow stadium policies, meaning outside food and big bags will not be allowed; additionally, half of the stadium will be closed off to the public.

**"I think it's a really cool opportunity for the football players, dance team and others involved."**

SOPHOMORE Cynthia Zhang

Regardless, many students are excited for the experience of the Homecoming game at Levi's Stadium.

"I think it's a really cool opportunity for the football players, dance team and others involved," sophomore Cynthia Zhang said.

Because the game is in partnership with 49ers PREP, the program will take the majority of the money; however, 49ers PREP will be giving this money to charity. The school will receive \$5 each from the first 1,000 tickets bought with the SARATOGA promo code, making up for some of the loss of home gate and concessions revenues.

Regardless, the 49ers PREP program has made its commitment to the Bay Area community by providing SHS an opportunity to play in Levi's Friday night football series.

"The program realizes that being a good community member is important and by giving us this opportunity, they're trying to build community roots with our school," Lugo said. ♦



## Veteran Spanish teacher joins staff

BY Jessica Wang

After five years of teaching at Harbor High School in Santa Cruz, Stephany Marks has transitioned to Saratoga High this year and is teaching two classes of Spanish 2 and three classes of Spanish 4 Honors.

This will be her 24th year teaching overall.

Marks said she is excited to teach at SHS and “come over to this side of the hill.”

“My first impression was that all the other teachers and the staff and the faculty are so nice, so kind and so welcoming,” Marks said. “I was nervous starting out the year, but I felt a lot better with how sweet everybody was.”

Marks was born and raised in Boulder, Colorado, and moved to Half Moon Bay when she was 15, where she took Spanish classes at Half Moon Bay High School.

“I had a great Spanish teacher, and I picked up the language quickly,” Marks said. “And there was a big Hispanic community where I lived, so I was able to practice it a lot.”

Marks attended UC Davis, studied abroad in Spain for a year and returned to UC Davis to complete her major in Spanish.

“I think she makes us speak Spanish more often and more consistently than other teachers in the past,” Xiao said, “which, while more difficult for us, will ultimately improve our Spanish as we continue to practice using the language.”

Starting from a young age, Marks had always wanted to be a teacher, and feels that

she has already reached many of her goals as far as teaching.

In the classroom, she focuses on building a strong foundation for her students and an understanding of culture in Spanish speaking countries.

This is so that they can use their language skills in the real world.

“My hope is that my students can leave my classroom with the desire to want to continue with Spanish,” Marks said. “I hope they use it out in the world and travel and help their community or other communities and have confidence in themselves.”

**“I was nervous, ... but I felt a lot better with how sweet everybody was.”**



TEACHER Stephany Marks

Junior Christina Xiao, who is currently taking Spanish 4 Honors, has noticed that Marks’ teaching style is highly immersive.

“I think she makes us speak Spanish more often and more consistently than other teachers in the past,” Xiao said, “which, while more difficult for us, will ultimately improve our Spanish as we continue to practice using the language.”

## Wu moves to NorCal

BY Allison Hartley

Emily Wu watched her students flow into her first-period English 10 class for the first day of school on Aug. 16. The classroom became animated as chatting students walked through the door, some even glancing past her as they tried to spot the teacher.

Just two weeks before the start of school, Wu moved to the area from Orange County, where she grew up and taught for two years at Dana Hills High School. She is teaching four English 10 classes and one English Language Development (ELD) class.

When she started college at UC Santa Barbara, Wu wanted to become a pharmacist or optometrist. After her second year, though, she realized that she “didn’t want to be in labs for six hours a day.”

Following taking a quarter of purely English classes, she dedicated herself to her newfound passion, English, graduating in three years and moving on to receive her teaching credential and a master’s degree in education, also from UCSB.

Wu said she’s excited to work her way through her first year here, knowing that she will be challenged just as her students will be.

“Literature is going to be interesting and cultured and have depth, so [the students] are going to learn a lot and going to be shocked a lot,” Wu said. “ELD is also going

to be a really hard and also a good, rewarding thing.”

Wu sees similarities between Saratoga High’s English 10 curriculum and her old school’s curriculum, but feels Saratoga’s is accelerated, with higher expectations of students’ prerequisite knowledge.

She feels that students respond well to her because she is young, but she also said that the sophomores are more reserved than she expected.

Compared to her former school in Orange County, she said students at Saratoga High also place higher standards on themselves.

“Students were a little more relaxed there,” Wu said. “They’re beach kids, surfers, skaters.”

Wu said she misses the laid-back beaches of Los Angeles and her family, but she has always wanted to live in the Bay Area; the welcome Saratoga High has shown has helped.

On the first day of her old school, about three people said hello to her, whereas about 10 greeted her in her classroom on the first day on the job at Saratoga.

“People are overly friendly here,” Wu said. “It’s a good thing, though.”

Wu is ready to embrace the change and is already enjoying working with her new students.

“The students all have so much to offer — to the world and to me,” Wu said. “I think the students will teach me more than I teach them sometimes.”



Wu English teacher

## History teacher changes career to pursue passions

BY Manasi Garg & Alekha Vadlakonda

After graduating from Stanford with a bachelor’s degree in History in the Law, newly hired World History and World Geography teacher Melissa Hesselgrave saw herself going on to attend law school. Before she went, however, she decided to work in Washington, D.C. as a paralegal to gain experience.

After a few years as a paralegal, she found that her job had nothing to do with her love for history, politics or even law itself. According to Hesselgrave, being a paralegal was much more about paperwork and money.

“I felt I wasn’t exercising my passions very much,” Hesselgrave said.

For a couple years, Hesselgrave switched between different careers such as marketing and being a fitness instructor, never feeling quite satisfied.

Then, at the behest of her mother, she turned her to teaching.

Hesselgrave started out as a long-term substitute teaching at Rubidoux High School in Riverside, Calif., her hometown.

At first, Hesselgrave struggled with teaching because she felt she couldn’t connect with her students. But after being “guilted into coaching [Rubidoux’s] water polo team,” she realized she loved the idea of guiding students to success. She began coaching the swim team as well, and developed deep bonds with many of the students at the school.

“It takes a minute for kids to learn to trust you, so just spending time showing that you

care and watching kids achieve goals in a sport translates really well into what they can do in school,” she said.

Hesselgrave also began to tutor kids on campus to ensure they were passing all their classes.

Her experience at Rubidoux inspired Hesselgrave to return to Stanford, where she received a master’s degree in Education from Stanford a few years ago.

Hesselgrave then became a history teacher at Sequoia High School in Redwood City, and found that teaching was much more fulfilling than working in law ever was because teaching combines her passions for history, philosophy and politics.

After Rubidoux, Hesselgrave taught at Patriot High School in Jurupa Valley, Calif. Over the past few years, her teaching style has evolved. At first, she focused more on lectures and individual assignments. Then, however, she began implementing group work into the curriculum and realized students were much more engaged with the material.

Sophomore Tiffany Huang, a student in Hesselgrave’s World History class, said she enjoys Hesselgrave’s teaching style.

“I like that we go in-depth with the material,” she said.

Although the basic lesson plans come from state- and district-required curriculum, Hesselgrave decides which sections to dive deeper into.

At the beginning of the year, her World History classes learned about the Battle of Thermopylae, but rather than analyzing only the Greek perspective, they considered the Persian side as well, which wasn’t cov-



History teacher Melissa Hesselgrave describes an upcoming test to her Geography students.

ered intensively in previous history classes.

In order to reduce her current students’ stress, Hesselgrave has implemented a policy that she will rarely assign homework excluding classwork remaining and long-term projects requiring extra time.

Hesselgrave is an avid advocate for mental health and plans to become involved in the new student wellness center opening in spring 2018.

Hesselgrave said she was inspired to prioritize mental health from her memories of once being a high schooler stretched thin between multiple extracurriculars and

grades. “I really think that balance [between work and relaxation] is important,” she said. “I definitely experienced a lot of stress and burning out [during school], and I feel like if I had better strategies for how to de-stress or to manage my work better and take time for self care, that would’ve been helpful.”

Overall, Hesselgrave said, she hopes to contribute to her new students’ lives at SHS. “I love building relationships with students and helping them think in new ways to achieve their academic goals,” Hesselgrave said. “It’s just a lot of fun.”

## Biology teacher returns to her alma mater

BY Elaine Toh & Jeffrey Xu

When Jennifer Lee, an alumna from the Class of 2002, began her career as a teacher, her mother asked if she would ever be interested in returning to Saratoga High. Lee’s answer was a simple “no way.”

During her previous job at the Santa Clara Unified School District, Lee was a math and science teacher at Cabrillo Middle School (2007-2014) and the program director of the 49ers STEM Leadership Institute (2014-2018), a program in which selected students from across the Santa Clara district are placed in advanced math and science. However, after 11 years with the district, Lee decided to return to her roots.

“I really loved that job, but I was kind of missing being with students every day,” Lee said. “So, when this opportunity came up at my old high school with teachers that were my teachers when I was a student, I couldn’t pass it up.”

Lee said she is still getting acquainted with life back on her old high school campus, even as she is seeing many familiar faces: among

them, biology teacher Lisa Cochrum and chemistry and physics teacher Jenny Garcia.

“They have really welcomed me by making me feel at home, answering questions I have as I settled into the campus and making it clear that they are excited to have me as a colleague now,” Lee said. “We’ve also had some good laughs over funny past stories and done some reminiscing as well.”

Sixteen years ago, Lee contemplated becoming a doctor and going to medical school, but by the end of her senior year at Stanford University as a Biology and Physiology major, she changed her mind and wanted to be an educator.

So, she applied for a masters in education program and received her teaching credential right after college. Eventually she was in front of the classroom.

“I did not plan on becoming a teacher originally,” she said. “It was not something I thought I would be interested in or good at. I realized that all of my passions — my hobbies and all my volunteer work — was actually related to education and mentoring people.”

Since she was young, she has

loved science: a quality that would lead her to pursue biology in college. Lee said she took inspiration from her oldest cousin, who is 13 years her senior.

“He was around a lot when we were kids, and he used to really take me under his wing,” Lee said. “So, him as a role model was a big part of why I think I stuck with science the whole way through.”

Knowing that not all her students will become biology majors, Lee hopes that her class will help students to learn not only science, but also organization, communication and leadership.

This year, special education teacher Brian Elliott is working alongside Lee to facilitate the mainstreaming of students from the special education program into general education classes.

Having spent hours in her classroom already, Elliott said that Lee is a “kid magnet.”

“She’s a real dynamic addition to our staff; she’s very smart and has a lot of experience in the STEM program,” Elliott said. “When she’s teaching, she brings in a lot of personal stories and makes the content really relatable to students.”



Science teacher Jennifer Lee helps to guide senior Emma Ford-Danbar on a computer assignment during fourth-period Anatomy and Physiology.

In this so-called team teaching environment, where there are two teachers in a classroom, Elliott said that while Lee is the content specialist, given her major in biology, he has been mainly focused on helping out students with multiple learning modalities, different abilities and just being a resource in general.

He said that Lee has been supportive and open to the team teaching environment and is also big on “the growth mindset: not just teaching content but also life-

long learning skills.” Lee said she hopes that her past experience as a student at the school will help her relate more to her students.

“I know things have changed since I was a student, but I do know that students here care a lot about school, and sometimes, that means a lot of pressure on themselves,” Lee said. “I also know it’s difficult for students to balance everything. And I’m hoping that as a teacher, I can support the students here that way.”

## New teacher chooses teaching over industry

BY Alex Wang

Freshmen stepping into math teacher Savita Agrawal’s class may be intimidated by their first high school math class, but Agrawal is experiencing a first with them as well: It is her first time as a teacher.

Although she was a student teacher last year at Lynbrook High while getting her teaching credential at San Jose State and taught at her own math academy prior to that, Agrawal has never formally taught at a school before. She now teaches Geometry, Algebra 2, and sequential Algebra 1.

Agrawal said teaching at a high school is significantly different from teaching at her academy, where she prepared students for prestigious math competitions. Many of her academy students have been nationally recognized for their achievements; at school, however, her students are merely trying to learn.

“Most of the students at my academy were really good and wanted to excel in math, so it was more fast-paced,” Agrawal said. “In high school, you have many diverse learners so you have to provide different ways of learning. Some students can go with a fast pace, but for some of them you have to slow down and make sure they get what they want.”

Before beginning to teach, Agrawal received a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from Punjab Engineering College in Chandigarh, India, and worked in the country’s semiconductor industry. After she married her husband, she moved to the U.S. and started work in the software industry at Siebel Systems.

Then, she had two daughters, one of whom needed constant attention due to serious health issues. Because of this, Agrawal resigned to take care of her children and began teaching them and their friends as

a hobby. (Both of her daughters are now in high school and now require no special care.)

The parents of the students Agrawal taught said that she should run an official program. This led to the formation of her math academy called Starkidz in San Jose, where she taught elementary and middle schoolers the fundamentals of math and prepared them for competitions.

Throughout the time that Agrawal has taught, she has believed that problem-solving skills should be the main takeaway from her classes.

“I worked in industry and I realized that I did not use any of my high school math in the semiconductor or software industry,” she said. “What helped me become successful were the problem-solving skills, the team-collaboration skills and critical-thinking skills I learned in math.”

Because of this, Agrawal focuses her teaching on developing these skills by having students explore problems and figure out the solutions themselves.

She has seen some math teachers give out the problem-solving method to students in advance and tell them to simply follow

a particular way to solve example problems. Instead, Agrawal likes to give students problems they have never seen before and let them try to figure out how to solve them with the knowledge they already have.

Agrawal said she will often not grade on whether a student has solved a problem perfectly, but rather grade on whether the student has shown her that he or she has sincerely worked through the problem.

This method has worked well for her in the past. She said she has been able to transform some students who initially hated math into ones who love it because they discover the knowledge themselves.

She discovered that being able to change students’ attitudes toward math was more meaningful than returning to the software industry, so she decided to continue teaching.

So far, Agrawal has enjoyed teaching at SHS.

“The students are really wonderful,” she said. “They are really receptive to whatever new concepts I am introducing to them taking it really nicely. I am looking forward to working with them and hope they keep rising up.”

## SHS welcomes alum back as new APCS teacher

BY Callia Yuan & Christine Zhang

Thomas Wang, a 2009 Saratoga High alum, has returned to teach at the school that launched him nearly a decade ago. He is teaching AP Computer Science and Digital Electronics.

Wang graduated from Harvard University in 2013 with a bachelor’s degree in computer science. Upon graduation, he gained experience working as an intern at Facebook and was recruited by a number of other tech companies. Eventually, however, Wang decided to turn to education. He taught high school math in the state of Washington before taking on a job at Saratoga High.

Wang declined to speak to The Falcon for this story, but others were more than willing to praise him as a person and a teacher. “When he was introducing himself, he talked about how he moved between all these jobs and found that teaching was the most rewarding,” said junior Joshua Yoon, who has Wang for AP Computer Science. “I can understand where he’s coming from, because I think teaching well has a lot of merit

and it’s not as easy as people think.”

Yoon said that Wang places a strong emphasis on connecting with his students. On the first day of school, APCS students started with bonding exercises. Wang asked everyone to share their experience in CS and their goals for the school year. The students then had group activities such as pair programming.

Sophomore Feranno Liu, who is also in Wang’s APCS class, said he enjoys the interactive aspect of the class.

“I actually like his method of teaching,” Liu said. “He genuinely wants to know more about his students and their struggles.”

