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stunning SENIORS

HOMECOMING CLASS OF 2019 OUTDUELS OTHER GRADES IN ANNUAL COMPETITION

BY AshleyFeng & KayleneMorrison

As senior Ferennie Liu strutted down the quad steps with her flag held high during the seniors' Quad Day performance last Friday, it was impossible to miss her confident smile. Joined by senior Color Guard members, Liu was determined to make every second of the Class of 2019's last Homecoming count.

Liu and the rest of the seniors' hard work paid off when it was announced that they had won the annual competition. They had 1,538 points, while juniors were second with 1,515 points, followed by freshmen with 1,271 points and sophomores with 1,207 points.

In anticipation for their final Quad Day, the 275 seniors participating started preparing decorations as early as a month before the performance, and it was apparent that the seniors' experience gave them an upper hand over the rest of the classes.

>> SENIORS on pg. 3

Quad Day performers Daniel Bessonov (12), Neo Chen (12), Andrew Gao (12), Thomas Lim (12) and Hanlin Sun (12) focus on a difficult stunt on Sept. 21.

DoorDash ban enforced; staff asked to wear IDs

BY EdwinChen & KaitlynWang

In an effort to strengthen school safety this year, the administration has implemented new measures and more strictly enforced old ones.

One change is to require staff members to wear ID badges on campus. The IDs help students and emergency responders quickly identify who is a staff member.

"I think they're important to have," Spanish teacher Gina Rodriguez said. "Also in an emergency situation, it's good for us to have some law enforcement on campus know that we work here. I don't have any problem with it."

Administrators say ID badges not only

help identify staff, but also make obvious any adults on campus who don't have a visitor's pass.

Another security enhancement is a stepped up ban of food deliveries from apps such as DoorDash, which was first implemented last year, principal Paul Robinson said.

Concerns about having unidentified intruders on campus stemmed in part from the influx of food deliveries in recent years, prompting the enforcement of the food delivery ban.

Students, especially underclassmen who cannot leave campus, may find DoorDash appealing. But according to Robinson,

>> DOORDASH on pg. 4

Athletics department in third year of debt

BY SherrieShen & MichaelWong

Because of a continued decline in parental donations, the athletics department ran a deficit of nearly \$60,000 in 2017-18 and had to be bailed again with donations by other school organizations, athletics director Tim Lugo said.

A record-low 70 percent donation rate failed to cover the \$208,000 worth of expenses last year.

To make up for this deficit, the Saratoga Foundation and Sports Boosters donated \$37,800 while ASB picked up the remaining \$21,522, filling the gap in the same way they had for the 2016-17 school year.

The athletics department now owes the

ASB a cumulative total of \$106,522.

This year, the athletics department is starting out even worse. With a 53 percent donation rate as of Sept. 7, fall sport donations are \$11,000 short compared to the fall of last year, Lugo said.

To combat the lack of response, athletic director Tim Lugo and principal Paul Robinson have personally visited team meetings for every single sport since this past spring.

"A lot of it is just education on our part," Lugo said. "Getting parents to be educated on what the money goes for, what it is used for and the different organizations we have."

>> ATHLETICS on pg. 6

'Breaking Down Walls' to promote unity

BY NityaMarimuthu & EmilieZhou

The school is hosting a program called "Breaking Down the Walls" during the week of Oct. 22 that will feature assemblies and activities that aim to help create a warmer, more welcoming environment for all students.

"The focus of the week was breaking down the perceptions that we have of each other as human beings and students of this school so that we can interact and work together instead of compete," said assistant principal Kerry Mohnike, leader

of the school's equity team, the group that is spearheading the week.

>> THE bigidea

Breaking Down the Walls

When: Oct. 22-26

What: A week of assemblies and training to connect students with their peers and teachers, and give them the opportunity to meet new people on a personal level.

Learning for Living, the same company that created Link Crew, is running the program. Breaking Down the Walls week will consist of a mix of small group interactions, assemblies and trainings. During this week, students will have opportunity to connect with their peers and meet new people on a more personal level.

On Monday, the program will start with an all-school assembly in the morning and training for Link Crew leaders in the afternoon. Students

in Link Crew will take on leadership roles during the week as freshmen, sophomores and juniors participate in different workshops and activities.

Seniors are not going to be included in the activity sessions, but willing seniors can take on leadership roles. This is in part due to the lack of time, but also to encourage seniors to take a broader role in the program.

According to counselor Eileen Allen, the idea of Breaking Down the Walls came about when the team was discussing how to connect teachers and students and reduce false perceptions about others. Teachers went through a similar training the week before school started and appreciated the experience.

"The training was really well structured

>> EQUITY on pg. 6

>> what'sinside

OPINION

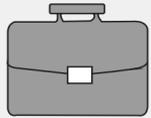
Staff editorial

Campus DoorDash ban enforcement takes school in safer direction. **pg. 7**

TEACHERS

New classrooms

Veteran teachers adjust to new classrooms in wake of changes in faculty and construction on campus **pg. 16**



news >> briefs

Seniors win hackathon with environmental app

Seniors Rohan Pandey, Miguel Tenant and Abhinav Tumu placed first out of 20 teams in the annual SRC Code competition, a student-run hackathon, on Sept. 8 and 9, each winning a pair of Beats headphones.

During the competition, they developed sWEep, a mobile app that raises environmental awareness and helps people locate trash to pick up. The name of the app is a pun combining the words "sweep" and "we."

Users of the map-based app take pictures of garbage, which the app identifies by comparing the picture with a database of images through machine learning. sWEep will then place a blip with an assigned point value on the map. The map is connected worldwide to other people's phones through Google so that others can pick up that trash and log points.

"We created this app so that people could have an easy and accessible way to do their part in helping to pick up trash and cleaning the environment," Tumu said. "People can get points for logging trash and picking it up, but picking it up is worth much more. People are inherently lazy. Usually the litter is too much work to pick up, so they let someone else get it." ♦

— Howard Tang

Upcoming season brings changes to mock trial

As a new season approaches, mock trial begins the year facing new challenges.

After coaching for four years, attorney coach Mary McDonnell moved to Chicago over the summer. Attorney coach Jing Lee also notified club supervisor Matt Torrens that she will not be able to teach this year, leaving mock trial in need of a coach.

Torrens has reached out to parents, faculty, the Santa Clara University School of Law and the Santa Clara County Bar Association in hopes of finding a new coach, to no avail. The team may have to function without professional instruction, which has not lent itself to success in past years without coaches, Torrens said.

