



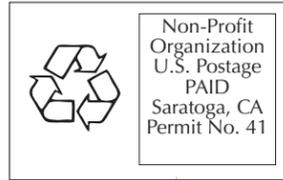
ENTERTAINMENT | 15
Rapper's OD reveals drug issues among artists.



IN-DEPTH | 19
Elections highlight how city council operates.



SPORTS | 23
Falcons rebound with three straight wins.



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

THE saratogafalcon



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

saratogafalcon.org

Friday >> October 19, 2018

Vol. 59, No. 3

A more modern *dress code*

EQUALITY, FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
PROMOTED IN MORE SPECIFIC POLICY



BY Alekhya **Vadlakonda**

With constant changes being made in culture, and society, the school's dress code needed an update this school year, assistant principal Kerry Mohnike said. The new dress code, published in the Student Handbook and on the school website, now clarifies which specific body parts need to be covered,

Mohnike said. It also explicitly permits some pieces of clothing, such as hijabs and visible bra straps, that are often prohibited at some other schools. The new dress code specifically states that "clothes must be worn in a way such that genitals, buttocks, breasts, and nipples are fully covered

>> **DRESS CODE** on pg. 4

GRAPHIC BY KAREN CHOW AND CALLIA YUAN

Breaking Down the Walls starts next week

BY Muthu **Palaniappan** & Elaine **Toh**

Next week, the school will be going through its first ever Breaking Down the Walls program, starting with school-wide assemblies on Oct. 22. During the rest of the week, LINK Crew leaders and other appointed seniors will lead freshmen, sophomores and juniors in the Large Gym in activities circling around the theme of connection.

"We will spend a lot of time talking about connection," assistant principal Kerry Mohnike said. "Connecting to the school and the people around you improves your sense of well-being and your academic performance."

The Monday assembly will be split into two: Half of the students will attend the beginning part of first period and the other half at the end, based on who their teachers are. Following the meeting, LINK leaders will stay behind for third, fifth and seventh period in order to receive training.

>> **BREAKING WALLS** on pg. 2

TEDx event hopes to inspire students

BY Megan **Chen** & Karen **Chow**

The next TEDxSaratogaHighSchool event is composed of five speakers who will speak about overcoming obstacles to chase their dreams.

It will take place Saturday in the McAfee Center from 5-7 p.m. Tickets are \$8.

The speakers consist of three professionals and two students from diverse backgrounds. Student speakers include senior Kaitlyn Wang and junior Krishna finocha. AP US History teacher Faith Lackhouse-Daly, entrepreneur and CEO of Deepfactor.ai Kiran Kamity and author of "The Illuminator" series Alina Sayre will also speak at the event.

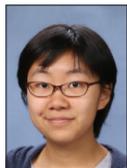
This year's theme is "Write Your Own story." The speakers will share how they did not let hardships stop them from continuing to strive for their goals.

Wang will be speaking about how poetry allowed her to step out of her comfort zone.

"I try to avoid public speaking as much

as possible, but recently, I've been trying to push myself to speak up more," Wang said. "What pushed me to speak at the event was that I'm more afraid of regretting not doing it."

"Recently, I've been trying to push myself to speak up more."



SENIOR Kaitlyn Wang

Wang recalled times when she attended the speaker series and thought that there was no possibility she could stand on stage and do the same thing.

"I was really frustrated that I couldn't give class presentations the way I wanted to," Wang said. "Hearing people speak at Speak Up for Change and watching a lot of

TEDTalks, I wanted to do that just once."

As the event nears, Wang admitted that she is both excited and terrified, and is busily preparing her speech and slideshow.

The event is also required to show TED-Talk videos along with the speaker series under the TEDx Program. TEDxSaratoga-HighSchool is organized independently of the company TED through a free license granted by TED.

The school's club members work together on different committees to make the event as successful and professional as possible.

"We hope that through the speakers' talks, the audience will be inspired to pursue passions which they might not typically pursue, and also be inspired to take on new ideas," said senior Michelle Vu, the club's co-head of curation.

Other members of TEDxSaratogaHighSchool include co-Presidents Rachel Bakke and Ines Picard, Head of Media Isaiah Vivera, co-head of marketing Isabelle Rieken and Kitty Huang, and head of production Harman Chawla. ♦

Band places first in division

BY Andrew **Li** & Jeffrey **Ma**

The marching band started its season strong at the Cupertino Tournament of Bands on Oct. 13 following its Senior Night performance the night before at the school's Benny Pierce Field.

At the tournament, the band performed its show, "A Dream Within," and took first place in its division, 6A, but lost to Homestead High School in the overall rankings.

While director Jason Shiuan was proud of the band's score and judges' positive comments, it was the students' performances that he valued the most.

"I felt that the band performed," Shiuan said. "You could hear it in their sound. They had so much energy and confidence when they stepped out onto the field."

Drum major senior AJ Lee called the competition "the best run we have done so far of the show" and "a good starting point for the season."

Even though they had just finished learning new choreography just a week before the competition, band members executed it well. However, they were not able to learn the entire show in time for Cupertino.

"The students' ability to be flexible and adapt quickly has really impressed me this week," Shiuan said. "At the same time, we struggled because we had so much new information this week — we simply could not

>> **BAND** on pg. 4

>> what's inside

OPINION

Movie guides

Student feels that movie guides are unnecessary and distract from the actual film. **pg. 7**

LIFESTYLES

Boy scouts

Junior uses memes to relate with the younger members in his troop. **pg. 12**

IN-DEPTH

Deafness

Junior recounts experience of receiving cochlear implants and taking ASL class. **pg. 20**

news >> briefs

Spirit Commission to host first 'Trunk-or-treat'

Looking to create a safer environment for elementary school students to trick or treat in, the Leadership class is hosting its first "Trunk-or-treat" this year for Halloween.

After school ends on Oct. 31, Leadership is inviting high school students to park their cars in the front lots with their trunks open and filled with candy provided by the students.

According to ASB secretary Jolyn Tran, the "trunk-or-treat" promotes a safer trick-or-treating as parents will be present and the elementary schoolers will be within a confined area.

Leadership hopes this event will bring together students and community members. Since October is already a stressful month for students, especially seniors facing college application deadlines, this event will provide a getaway from the stresses of school.

"We are hoping the kids from the high school will participate by decorating their cars, dressing up, passing out candy and coming to support the event," junior spirit commissioner Kaitlyn Thompson said.

— Allison Hartley and Muthu Palaniappan

MAP juniors visit Angel Island for annual trip

The junior class of the Media Arts Program (MAP) had their annual field trip to Angel Island on Oct. 11.

MAP has traveled to Angel Island annually for the past 10 years. Ever since the field trip's beginnings, the administration and staff have decided to keep the trip relatively similar to how it's been done in the past.

Dubbed the "Ellis Island of the West," Angel Island used to be a holding place for immigrants who entered the San Francisco Bay from the 1910s to 1940s.

Students visited iconic spots on the island, including detention barracks, where they were able to examine carvings on the walls made by the immigrants who were detained over a century ago.

The trip provides an opportunity to enhance their understanding of the history of the immigration station.

Current MAP juniors said they gained new insights on the historical place and also bonded with their peers.

"I went with my family when I was really young, so I loved getting the chance to revisit it with my friends as well as learn more about its history," junior Liviya Katz said.

— Krithi Sankar

>> picturethis



FALCON // ALAN ZU

CLUB DAY >> Junior Elise Phan signs up for Rocketry Club in front of junior club officers Katherine Peng, Adrienne Chan and Ivy Qian during Club Day on Sept. 27.

Hot off the presses: principal Paul Robinson keeps school updated with weekly emails

BY AllisonHartley & ShreyaKatkere

Every weekend, principal Paul Robinson sits down in his office to write his widely read "Week at a Glance" emails that go out to parents, students and staff.

Robinson, who was an English major, said he debated between becoming a teacher or a newspaper journalist. He ultimately found that he enjoyed working with high school students and being involved with activities, and did not want to be limited to the world of journalism.

"This is my way of completing that journalistic dream," Robinson said. "You guys are my weekly column. I get to write a weekly thing and blast it out to a lot of people."

During his weekly mid-morning Friday meetings in the office, Robinson listens to the directors of the various departments around school, including athletic director Tim Lugo, assistant principal Kerry Mohnike and maintenance and facilities director Brian Moran, among others, to obtain information for his email.

Students, teachers and community members also update him on their latest news. He compiles schedules of all of the campus activities' calendars, such as music, theater and robotics as well as their successes.

"I like to know what's happening, so I like to show up and cheer people on and be there for these things," Robinson said.

During weeks that are packed with events, Robinson said it sometimes requires him longer to compose the "Week at a Glance" email. He takes time to think about what he wants to write and tries to make it "as informative or inspirational [as I can]; I just try to be true to what's going on here at school."

ASB secretary Jolyn Tran is one of the many students who enjoy receiving the "Week at a Glance" emails.

"I read them pretty often, almost every week. I actually think they are pretty interesting," Tran said. "Most of the time I don't really know what's going on within the school that doesn't pertain to Leadership, so it's nice to get the emails."

Six years ago, during Robinson's first year as principal at the school, he sent the emails about once a month, but decided that they weren't frequent enough to convey everything that goes on here.

He uses a program called School Messenger to send out these emails to parents. However, he was originally not aware that the emails were being sent to students as well.

"When I found out, I wasn't sure if I should keep sending them to students or not, but students let me know they like knowing what is going on around here," Robinson said.

Robinson often gets emails from alumni or their parents asking if they can still receive the "Week at a Glance" emails so they can stay updated with important events in the community. When Robinson gets these emails, he gladly adds them to his list of people he send his emails to.

"[Writing the weekly emails] is fun for me," he said. "I like talking about some of the great things going on here, but also the hard things, things we need to work on because you guys are great to work with. We're not perfect, but we try and that's all anybody can ask."

BREAKING WALLS

continued from pg. 1

are well worth missing a few periods of class, Mohnike said.

"My understanding with the program is that nobody knows what it is like at first," Mohnike said, "but as the days go on, more people want to go and are excited to."

But many students, after hearing that they would need to miss classes to attend the program, were worried about missing their AP or Honors courses.

"In the AP classes we can't really stop the lecture, so essentially losing that day of class causes [students] to fall behind," junior Alex Pan said.

However, Mohnike said that some faculty have experienced a shortened version of the program beforehand and that she has already notified teachers that students will miss some of their classes. She requested teachers to either repeat or alternate instruction so that students do not feel behind in their classes.

The founder of the Breaking Down the Walls program, Phil Boyte, is also the founder of the national LINK Crew program, so Mohnike thought it would be fitting for LINK leaders to be involved with the program.

Also, the program is not cheap. According to Mohnike, it cost \$40,000, and was paid for by the Saratoga Education Foundation. However, Mohnike said the program could be "life-changing" for some students. Although the school has never done Breaking Down the Walls before, she hopes students learn a lot from it.

"Mostly I just want students to have an open mind," Mohnike said. "It's about listening to other people and they making those connections and making school a place where people want to come to — not just because they want grades or because it's a step to grad placement, but because it is a place they want to be."

>> correction

In the Sept. 28 issue, the Falcon published a graphic on pg. 6 for the article titled "Athletics department in third year of debt" that has incorrectly switched the donation amount of the Saratoga Foundation and Sports Boosters with ASB.

The Falcon strives for accuracy. Please contact elaine.sui@saratogafalcon.org to report any inaccuracies in the issue.

>> falcononline



Top Story

The boys' dance team tries to recover from the loss of their official status and the graduation of their captains.



Top Photo

Freshman Kunal Shrivastav and his brother sophomore Tushar Shrivastav visit the chess club table during Club Day on Sept. 26.



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

Club Fair brings minor changes, attracts members

BY AndrewLee & JeffreyXu

As students rushed towards the quad on the first day of Club Fair on Sept. 26 in order to be the first in line to sign up for clubs and get free food, they were actually surprised to find the setup relatively uncrowded compared to previous years.

This was due to the Club Fair being held over the course of two days rather than the single day it was held in 2016 and prior. Also, introducing an open-campus lunch policy reduced the amount of students on campus.

Last year, the organizers of Club Fair spread the event over three consecutive days. This year, club commissioners Cameron Lin and Samyu Iyer consolidated the event to two days — a change enabling students to sample various clubs without being overwhelmed by their choices.

On the first day, 25 academic clubs such as Science, RISE and App Development clubs had the chance to present themselves in the quad. Thirty one arts, cultural and service oriented clubs such as Chinese, Culinary and Poetry clubs advertised the following day.

Since then, Club Days have become increasingly fluid, with both officers and commissioners accustomed to the preparation and execution of a successful event.

"I feel Club Fair went pretty well this year," senior club commissioner Cameron Lin said. "We were really happy with the two-day club fair; I think it helped to organize things a little bit better."

Another change that came to this year's Club Day was that upperclassmen were still allowed to have lunch off campus.

According to Lin, an open campus resulted in an easier Club Day for all because many upperclassmen are already involved in clubs and didn't need to participate, allowing the underclassmen to have more space to explore.

This change gave upperclassmen the regular freedom of leaving campus instead of being restricted for an event they might not otherwise attend.

With the event becoming increasingly focused and audience oriented, veteran club participants such as senior RISE president Ethan Ko noticed that the recent changes benefited the clubs in addition to student experience.

"There was definitely more genuine interest, with people taking their time to ask what the club was about, and what they were planning to do," Ko said. "These things definitely showed people much more about RISE, which contributed to much higher attendance during our last few meetings."

Club commissioners are also taking extra steps this year to improve communication with all clubs so that all club officers are up to date.



FALCON // ALAN ZU

On Sept. 26, seniors Akilesh Bellathur, Abhinav Tumu and Rohan Pandey present the Science Olympiad Club to interested students.

prove communication with all clubs so that all club officers are up to date. To do this, club commissioners are increasing their use of the already established Club Presidents' Facebook group this year.

"The presidents' group is just a way for [club commissioners] Samyu and I to keep in contact with presidents of each club so that they know what's going on and to remind them to update the calendar that we have each year for their meetings," Lin said. "It's a really easy way for us to communicate with them."

With the minor changes that came this year, Club Day once again gave students the opportunity to join the diverse family of clubs on campus. Lin said she hopes that Club Days gradually improve with organization in future years, and that students will have a chance to preview all clubs during the event.

"I think there are some things we could work on for next year," Lin said. "There were extra clubs added each day, so finalizing the Club Day quad layout diagram earlier so that all of the clubs were on it could help to improve."

Students drop AP, honors classes resulting in larger class sizes

BY JacksonGreen & MarisaKingsley

In mid-September, as students in English teacher Meg Batty's third-period English 11 class filed in, they glanced around at the yet-again rearranged desks. Batty apologized, explaining how she had to make room for another table due to more students' entering the class.

In June, when the school was planning classes for this year, the expected average English 11 class size was 30 students.

But at the beginning of this school year, the average was 32. Then, more juniors started dropping from Honors, and the class sizes jumped to an average of 34 to 35 students.

Guidance counselor Alinna Satake said there was an unprecedented number of students changing class levels in English 11 and US History than there were in previous years.

Another factor is a skewed balance between the number of honors and regular classes. This year, there are seven English 11 Honors sections compared to three English 11 sections. History is slightly better, with four sections each of APUSH and RUSH.

"We cannot tell students what to do and we just hope kids will make the best choices for themselves."

COUNSELOR Alinna Satake

Satake said that students often feel peer pressure to sign up for these higher level classes, but soon realize that the harder classes are not the right fit for them.

Batty has also noticed this dynamic, saying, "I think when students sign up for classes, they haven't experienced an Honors class in English. So, there's an aspect of balancing the work for that class with all of the other classes. I think as juniors, students sign up for a number of AP Classes, and in theory, it sounds really great, but when you're actually having to do all the homework and study for all the tests, it ends up being a lot."

With the noticeably large changes in class sizes, there are some challenges that come along with it, such as adjusting activities to accommodate the larger number of students as well as a heavier grading burden.

"I definitely have to rethink how I do things," Batty said. "We do a lot of jigsaws where we [split up] the questions [among different people], and for some activities I don't have enough questions. And it's a lot of bodies in the classroom, but I'm really enjoying working with the juniors."

So far, the administration has allowed more students space to join each class to account for the anticipated dropping and adding of classes. Yet Satake said that the administration is also having conversations with teachers and other staff members about possibly changing add and drop dates of classes.

For now the administration does not have a definite solution for this issue, but are currently working on a solution to ease the fluctuation of class sizes in coming years.

Ultimately, Satake said that to combat this issue, students should be making the right decision the when they sign up for classes in the spring.

"It's part of the reason counselors sit down with every student in the spring to go over course selection and make recommendations," Satake said. "But we can only make recommendations. We cannot tell students what to do and we just hope kids will make the best choices for themselves."

According to assistant principal Brian Safine, around 70 percent of seniors have indicated that they are applying to private colleges this year, meaning the office staff will be busy writing and organizing letters in the next two months.

Every year, Safine said he usually writes about 20 to 30 letters, and sometimes even writes double that number.

In the midst of all these applications, the office staff has many valuable tips for the seniors.

"The most important thing for seniors to do is to define the criteria in a college that's most meaningful to them," Safine said. "In the final analysis, students will be the ones attending their chosen college for four years, so their personal definition of a good college will mean far more than someone else's."

Counselors, administrators help seniors apply to colleges

BY MeganChen

In the fall semester, while seniors scramble to find time to write and edit the essays they will later send to colleges, administrators and counselors alike are busy, putting together envelopes and writing recommendation letters to paint a picture of each senior for admissions officers.

Each year, the senior class is divided evenly among the four administrators and four counselors. In turn, they spend dozens of hours writing school reports about the seniors they're assigned to.

The college application process varies in complication depending on which schools seniors decide to apply to. Those who apply to community colleges, California State Universities, UCs or other public universities will apply through a straightforward online application, not needing a processed request of teacher or office recommendation letters. Additionally, out of these public universities, only UCs require student written essays, making the process simpler for the office staff.

In comparison, the private college application process is much more complex. Although the application process is still online in the form of the Common Application, the schools often require letters of recommendation from both teachers and administrators.

Students purchase envelopes from the office and fill in the appropriate information regarding which colleges they want to apply to, including the deadlines and requests for recommendation letters, as well as student information from other teachers.

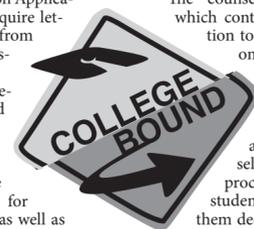
Guidance secretary Sharon Fong then prepares envelopes that enclose transcripts and basic student information for the administrators and counselors to write their reports.

"We're very busy right now, especially because [in addition to processing all the college applications] we also have to dive right into National Merit Scholar applications," Fong said.

The counselors receive the packets, which contain the necessary information to write and send quality recommendation letters for their students.

"The packets are essentially the last part of the three-step process of applying to college," counselor Frances Saiki said. "The process starts with testing when students are juniors, then we help them decide which colleges to apply to and finally students send in their essays and applications."

On Sept. 12, seniors turned in the packets for colleges with applications due on or before Dec. 1, which included those under the early admissions deadline and some



BAND

continued from pg. 1

fit everything in.” Despite the show being incomplete, the band still scored relatively well, which means that the judges understood the overall theme, Shiuan said.

Shiuan plans on finishing the show and refining many musical and visual ideas in the next few weeks. The next competition is Bands of America NorCal Regional tomorrow at Diablo Valley College.

“Now is about really coordinating how visual moments can directly support and highlight all the musical content we have,” Shiuan said. “We’ll also continue to refine our musical ability with lots of slow practice and building technique and fundamentals.”

Shiuan emphasized the importance of each member’s contribution to the whole band.

Every member needs to approach posture, confidence in count structure, musical responsi-

bility and visual commitment, all with the same high level of energy and engagement.

The more the band narrows the gap between individuals’ performance skill, the more impactful they can be as an ensemble, he said.

Another struggle the band had was timing, Shiuan said. The performers struggled with playing in time because of the football field’s large size.

In addition, many members, including Lee, were nervous before the competition, but settled in throughout the performance.

“As soon as I started conducting, I began to enjoy it a lot more,” Lee said.

Shiuan expressed pride and joy in what the band was able to achieve in such a short period of time.

“At the end of the day, I don’t let the results get in the way of how I felt our performance went,” Shiuan said. “I felt like the students hit all their goals in the performance and walked off the field feeling proud of what they accomplished.” ♦



Senior Miya Uenaka sweeps her flag in Cupertino Tournament of Bands on Oct. 13. *Courtesy of BOB UENAKA*

Debate team succeeds despite challenges

UNCERTAINTY AFFECTS TEAM ORGANIZATION AS SEASON BEGINS

By Manasi Garg & Jayne Zhou

Over the summer, Chris Harris, the longtime head coach of the speech and debate program, resigned. His departure raised many questions about the team’s operation and the future of its leadership.

Currently, there are two new coaches: debate coach Victor Rivas Umana and extemporaneous-focused coach Vidya Ullal.

“Through communication and several practice rounds, we identified what worked and what didn’t.”

JUNIOR Ronak Pai

In the meantime, a parent-led Booster committee still oversees the club, even as the club is shifting to becoming more student-led and student-run than in previous years.

Without the presence of a director, the club is struggling to find a viable structure going forward.

Despite these uncertain times for speech and debate and lack of structured coaching, students are forging ahead, determined to succeed at their various events.

After just a month of practice, the de-

bate team started the new season with a bang at the eighth annual Robert Garcia debate tournament held at Saint Francis High School on Sept. 16.

Many local schools, such as Palo Alto High School, Bellarmine High School, Leland High School and Harker High School, among others, attended.

Public forum debate team Adhit Sankaran and Ronak Pai, both juniors, took first place, while sophomore Nolan Chen and junior Siva Sambasivam took second and juniors Ashwin Ramakrishna and Shivam Verma broke to octofinals.