To assistant principal Brian Safine, Wang stood out from the pool of job applicants because of his willingness to interact and connect with the students.

“What I remember [from watching a video of him teaching] is that he really checked in on everybody to make sure they were engaged,” Safine said. “He didn’t want to let students hide, so he made sure that he was

connecting with each of them as he taught.”

According to Safine, several tech companies wanted to recruit Wang even before he graduated from college, and Wang spent several years working in the industry before becoming a teacher — experience that his students are sure to benefit from.

Safine added that when Wang attended Saratoga High, he was not only very bright, but also affable, humble and well rounded. These characteristics can still be seen in him today, Safine said.

“People should understand that he’s really a man of diverse interests and abilities, rather than someone who strictly focuses on academics,” Safine said.

As a Saratoga High student, Wang played on the school’s varsity basketball team and was also a member of the orchestra. Perhaps most impressive of all, he was able to become the valedictorian for his class even as he was involved in these activities.

Mike Davey, who was Wang’s basketball coach during Wang’s junior year, said that

he always saw Wang as a sort of “superhuman.” The basketball team would call him “Mr. Fundamental” because he did everything right by the book as an athlete, Davey said.

Davey liked that Wang balanced a multitude of activities in his life. He knew that Wang valued academics along with athletics and community work, since Wang also worked in a hospital during his high school years.

“He didn’t do [basketball and community work] to put a checkmark on his box for graduation; he did it because he loved it, and I always respected that,” Davey said.

So far, Wang’s students seem to be enjoying his teaching style. Liu remembers coming to class early one day to ask a question, and Wang “was happy to answer it and asked me whether or not [his response] was helpful.”

Safine also said he appreciates Wang’s ability to include everyone.

“He’s really dedicated to the task of making [the curriculum] understandable to his students,” Safine said. “We’re lucky to have him.”



Wang 2009 graduate senior photo

FALCON // ALAN ZU

FIFTH PERIOD STAFF POLICY

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

MISSION STATEMENT

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Saratoga Falcon welcomes all signed letters of opinion, which are subject to editing for length, accuracy and grammar. Please send them to victorliu@saratogafalcon.org. For ad information, phone (408) 867-3411, ext. 222.

Editors-in-Chief

Chelsea Leung  
Alexandra Li

Associate Editor

Elaine Sun

News Editor

Michael Zhang

Opinion Editor

Victor Liu

Sports Editors

Andrew Lee  
Alex Wang

Lifestyle Editors

Leo Cao  
Karen Chow

Entertainment Editor

Muthu Palaniappan

Associate Entertainment Editor

Selena Liu

In-Depth Editors

Elaine Toh  
Jeffrey Xu

School Scope Editor

Ananya Vadlakonda

Multimedia/Social Media Editors

Anissa Au  
Krithi Sankar

Backpage Editor

Patrick Li

Head Copy Editors

Shreya Karkere  
Jessica Wang  
Jayne Zhou

Head Photographer

Ava Hlooman

Associate Photographer

Alan Zu

Graphic Team Leader

Callia Yuan

Web Team/App Development

Jackson Green  
Isaac Le

Business/Ad Managers

David Koh  
Esha Lakhotia

Reporters

Megan Chen  
Manasi Garg  
Shama Gupta  
Allison Hartley  
Marisa Kinsley  
Andrew Li  
Jeffrey Ma  
Alekhya Vadlakonda  
Christine Zhang

Adviser

Mike Tyler

Printed by Folger Graphics in Hayward, Calif.



# Revised hall rules punish everyone

The school recently implemented several new policies in order to curb JUULing during the school day. These measures go beyond the simple closing off of certain areas at lunch or other times.

Sadly, these new policies seem to have several loopholes that still allow students to JUUL on campus. Even worse, the measures create additional problems for everyone else — including those who do not JUUL (a huge majority of the school).

However, this isn't to say that students are without fault. In previous years, bathroom rules were based on an implied trust — students would ask to go to the bathroom, and teachers would honor their request, trusting that they would behave appropriately and come back immediately.

Student JUULers have broken that established trust by telling teachers they would be using the restroom, but instead, contacting their friends to JUUL together.

Clearly, if it weren't for student JUULers, there would be no need for these new bathroom policies, however rigid and ineffective they might be. The purpose of introducing the new color-coded flip flops is to prevent students from straying too far away from their classrooms, with each department using a different colored flip-flop.

But the truth is that determined students will still find ways to JUUL. A student could also simply hide the flip-flop and say they have a free period upon being seen in the hallway by a staff member.

Another problem with using

flip-flops as bathroom passes is that they're unsanitary. Having every student carry the same bathroom pass whenever they use the restroom can cause a lot of needless germ-spreading. Both students and teachers alike have expressed their discomfort with carrying flip-flops to the bathroom, with some teachers supplying Clorox wipes specifically for students to clean the passes.

A second new policy, requiring students to leave their phones in the classroom, will also do little to curb JUULing. The administration has justified this policy by claiming that some students enjoy posting videos of themselves JUULing on Snapchat. But, of course, preventing videos and trying to paint JUULing as "not cool" doesn't actually address the real problem of nicotine addiction.

Students who don't JUUL can still be influenced by others and start JUULing even if they aren't seeing videos during school hours. Collecting phones neither combats the actual problem nor stops communication among students.

The reasoning behind this policy is also highly questionable seeing that administrators aren't opening Snapchats of their friends JUULing and don't know what the situation on social media is really like.

Administrators have also said that not allowing phones in the hallways prevents students from texting and meeting their friends in the bathroom, but students can still coordinate with their friends before class and will



not be affected by leaving their phones in the classroom.

Confiscating phones might make bathroom trips a bit shorter by preventing students from playing games or checking social media, but if that were the problem, then the school might as well ban phones altogether.

A bigger problem of these new hall policies, however, is that a majority of the student body who do not JUUL are still being affected by the actions of a small minority who do. The policies inconvenience both students and teachers and do little to prevent JUULing.

With JUULs being about the same size as a USB, students will almost always be able to sneak them out of class. Short of rummaging through students' back-

packs and physical searches, it would be practically impossible to stop JUULing before it happens.

Instead, the school should focus on the root problem: educating the JUULers themselves and getting them to break their habit.

Hosting more anti-drug promotional activities and events — not colored flip-flops and phone bans — is the best solution, and encouraging the anonymous reporting of JUULers will give administration the help they need to finally put an end to this problem.

By easing these overly rigid bathroom policies, the school can allow students to learn and do their business without interruption and inconvenience. ♦

### Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editors-in-chief  
Chelsea Leung  
Alexandra Li

Opinion Editor  
Victor Liu

Reporters  
Jeffrey Xu  
Callia Yuan

The Falcon staff voted 26-2 in support of this article.

# E11 Honors summer reading anxieties misguided

by Jeffrey Ma

Last May, the English Department told students taking English 11 Honors this year that they needed to read Arthur Miller's "The Crucible" and flag 10 to 15 key passages during the summer.

This change of curriculum prompted a wave of worry and fear. The implementation of summer reading seemed to be a precursor to junior year stress, and students began to consider switching out of Honors because of it. In the end, this anxiety was misguided.

While the difficulty of the Honors course warrants debates of switching classes, summer reading alone fails to justify such an action.

Miller's four-act play runs less than 200 pages long. The four hours it takes to read it and the one to two it takes to annotate is nothing compared to the 1,500 hours students have at their disposal through the summer. The five-to-six-hour investment pales in com-

parison to the myriad of practice SATs and tutoring classes often taken during the summer before junior year.

Despite his story's setting in Puritan Salem, Miller's language is straightforward and modern, with just a few "Goodys" here and there for a dash of historical accuracy. "The Crucible" is no harder than any book read in English 10.

To aid student understanding of Miller's intentions behind the play, both English 11 Honors teachers, Natasha Ritchie and Amy Keys, provided study guide questions and an accompanying "Overview" article before the summer.

Many versions of the play also include readings that provide similar information and guidance. Even the "about the author" sections give sufficient information to get allegorical aspects of the play.

The play's difficulty level, or rather its lack of difficulty, can be attributed to its status as the introductory piece for the English

11 Honors course, helping students adjust back into an academic mindset after a summer of doing mostly everything other than reading allegorical literature.

Given the play is not a brand new addition to the curriculum, the overall difficulty of the course has not increased; if anything, this assignment actually alleviates the school year's workload by shifting the reading process from the first week of school to the summer.

If students are unwilling to do even the same amount of reading at a more student-friendly time, they should reconsider why they are taking the course. Honors is meant for students willing to go the extra mile in reading and writing — not for those looking for a mere GPA boost.

Aside from reading "The Crucible" itself, many students also fretted over the associated in-class essay originally scheduled for the first day of class.

Despite the essays never be-

ing assigned, the preliminary assignment of flagging key passages would have provided, at worst, a decent basis for students to write their essays and at best, an outline for the entirety of their essays.

The expectations were not that students would come in on the first day of school with mastery over the entire play. Analysis of the play was done in class through writing prompts and Socratic seminars.

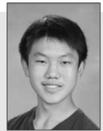
Instead of viewing summer reading as a stress-inducing blotch on an otherwise pristine summer, students should take it as a beneficial change. Such a small summer reading assignment alone fails to justify a swap out of the course.

In retrospect, the assigning of the reading almost parallels the content of the play itself: just as hysteria clouds the truth of the situation in "The Crucible," the fears and murmurs surrounding summer reading masked its reality under an intimidating facade. ♦

## togatalks

Do you think the summer English reading assignment was beneficial?

"Summer reading wasn't very helpful because I wasn't able to remember it at the end of break."



junior Brian Zhu

"We were able to get straight into the work for the unit and had more time for discussion."



junior Surbhi Bhat

## THE saratogafalcon

# Shifting blame to students won't solve testing blunders

BY Howard Tang

Right after the College Board faced controversy when students received abysmally low scores on the June SAT, students who were unsatisfied with their scores set their sights on the next test day in August, hoping that they would be able to receive better scores. Unfortunately, the latest SAT was mired in controversy once again.

The U.S. August SAT was discovered to be an exact copy of the international version of the October 2017 SAT, and although College Board did not officially release the test to the public, the August test was still printed into foreign test prep books. To make matters worse, international students who may have had previous knowledge of the international October test traveled to the U.S. specifically to take the August version of the SAT because the SAT was not offered abroad in August.

### Recycled questions do not accurately measure a student's aptitude, defeating the main purpose of the test.

Instead of taking responsibility for its own mistakes, College Board decided on a different tack: seek out those who have seen and exploited the test.

According to NBC, College Board responded to the controversy by threatening to cancel the tests of any students suspected of cheating — that punishment would also potentially ban them from re-taking future tests. This decision was unreasonable. The fear of such a thing happening was amplified when most students received their scores on Sept. 7, while some other students saw a pending message telling them that their scores were still under investigation.

First, students taking the test should

not be punished for mistakes made by College Board itself. College Board test makers should not recycle questions, much less whole tests. Any recycled material would obviously give an advantage to students who have previously seen the questions. That is, recycled questions do not accurately measure the aptitude of the test takers, defeating the main purpose of the test.

Adding to this unfairness, College Board has no legitimate way to identify cheaters. It has decided that a large increase in scores from a previous test can be indicative of cheating.

Similarly, a decrease in scores from this SAT to the PSAT in October could also suggest that a student had an unfair advantage for the August SAT and therefore could not replicate his or her success without seeing the test beforehand. However, even these instances could be explained by hard work and studying.

Additionally, College Board should just take the time to make new tests. According to Patch, the College Board earns annual revenues of \$200 million. A greater part of this enormous sum should be used to fund the construction of new tests instead of used for the maintenance of the organization and other "educational purposes." College Board should reallocate money to actually improve the primary service it provides: creating apt tests.

Students who hadn't previously seen the August test might not be the only ones who feel cheated. Some who have seen the material floating around in the internet used it for practice, with no ulterior motive of getting an unfair advantage.

These people might unintentionally receive harsh repercussions, such as being barred from re-examinations, despite spending enormous amounts of time genuinely studying for the test.

With its current monopoly on standardized testing, College Board has the ultimate responsibility to create fair — and fresh — exams that accurately assess every student's abilities. ♦



# June SAT reveals problems with equating process

BY Jeffrey Xu

After the June SAT scores were released in July, thousands of angry students and their parents took to social media and sent emails to The College Board, complaining that students generally scored comparatively lower on this test than on past SATs, despite getting more questions right in June. In response to the backlash, the College Board released the following statement:

"We understand your questions about your June SAT scores. We want to assure you that your scores are accurate. While we plan for consistency across administrations, on occasion there are some tests that can be easier or more difficult than usual. That is why we use a statistical process called 'equating.'"

Essentially, equating means ensuring that a score received on a given test date is the performance-equivalent of a score from another date. Put simply, it is the SAT equivalent of curving.

Equating supposedly accounts for differences in difficulty between different versions of the SAT, so a more difficult test would allow a student to miss more questions and still achieve the same score compared to missing fewer questions on an easier test.

However, equating does not always work as intended. While its purpose is to make the test more fair across all dates, there can

be drastic results if the test is too easy, which is what happened last June.

In the case of the June test, too many people earned high raw scores. To standardize the scaled score distribution, The College Board deducted a high number of points even for missing one or two questions.

According to The College Panda, students would lose zero to 10 points for missing just one question on math in all previous administrations of the test.

However, test-takers in June lost 30 points for missing just one question in the math section.

### Rather than being an effective way to standardize all testing sessions, the equating process seems more like a concession that the SAT is inherently flawed.

For some students, they received drastically lower scores in June than in their previous attempts at the SAT, despite answering many more questions correctly.

Following the June SAT fiasco, the Princeton Review published a lengthy article titled "Why You Don't Want An Easy SAT."

# National Merit cutoffs should not be based on students' state locations

BY Alex Wang

Every year as the National Merit Semifinalist scores are released, many students narrowly miss out on the recognition and a chance for a scholarship and other benefits. Seniors living in Massachusetts, California, Maryland, Washington, D.C., and New Jersey — the states with the highest cutoffs — are among the most frustrated about their borderline scores.

The PSAT/NMSQT is a 47-question reading, 44-question writing and language and 48-question math test designed to prepare students for the SAT and act as a qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship. The English and math subsections each have a score out of 760 for a combined full score of 1,520, and the subsections are then translated to an index out of 228.

This year, the five aforementioned states each had cutoffs of 223, which is around a PSAT score of 1,490. Meanwhile, the states with the lowest cutoffs — Wyoming and West Virginia — had cutoffs of 212, which is around a PSAT score of 1,410. Although this discrepancy may not seem like much, 80 points can mean a difference of 10 questions. In California, even one more question could be the difference between a student's making the 223 National Merit cutoff or barely missing out with a 222 index score.

Because the cutoffs are calculated based on the top percentage of scorers of each state, wide score gaps of qualifiers exist among many states. This means that some

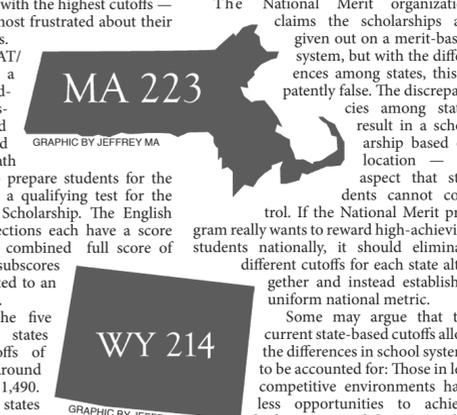
of the high achieving students in Wyoming, for example, could be comparable to mediocre students in California; however, the Wyoming students receive the National Merit honor anyway because of their location. Given this reality, it seems more accurate to call the distinction the State Merit Award.