However, senior vice president Khiara Berkowitz said that because the club had great mentors, returning members of mock trial have gained experience with the trial process.

"[Working without an attorney coach] would definitely take a lot of hard work and collaboration between all members of mock trial, but if people are willing to take initiative and put in the effort, we can accomplish a lot," she said.

Furthermore, mock trial lost several key members to graduation last year, but their empty spots provide plenty of room for new members to participate. The team welcomes students from all skill sets, from acting and public speaking to drawing. In particular, Berkowitz said she hopes the club will gain more drama students to play witnesses.

This year's case, People v. Klein, focuses on a criminal threat and the First Amendment, which differs from last year's murder trial. In the case, Reagan Klein is charged with making a false emergency report and a criminal threat against his coworker, Sawyer Smith; the pretrial argument addresses whether Reagan's message was a true threat.

"It's hard to live up to a murder case, but this case is definitely interesting to argue as it's not entirely black and white," Berkowitz said. "It's also applicable to our everyday lives as it deals with the negative use of social media." ♦

— Kaitlyn Tsai

>> falcononline



Top Story

Reporter recommends La Cueva over all others as a quick and delicious lunch spot. on pg. 13

Picture of the Week

Sophomore Isaac Sun leaps over other sophomore stunt dancers during their quad day on Sept. 19. FALCON // ALAN ZU

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

>> picturethis



FALCON // KRITHI SANKAR

TEACHER QUAD DAY >> Teachers Natasha Ritchie, Jason Friend, principal Paul Robinson and Andrew Ford play Professor McGonagall, Professor Snape, Dumbledore and Harry Potter in their rendition of Harry Potter for the teachers' homecoming skit on Sept. 17.

Boba 'bandits' drain class funds

BY Anishi Patel & Rohan Kumar

With just under 45 boba stores within 5 miles of the school, it's no wonder that class officers have been hosting boba fundraisers for years.

Each class hosts around five boba fundraisers a semester, during which they buy and sell more than 100 cups of boba an event. But these fundraisers come with a downside: thieves who nab the drinks and deprive the classes of needed funds.

After realizing what had been going on, class officers are now positioning themselves around their boba boxes to deter theft.

"We try to have a barricade and people standing and watching," sophomore class president Erica Lee said, "because [boba thieves] just come to the back and take boba out of the boxes. Sometimes they take the whole box."

Other students use more indirect methods, often telling a class officer that payment was made to another person, then demanding boba.

According to junior class president Emma Hsu, the junior class boba policy prevents this type of

theft by mandating that the class officer who collects the money must also distribute the boba.

Junior class officers put their policy into action during the second semester of the 2017-18 school year, and have had less boba stolen since, Hsu said.

"Some sophomore class fundraisers have lost nearly \$50 of a possible \$200 in profit to theft."

SOPHOMORE Cynthia Zhang

When buying from Teatop, the junior class gets a 20 percent discount on an order of 100 drinks, which allows them to make a profit when they sell boba at school. But each stolen boba cuts into this margin.

"When someone steals a \$5 boba, we have to sell six more to make up for the stolen one, losing profit on all six," sophomore class representative Cynthia Zhang said.

Some sophomore class fundraisers have lost nearly \$50 of a

possible \$200 in profit to theft, Lee said.

The 25 percent loss from these thefts seems even more significant when put into perspective with class officer goals. Sophomore class secretary Tyler Chu said the goal of the sophomore class is to raise around \$10,000 this year. If the class was to earn the maximum amount of money during each boba fundraiser, the overall profit from the 10 events would cover 20 percent of this goal. At the current rate, allowing for profit lost to theft, boba fundraisers would only contribute 15 percent, \$500 less than their potential profit.

Although no such incidents have been reported to the administration, assistant principal Brian Thompson said, any reports of theft will be dealt with appropriately.

Although boba remains popular for fundraising, Zhang pointed out boba thieves may not recognize that their actions are directly detrimental to their class officer.

"We work really hard, using our own [class] money to buy boba, and people who steal are basically just taking away our ability to provide services and activities like prom," Zhang said. ♦

'Julius Caesar' cast list released

BY Anishi Patel & Oliver Ye

Preparations for the fall play, "Julius Caesar," are well underway after the Sept. 11-14 auditions concluded and a cast list was posted.

Headlining the play will be senior Dermot Gleeson as Roman politician and military general Julius Caesar; senior Shasta Ganti as Caesar's friend, Brutus; senior Matteo Morganstern as one of Caesar's most outspoken enemies, Cassius; junior Matilda Hickman-Smith as Caesar's wife, Calpurnia; junior Surbhi Bhat as Brutus's wife, Portia, and senior Raghav Malaviya as Caesar's steadfast political supporter, Antony.

Julius Caesar, a Shakespearean play, is the first non-contemporary production the drama department has put on in over six years.

"I feel that Shakespeare is just so prominent in every school curriculum in America that a drama program should commit to doing

one every once in a while," drama teacher Sarah Thermond said. "I firmly believe that Shakespeare plays are meant to be seen live, and it's also good variety for students to handle classical language."

The play's language and style provide a novel challenge for cast members, calling for extra research and preparation.

"It's an earlier form of English, and there are a lot more lines to get used to," Malaviya said, "but I think it will be a challenge that we can take on and succeed in."

In order to better familiarize himself with Antony's lines and character, Malaviya said he marks up the script with a modern English translation of each passage, noting his character's actions and emotions.

Younger students have also stepped up to the challenge, surprising Thermond with their efforts.

"I thought [Shakespearean monologues] would be difficult, but the students were really good,"

she said. "Even freshmen I had never met walked in and did an amazing job [at auditions]."

The play is an attractive one to put on in that most English 10 classes read it as part of the curriculum, giving upperclassmen a high degree of familiarity with it.

"It's a really good show, especially for all the juniors or seniors who have already gone through it [in school], because it's easier for us to understand," Malaviya said.

Putting on a play many students recognize also boosts attendance, Thermond said.

In putting on the show, the drama department will be adding more combat scenes, experimenting with new audio and visual technology.

"We have fewer days for rehearsals, so this is going to be exciting," Thermond said, "but in terms of performance ability, they are already most of the way there."