Senior Lincoln Douglas debater David Koh broke to quarterfinals, and junior Christopher Feng broke to octofinals in Lincoln Douglas debate and was named fourth place speaker.

Chen said that this tournament was his first time competing in Public Forum and that at first, he was nervous going varsity. But the team won all four of their rounds on Saturday.

“Each time we got a win, we felt more confident,” Chen said.

Both Sankaran and Pai attributed their win to new strategies they were trying out and their dedication.

“We developed a new strategy this year to win after two years of experience,” Pai said. “Through communication and several practice rounds, we identified what worked and what didn’t.”

Their second tournament, the Stephen Stewart Middle School and High School Invitational, was held at Milpitas High School on Sept. 29.

They were met with another success, with Koh taking first place in Lincoln-Douglas and Sankaran and Pai breaking to octofinals in Public Forum.

“We hope the coaching improves and can take us to the next level, and hopefully we’ll improve even more,” Pai said. ♦

Quiz Bowl aims to boost performance, recruit new members, close gender gap

By Jeffrey Xu

The Saratoga Quiz Bowl B Team, composed of juniors Grant Chen and Michael Tang and seniors Anuj Changavi and Sarah Meng, won first place at the novice competition at Saint Francis on Sept. 22.

The D Team placed ninth, C Team placed 12th and the E Team placed 23rd out of a total of 43 competing teams.

According to the official rules of the novice competition, only students who had never been to nationals could compete, preventing all members of the A Team from competing. Overall, senior captain Kiran Rachamalla, who is on the A Team, was impressed by the outcome.

“I am really proud of what our team achieved,” Rachamalla said. “Our [B Team] won the tournament. This was really good, considering all but one [of the members] started playing in the middle of last year.”

“We try to make sure our players cover a breadth of topics so players on a team don’t overlap.”

JUNIOR Shivam Mani

He said that the other teams also performed well, especially considering that they were composed of mostly new members. Junior captain Shivam Mani said that the team started recruiting efforts in early September, having held an informational meeting and several lunch practices in history

teacher Melissa Hesselgrave’s room. She is not the adviser, however, since according to Mani, Quiz Bowl has no official adviser.

This is because Quiz Bowl is not an official campus club, but rather, more of an after-school activity. In addition to lunch and after-school practices on campus, the team also holds Saturday practices at both the captains’ homes: Novice practices at Mani’s house, and advanced practices, take place at Rachamalla’s.

Mani said that the team has seen several new recruits, with promising individuals including sophomores Rohan Kumar and Nirmik Tambe. Mani also said that there is now increased gender diversity on the team.

“We are trying to also increase our gender diversity, as 95 percent of the team has usually been male,” Mani said. “But this year, we’re seeing more girls joining Quiz Bowl, which is always great to see.”

Mani said that the teams were not chosen based purely on skill and speed; rather in such a way that each team would have good coverage of all the Quiz Bowl topics, including literature, science, history, arts and more.

“For teams, it’s not as simple as putting all the good people on A team, and putting all the rookies on a low team,” Mani said. “We try to make sure our players cover a breadth of topics so players on a team don’t overlap.”

Both captains hope to see improvement from new and old members create an even stronger team this year.

“I am really excited to see what the future holds,” Rachamalla said. “I think all the new people got the Quiz Bowl ‘bug,’ so hopefully, they will be motivated to study and improve.” ♦

such as the one at Redwood Middle School, often focus on the lengths and style of items popular with female students, such as shorts and cropped tops.

The dress code states that “students should not be shamed or required to display their body in front of others (students, parents, or staff) in school.”

“[One of our main goals was] to make something that made sense for all of our students but also addressed what young ladies were telling us was a big issue or a problem,” Robinson said. “I think that was something that we have tried and hopefully succeeded in coming up with.” ♦

DRESS CODE

continued from pg. 1

with opaque fabric. However, cleavage should not have coverage requirements.”

Previously, what body parts needed to be covered and what clothing was banned were only vaguely defined.

To craft a new dress code, Mohnike brought together a group of staff members and students last February, including English teacher Suzanne Herzman, school psychologist Michael Stone, campus supervisor Jeanine Sevilla, senior Sasha Picard, alumna

Anya Srivats and senior Madison Hartmann, to revise the dress code.

According to principal Paul Robinson, the committee looked up different dress codes throughout the nation and came across one from Evanston High School in Evanston, Ill., that was similar to what they were looking for. Mohnike said that they then used it as a template to



make the new dress code. Mohnike said she hopes that this new dress code will help students and parents understand what is accepted at school and also to “make sure that people feel included no matter what they have on their body.”

Robinson said that one of the hardest aspects of creating the dress code is that dress codes can make girls feel unfairly targeted.

Dress codes in general,

Boys’ dance team hopes to perform at next rally

By Selena Liu

Outside the cafeteria every Wednesday from 4-6 p.m., the four members of the all-boys’ dance team can be seen learning and practicing new choreography taught by this year’s captain, senior Jason Ting.

Ting holds these practices after school every Wednesday, hoping to continue the legacy of last year’s boys’ dance team. However, this year, the team is forced to practice under much different circumstances, as the school has decided to no longer sanction his year’s boys’ dance team as an official group. It is now student-run, as opposed to last year, when the team was also led by girls’ dance team coach Kaitlyn Landeza. Landeza said that she stopped coaching the team this year because she no longer had enough time to lead both groups.

“There’s still a lot of training that has to be done for us in order to be better as a team.”

JUNIOR Daniel Ning

Last year, the official boys’ dance team had 11 members — eight of whom were seniors. With the departure of these seniors, including last year’s captains Nicholas Di and Nathan Kang, this year’s team now has three remaining members, including Ting and juniors Ashvin Maheshwar, Alvin Liu, as well as one new member, Daniel Ning.

Even with the reduced participants, Ting still hopes the team can continue to expand and improve as dancers so that they can potentially perform at future rallies and other school events.

Ting joined the boys’ dance team last school year, the team’s first year of existence. During last year’s auditions at the end of October, Ting felt excited to demonstrate his passion and talent for dance after

Di invited him to try out for the new team. The team attracted much attention last year because it was the first time the school had a boys’ dance team and because joining the team offered a unique way to earn physical education credits.

The team also performed at the 2017 holiday rally along with the girls’ dance team, and at the March rally with their own choreography. Without school-sanctioned tryouts this year, Ting and officers Maheshwar and Liu plan to hold their own auditions later in the year, but they are still uncertain of the date. Meanwhile, the three searched for potential members by reaching out to the student body through Facebook.

“A few people replied,” Ting said. “But right now we just want to see if anyone else is interested in joining.”

After people showed interest on Facebook, Ting evaluated each potential member on his ability to learn new choreography. So far, Ting recruited one new member, Ning, who applied to join the team this year after seeing Ting’s announcement on Facebook.

Newcomer Ning is excited to see how the team will grow throughout the year. Ning said he enjoys attending practices every week, especially because Ting teaches members his own choreography. Ning hopes that the school will reconsider making the boys’ dance team an official group again.

“I think we should be supported by the school again because I think our team is good as of now,” Ning said. “We want to prove ourselves worthy and show off our skills.”

Members of the team continue to seek new opportunities to showcase their talents in the coming months of the school year, aiming to perform at the next rally in December.

“There’s still a lot of training we need to do to be better dancers and to be better as a team,” Ting said. “But we really want to put this rally performance together.” ♦

Senior coder wins prize at hackathon with app

By Esha Lakhota

At the BASEHacks 3.0 hackathon on Sept. 23-24, senior Rohan Pandey and his team, consisting of three other developers from California, won the Google Cloud Platform API prize for creating an on-call called We & YOU that provides on-call trained teen volunteers to teens struggling with mental health issues.

For this award, Pandey and each of his three other teammates brought home a Google Home Mini. Held in Fremont, BASEHacks is a free high school competition in which anyone under 18 can participate.

Around 130 people, forming approximately 35 teams, competed in the event.

A typical hackathon lasts for around 24 to 27 hours, starting at 9 a.m. on Saturday with an opening ceremony and an optional team information session. The participants then have lunch, followed by an entire day of coding until dinner is served at about 7 p.m.

After that, most of the teams will continue coding throughout the night, but there are often fun activities like cup-stacking planned for newcomers at their first hackathon.

At around 5 or 6 a.m. the next day, a team usually comes up with a functional application and practice for the presentation after breakfast at 8 a.m.

Presentations and judging continue until about 11 a.m., when results are announced. The event officially ends around noon on Sunday.

The calling service for Pandey’s application uses the Google Conversion Professional Natural Language Sentiment Analysis API to calculate volunteer ratings from callers’ reviews in hopes of tackling the issue of teenage mental health.

In surveys he and his teammates conducted before the hackathon, they found that most teenagers with mental health is-

sues were currently talking to adult counselors, but they wanted to be talking to their friends or other teens. Pandey’s team was also aware of the long wait lines and technological issues with suicide hotlines, so they came up with a solution: a service that crowdsources and verifies teens to help other teens.

“Mental health is definitely a pressing problem for teenagers and I think we need to create good solutions as soon as possible,” Pandey said.

Though Pandey wrote his first line of code in fifth grade, he didn’t become interested in software until the second semester of his sophomore year.

“I’m honestly not too sure where my interest in it comes from, but being able to build something from scratch without needing access to a lab or engineering facility is really empowering,” Pandey said. “Once I got into the coding mindset in early 2017, I was hooked.”

Pandey built an IoT weather solution that summer, went to his first hackathon last September and then got into web development about six months ago. Pandey plans to participate in four more hackathons in just the next month. “I’m interested in hackathons because learning by doing is really effective, especially with code,” Pandey said. “Building projects at hackathons are really what took me from being an APCS Java programmer to someone who can build a full-stack web app.”

Pandey said he hopes to use what he learned from hackathons in his future jobs. He also is planning to use the skills he has learned in his college career.

“I already have a paid job at a software startup that I only have because of web development skills I learned at a hackathon,” Pandey said. “Having web development skills lets you get involved with virtually any startup because everyone needs at least a web presence, if not a full-on web app.” ♦



Pandey App focused on mental health

Students start tutoring academy aimed at teaching computer science and economics

By Jeffrey Xu

As a freshman last year, Henry Weng took AP Computer Science and excelled in it. But his experience was not universal since one of his friends and classmates struggled and dropped out of the class.

To help deal the problem, he came up with a tutoring program with a peer-to-peer teaching model to support the learning of the difficult subject.

He named the program DeltaX Academy. It has become an official non-profit under the state of California and was recently certified under the Presidential Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) system.

Besides acting the AP Computer Science class, Weng competes in the USA Computing Olympiad at the Gold level, making him a highly qualified teacher.

After self-studying both AP Microeconomics and Macroeconomics and receiving 5s on both last May, Weng decided he wanted to tutor in economics as well.

At first, Weng planned on running the organization by himself, but when he found out that the Saratoga Fire Station, his planned host location, required two people eaching at all times, he needed to find a partner. In what he called a “fortunate stroke of serendipity,” Weng said he ran into junior Felix Chen at a Chinese noodle restaurant over the summer.

Weng said that Chen, who has ample CS experience from excelling in APCS and was willing to teach, was the perfect partner.

As for coming up with the name DeltaX, Chen said that the word “delta,” meaning change, represents how different DeltaX is, since it is completely student-founded and student-run.

DeltaX has begun advertising and has already had its first class this past summer, called AP Computer Science Prerequisites. Weng said that the first course, taught by him and Chen, was “an incredible success,” with four students from SHS and 10 from other schools signing up at the cost of \$75 per student. Weng said that they plan to donate all proceeds to charity.

“I hope the DeltaX Academy will become more integrated with SHS.”

SOPHOMORE Henry Weng



The organization is PVSA certified, meaning that DeltaX can now give the Presidential Award to volunteers who have reached the volunteer hours quota. Weng said it was 12 hours total and was broken down into eight 90-minute sessions.

Currently, their staff includes Chen, Weng, freshman Bill Yuan and Aditya Nair and juniors Lintao Cui and Callia Yuan.

PORTFOLIO PREPARATION CLASS

When: Every Saturday

Fundamental knowledge & understanding of art processes; training in visual communication; and self-expression skills for developing portfolios for art colleges and universities

Where: 2905 Homestead Rd. Santa Clara, CA 95051

Contact: (408) 244-8311 or info@sjaart.com

ComedySportz team holds first performance

BY MarisaKingsley & JessicaWang

Audience members in the Thermond Drama Center gasp for air as they laugh at the members of the ComedySportz team play a game of “What Are You Doing?” This is a charade-like game where members of opposing teams must act out the same action, but each does something completely different and sometimes bizarre.

This is just one of the many games an audience member might see during a performance of ComedySportz.

Members of the SHS team had their first performance of the school year in the Thermond Drama Center on Sept. 14.

In each performance, the members split into two teams which compete against each other in improv comedy in a series of matches, judged by a member of ComedySportz San Jose.

The program is run by students with the exception of the team adviser, drama teach-

er Sarah Thermond, who may help with the audition process if the captains have trouble choosing between two or three members to add on to the team.

Last year, the team had 10 members, but because of graduation, more spaces have opened up. Team captain junior Elodie Torres and co-captain junior Trent Glenn were scheduled to hold auditions on Oct. 18 to find additional members.

“The auditions process just involves playing some scene games and showing us what you can do,” Torres said. “You don’t have to be an improv genius — I certainly wasn’t when I joined — but we look for enthusiasm and overall potential.”

Last semester, a teacher vs. student match was held for the first time, and the team plans to make this event an annual tradition. Torres also plans to organize more group activities outside of practices to encourage team bonding.

The team practices every Friday during lunch and about once a month on Saturday

afternoons, and matches are usually held every two to three months. The next show is scheduled for Dec. 7 in the Thermond Drama Center.

“It’s also fun for audience members because you don’t have to know anything about it to have a good time.”

TEACHER Sarah Thermond

Similar to regular improv, each match requires audience participation. Audience members give scene suggestions and are the scorekeepers for each game. At the end of each game, points are awarded to the team that receives the loudest and most enthusiastic applause.

The school team pays for a membership with the official ComedySportz group in San Jose to be a part of its high school league.

ComedySportz San Jose began the program to encourage students in theater programs to learn and polish their skills in improv. The league gives members of the team the opportunity to attend workshops, work with professionals and attend an annual area-wide tournament for high schools.

“We do cover improv a lot, especially in the Drama 1 curriculum, so it’s really nice to be able to have a sort of culminating performance that gets to share that element of performance art which is based on the-on-the-spot creativity and comedy,” Thermond said. “It’s also really fun for audience members because you don’t have to know anything about it to have a good time.”

Current Comedy Sportz team members are juniors Eman Ahmad, Dasha Efimov, Trent Glenn, Maya Gonder, Ritika Kuppam, Julia Trueba and Elodie Torres, and seniors Raghav Malaviya and Isaiiah Vivero. ♦

Soundings revamps to expand and raise awareness

BY ManasiGarg

Since the 1980s, Saratoga High’s literary magazine, Soundings, has accepted student submissions in art, photography and creative writing. Traditionally, Soundings is run by seniors only and releases one print issue a year in the late spring.

This year, however, some of those traditions are being reworked.

“We’re trying to make [Soundings] more inclusive this year because in the past it was senior-run and the choosing of staff members was selective,” junior Anishi Patel said. “A lot of people didn’t know or didn’t care about Soundings.”

According to senior Sherrie Shen, the core staff wanted juniors on the leadership team so that next year someone will have enough experience to take over the magazine’s production and management.

Final decisions about who is part of the staff are still undecided. Currently, the only confirmed members are Patel, Shen, and seniors Kaitlyn Wang, Cheryl Wang and Anisha Byri.

Further changes are being made this year to revamp Soundings. In the past, Soundings had a website, but it was never used and the domain is currently owned by someone

else. Last year, the former staff created another website solely to collect submissions. This year, however, the staff is working on building a completely new website using Wix so they can publish student works on there as well.

The staff plans to have three online issues, one this semester and two next semester, as well as the customary annual print issue.

According to Shen, the print issue will be a “showcase of the best submissions.” Submitting to previous cycles, i.e. the online issues, automatically enters the submission into the pool for the print issue.

All these changes are the result of feedback and brainstorming.

Patel said that over the summer, she realized that having a fully-fledged online web-

site for Soundings would be a “cool idea,” but because the magazine was traditionally senior run, she wasn’t sure if she, as a junior, could put her idea into practice. She went to alumni Kyle Wang, who graduated last year and was an editor for Soundings in the 2017-2018 school year, for guidance. He recommended she contact current seniors, so Patel reached out to senior Kaitlyn Wang.

It turned out the two had had a similar idea. Together, along with Shen and Wang, they discussed the changes they wanted to make in Soundings with journalism teacher Michael Tyler, and set plans for building a website in motion.

“I thought it would be super cool for our school to have an art platform where stu-

dents can submit all year round, rather than just once a year like Soundings has done previously,” Patel said. “Having it online is the perfect way to do it.”

Patel said that, “fingers crossed,” they would open submissions by mid-October and release the first online issue at the end of November.

The staff also plans to advertise Soundings and the opening of submissions through daily announcements, SHSTV and English teachers, encouraging students interested in art, photography or creative writing to submit.

Shen joined the staff this year because of her interest in creative writing, and because it is currently the only outlet on campus that explores that interest.

“After Writing Club was disbanded [and the creative writing course was discontinued], Soundings is pretty much the only group on campus that works with prose,” Shen said.

For Kaitlyn Wang, working on Soundings is representative of her love for creative writing.

“In the past, I’ve really enjoyed reading literary journals and I’ve submitted my work to them before, so I wanted to help make this possible,” she said. ♦



GRAPHIC BY ELAINE SUN

Clubs commissioners address surge in new clubs

BY ChristineZhang

This year, the two clubs commissioners, seniors Samyu Iyer and Cameron Lin, said they reviewed 24 new club applications prior to Club Day, which occurred Sept. 26 and Sept. 27, and they are still receiving more.

To accommodate all the new club applicants, Iyer and Lin had to schedule interviews on the weekends, whereas in the past, clubs commissioners were able to fit all of their new club interviews into the school day.

The pair initially arranged interviews to occur during tutorials, but they were running out of time. Each interview took them about 15 minutes.

“It was coming to the point where every single tutorial was getting washed out for interviews,” Iyer said. “As seniors, we still want to go to the college presentations and talk to teachers.”

Iyer and Lin decided to interview all their new club applicants on two consecutive weekends in September to free up their time during school.

Iyer said that she was not surprised by the huge influx of new club applications this year. Out of the applications they received, there was only one that was carried over from last year.

“I know that there are a lot of people who have wanted to start a club,” Iyer said. “Club Day was an incentive for them to actually do it.”

“We just want to see people doing what they like to do with others that like to do it.”

SENIOR Samyu Iyer

This year, Iyer said that there are currently 68 established clubs, while last year there were 65.

Iyer said that she hopes students are driven to start clubs by their passions, no matter how many people they can attract with it. When students find others on campus that share their passion,

they want to create a place to meet, discuss and foster their interests together.

She acknowledged that some students may have ulterior motives in starting clubs, such as to gain a leadership position to write on college applications, but she said that the students’ true intent is often clear in their applications and interviews.

“[Students’ actual motives] also really do reflect in our interviews of them, and [we can tell] who’s really passionate about their cause,” Iyer said.

When an applicant is rejected, Iyer and Lin give them a few things that they want to see improved, and the applicant is invited to re-apply.

This process can be repeated several times, but if the applicant truly does care about starting their club, then it is likely that they will eventually be accepted, Iyer said. Clubs can be approved any time during the school year.

Iyer said that although the clubs commissioners received a noticeably large number of applications this year, they did not

reject more clubs than they would have if there had been fewer applications. In fact, they approved 14 out of the 24 total applications and rejected 10.

Iyer and Lin only compare new club applications to existing ones when they are very similar to each other. The application is then likely to be rejected because the commissioners do not want too much overlap between clubs.

However, if an applicant presents a club with a unique goal, strong leadership and a sustainable model for the entire school year, Iyer said that she sees no reason not to approve the club. The number of existing clubs is not taken into account when reviewing applications.

“We take it on a club-by-club basis,” Iyer said. “We don’t really look at it that much as a broad picture.”

Recently, sophomore Aileen Liao successfully re-started UNICEF Club affiliated with the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund, with sophomore officers Danielle Moon, Katie Chen and Kaushik

Jasti. Liao founded the club without knowledge of a previous club of the same name, which was discontinued in the spring of 2017.

The club focuses on improving children’s lives through educating, volunteering and fundraising. Liao said that she wanted to establish a club that revolved around helping children.

“This is a youth helping youth mentality,” Liao said. “Hopefully, it has more impact and is more meaningful for both sides.”

Liao first applied for the club last spring and re-applied several times before it was accepted. The clubs commissioners sent her a message approving her club a few days before Club Day.

“When I got it, it was like all the work paid off,” Liao said. “I was so excited to tell my officers. It boosted their morale.”

Iyer said that if students have something that they are genuinely passionate about, they should not be afraid to apply and try to start a club.

“We just want to see people doing what they like to do with others that like to do it,” Iyer said. ♦

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 victor.liu@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

Lifestyles 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

Annissa Mu
Krithi Sankar

Backpage Editor

Patrick Li

Head Copy Editors

Shreya Kulkarni
Jessica Wang
Jayne Zhou

Head Photographer

Ava Hooman

Associate Photographer

Alan Zu

Graphic Team Leader

Callia Yuan

Web Team/App Development

Jackson Green
Isaac Le

Business/Ad Managers

David Koh
Esha Lakhota

Reporters

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

Adviser

Mike Tyler

Printed by Folger Graphics in Hayward, Calif.