The National Merit organization claims the scholarships are given out on a merit-based system, but with the differences among states, this is patently false. The discrepancies among states result in a scholarship based on location — an aspect that students cannot control.

If the National Merit program really wants to reward high-achieving students nationally, it should eliminate different cutoffs for each state altogether and instead establish a uniform national metric.

Some may argue that the current state-based cutoffs allow the differences in school systems to be accounted for: Those in less competitive environments have less opportunities to achieve higher scores. While it is true that test prep centers solely designed to increase standardized test scores thrive in states like California, preparation is not necessary to score well on the test. Furthermore, state-based cutoffs also hinder those who still score well in comparison to the rest of the nation, but just fall short in the uber competitive states because they cannot afford to go to a test prep center.

Different cutoffs therefore provide no real benefit and also detract from the goal of rewarding students on standardized merit-based criteria. ♦



## UC system should make SAT/ACT essays optional

by SelenaLiu

Starting in 2016, standardized test essays became optional for both SAT and ACT test takers. But officials in the University of California system apparently didn't get the memo.

The requirement to submit the essay score as part of the college application leads to many students using extra time preparing for the essay section if they want to apply for UCs. This is time that would be better spent on their actual classes.

Instead of relying on this outdated measure, UC officials should nullify the SAT and ACT essay requirement entirely.

There is no reason this requirement should cause students additional grief by mandating the essay when the College Board has already given students the liberty of choosing whether to take the essay test.

In addition, the SAT and ACT essays add additional costs to the registration price of taking the test. For the SAT, it costs \$47.50 without the essay and \$64.50 with. For the ACT, it costs students \$50.50 without and \$67 with the essay.

Scott Jaschik from Inside Higher Ed writes that despite many universities dropping the essay requirement in recent years, including all Ivy League schools, there is still "one giant obstacle: the University of California."

Jaschik notes that while the UC system uses SAT essays to critique students' reading, analytical and writing skills, other colleges have used alternate supplementary material, such as a school-written essay, to replace the SAT essay.

Additionally, almost all colleges already require personal statements and supple-

mental writings from applicants; the UC system already has its own four short essay prompts.

All of these can be used to evaluate students' critical thinking and writing skills.

Not only are these alternate options cheaper for students, but they are also more effective than the SAT at evaluating student proficiencies.

Whereas the SAT gives too little time for students to outline and integrate quality analysis into their essays, school essays allow students to have enough time to plan and elaborate on their ideas.

In addition, the school essay-writing process emphasizes students' ability to

improve as a writer through peer and self-review instead of their ability to follow a formulaic writing style used to obtain a good score on the SAT essay, and this demonstration of improvement will show colleges more about each individual student's learning process than any standardized test essays ever will.

Colleges will also be able to see students' writing in a variety of essay styles, whereas the SAT essay tests analytical writing alone.

The quality of supplemental school essays also gives insights into how difficult different high schools' English curriculums are, allowing college admissions officers to differentiate among students attending schools of varying difficulty.

Competitive universities across the country have dropped the SAT essay and replaced them with writing evaluation processes that offers a fairer way to gauge a student's ability to write; the UC system, being one of the most competitive universities in the country, should do the same. ♦



GRAPHIC BY CALLIA YUAN

## UChicago should not replace alumni interview with videos

by AlexWang

With college application season around the corner for seniors, students are beginning to take note of changes in the application process, most notably from some of the more prestigious schools. Among these was the University of Chicago's decision to start accepting video presentations from applicants in place of traditional alumni interviews — a decision that seems questionable at best.

Over the years, the college admissions process has changed drastically. Colleges now place less emphasis on standardized test scores and GPAs; instead, they are focusing more on extracurriculars, essays and letters of recommendation.

These changes do make sense in an era of grade and test score inflation.

Essays, extracurriculars and letters of recommendations all give admissions officers qualitative information about a student's interests and personality much more effectively than raw numbers can. For some schools, alumni interviews can be another important piece of gaining more personal insights about applicants. By sitting down and having a brief conversation, interviewees get to see the more unpolished but authentic side of an applicant.

While essays and letters of recommendation may reveal a lot of information about a student's background, a sit-down interview can show colleges whether students corroborate what they say in their essays and have the manners and qualities of a person that they would want to commit to for the next four years.

For its part, the University of Chicago says it is replacing interviews for good reasons. For one, they lack the resources for

all the requested interviews; Doing a large number of interviews is not easy and practical, especially if an admitted student ultimately decides to go to another school.

Moreover, college interviews can last for hours, while the University of Chicago wants applying students to submit videos that are around 2 minutes. No doubt this new format will certainly save admissions officers a lot of time.

Despite these benefits, replacing the interview with a video profile is still a decision that does not seem well thought out. Although the university says that a more informal selfie-style video is just as good

as a professionally lit and shot video, one can imagine that a cleaner and better shot video would subconsciously give a better impression of an applicant.

Furthermore, videos can be edited, so that negative aspects of a person can be hidden. This makes videos an arguably "glorified" essay as both showcase a select portion of an applicant's back-

ground and personality. The 2 minutes depicted in a video cannot exhibit much about the applicant, so the unbiased opinions of a physical interviewer should be weighed more heavily than what an applicant will record about himself.

Finally, students who have experience in working with videos, or whose parents have the wealth to hire professional help making them, have huge and unfair advantages. Although Chicago may think that a video profile may be more important in this day and age, an old fashioned interview is the better choice to discover an applicant's true personality. While there is still room for improvement in many aspects of the college application process, the alumni interview is one that should be left



GRAPHIC BY CALLIA YUAN

## Nifty DIYs are not as simple as they look



Shreya Katkere and Jayne Zhou

We've recently seen a lot of Nifty DIY videos online, so we took up the challenge to recreate one because they seemed fairly easy and inexpensive.

After searching the Nifty website, we decided on our first project of "making a regular store-bought cake look professional."

Since our goal was to take an average cake and make it look as professionally decorated as possible, we bought a plain vanilla cake with vanilla frosting from Safeway. Following the video's instructions, we wiped off all the icing and put it in a separate bowl. Then we redistributed the icing on the cake, making sure to cover the top of the cake evenly.

After we were finished with the icing, we proceeded to make the chocolate sauce, which consisted of eight Dove dark chocolate squares and half a cup of heavy whipping cream. We heated the mixture for a minute and stirred until all the chocolate squares fully melted.

One problem we ran into was that the chocolate squares took over 15 minutes to fully melt. And once they finally did, the consistency of the mixture was too watery because we had melted the chocolate too much, so we had to add more chocolate to even it out.

After making the chocolate sauce, we drizzled it down one side of our cake and added strawberries to make it more colorful. We wanted to top our cake off with macarons because the cake we were trying to copy from the Nifty DIY included macarons as a topping. Unfortunately, we

did not have any macarons; however, we came up with the great idea of using thin mints and icing to create our own, unique version.

In the end, we got a decent looking cake, but it was pretty basic for the amount of work we had to put into it. The cake lacked the professionalism we were looking for, but it tasted pretty good, since our DIY decorating didn't affect the original store-bought taste.

The second DIY involved making soap into the shape of gems. This was a lot more time consuming than we had anticipated — though the entire video was about 30 seconds, the actual project took an entire hour.

Originally, we thought that all we had to do was melt the soap base, color it and cut it into shapes. However, we forgot the most important part of the process: letting the soap set. This took a lot of patience.

Our soaps turned out a little disappointing compared to the ones in the video because they lacked the gradient color scheme that the soaps had in the video. We also didn't splurge on a scent, so they smelled like plain soap base. Though our soaps were still usable, they did not look very pleasant.

The processes of making both the soaps and cake were far more difficult and took way more time than we anticipated. The DIYs seemed so easy in the videos, but we found that the videos are not an accurate representation of the amount of effort it actually takes. Instead of wasting two hours decorating a cake and shaping soap into gems, we could've been studying for AP U.S. History or AP Biology.

Sadly, we didn't learn much from either of the projects. Nor would we recommend anyone to waste their time on these DIYs unless that person has a real passion for arts and crafts and is willing to put in the time and effort (unlike us). ♦

# << 9 lifestyles

## Sleeping 10 hours is harder than expected



Michael Zhang

It seems like parents are always urging students to get the recommended 8-10 hours of sleep, and it seems like we teenagers never do. Usually, I get around seven hours of sleep on school nights, so eight hours seems reasonable, but 10 feels a bit excessive. So, in an attempt to test how beneficial this about of sleep is, I tried to sleep for 10 hours every night for a week.

It turns out sleeping that long sounds easier than it is. On the first night, I went to bed at 9:50 p.m., hoping to get 10 hours of rest before school the next day. But my body wasn't accustomed to sleeping this early. Although I'm not really sure how much time passed, I lay in bed for what felt like hours before finally being able to fall asleep.

The next day, I tried to sleep at a more typical time of 11:30 p.m., since my free first period allows sleep into tutorial. This time, the problem wasn't falling asleep, but rather waking up too early — I naturally woke up at around 8:45 a.m., which put me at around nine hours of sleep in the night.

Even toward the end of the week, I was still struggling to make my body stay asleep for 10 or more hours. But I did manage to get over nine hours of rest a night, compared to my usual seven or eight hours. And just this extra bit does, in fact, make a difference.

For me, the main benefit is being more awake in the mornings. With adequate rest, it was exponentially easier to will myself out of bed each day, even when it was cold outside my sheets. ♦

Throughout the school day, however, I didn't notice myself being more attentive or energetic. And while I usually begin to tire a few hours after dinner, I did not feel the same level of exhaustion at night after sleeping more the night before. So in a way, sleeping 10 hours one night actually made it much harder to get as much sleep the next.

The biggest complaint I have about going to sleep early is the loss of time. When I went to bed before 10 o'clock, I felt like my days were significantly shorter. Compounded with other evening activities, getting 10 hours of sleep feels a great deal more like a hassle than a useful luxury.

**It did teach me valuable time management skills, since I had to stay on top of my homework and finish as much as possible on days I didn't have extracurriculars.**

As a result, this forced me to rush parts of my homework since there was simply not as much time to complete it. On the other hand, it did teach me valuable time-management skills, since I had to stay on top of my homework and finish as much as possible on days I didn't have extracurriculars.

As for whether this amount of sleep could become a permanent habit, my answer is that even if I did not have a heavy load of work to do daily, I don't think I would enjoy sleeping 10 hours a night. Nine? Maybe. But I definitely don't need 10. ♦

## 'Shotgunning' universities worsens students' chances

by MichaelZhang

With admission rates hovering around 5 percent for universities like Harvard and Stanford, even the best high school students can't count on getting in. As a result, along with the ease of using online application platforms, like the Common App, thousands of seniors have made the decision to try the "shotgun" approach of applying — submitting 20 or even 30 applications in hopes of being admitted to a distinguished undergraduate program.

At first, it might seem like this method has few or no drawbacks. At second glance, it may not be the silver bullet to college admissions.

**Students should focus on one or two colleges and craft essays that are flawless.**

Shotgunning colleges takes advantage of a certain degree of randomness — for instance, whether a student's application essays happen to connect emotionally with admission officers or not.

There appears to be no risk to shotgunning, since it can't hurt to apply. In fact, it seems as if there are plenty of successful students every year who shotgun their way to unlikely college acceptances.

But the success stories become disproportionately highlighted, and application fees can quickly rack up. The stories of unsuccessful students who randomly applied to schools without much second-thought get buried by these rare success stories,

further contributing to the myth that shotgunning colleges is a bulletproof method.

College admissions are not as random as most people think. Of course, essays resonate better with certain admissions officers, but for the most part, universities know the types of students they are looking to admit. Even for borderline students, admission officers will make logical choices. It's in their job description, after all.

Furthermore, it seems to be more efficient for students to put full effort into the essays of a few reach schools than to hastily complete mediocre applications in hopes that one might just be good enough. Surely, if a student hopes to be admitted by a prestigious university, they cannot just depend on their scores — it must be through the essays. So, students should focus on one or two colleges and craft essays that are as flawless as possible, because logically, that seems to be the most successful method.

It's more logical that students take the time to research colleges that they truly believe will be the right fit for them, and then craft the best essays they possibly can for those select colleges. Not only will they be more enthusiastic in the application process, but they will also be happier if they find out that they have been accepted into a college that is perfect for them.

Contrary to popular belief, shotgunning might decrease a student's odds of success in this college acceptance lottery. Instead, picking a couple of schools to fully dedicate essays for seems like a more sensible option.

The shotgun method is a gamble that doesn't guarantee a payout, and as a result, many students who chose to utilize it could be disappointed by the end of March if it doesn't work out. ♦

## Homecoming game at Levi's inconvenient

by MuthuPalaniappan

For the first time, the school will hold the Homecoming game at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara on Sept. 21. Although it is an amazing opportunity to play on an NFL field at no cost for the school, the whole thing is an added hassle for most students.

Perhaps this sounds like whining on my part, but I'm hardly alone in feeling this way.

Traditionally, the Homecoming game is held at school, which is less than a 10-minute drive from the homes of most students. Getting to Levi's will take half an hour or more, and many students will simply not bother to go since they care little about football anyway.

The game won't cost the school any money, attending the game itself will be more expensive for students. This year, the school plans to sell \$10 tickets for "spirit buses" so students can get to and from the stadium, and the Homecoming court will take limos to Levi's. Students who do not want to purchase bus tickets will have to pay for gas and \$20 for parking. Additionally, each ticket to enter the stadium is \$25, even for students with ASB.

Also, having to take a bus is inconvenient for students who may not want to stay for the entirety of the game.

Personally, for every football game I have been to, I have not stayed for all four quarters. Whether it be because I get bored or have somewhere else to be, school is just a short 2-minute drive from my house; I can easily pop in and out of a game.

With home games, I can still support the football team and show my school spirit even if I didn't spend three hours in the

stands. This year, I'll have to choose between the game and possibly any other commitments.

Perhaps the final reason to be disappointed in the Levi's location is that Homecoming is a time to celebrate school spirit, and should always be an on-campus celebration. Playing at another stadium defeats the whole purpose of coming home.

It's a great opportunity for players and die-hard football fans to be in such an esteemed stadium. However, I'm afraid that in a stadium that seats around 70,000 people, Homecoming will feel empty and unspirited with a crowd of less than 2,000. If we spent \$2 million on our sports plaza, we might as well use it. ♦

### >> thebigidea

#### Homecoming at Levi's Stadium

**How did Saratoga manage to secure Levi's Stadium as a venue for the Homecoming game?**

Jared Muela, the director of 49ers PREP, a program to connect local communities, approached Coach Tim Lugo with the opportunity to play at Levi's.

**How much will attending the game cost?** Although the game will not cost anything extra for the high school, students will have to pay \$25 for tickets, \$10 for spirit bus tickets, or \$20 for parking if they want to drive there.

**What other changes are there to the game?** In addition to the venue change, the Homecoming court will walk on the field instead of riding in vintage cars. Outside food and bags will not be allowed into the stadium either.