Julius Caesar will premiere on Nov. 10, with additional shows on Nov. 11, 16 and 17. ♦

FRESHMEN

BY Rahul Vadlakonda

The Class of 2022 finished its first Homecoming performance on Sept. 18, overcoming obstacles and taking the school on an adventure to Narnia.

Despite the traditionally low expectations for freshman decorations and Quad Day performances, the class nonetheless pulled through, impressing the audience by adjusting on the fly to a faulty sound system and singing their music sequence during the all-girls dance.

All-girls dance choreographer freshman Kaylie Wong said that the unexpected obstacle, though initially upsetting, quickly became a positive moment of the performance.

"Everyone can participate and join in on the action by showing school pride and being the best class."

FRESHMAN Derek Hsu

"[Although the music turned off] everyone kept dancing and started singing, which was mind blowing and made me forget all the bad thoughts," she said.

Wong said she thought the main challenge of

Homecoming was not inexperience, but rather the delay in choosing freshman class officers.

During preparations for the girls' dance, Wong said that setting practice times, choosing songs and ordering shirts for a large group proved to be a challenge.

"It was pretty hard organizing things and making sure things weren't changed a few days before the performance," she said.

Freshman class president Derek Hsu added that despite their inexperience with Homecoming, the freshman decorations exceeded initial expectations.

"Our decorations were even better than the sophomore class, according to some upperclassmen," he said. "I am proud of everyone who helped."

Although their decorations turned out successful, Hsu said that the preparation for the freshman skit was where they ran into problems.

"Monday night was officially our first time going through the entire performance and there were many mishaps," he said. "Whether it was faulty music or missed cues, everyone was scrambling to prepare for the performance."

Senior Anuj Changavi said that despite this being a new experience for freshmen, their skit made it seem otherwise.

"Considering they were freshmen, they did well," Changavi said. "It was their first time and they had a lot of dances compared to what we had freshman year." ♦

SOPHOMORES

BY Connie Liang

"If I'm going to do nothing for an hour, you might as well just enroll me in leadership class!"

"That's it! Who do you think you are?"

"I'm pretty hot chocolate if I do say so myself!"

This year the sophomore "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" skit centered around the premise of a candy-making class led by Mr. Wonka. Emphasizing inter-class roasts and puns with a sweet twist, the performance included all-boys, all-girls, hip-hop, stunt, color guard, Bollywood, K-Pop and finale dances.

Hip-hop dance coordinator sophomore Tabitha Hulme, who acted as Violet in the quad day skit, said that the dance coordinators placed more emphasis on organizing schedules this year. These measures included additional dance tutorial videos on Facebook, specialized one-on-one lessons and separate groups to help those who missed practice catch up.

"With the less time we've had, it has definitely been a little more challenging getting everything finished to how we want it to look," Hulme said, noting that although there were rehearsal conflicts they always found a way to work around it.

Sophomore Jessie Zhou, who participated in the hip-hop dance, said practices were mostly productive, a difference compared to freshman year.

"Last year was a little more laid back," Zhou said. "I think it's because this year we have to make a better impression than the freshmen."

Some factors to the performance, how-

ever, were out of the dancers' control.

A little more than 10 seconds into the beginning of the K-Pop routine, the background track cut off. For the following few minutes, sporadic bursts of music were interrupted by long pauses while the dancers attempted to synchronize their movements, having to restart the dance repeatedly. Finally, they continued on without the help of music, following instead a background drummer's beat and the audience's chant of "K-Pop, K-Pop, K-Pop!"

"When we had to do it over and over, I was laughing because we roasted the freshmen on how their music kept on stopping and yet it backfired on us," said sophomore class treasurer Lauren Tan.

The long hallway stretching from the school's front entrance to the library, where sophomore decorations are held, also proved problematic for the sophomore class. Sophomore Arnav Mangal, who organized the boys' dance and played Mike in the skit, said the many exits and entrances in that particular area caused the decorations to appear more sparse and spread out.

The sophomore Homecoming coordinators also created incentives including pizza during move-in day in hopes that more people would show up to help decorate. They also asked certain teachers to give extra credit for participation, but this resulted in "some people coming just for the extra credit and not helping that much," according to Mangal.

Although the sophomore decorations became the butt of jokes from the upperclassmen, Hulme said that everyone was surprised by how well the overall performance turned out, especially given the tighter deadlines this year.

"I'd definitely say this year's Quad Day was a success because of how motivated everyone was to put on their best performance," Hulme said. "We wanted to really go hard on roasts and dances, and we were really happy with what we produced." ♦

For Liu, the end result was worth the hours spent practicing on the upper field.

"We put in the time and the effort, and I think we really pulled through on our last Homecoming," Liu said.

Also, stunt dance choreographers Amy Tang and Francesca Chu decided to hold late night practices, often from 9 to 10:30, in order to accommodate to the schedules of the 21 students in the dance. Though they started teaching choreography three weeks before the performance, the two ended up changing the mix on Monday of Homecoming week, four days before the performance. However, the stressful days that ensued were worth it considering the stellar performance.

The seniors also found ways to incorporate previous years' Quad Days into their performance.

Senior Enzo Coglitore sprinted out during the All Boys' Dance to recreate a move they had done freshman year, where Coglitore mimed pulling the rest of the dancers towards him while the boys crawled on the ground, reaching up at him.

"[Senior Justin] Chao and I were talking about ideas to make the all-boys dance legendary and we knew that we wanted to tie it back to freshman year," Coglitore said. "So we decided that I would run out and do the move again."

At the end of the show, Alice, played by senior Sasha Pickard, reflected on her journey through past Homecoming themes — Atlantis, Cars and Back to the Future — ultimately realizing that there was no place she would rather be than Saratoga.

For the seniors, the hours put into Homecoming preparations over the years culminated in a memorable finale.

"Homecoming is such a grind, but I really enjoyed those late night dance practices hanging out with everyone or painting and listening to some sweet jams," said El-Ashmawi. "It's our last year of high school and these are the type of memories that I will never forget." ♦



JUNIORS

BY Ashley Feng & Kaylene Morrison

As a group of dancers clad in black clothing and blue bandanas crowded around a single table in the middle of the quad, junior George Bian ran down the steps in a lion costume, holding a gallon of water. Right as the beat dropped, he flipped the gallon and the crowd went wild.