Movie guides distract from learning

“Please fill out this worksheet while you watch the movie.”

Nearly every student has heard some variation of that statement. Teachers play movies on the projector screen, and students are expected to complete a worksheet with dozens of questions related to the movie, usually to be handed in right after the movie ends.

Although this practice may seem like an effective way to reinforce the ideas shown in the movie and ensure that students actually pay attention to it, the worksheet usually acts more as an obstacle than an enhancement to learning. Because of the worksheets, students shift their focus from processing and internalizing the movie’s contents to getting the right answers.

Movie worksheets and video guides do the exact opposite of helping students pay attention. When students look at the screen, they do not focus on the movie’s content itself; instead, they watch for the answer to the next question, and everything in between each answer becomes background noise.

Students pay attention to a fraction of the movie because the worksheets and guides demand that they concentrate on scribbling down the proper, often hyper-specific answers. A history student might not watch a documentary to fully understand why the Americans dumped tea into the Boston Harbor, but to write down how many crates were thrown overboard.

When the questions are too densely packed together, students can hardly afford to glance

up from their worksheets, let alone pay attention to the movie’s main ideas. They become so busy jotting down answers that they miss crucial points of the plot. Instead of asking students to look at the bigger picture, the worksheets often hone in on more specific parts of the movie, testing whether or not a student is picking up on minute details rather than getting a good understanding of the movie in general.

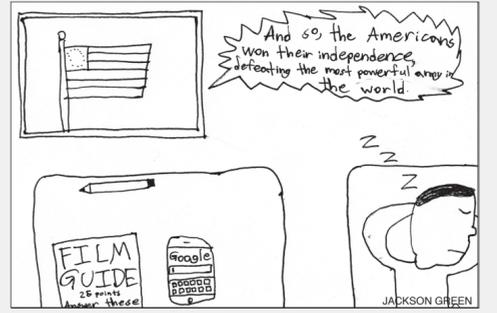
All of this means it’s much harder for students to get a genuine, natural understanding of the movie. They constantly look away from the screen to write, and even if they are able to somehow pay attention, the questions disrupt the movie’s natural flow.

The worksheets also do little to prevent students from going on their phones during the movie. Determined students can still easily sneak their phones out, and they can quickly hide their phones when the teacher walks behind them. Even worse, students may use their phones to find the worksheet’s answers online, completely defeating the purpose of watching the movie altogether.

At the end of the movie, students who used their phones and weren’t paying attention often copy answers from their friends or other classmates.

What is sad about this situation is that the movie itself may have deep educational content, but the worksheets tend to strip the movie of importance and meaning.

Movie worksheets cause students to think of the movie as



nothing more than a typical classwork assignment, and thus, there is no reason for teachers to waste entire class periods on the movie if they include the worksheet as part of the activity.

If teachers insist on using movie worksheets, they should hand the worksheets to their students after the movie ends. Additionally, instead of having hyper-specific questions, teachers should edit the worksheets to ask about more general plot ideas or themes of the movie.

If they are worried about their students not paying attention to the movie without the worksheet, teachers can give their students the option to take notes

during the movie without making it a mandatory assignment. This would still aid the students who prefer to write down main ideas, and it wouldn’t hinder the ones who concentrate better without the written task.

Not only would this change require little work on the teachers’ part, but students would also be able to focus on the movie itself while they watch it.

Furthermore, they would be able to write more detailed, comprehensive answers afterwards, demonstrating their true understanding of the movie rather than their ability to catch trivial facts — and they wouldn’t be copying from the answers of their classmates. ♦

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editors-in-chief
Chelsea Leung
Alexandra Li

Opinion Editor
Victor Liu

Reporter
Christine Zhang

The Falcon staff voted 28-3 in support of this article.

YOUR OPINIONS ON THE FALCON

THE FALCON WELCOMES

SIGNED OPINIONS ON ITS STORIES.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK OF OUR WORK.

From the editors:

A school newspaper is meant to hold its school accountable. At The Falcon, we take this duty seriously: We want to both record the events of the school and analyze them. But at the same time, The Falcon ought to be accountable to its readership as well.

As student journalists, we’re going to make mistakes. And part of being transparent is acknowledging those mistakes — and acknowledging opinions that people have about our stories.

More and more, the country seems to lose trust in media. Such resentment, when unspoken, can go under the radar if no one in media addresses it; as a result, it may give rise to other, less trustworthy sources. It’s our goal at The Falcon to be a standard bearer for truth. And we want to know what opinions others may have about our reporting, and adjust our journalistic practices accordingly.

We want to open up a dialogue with the school community. We realize that writing a long letter to the editor may be cumbersome and difficult, so instead, we want to encourage students to submit short comments — no more than about 100 words. Email any suggestions, criticisms or praise about each issue to feedback@saratogafalcon.org and we’ll do our best to print it here in the Opinion section. ♦

- Chelsea Leung and Alexandra Li

Kirk Davis, Physics Teacher



Davis

“I liked reading the new teacher profiles. It was a great way to know these people even though we met them — it’s fun seeing that kind of stuff. The other thing that I think is absolutely hilarious is the April Fools issue. I think it’s done with just the right amount of bite but it’s not mean to anyone. I also enjoy catching up with the sports teams because I watch a lot of sporting events. I read the paper every time it comes out, but not every article so I scan the headlines to keep track of what’s going on.”

Brandon Yuen, Senior



Yuen

“The front page is quite intriguing and it captures my attention, so I’m usually more interested in reading those stories. I like how the paper talks about contemporary issues that students care about like “Breaking Down Walls” and the debt problems surrounding the sports departments. One improvement I think could be made is increasing the amount of stories related to localized issues and students, so we would be more interested in it. Adding a crossword to the backpage would also be cool.”

Ronak Pai, Junior



Pai

“I think the newspaper is a good way to get ideas out there but I don’t think that many people read it because some of the stories are kind of long. Personally, I read the headlines and the first paragraph for most stories and then I stop after that. With the rise of social media, people don’t spend that much time reading things on paper anymore, and students don’t have that long of attention spans. The newspaper should utilize more short and simple stories to help improve reader retention.”

Isabelle Lee, Sophomore



Lee

“I really like how the pages in the center of the paper are colorful and have really nice graphics, with usually more light-hearted stories. In general, I think the newspaper does a pretty good job of covering relevant issues at the school, like the story on Doordash bans. I don’t support the idea that Doordash should be banned, like the opinion article said, because as an underclassman, I don’t have the opportunity to drive off and buy food. I guess the ban increases school safety, but it’s still excessive.”



What KAVANAUGH HAS TAUGHT US

GRAPHIC BY CALLIA YUAN

Rape and sexual assault cannot be excused as 'rough horseplay'

BY ManasiGarg

On Sept. 27, Dr. Christine Blasey Ford testified that current Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh sexually assaulted her at a high school party 36 years ago. She was just 15 — Kavanaugh, 17. She said that he ambushed her on the way to the bathroom and, 'stumbling drunk,' he shoved her onto a bed; that he groped her and grinded her unwilling body against his own; that he removed her clothes and covered her mouth; that his two friends stood nearby, laughing at Ford's terror and ignoring her cries for help.

What Ford described was not a youthful indiscretion; it cannot be written off with a casual dismissal. What Ford described was attempted rape, and her testimony was very credible to most.

Still, there are many who tried to paint the assault as a silly teenage mistake on Kavanaugh's part, as if sexual assault could ever be considered an understandable "mistake." Carrie Severino, a lawyer for the right-wing organization Judicial Crisis Network, dismissed Kavanaugh's purported behavior as "boorish" and merely "horseplay," in a televised interview on CNN, as if attempted rape and horseplay were the same. Fox News columnist Stephen Miller snidely tweeted, "It was drunk teenagers playing seven minutes of heaven," as if a consensual game could be confused with sexual assault.

This minimization of Ford's allegations against Kavanaugh not only exemplify society's willingness to gloss over assault when committed, but has also allowed the ugly head of self-victimization among men in power to become visible.

"If somebody can be brought down by accusations like this, then you, me, every man certainly should be worried," a White House lawyer said in a statement on Sept. 16. "We can all be accused of something."

This statement, and this kind of thinking, shifts sympathy away from the victim and onto the boy or man accused. It bemoans that all men are "at risk" — any man could be Brett Kavanaugh, could have his life ruined by a woman. It disregards the trauma of the woman or man who has been sexually abused in favor of the accused's discomfort at being on trial. It normalizes the behavior Ford describes; it normalizes sexual assault. What teenage boy, after all, hasn't been intoxicated and attempted to rape a teenage girl?

These are all variations of the same root idea: "Boys will be boys." It is a popular idea that has been used to defend the innocence not just of Kavanaugh, but of many men accused of sexual assault.

The phrase bolsters the notion that boys are all naturally aggressive, that their behavior is something they cannot control. It implies that sexual assault is just a manifestation of male adolescent behavior, that if a boy hurts someone else, it isn't him being cruel, it is him just being a boy.

The phrase is dangerous because it is unequivocally false. Experts in adolescent behavior say that Kavanaugh's alleged behavior was not, and is not, normal.

Niobe Way, a psychology professor at New York University, told Vox that in interviews with adolescent boys, she's discovered many of them are violent or put on an act of aggression to fit in with cultural expectations of masculinity. It isn't natural for boys to "rape, assault, push girls down, cover their mouths so they can't breathe or try to take their clothes off," Way said. Assuming that sort of behavior is natural is not only dangerous to victims but unfair to boys.



MEGAN CHEN

The culture of silencing sexual violence in the United States and allowing culprits to get away relatively unscathed (think Harvey Weinstein, who even with numerous allegations of sexual assault against him, remains wealthy and free) is so overwhelming because of this "boys will be boys" idea.

Until we stop dismissing rape as rough horseplay and sympathizing with the accused over the victim, we will never be able to hold perpetrators of sexual violence accountable for their crimes. Even though Kavanaugh was confirmed to the court, it doesn't make Ford's testimony any less heroic; although her bravery galvanized sexual assault survivors to come forward, the many disparaging reactions to her account show that there is a lot more work to be done before perpetrators of sexual violence receive the punishment they deserve.

Confirmation reveals flaws in legal process

BY DavidKoh & JeffreyMa

Donald Trump's presidency has been riddled with controversy and partisan polarization. Most recently, his nominee for the Supreme Court, Brett Kavanaugh, was confirmed on Oct. 6 despite Dr. Christine Blasey Ford's sexual assault allegations. With a vote of 50-48 in his favor, Kavanaugh is the most divisive justice to date.

Besides raising questions about rape culture and sparking social unrest, the hearing exposed deeply rooted issues with how the Senate confirms Supreme Court nominees — the process fails to objectively evaluate candidate fitness for the nation's highest court.

While testifying under oath, Kavanaugh made statements that were seen as vague or stretching evidence — or in some cases, as flat-out falsehoods. Furthermore, he refused to cooperate with an FBI investigation into Ford's allegations and responded to Sen. Amy Klobuchar's questions of whether he blacked out from alcohol consumption with an angry question of his own: "I don't know, have you?"

Whenever a seat is up for grabs these days, a partisan fight is sure to ensue.

Instances like these reveal his lack of the temperament necessary for the Supreme Court, yet the focus seemed to remain on Ford's allegations alone. While some senators tried to return the hearing from drinking and assault

to his character and honesty, most media attention remained fixated on Ford's allegations.

The spotlight placed on an essentially "he said, she said" scandal demonstrates the flawed way potential justices are evaluated. And although allegations of sexual assault should be taken seriously, more focus should have been drawn to Kavanaugh's glaring partisanship and belligerence in a high-profile setting.

Without the proper state legislature mandating that corporations pursue diversification, there will be no change in gender inequality that exists in corporate spaces. Currently, one-fourth of publicly traded companies based in California don't have any women on their corporate boards, according to The Wall Street Journal.

The bill has sparked backlash as opponents of the bill have claimed that it commodifies women into a method of reaching quotas and results in the perception that women can't gain these positions on their own.

However, this bill is nothing new. In 2013, Democratic senator Hannah-Beth Jackson introduced Senate Concurrent Resolution 62, which encouraged corporations with a board of nine or more members to include at least three women by the end of 2016. California was the first state to adopt this kind of legislation, and other states have since followed suit.

Notably, the resolution differed from SB 826 in that it did not require or make mandates of corporations or issue penalties for non-compliance. As a result, the solution was ignored, and three years following the resolution, only 20 percent of companies had come up to the standards.

Thus, it became evident that without legislation, corporate gender disparities come stagnant. Past legislature to encourage gender diversification have failed because there has been no legal enforcement of these standards.

Another suggested alternative has been to empower women from the beginning of their lives and education. However, when women and men start from similar educational backgrounds, women

Noisy construction will lead to benefits next year

BY AlexWang

Pencils scribble as students take their APUSH exam in history teacher Faith Stackhouse-Daly's room, trying to remember the effects of the Constitution. In the meantime, all they can hear is the loud jackhammer outside and the whirring of electric drills. Although they try to concentrate on the task at hand, the noise outside can be too much to bear.

To those complaining about the noise, know that we all feel your pain. As we listen to our teachers' lessons, the drilling drones on in the background. But as we look through the fences, we cannot help but notice the progress on the new student center in the heart of campus. When the new wellness center and other rooms finish being constructed in early spring, it will provide a

spot that all students will benefit from.

Currently, the walk to reach the offices of the CASSY counselors is long and out of the way; students must go along the path between the office and the 200 hundred wing to reach it.

Furthermore, the CASSY facility is not even a proper building. The therapists are currently being housed in a portable, which gives them a small space that's unable to accommodate a large number of students. The new building will be able to provide numerous students with a space to de-stress or talk with a counselor in a location more accessible to all.

Last year, CASSY provided 4,800 hours of counseling, and now with a more centralized location, that number is bound to increase — and with it, a general

improvement in students' mental well-being. Students seeking support will just need to drop in to meet or schedule appointments with the therapists.

On the other hand, a more centralized location may deter some students from using the facility because they prefer to have more privacy. However, CASSY counselors have promised to try to combat this feeling of self-consciousness by making the wellness center more welcoming and integrating wellness into school culture.

Besides CASSY, the new 800 wing will provide a new leadership room and conference rooms for students. This new area will open up more places for students to do homework or hang out during lunch and tutorial, as the library and many teachers' rooms are often over-crowded and noisy.



FALCON BY JEFFREY MA

Construction of the new student center is on track to finish in spring.

A revamped copy room will also be in the 800 wing, and there will be improved staff bathrooms as well.

A newer building always has its advantages. When the music building opened last August, it

came with state-of-the-art facilities that will benefit students for decades. The new student and wellness center will be similarly beneficial when it is complete — we just need to put up with more noise to get there.

New legislation increases workplace gender diversity

DavidKoh
KrithiSankar

On Sept. 30, Gov. Jerry Brown passed Senate Bill 826, which mandates that all publicly traded companies in California include at least one woman on their boards by the end of 2019 and three by 2021, in an effort to promote workplace diversity.

Though the law is controversial, Brown is right in implementing it. Despite California's advanced economy in comparison to other states, it has lagged behind in gender diversity at the highest corporate levels.

Without the proper state legislature mandating that corporations pursue diversification, there will be no change in gender inequality that exists in corporate spaces. Currently, one-fourth of publicly traded companies based in California don't have any women on their corporate boards, according to The Wall Street Journal.

The bill has sparked backlash as opponents of the bill have claimed that it commodifies women into a method of reaching quotas and results in the perception that women can't gain these positions on their own.

However, this bill is nothing new. In 2013, Democratic senator Hannah-Beth Jackson introduced Senate Concurrent Resolution 62, which encouraged corporations with a board of nine or more members to include at least three women by the end of 2016. California was the first state to adopt this kind of legislation, and other states have since followed suit.

Notably, the resolution differed from SB 826 in that it did not require or make mandates of corporations or issue penalties for non-compliance. As a result, the solution was ignored, and three years following the resolution, only 20 percent of companies had come up to the standards.

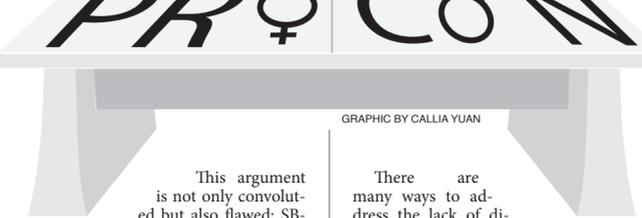
Thus, it became evident that without legislation, corporate gender disparities come stagnant. Past legislature to encourage gender diversification have failed because there has been no legal enforcement of these standards.

Another suggested alternative has been to empower women from the beginning of their lives and education. However, when women and men start from similar educational backgrounds, women

are more likely to end up in lower positions according to a report by Catalyst. It is evident that without any sort of legislation, women will continue to be treated as lesser in workplace environments.

The bill simply serves as a catalyst for beginning to bridge the gender gap in corporate environments. Gender equality on boards is something that has been promoted over and over again, yet failed due to a lack of legislative enforcement. Even if the bill ends up falling short of expectations, it is a key starting point in breaking the glass ceiling that prevents women from advancing in the workplace.

However, despite its good intentions, the bill has been also attacked for being a potential slippery slope that leads to similar legislation for people of different ethnicities or sex.



GRAPHIC BY CALLIA YUAN

This argument is not only convoluted but also flawed; SB 289 was both fiscally and socially motivated. A 2017 MSCI study over a five-year period found that boards with three or more female members reported earnings per share 45 percent larger than companies with no female directors.

Any future policy that would be passed would require the same evidence that it would be beneficial to the companies and not just trivial requirements for boards.

The most overwhelming argument for the bill is that without it, studies have predicted that it will take 40 to 50 years to reach gender parity.

Due to previous failures, it is clear that the only option going forward is to pursue policies that are enforceable, rather than creating hollow promises of increasing diversity.

Despite claims from opponents, SB 826 serves as a starting point for bridging the existing gender diversity gap and will amend the current obstacles that plague the status quo.

Quotas for corporate boards fail to solve gender disparity

BY LeoCao

Last month, Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law a heavy-handed — and perhaps unconstitutional — bill mandating that every publicly traded company based in California will need at least one woman on the board by the end of 2019, and as many as three by 2021. Failure to do so will result in \$100,000 to \$200,000 fines.

The Bank of Merrill Lynch reported that women account for 25 percent of board seats of Fortune 1000 companies, a drastic increase compared to the 14 percent from just a decade ago. Although these numbers are low considering that women make up half of the workforce in America, women are still being named to leadership positions at a swift pace.

Perhaps most of all, the law is also likely illegal. Federal courts have rejected efforts requiring private entities to implement racial or gender quotas as violations of the Constitution. Moreover, the composition of a company's board is controlled by the state where the company is incorporated; many large California companies are incorporated in other states such as business-friendly Delaware. If the law is upheld in the court, existing California companies might choose to relocate their headquarters to other states, damaging California's economy in the process.

There have been studies that show companies perform better with women on their boards, but this does not mean it should be mandated by government. Logically, it doesn't make sense that companies will suddenly improve once their quotas are artificially met; if anything, this change may even hurt the economic productivity of the companies as a more qualified man may be overlooked in favor of satisfying arbitrary gender quotas.

California's solution intrudes into a field where it does not belong. And where does this intrusion end?

First of all, quotas undermine the credibility of those they seek to help. A law enforcing a minimum number of slots for women on corporate boards implies that women cannot reach executive positions based on their own merit. This message is unfair and untrue, and is insulting to the qualified women currently advancing to

board positions.

The law asserts that increasing the number of women in executive positions "will boost the California economy, improve opportunities for women in the workplace and protect California taxpayers, shareholders, and retirees." But as the bill was being debated, state Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson suggested in a passionate speech that she was motivated by feminist frustrations as much as by economic concerns.

This policy isn't driven so much by improving the economy as she is by a sense of revenge.

Perhaps most of all, the law is also likely illegal. Federal courts have rejected efforts requiring private entities to implement racial or gender quotas as violations of the Constitution. Moreover, the composition of a company's board is controlled by the state where the company is incorporated; many large California companies are incorporated in other states such as business-friendly Delaware. If the law is upheld in the court, existing California companies might choose to relocate their headquarters to other states, damaging California's economy in the process.

There have been studies that show companies perform better with women on their boards, but this does not mean it should be mandated by government. Logically, it doesn't make sense that companies will suddenly improve once their quotas are artificially met; if anything, this change may even hurt the economic productivity of the companies as a more qualified man may be overlooked in favor of satisfying arbitrary gender quotas.

California's solution intrudes into a field where it does not belong. And where does this intrusion end?

First of all, quotas undermine the credibility of those they seek to help. A law enforcing a minimum number of slots for women on corporate boards implies that women cannot reach executive positions based on their own merit. This message is unfair and untrue, and is insulting to the qualified women currently advancing to

board positions. The business world is undoubtedly hungry for the aptitude, talents and ingenuity of female leaders. However, that does not mean the government needs to intrude in corporations' hiring decisions.

Statute of limitations should be repealed for sex crimes

JeffreyMa

Sixty women have accused disgraced former comedian Bill Cosby of rape, sexual assault, sexual battery or sexual misconduct. While he was convicted recently and sentenced up to 10 years in prison, the 60 accusations altogether amounted to just one criminal and nine civil cases against Cosby, who is 81 years old.

Although Cosby could have faced more than just 10 indictments, the disparities between the number of accusations and legal actions filed against him are rooted in states' statute of limitation laws, which set a time limit for the filing of charges against the defendant.

These laws originally existed to protect defendants, on the theory that plaintiffs could pursue cases within reasonable time frames and that witnesses' recollections and evidence degrade over time.

However, for sex crimes, statute of limitation laws only act as obstacles to reaching justice for the victims.