4.5/5 ★★★★★

**Pros:**

- + Nice environment
- + Unique flavors
- + Lots of pre-picked toppings
- + Gives you the option for rolled icecream
- + Free samples
- + Gives out stickers

**Cons:**

- Expensive

1600 Saratoga Ave, San Jose, CA 95129

4.0/5 ★★★★★

**Pros:**

- + Tastes like real tea
- + Decent price

**Cons:**

- Long line
- Only one size
- Limited menu
- No WiFi

10787 S Blaney Ave, Cupertino, CA 95014

3.0/5 ★★★

**Pros:**

- + The nitrogen used to make the icecream looks nice in pictures

**Cons:**

- The ice cream's texture is kind of hard
- Expensive

10815 N Wolfe Rd #102, Cupertino, CA 95014

2.0/5 ★★

**Pros:**

- + colorful & original
- + Also has dimsum
- + No tax !!

**Cons:**

- Only one size
- Flies everywhere
- Doesn't taste good
- Not worth the price

20950 Stevens Creek Blvd, Cupertino, CA 95014

September 14, 2018

## Milpitas: teaching care techniques

King ring



Marisa Kingsley

This summer, I decided to go out of my comfort zone and try something new: taking care of children. To do this, I signed up to be a camp counselor at the Humane Society of Silicon Valley in Milpitas. The camp is a place for elementary and middle school-aged kids to learn how to care for animals in the shelter. I had attended this short camp many years before and had a great experience there. I applied to be a counselor and managed to pass the interview, though I soon learned that was the easiest part of the job.

The first day was easily the most nerve-wracking. I didn't know any of the kids I was assigned to, nor did I have much experience being in a position of responsibility other than previously having a "buddy" in elementary school. This role was entirely new to me. There were eight counselors, including myself, and we were constantly on the move. We helped the kids properly hold animals, assisted them with crafts and cleaned up after them. On top of that, we had to keep them entertained by playing fun and engaging games and making sure they felt included and happy. We also had to walk around and make sure the kids were treating the animals respectfully when they visited them, not to mention trying to find the balance between discipline and fun. I ended up befriending a group of girls who were friends outside of the camp. I found that just spend-

ing time with them and listening to what they had to say was the best way that I could connect with them. By the end of the week, they considered me to be their "pack leader" of sorts, which was made obvious by the turkey call I adopted to get their attention. I look back fondly at the week (even when I had to hold large snakes) because of the moments I could make the campers laugh, like through a game of amoeba tag. To put it straight, I was awful at it. The campers laughed as I failed to tag kid after kid, and this charade went on for minutes until I finally managed to tag one. I remember one of the campers saying, "Why are the counselors so bad at this?" Despite my initial self-doubts, I ended up seeing my time as a camp counselor as an incredibly rewarding experience. I developed more assurance in my skills with children and realized I could handle greater responsibility. ♦



## Taiwan: eight years of teaching

BY Allison Hartley

On a June morning in Yilan, Taiwan, sophomore Audrey Lee paused for a breath. Feeling nervous about her new responsibilities, she asked God to prepare her for what was next and encourage her to be brave. Lee has traveled on eight volunteer missions to China, Taiwan and Mexico with her church, Chinese for Christ in San Jose. Every year at a summer camp, she teaches children English and about the Bible. During her week in Taiwan, she took on more responsibility as the primary English teacher for students in the sixth- to eighth-grade class rather than tutoring students one-on-one as she had done before. "It was a different experience," Lee said. "I made my own lesson plans and fun interactive games to

hold the attention of the students." Lee taught from her own English curriculum in between worship. Despite her larger role, Lee didn't feel alone teaching the class of 12. She said her team of adult volunteers and God facilitated her work, making it successful. Her students' willingness to learn made it rewarding. "They soaked up everything I tried to teach and participated a lot, which made teaching easier since I had such a responsive class," Lee said. Her tasks have increased in difficulty throughout the years. When she was younger, her main job was to hand out papers and socialize with students, which she enjoyed more than this summer's duties. "When you bond with the kids, they are more willing to tell you things to pray about, things they are wor-

ried about and their problems and issues. It was a more honest friendship," Lee said. "When I'm their teacher and they're obligated to respect me, it's a more shallow relationship." Nonetheless, Lee felt close with her students, recalling a moment during her class's last-day performance where her students performed the song "He Knows My Name." When one of her students forgot her part, Lee silently encouraged her to continue, and the girl soon remembered and continued singing. "I was proud because she was brave and powered through," Lee said. Lee hopes to cultivate more deep relationships on future missions, especially through Facebook contact. "I liked teaching, but I hope I get to become super close with more kids, like on my past missions," she said. "It creates lifelong friendships." ♦



Lee



# Traveling through summer

STUDENTS SHARE THEIR LEARNING EXPERIENCES



## SF: creating a new lifestyles app

BY Ava Hooman & Esha Lakhotia

This summer, senior Veda Jammula attended a six-week sleepaway coding camp called The Make School's Summer Academy in San Francisco to improve her knowledge on app development. Jammula applied to the camp last April since she wanted to learn how to make a fully functioning app from start to finish. The Make School is a program where students create their own working app or website within six weeks. To get into the Summer Academy, Jammula had a video interview, she said. Some questions were somewhat random. One question was about her post-summer plans and another asked for the best tic-tac-toe strategy. "I was initially really confused by the wide ranging questions, but I actually appreciated how creative they were," Jammula said. "They let me to show a side of my personality that isn't always asked for."



The camp, which ran from June 30-Aug. 11, was split up into weeks consisting of different activities. During the first two weeks, the students learned how to use Swift, a programming language, and the entire third week was a hackathon requiring students to develop apps in pairs or groups. In the last three weeks, they built their own individual apps. "As helped with confused students and instructors taught for one hour every day. "I really liked the camp because

of the people there and the positive learning environment," Jammula said. While there, Jammula met people from around the world and made lifelong connections. "I have never gotten so close to people after just one day," Jammula said. "I remember the first night we got there, even though we did not know each other, we all sat in one room and talked for hours about our lives." At the end of the six weeks, Jammula launched her own app, Hot Closet, on the Apple App Store. The app helps girls organize their clothes and prepare outfits for school or other events. Jammula said it was inspired by her older sister, who "always has trouble deciding what to wear." The app has over 200 downloads, but Jammula does not plan to stop there. "I will definitely try to expand my knowledge in the CS side by using this knowledge to create more advanced apps in the future," she said. ♦



Jammula

## China: student becomes a teacher

BY Alan Zu

Sophomore Anthony Qin stood before his class of 13 students in the rural province of Yunnan, China, singing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" to his 15-year-olds pupils. The students followed along, trying to master the classic song while bettering their English. Qin was there from July 28-Aug 6 volunteering for the Peach Foundation, a program which helps children from poor districts lacking enough learning resources to complete a college education. Qin had to pay \$220 to cover his living costs in China for the summer. He lived in Kunming, a city near the village where he taught. Every day, the volunteer group drove him to the school where the children from the village went to learn. The school Qin taught at also included dorms for some students to stay in because many live far away. Qin's main goal was to teach his students how to pronounce English words. The program also provided materials, such as notebooks and writing utensils.

One of the class's projects was to prepare a song for the program's final performance. For about an hour every day, Qin's class focused on learning, singing and memorizing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." The class copied down the lyrics while Qin played the music. As they practiced, Qin also corrected his class's pronunciation.



Unfortunately, Qin couldn't watch his class perform their song on the last day because he had to leave a day early

for band camp here on campus. However, his mom recorded the performance for Qin, who said his students did really well. Each class also received a badminton set and a basketball for their free time. At the end of the camp, the sports items are raffled away to one kid in each class, giving them items of enjoyment they could not afford. During his trip, Qin and his group also had the opportunity to visit his students' houses. Because of the village families' low income, they didn't use lights at night to save money, despite having electricity. Qin also said that many of the houses, adjacent to large government farms filled with corn crops, were dirty and carried a putrid smell. Qin felt lucky to witness the differences between life in the Yunnan village and life in Saratoga. "I learned that I am more privileged than a lot of people," Qin said. "Whenever I am slacking off, I recall my experiences on this trip and think, 'Oh, [I] need to get back to work; I have so many more resources than the children I taught.'" ♦



Qin

## CASSY preps to move to center of SHS

BY Manasi Garg, Christine Zhang & Alekha Vadlakonda

For dozens of students who use its mental health services, CASSY is a safe space. CASSY provides them assistance and support, ranging from talking through ways for alleviating stress to seeking medical help for mental illnesses.

In the 2017-2018 school year alone, CASSY provided ongoing services to 220 students and gave 70 parent consultations. In total, CASSY provided 4,800 hours of counseling last year.

According to therapist Shelley Moeller, CASSY is an outside agency that was brought to Saratoga High to provide support for students.

It was first implemented on campus in the year following the high-profile suicide of sophomore Audrie Pott in 2012 and has become an integral part of the school's culture in the years since.

Currently, the school's CASSY service is staffed with two experienced therapists: Moeller, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) and Kaitlin Eastland, an Assistant Marriage and Family Therapist (AMFT).

Unlike most other mental health services, CASSY's sessions are free to students, and

students are welcome to simply walk in and chat with a therapist when they need to.

Further appointments can be made with the therapists depending on the student's availability. Although CASSY's two therapists say they will happily aid any students in need of help, they are mandated reporters required by the state of California to report instances of physical and sexual abuse to Child Protective Services.

They will also report students with definitive plans of suicide to their parents, doctors or Uplift Family Services. However, confidentiality is preserved for students with occasional thoughts, not plans, for self-harm or suicide.

### From obscurity to prominence

Currently, CASSY is located in a portal building behind the 200 building in a little-known part of campus. Although this location offers privacy to its users, others may not use it because it's so far out of the way.

This spring, CASSY will be relocated to the new student/wellness center being constructed in the 800 building.

The student/wellness center's primary objective will be to allow students to hang out in a comfortable setting. With CASSY at the center of campus,

students will be able to drop in and chat with counselors without having to go out of their way.

In addition to CASSY, the student/wellness center will also host Leadership classes and provide conference rooms that are open to all students.

One of the other main goals of relocating CASSY to the middle of campus is to destigmatize mental health, Moeller said.

Moeller hopes that the idea of a wellness center will diffuse the negative stigma surrounding mental health.

"The move to the 800 building will hopefully make CASSY a more common place for students to hang out," she said. "They could start some groups on anxiety, or just talk about whatever's bothering them."

When asked about the reason for moving the CASSY center, Robinson said that he wanted to give the CASSY therapists a more spacious place.

He also hopes that by moving CASSY to a more centralized area on campus, CASSY's services would not only become more accessible to students, but also help normalize seeking mental health services.

Robinson had the opportunity to visit high schools in San Francisco with wellness centers and said that the success they

had with their centers prompted him to make the change and centralize CASSY's location.

With CASSY more prominently located, the therapists likewise believe that they will be able to reach more students.

"I think being in the wellness center might make the students more comfortable," Moeller said. "Hopefully, we'll have somebody out front that greets students, lets their teachers know they're here and lets them schedule appointments with therapists."

Moeller also said that she hopes the move to central campus will bring more support for CASSY, as well as help integrate it into the school's culture.

But Moeller said that moving CASSY to a more exposed area on campus would perhaps present a disadvantage for a few students who feel self-conscious about seeking help, saying that students sometimes "feel more comfortable with it [at the edge of campus because] it feels more private."

Nonetheless, Moeller said the advantages outweigh the one possible disadvantage this move might present.

"I think there's so much importance in working on our mental life," she said. "That'll just be more commonplace in a wellness center." ♦

## Meet the Counselors



**Eastland**  
CASSY Therapist

Kaitlin Eastland is an Associate Marriage and Family Therapist (AMFT) who has been working as a part of Saratoga's CASSY for several years. During high school, Eastland recalled wanting to talk to

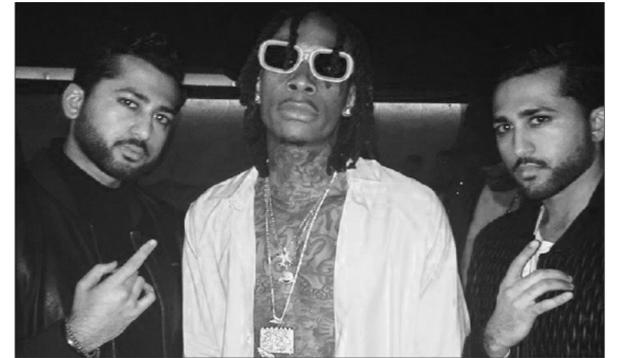
someone who could provide professional help and keep her information confidential. When she was given the opportunity to "give back" to other high schoolers, Eastland decided to work as a therapist. ♦



**Moeller**  
CASSY Therapist

Shelley Moeller, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT), has been working as a therapist for 10 years. When Moeller was initially in the process of receiving her MBA and as a result was

working at a high school to receive her practicum hours, she realized she "really enjoyed" working with students. Piecing together her excitement when she worked with adolescents, with her long-time passion for psychology and mental health, Moeller became a therapist. "I see my role on campus as supporting students," Moeller said. ♦



Courtesy of THEMXXNLIGHT

Akash and Krish Chandani, known as THEMXXNLIGHT, pose with Wiz Khalifa (center).

Asian culture within our sound and look, we hope we can obtain fans all throughout America and India. We love dressing up in our Indian wear and plan to depict that in future music videos."

At the moment, the twins have a couple of Hindi R&B songs that they "have big plans for."

When creating their music, the twins said that they write all their lyrics on the spot; "we go for that moody vibe," Akash said.

Although one may think that working with a sibling would cause disputes, Akash said that the two love working together.

"Over the past couple years, we have figured out who's better at certain things, so we just go back and forth with melodies and see who comes up with something that clicks," Akash said. "Then, we figure out whose

voice fits with that specific part of the beat." Akash advises any aspiring musicians to stay motivated in their music production and to have a good sense of time management.

He said that "if someone has a passion they should definitely pursue it, while doing their best to maintain their academic careers as well."

The duo currently have an EP and an album ready. Their EP, which "is just a small taste" of what they have in store for the future, is scheduled to drop in a month, and they're working out label deals to put the album through as well.

"Music was something we loved doing, so we just kept at it on the side of our engineering degree," Akash said. "It was super difficult, but the hard work is paying off now!" ♦

## Letter to self: Challenges await

by Jeffrey Xu

Dear future me,  
You probably think you don't have time to read this, seeing that you're in the brunt of junior year. But please, just give it a couple minutes. I promise it'll be worth the while.

I wish I could take a glimpse into your life — right now I have no idea what the future holds, so I'm hoping you can see it from where you are.

But just to remind you of where I am at the moment, I am currently adjusting to the heavy workload of AP U.S. History (APUSH) and English 11 Honors.

Homework for those two classes has been taking a combined total of five or more hours each day to complete, despite the new reduced APUSH curriculum. Interestingly enough, despite the fact that I am taking both AP Chemistry and AP Physics, my humanities classes seem to take much more time than anything else.

In English currently, I just finished the Socratic Seminar work for "The Crucible," a book that was assigned for sum-

mer reading for the first time. The play was enjoyable and didn't take much time to read, so no complaints there. But I hope you're getting more efficient at preparing for Socratic Seminars because that first one took me seven hours.

It especially sucks right now because these long nights of homework are really cutting into my beauty sleep time.

On that note, I hope that you're sleeping well. It probably seems like it was forever ago that you could get a comfortable nine hours of sleep a night.