This was one of the highlights of the junior class's "Wizard of Oz"-themed Quad Day skit on Thursday, Sept. 20. Compared to last year, participation in decorations and dances increased, with popular dances like the stunt dance and all girls' dances seeing more interest. One focus of the junior Quad Day this year was the stunt dance, choreographed by juniors Ashleigh Abe and Vivienne Nguyen.

While Abe and Nguyen were excited to put together the stunt dance, neither has an extensive dance background or experience with choreography. In fact, Abe, who has an extensive background in gymnastics, joined the dance team for the first time this year.

"It took a lot to think of what skills people have and whether or not it would end up looking too messy to put out there on Quad Day," Abe said.

In contrast, junior Alena Jarrett had a fairly extensive acting background as she led the juniors in writing their Quad Day skit. Jarrett has worked in a wide range of jobs in the entertainment industry starting from age 4, and also has experience playing extras in movies. Additionally, she has been writing the script for her class's Quad Day performances since freshman year.

Jarrett began writing four days after the themes were announced, and after watching "The Wizard of Oz" and variations of it such as "The Great and Powerful Oz," Jarrett made a rough skeleton of the skit, which was completed with suggestions from juniors Emma Hsu, Risa Carter and Livi Katz.

Jarrett thinks that she has improved as a script writer since last year and that the ac-

tors had a better performance as well.

"Our jokes and plot were more original and relevant, and our transitions were a lot smoother," Jarrett said.

In order to make next year's skit more of a success, Jarrett took note of aspects of the performance that the juniors needed to work on.

"Our dances could be better incorporated into the story line and we could use more stage space," she said.

One problem that hurt both the quality of the skit and the stunt dance was the inadequate number of scheduled practices. The academic pressures of junior year prevented many from attending the few rehearsals that were scheduled.

"Stunt is something where you want it to look good as a group," said Abe, "and it's hard to choreograph for a group if a few people aren't able to show up to practices."

With the tight deadlines of this year's Homecoming week, the dancers didn't begin practices until two weeks before the Quad Day performance. Abe and Nguyen choreographed the basics prior to practices, but they completed the dance with help from other dancers.

"Throughout every practice everyone was able to work together, input ideas and change things," Abe said.

Even with problems coordinating practices, the dancers were able to pull off some new tricks, incorporating an aerial line, smoke bombs and even a water bottle flip.

"I think the choreographers for the stunt dance really stepped it up this year, because the tricks were cleaner and the formations seemed more organized," junior class president Emma Hsu said. "The new tricks were nice because they show how we have changed now that we are upperclassmen." ♦



El-Ashmawi



TALISMAN / JUSMAN KHAN

French teacher Elaine Haggerty shows her new ID picture on a lanyard around her neck, following the recently implemented safety measures on campus.

SAFETY

continued from pg. 1

Doordash is not suited for a school environment.

"It's presented more problems than not," Robinson said. "Doordash works best when it's delivered directly to your home. Coming to school, getting deliveries like pizza — it's just not a good idea. A lot of times it ends up going sideways versus getting to the right place."

In additional efforts to strengthen safety measures, the administrative and counseling staff attended a threat assessment training program last spring, which emphasized how to conduct interviews after receiving a reported threat. Teachers, parents and students will also have an opportunity to participate in an online training component in October.

"Communication, connection, early involvement of law enforcement and training for students and parents: all of this is what we are working on this year," Robinson said. "The threat assessment training taught us new things, but it also verified that many of the things we already knew and had in place were good for us to do. That's how we're continuing to try to increase what we can do on campus to keep all of us safe."

Because students may know something that is occurring before adults do, it is important for them to feel comfortable coming in and talking with an adult, Robinson said. Good communication can help prevent something from happening that may be catastrophic.

"We're not immune to the problems of the world," teacher Matt Torrens said. "I think we need to be prepared for things that we're reading about in the newspapers."

Sophomore Andrew Xiao also voiced support for the training.

"It's definitely what the school should be doing," Xiao said. "We should be spending more time preventing school incidents."

Xiao believes that additional measures should be taken to improve school safety, specifically increased funding for school therapy services.

"I see a lot of times when students have problems, they don't get help and try to tough it out," Xiao said. "Creating a more open environment and encouraging students to use their resources more is important for school safety."

With efforts ranging from ID badges to threat assessment training for teachers, Robinson hopes that together, administration, students and staff can help ensure that the campus remains a safe place for everyone.

"That's what we want to achieve: to make sure that every student feels really comfortable that when they recognize that something's wrong, they let an adult know on campus so we can take care of it as quickly as possible," Robinson said, "because that's the only way we keep each other safe." ♦

Robotics reaches unprecedented numbers of student participants

By Rohan Kumar

The school's MSET Robotics Club has reached historical levels of enrollment this year, allowing it to cancel its annual Open House recruiting event after reaching capacity at 120 members.

Interest in the program has been ticking upward. In 2016, the team had 82 registered members. In 2017, there were 109 registered members.

Sheeba Garg, the president of MSET Boosters, said that a new robotics club at Redwood Middle School has led to the increase in popularity. Many of the freshmen who enrolled the high school club this year were also members of the Redwood club.

The Redwood club will continue to have four teams of 15 students each this year, for a total of 60 members. With many of these students being eighth graders, members will likely continue to flow into its high school equivalent for years to come.

Another factor that helped attract more students to the club is the MSET FRC team's

qualification for the World Championship in Houston last year, Robotics president senior Basil Shama said. This achievement has helped add prestige to the club's FRC program, making it more desirable for students hoping to be part of a competitive team.



Shama

With interest in robotics growing rapidly and only three club members graduating from the school the previous year, the club has had to expand significantly. In 2016, the club was divided into three teams of 15 members that participated in the FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) and one team of 60 members that participated in the FIRST Robotics Challenge (FRC), which is a more advanced competition.

In 2017, the club expanded to include four FTC teams, increasing its maximum capacity from 105 students to 120 students.

The club was unable to expand any further, and interest eventually surpassed the club's capacity. The club was forced to choose returning FTC members on the basis of skill, and handed out the remaining

FTC and FRC positions on a first-come-first-serve basis, ultimately turning down many interested students.

"We were really excited to have so much interest in the club but didn't want to extend past the number of members where we felt like we couldn't train those members or have enough work for all the students to have significant roles in the club," Shama said.

Shama added that various constraints notably the space and parent technical volunteers available to the club.

The club is still limited to two buildings in the old music quad, but it is in the process of having its space expanding in coming years.

Given these constraints, Garg, the Booster's president, said that the club has reached a good balance between resources and members.