So far, just seven of the 50 U.S. states have eliminated statute of limitations for felony sex crimes. If anything, the Cosby case, recent exposure of Harvey Weinstein and uncovering of the Catholic priest abuse scandal in Pennsylvania indicate that 50 out of 50 states should abolish them in the case

of sex crimes.

Current state laws vary greatly in terms of the actual time limit for the statute. Most states hover around 20 years for felony sex crimes with a few exceptions at half that many years.

To put simply, women are hesitant to report men who have the power to potentially counterattack.

Rape is one of the least reported crimes nationally, with just an average 30 percent report rate, according to Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network. Despite awareness efforts in recent years, being a rape victim still bears some degree of stigma in the eyes of society.

The two most damning trends, however, are those of the gender disparity between rape perpetrators and victims and of gender power imbalance in the workplace.

While efforts have attempted to destigmatize the rape of males, the statistical majority of rapes are still male-on-female.

The recent MeToo movement, where

numerous powerful figures — mostly men — have fallen from grace, demonstrated the lopsided power scale in the industry.

When these statistics are taken in conjunction with the imbalanced corporate workspace, what is produced is a stifling of rape reports.

To put simply, women are hesitant to report men who have the power to potentially counterattack. By the time the victimized woman moves on from the corporate office and into a position to possibly lodge accusations, often the statute of limitations has already expired.

For the vast majority of Cosby's accusers, such is the reality: It is legally impossible for them to seek retribution for Cosby's crimes, resulting in the meager one criminal case against Cosby faces.

Even in the nine civil cases Cosby faces, only two are within the actual statute of limitations.

The other seven have expired, so instead, the plaintiffs all filed defamation cases. Even for these women, true criminal justice cannot be achieved, let alone for the other 50.

Perhaps even more morally repugnant is the recent revelations of systematic cover-ups of thousands of child sex abuse cases perpetrated by over 40 predator priests in the Catholic churches of Pennsylvania. Even with these heinous crimes coming to

light, most victims will not taste justice.

A vast majority of the accusations brought forth by victims are past the statute of limitations due to systematic church cover up and the nature of child and adolescent sex abuse.

This form of sex abuse is even less likely than corporate offenses to surface before the statutes run out; according to the National Center for Victims of Crimes, when children are the victims of sex crimes, they are often unable to properly process what is happening to them until much later in their lives.

Thus, many cases remain unreported for decades, with many of the abused coming to terms with their experiences and traumas and speaking up only when they are well into adulthood.

With the Pennsylvania statute of limitations set at 30, most accusation go unexamined — the victim unwilling, the rapist dead or the statute expired — as in this case.

Both instances of sex crimes — corporate or child — demonstrate the underlying flaws of statute of limitation laws when they are applied to sex crimes; the law should not penalize victims for overcoming trauma.

If a coping victim needs more than 30 years to come to terms with their past abuse, then the legal code should give them the time to do so.

New dress code lessens sexism toward girls

By Selena Liu

At the start of the school year, the administration revealed a dress code that aims to be more specific about what items students can and cannot wear.

This new policy was agreed upon by a committee of teachers, administrators and student leadership that collectively formulated the new policy and differentiated between appropriate and inappropriate clothing, according to the 2018-2019 Student Handbook. The creation of this new policy helps lessen gender discrimination.

In schools nationwide, there has been a long-term issue where schools form dress code policies that prohibit female clothing that serves as a "distraction" to boys.

According to parental education institution Motherly, "the language of dress code

policies often [makes] boys' reactions, behaviors and distractions the responsibility of their female peers. It's an attitude the perpetuates misogyny, laying the groundwork for the 'she was asking for it' perception of sexual harassment and assault."

This type of traditional dress code policy, which objectifies female students to quantify them only as "distractions" in the school environment, is inherently discriminatory.

With the creation of its new dress code, the school bans certain types of clothing rather than banning the general exposure of female body parts that are deemed too "distracting." As a result, the new dress code is fairer to female students.

Additionally, whereas in previous years teachers could make judgments based on their interpretation of the dress code policy, now teachers can only cite students for

violating rules explicitly stated in the clothing policy, making dress coding students a much more straightforward process.

This process can both save time and shorten a potentially awkward situation for both the student and the teacher when a student is given a violation.

The dress code in the past was less than half as long as the current dress code, and it only included vague general rules about what students should or should not wear.

For example, the old rules prohibited "any clothing disruptive to the teaching/learning process."

However, no specific types of clothing were specified in the policy besides clothing that depicted violence or exposed inappropriate body parts. The more specific and concrete policy prevents the targeting of female students for violations.

For example, in the new policy, the school has specifically permitted spaghetti strap tank tops, halter tops and clothing that exposes cleavage, as long as this clothing does not expose other prohibited body parts.

By permitting these varieties of clothing, the school has shown that they take into consideration both genders' range of clothing and the types of clothing regularly worn in teen fashion.

Times have changed in terms of both clothes and attitudes toward gender discrimination.

The new, more specific, dress code policy has finally accommodated this shift, and to counter possible gender discrimination, the formation of this new policy demonstrates the school's new open-minded attitude toward modern female clothing types. ♦

New rules unfairly inconvenience club officers

By Muthu Palaniappan

This year, clubs have to follow a new rule: They can run meetings only if all their officers are present.

The only exception is if an officer is sick or has an emergency.

Even though officers, as elected officials, should feel obliged to attend club meetings, this new requirement, forcing all club officers to be at meetings, is excessive.

Although officers may not be sick or have emergencies to attend to, there are several other obstacles they could very possibly encounter, interfering with the club's meetings.

For example, if an officer is on a school field trip, which isn't currently accounted for in the club handbook's new rule, the club meeting could not take place, even though all other officers may be present at school.

Similarly, if one officer needs to make up a test during lunch or talk with a guidance counselor, it would be unfair to the other officers and club members that the meeting be canceled.

Or, for senior club officers, they might have to choose between attending a club meeting or going to an informational college session.

Forcing officers to go to every meeting also prevents them from participating in another club that they truly enjoy if the two clubs happen to have overlapping meeting dates.

Moreover, it's not always necessary for a club to have all of its officers present for a meeting to run smoothly.

For example, an absent treasurer wouldn't be detrimental to a club if the other members weren't discussing finances during

that meeting.

However, it's still understandable why the rule has been put in place.

Often, clubs will have more officers than needed so students can pad their resumes with leadership positions.

Even though officers should feel obliged to attend club meetings, this new requirement is excessive.

It is unfair for a student to become a club officer without actually being devoted to the club, so in theory the rule can help prevent excessive numbers of officers in clubs who

provide no real contribution.

Even so, the new rule isn't the right answer.

Perhaps having a minimum attendance requirement similar to minimum member turnout at meetings would be a better solution.

Even an minor amendment to this rule that could allow an absence to be excused for a wider variety of reasons would be a better resolution to discourage resume-padding.

Unfortunately, the downsides of the new club rule outweigh its benefits.

If clubs have to systematically cancel or postpone meetings because a single officer cannot show up for any reason, it will negatively impact other members who will miss out on participating in clubs that they are genuinely interested in. ♦

\$175 for ASB package is far too expensive

By Shama Gupta & Megan Chen

As forms pile up at the beginning of every year, around a thousand students buy the \$175 ASB package.

But as the year goes on and school dances and football games go unattended, many students have come to the realization that buying the ASB package isn't all that worth the cost.

This is why the number of students purchasing ASB has dropped from 1,080 to 979 in the last year.

For students who dish out the nearly \$200, they pay less for dances, can attend football games for free and receive a complimentary planner, T-shirt, pom pom and yearbook.

But because Saratoga students are busy with sports, speech and debate practices, robotics competitions and many more extracurriculars, it's often difficult for them to go to all those football games and dances to get their money's worth.

The number of student purchasing ASB has dropped from 1,080 to 979 in the last year.

Realistically, other than students in band or those who are otherwise obligated to go to football games, most students

haven't been to more than one or two of them.

School dances other than prom or winter formal are also lightly attended.

Additionally, the students who actually use their planners could buy a much cheaper one elsewhere or even use a free online planner.

While the yearbook is generally more wanted by a student, it, along with the shirt, it can be bought separately for a cheaper combined cost.

The yearbook costs \$100, and the T-shirt is \$20. If students only bought the items they needed, they would save \$55 as compared to buying the entire ASB package and all its supposed benefits.

This year, the school added to their already-long list of benefits with the complimentary red and white pom pom. While the point of the item is likely to encourage school spirit, the pom poms haven't been put to use at all.

For the small population of students who really do take full advantage of their ASB perks by going to all the football games and dances the school has to offer, buying ASB would be a smart choice.

But in order to make the package a better bargain for the rest of the students, the school should consider reducing the cost of ASB.

The money raised from ASB packages is used directly for the school. If there are so many students without motivation to buy the package, there will be less money to use for the betterment of the school. ♦

E-cigarette crackdown sends right message

By Alex Wang

The new bathroom policies introduced this year were a part of the administration's effort to combat student use of electronic cigarettes, the most popular brand being the notorious JUUL.

Of course, this problem is not limited to Saratoga High; teen use of e-cigarettes is now a nationwide epidemic, and the Food and Drug Administration is taking positive (and overdue) steps to crack down.

The FDA released a statement mandating e-cigarette brands to prove they can keep their products away from minors.

The FDA released a statement on Sept. 12 mandating popular e-cigarette brands, specifically JUUL, MarkTen, Vuse, Blu and Logic, to prove that they can keep their products away from minors within 60 days. The brands must revise marketing techniques, including websites, and remove the flavorings popular with younger users, among other changes.

The FDA also targeted convenience stores and other retailers who are selling e-cigarettes to minors, issuing fines and sending warning letters. Finally, the FDA began investigating companies that purchase products in bulk to prevent adults from mass buying devices to resell or distribute to teenagers.

The main reason behind this critical stance against e-cigarettes are their nicotine levels and the predatory sales tactics

used by the companies that manufacture them.

According to The New York Times, e-cigarettes contain fewer toxic chemicals than traditional cigarettes but have increased levels of nicotine that cause them to be more addictive. This abnormally high amount of nicotine can have a negative effect on the growing adolescent brain.

While e-cigarettes were initially designed and marketed as a healthy alternative to smokers who were trying to curb their habit, they instead did the opposite. Today's teens are getting addicted to JUULs and Blu, not Marlboros.

Another major criticism of e-cigarettes is their popularization of flavored hits. For example, JUUL offers eight flavors, ranging from mango to mint, while Blu offers an even greater variety of 16 flavors.

These flavors are often one reason teens use and get hooked on e-cigarettes; like candy, they appear to be fun and taste good despite being unhealthy.

Now that the government has explicitly condemned e-cigarettes and recognized the danger they pose to teenagers, the hope is that fewer JUULs and other e-cigarettes will be getting into the hands of the 2 million middle and high school students across the country.

This change also translates to the school's new policies: The school has reclassified JUULs and other e-cigarettes to be on the same level of punishment — up to five days suspension and law enforcement notification — as substances like alcohol and marijuana.

While the largest way to fix the problem lies in teens making better judgments, the new FDA regulations will help change teenagers' mindsets and underscore the dangers of e-cigarettes. ♦



STARBUCKS

- ★ easily accessible globally
- ★ wide selection of food
- ★ more customizable
- ★ has a mobile app
- ★ sugary drinks
- ★ modern vibe



- ☿ handroasted
- ☿ ideal for studying
- ☿ lower caffeine content
- ☿ wider variety and stronger emphasis on teas
- ☿ coffee served within 30 minutes of making it



Source: TheDailyMeal

GRAPHIC BY MEGAN CHEN

The quest to find the best cafe for studying



Bogged down by piles of English or AP Physics homework, students frequent different study spots like a variety of cafes in search of a place to be productive outside of home. We decided to try a few cafes around the Saratoga and Cupertino area to see which ones were the best for a study trip.

Sue's Gallery Cafe
Sue's Gallery Cafe, which is located at the far end of downtown Saratoga near the drive to Hakone Gardens. It opened in 2016 and has a wide range of hot and iced coffees, teas, pastries and bread. The cafe's main seating area, which is next to the kitchen and counter, is quite small but has plenty of outside seating and even an upstairs.

The ample amount of seats combined with the calm environment make it an ideal study spot cafe.

The cafe might look crowded from a glance, but there are actually many open spots. Its vibe is quite nice since it plays

very atmospheric, quiet music. The only downside of the cafe is that it closes at 6 p.m. Other than its limited hours, the cafe is a great choice for studying and its close location makes it a staple for many students.

Philz Coffee
Philz Coffee is located in Cupertino near the Whole Foods and Target. It is a branch of the company known for its flavorful coffees.

Upon entering, we soon decided Philz was not the right choice for us because of the loud environment. Unlike Sue's, a majority of people there were meeting with others or hanging out with friends. If you are willing to sacrifice some quiet for a rather tasty cafe, then Philz is a great choice.

Bittersweet Cafe
The last place we tried was located in Cupertino near the Chipotle. The cafe is similar to Sue's in the sense that it feels homey and tranquil. Also, it closes at 8 p.m., allowing for late-night study sessions. On the other hand, it is much smaller than Sue's and Philz, so it can be difficult to find seating at times, especially over the weekends.

After trying and testing a few cafes, we decided that the best one for us was Sue's, despite its limited hours. The ample amount of seats combined with the calm environment make it an ideal study spot cafe. But if you are someone who prefers to spend nights rather than afternoons working, the other two cafes are better options, as long as you can sacrifice some limited seating or quiet. ♦

App helps students focus on homework



In this day and age, distractions are so plentiful when students are trying to focus. We are both chronic procrastinators, and nothing can keep us away from scrolling aimlessly through Instagram or replying to Snapchats when we have lots of homework to do.

We both downloaded one app called Flora to motivate us to look at our phones less when studying and doing homework.

The app allows users to grow virtual plants by not leaving or closing the app. For example, if you stay focused and don't leave the app for 5 minutes — powering off doesn't count — you can grow a flower or a tree. You can even grow plants with your friends if both of you stay on the app. Eventually, you can grow a whole garden of virtual plants.

Our initial problem was that there was nothing keeping us from leaving the app. And soon we were back on Instagram. Then came a sad notification that our plant had died. When we returned to the app, we were met with a glaring red screen and an angry dead tree.

This was certainly enough incentive for us to keep our plants alive. Flora also provides different varieties of plants that unlock after spending a certain amount of time being productive and growing a garden. Each time a new plant is unlocked, the user travels forward on a

world map, which gradually increases the time needed to unlock the various different plants.

We ended up making a competition out of it; we wanted to see who could grow the prettiest, most plentiful garden. We found that this made us the most productive. One downside of the app is that it allows you to choose the time you want to spend without your phone. This mean we could choose a mere 5 minutes and grow a full tree. The app doesn't have any rules that say "you have to take at least an hour to grow this tree," or anything like that.

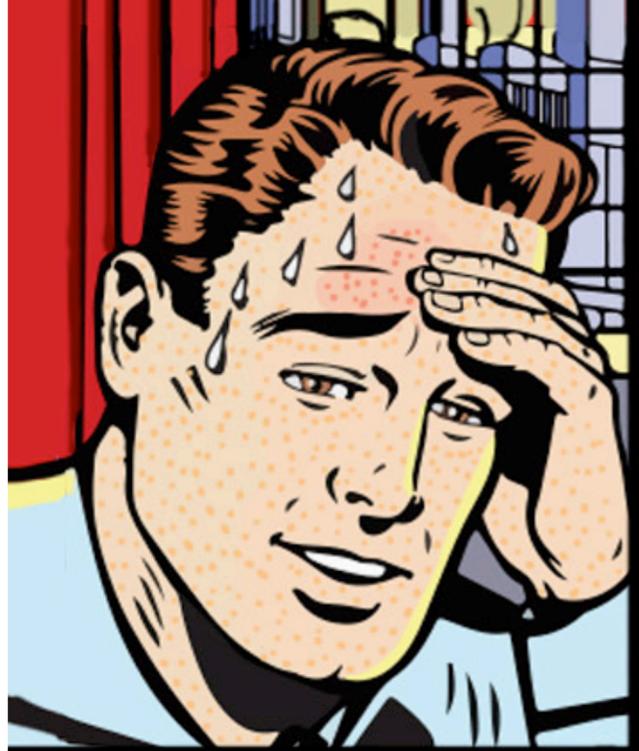
The app also allows users to take a break from growing the tree, subtracting from the total time being productive. Because Flora still allows users to leave the app and eventually grow a tree, it doesn't force users to stay on the app. Sometimes, it can't even detect that you've left the app, which is a pretty glaring shortcoming in their system.

Even with these problems, though, we found that opening our phones with an initial intent to go on social media was often prevented by seeing the countdown as a constant reminder for us to stay productive.

Although the app relies on a user's motivation, it serves as a helpful reminder that they shouldn't be using their phone, while also rewarding them by unlocking new plants for their gardens.

The bottom line is that while Flora may not be the best productivity app, but it is certainly worth trying out. You'll thank yourself when you're not having to do AP U.S. History homework at 3 a.m. because you've been on and off Instagram the entire night. ♦

THE CRINGIEST MOMENT OF MY LIFE!



STUDENTS
REFLECT ON
THEIR MOST
EMBARRASSING
EXPERIENCES



Memelord rules his troops

Goody-2-
Xu's

Jeffrey Xu

While some might say that the highlight of my summer must be the 6-week research program I participated in at the University of Iowa or a vacation to SoCal, for me, it will always be my week in the mountains of Oregon at Boy Scouts summer camp at the end of July.

Prior to the trip, I was voted into the role of senior patrol leader, making me the de facto leader of the troop. This was likely because I was one of the older scouts in the troop, and people seemed to think I had experience.

Despite being an older and expectedly more respectable scout, I did some of the cringiest things in my life during that week.

As our troop of mostly middle schoolers and high school freshmen assembled in front of the San Jose Amtrak station prior to our departure, I saw a group of 15 uncoordinated, unmotivated and frankly, unfriendly pubescent boys.

Having been part of the troop in a non-leadership position for the past five years, I knew that our troop had a reputation for being lackluster in almost all aspects — spirit, brotherhood and organization, among them.

I assume this was due to some not getting along with others, creating an inability for scouts to work together as a unit.

Somehow, I would have to whip these teens and pre-teens into shape if I ever wanted our troop to win any awards or recognition at the camp awards ceremony among around 10 other troops.

Soon after arriving at camp, however, I found that yelling orders at my subordinates failed to gain their respect. If I could hardly force a pair of tent buddies to pitch their own tent, how was I supposed to lead this group of scouts to perform campfire skits and clean the campsite for inspection as a unit?

After some deep thinking and a couple of moments of existential crisis, I finally came to the epiphany that I would have to connect with the tweens through a medium other than barking commands: in other words, through understanding their interests, which included Fortnite and obscure internet memes.

And thus the transformation from being a somewhat respectable senior scout into a "memelord" began. Everytime I walked the troop throughout the campgrounds, I would "T-pose," acting as the mother bird to all my chicks. Of course, I proscribed everyone else against T-posing, since I felt like I was the only one worthy of asserting my dominance.

During a campfire, instead of performing a traditional skit, our troop

performed a skit-song hybrid, in which all of the scouts played satirical or humorous roles, including a Fortnite player who had been diagnosed with "ligma," pop culture stars such as Lil' Pump and classic stereotypes such as the football player who couldn't do addition.

I played Big Shaq, the artist of the hit song "Man's Not Hot." I lost a bit of self-respect during that skit as I yelled the iconic line "the ting goes skrrrrra," but I suppose it was worth it as our audience was in hysterics by the end of our performance.

At the end of the camp, I felt like our excessive "memeing" really helped to improve brotherhood within the troop, allowing us to work together as a unit and win awards, such as one for having the cleanest campsite.

To my disbelief, other troops began to respect our troop, even chanting our troop unit number, 888, when we encountered them in passing. We were also occasionally referred to as "tryhard," but I didn't really care. I was ecstatic. By the end of the week, our troop was clearly the most closely bonded troop.

And even though I behaved more like an 8-year-old throughout the camp, people seemed to think I was "alpha material."

In retrospect, while I do consider this summer adventure to be a massive success, I hope to leave the T-posing and pop star material part of me behind when I take on future leadership roles. ♦

A catastrophic speech and debate event: I can never compete again!

Sel-liu-er
Data

Selena Liu

As freshman me stood there on the podium in a large classroom at James Logan High School, staring at my laptop screen, my mind went blank. What was I saying? How could I possibly phrase the words on the screen into something understandable? My partner, opponents and judge were all staring at me, waiting for me to continue my counter argument, but I completely blanked out.

Without any other options, I said, "I'm sorry, I'm feeling sick. Can I just sit down?"

Despite having no prior experience with public speaking and barely being able to hold a decent conversation without tripping over my own words, I decided it would be a good idea to join the speech and debate freshman year.

Why did I sign up for debate, a competition that evaluates argumentative skills, a skill I barely have? I'm not so sure myself — I wanted to get better at public speaking and I thought learning how to argue with logic would help me with that, but I had no idea that joining debate would force me to quickly come up with evidence-based arguments and counterarguments within a matter of minutes.

To make matters even worse, my debate captains decided it would be a "good experience" for me and my partner, also a rookie freshman, to take part in a varsity tournament for our very second debate tournament ever to see what a higher level tournament was like.

I soon regretted agreeing to their decision. In the first debate round, my partner and I were painstakingly refuted point after point by past varsity tournament finalists. I

felt thoroughly humiliated by my opponents in both my lack of knowledge and argumentative skills.

Little did I know, this tournament had worse in store for me. By the second round, my wits had been properly thrown out the window. This time, my partner and I were up against a pair of debaters from Texas who had flown to California just to take part in this tournament. I knew I was going to have a bad time.

My opponents presented their case first, and when the speaker reached his second point of contention, I realized that I hadn't been paying attention to anything he was saying.