By now, you're probably lucky to fit in seven — I'm just having a hard time grasping the concept of being sleep-deprived all the time, unlike the other 90 percent of this school. But perhaps you've found a loophole, such as drinking coffee, despite Dad's constant objections against it.

But, I just wanted to let you know that the end is near. Even this early, there is light at the end of this seemingly endless tunnel called junior year. I'm here to give you that final push, the energy to

sprint down the home stretch and cross that finish line.

Just kidding. We both know that the end of junior year is simply the beginning of college apps, intensive summer programs and a long list of college tours. And after that, we have senior year. By the end of first semester, you will, without a doubt, be sliding into severe senioritis.

There will only be a brief break before we dive deep into college, which is essentially another four years of pain and agony.

That said, I strongly advise you to keep your spirits up and tackle life with a positive attitude. I know you are probably very stressed, but as they say, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger!

As long as you're still keeping the promises you made at the beginning of the year, you should be fine. That is, don't procrastinate, keep making those to-do lists in Momentum™ and stop — and I mean it — stop watching so much YouTube.

I've found that following these three guidelines has really helped my productivity, especially

in pushing through my massive amount of homework these first few days of school.

Despite having time for almost nothing else besides schoolwork, I feel like I've still been really efficient recently, which is why I really hope you're still maintaining good discipline.

Speaking of promises, if I'm being really honest, I've already forgotten my New Year's resolution; in fact, I'm not sure I even made one in the first place. But I do hope you've made a strong one for 2019 that will carry you through college apps and first semester senior year. Maybe writing that down somewhere will help.

With that, I should probably go to sleep now. I have to savor these blissful nights of 9-hour-sleep while I still can.

I'll need all of the brain recovering I can get for my next 5-hour load of junior homework tomorrow! I wish you good luck in your future pursuits, and I hope the path ahead is a lot clearer than it is now.

With love,  
Jeffrey ♦

## VOICES around CAMPUS

Editor's note: The Falcon sought out freelance writing for this issue. The following is a poem written by sophomore Josephine Chou titled "PLEDGE."

I watch waves glisten in ripples as I stroll, sink toes in silken sand, sun toasty on my back.

I arrive at water's edge, put my feet together, wait for foam to wash them, then move further out

to stretch my arms in the swells and listen to Ocean murmuring her lifelong secrets.

Pollution, she sighs, is killing my children and strangling me.

I give my word to help.

## Ex-Harker students succeed in music industry

BY Alex Wang & Callia Yuan

"I see the moon in your eyes / All of a sudden you go out of sight." The voices of Saratoga-based R&B duo THEMXXNLIGHT (pronounced "the moonlight") floated over a Bollywood-inspired beat in "All of a Sudden" on Wiz Khalifa's album "Rolling Papers 2."

THEMXXNLIGHT consists of identical twins Akash and Krish Chandani, both 22 and alumni of The Harker School and Cupertino High School.

Their career began in a college dorm at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) with a \$150 microphone and the 2004 version of GarageBand.

They started under the name "LU-VKUSH" as a reference to the mythological twins in Hindu stories, but switched to "THEMXXNLIGHT" in February, as their last name "Chandani" means moonlight in Hindi. The twins had played Division 3 basketball for RPI, turning down a college basketball offer from MIT.

Akash explained that they quit the basketball team because they would not be able to take the sport past college, and realized that staying on the team would simply be a form of exercise for them, so they instead suddenly decided to pursue music.

"The same day that we quit the basketball team, we recorded our first cover ever and posted it online," Krish said in an interview with Genius. "It was pretty bad. Our entire set-up, even now, is probably not even worth \$500. It's just crazy how our passion switched [over] one day and we haven't looked back since. Every breath since then has been either music or engineering."

Before they began doing music, the twins attended Harker from their freshman year

until mid-junior year, when they switched to Cupertino. They graduated college this May from RPI with degrees in Industrial Systems Engineering.

"We always wanted to obtain a professional degree, but music was always what we wanted to do with our lives," Akash told The Falcon in social media interview. "It's an extremely tough industry so we didn't want to put all our eggs in one basket. Our parents did influence our decision to pursue engineering, but we are glad they did."

Their music was very popular, even attracting the attention of Wiz Khalifa's producer Sledgryn, who reached out to the twins after discovering their music on SoundCloud.

Khalifa was so impressed by the twins' sound that he decided to include THEMXXNLIGHT in three of the 25 songs on "Rolling Papers 2," Khalifa's most recent album.

Because of this exposure, THEMXXNLIGHT's songs now have more than 5 million plays on Spotify.

Now that they have found their niche in the music industry, the twins have put off engineering at the moment and have shifted toward a career in music.

But, for all of their success, they have had little formal training. Akash said that while they grew up playing many instruments, they mostly played by ear and to this day can barely read sheet music.

They credit their love for Indian music, which is an influence that can be heard throughout their songs, to their mom and dad, who are from Bangalore and Mumbai respectively.

"It feels great that people are now accepting our sound and style into the music industry," Akash said. "Especially as the only artists that really emphasize our South

BY Jayne Zhou

## 'Crazy Rich Asians' film defies movie stereotypes

As an Asian-American who is used to watching movies produced by mostly older white men, I found watching "Crazy Rich Asians" to be both empowering and inspiring.

Based on a best-selling novel by Asian-American author Kevin Kwan, "Crazy Rich Asians" shares the story of a Chinese-American university professor named Rachel Chu who accompanies her boyfriend Nick Young to a wedding in his native Singapore.

Though the storyline follows that of a traditional rom-com, "Crazy Rich Asians" is not just any average rom-com. The movie adds unique elements of culture and cultural defiance to make the film feel fresh.

For the first time in forever, I saw people on the screen who were Asian; that was mind-boggling to me, but it shouldn't have been. Diverse representation on screen is important to give people pride in their ethnicity.

In addition, my Asian parents usually discourage me from watching rom-coms, since they're convinced it's a waste of time to watch a bunch of 20-year-olds fall in love. However, my parents were extremely moved by the movie and the accurate representation of Asian tradition, and as a result, they barely even noticed the romance of it all.

The only thing that bothered us was the constant change from Mandarin to Cantonese within the family. For some reason, the grandmother spoke Mandarin, but the rest of the family only spoke Cantonese and Rachel only spoke Mandarin. One second I could understand what they were saying, but soon the characters would start speaking in Cantonese. Additionally, all of the music was in Mandarin. All in all, the use of language in the film could have been more cohesive.

But all is forgotten after watching the rest of the beautiful movie, created by director Jon Chu.

Chu is a Bay Area local, born and raised in Palo Alto; his father owns Chef Chu's, a restaurant in Los Altos, and his niece attends Redwood Middle School.

Through "Crazy Rich Asians," Chu takes his audience on an adventure through the life and traditions of Asia's upper class. Instead of basing the film on Asian stereotypes, Chu shows a side of Asian culture rarely depicted in films.

The importance of family, another huge part of Asian culture, is a central theme in the movie. There are also several more subtle allusions such as dumpling-making and mahjong, a game of skill, strategy and calculation.

This accurate cultural representation

### Diverse representation on screen is important to give people pride in their ethnicity.

is not only inspiring; it's also proving to be popular. After its release on Aug. 15, the movie has grossed \$149.2 million worldwide as of Sept. 7.

According to Vox, "Crazy Rich Asians" is a groundbreaking for lots of reasons, but having a woman at its center who grows and becomes stronger without compromising her own moral center in the midst of unimaginable glamour is one of them."

"Crazy Rich Asians" is the final push the movie industry needs toward more accurate representation of Asians in films; let's hope it is only one of many great culturally rich films to come. ♦

## Daily life becomes focus of senior's vlog channel

BY Patrick Li & Muthu Palaniappan

Starting in mid-July, senior Enzo Coglitore began a routine that he has carried into the school year: He wakes up at 5:30 a.m., picks up his Canon G7x and starts filming for his YouTube audience of over 290 subscribers.

After editing, this video will later become one of Coglitore's weekly vlogs, where he takes the audience along on a ride through his daily routines. Currently, Coglitore has 20 videos uploaded to his channel.

Coglitore started his channel after purchasing his camera in the beginning of summer. Despite being initially hesitant about putting himself online, Coglitore started vlogging because he knew he would have fun at it.

"My goals for the vlog channel are to grow my platform, to hopefully have influence and to make a difference," Coglitore said.

Coglitore is now posting videos around twice a week after school started, but he posted daily over the summer. Some of Coglitore's past videos detail his summer job at Mind Pump Media, an online fitness podcast, and his health transformation. He documents how he lost weight through a strict dieting and exercising plan.

While Coglitore watches other popular vloggers such as Casey Neistat and Emma Chamberlain, he still maintains his own unique vlogging style.

Coglitore's videos, which each take around 1.5 hours of prep and editing time, range from 5 to 10 minutes long. Coglitore knows how to entertain his viewers, whether it be with a sped up clip of him cooking breakfast or a clip of him singing along to the radio. He learned a lot of his editing techniques from being a part of the Media Arts Program, and his videos have high-quality transitions and show a lot of effort.

During school days, Coglitore's vlogs are filled with clips of classroom work and conversations between him and his friends. All of his videos tend to be light-hearted.

At the same time, Coglitore is still candid in his videos. He talks about struggles that other students and audience members can relate to. For instance, in a recent video, Coglitore detailed the stresses of being a senior.

### "I see myself becoming more confident with my skills."



SENIOR Enzo Coglitore

In a video titled "We NEED To Talk..." (Senior Stress)," Coglitore said, "Making YouTube is hard... but I do enjoy doing this, so I am going to make sure I am bringing you the best content that I can."

Each vlog gets around 200 or 300 views within a week of its posting. Since Coglitore advertises his channel via his other social media accounts, many students have been introduced to his YouTube account.

One of Coglitore's avid fans, senior Andrew Gao, said he enjoys Coglitore's videos because they are unique.

"I think Coglitore differentiates himself from other vloggers because he is a high school student, and there are not a lot of high school vloggers," Gao said.

Coglitore cannot see himself giving up vlogging anytime soon and has big dreams for this new hobby.

"As I make videos, I see myself becoming more confident with my skills," Coglitore said. "I love the feeling." ♦

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

2022: a great introduction

By ElaineToh

During the early 2000s, a wave of highly acclaimed fictional movies — the first few entries of the Harry Potter series and the Lord of the Rings trilogy — made their way onto the silver screen, leaving people wistfully wishing to attend Hogwarts or to live in Middle Earth (minus the impending doom and possible death, of course).



SOURCE: CLIMBIX

Enter "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," the first movie installment based on C.S. Lewis' seven-part book series, "The Chronicles of Narnia," fitting nicely in the fantasy world genre.

Taking place during World War II, the movie opens with bombs falling through the clouds and onto Britain, toward the home of our protagonists: Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy Pevensie. Luckily, the four siblings escape the bombing, but, at their mother's request, are sent away to the countryside to live with an old professor, who, of course, owns a mysterious and magical wardrobe.

Without anything to do, the siblings try to kill time by playing hide and seek inside the old professor's house.

Through some happenstance, Lucy finds an empty room with the large wardrobe and walks inside.

Passing several fur coats, she falls into a bed of snow and enters the realm of Narnia, a kingdom currently oppressed by the White Witch, who keeps it in a perpetual winter.

Though Lucy tells her siblings about the world of grandeur inside the wardrobe, nobody believes her, especially since it at first seems like a completely normal object in the siblings' first attempt to all enter. However, while playing baseball, the siblings get in trouble for breaking a window. They decide to hide inside the wardrobe and suddenly get transported into Narnia.

After Edmund decides to join with the White Witch, the rest of the Pevensie siblings decide they need to save their brother because she plans to kill him. With the aid of some talking animals and mystical creatures, the children go on a journey to save Narnia and their brother from the White Witch.

Witch.

Though "The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe" and, in fact, "The Chronicles of Narnia" as a whole might not be the most popular, it still manages to be an entertaining experience, capturing my attention for the complete two hours and 30 minutes. So as the freshman Homecoming theme, it is by no means terrible, a quality usually attributed to underclassmen themes.

The plot, though pretty standard, can be easily adapted.

Perhaps freshmen can stumble upon the land of Saratoga High, which is currently controlled by the "evil" seniors.

And, just maybe, with the power of their less-stressed minds, they can overcome the currently worried-about-college-apps seniors. But, that's just an example.

Even the decorations have possibilities. While it may not have as unique a design as "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," "Wizard of Oz" or "Alice in Wonderland," there are certain elements that can be implemented.

For example, freshmen can divide their hall into two with one displaying the miles of snow from the White Witch's perpetual winter and the other with grassy fields and deep red tents, as the snow begins to melt.

"The Chronicles of Narnia" — including "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" — is simple — but not overly ambitious. All in all, it's a great introduction to the frenzy of Homecoming. ♦



THE WIZARD OF OZ

2020: magically classic

By LeoCao & AndrewLee

This Homecoming, the junior class is tasked with incorporating their theme "The Wizard of Oz" into a successful quad-day.

Made almost 80 years ago, "The Wizard of Oz" movie is still as magical as it was when it was released in 1939.

After watching the film, we felt it succeeds in depicting a fantasy world.

With a combination of an ecstatic cast, emotional music and a heartfelt story, the film, an adaptation of the children's novel "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" by Frank Baum, remains one of the most well-known family productions in film history.

A young Judy Garland was a skillful actress and a gifted singer whose voice was well suited to the emotional music.

Additionally, Jack Haley's Tin Woodman, Bert Lahr's Cowardly Lion, Ray Bolger's Strawman and Frank Morgan's Wizard add perfect touches of humor.

Intent on seeking out the aid of the mythical Wizard of Oz to get back to Kansas, Dorothy sets off on a light-hearted adventure along the yellow-brick road.

Along the way, she meets the Cowardly Lion

Tin Woodman and Strawman who all agree to join Dorothy on her quest.

Although the characters may seem a little bit comical and unbelievable, we found that each one of Dorothy's new friends possesses a critical flaw that is important and unique to each person, animal or tinman, adding emotional value.

With its famous plot twist at the end of the film, we were left with a satisfied and content feeling when we understood the small but powerful message the film delivers: You already have everything you need inside you. The junior class Homecoming skit will include many well-known aspects of the film.

Additionally, the film provides many opportunities for creative decorating, like the yellow brick road.

It provides exceptional material for both script writers and dance choreographers.

The theme also gives students a lot of costume creativity in depicting the film's famous characters, such as Dorothy, Tin Woodman and Cowardly Lion.

With plenty of playful and comical imagery throughout the film, "The Wizard of Oz" is arguably one of the best Homecoming themes. ♦



CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

2021: surprisingly sweet

By AlanZu

When I first saw the 1971 and 2005 version of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," I thought both movies were fantastic and imaginative. The 1971 version's visuals were especially magical and enhanced by the bright colors. Because of its enticing plot, "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" is a great choice for the sophomore Homecoming theme.

The impact from all versions of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" — the original 1964 Roald Dahl book, the 1971 movie and the 2005 movie — is notable in pop culture.

The 1971 film, named "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory," was nominated for two Academy Awards. Many of the original movie's songs, such as "The Candyman," are still popular.

In general, critics have preferred the old version over the new one. Movie critic Roger Ebert wrote, in 2005 on his own movie review website, that the most recent movie version is extremely disturbing for viewers. "The problem is not simply that Willy Wonka looks like Michael Jackson; it's that in a creepy way we're not sure of his motives," Ebert said. Willy Wonka, in the 2005 version, is performed by Johnny Depp, while the 1971 version of Willy Wonka is played by Gene Wilder.