"With the mentor support and everything that we do, I think that's the maximum we can have," she said. "This is an optimal level at which any organization can operate. And this I think is almost past our optimal level, but we are right there." ♦

New world language head focuses on interdepartmental collaborations

By Samantha Yee

Following the recent retirement of Arnaldo Rodriguez, the longtime head of the world languages department, Spanish teacher Sarah Voorhees stepped in to the role of department head after teaching at the school for 19 years.

Within the first few weeks of the school year, she has been focusing on interdepartmental collaborations, especially with the special education department.

"I don't remember ever meeting other departments for collaborations before," Voorhees said. "[The meeting with the special ed department was] great; everyone said it was really helpful."

The main goal of this collaboration is to help foreign language teachers work more effectively with individual special education students.

They discussed how students qualified for Individualized Education Plans (IEP), regarding their accommodations and goals and how these services could apply in foreign language classes.

"We talk about things that are going to help the whole school too, versus just my department."

TEACHER Sarah Voorhees



Each foreign language teacher received feedback about what teaching and studying

strategies each student with an IEP needs to be successful.

Special education department chair Brian Elliott is optimistic about the future of the two department's relationship.

"I think we've kind of pioneered a model that a lot of teachers are going to want to participate in," Elliott said. "I would think that this might be something we do every year at the beginning of the year, just so that all teachers get a good understanding and overview of their students, and their individual learning needs."

Voorhees hopes to have more interactions with other departments, such as English or math, as the year progresses.

"We talk about things that are going to benefit the whole school too, versus just my department," she said. "It has been interesting to know what's going on in other departments." ♦

800 wing construction noise disrupts classes as wellness center moves ahead

By Allen Chen

Junior Naveen Bashyam sits in English teacher Meg Battey's room in the middle of a 30-point Socratic seminar, and he's yet to speak for the first time. He notices a lull in the conversation, and leaps at the chance. Just as he is about to deliver the sentence of the century, the sound of clattering and buzzing outside the door cuts him off. He freezes, and someone else takes the opportunity to speak.

This scenario might resound with students in classes near the nascent student-wellness center. The remodeling of the 800 wing has been ongoing since last year.

When complete, the center will provide a student center, places for students to meet with CASSY counselors and rooms for teachers to collaborate.

"Our wellness center should be the heart of campus," principal Paul Robinson said. While the original estimated budget for the project was \$3.5 million, the actual price is en route to being significantly less. This is mostly due to the roof being in bet-

ter shape than the administration first expected.

Bashyam is ready to see the building completed.

"It'll help the students' stress. Counselors being there and it being a chill place will really help students relax."

JUNIOR Naveen Bashyam

"It'll help the students' stress," Bashyam said. "Counselors being there and it being a chill place will really help students relax."

The construction, which was scheduled to finish over the summer, was delayed by a severe concrete hose malfunction. The workers were forced to move the concrete by wheelbarrow as a last resort. The building is now expected to finish in January,

Robinson said.

The construction crew, which has finished laying down concrete, is now beginning the process of framing the walls. The administration expects to begin installing plumbing and electricity soon.

Because they are only remodeling a building, as opposed to building a new one, the construction is significantly easier. The downside is that the construction needs to occur in the middle of campus, creating noise and dust.

The administration has tried to schedule the loudest operations after school, but there inevitably are still distractions during school hours. Regardless, Robinson thinks the benefits of a central student-wellness center will outweigh the temporary noise during class.

"It's going to be a place for students to gather, a place for our CASSY counselors to be meeting with students, a place for teachers to gather and collaborate," Robinson said. "We all want to get it built as soon as possible, so we're just going to have to deal with some noise right now." ♦

50 clubs seek members at two-day Club Fair

By Sandhya Sundaram & Amanda Zhu

Armed with tri-fold posters and bowls of candy, club officers shouted from their tables, attempting to lure in students to join the numerous clubs stationed in the quad for the annual Club Fair.

Like last year, the event fell on the Wednesday and Thursday after Homecoming, Sept. 26 and 27. Officers from various academic, service, cultural and art clubs showcased their club's purpose, previous accomplishments and opportunities to attract new members.

Senior clubs commissioners Cameron Lin and Samyu Iyer decided to make Club Fair extend over two days, as opposed to the three-day event

from last year.

The first day was for academic clubs such as Science Club, and the second for service and culture clubs, such as Korean Club and Interact. The commissioners hope that the two days will give students a chance to get an in-depth view of many clubs and make informed decisions based on their interests.

"We wanted to make sure that people are able to see all the clubs just because there are so many clubs at our school," Lin said.

For many students, the event itself is often chaotic and confusing, with enthusiastic officers recruiting at every corner and a crowd of people standing in the quad. To aid students in finding specific

clubs, the Leadership class put up posters around the school to make it easier to navigate the event.



ALL GRAPHICS BY ASHLEY FENG

In addition, Lin and Iyer decided to make both days an open campus, meaning that as usual, upperclassmen will be permitted to leave campus during lunch so there will be less people in the quad.

The commissioners did not want to limit students' freedom for two days by closing the campus and knew it would be beneficial in terms of overcrowding by club booths.

"We felt that the people who wanted to stay and check out the clubs would stay," Lin said. "So we didn't need to make it mandatory for the whole student body to stay."

Senior Rachel Bakke, an officer in the TedX club, said her group had a fundraiser prior to Club Fair to help cover costs. Bakke also set up posters

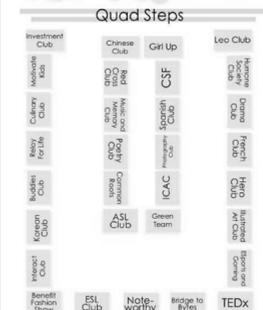
and a laptop for people to sign up. "I think we might have a video of stuff for people to know what we actually do," Bakke said. "We want to be able to explain our club really simply to get other people to join."

Lin hoped that the event would draw in freshmen to get involved with the school community and school activities with the changes made.

Because the event had been split into two days, it was easier for students to select the best club for their interests.

"The goal is to have especially the underclassmen, even if they're just joining one club, to really find a club that they're passionate about and that they feel comfortable in," Lin said. "I think that with the wide variety that we have at our school, they can find something." ♦

Service & Arts/Culture Clubs (Thursday, September 27th)



Classrooms benefit from academic tutors

By Aaria Thomas & Kaitlyn Tsai

Most people have seen teacher's assistants quietly doing their own work at the back of classrooms, or in the halls running errands for teachers. Being a TA is a popular choice for the applied arts credit, but few have heard of taking on the role of an academic tutor.