My notebook, which should have been filled with my opponents' points that I needed to promptly provide counterarguments against, was instead filled with nonsensical scribbles barely related to what my opponents were actually arguing for.

Consequently, when I walked up to the podium with my notebook and laptop and no plan on what I was going to say, you could say I was more than just a little nervous. My hands were shaking and my stomach felt like it would drop.

And from what I remember, the next few minutes were embarrassing and torturous. After a solid minute of word vomit and feeling my face grow more red by the second, I told the judge, "I'm sorry, I'm feeling sick. Can I just sit down?"

At that point I knew I had embarrassed both myself and my partner. It was the cringiest moment of my life. I wanted nothing else but to escape from that room.

While I left the James Logan tournament mortified, I still decided to participate in debate for the rest of the year, taking part in many more JV instead of varsity tournaments, much to my relief.

And by the end of the year, I realized, much to my surprise, that I had in fact gotten better at public speaking, perhaps even to the point that I could actually do decently at another varsity tournament. ♦

The 'Gangnam Style' dance reappears in the worst way

Lee-ve me
alone

Andrew Lee

I cannot dance. Sure, I have participated in quad day dances and performed some silly dance moves around my friends, but I never realized how painful my dancing was until I went through a deep, traumatic experience witnessed by my family members and hundreds of strangers this past July.

It was a hot and sweaty summer day in Jeju-Do, a rather large Korean island almost halfway around the globe. After exploring many of the tourist attractions and cafes for what seemed like an eternity in the blistering heat, my family decided to watch a show and finally catch our breath in a dark, shady theatre.

At first, everything seemed to be going just as planned as we entered the cool auditorium, which I believed would display a sea-life show. I had no idea that what I was about to watch was just a show with colorful lights, different acrobatic performances, and some water shot around in cool formations on stage.

The show began, and though I soon realized that I would not get to see dolphins and penguins swimming around, I began to feel comfortable watching the acrobats and stuntmen from China swing around the stage. I even clapped along with the crowd as loud music blared through speakers overhead.

But all of a sudden, the trapeze artists and acrobats left the stage. Everything went dark, but I could see parts of the stage adjusting for whatever act that was going to come next. When the colorful spotlights came back on, the back section of the stage had suddenly transformed into a large

pool, and several very high decks had protruded from the wall high above the ground.

From there, a group of fit, massive Russian men, entered onto the stage wearing nothing but colorful tight speedos. One thing led to another, and soon all the Russian men were running around the stage, pushing each other into the pool while taking turns jumping in from the elevated decks.

Confused and slowly losing track of what was going on with the performance, my fleeting mind abruptly focused back on the stage as a familiar yet distant tune began to play through the speakers. The song was none other than "Gangnam Style," something that I had not heard since 2012.

As the song began to play, the muscular Russian men stopped what they were doing, and immediately jumped into the audience. They came running up the steps, searching for someone or something in the crowd. What was probably the largest man of the group of Russian performers ran up the steps next to my row, scanning the seats until his eyes landed on mine. Without hesitation, he quickly tapped my shoulder and motioned me to head up onto the stage.

Without a clue about what I was getting myself into, I bolted up out of my seat and jogged up to the stage. I awkwardly clambered up onto the raised platform. There, all the performers had lined up along the stage and were dancing to the iconic "Gangnam Style" dance. Outdated and cringey, the dance was a painful one for me to do.

But doing the dance in front of a massive Korean audience was not the worst part. As I was leaving the stage after what felt like an eternity, I saw that all the other audience members who were asked to come up on stage were young girls ranging from 3 to 7 years old.

After returning to my seat and regretting my decision for another 20 minutes, I was relieved when the show finally ended. As my family and I walked out of the auditorium, I could hear strangers snickering in Korean. "Oh, that's the guy that danced with the little girls on stage."

I apologize to all that had to witness my dancing. ♦

Tea channels: the source for all the online drama

BY Manasi Garg

Recently, there's been a new trend on YouTube — drama channels, or “tea” channels.

Think of them as the SparkNotes for the YouTube community. They take complicated, confusing scandals and break them down into shorter videos.

Or maybe you can think of them as the FBI of YouTube. Videos like this typically include screenshots of a given YouTuber's past tweets, text conversations and blurry snippets of Snapchats and videos.

Although the exact purpose drama channels serve is unclear, there's no question that they've become very popular.

This increase can be linked to the rise of the very YouTubers that tea channels make videos about. As YouTubers' celebrity status rises, so does the general public's interest in these influencers' lives, and the video these channels make satisfies that interest.

Some of the most well-known drama channels are “shook,” which has 721,000 subscribers, “exposed,” which has 506,000 subscribers and “Tea Spill,” which has 400,000 subscribers.

For better or for worse, these channels' large fanbases mean they have an unprecedented amount of influence on the You-

Tube community. When done right, these videos shine a much needed light on YouTubers' dubious behavior.

But as these channels become more influential, there are more questions being raised about the ethics of the videos they post.

The first problem is that the content tea channels post usually isn't their own — rather, they edit together content from other YouTubers.

The second, and larger, problem is that the content that tea channels post can be considered libelous. The majority of drama channels often have a subjective slant on their videos, and this is dangerous because biased “tea” videos may unfairly ruin a YouTubers' career.

As a result, tea channels' videos can potentially even jeopardize a YouTuber's mental health.

Drama and tea channels are intent on providing a compelling narrative to viewers, but sometimes, these drama channels forget that the people these videos are being made about are real humans.

Whether they deserve the popularity or not, tea channels have become an integral, albeit controversial, part of the YouTube community, and there is no doubt that they are entertaining. Personally, I enjoy indulging in my love for the “tea.” ♦

Jeffree Star: the fabulous, versatile makeup guru

BY Jayne Zhou

Is that a man with pink hair? A woman? No. It's just Jeffree Star, YouTube's most fabulous makeup guru. Boasting a net worth of over \$50 million, Star is not only a YouTuber, but also an entrepreneur, investor, expop star and very big spender.

Star's entertaining and open personality is what makes him such a huge success. His most popular videos include large designer hauls, make-up hauls and confession stories. But along with the whole YouTube community, Star has had his fair share of controversies.

Star's career began during the MySpace era, when he amassed a cult following after a conflict in August 2017 with socialite Kim Kardashian West. Kardashian West's followers dug up several of Star's derogatory posts on his old MySpace page, where he threw around racist comments like the n-word.

Star's earnest apology allowed him and his company to bounce back from the damaging incident, and though many people still haven't completely forgiven him, he has chosen to move past the incident.

In Shane Dawson's YouTube exposé series on Star, Dawson follows Star through his Calabasas mansion.

Dawson's video provided an exclusive look into Star's opulent life and an exclusive tour through his house, including his closet with \$7 million's worth of clothing and limited edition designer bags.

But how can a YouTuber afford all of these things? Even with the high pay a popular YouTuber receives, no one can reach such a high net worth on just the average YouTube salary is 45 percent of the \$2,000 that YouTubers receive for every million views on a video.

So what exactly does Star do? “There must be some kind of drug thing going on,” Dawson jokes in his video on Star. But in fact, Star does so much more than just his YouTube: currently, Star has 10 businesses running outside of his YouTube channel. He has invested in several properties around the world.

For example, Star's personal brand, Jeffree Star Cosmetics, has earned millions with its product, which often reflect parts of Star's life, like his gender identity as a gay androgynous male. Because of his gender identity, Star also provides a unique personality to the YouTube community as an advocate of LGBTQ rights.

Clearly, Jeffree Star is no average beauty YouTuber, and the range of his success leaves all of his viewers “shook.” ♦



GRAPHIC BY CALLIA YUAN

OUR favorite YouTubers

Shane Dawson: the very talented documentarist

BY Esha Lakhotia

Internet sensation Shane Dawson has been creating buzz recently, as his most recent YouTube documentary series about YouTubers Jake Paul, Jeffree Star and Tana Mongeau have touched on extremely dark topics such as sociopathic tendencies and childhood abuse.

Dawson is a comedic actor, author, singer, songwriter, director and podcaster, but his main focus is YouTube, where he's known for his sketch comedy videos, conspiracy theories, food concoctions and, more recently, his docuseries about the lives of multiple YouTubers. His YouTube channels Shane, Shane Dawson TV and Human Emoji collectively have more than 30 million subscribers and 6 billion views.

Dawson's channel Shane is his current main channel where he posts all of his skits, conspiracies and docuseries, while Shane Dawson TV was dedicated to his old content including short documentaries, old challenges, parodies and music

videos. Human Emoji contains his oldest work, including question and answers and gaming videos.

Dawson started his channel in 2008, and nine years later, Dawson became one of the most popular creators on YouTube and was named the sixth most powerful influencer in entertainment on the Forbes' 2017 Top Influencers List.

Though Dawson has been a family favorite for years, his most recent eight-part docuseries about whether YouTuber Jake Paul exhibits symptoms of a sociopath has become a controversial topic.

Some fans argue it is dangerous for Dawson to label people as a sociopath without the proper training and credentials.

However, the biggest backlash has come from critics of Paul, who believe that Dawson's docuseries will cause viewers to empathize with Paul for his mental illness, which should not excuse his actions.

Overall, Dawson's style of video, ideas and creativity has earned him immense success and fame. With his docuseries, Dawson has revolutionized YouTube. ♦



GRAPHIC BY ELAINE TOH

Emma Chamberlain: the iced coffee vlog queen

BY Ava Hooman

On June 2, 2017, 17-year-old Emma Chamberlain decided to post her first video on YouTube, “City Inspired Summer Lookbook 2017.” Today that video has close to a million views, and she has over 4 million subscribers.

Chamberlain, who lived in San Mateo before recently moving by herself to Los Angeles, attended the private all-girls Notre Dame High School in San Jose. Chamberlain created a YouTube channel as a distraction from school. Then in her junior year, dropped out of high school and moved to Los Angeles, hoping to further her YouTube career and live close to her YouTube friends, including James Charles and the Dolan Twins.

Chamberlain's popularity began in a humble way. After posting every day for an entire summer, Chamberlain started to notice that a month into her new channel, she gained thousands of subscribers, specifically after posting the video “FIRST TIME DRIVING ALONE.” In the video, Chamberlain documents her first time driving alone, vlogging and talking the entire time.

She went from around 500 to 15,000

subscribers in a single day. Chamberlain admitted in her podcast with fellow YouTuber Cody Ko that to this day she still doesn't know what about that video viewers found so entertaining, but she suspects it had something to do with the title and it being in all caps, a technique some YouTubers use to drive more people to watch their videos.

The key part of Chamberlain's content that attracts so many new subscribers is her relatability and her self-deprecating content. Chamberlain never fails to acknowledge embarrassing moments in her life, allowing her viewers to feel comfortable and welcome.

Will her popularity continue to rise? That's what every YouTuber wants, but with the constant discovery of new and original content, it won't be easy.

To her credit, Chamberlain has begun to enter new areas of venture such as her clothing brand and photography, both of which will help her keep a good income even if her videos begin to decline in interest.

At such a young age, Chamberlain should remain open to the idea of attending college at one point because of the trend of YouTube fame and fortune only being temporary. ♦

THE saratogafalcon

October 19, 2018

The pitfalls of portfolios: art and film majors face a long, challenging application process

BY Alex Wang

When senior Nick Burry clicked “submit” on his Chapman University Common Application in September, he was two months early in turning in his college applications. After that, most students would breathe a sigh of relief, as the grueling process of applying for college was finally over for them. But not for Burry; his college application process was far from over.

As a prospective film major, Burry needs to shoot multiple short films as part of his portfolio for his application. He said he will spend the next few months creating films that demonstrate his ability in every aspect of the film-making process, from the writing, directing and casting to the filming, producing and editing.

Applicants for other art majors face a similar lengthier process, senior Angie Yang said, who wants to study design or animation.

“Prospective students need to create a portfolio consisting of pieces that showcase their creativity and ability to work with the materials provided,” said senior Angie Yang, who wants to study design or animation.

One popular school for art majors, New York University, requires applicants to submit 12 to 15 artworks for their portfolio, which can make up 50 percent of the admissions decision.

According to senior Nick Burry, students need to submit their portfolios to a school's

portal or to that school's SlideRoom, a website where the schools can review an applicant's work.

However, because the works are submitted online rather than physically, for 3-D works, the texture and the 3-D feel of the piece will be lost, senior Hannah Chang said. She is aiming for illustrations in communication design as her major.

Because of the added workload, Burry said that students must plan ahead. For him, submitting his Chapman University Common App early was a must, in order to provide him sufficient time to create films to fill out his portfolio, which consists of a two-minute film and four small supplementary essays.

“I'd say the Common App is the easy part because there's more stuff to do for the portfolio,” Burry said.

Additionally, even with the early deadlines, Burry said that colleges usually release decisions in March, in order to have enough time to review portfolios, instead of in December, when most early action decisions come out.

“It's expected that if you're applying film, you are applying early action, but you hear back after everyone else,” he said.

The most time-consuming part of this process for most students is their portfolio. Burry's five-minute film for USC took him a month and a half from start to finish.

Similarly, Yang's portfolio includes a variety of pieces using different mediums.

She has both 2-D and 3-D works that range from color on paper to sculptures made out of chicken wire and yarn. Chang's portfolio comprises pieces of different mediums, figure drawings, different lighting conditions and observational and illustrated works. Both Chang and Yang said that their portfolios are mixes of pieces created specifically for college and previous pieces made for personal interest.

“You keep drawing and improving and pick from your previous work,” Yang said. “But during the last few months before the deadline is when the inspirations come, so more actual portfolio pieces will be produced then.”

Yang said that she spends more than 10 hours of week at art class. She used to have two hours a week of class — mainly for fun — until freshman year, when she decided she wanted to major in art and began taking her drawing more seriously.

Although there is more work involved in applying to be an art major, Chang said she wants to do art in college because it is what she is best at, and she hopes that she can learn something new.

Burry also hopes to gain exposure to the film industry and receive opportunities such as internships by attending a good film school. Top schools will put students in a film production class where students will be able to apply their knowledge and use cameras to make films by the first week rather than a studies class where students just learn the material and techniques.

But to pave a bright future for themselves, these students must first endure a long application process. Compared to more conventional applicants, students applying to art and film majors have a harder process overall.

“[Applying for art and film schools] is just a longer process, and that's something people don't understand,” Burry said. ♦

“You keep drawing and improving and pick from your previous work.”



SENIOR Angie Yang

For Yang, her most time-consuming piece, an extremely detailed line drawing, took her one month. She said that her 3-D pieces can range from taking 30 minutes to 6 hours. A few of Yang's artworks are based on specific college prompts; she said that these are the pieces colleges pay the most attention to. For example, one prominent school, Rhode Island School of Design, asks applicants to create two pieces in response to one of the three prompts: error, verify or forge.

Rapper ODs shed light on drug problems in music

BY Marris Kingsey

On Sept. 7, fans of Pittsburgh rapper Mac Miller were devastated to hear that he had passed away from a drug overdose in his home in San Fernando Valley, Calif.

Miller, whose real name is Malcolm James McCormick, was 26. On Aug. 3, he had released his fifth and final album “Swimming.” It was his most critically acclaimed album to date, mirroring his early commercial success, and debuted at No. 3 on the Billboard Charts. He was expected to go on a national tour on Oct. 26, which would have ended Dec. 10 in Vancouver.

Miller was always open about his struggle with sobriety, along with his ongoing battle with anxiety and depression that may have led to the drug abuse that eventually led to his death.

He described his struggles candidly through his music, such as in his 2014 mixtape “Faces” and his song “Self Care.” He was hardly alone in his struggles in the entertainment industry.

On July 24, reporters released the news that singer Demi Lovato had been taken to the hospital after an apparent drug overdose. Luckily for Lovato, she quickly checked into rehab after being discharged from the hospital.

In 2016, a more severe case with drug abuse arose. The world was shocked when it was reported that iconic singer Prince, full name Prince Rogers Nelson, was found dead in his home in Minnesota from an accidental opioid overdose of fentanyl at age 57.

Often times, accidental deaths like these are caused by prescription or non-prescription opioids, many of them being used as self-medication.

According to the CDC, 66,632 Americans

have died from drug overdoses in 2016. Around 66.4 percent of those deaths were caused by opioids.

Studies have linked opioid use to the development of depression, and have found that people with pre-existing mental illness are at a higher risk of becoming addicted to opioids.

The abuse of opioids has escalated into what most experts call a public health crisis.

To tackle this wide scale issue, the Department of Health Services (HHS) along with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is pushing efforts to improve access to treatment and recovery services for opioid addiction.

They are also working to promote use of overdose-reversing drugs and safer and more effective ways to treat chronic pain.

As for the entertainment industry, individual film studios and record labels should start instituting new policies to discourage drug use.

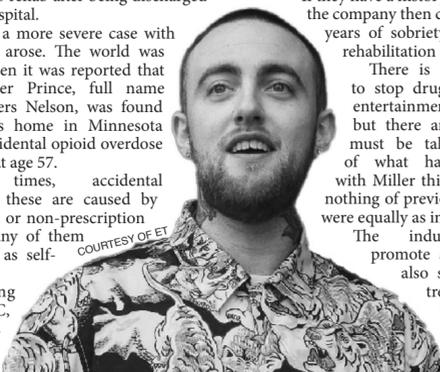
New policies could include not hiring clients who have had a recorded history of drug use or addiction issues unless they have sought treatment.

Studios could look through their history for DUI convictions or drug possession.

If they have a history of drug use, the company then could look for years of sobriety or trips to rehabilitation centers.

There is no one way to stop drug use in the entertainment industry, but there are steps that must be taken in light of what has happened with Miller this year, to say nothing of previous ones that were equally as impactful.

The industry must promote self-care and also seek ways to treat addicts in the industry who need it. ♦



COURTESY OF ET

Netflix creates A-List celebs from Originals

BY Shreya Kulkere

Noah Centineo has broken through as the current heartthrob of American as a result of his recent role of Peter Kavinsky in “To All The Boys I Loved Before,” a popular Netflix original rom-com.

Before landing a role in “TATBILB,” Centineo had acted in several movies and TV shows. Centineo appeared in Camila Cabello's “Havana” music video, and he also played the role of Jesus Foster in the American family drama TV show “The Fosters” prior to acting in “TATBILB.”

Before “TATBILB” was released in Aug. 17, Centineo had about 95,000 followers on Twitter and 791,000 on Instagram.

After less than a month of the show's release, his follower count increased to 1 million on Instagram and 9.5 million on Twitter.

As of early October, over a month after “TATBILB's” release, Centineo has 12.9 million followers on Instagram and 1.7 million on Twitter.

Shortly after the success of “TATBILB,” another Netflix original featuring Centineo, “Sierra Burgess is a Loser,” was released on Aug. 30. In the show, Centineo plays Jamey, a cute football player.

What caused the boost in popularity? Centineo blew up in the American media after his role as Kavinsky, a jock with a nice, thoughtful personality and who has the qualities of the perfect boyfriend. In addition, Centineo's good looks and lovable personality further contributed to his popularity online.

Centineo is popular at Saratoga High, and many students follow him online platforms such as Instagram.

“I have been a bifan of Noah Centineo for a long

time, since I watch “The Fosters,” junior Simrita Advani said. “It was really crazy for me to see him become a national sensation with so many fans all around the world.”

The Ringer, a sports and pop culture website, described how Netflix is effective at producing these A-list celebs because it is an especially popular platform among 18- to 34-year-olds.

Audiences in this age group, use social media extensively, so they are more likely to post about what they watch on Instagram, Twitter or Facebook.

Lana Condor, his co-star in “TATBILB,” Joey King, Jacob Elordi, Millie Bobby Brown and Gaten Matarazzo are all A-list celebrities who were in various Netflix Originals.

Millie Bobby Brown, a 14-year-old British actress, had a path to fame similar to Centineo's.

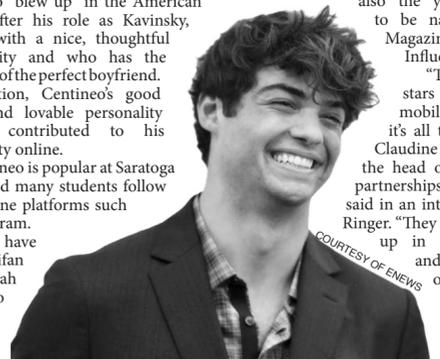
Brown's parents moved their whole family to Los Angeles to allow her to pursue her acting dreams, but she was not able to land any major roles at first.

Lucky for Brown, just as things were looking hopeless, she landed a role on Netflix's original show “Stranger Things.”

Since then, her popularity and follower count on her social media platforms have blown up, and she was also the youngest person to be named on Time Magazine's “100 Most Influential” list.

“These are young stars who think in a mobile world because it's all that they know,”

Claudine Cazian Britz, the head of entertainment partnerships of Instagram, said in an interview with The Ringer. “They sometimes come up in these moments and it happens overnight. Noah Centineo is a perfect example.” ♦



COURTESY OF ENWS

Tutoring center provides learning space for students

by Christine Zhang

After sixth period on Oct. 11, junior Sammati Nakil headed to the tutoring center to meet with her tutee, sophomore Hermione Bossolina. She chose a table at the back of the tutoring center, grabbed a whiteboard and marker and prepared to teach Chemistry Honors.

There were few people in the center, making it a warm, studious environment for them to focus.

Nakil meets with Bossolina twice a week for about one hour each session. Bossolina appreciates the help with a difficult class, and Nakil said that it is a “cool way to get volunteer hours.”

Since the 2016-17 school year, the center’s first year at the school, the tutoring center staff has distributed tutor sign-up sheets to encourage students to help their peers, tutoring center coordinator Sunita Bal said.

“We want to give the opportunity to all students, regardless of the ones that visit [the tutoring center], to be able to help another student or get help,” Bal said. “I think it’s a good way to reach out and have students sign up.”