Even so, both movies and the book still share many similarities, such as their overall plot.

Charlie is chosen to go to a factory along with four other children. The others, who all misbehave in the factory, are punished for their misdeeds, and Charlie is rewarded with the entire factory.

The original movie would be a more delightful inspiration for the sophomore skit. As Ebert says, the 1971 version is "delightful, funny, scary, exciting and, most of all, a genuine work of imagination."

One aspect from the original story that the skit should definitely include is the Oompa Loompas. The Oompa Loompas, who are short, exotic, orange-skin dwarves working in Wonka's factory and paid only with cocoa beans, create memorable dance scenes in the movie that could be an entertaining quad day number.

Another enjoyable scene occurs when Willy Wonka introduces his machines in the factory's inventing room, which is imaginative.

For example, Wonka adds sport shoes into a frothy mixture in order to give it "a little kick," and each one of his machines makes strange noises as they pump or whirl chemicals to create different candies like the "Everlasting Gobstopper."

Such scenes are worth adding to bring some more charm to the Homecoming skit.

Wonka, being the owner of the chocolate factory, should be portrayed energetically. In the 2005 movie, he is excited at the strangest ideas, such as the almost-creepy puppet performance before the ticket winners enter the factory.

The sophomores could portray Wonka as this eccentric character to add humor into their skit.

Many scenes from the 1971 "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" are captivating due to their charming creativity.

While it is impossible to perform the entire film, both movie versions include so many iconic scenes that the skit should be successful.

And, with so many Oompa Loompas, main characters, and an entire town, the skit will require a vast cast in order to cover all starring or supporting roles. ♦



SOURCE: ICOLLECTOR

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

2019: visually aesthetic

By AlexandraLi

When I first heard the senior Homecoming theme was "Alice in Wonderland," I was disappointed. It was at least a widely known story, but "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" or even some of the other themes felt like they had more exciting plots and more unique characters.

Yet I decided to give the movie a chance and watched Tim Burton's 2010 "Alice in Wonderland." I was surprised to find it set in the Victorian era, with a young blond girl named Alice Kingsleigh describing a recurring nightmare where she sees many characters similar to that of the original 1951 "Alice in Wonderland."

The movie fades to 13 years later, where it quickly becomes clear that the now-teenaged Alice is opposed to all things regarding tradition.

I don't remember much about the original movie, but one of the most memorable parts occurs when a bunny holding a big clock runs away frantically yelling, "I'm late, I'm late, for a very important date!"

Since the bunny in the 2010 movie does not say this line and looks far more like a normal bunny, I was fairly disappointed.

From there, the plot of the original story began. Alice falls down the hole below a tree, drinks and eats some food to grow and shrink and escapes from a room.

But the whole landscape of Underland and Alice falling down the tunnel is quite

impressive visually. The computer-generated landscape images provide the mysterious sort of environment that fit well with the dreary mood created by the Red Queen's reign.

Although Alice firmly believes that she is in a dream, she is proven wrong when she is physically hurt.

She is introduced to the troubles in Underland, where the evil Red Queen opposes the White Queen, who used to rule the kingdom and now is the head of a resistance.

The characters have a scroll to predict the future, and Alice appears to play a crucial part in returning the crown to the White Queen.

This plot is evidently much more complex than the 1951 plot of Alice's simply trying to return home in a land of her dream.

With this movie as the senior Homecoming theme, I've realized that the class has a lot of possibilities for decorations that are easily identifiable as "Alice in Wonderland," such as the Cheshire Cat and army of cards.

While some of the costumes might have to be somewhat elaborate, others can be easily outfitted and recognizable.

Having watched the more recent film, I see "Alice in Wonderland" as a decent choice for the senior class, and I look forward to seeing some of the classic moments and characters represented in my class's Homecoming skits and dances. ♦

After popular controversy, Academy members withdraw new awards category 'Popular Film'

By AndrewLee

Ever since the Oscars made a transition from being a private company banquet to a televised broadcast in 1953, members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences have been trying to push its production to become more interesting and audience-friendly.

Even with these efforts, though, many have noticed that the annual show's viewership has been on a steady decline in recent years, with this year's ratings dropping to a record low of 26.5 million viewers. To alleviate these poor ratings and keep audiences engaged, the Academy of Motion Arts and Sciences announced changes starting 2020, such as a capped runtime of three hours and an earlier air date of Feb. 9.

The most riveting and controversial announcement, however, was the addition of a new award category: Achievement in Popular Film, which spurred lots of controversy and discussion among film buffs.

Without any further information about how films would be selected for the award, people were left confused as to what the award really stood for.

Speculation suggested that the award could be based on box-office performance or attention in the media.

Many feared that popular films with potential and merit to be Best Picture, such

as the recent groundbreaking blockbuster "Black Panther," would be pushed into an arguably "lesser" award because of their high ticket sales and large budgets.

Because of the groundswell of criticism the Academy has faced, the institution has decided to completely remove the implementation of the new award in the near future, and according to Los Angeles Times, "seek additional input" and remain "actively engaged" on whether the idea should return.

Even with the immense backlash from fans and the widespread negativity regarding the uncalled for Popular Film award, the Academy feels as if the addition of this new category was justified and could even return in the future.

In a recent interview with the New York Times, Academy president John Bailey said that "this new award was meant to create a category of really excellent filmmaking that would essentially address and create interest in the awards for the kind of movies that people really go to see in large numbers." "The Oscars" have always been a celebrated outlet in which excellent films, no matter how obscure, are honored. Films of any

type, regardless of media attention or ticket sales, are given the opportunity to step up into the spotlight for their achievements and are deservedly represented in the film industry as the best of the best.

Noticeably, popular films have been consistently absent for much of Oscars history. Although they are enjoyed and celebrated by a majority of the public, they are not deemed representative of the most prestigious excellency in film by Academy voters.

However, as popular films seem to be improving in quality in the eyes of the Academy, people have been excited to see the Awards give the recognition that some popular films arguably deserve.

The introduction of an award based on popular achievement made people feel as if the progress made by these films had been undermined and were planning to be given a "consolation" prize not worthy of the title of "Best Picture."

But according to Bailey, there was a fundamental misunderstanding in how the award was received. Instead of using this award as a cheap attempt to sideline a plethora of superhero-dominated popular films, the Academy was trying to find a way to

recognize a dramatic shift in modern film industry — one that separates more adult, profound films and those considered to be "popular."

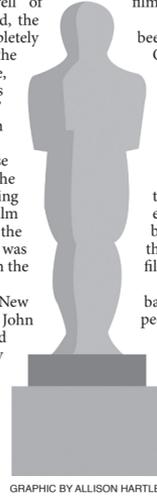
The choice to remove the category was one that was not up to himself, but rather a democratic choice of all 54 board members of the Academy and popular opinion, Bailey said.

Popular films have been consistently absent from much of the Oscar's history.

"[The Academy] is trying to be egalitarian and listening to the voices of our members ...," Bailey said. "We are just trying to address what we see as an existential problem that ... is not going to go away in terms of where films seem to be headed."

In an attempt to rebuild after its record-breaking low ratings earlier this year, Academy leaders inadvertently created much more of a backlash than they were counting on, only to reverse in the end.

The Academy hopes that audience understands that Academy members are doing their best to address an abrupt shift in popular film culture and misconceptions about the Oscars' goal to recognize excellence in film. ♦



GRAPHIC BY ALLISON HARTLEY

Ruby Rose faces criticism for her role in 'Batwoman'

By ShreyaKatkere

On Aug. 7, model and actress Ruby Rose was cast as Katherine Kane, or Batwoman, the first openly gay superhero to headline a TV series, in CW's upcoming DC Comics series "Batwoman."

The casting of Kane for the role of the Jewish-lesbian lead generated some controversy because she does not identify as a lesbian and she is not Jewish.

A typical Tweet was like this one from passionate critic @negative\_purple: "[The directors] lied about wanting an actor that [stayed] true to who Batwoman is and instead just picked a 'hot' white person who isn't too gay to offend the straights."

Many people believe that the decision to not cast a Jewish person for the role is anti-Semitic.

The hashtag #KeepKateJewish has been trending recently on Twitter. Some in the LGBTQ+ community said that Jewish lesbian actresses such as Evan Rachel Wood, Zoe Kravitz or Olivia Thirlby should have received the role instead.

Rose retaliated to these accusations on Twitter, writing, "Where on Earth did 'Ruby is not a lesbian therefore she can't be Batwoman' come from — [it] has to be the funniest, most ridiculous thing I've ever read."

Though Rose has dated women before, she does not identify as a lesbian. Shortly after this controversial Tweet, Rose deleted her Twitter account, not wanting to deal with hate comments under her post.

Rose isn't the only one who has been called out for race and sexuality issues

example is Scarlett Johansson, who was recently shamed for taking the role of Dante "Tex" Gill, a transgender character in the movie "Rug and Tug."

The "Rug and Tug" incident was not the first time she has been in the middle of a casting controversy. In January 2015, Johansson was cast for the role of Motoku Kusangi in "Ghost in the Shell." The Media Action Network for Asian Americans (MANAA) and countless other Asian Americans were extremely angered by this episode of so-called white washing.

Johansson turned her shoulder to the disapproving comments, going forward with her role in "Ghost in the Shell." But she eventually withdrew from her role in "Rug and Tug" and apologized to all the people that her casting offended.

"Diversity is important in Hollywood, and I would never want to feel like I was playing a character that was offensive," Johansson said in an interview with USA Today.

Although Rose has not yet taken any steps toward backing out of her role as Batwoman, the issue of character-actor matching remains prominent.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that it is part of a director's job to attract more viewers for their film, and the best way to do this is often to hire a well-known actor or actress to play the lead.

Even though it's up to the directors to choose whether to focus on procuring greater viewership by casting brand-name actors or to emphasize accurate representation for marginalized communities, the final decision whether to see the movie or not lies



GRAPHIC BY ALEXANDRA LI

The Jay Koo Academy

EXPERT TEST PREP AND COLLEGE ADMISSIONS CONSULTING

PSAT Weekend Workshop

Sunday, October 7

Diagnostic PSAT 9am-12noon

Review/Strategy Discussion 1pm-4pm

See website for details.

SAT Prep Class

(for December 1 SAT)

1	Diagnostic Test 1	Tuesday, 10/16	6pm - 10pm
2	Lecture 1	Thursday, 10/18	7pm - 10pm
3	Lecture 2	Saturday, 10/20	1pm - 4pm
4	Lecture 3	Tuesday, 10/23	7pm - 10pm
5	Lecture 4	Saturday, 10/27	1pm - 4pm
6	Lecture 5	Tuesday, 10/30	7pm - 10pm
7	Lecture 6	Thursday, 11/1	7pm - 10pm
8	Diagnostic Test 2	Saturday, 11/3	1pm - 5pm
9	Lecture 7	Tuesday, 11/6	7pm - 10pm
10	Lecture 8	Saturday, 11/10	1pm - 4pm
11	Lecture 9	Tuesday, 11/13	7pm - 10pm
12	Diagnostic Test 3	Saturday, 11/17	1pm - 5pm
13	Lecture 10	Tuesday, 11/20	7pm - 10pm
14	Diagnostic Test 4	Saturday, 11/24	1pm - 5pm
15	Final Review	Tuesday, 11/27	7pm - 10pm

See website for registration details.

408-712-5274

www.jaykooacademy.com • info@jaykooacademy.com  
12280 Saratoga-Sunnyvale Rd., Suite 201, Saratoga, CA 95070

# Are you afraid to drive? Me too, and I've procrastinated on it for two years

Toh-yota

Elaine Toh

Around nine years ago, I sat glued to my dad's phone in the car, mindlessly playing a game as my eyes began to close. Next to me were my two older sisters, both half asleep. Slightly bored, I started to ask my parents when we would finally pass the traffic-filled highways and get to Los Angeles.

"How could that happen?" my mom asked, followed by a lot of sighs and disappointed "tsk's".

Curious, I placed my game down onto my lap and slowly peered out the window. Outside, it was a common scene — a car half-smashed, more than two police cars hovering around the area, and an EMS vehicle, lights flashing.

I was too small and far away to see any more than that. Yet, it wasn't the first time nor last time I would witness something like that. Driving back home from LA, going to an eye doctor or an acupuncture appoint-

ment and traveling to the airport, the accidents all seemed similar — same beat up car, a couple of police cars and an EMS. Yet, my stomach can never stand them, making me feel nauseous.

Anytime my mom suddenly steps on the brakes, my heart lurches forward. Whenever a car in a different lane dangerously swerves into ours, a pang of fear hits my mind.

I guess that's why I don't have a license. I am 17 without even a permit. At this point, I don't even have any aspiration to get one. Long story short, I'm just terrified.

In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2015 in the U.S., 2,333 teens between age 16 to 19 were killed in auto accidents, and 235,845 were treated in emergency departments for injuries. This equates to approximately six teens dying every day from driving.

I'd rather not risk the same fate, especially since I wholeheartedly believe I might do

something stupid while driving. But the thing is, I'm not the odd one out as a 17-year-old who can't drive (the permit part is debatable).

In a recent study by Michael Sivak and Brandon Schoettle from the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, between 1983 to 2014, the number of teens driving has declined: 18-year-olds from 69 percent to 60 percent, 17-year-olds from 69 percent to 45 percent and 16-year-olds from 46 percent to 24 percent.

What's the reason for this decline? According to The Atlantic, one study of people between 18 and 39 who did not have driver's license gave three primary reasons: "too busy or not enough time to get a driver's license" (37 percent), "owning and maintaining a vehicle is too expensive" (32 percent) and "able to get transportation from others"

(31 percent).

So I'm not exactly alone in my mindset of not needing or wanting to drive until I'm older.

Also, aside from the fact that I'm afraid, there is really no need for me to drive, since I usually only travel to and from school to home, which is about a 10- to 15-minute walk (and yes, I don't have a social life, so I usually don't go out).

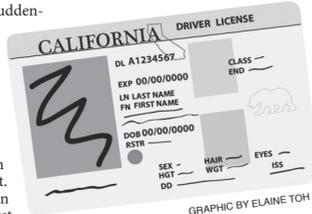
If I ever need to go somewhere farther to buy a poster for a project or a gift for a friend, I can usually find a small chunk of time when my parents are free to drive me.

I guess my reason for not driving would be that I just don't want to get a license. With junior year's workload piling up, I constantly need to catch up on homework or procrastinated essays along with taking the infamous SAT and ACT tests.

So, even though all my much younger friends might start their newfound independence while driving, there is no rush for me. When I have the confidence to do so (or when my parents pester me enough), I will go to the DMV and try.

But for now, I can always leech rides off my friends and wait.

Or I can always play Mario Kart. ♦



GRAPHIC BY ELAINE TOH



GRAPHIC BY CALLIA YUAN

# Teacher, student experience culture shock

by Alekha Vadlakonda & Jessica Wang

Physical Fitness teacher Yuko Aoki and junior Je-woo Im spoke to *The Falcon* about their thoughts on the differences between the United States and their homelands. Aoki moved from Maebashi, Japan about 30 years ago and has since noticed some distinct cultural contrasts between her homeland and the United States. Im moved to the United States from Korea five years ago when he was in seventh grade.

## -Yuko Aoki-

Q: What differences did you notice between Japanese schools and American schools?

A: School is very different. Maybe these days it has gotten a little bit better over there in Japan, but when I was in high school, high school had very strict rules.