Academic tutors are less well known and less numerous than TAs are. Four students are academic tutors this year as compared to 76 TAs, according to registrar Robert Wise.

The position was first opened four years ago with the intent of providing students with a more hands-on experience with supporting a class, assistant principal Brian Safine said.

While a TA works more for teachers or the office and performs clerical work, an academic tutor operates as someone who ensures that all students understand the content.

However, because helping students is more interactive than doing clerical work, students tend to gravitate more toward being TAs in order to have periods of time to catch up with their own academics.

Sophomore Wilson Fung, a TA for

Sara Tseng's Chinese 1 class, seconds this idea, saying that he often has time to do homework during the class. Otherwise, his tasks include retrieving materials from the office, copying paper and occasionally participating in class activities.

"It is a good experience; you build a better connection with the teacher," Fung said.

On the other hand, senior Leandra Kingsley, an academic tutor for special education teacher Lauren Taylor's independent academic study class, spends more time working with students.

During class, Kingsley helps students who have questions about their homework. Once, she organized important information for math problems for a student with a migraine to do.

Kingsley originally started volunteering in the tutoring center but decided to switch to being an academic tutor.

"I like to help people, and being an academic tutor is a good way to help people while also earning credit," she said.

Math teacher Kelly Frangieh has experience working with both TAs and academic tutors. Since her class is more "teacher-centered instruction," she is unsure of how she should integrate an

academic tutor into her class.

As such, Frangieh prefers having TAs in her class because they can handle clerical work that would otherwise take teachers a long time to do, such as grading homework or making packets.

"As a department, a lot of times we'll shoot emails back and forth asking, for example, 'Does someone have a TA third period? I need some help organizing some books,'" she said. "It's a super helpful time saver for sure."

By providing assistance in the classroom, TAs and academic tutors can develop certain skill sets.

However, she still agrees that academic tutors could provide more support to other classrooms.

Taylor said students often learn best from other students, and academic tutors offer that type of support. Since academic tutors are students as well, they are more in-tune to how classes are being taught and can help students by mimicking what

their own teachers model in class.

Furthermore, academic tutors provide more face-to-face instruction to students.

"If the tutor is grasping what I'm doing, and the other students aren't, it allows us to divide the class in half and work with students in smaller groups," Taylor said. "Having more one-to-one instruction allows students to get the concepts more easily."

Overall, both roles provide many benefits for students as well as teachers. By providing assistance in the classroom, TAs and academic tutors can develop certain skill sets.

"Being a tutor is going to give me a chance to work with all kinds of people and help them with their schoolwork while also improving my teaching skills," Kingsley said.

TAs and academic tutors can take advantage of their service opportunities and further their own growth and development, making their efforts in the classroom valuable to everyone.

"Most of our students are old enough to recognize when you give of yourself in support of another person, there is an inherent growth in you as an individual," Safine said. "It's successful when our students work in support of others." ♦

Speaker Series celebrates its 10-year anniversary

By Amy Tang

The Media Arts Program has held many speaker series over the years, with guests including USA Olympics photographer Jeff Cable and NBC anchor Scott McGrew. To celebrate the 10-year of the series, MAP is hosting an advance screening of documentary created by three Saratoga High alumni on Oct. 9 at 5:30 pm in the McAfee Center.

The event, which has free admission, has invited former MAP teacher and co-creator of the program Tony Palma to make an opening address. Following him, MAP Booster parents will talk about the creation and the development of the program.

A screening of the investigative documentary, "Fail State," will follow the speakers. The event will be a premiere for the audience because the documentary won't be officially released on Amazon Prime and other platforms until later this year.

The documentary, produced by Dan

Rather, investigates the for-profit college industry, specifically the ways that colleges exploit low-income and minority students.

The documentary investigates the for-profit college industry, specifically the ways that colleges exploit low-income and minority.

According to senior and MAP student leader Kitty Huang, MAP Boosters coordinated with the speakers to create the event, while the MAP student leadership board worked to promote the event on campus. "We worked really hard to pull this all together," Huang said. "This is a special event and I hope a lot of people will show up." ♦

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SJART ACADEMY

Band leadership changes to increase efficiency

By **Connie Liang** & **Sofia Jones**

With their backs to the empty bleachers, junior Alena Jarrett and seniors AJ Lee and Deyshna Pai stood on raised blocks on the football field recently for a normal after school rehearsal, and motioned to the beat of the music. Before them, a moving column of students holding clarinets, flutes and trumpets spread out across the field and stepped into position.

Jarrett, Lee and Pai are three drum majors who hold traditionally integral roles in the marching band leadership hierarchy. This year, however, members of the 140-member marching band are learning a new show, titled "A Dream Within," as well as adapting to a student leadership system.

Band leadership in previous years put drum majors at the top of the hierarchy, followed by general managers, managers and section leaders. The new system, in contrast, has multiple manager teams rather than just one, replaces general managers with seven captains and almost doubles the number of students in leadership positions, from 29 members last year to 41 members this year.

"We wanted to improve upon last year where we couldn't get a lot of things done because there were just not enough people to do it," Lee said.

The leadership team's goals for the year are to increase connections between upperclassmen and underclassmen and help lessen the stress on band directors Jason Shiuan, Michael Boitz and Andrew Ford. The newly assigned captains are essentially

taking on a pre-drum major role; they lead and give advice to their respective sections.

The increase of people in each manager team means responsibility for jobs getting done is delegated to more people, ideally improving efficiency.

Shiuan noted that the group dynamic differs from year to year depending on who applies and who is in the group. With this particular group, however, he thinks it is going well.

"This year, a larger leadership team seems to be working out," Shiuan said. "People are starting to feel more involved in the program, and it helps them take ownership of the ensemble."

However, the new leadership team system is something some veterans are still adjusting to. Junior Brass Captain Joshua Yoon said that he believes there may now be too many people with leadership positions.

"Last year, there was a tighter connection between everyone," he said. "Leadership is already big enough, but this year it's so big I sometimes have trouble remembering everyone." On the other hand, Lee sees this as an opportunity for more students to take on the role of helping the adjusting freshmen, thereby fostering a more cohesive program for everyone.