The tutoring center is located next to the research center and is part of the library building. It is open from 9:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. every school day. It was implemented on campus as an area for students to study collaboratively.

“It’s a place for students to get help from

other students,” Bal said.

At tutorials, the center tends to be more loud and crowded. Some students play video games along the line of computers at one side of the room, and several others work together or socialize in groups. Because of this, most tutors meet with their tutees after school.

So far this school year, Bal said that she has paired six tutors with tutees, including Nakil and Bossolina. Several others get help for one particular quiz or test, but are not regular visitors at the center.

When students sign up to tutor, they write their name, subjects they want to tutor and time availability in a binder on Bal’s desk. A tutee does the same in a different binder, and Bal matches the two students together if their free times and subjects coincide. The tutor receives community service hours for tutoring at the center. If the tutee needs to meet with their tutor outside of the tutoring center’s hours, then the tutor can choose to be paid. Bal pairs the students together, but the details of the scheduling and payment are ultimately up to the two students. Overall, Bal has found that the tutors are committed and willing to help.

Junior Claire Smerdon started to tutor at the center this school year. Bal said that Smerdon and Nakil are two of the most active tutors at the center.

Smerdon is able to tutor math up to the level of Precalculus Honors, but she currently tutors Algebra II.



Junior Sandhya Sundaram tutors freshman Matthew Ingster on Algebra during tutorial to “help someone get better at a subject” and in the end “give them confidence going forward.”

Similar to Nakil, she meets with her tutee once or twice a week for a total of approximately two hours.

Smerdon said that she decided to tutor because she enjoys math that she is already familiar with, and she has had previous experience in tutoring. It was also a way for her to give back to the community.

“I really love teaching, and it’s doing math that I already know,” she said. “It made sense for me to do it.”

Smerdon said that the tutoring center’s system of matching tutor and tutee brings together people that otherwise wouldn’t meet. She added that the center is helpful for students who need a place to focus during the school day, as it provides a comfortable

learning environment.

The tutoring center also offers various testing books, such as SAT and ACT prep books, for students to check out. Bal said that the community donated their used books to the center.

Smerdon said that being a tutor does not only benefit the tutee, since both parties grow from the experience. She has learned different teaching methods and observed different students’ learning styles.

“I think tutoring is really special because it [connects] two people that have different strengths and weaknesses,” Smerdon said. “It’s really interesting to see how that comes together and how you can learn so much from it.” ♦

Petition for business class results in proposal

by Alex Wang & Callia Yuan

Currently, the only slightly business-related class that students can take is less than one semester of Economics under the senior-exclusive Government/Econ course. Meanwhile, other schools in the area, such as Lynbrook and Monta Vista, offer a variety of business classes, ranging from principles of business to accounting to marketing.

This is largely due to the fact that Lynbrook and Monta Vista have much larger school populations, with around 1,800 and 2,400 students, respectively. Saratoga has roughly 1,350 students, making it more difficult to garner enough student sign-ups to sustain a new class.

Even so, junior Brian Zhu thinks a business class can succeed. He created a petition on Change.org and posted it in the school Facebook group on Sept. 10, asking the school to add a business class. As of Oct. 8, the petition had received 137 signatures.

“We literally have no business classes at our school,” Zhu said. “I’m trying to be a business major, but our school doesn’t have anything to help me learn business, so I wanted to add a business class. I think that a lot of people in the school have an interest in business, and I’m not the only one that wants this class.”

This led to the creation of the petition, through which Zhu hopes to show that the student body supports his idea. After many students signed, a process has started that may result in a new class next year.

As a result of Zhu’s efforts, the course, Introduction to Business, is currently mov-

ing forward, assistant principal Brian Safine said.

To open up the course for student sign-ups in February, the course must be approved by the school leadership team consisting of department heads, and then by the school board. The presentation of the business course to the school leadership team is scheduled for November.

The class would be taught by physics teacher Kirk Davis and mirror the Introduction to Business class he last taught when he

“I think that a lot of people in the school have an interest in business, and I’m not the only one that wants this class.”

JUNIOR Brian Zhu

was hired in 2007. Students eventually lost interest in that class when the school began allowing upperclassmen to double up in science courses. More science periods were added because of this new policy, and students ended up choosing to take an extra science class over a business class.

Despite a lack of business classes, business clubs, such as Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and LaunchX, still have a presence on campus. However, a club brings much more to the table for students, Zhu said. Clubs generally require students to self-study business principles and learn a

lot of the material on their own.

Students who already have numerous extracurriculars may not be able to find time to study for competitions like FBLA or build their own business like in LaunchX. On the other hand, a class gives grades, which motivate students to study and learn, and allows them to learn from someone more knowledgeable and experienced.

Zhu’s interest in business began in middle school when he took an entrepreneurship class at Miller Middle School.

“The world of business was always interesting to me,” Zhu said. “It’s the possibility of doing something that actually impacts other people. At the same time, you can also learn how the world generally works, especially because everything today is so heavily influenced by money.”

His interest continued into high school, but he hasn’t had a clear path toward his goals. He recalls an experience in his freshman year when he tried to participate in DECA, a business competition similar to FBLA where students put their business knowledge to use.

He said that he was denied because the school did not have a benchmark business class, preventing the creation of a school DECA club.

Additionally, he needed to self-study for the AP Macroeconomics and AP Microeconomics exams because there was no class for him to learn the material.

The impetus for Zhu’s petition came when he talked with his friends at Lynbrook, who told him of another student at a different school who successfully pushed the school to offer a course through petitioning.

Zhu talked to Safine before making the petition about the process of creating a new class, who informed Zhu on how they decide on course offerings.

“[To offer a course], we ideally have a match between student interest and teacher interest,” Safine said. “The ultimate gauge of student interest is when we present a course in February and students either sign up or they don’t.”

Another show of student interest is a petition, Safine said, and Zhu’s petition demonstrates this. The current business class petition may follow what happened in 2012 with AP European History; a petition to bring the course back led to the reinstatement of that course.

If the class comes to fruition, Davis said he wants the class to be limited to upperclassmen, with the curriculum ultimately accumulating into students’ putting together a business plan for an idea of a company.

“[The final project] has to include everything you’d expect to see in a business plan, so if students are going to manufacture something they need an operations plan, a way to finance it, a managing team, marketing and sales, profit and loss,” Davis said. “During the course, we’d learn about all those components of the business enterprise.”

Ultimately, Zhu wishes for the class to give more exposure to students who are interested in business.

“Business clubs, no matter how much time you really put into it, is not going to be as much as you put into a class,” Zhu said. “A class allows the teacher to teach, which is unique in a way that no club can bring.” ♦

Service-learning effort allows classrooms to connect with community on larger scale

By Shama Gupta

The 60 students of Jennifer Mantle’s AP Statistics class walked around the Guadalupe River last spring, using their knowledge gained from a year of statistics to evaluate how the conditions affected the trash around the river.

They finished by picking up all the trash they had recorded. Today their data is being used by the city of San Jose on an ongoing study about river pollution.

This is just one example of how classes and clubs at the school have implemented service learning, which takes students into communities and gives them opportunities to help, using what they have learned in class.

Tim Galleher, who volunteers as the school’s service learning coordinator, considers his role as being an additional helping hand for students and teachers. He started the service-learning program in 2013 with the hope of connecting classrooms with the community through social works and volunteer projects.

Since he has been involved in the Saratoga community for 21 years at both the schools and as a pastor at the Saratoga Federated Church, Galleher helps students find ways to create lasting impact in the community through his various connections with people and organizations.

Service-learning has dramatically taken off at the school since it first began five years ago.

At the start, Galleher recalls how the program faced several obstacles.

“I went and talked to all the teachers, and nobody wanted to do anything,” Galleher said.

The first teacher to openly support the program was physics teacher Jenny Garcia.

When she coordinated with Galleher in 2013, he helped connect her classroom with Sacred Heart Community Services. Inspired by the idea, Garcia’s physics students were given the option to plan and teach a physics lesson to young children for their final project.

Garcia, who said she wanted her kids to get more hands-on experiences, recalled how pleased she was to find how many of her students chose to do the service-learning project. Even though she has not been able to repeat the project in the years since because of timing issues, she said she would love the chance to try it again.

Since this first effort, more and more students have become involved in service learning, both in student-run clubs like Interact and Red Cross, as well as in classrooms. For example, last year, 120 AP Environmental Science students did a service-learning project and volunteered a total of 500 hours.

Additionally, 2018 alumni Gina Hinojosa, Julia Miller, Aashir Singh and Danni Horwitz from the Media Arts Program presented a project called “Speak No Evil” as their senior project. In the film, students portray the abusive relationship of a couple who met online. Their documentary is now being used in partnership with YWCA to help train volunteers in recognizing domestic abuse.

These, along with almost 30 other projects last year, are just the beginning of what Galleher imagined when he first started volunteering at Saratoga High.

“When I first talked to the school, my dream for the foundation was for students to end up doing projects on their own and carry out their own dreams,” he said.

Although Galleher remembers thinking that the idea was possibly unrealistic when



Courtesy of KRISHA MINOCHA

Junior Krishna Minocha (left) teaches young kids basic mechanisms to build robots with the robotics team at the Mayfair Community Center, San Jose last summer.

the program started, his initial vision has already started to come true after only five years.

One notable success story was a recent effort by the robotics team. Last summer, Galleher connected them to Mayfair Community Center, where members taught kids living in San Jose how to build robots.

Junior Krishna Minocha, who was in charge of the team’s trip to San Jose, said she enjoyed using her regular skills in a different way and had fun sharing those skills with others.

She described the setting as one with a “family feel” to it and said they played games

with the kids along with helping them 3D-print cars they designed on computers.

Minocha said it was amazing to connect with children from less privileged backgrounds and realize how easily they can understand advanced concepts.

In the end, Galleher said that the real difference is being made when students can take what they’ve learned in class and apply it in helping the real world. As the school year starts, Galleher hopes to continue building opportunities for students to volunteer and serve.

“People are doing individual projects, and it’s really just taking off!” Galleher said. “We’ve grown so much as a school.” ♦



GRAPHIC BY KAREN CHOW

by Jeffrey Ma & Elaine Toh

For years, junior Selina Yang and her friends have dressed up for Halloween with whatever comes to their mind: last year, they came dressed as pineapple on pizza, and this year, they will be coming as boba.

With Halloween fast approaching, Yang came up with the idea of being boba, reflecting the craze for the sweet beverage.

Wanting more people to participate, she gathered 16 of her friends on a Facebook chat, asking them if they would dress up with her as different brands and varieties of boba — from HappyLemon to ShareTea, and QQQ to 85°C.

“There are so many amazing boba brands around the Bay Area,” Yang said. “I want them all to be represented, which is why I want as many people as possible to join in.”

While many students and staff share Yang’s view of Halloween as a harmless way of enjoying themselves during school,

others dub it as an unnecessary distraction from academics.

Junior Shivam Mani, for instance, views the holiday as more of a nuisance than anything else.

“Halloween is really hyped up for some reason [despite] most high schoolers no longer participating [in it],” he said.

Traditional Halloween activities like crafting costumes and trick-or-treating can be facets of creativity and fun, but Mani said that by high school, those activities are too time-consuming if not outright childish, arguing that high schoolers “really should have better things to do.”

For Mani, such as self-realization about Santa not being real comes with age, growing out of Halloween should likewise come naturally.

“Asking for candy from adults when you are over 14 is embarrassing and almost depressing,” he said.

For senior Anuj Changavi the holiday is a way to blow off steam.

“Halloween is in the middle of the semester when it feels like the semester will never end,” Changavi said. “It’s cool to put your effort in something other than infinite school work or college applications.”

English teacher Ken Nguyen, who dresses up yearly with elaborate self-made costumes such as the hero Saitama and the monster Godzilla in recent years, thinks Halloween is a holiday to express himself and to have fun and sweets in the process.

“There is nothing ever wrong with candy,” Nguyen said. “A little sweetness in your day is never destructive — everything in moderation, of course.”

“Asking for candy from adults when you are over 14 is embarrassing and almost depressing.”

JUNIOR Shivam Mani

Nguyen identifies a “too cool” teenage sentiment and student self-consciousness as the two primary components behind some students’ distaste for Halloween.

The holiday can be perceived as too flashy and attention-seeking, he said.

But ultimately, for Nguyen, Halloween is about spreading fun and joy across campus. “When you come onto campus and see your teachers or friends dressed up, it brings a smile to your face because it’s hilarious or amusing or fun,” Nguyen said. “And there is nothing harmful about a custom or practice that reinforces that.” ♦

togatalks

Does the school need a business class?

“Yes, because at the end of the day, a lot of us will be working or even founding a company.”



junior Raj Janardhan

“Yes. Business isn’t just working at companies; you need to learn people and marketing skills too.”



junior Shiv Gupta

“Yes because a business class will teach students to manage finances and make more money.”



sophomore Katie Chen

Club rebrands itself

BY Allison Hartley

The leaders of the Women in STEM club have one mission this year: to increase attendance and revitalize the club. Since alumna Sonal Pai established the club in 2013, it has had highs and lows. The club has experienced a lull in the past two years, with a low-key presence on campus, low participation and not many events. However, in the coming school year, WiSTEM hopes to boost participation by hosting several events.

“Equality is important, and being able to go in having the same opportunities is part of that.”

JUNIOR Kiran Chandrasekher

This spring, for example, club officers plan on holding a WiSTEM night, when members of the club will be divided into groups based on the area of STEM they are interested in. They will then collaborate on and present projects to professionals and their peers, which president Chandrasekher said will “help people make connections and explore what they’re interested in, and also expose other people who come and see the projects [to specific STEM fields].”

The club also plans to take members on company tours to broaden their experiences along with bringing back the Bay Area Research Expedition (BARE), an annual conference hosted in collaboration with the Lynbrook and Monta Vista WiSTEM clubs.

At the conference, professionals will

advise local high school students. This year the clubs will likely hold BARE at Saratoga High rather than at a venue like Google.

Despite Silicon Valley’s emphasis on STEM, girls make up a much smaller part of STEM groups and classes around campus, such as APCS and robotics.

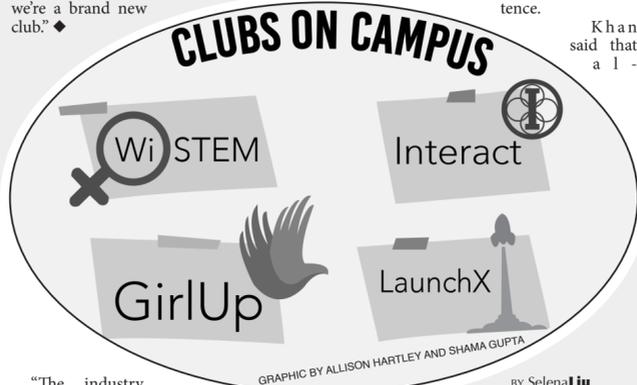
“Usually parents [in Saratoga] are in STEM because it’s a high-tech hub, so you [believe] ‘women can go into STEM subjects, too,’ but when you go into actual STEM classes and activities, it’s not the case,” Chandrasekher said. “Equality is important, and being able to go in having the same opportunities is part of that.”

Still, Vadlakonda said that the club encourages participation from both genders as it’s important for men to understand that women have a role in STEM, too. Five male students, out of around 30 members overall, attended the first ice cream social meeting on Sept. 28.

Throughout the year, WiSTEM will hold meetings during Friday lunches in room 304, WiSTEM club adviser Audrey Warmuth’s room.

During lunch meetings, members can learn networking skills, be introduced to potential STEM fields and meet other students.

“Events will speak for itself, but we will continue to advertise throughout the year,” Vadlakonda said. “Our goal is to come back with a bang and be different from last year. It’s almost like we’re a brand new club.” ♦



GRAPHIC BY ALLISON HARTLEY AND SHAMA GUPTA

Raising awareness

BY Megan Chen & Shama Gupta

In early September, when sophomore Allison Hartley saw a poll on Instagram posted by junior Jolyn Tran that asked if anyone would be interested in starting a feminism club, Hartley had already been in the process of applying to start one. Hartley then reached out to Tran, and the two decided to join together and start GirlUp.

Hartley attended a Stanford summer camp this past summer run by an organization called GirlUp, a United Nations Foundation group. Hartley learned about women’s empowerment and was inspired to start a chapter of the larger organization.

The GirlUp club will coordinate with GirlUp clubs from other schools, and encourage members to participate in the Women’s March on Jan. 20.

The club will meet during lunch in Room 406, the room of their adviser, English teacher Emily Wu. Hartley and Tran said the club will follow a few basic requirements from the UN Foundation, like participating in the GirlUp community and in fundraiser challenges.

Some of the club’s goals are to help bring education to women who aren’t provided with it through fundraisers for supplies and feminine products, which will be donated to women who can’t afford them.

“All women deserve to feel like they’re being taken care of and to feel clean,” said sophomore vice president Manasi Garg.

Garg also believes that there is a reason behind the high cost of feminine products — one of the many issues the club aims to look at throughout the year.

“The industry seems to be taking advantage of women who will undoubtedly buy feminine products [even when they are] overpriced,” Garg said. “It ultimately is a form of discrimination.”

Tran and Hartley don’t want to limit these fundraisers and drives to local communities. After researching the state of women’s education in developing countries, Tran and Hartley saw another opportunity to empower women by participating in the “Give her a Future” fundraising program under the UN, to raise money for supplies and education for Ugandan girls in refugee settings.

The club also wants to tackle are body positivity and payment inequality. Garg said that these topics are not given enough thought, when they are significant issues.

Despite the name, GirlUp isn’t solely aimed at girls. Tran said that some boys she has talked to didn’t fully understand what feminism is.

“They were afraid of feminism and thought it meant girls hate men,” Tran said. “I thought it would be great for us to develop the knowledge of what feminism is.”

The lack of understanding surrounding feminism motivated Tran and Hartley to start a club that teaches girls and boys alike that feminism isn’t a bad thing.

“We are not a man-hating group at all,” Hartley said. “In fact, a goal for us would be to encourage guys to join our club.”

Above all, Hartley and Tran said, they are starting GirlUp to help change important issues they care about.

“These are relevant issues that apply to half of the world,” Hartley said. “If everyone could help out, that’d make a difference.” ♦



Tran Club Co-President

Restoring popularity

BY Christine Zhang

Excited shouts rang out as dozens of Interact Club members crowded around for the annual Fall Leadership Conference event at Independence High School on Oct. 14. Students from different schools came together for several hours to learn about community and international projects that their district is planning for the year.

Although the FLC generally has high attendance, Interact’s regular club activities have recently suffered a decline in participation.

Interact has traditionally been a prominent service club on campus. It offers volunteering opportunities, which count toward community service hours. President Usman Khan noticed last year that the club’s lack of campus presence has lowered students’ overall interest in Interact.

Khan now plans on attracting students by bringing more food to meetings, creating regular PowerPoint slideshows and hosting more events.

“We want to find more ways to get members to come,” Khan said. “It’s just about getting the image back that Interact is a really big club on campus.”

The club is also considering selling apparel and holding more fundraisers to increase awareness of its existence.

Khan said that a lot of

though many younger students seem curious about the club, they are not involved in it. He plans to reach out and engage more with the underclassmen.

“We should focus on younger members,” he said. “Connections are always the most important thing, and I feel like we haven’t made those connections.”

Interact Club is looking to collaborate with their parent club, Saratoga Rotary Club, in the near future. Khan said club officers already have contact with their rotarian, Katherine Zheng, and that they also have capable, outgoing events coordinators in seniors Chloe Peng and Michelle Vu.

Additionally, the club wants to help the Saratoga Rotary Club with a large-scale event, like the annual art show in May.

Khan said that Interact has helped with the art show in the past, but not in recent years.

Around 10 people showed up to Interact’s first lunch meeting on Oct. 3. The club discussed FLC as well as volunteer opportunities in the near future.

Interact’s first event will be to provide sandwiches for the homeless in downtown San Jose.

Khan wants to make homeless food distribution a monthly occurrence.

Khan said that he hopes to help restore Interact’s once prominent presence on campus. History and world geography teacher Melissa Hesselgrave will replace Carrie Bohls as club adviser.

Interact meets every other Wednesday at lunch in Hesselgrave’s room, Room 501.

“Come see us,” Khan said. “It’s going to be fun.” ♦



GRAPHIC BY SHAMA GUPTA

Founding companies

company model and a year-long development to a panel of certified investors in the spring Launch X competition.

Teams who do especially well in the spring competition will be chosen for a national Launch X competition in June at MIT, where they could win up to \$10,000 in investments to put their company model into action.

During Launch X meetings every Thursday in room 406, Zhu plans to let members work on their companies while teaching how to start and maintain them.

“Most of the work will be done outside of the full group meetings, within the small ‘companies’ in order to build the companies and meet with mentors,” Zhu said. “Consequently, members will learn every skill they need in the real world. They will learn how to generate profits, outreach to other people, build a company and become better public speakers.”

Launch X’s treasurer, junior Jingyu Kang, anticipates Launch X groups showing varying company models in the spring.

Likewise, Zhu looks forward to an exciting first year of Launch X, especially after seeing the large number of people who signed up to be members at Club Fair on Sept. 26.

Zhu hopes that the increased demonstration of interest in Launch X will help the school recognize students’ interests in business and entrepreneurship, and open more classes specialized toward business.

“I think Launch X will help SHS become more accommodating of business classes,” Zhu said. “I hope this club allows the school to provide more support for prospective business students.” ♦

“I hope this club allows the school to provide more support for prospective business students.”

JUNIOR Brian Zhu

Zhu, who wants to major in business, said he wanted to supplement his own interests by giving members first-hand experience in forming their own businesses with collaboration from volunteer entrepreneur mentors who have had experience in the business industry.