My school had, of course, a uniform that you had to wear. And on top of that, the uniform had to be a certain way. The skirt length was measured and decided. You couldn't put on makeup, you couldn't perm your hair, you couldn't do your nails and you couldn't have accessories.

The rules were very strict. It was yes or a no. There was no concept of gray area. You were doing it right, or doing it wrong. Academically, it was very rigorous. They were very competitive, even more so than here.

There's a high school entrance exam, too. So the middle school students are not going directly to high school; they have to take an entrance exam. It's very stressful.

Q: What is distinctly different about Japanese culture with respect to American culture?

A: It's different even in language. If we compare the languages, an English sentence is a subject and verb. So without hearing the rest of the question, we already know if the answer is yes or no. For the Japanese language, there is a subject, and then a lot of things, and then at the end of the sentence is the verb. So it's very vague.

The hardest thing for me when I first came to the United States was expressing rejection.

Here [in the U.S.] we say "no." But I couldn't say "no" in Japan. [Instead, I would say,] "Yeah, that's a wonderful idea, but" and then everybody [would] take the [implicit] "no" and say, "Okay, okay, I understand you don't want to do it." So unless I said "no" or "I'm busy," [people in the U.S. would not understand.] I would have to say it [straight to

the point]. In Japan, they would get hurt if I say that.

## -Je-woo Im-

Q: Can you tell me about your background before you moved to America?

A: I went to a normal Korean school; I went to two elementary schools, went through one year of middle school and came here.

My dad wanted to be a doctor here, so he came here to study for the USMLE [United States Medical Licensing Examination] but he gave up and went back, and he's a doctor in Korea now. So my dad's living in Korea, and the rest of the family is living in America.

Q: When you first came to Saratoga, what was a major cultural difference that you immediately noticed?

A: I think the academic stress here is similar to Korea, but the priority given to teachers and students is different.

In Korea, students are given the priority in terms of education, but here, it seems that teachers are given more priority because students have to move around instead of teachers, and teachers get all the equipment

they need. While in Korea, it's kind of the other way around, [with teachers moving around].

Q: How quickly or easily did you integrate into the school?

A: Saratoga has a lot of Asians, so it was pretty easy to integrate; the culture was pretty similar.

Q: Are there any major differences in the education system here?

A: We get to choose our own subjects here, which is cool, but at the same time I think it gives students stress in terms of academic rigor.

Q: In terms of extracurriculars and school activities, is it different here compared to Korea?

A: In Korea, all you have to do is study 24/7. You don't have extracurriculars. You just do math, English and Korean language arts, but here it's half-studying, half-extracurriculars.

Extracurriculars are as important as school, so I think that helps with stress, but at the same time, it gives more stress. Balancing academic life and extracurriculars is harder, but it helps a lot with time management in the future as well. ♦



Aoki Moved from Japan



Im Moved from Korea in 7th

# Analysis: Community service overseas is valuable, but is it worth the high price?

by Andrew Lee & Jeffrey Ma

In the animal shelters of Nepal, the ribs of the cows are visible through their skin, and dogs are found dead every week.

After witnessing such a desolate scene while attending the Nepal Orphanage Improvement (NOI) summer program in Kathmandu, junior Daniel Ning was inspired to start his own organization to fundraise and send supplies to the shelters in Nepal.

Ning is just one of many who have invested parts of their summer breaks in volunteering, with multiple students choosing to journey overseas to participate in similar programs.

Whether it is to help those in dire need or to boost their college applications or some combination of both, many students believe that volunteering for periods of time abroad is an invaluable experience.

One program that several students have attended this past summer is the NOI summer program in Kathmandu. There, they were tasked with teaching and playing with local students, and were given chances to participate in small excursions to places like animal shelters.

Some students who participated include juniors Ning, Selina Yang, and Charlie Liu, sophomore Henry Weng, and senior Sarah Meng.

The program is run by IvyMax, which, according to ivymax.com, is "a leading in-center and online education service provider that prepares students exceptionally well for admission to top-tier universities and beyond."

For around \$4,500, the program provides food, board and transportation for a duration of two weeks.

Whether or not the students themselves truly wanted to make a difference in a deprived community abroad, it's almost impossible to ignore that one main purpose of the program is to supplement college applications and to strengthen students' lists of

extracurricular activities. After all, IvyMax itself is a college preparatory institution, providing mostly preparation for SATs, AP tests and various other subjects such as critical reading and thinking.

With this in mind, it is difficult to see the program as solely charitable in nature. Ning, who attended the program in late July, thinks that several students who went to Nepal seemed only present to add the activity to their college applications.

"There were definitely some people there who were only there to boost the 'aesthetic' of their college apps and didn't really care," Ning said.

However, the results of this mixed motivation aren't necessarily bad.

In senior Sarah Meng's eyes, college applications clearly play a role in a vast majority of student's motivation, albeit to varying degrees. Meng herself said that college applications were the primary motivator when she first begrudgingly signed up for the trip, but she went through a change of heart during it.

"I thought that I was going to completely hate it," Meng said. "But I actually ended up loving painting with, interacting with and

"Some people were only there to boost the 'aesthetic' of their college apps."



JUNIOR Daniel Ning

teaching [the kids there]."

Students like Ning and Meng said that the program was a valuable experience that was worth the time and money spent. Although the purpose of the program may have been for improving their college applications, the students said they gained valuable experience from the trip nonetheless.



Courtesy of SELINA YANG

Students from Nepal orphanage improvement (NOI), a community service program in Kathmandu, Nepal sponsored by IvyMax, collaborate to move a large structure this past summer.

For Ning, seeing the pitiful conditions the animals wallowed in inspired him to found his own private organization called United for Animals Foundation which is dedicated to helping support them.

He has also engaged in multiple fundraising events in order to benefit these animals, including planning his own bake sales. So far, Ning has fundraised \$500 from two bake sales.

While Ning found his purpose in helping animals, other students found solace in interacting with the Nepalese people, especially with the children.

What swayed Meng's viewpoint from hating to loving the experience was interactions with the people there and teaching at a local school.

"I'm ten times more into the idea of helping in Nepal [now that] I've been there, seen the people and interacted with them," Meng said.

In two weeks there, she felt a personal

connection with the students she taught.

Meng said that for the children in Nepal, many of whom live in poverty, it's meaningful when their "older [brothers]" and "older sisters," or the volunteers, come once a year from afar to "make fools of themselves to make [the children] laugh."

Another question is why so many students travel around the world to volunteer when so many opportunities to help nearby communities are accessible in the Bay Area.

The students interviewed for this story didn't have a definitive answer for this question but emphasized that helping out in other parts of the world brought them a life-changing connection with both the people and animals of a far-away place.

"I hope [the kids there] will remember the time the awkward older American teens came to their school and sang and danced and answered all of their questions about famous American singers and actors," Meng said. ♦

by Esha Lakhotia & Selena Liu

While her parents were away at work on Halloween, sophomore Grace Wang, then age 3, went trick-or-treating around the neighborhood with her oldest sister, Sue.

This was one of the few fond memories Grace shared with Sue, who is 13 years older. After Sue went away to college at UC Berkeley, Grace, then 5, began to feel more distant from her oldest sibling.

"I don't really have a strong relationship with Sue," Grace said. "I'm not really sure what she likes or what she dislikes and her personality in general."

Although Grace enjoyed spending time with her sister when their family went to visit her at college, she does wish that she could have stronger connections with her.

"I think we missed out on just being able to talk about simple things like schoolwork

or hobbies or books and really getting to know each other," she said.

In contrast, Grace has many more fond memories with her middle sister, senior Kaitlyn Wang, who is a mere two years older. After Sue began attending college, Grace would often walk to Cupertino with Kaitlyn to buy frozen yogurt and cream puffs.

Since Sue left home, Grace believes that her relationship with Kaitlyn has gotten much closer, especially since they are similar in age.

"We know each other's personalities and interests because we're only two years apart," Grace said. "The fact that we go to the same school is beneficial since she helps me with homework, and I got to see what life would be like in junior year."

A study published in 2011 in the *New England Journal of Medicine* states that the average age gap between siblings in America is about two and a half years.

## togatalks

What kind of relationship do you have with your siblings?

"We were close before she left to college, but because of distance we don't talk much."



senior Mark Guidry

"Since my brother's in college now, most of our communication is over Snapchat."



junior Kevin Chang

"With my brothers it's distant because of a large age gap, but for my sister, we're pretty tight."



junior Prosper Chiu

# FALL SPORTS

## GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL OFF TO A QUICK START

**Head Coach:** Steve Chiou  
**2017-2018 record:** 2-10  
**2017-2018 recap:** The Falcons finished at the bottom of the more competitive De Anza League.  
**Key Additions:** sophomore middle blocker Berry Bailey and junior opposite hitter Risa Carter  
**Key Matchups:** Cupertino, Fremont  
**Star Players:** senior outside hitter Katie Hulme, juniors defensive specialist Lauren Hansen, outside hitter Francesca Whiting  
**Key losses to graduation:** outside hitter Riley Carter, setter Dasha Gousseva, libero Hannah Fan, middle hitter Belle Strawn, right side hitter Paige Hansen  
**League:** El Camino Division  
**Prognosis:** Senior captain Katie Hulme said the team underperformed last year but is ready to bounce back this year.

serve-receive-passing and have better connections between setters and hitters, we'll be a lot more successful," Hulme said. She also mentioned that since they have dropped to the El Camino Division, the Falcons will be matched up against less competitive opponents.

However, the team will have to develop some of its younger players. Having lost almost all of their starters from last year, they are now trying different lineups, mixing around the eight new players as well as the six returning varsity players. "We're trying to integrate our new players into the team," Hulme said. "We began the season by putting players in multiple positions. Now that we've been playing for several weeks, and we've had a couple games, everyone has a set position, so they can focus on their specific role."

Hulme also said that the team has practiced a lot and played many games



The girls' varsity volleyball team huddles before a match against Monta Vista on Sept. 4 at the home gym. The Falcons lost the match with a set score of 2-3.

FALCON // ANA HOOMAN

during the preseason.

"Our coach [Chiou] did a great job of scheduling preseason games against much tougher teams than we will be playing in

our league," Hulme said. "So hopefully we will be well prepared." ♦

—Karen Chow and Jeffrey Xu

## GIRLS' GOLF SHOOTS FOR CCS QUALIFICATIONS

**Head Coach:** Dave Gragnola  
**2017-2018 record:** 5-3-2  
**2017-2018 recap:** The team did well, but had some close matches that they felt should have resulted in wins.  
**Key Additions:** freshman Savannah Lin, junior Alice Lin  
**Key Matchups:** Los Gatos, Lynbrook, Palo Alto  
**Star Players:** senior Janelle Jin, junior Alice Lin and Sally Kim, sophomore Jane Loo  
**Key losses to graduation:** Sarah Lo  
**League:** De Anza Division

**Prognosis:** Last year, the Falcons had a successful season, but came up short against some of their key matchups. This year, the Falcons hope to push into the sectional playoffs as a team.

Although No. 2 Sarah Lo graduated, the remaining players think that their two new additions can step up to fill the void Lo left.

The two new players, freshman Savannah Lin and junior Alice Lin hold the No. 5 and No. 2 positions, respectively.

While the team didn't make CCS last

year, No. 1 player Janelle Jin and No. 2 player Sarah Lo played well enough to advance individually.

Also high on the Falcons' wish list this year is the change to avenge a loss to Palo Alto.

"The match was tough and their team is really good," No. 3 player sophomore Jane Loo said. "It'll be hard, but if we can win against them this year, we'll have a better shot at CCS."

The Falcons also struggled with the

matchups against Los Gatos last year. After fighting hard at each of three matches, they came up short every time.

As the Falcons look forward to the season starting on Sept. 9, they are committed to improving this season. If they win all the close matches from last season, the team will be in good shape to qualify for CCS.

"Every year, everyone improves, so I think it'll be a really promising season this year," Jin said. ♦

—Shama Gupta

## GIRLS' WATER POLO HOPES TO REVERSE FORTUNES

**Coach:** Jerome Chung  
**2017-2018 record:** 1-19-1  
**2017-2018 recap:** The team struggled in the more competitive De Anza League.  
**Key Additions:** sophomore Morgan Bruun-Jensen, senior Emma Ford  
**Key Matchups:** Los Gatos, Half Moon Bay  
**Star Players:** seniors Sarah Daoudi and Maddie Stuart, sophomore Morgan Bruun-Jensen  
**Key losses to graduation:** Audrey Dang, Vivien Zhang, Aileen Zhang  
**League:** De Anza Division

**Prognosis:** After a lackluster season in which the girls' water polo team finished with a 1-19-1 record, the team hopes to rebound and make CCS this year.

With experienced seniors like Sarah Daoudi and strong underclassmen like sophomore Morgan Bruun-Jensen, the players are working hard to meet these expectations.

"We came in more prepared and determined to work harder because of our performance last season," senior Maddie Stuart said. "This has helped us be more

efficient at practice and given us a head start against the other teams."

The varsity girls are currently 2-0 after winning 13-3 against Half Moon Bay and 10-6 against Harker. In the match against Half Moon Bay, Bruun-Jensen managed to score four goals the first quarter and three consecutive goals the fourth quarter.

Stuart also attributed the current success of the team to senior Emma Ford, an experienced newcomer who transferred from Los Gatos this year.

"We're off to a great start," Stuart said.

"The team is really unified this year and everyone gets along super well."

Also, the team is learning from the previous season and creating new play strategies. The girls are particularly focusing on counter-offense, which Stuart said helped win this season's first two games.

"After our first two wins, I'm super excited for the rest of the season and I'm sure we'll head to CCS with our unity and drive to succeed," Stuart said. ♦

—Andrew Li and Alan Zu

## CROSS COUNTRY STRIDES AHEAD

**Girls' Head Coach:** Danny Moon  
**2017-2018 recap:** Team sends seven runners to CCS and achieves 5 personal records  
**Key Additions:** freshman Nicole Lu  
**Key Matchups:** Lynbrook & Monta Vista  
**Star Players:** junior Julia Hoffman, seniors Isabella Tan and Siena Parsons  
**Key Losses to graduation:** Lillian Zeng and Hailey Scola  
**League:** De Anza Division

nior team captain Tricia Jain said. The team has been working hard in anticipation of their first meet at Lynbrook on Sept. 10.

"We are expecting a lot of great runs and [personal records] at Lynbrook and the goal is to keep improving meet times as the season progresses," Jain said.

**Boys' Head Coach:** Ian Tippetts

**2017-2018 recap:** Senior Amit Nag qualifies for the state meet and ranks 21st; and seniors Anirudh Rao and Charles Qi, junior David Berkowitz-Sklar, and sophomores Kole

Tippetts and Shivam Verma attend CCS; team places sixth at CCS with Nag placing fourth overall

**Key Additions:** freshman Harrison Dance

**Key Matchups:** Palo Alto & Los Gatos

**Star Players:** junior Kole Tippetts, Sahaj Rastogi, and Alex Pan; seniors Nirav Adunuthula and David Berkowitz-Sklar

**Key Losses to graduation:** Amit Nag, Anirudh Rao, Charles Qi  
**League:** De Anza Division

**Prognosis:** After the 2017-2018 season yielded great results with the team sending five runners to CCS and ultimately placing sixth, the team now looks forward to

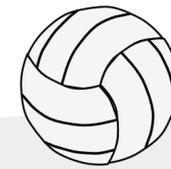
the 2018-2019 season in hopes of making practices harder and more efficient to replicate their past success.