Shiuan and others are seeing improvements from these changes and believe it is helping the band prepare for the approaching competition season in October.

"These new changes are really beneficial for this group, and as the season goes on, it feels like a step in the right direction," Shiuan said. ♦

Restrooms remodeled after student complaints

By **Andrew Lee** & **Jun Lee** & **Nitya Marimuthu**

After numerous complaints over the years, the Leadership class and administrators worked to have dividers installed between urinals the boys' bathrooms over the summer.

They have also arranged to soon have full-length mirrors put in the bathrooms in the gym lobby, where they will be used for dances and other events.

Following these initial improvements, Leadership is working on having dispensers for feminine products put in girls' bathrooms as well as upgrading the hand dryers in all bathrooms.

rooms by the gym has taken slightly more time than the urinal dividers, in part due to the "high standards" set by the administration.

"The students couldn't just go to Target and put in \$25 mirrors into school bathrooms; they have to be shatterproof and have steel around the sides," Torrens said.

The installation of the bathroom dividers received quick approval due to their cheaper nature, while the rest of the devices require additional planning and budgeting in order to meet the public school standards.

The final installation of the mirrors has been delayed several times as the construction team failed to show up to discuss plans. Delays are also due to the higher price than expected — almost \$500 per a mirror. Initially, Leadership planned on installing full-length mirrors in all of the bathrooms; however, due to the high prices, they have opted to add mirrors to only two bathrooms for now.

Administration has also added "flip-flop" holders to most of the bathrooms on campus, to alleviate student complaints about not having a sanitary place to put the mandatory flip-flops while attending to their needs.

Many students, however, are already thankful for the initial changes.

Said junior Alex Pan: "Before the dividers were added, the urinals were a very awkward place for everyone and just made going to the restroom a hassle. With the new dividers, the bathroom feels a lot more safe and comfortable and offers the privacy that people may want." ♦

"The bathroom feels a lot more safe and comfortable."



JUNIOR Alex Pan

According to a survey conducted last spring by ASB and Leadership, many boys noted a lack of privacy between urinals, while girls complained about faulty hand dryers as well as a lack of full-length mirrors and feminine product dispensers.

Activities director Matt Torrens said that installing the mirrors in the bath-

BREAKING DOWN WALLS

continued from pg. 1

and I thought it was far more comfortable to participate in than I was worried it would be," English 12 teacher Jason Friend said. "It let us see things about our fellow teachers that we didn't know before."

The main issues that the school hopes to address this week are the different barriers created by academic competition.

"I think sometimes, but not always, people tend to stick with people who are in the same kind of academic level of classes," Friend said. "I think that this wall can always be broken down more and people can realize that there's a lot of interesting people who they might not necessarily associate with all the time."

According to registrar Robert Wise, 663 out of 1,344 students, or 49.3 percent of students, are currently taking at least one AP class. Approximately 2.9 percent of freshmen, 32 percent of sophomores, 79.3 percent of juniors and 86.4 percent of seniors are enrolled in an AP class.

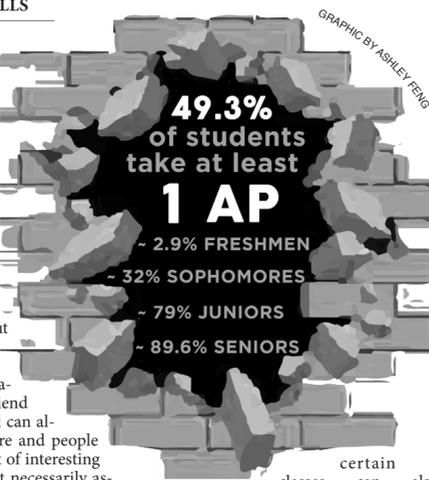
In addition, it's typical for students, especially juniors and seniors, to be taking multiple AP and honors classes.

This year, juniors are taking up to five AP classes while seniors are taking as many as six AP classes.

While many students take these classes to challenge themselves, others admit that the intense academic competition has also affected their decisions on choosing certain classes and their relationships.

"I am pressured to take all the classes that challenge me, but I try to overcome this and decide which classes would be the most useful," junior Quan Do said. "I think the mentality at SHS is that everybody is your competition, and that if you don't take hard classes, you will fall behind. While this helps with colleges, it could lead to an unhealthy high school experience."

The constant peer pressure to choose



certain classes can also negatively affect students and possibly increase stress for those who are overloading their schedules with difficult courses.

The prevalent academic competition also sometimes leads to students being isolated from their classmates. Offering help to others could give them a leg up, and the continuous race to the top leads to a ruthless environment.

"I think that academic competition has caused students to be kind of reserved and to hide some things from others," senior Elizabeth Hung said.

"Since we all know we're competing with each other, we might withhold information or try to undermine others."

While the goal of the assemblies and activities is to encourage inclusiveness among students, it's only a small step toward changing and improving the school's culture and environment.

"I think that Breaking Down the Walls week will potentially just allow people to have a little pause from that academic stress that everybody's under and see the bigger picture," Friend said.

"I think that can have small positive impacts, and then they might ripple into larger effects." ♦

ATHLETICS

continued from pg. 1

Team parents are now tasked with reminding other parents to donate. Credit card payments are no longer accepted, as the administrative team believes that a check-only policy will draw more donations.

At the root of the problem is that many parents are choosing not to donate at all or to donate directly to their child's sport only instead of making the asked-for \$250 contribution to the athletics department. This means that some individual sports have money, but the athletics department's budget suffers.

Lugo said the continued deficits will have even more negative ramifications unless corrected.

"We have to start making some tough decisions," Lugo said. "We're at the point where we might not be able to pay for assistant coaches or buses for sports because I've got to make sure the necessities are covered right now, and it's getting a little tight."

Despite complaints from parents, all sports must now fundraise for all their events and tournaments. Unlike in previous years, the athletic department will not allocate a certain sum to each sport for purchases.

This means that

\$148,678 remaining deficit

\$21,522 donated by the Saratoga Foundation and Sports Boosters

\$37,800 donated by ASB



to pay for new uniforms and equipment, each sport must fundraise.

Another possibility is that some smaller sports may be cut someday, but Lugo said he doesn't want to think along those lines just yet.

By contrast, larger, more traditional sports face little danger of being cut because they raise enough money to support themselves, Lugo said. Football, for example, raises \$50,000 annually and has never relied on the athletics department. Boys' and girls' basketball, baseball, field hockey are also self-funded.