“While many other clubs can tell you how to start a business, Launch X provides an actual mentor, which can help you through the process of actually starting a company,” Zhu said.

After a year, teams will advertise their

City council members, candidates work to preserve Saratoga’s unique culture

BY Allison Hartley & Manasi Garg

At 7 p.m. sharp on Oct. 3, mayor Mary-Lynne Bernald pounded her gavel, welcoming the scattered audience and the other members of Saratoga’s city council — vice mayor Manny Cappello and councilmembers Rishi Kumar, Howard Miller and Emily Lo — to the meeting held on the Civic Theatre’s stage.

They proceeded to discuss the city’s current issues, such as tobacco and e-cigarette regulations, tightening rules on the sale of tobacco products to minors and banning the sale of all flavored tobacco products excepting menthol.

Still, while Saratoga residents generally understand the importance of city council, they may not be aware of all the council’s responsibilities.

Bernald said the council has a vast array of duties that fluctuate on a daily and weekly basis. While the council makes larger policy decisions, the council-appointed city manager James Lindsay is more in charge of the daily operation of the city.

“We, as the council, are the overseers,” Miller said. “We set the big picture direction of where the city should go. We’re like board directors — we set policies and directions for the city, and the city manager would be the CEO.”

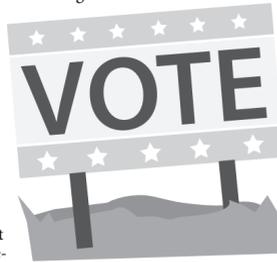
Dictating the city’s policies requires informed and rational decisions rather than emotional ones, said Lo, who has also served as mayor in the past.

“For the City Council to be effective and make the right policy decision, diligently doing homework and fact finding are crucial,” she said.

Election cycle

Driving through Saratoga this fall, many people have become accustomed to the familiar brightly colored lawn signs endorsing various candidates for the upcoming elections on Nov. 6. Five candidates — incumbents Bernald and Kumar, and newcomers Anjali Kausar, Corinne Vita and Yan Zhao — are running for three seats open for reelection.

In 2016, two seats up for election, so each voter could vote for up to two candidates. According to the Santa Clara Registrar



of Voters, Saratoga citizens cast 22,272 votes for councilmembers out of 30,767 residents, including around 8000 non-voting minors.

Candidate Corinne Vita said that about 50 percent of residents vote through mail in ballots, which were sent out Oct. 8, and the remaining voters go to polling centers set up at various locations around the community such as churches, schools and private homes.

While there may not be many divisive issues surrounding the city council elections, candidates make pitches to voters about what makes them the most qualified to serve.

Some candidates have centered their campaigns around decreasing crime rates, others around traffic and road safety and still others around keeping water and utility rates low for citizens.

Resident Thomas Cobourn, who has lived in Saratoga for 13 years, said that many Saratogans vote for people they are familiar with, reflecting Saratoga’s small-town nature.

“They’re all intelligent and successful in what they do, and they all have done a lot of community work, volunteering either on city commissions or on kids’ activities and leagues,” he said of the candidates. “Either you’ve met them or they’re your friend, so you know their character very well.”

Based on who they support for candidates, dozens of Saratoga residents have shown monetary support for candidates through donations ranging from hundreds to thousands of dollars.

According to campaign disclosure forms, by Sept. 22, Kumar’s ending cash balance was \$30,567, Zhao had \$19,348, Kausar had \$9690, and Bernald had \$14,630. Vita’s form said she received around a thousand dollars, and will spend/receive less than \$2,000.

Candidates spend this money on a multitude of campaigning strategies, yet the most visible form of campaigning is through lawn signs. Kumar’s red, white and blue lawn signs are a visible element of his campaign, but he also advertises on Facebook to residents.

Some residents have even passed out campaign fliers at the Homecoming football game on Sept. 21. Others voiced support for their choice in neighborhood block gatherings, with candidates sometimes showing up to the surprise of the rest of the neighborhood.

This self-promotion during block gatherings has been a subject of debate in recent posts on the Nextdoor app, a social networking service that connects neighborhoods.

“If you are a sucker for political monologue, why should the whole neighborhood suffer?” Nextdoor app user Lakhinder Walia said, arguing that neighborhood block parties should not be politicized.

Regardless of whether they attend these block parties, candidates’ top priority seems to be getting to know citizens; many candidates said that they enjoy simply making their way through Saratoga.

“I spend a lot of time walking in Saratoga neighborhoods, going door to door to engage people,” Zhao said.

However, it is important that voters stay informed and are cautious about blindly believing campaign promises.

“It’s very common to say ‘I promise I will balance the city budget,’ and that sounds good, but it turns out that it’s not possible to be a city if you ever have an imbalanced budget,” Miller said. “[Candidates] make promises that have to do nothing with improving the city.”



FALCON // MANASI GARG

Top: Mayor Mary-Lynne Bernald speaks to the City Council members on Oct. 3.



Left: A citizen addresses the council about banning flavored tobacco from retail stores.

The council also refinanced bonds for the Saratoga public library, which relies on voter loans, or bonds, to fund large projects, such as the reconstruction completed back in 2003; however, the bonds are repaid by property owners through their property taxes.

By refinancing these bonds, the council swapped higher interest rates on the loans in favor of lower ones, resulting in the Saratoga property owners paying less money over time. Miller said that this saved the community \$200 million.

Lo said one of the city council’s main priorities is to enhance community.

For example, Lo said, the council seeks to promote downtown as a “destination of wine and dine” and to facilitate the permit process for businesses in Saratoga.

The council does this by holding multiple events and programs throughout the year such as the Lunar New Year Celebration, the Fourth of July Celebration and the Hakone Matsuri festival. It also supports the Public Arts program, which gives residents a chance to paint art on utility boxes around Saratoga. One utility box across the street from Saratoga High depicts a puppy and a kitten.

Such decisions are discussed in meetings, which are open to the public. Typical meetings range from two to five hours and occur during the first and third Wednesday of each month, excluding summer and holiday recesses.

Generally, the council is unified in its decisions. Both Bernald and Miller say they can’t remember a time the council hasn’t passed a bill with less than a 4-1 vote majority and is often unanimous.

“My main goal as a councilmember is to make sure that this group of five council members work for the good of our citizens,” said Miller. “I was not elected to beat everyone up and get my way; I was elected to figure out the best things for our city.”

At the end of the day, despite their differences, all the members and candidates say they share a central goal: preserving Saratoga’s small-town character, natural beauty and relative peace and safety compared to the rest of Silicon Valley.

“When you’re 30 years old and come back to this city, you will be amazed when you see hills that are green and homes that are not packed on top of each other and when you breathe air that is fresh,” Miller said. “And if we’re a little slow in catching up with rest of valley, in a way, it’s good, because we’re preserving our charm.” ♦

“There’s no reason for me to have a nicer chair and a nicer seat for meetings I have twice a month.”

COUNCILMEMBER Howard Miller

Junior with cochlear implants connects with deaf community through ASL class

BY Shama Gupta & Christine Zhang

Junior Arya Mididaddi's failing her first hearing test as a newborn didn't worry her parents: Babies often fail the test the first time they take it. But after she failed multiple times, her parents were shocked. They learned she had been born profoundly, or completely, deaf in both ears.

When Mididaddi was a year old, she underwent a cochlear implant procedure. The implant is an electronic device that does the work her inner ear cannot. She later had the same implant in her right ear when she was 5.

From the ages of 1 to 5, Mididaddi regularly visited an audiologist and a speech therapist to help develop her hearing and speech.

"I was taught to be hearing. I was never taught as if I was deaf, so no one ever taught me how to sign."

JUNIOR Arya Mididaddi

Audiologists specialize in diagnosing and treating individuals with hearing problems as well as evaluating and preventing hearing loss, according to ExploreHealthCareers. Speech therapists help impaired individuals develop their spoken communication skills, such as pronunciation and expression.

Mididaddi said that her audiologist "programmed" her by producing beeps in her ear for her to process as her first sounds.

Her speech therapist helped her to catch up to her peers in spoken communication. When Mididaddi received her first implant at 1, it was her first time hearing and speaking, so she was a year behind in speech.

Also around the age of 1, Mididaddi began to attend Weingarten Children's Center in Redwood City, a non-profit, state-accredited school for children with hearing impairments.

Mididaddi said many children at the center disliked wearing their implants, taking them off and throwing tantrums when required to wear them.

Mididaddi had few such issues. Her teachers and parents encouraged her to develop her speech skills by making her use her implants.

"The teachers there specifically focus on making speech therapy a part of everyday life," Mididaddi said. "My parents also forced me to wear the implants — they forced me to hear and learn and listen."

Mididaddi added that her family, especially her grandma, played a large role in helping her open up after getting her implants.

Mididaddi cannot remember being able to hear for the first time because she had her left ear implanted at such a young age.

"I was taught to be hearing," she said. "I was never taught as if I was deaf, so no one ever taught me how to sign."

After she adjusted to her cochlear implants, Mididaddi's life has been similar to students born with full hearing.

Junior Karthi Sankar, Mididaddi's friend since fourth grade, said she has not noticed any problems.

"She's like any normal person," Sankar said. "There isn't any difference in her personality just because she [was born] deaf."



FALCON // ALAN ZU

Junior Arya Mididaddi looks through her class notes about the first and second laws of thermodynamics during Janny Cahato's AP Chemistry class on Oct. 16.

When Mididaddi entered her junior year of high school, she signed up for the West Valley American Sign Language course available to Saratoga High students.

Although she doesn't need sign language, she signed up to connect more with the deaf community, which she would've been a part of if not for her implants.

Mididaddi said it's nice to be learning a language that in some ways, connects to her and her background.

The class meets every Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30-5 p.m. in Room 706 at Saratoga High and is taught by Tracy Meng, who grew up using ASL with her deaf family.

Overall, Mididaddi enjoys the learning the language, although she said that the learning process can be longer than that of

other languages because Meng introduces new vocabulary by individually finger-spelling each word with the ASL alphabet.

Mididaddi said she is also taking ASL in case there is complication with her implants in her future, though she said she is capable of communication with lip reading.

Despite her ability to hear with her cochlear implants, Mididaddi does not consider herself as part of the hearing community. Rather, she views herself as a member of the cochlear community, made up of people like herself.

Mididaddi said she chose to take ASL in order to associate herself more with the deaf community.

"It's a part of me," Mididaddi said. "It's a different timeline of my life that I could go through, but I never actually did." ♦

Girls cast in males' roles for school play

'JULIUS CAESAR' SHATTERS TRADITIONAL GENDER TYPECASTING

BY Marisa Kingsley & Jessica Wang

During the Oct. 18 rehearsal in the McAfee Center for the upcoming fall play, "Julius Caesar," junior Ritika Kuppam, playing the role of a male conspirator, pretended to stab Julius Caesar, portrayed by senior Dermot Gleeson. Kuppam is just one of the 27 female students in this year's production who have been cast in a traditionally male role.

Although the original play has only two female roles, casting female students in male roles was not difficult, drama teacher Sarah Thermond said.

The characters of "Julius Caesar" are already larger than life and had a "mythic" status as historical figures when Shakespeare wrote them. Because of this, Thermond prioritized the relationship dynamic between actors, rather than the characters' genders.

Thermond said that after auditions on Sept. 11 and 12, it was easy to imagine the girls in roles like military generals or senators. Yet there was one spot where this became difficult.

"About the only place where considering women for traditionally male roles became

a little tricky was to sell a petite lady being significantly older and more powerful [as a senator or military general] than a super tall dude [playing a soldier or servant]," Thermond said.

Gender has always been a topic of discussion when it comes to Shakespeare's works. In 16th century England, it was unheard of for female actors to play a woman's part — or any parts at all. Women were only allowed to attend the shows, according to Clare McManus' British Library article "Shakespeare and Gender: The 'Woman's Part.'"

In the first staging of "Julius Caesar" in 1599, female roles were played by highly trained boys.

In fact, "the practice of casting boy actors in female parts was meant that the playful exploration of gender was written into these plays from the start," McManus writes. This practice was used to tease the audience with the knowledge that a young man was cross-dressing as a female, along with revealing the skill of the highly trained male actors.

A female actor first played a Shakespearean woman's part in 1660, when Anne

Marshall played the role of Desdemona in a production of Shakespeare's "Othello" in London.

Although men played women's roles well into the 17th century, there were many more pioneering women who did not necessarily perform in playhouses, but performed in a variety of other ways.

For instance, cross-dresser Mary Frith, known by her alias Moll Cutpurse, was one of the first notorious figures of the London underworld. In 1611 at Fortune Playhouse, she watched a production of "Roaring Girl," a play based off Frith's own life.

Yet the actor that was portraying Frith's part was a male. When the production was over, Frith went on stage, played the lute, sang and taunted the crowd for believing that she was a man.

Since then, female actors have done their own takes on Shakespeare, with the creation of all-female productions of "Julius Caesar," "The Tempest" and "Hamlet" by English film director Phyllida Lloyd.

While the abolishment of gender roles gives more opportunities and provides a di-

verse cast, the main roles in SHS's production of "Julius Caesar" are still played by male students: Gleeson will play the role of Julius Caesar, senior Raghav Malaviya will play Mark Antony, the role of Brutus will be played by senior Shasta Ganti and senior Mateo Morganstern will play Cassius.

Students auditioned with prepared monologues from the characters Brutus, Cassius, Portia, Antony and Caesar. Thermond said that every student came into auditions ready and able to take on the difficult content of Shakespearean drama.

"[I was] just trying to keep straight what made each character unique so that I can match the best actor to each role," Thermond said.

Junior Ritika Kuppam said she finds the decision to cast females in traditionally male roles as a step in the right direction.

"I think it makes the play more inclusive and almost empowering because I play one of the conspirators who has been changed [to a] female, and I get to kill Caesar," Kuppam said. "Like that's a big deal. I actually really like having different genders being switched because it's less like the males do everything; it accurately represents that females are equals." ♦



Thermond Drama teacher

togatalks

What is your opinion on casting different gender roles?

"I think it's perfectly fine because it's been an established historic tradition."



junior Brandon Wang

"I think it's a great thing because it stresses gender equality."



sophomore Isabelle Lee

"I think it's unnecessary because there are enough guys to play guys."



senior Chloe Peng

GIRLS' TENNIS

Falcons regain traction but struggle against Monta Vista

BY Andrew Lee & Jayne Zhou

More than midway through the season, the girls' tennis team continues to set a strong pace in the De Anza League. Aiming to end with a solid record for entry into CCS, the team has been trying to remain consistent with its performance and strong with each passing match.

The Falcons beat Homestead 6-1 on Sept. 27, Los Gatos 4-3 on Oct. 2, Los Altos 4-3 and Palo Alto 6-1 on Oct. 9. The Falcons fell 5-2 in their match against league-leading Monta Vista on Oct. 4. As of Oct. 15, their league record is 8-2 and their overall record is 10-2, putting them in high up in the De Anza Division.

Experienced players, such as sophomore No. 3 singles player Alyssa Pina and new additions to varsity, such as junior doubles player Sanya Kwatra, have become increasingly accustomed to the new team dynamics this year, and players are now in sync with the steady rhythm of league matches.

"The team has gotten a lot closer and our practices are a lot more productive now," Kwatra said.

However, even though the team has been able to pull through against a number of teams that it has faced so far, the girls are finding themselves struggling against their old rival Monta Vista and new rival Los Altos.

So far, the girls have lost twice to Monta Vista and once to Los Altos. Los Altos has emerged as a strong challenger to the traditionally dominant teams of Saratoga and Monta Vista.

But in its match on Oct. 9, the girls' tennis team was able to defeat Los Altos 4-3.

With senior No. 1 singles player Rini Vasan out for the season from a torn wrist and junior No. 2 singles player Monica Stratakos weakened by a leg injury, such a close victory came as a surprise, but reflected the long hours and hard work the players have been committing at practices to compensate for missing talent.

"The team has gotten closer and our practices are more productive."



JUNIOR Sanya Kwatra

Stratakos, who had been playing No. 1 singles with Vasan out, began to have difficulties early on the game. Because of her injury, Stratakos was forced to withdraw her match, resulting in a default loss for the Falcons.

The remaining singles and doubles players had to perform even better than how they did in their previous matchup against Los Altos, where the Falcons fell 4-3 on Sept. 18.

Both junior No. 2 Anissa Mu and Pina singles were able to secure easy wins. Mu won her match 6-1 6-1, and Pina 6-0 6-0. In addition, seniors No. 3 doubles players Khara Berkowitz and Divya Aggarwal defeated their opponents 6-1 6-0.

The match came down to No. 1 players Katie Lam and Juhi Patel. In a tight contest, Lam and Patel were able to endure, winning the tie breaker 10-6.

"It's difficult to play against [Monta Vista and Los Altos] because our top few players have been injured and had to sit out a few important matches," Kwatra said. "So everyone [has] to be moved up a spot and play against people they normally wouldn't if we had the whole lineup."

Vasan observed that much of the team's ability to recover from the loss of key players can be attributed to having had sufficient time to recover from practice not done throughout the off-season and being able to communicate through strong bonds among its athletes. This was especially important in the most recent match against Los Altos, Vasan said.

"At the beginning of the season we were a bit rusty as many of our players did not practice a lot over the summer," Vasan said. "But after loads of school practices we were able to bond together as a team and perfect our strokes."

With a key upcoming match against Los Gatos on Oct. 23 and possible future matchups against stronger teams through SCVALs and CCS, girls' tennis hopes to reflect on its recent victory against Los Altos and learn from its experiences. The girls hope to develop their skills as a team further and morally support each other during matches.

"I think [the team] can take away that focusing at the start of the match is very important and that cheering for each other is really important in motivating teammates," Vasan said. ♦

CROSS COUNTRY

(9th) Stanford Invitational 9/29

(7th) SCVAL Crystal Springs 10/2

(5th) Artichoke Invitational 10/6

"I think it was great that everyone just tried their best."
— senior Isabella Tan (Girls)

"Our potential has been building for the past two years now. All we need now is grit."
— junior Kole Tippetts (Boys)

WATER POLO

24-7 (W) Willow Glen (Girls) 10/12

7-4 (L) Fremont (Boys) 10/11

18-9 (L) @ Milpitas (Boys) 10/9

"We definitely want to make it to CCS since we are No. 1 in our league."
— senior Sarah Daoudi (Girls)

"The team is working hard to improve our skills and record."
— senior Andrew Gao (Boys)

GIRLS' GOLF

226-206 (W) Lynbrook 10/16

232-191 (L) Palo Alto 10/12

"I think the season is going well, everyone is working hard to improve."
— senior Janelle Jin

For complete stories on these sports, visit saratogafalcon.org/sports

Lugo's Intermediate PE class strays from established CrossFit-based curriculum

BY Alekhya Vadlakonda & Ananya Vadlakonda

Freshmen know the routine in PE. The class starts with a warm-up and is followed by strength training, a CrossFit-based workout of the day and a possible final assessment to finish the class period.

This CrossFit-based model is being tweaked this year by teacher and athletic director Tim Lugo, who is back teaching PE this year after several years away from it. He noticed some repetitiveness for second year PE students in Intermediate PE, and said he decided to adjust the curriculum to curb the monotony in the everyday workouts.

As a result, he decided to teach his fourth-period Intermediate PE class "just a little differently." Aware that second year PE students have already learned about the specificities that are required in a traditional CrossFit setting, Lugo created a more activity-based class where he teaches cooperative game skills, making his new curriculum similar to that of the elementary and middle schools. He hopes that students can take these skills with them outside of the class after he realized that although some students become passionate about CrossFit, several others don't.

"I think we need to expose kids to as many avenues as we can because different activities can keep them active for a lifetime," he said.

For instance, the class's first unit revolved around pickleball, a sport similar to tennis that is also included in Redwood Middle

School's seventh grade PE classes. Lugo hopes that by learning the basic techniques of pickleball, students will be able to pick up tennis on their own and continue with the sport recreationally for years after.

"Tennis is something you can do into your 50s and 60s and 70s," Lugo said. "It's not that you can't do CrossFit into your 70s. There's a lot of older people that do it, but depending on your health level at that time, [it becomes more difficult]."

Lugo is also planning on staying away from the final that is traditionally administered to PE students: a CrossFit-based final exam called "Final Gone Bad." For many years, PE classes, both Beginner and Intermediate, have used "Final Gone Bad" as the exam to test cardiovascular fitness.

"It's funny because I actually created 'Final Gone Bad' when I was teaching PE years ago," Lugo said. "I named it after a CrossFit workout called 'Fight Gone Bad' that a lot of MMA fighters used to use."

However, rather than "Final Gone Bad," Lugo is testing his students a different way: a running exam. For the first semester, the exam will be a 1.5-mile run, and for the second semester, students will have to run a 5k. The finals will be graded based on a rubric of times and the students' individual improvement. To prepare the students for the running-centric final, Lugo's lesson plan allows time for running every class period. Although some students are not keen on the regular running in Lugo's class, many prefer it to CrossFit.

"Mr. Lugo does a really good job of push-



FALCON // EDWIN CHEN

Intermediate PE students in athletic director Tim Lugo's class have fewer CrossFit workouts; instead, they are doing more running and games emphasizing cooperation.

ing students to run and push our limits, which is why we tend to run at least once a week," sophomore Ritika Garg said.

Lugo said he got the idea of the differently structured class from his years teaching at Evergreen Valley High School before coming to SHS. There, students had a running final exam — an easy way to test a student's cardiovascular fitness improvement, Lugo said. So, when given the opportunity to choose the final for his students, he decided to aim for the 5k.

"I think it's kind of neat because most

people can't picture themselves running a 5k," Lugo said. "To watch students complete that seventh lap at the end of the year, and to see the look on their face, regardless of their time, is pretty cool."