The team ended the 2017-2018 season with an average mile speed of 6:35, an improvement of 27 seconds compared to the 2016-2017 season — a testament to the efficacy of coach Tippetts' creation of harder and stricter practices.

The team had their first meet at the Stevenson Invitational on Sept. 8 where the varsity team consisting of freshman Harrison Dance, juniors Kole Tippetts and Shivam Verma, and seniors Nirav Adunuthula and Hugo Huang came fourth in their division and sixth overall out of 50 teams. ♦

—David Koh

# 2018



GRAPHIC BY CALLIA YUAN

## GIRLS' TENNIS ADDS KEY SENIOR

**Head Coach:** Florin Marica  
**2017-2018 record:** 9-3  
**2017-2018 recap:** The team lost to Saint Francis in CCS Division I semi-finals.  
**Key Additions:** senior Rini Vasan  
**Key Matchups:** Los Gatos, Monta Vista  
**Key losses to graduation:** Elizabeth Lee, Stephanie Ren  
**League:** Santa Clara Valley Athletics League, De Anza division  
**Prognosis:** Following a strong season last year, where they finished with a 9-3 record

and lost in the CCS Division I semifinals against Saint Francis, the girls' tennis team is hoping to improve after losing key players Elizabeth Lee and Stephanie Ren.

Having had a strong performance history for several years, the girls' tennis team stands as one of the most consistent and reliable teams in SHS athletics.

With a constant flow of powerful players joining the team, such as senior Rini Vasan, the girls' tennis team seems as if it could triumph in its Division I league every single year.

However, according to junior Vivian Lin, there is still always some room to improve and construct an even better team.

"We are all working really hard, both during school practices and on our own time, to improve our strokes," Lin said. "I'm looking forward to watching the

team grow closer since we have new players."

Nonetheless, the team is confident in its lineup this year and is looking forward to another strong season with veteran coach Florin Marica.

Players hope that with steady improvement throughout the season, they can make their SHS reputation an even bigger threat in CCS. ♦

—Andrew Lee and Jayne Zhou

## FIELD HOCKEY LOOKS TO IMPROVE YOUNG PLAYERS

**Head Coach:** Nanu Sidhu  
**2017-2018 record:** 2-11-3  
**2017-2018 recap:** The team did not qualify for CCS.

**Key Additions:** sophomores forward Allison Ha, defender Gwen Oberhauser, sweeper Leila Chaudhry, midfielder Jasmin Reddy

**Key Matchups:** Los Gatos  
**Star Players:** junior center midfielder Sarah Rieken, senior defender Autumn Zuleeg, junior defender Hannah Beine

**Key losses to graduation:** Kate Bossi, Valerie Yang, Stobhan Burgos

**League:** El Camino Division  
**Prognosis:** Last season, the team was eliminated from CCS after they tied with Los Gatos during the playoffs. This year, the team feels optimistic about the upcoming season due to the new arrangement of the league.

Although the Falcons remain in the El Camino division, some of the better teams such as Archbishop Mitty and Saint

Francis have been moved to the De Anza division, leaving the Falcons with better chances at victories.

With only three seniors, the team aims to sharpen its new blood, working on the basics and gaining new skills.

"Originally, I was nervous about keeping up, but the coach is good at getting everyone at the same level and running drills that people can participate in," said sophomore Allison Ha, who joined varsity this year.

They focused on team building and dynamics last season and hope to carry this into the upcoming year with a full roster.

"I think the season might be rough at first because it's a young team," junior goalkeeper Simrita Advani said. "It'll be a rebuilding season, but I think we can definitely be on top of our league this year." ♦

—Allison Hartley

## BOYS' WATER POLO BRINGS IN FRESH TALENT

**Head coach:** Jacob Young  
**2017-2018 record:** 2-11-3  
**Last season recap:** The team struggled all year, falling short of CCS.

**Key Additions:** junior goalie Nima Aminzadeh, junior Ashvin Maheshwar, freshman Marcus Kuo

**Key Matchups:** Monta Vista (Sept. 13), Cupertino (Sept. 25), Fremont (Oct. 11)  
**Star Players:** senior Ryan Busse, senior

Nick Bray, senior Andrew Gao  
**Key Losses to graduation:** Ryan Ahari, Roland Shen, Alan Lu, Nathan Chin  
**League:** El Camino Division

**Prognosis:** After a disappointing 2017 season with a 2-11 record, the Falcons plan to rebuild after losing star players such as Ryan Ahari and Roland Shen to graduation. The team failed to make CCS last year and hopes its new talent can help

them achieve this goal this season. Despite their poor performance last year, the team has promising incoming players such as freshman Marcus Kuo and sophomore goalie Nima Aminzadeh.

This year, the team is placing an emphasis on communication and team cohesiveness.

"As a team, we all have very high hopes for the upcoming season," junior Ashvin

Maheshwar said. "We get to bond together in and out of the pool, which allows us to communicate better when we are in a game."

So far, the boys' varsity water polo team has played two league games. They currently have a 0-2 record after losing to Harker 19-9 and Wilcox 17-7. ♦

—Isaac Le and Andrew Li

## FOOTBALL

# Falcons gear up for Wildcats following 2 losses

By Alex Wang

The Falcons (1-2) will meet the 2-1 Los Gatos Wildcats in the annual rivalry game under the bright lights of Helm Field in Los Gatos tonight.

The team heads into the matchup banged up but hopeful. The Falcons managed to secure a 27-20 win against Santa Teresa in its home opener on Aug. 24, but lost to Silver Creek 27-13 on Aug. 31 and Sacred Heart Prep 54-18 on Sept. 7.

Leading the team are junior quarterback Payton Stokes, senior running back JJ Wang and senior linemen Devin Mather. Notable additions include Stokes as well as junior wide receivers George Bian and Max Mullenburg while notable players who graduated include quarterback Niko Rositano, wide receiver Harrison Fong and lineman Allie Liddle.

The team has already been hard hit by injuries in the last two weeks. Sophomore wide receiver Ryan Gilligan broke his fibula and senior kicker and senior safety Kick Poelmann tore his ACL during the game against Silver Creek.

These injuries will keep them out for the rest of the season. Additionally, se-

nior lineman Peter Owens and sophomore lineman Hunter Dertorossian were ruled out against Sacred Heart, Owens with illness and Dertorossian with a concussion.

Throughout the three games, the team has started strong but in the second half, Bian said that this is one of many reasons for their 1-2 record.

"Over the last two weeks, we didn't have great practices and that translated onto the field, so we will be heading into the next game with a hard work ethic," he said.

Even though the game against Los Gatos is a non-league game, players see it as no less important than in previous years. The game will pit players from JV teams of the past two years; both JV matchups were won by the Falcons.

However, the Wildcats team is talented in all aspects. Offensively, they are led by senior quarterback Jack Lewis Miller and senior running back Ryan Garwood. On defense, the Wildcats boast senior middle linebacker and Cal-commit Kyle Smith, who had 193 tackles last year. In the Wildcats' first three games, they cruised by Lealand 35-9 and Leigh 45-0, but lost to San Benito 26-16 last week.

The Falcons' games have played out dif-

ferently. Last week, they were up against a strong Sacred Heart team and suffered a lopsided loss. In the beginning, the Gators came out with two touchdowns, while the Falcons struggled to complete passes and move the chains. But later, they began to find their rhythm and came back with two touchdowns of their own. A Sacred Heart field goal ended the half with the Gators up 18-12.

The second half was a different story. After the two teams traded touchdowns, the Falcons' defense began to fall apart and the Falcons could not get a drive going. Meanwhile, Sacred Heart scored two long rushing touchdowns and a passing touchdown and then intercepted a Stokes pass, which led to another rushing touchdown. A lost fumble on the Falcons' last drive ruled out any chance of a comeback.

The Silver Creek game was tight, and the Falcons had a significant chance to win the game. The team got off to a hot start, establishing a strong run and screen game early. But it was still a struggle to find the end zone; two turnovers proved costly. Nonetheless, the team still led 7-0 at the half because the defense was stout, limiting the Raiders to several short drives.

The game flipped in the second half. On the Falcons' ensuing drive after kick-off, a Raiders' linebacker jumped a screen pass for a pick-6. Afterwards, the Falcons seemed to lose all momentum with one ended drive after another. The offense faced a lot of pressure from the Raiders' pass rush, limiting the passing game. Meanwhile, Silver Creek managed to score two more touchdowns to lead 21-7.

The Falcons tried to mount a comeback late in the game after a pass touchdown to Wang, but a fumble on the 1-yard line and an interception sealed the game.

Against Santa Teresa, the Falcons managed to squeeze by with a win, equalling their total from last season. The gameplay from the team was solid overall: their passes were on point and they rushed well. The defense had two interceptions, but some sloppy play from both sides of the ball led to a closer game than the team would have wanted. In spite of that, the Falcons managed to hold on in the fourth quarter to win the game.

The outlook on the season is positive this year for the team after a dismal 1-9 season last year, since competition will become easier in the El Camino League. ♦

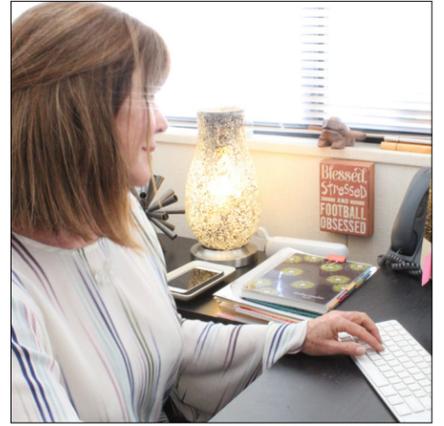
>> snapshots



FALCON // AVA HOOMAN



FALCON // KRITHI SANKAR



FALCON // AVA HOOMAN



FALCON // ALAN ZU

Senior Katie Hulme serves in a volleyball game against Monta Vista on Sept. 4.

Senior Sasha Pickard works on senior Homecoming decorations on Sept. 9.

Therapist Shelley Moeller works in the CASSY building in early September.

Sophomores Isabelle Lee and Erica Lee create streamers on the weekend of Sept. 2 for their Homecoming Quad Day.

buzzworthy >> Logan Paul and KSI brawl to a draw

BY LeoCao & AlexWang

After months of YouTube drama and diss tracks, KSI and Logan Paul's boxing match finally took place in Britain's Manchester Arena on Aug. 25. The fight featured two of the most popular content creators on YouTube. KSI, who has 19 million subscribers, and Paul, with 18 million, both publicized the fight as the "biggest event in internet history." Although the event ended in a draw, the fighters can certainly claim the match as an success. In addition to 21,000 people watching in the Manchester Arena, who paid an average of \$180 each, the official livestream on YouTube also boasted over 800,000 viewers, each paying \$10 to watch two people, who started training a couple

of months ago, punch each other in the face. No one has disclosed how much money the fighters made from the event, but Business Insider estimates that each YouTuber received around \$5.5 million. This is actually an absurd amount of money for two amateurs who probably just trained

**KSI and Logan Paul have built their success by sitting in front of a camera. They film, edit and upload videos. So why did they decide to host a boxing match?**

in their free time. To compare, the average salaries of Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) fighters is less than \$500,000 a year. Earlier this year in February, KSI and Joe Weller fought in the first ever YouTuber boxing match, in which KSI won and earned around \$400,000. The publicity and money generated from this first-event probably led to KSI and Paul's fight. By having a six-month-long promotional period, both YouTubers were able to rack up views and receive lots of attention. Since their fight was announced earlier this year, KSI and Paul have engaged in an avalanche of press conferences, traded insults and provided numerous training updates on social media. Before the fight, each walked out to his own diss track targeting the other YouTuber. KSI and Logan Paul have built their

success by sitting in front of a camera. They film, edit and upload videos. So why did they decide to host a boxing match? The answer is that drama with other YouTubers is an essential aspect of both fighters' business models. With so much money and attention involved, turning this idea into a physical event was all but inevitable. With months of hype and suspense ultimately leading to a tie, the ending sets up perfectly for a sequel. "Logan, I think there is only one thing to do. I think we gotta rematch," KSI said immediately after the fight ended. Paul responded, "I think it's what the people want." ♦



Female care boxes fun but unneeded  
WHY NOT JUST GO TO LOCAL DRUGSTORES, JUNIOR ASKS

sel-liu-lar data



Selena Liu

As a student who uses female hygiene products once every month, you can be rest assured I know my periods. So when I heard that there are companies who compile a monthly subscription care package to send to women during that special time of the month, I was genuinely interested in what these packages included. After all, many other companies send makeup packages or care packages to monthly subscribers; how different could a box meant for periods be? So, doing what any curious person would do, I searched for one of these care packages online and ordered one from popular period-box company "The PMS Package." And I was pleasantly surprised. "The PMS Package" sends out the package once per month, at any date of your choosing, and the package includes some basic feminine products, Advil and a scented candle, things that many women would appreciate when they have headaches, cramps or just want to relieve stress. However, what confused and disappointed me is that the packages came with a basket of candy and cakes. Although cravings for sweets and other unhealthy foods

are common during periods due to low levels of serotonin, gynecologists strongly suggest against women having overly-sugary foods during that time of the month. By including chocolate, cookies and salted caramel popcorn, among many other sugary snacks in their packages, companies like The PMS Package demonstrate that they clearly know little about what a woman actually needs during her period.

**I don't particularly see the meaning behind companies sending period boxes to women each month.**

On the other hand, some companies do pay more attention to women's health requirements. For example, the period box "LOLA" sends packages with no unhealthy snacks, but only high-quality period products and stress-relieving body mist. Others, like "A Genie's Dream," send healthy treats, like KIND bars and Earl Grey tea leaves: treats known to provide nutrients and good health benefits. Regardless, I don't particularly see the meaning behind companies sending period boxes to women each month. To be honest, if I wanted female hygiene



GRAPHIC BY KAREN CHOW

The subscription boxes include feminine products as well as other products like candles and sweet and savory snacks.

and stress-relieving products, I could just buy them at the convenience store instead of ordering them from a company. Moreover, I could easily buy the snacks these packages send me in bulk at my local Costco. But I admit, as a woman, it's nice to have a care package sent to you during the most stressful time of the month, no matter how easily accessible the actual items in the package are. Having a stash of backup period products, painkillers and small trinkets can only make a woman's day better, so these boxes may serve some purpose after all. ♦

topten

WAYS TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS

- 10 Send your favorite memes to everyone on your contact list. No one can resist a funny meme.
- 9 Flash a pack of gum in one of your classes. You'll be surprised at all the people interested to talk to you.
- 8 Watch all the YouTubers your friends are currently watching. We love a social shister.
- 7 Change your style into something more hip and modern. Urban Outfitters has free shipping on orders over \$100.
- 6 Sign up for multiple clubs during club rush. Intense debates at Democracy Matters are great opportunities to make friends.
- 5 Humiliate yourself into being the mascot during your grade's Homecoming skit. At least people will notice you.
- 4 Learn all the most used words around SHS. Ufts I midkey hate muxing clout diggers.
- 3 Watch "To All The Boys I've Ever Loved." It will guarantee you a conversation with almost anyone.
- 2 Pretend that you enjoy listening to popular artists like Shawn Mendes. Fake it til' you make it.
- 1 Tell underclassmen you have a license. Instant friends.

>> Ava Hooman