Lugo's new method to teaching PE has been received well by most students, who are looking forward to what the year has in store for them.

"This year, PE seems to be focused on a different part of PE, which I enjoy because my two years of PE will give me enough exposure to fitness," Garg said. ♦

FOOTBALL

Falcons bounce back from early-season losses, look to make their final CCS push

BY LeoCao
& AlexWang

Junior wide receiver George Bian chest-bumped junior quarterback Payton Stokes after Bian hauled in his fourth touchdown reception of the game against the Gunn Titans on Oct. 12. The catch tied a school record for most receiving touchdowns in a game.

"It was pretty awesome to be able to score four touchdowns because I proved that hard work pays off," Bian said.

As the Falcons head into their final two regular season games, they are looking to qualify for CCS in the lower El Camino division. With a 1-4 start to their first five games, including a heartbreaking Homecoming night loss on Sept. 21 to Santa Clara, the Falcons have bounced back with three straight wins: two comfortable wins — 48-34 against Gunn and 48-31 against Mountain View on Sept. 28 — and a 55-29 thrashing of Monta Vista on Oct. 5.

The Falcons, now 3-1 in league, sit in second in the standings. They are behind only 3-0 Santa Clara but are tied with Mountain View, whom the Falcons have an advantage over due to a head-to-head victory.

During the last two games of the season, the Falcons will face the 4-4 Los Altos Eagles at home on Oct. 26. Los Altos moved down to the El Camino League with the Falcons this year. On Nov. 2 they will travel to face the winless Lynbrook Vikings, who have scored a measly 27 points in seven games. Last year, the Falcons' only win was against the Eagles, a 41-12 rout in the last game to salvage an otherwise winless season.

"I think the rest of the season should be just like the last few weeks because we have a great momentum going forward from the positive energy the offense has sparked in our team," Bian said.

During the last three weeks, the offense shone with Stokes as the cornerstone. He was uber-efficient in all three games, passing for 1,132 yards and 15 touchdowns while only giving up one interception.

None of the other offensive players slacked either. Bian and junior wide receiver Max Muilenburg helped carry the team with big games receiving, and senior running back JJ Wang kept the ball moving on the ground.

"I'm happy and excited that we're finally getting together as an offense," Stokes said. "The offensive line is blocking and the receivers are making catches and our stats show that we've been working hard and getting better."

Stokes's chemistry with his receivers seems to be coming along well, especially with Bian and Muilenburg. During the second quarter against Monta Vista, Stokes threw a 47-yard touchdown to Muilenburg, placing the ball ahead of the defender so only Muilenburg could catch it.

"Last year, we started working out outside of school and ever since then during practice we just clicked," Stokes said. "We talked about where I want to throw them the ball, so the chemistry works out well."

The team has also seen a reduction in turnovers. Stokes attributed this to the fact that the team has gotten more comfortable with each other. Because the offense is so young, he said, the team lost the ball more



Courtesy of NICOLLE AND JASON WANG

Sophomore Tyler Chaffin-Price breaks a tackle against Monta Vista on Oct. 5. The Falcons won 55-29 and are riding a three game winning streak into the last two games of the season. They currently sit second in league standings at 3-1.

often early on as they did not have enough time to adjust to a higher level of play.

The defense did the rest of the work to keep the Falcons in the lead. Senior linebacker Justin Yagobi has been flying all over the field, leading the team in tackles with 80 on the season. The defense as a whole followed this type of play by causing turnovers and pressuring the opposing teams' quarterbacks.

After an injury scare to junior defensive lineman Will Seifert during the Homecoming game against Santa Clara, he is back in

action and making an impact on the defense. After a short two-week hiatus, he had eight tackles, a sack and a fumble recovery against Monta Vista. His fumble late in the fourth quarter ended up sealing the game for the Falcons.

The Falcons' hopes are high for the end of the season. With two games left on the schedule, they are looking to finish the season strong and make a deep CCS run.

"We're going to dominate the other teams and keep doing what we do and go into CCS and hopefully win it all," Stokes said. ♦

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

Themed game draws large crowd, excites players

BY KarenChow
& JeffreyXu

At the home game against Gunn on Oct. 11, senior outside hitter Katie Hulme leapt up to execute one of the cleanest line hits all season deep into the Titans' court, winning the point. The crowd roared.

Despite losing in three sets (25-23, 25-21 and 25-13), the final score was somewhat beside the point.

The match, a special event in support of breast cancer research, drew the Falcons'

largest turnout all season. The girls decorated the entire gym in pink and asked the crowd to dress in pink on Facebook.

"It was fun decorating the gym with streamers and balloons, and we got to wear pink items and the crowd did as well," senior setter Rachel Bakke said. "There was a lot of energy and everyone was into it."

During the game, junior libero Lauren Hansen also made several skillful digs, one-hand digs and pancakes, essentially diving flat-handed saves, saving the team crucial points on multiple occasions.

Hulme said that although the team lost, the match was against the toughest team in the league, and they made the Titans work for every point.

"I knew if we made an event out of the game, we would not only get more fans to come out but also support breast cancer," Hulme said. "I was hoping to get a bigger turnout for the Gunn game because they're the best team in our league, and I knew we'd be extra inspired by the fans. We played really hard, and I think a lot of it had to do with the support of the crowd."

The Falcons are 4-5 in the El Camino Division and are 11-13 overall as of Oct. 15.

However, Hansen said that this year is a "building season" because the team has five additional underclassmen who have never been on varsity before: freshman defense specialist Jordan Sin, sophomores middle hitter Berry Bailey, setter Hermione Bossolina, outside Danielle Moon and opposite hitter Riya Pursai.

"Because we built such a close bond with the underclassmen, we will work better together next year," Hansen said. ♦

FIELD HOCKEY

Team incorporates new underclassmen

BY AllisonHartley

The girls' field hockey team filed into line in order of seniority at a team dinner at Jake's Pizza after a 6-0 loss to Cupertino on Oct. 2, but the separation among grades ended there. After receiving their food, the girls sat together, laughing and enjoying each other's company.

The team's record stands at 1-7-4 as of Oct. 15. They will play Lynbrook at home on Oct. 26.

Junior forward Hannah Beine leads scoring with two goals this season while a handful of other players have score one goal. Field hockey, which has struggled with filling rosters in the past, has one extra substitute player this season, thanks largely to a strong underclassman presence on the team.

With six new underclassmen and only three seniors, the team is working to incorporate its new players with a special

emphasis on conditioning.

"The size of our team has been an obstacle, but to overcome it we've been working extra hard on our fitness," junior captain Sarah Rieken said.

Junior goalie Simrita Advani said the team's drive showed during their game against Los Gatos on Sept. 25.

The team lost 9-0, only a slight improvement from their 10-0 loss during the league season last year, but despite the lopsided loss, Rieken said the team was "a little more hungry for the win and more intense."

Sophomore midfielder Jasmin Reddy, a new addition to the varsity team, said that she noticed a big difference in intensity between the JV and varsity teams because more varsity players aim to play in college rather than just learning the basics of field hockey in JV.

"On varsity, the style of play is faster and more intense," Reddy said. "I feel like

everyone wants to have even more of a good result on varsity because of the hard work ethic we have in practice."

"[The team was] a little more hungry for the win and more intense."

JUNIOR Sarah Rieken



Olivia Kinoshita, the only freshman on varsity, has been playing the sport for three years, playing throughout middle school as well as on various club teams.

She said her club team, Stanford Lightning, was already on a similar level to the varsity team, so the transition to varsity

was smooth.

"I was already friends with most of the varsity girls [from the club teams], so they're all nice and it was really easy to transition in," Kinoshita said.

Junior right full back Ella Parr, who is recovering from an ACL injury, echoed Kinoshita's sentiment, saying that "there is a lot of mutual respect" between the underclassmen and upperclassmen players.

The field hockey team has adjusted well with incorporating the players of different ages, especially benefitting from team bonding such as the weekly evening team dinners.

"At first, I was a little nervous of the upperclassmen and not as confident as I was on JV, but now I feel more comfortable and confident with everyone on the team as we see each other five days a week for 2.5 hours," Reddy said. "The upperclassmen treat us really well, and they don't look at us differently as underclassmen." ♦

4-sport alumnus athlete declined D1 scholarship but landed in education

BY AllisonHartley

The buzzer sounded, marking the end of double overtime and Saratoga High's win over Cupertino — Saratoga had earned the 2005 El Camino League title. The crowd of almost 400 roared, rushing the home basketball court and engulfing the sweaty team with excited hugs and congratulations.

As a senior in 2005, alumnus Danny Wallace, who now teaches special education and coaches the girls' varsity basketball team, won Most Valuable Player of the league in both basketball and volleyball, and MVP of both the track team and the defensive line in football.

It looked almost certain that the four-sport athlete would continue his athletics career in college had he not been focused on being a volunteer firefighter since age 16.

Wallace received a scholarship offer from UCLA to play Division I volleyball in 2005, but declined it, opting for a career in firefighting and attending Mission College for an associate degree in fire technology and an EMT license.

"Looking back, I wish I would've gone [to UCLA]," Wallace said. "UCLA won the NCAA title in 2006, and I would've been part of that team and could have said I was part of an NCAA championship team."

Then athletic trainer Heidi Peterson contacted UCLA with Wallace's volleyball game

film during his junior and senior years in high school, and his parents, especially his dad, had been excited about the opportunity.

"My dad took it hard because he would have loved to see me play for four more years — any sport," Wallace said. "I'm very competitive playing sports. I'm very nice off the court, but on the court, I want to do my best to win."

Wallace knew he would be taken on the UCLA team as a building player, not a star player; however, at 6'4", Wallace showed potential with a 40-inch vertical jump and could place the ball anywhere on the court.

"There weren't many blockers and hitters like me," Wallace said. "UCLA was very interested in me, and the coach was nice and all, but I felt bad [for declining the offer] because Heidi was the one that did all the work."

Had he anticipated becoming a teacher, Wallace said that playing UCLA volleyball would have been a great experience, and he could have gotten his teaching credential at UCLA as well.

Still, he said he would have initially felt some degree of imposter syndrome regarding his academics, as many of Wallace's friends weren't accepted into UCLA.

He held these friends in a higher academic regard than himself, so he felt like he did not belong in the academic environment at UCLA, either.

Wallace stopped firefighting at 22 due to the harrowing nature of the work, and decided to transfer to San Jose State University, where he enrolled in social studies and business classes, unsure of his major. He excelled at SJSU, boosting his own perception of his academic capabilities. During his senior year at SJSU, the volleyball coach wanted to recruit him for the team.

"I told them I would play if the team was at a higher level, but I didn't want to play on a team that's going to lose a lot of games," he said. "If I want to commit to something, I want to commit to something that has a chance [to succeed]."

His motivation to succeed is apparent on the sidelines of the varsity girls' basketball games.

Wallace credits his entry into coaching to teacher and longtime basketball coach Mike Davey, who years ago asked him to return to Redwood, his old middle school.

There, he helped develop the sixth grade girls' basketball team during his last year at Mission College when he was considering moving on from firefighting and transferring to SJSU.

"When I started getting involved, I realized how much I loved coaching. The girls responded to me well even though they were sixth graders," Wallace said. "I realized if I enjoyed coaching, I might really enjoy teaching."

Encouraged by his coaching experience, he decided to earn his teaching credential. Wallace considered teaching his favorite subjects, math or history, but found that he wanted to help kids overcome challenges, drawing from his own experience with dyslexia. He chose to teach special education.

"I was hoping to be a role model for kids with special needs, to say, 'You can achieve a master's in college if you want to and you can be successful, but it's going to take time and investment in yourself,'" Wallace said.

He was able to find a job at SHS, where he had enjoyed his high school experience playing sports and liked his teachers and friends. Wallace said he is "happy to work and be a part of this amazing community."

Ultimately, Wallace believes he landed in the right position as a teacher, and enjoys the time spent on campus.

"I love what I do. I really put a lot of time and effort in, and there's nobody that can tell me I don't because I come here at 7:30 in the morning at leave at 8 or 9 at night," Wallace said. "I'm coaching basketball, working on caseloads, calling parents up, helping people or doing what I have to do." ♦

49ers tryout gave Ellis valuable experience

BY AlanZhu

In a training facility near what would become Levi's Stadium about 25 years ago, PE and Geography teacher Rick Ellis gathered with other top college football players to try out for the San Francisco 49ers.

As the group of aspiring professional football players walked into the training facility, they stared at the 49ers' five glimmering Super Bowl trophies in awe. Ellis recalled sitting, feeling amazed and honored, in front of player Jerry Rice's locker, changing into his new uniform.

Coming from two big Catholic families that enjoyed football, Ellis began to play the sport at a young age.

"I remember going over to my grandma and grandpa's house, and they would have football helmets and shoulder pads,

and I remember putting on the helmets like dress-up," Ellis said. "That's where it started; it was from a really early age. Football was part of my life."

"People would say, 'You're too small to play college football.'"

TEACHER Richard Ellis



Because football has been a large part of his life for so long, Ellis's initial goal in youth was to be able to play in college.

After playing at national powerhouse Mater Dei High School in Southern California, he was later recruited for the Division I football team at Saint Mary's College.

"There is so much excitement and passion in college football," Ellis said. "When I grew up, there was so much intensity around it; I loved it and fed off that stuff."

Ellis was the starter wide-receiver at Saint Mary's. He was also the kick-returner; he ended his junior year season seventh in the nation for punt-returns and ninth in the nation for kick-off returns.

In spring in Ellis's senior year in college, he and top players from colleges across the nation received invitations to the 49ers tryout. Being a starter in college football, Ellis believed that he "had a shot" at playing professional football. However, being

only a 5'7 speedster, his size and strength were obstacles.

"I felt that I was as good as anyone [at the tryouts] skill-wise," Ellis said. "I was as fast as anyone there, I caught as well, I could lift as well, but I was probably smaller than anyone there."

Because Ellis was undersized — not the typical 6'2"-264-pound player in the NFL — he had to work twice as hard to impress the coaches.

"People would say, 'You're too small to play college football,'" said Ellis. Even so, Ellis said he learned much just from trying out. He even had the chance to meet Steve Mariucci, then head coach of the 49ers, and shake Mariucci's hand.

"He said 'Well, welcome and glad you're here,'" Ellis said. "This was the 49ers head coach! I felt big-time, and it was cool." ♦

Controversial NFL rules seek to protect quarterback

BY MichaelZhang

After Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers was hit and landed on by Vikings linebacker Anthony Barr on Oct. 15 of last year, Rodgers struggled to get up. It was later revealed that he had suffered a collarbone injury as a result of Barr's bodyweight during the hit.

Because of injuries like this, the NFL made rule changes during the offseason to ensure the safety of players, particularly the quarterback.

The most controversial of these changes is an addition to the roughing the passer penalty.

According to the NFL, "the defender is responsible for avoiding landing on the quarterback when taking him to the ground," including on a sack. Failure to do so results in a 15-yard penalty against the defense and an automatic first down.

One major complaint about this rule was that defensive players are now more limited in the ways they can hit the quarterback.

In the first three weeks of this year's regular season, NFL officials frequently called

this new rule on previously clean hits, leading fans to question the necessity of this rule.

For instance, in Week 3, after Packers linebacker Clay Matthews's sack of Redskins quarterback Alex Smith drew a penalty flag, Matthews noted that even Smith himself believed it to be a fair hit.

Furthermore, while this rule protects quarterbacks, it sometimes leads to more injuries to defensive players.

In the same week, Dolphins defensive end William Hayes tore his ACL in an attempt to avoid landing on Raiders quarterback Derek Carr during a play.

Another complaint noted the subjectivity of the rule. Some fans said that officials of different games view the nuances of the rule differently, leading to instances where a legal hit in one game could be penalized in another.

Due to this backlash from fans, the NFL ultimately decided to re-examine this rule following Week 3.

Consequently, there was only one controversial instance of roughing the passer in Week 4, during a hit by Raiders defen-

sive end Arden Key on Browns quarterback Baker Mayfield.

Even so, many do believe this one to have been the correct call, since there was helmet-to-helmet contact, which is illegal due to the possibility of head and neck injuries.

Aside from roughing the passer, the NFL said it would also be enforcing a previous rule protecting the long snapper on field goal and extra point attempts more often. This was called once during the Saints at Falcons game of Week 3, converting the Falcons' fourth down into a first. They eventually scored a touchdown, rather than a field goal, on that drive.

Another regulation emphasized by the NFL this year includes prohibited illegal contact downfield, and both offensive and defensive pass interference will be strictly enforced.

Also, protections for runners who give themselves up, such as during a quarterback's slide, were also clarified to minimize unnecessary contact and dangerous hits to the head or neck area, which sometimes result in concussions or paralysis.

As the game evolves and the NFL seeks

to reduce serious and lasting injuries to players, debates will continue as to the best way to officiate the game.

During these adjustment periods, fans should be patient and understand that officials, and even players, need time to transition as well. ♦

>> #bigidea

New NFL Rules

Roughing the passer

Defensive players may no longer hit and then land on the quarterback with their body weight, even during a sack.

Protections the long snapper

The NFL is now more strictly enforcing a rule that penalizes unnecessary contact with the long snapper during field goal and extra point attempts.

Protections for runners

Late hits on runners who give themselves up, particularly to the head and neck area, will be more strictly enforced as well.

>> snapshots



TALISMAN // LEI OTSUKA



FALCON // ALAN ZU



FALCON // KRITHI SANKAR



FALCON // AVA HOOMAN

Junior Gabby Jandu sets the volleyball at a match against Gunn High on Oct. 11.

Freshman Kunal Shrivastav and sophomore Tushar Shrivastav (right) visit the Chess Club stand at Club Day on Oct. 7.

Junior Vivian Lin prepares to swing a backhand in a tennis match against Palo Alto on Oct. 11.

Juniors Meghna Gupta, Ananya Krishnan and Livya Katz ride the ferry on the Oct. 11 MAP field trip.

buzzworthy >> There's a reason thrifting is so popular: It works

BY MuthuPalaniappan

On YouTube, videos about thrifting. Although buying vintage and second-hand clothing has been around for a while, a lot of younger adults are starting to “thrift” to create a more unique and exclusive wardrobe. Perhaps best of all, thrifting is eco-friendly.



GRAPHIC BY KAREN CHOW

At first, I thought that thrifting was only possible in big cities like San Francisco or Los Angeles where there are designated vintage and thrift stores. These stores house

hand-picked secondhand clothes from notable labels like Chanel or Levi's.

As I watched more videos, though, I realized that many vloggers also go to their local Goodwill or Salvation Army and find some great pieces instead of needing a more specialized store.

So, I decided to try it out myself, choosing Savers in San Jose. Savers is a Goodwill-like store that sells tons of secondhand clothes. As soon as I walked in, I was overwhelmed by the large number of clothing racks in the store. The layout reminded me a lot of Nordstrom Rack, with clothing organized by size and messily hung on metal racks. For around 30 minutes, I looked through jackets, shirts, pants and other clothing around the store.

After browsing through every 15 or 20 pieces, I would find an item that I put in my

basket to try on. Some clothes were just \$1, while others were a whopping \$25. All the items I ended up picking out were under \$10.

After browsing through every 15 or 20 pieces, I would find an item that I put in my basket to try on. Some clothes were just \$1, while others were a whopping \$25.

After looking through all the women's clothing racks, I found seven pieces of clothing I wanted to try on, and I ended up

purchasing four of those items. I got a long sleeve striped shirt, a short sleeve striped tee, a red “The Hundreds” shirt and a fuzzy oversized zip up jacket.



The striped tee and long sleeve shirt were a bit large, so I decided to crop them by cutting a bit of the fabric off at the bottom of the shirts, performing my own DIY. I didn't mind the oversized fit because of how cheap the items were.

As I left the store, I was super happy with my purchase; all four items came out to a whopping total of just \$20.

Although it was exhausting to browse through the hundreds of clothes at Savers, it was super rewarding to find pieces and upcycle them. I found thrifting extremely satisfying and I will do it again. ♦

ISSUE >>> **highlights** >>>>

“As my family and I walked out of the auditorium, I could hear strangers snickering in Korean, “Oh, that's the guy that danced with the little girls on stage.”

— reporter Andrew Lee on dancing “Gangnam Style” in Korea (pg. 13)

“There's nothing ever wrong with candy. A little sweetness in your day is never destructive — everything in moderation, of course.”



— English teacher Ken Nguyen on Halloween (pg. 17)

27

the number of female students playing traditionally male roles in “Julius Caesar” (pg. 20)

“This is my way of completing that journalistic dream. I get to write a weekly thing and blast it out to a lot of people.”



—principal Paul Robinson on his weekly emails (pg. 2)

\$40,000

the cost of Breaking Down the Walls week (pg. 1)

topten

HALLOWEEN ACTIVITIES

- 10 Get lost in a corn maze and stay there. That way you'll have a better excuse than “I was sick” for missing that last calculus test.
- 9 Find uneaten candy from last year. Ignorance is bliss, and candy doesn't expire if you don't read the label.
- 8 Tell a scary story. Just the thought of an uncurved AP Physics test will send shivers down their spine.
- 7 Experiment with costume make-up. For once you'll have an excuse to look like a clown at school.
- 6 Go to a Halloween Party. Party it up until 11:59 PM on Nov. 1 by working on early applications.
- 5 Stay safe from creepy clowns by dressing up as one. If you can't beat them, join them.
- 4 Save your crusty Tootsie Rolls for next year. Put them out on the porch for a wallet-friendly solution.
- 3 “Decorate” your white t-shirt with ketchup for a last-minute costume. That definitely wasn't an accidental spill.
- 2 Sit inside, turn out the lights and hide from trick-o-treaters. Candy is expensive.
- 1 Dress up as Santa. Christmas is only two months away!

>> Victor Liu