Even sports like cross country can have deceptively high costs, Lugo said. With two buses, two-way transportation alone costs \$2,000 per away meet.

In comparison, it only costs \$2,200 to hire a referee for the entire season for volleyball, he said.

Boys' water polo is one of many sports already feeling the effects of a restricted budget.

"We can't afford to play tournaments, [so our team will have] less game experience," captain junior Grant Chen said.

As a result, the team started a fundraising effort this year, using Vertical Raise, a platform that tracks individual contributions and incentivizes the top five donors with gift cards.

At the end of their fundraiser, players raised a total of \$6,745, allowing them to purchase new balls, cages and suits, as well as pay for tournament fees.

As the debt to ASB continues to accumulate, Lugo hopes the district can step in and erase some of it, though negotiations for this funding have been delayed to allow the recently appointed superintendent time to become more familiar with the situation.

Looking forward, Lugo envisions that the scope of the current Sports Boosters will adjust to compensate for the athletic department's debt, focusing on a more sport-centric organization until teams can cover their own expenses.

"The money's got to come from somewhere," Lugo said. "How do we do these things without it?" ♦

FOURTH 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 amy.tang@saratogafalcon.org. For ad information, phone (408) 867-3411, ext. 222.

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DoorDash ban should be respected

As the noon lunch bell rings, a large crowd of upperclassmen stampedes to their cars before racing off campus to get lunch, while another crowd of underclassmen rushes to the school lunch lines.

Since off-campus lunch is a privilege exclusive to juniors and seniors, some underclassmen previously relied on services such as DoorDash and Uber Eats to get outside food delivered to the school.

That ended last year when the school banned such deliveries, and enforcement of the policy has been stepped up this year.

The first instinct of younger students may be to call it unfair.

And in some ways, they're right.

The school has essentially removed one of the only ways they can get outside food.

In the larger picture, though, this ban has proven beneficial to the school and the safety of its environment.

The school has cited numerous problems with food delivery services.

Because there is little

coordination between drivers and students, drivers were showing up to the office leaving food behind to sit there for hours or even days.

Food delivery drivers would also argue with office staff about payment.

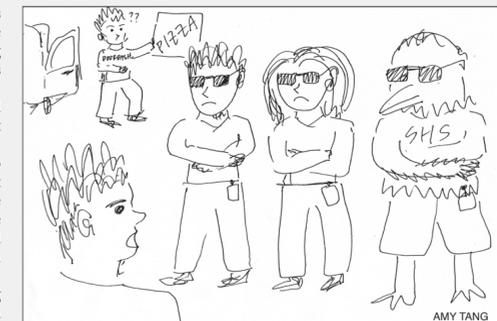
Because the people who ordered the food were often not there to make payment, and the office was not responsible for the order, explosive clashes would occur, sometimes resulting in drivers storming off in anger.

Perhaps most concerning of all, these services also pose a security risk.

Unidentified strangers entering campus to bring food for students, even if they do not visibly pose a threat, still stir uncertainty as nobody can confirm who these drivers are.

Being able to identify the people on campus is critical for student safety, especially in light of numerous national school safety incidents in 2018 alone.

Freshmen and sophomores should respect the DoorDash ban and wait their turn for off-campus meals.



AMY TANG

For now, they can bring their own lunches or, if they forget them, they can ask their parents to deliver food to a table outside the office.

And parents won't charge

the extra fees tacked on by DoorDash.

If all else fails, underclassmen can always just buy school lunches until they are allowed to go off campus. ♦

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

<i>Editors-in-chief</i> Elaine Fan Sanjana Melkote	<i>Opinion Editor</i> Amy Tang	<i>Reporter</i> Edwin Chen
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The Falcon staff voted 24-7 in support of this editorial.

Parent drivers need to adhere to school rules

By **Daniel Bessonov** & **Francesca Chu**

A blue Honda Odyssey parks in the middle of the senior lot. A small freshman escapes out its closing doors, frantically sprinting to get to his first-period class.

Amidst a symphony of honks, the minivan stays stationary as the driver picks up her phone, sips on her coffee and blocks all incoming traffic in the student parking lot.

Parking in the morning and arriving to class on time has become exponentially more difficult in recent years, especially so for students arriving at school with only a couple minutes to spare.

Ever since the back lot became a teacher-only parking zone and not a drop-off area last year, arriving at school past 8:05 has become a nightmare.

Upperclassmen have always had to compete for scarce parking spots. But now, we also have to increasingly compete with freshman and sophomore parents, who vehemently deny the existence of a traffic circle and choose to blissfully ignore the existence of the "Student Parking" sign.

To many parents, a designated drop-off area doesn't exist; instead, the entirety of the parking lot is their domain. Instead of dropping their kids off in the drop-off line like they're supposed

to, they choose to block five other cars in the student lot while taking their time and ensuring that their student leaves the car with a lunchbox, violin case and colossal backpack.

Then, adding to their original offense, they park in student-reserved spots for 10 minutes before going on with their days, forcing students to circle around the parking lot searching for empty spots.

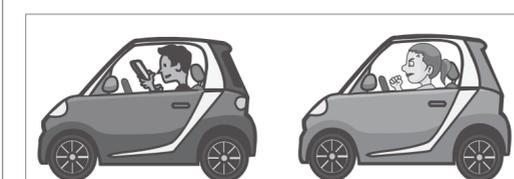
The nonchalance and total disregard of school rules by some parents is ridiculous.

Students getting dropped off illegally by the street or obnoxiously in the student parking lot should have to present their ID if confronted and face some sort of repercussion for being dropped off in the wrong place.

Essentially, by blocking other students and cars, parents are causing students to be late to their classes and exhibiting a selfish demeanor that gives parent drivers a bad reputation.

Until rules are enforced to keep parents out of student parking lots, this behavior will not change.

There's a reason a drop-off area exists: for parents or guardians to drop-off students. Most of all, parents of underclassmen need to understand that their car can only enter the student parking lot once their child is the one driving. ♦



GRAPHIC BY FRANCESCA CHU, ROHAN KUMAR AND OLIVER YE

4-day school week not beneficial for anybody

By **Justin Guo**

District 27], a suburban school district in Brighton, Colo., announced a switch to a four-day school week at the beginning of the 2018-19 school year due to budget problems.

Now, with the weekend extended through Monday, the remaining school days are being lengthened by 40 minutes.

This is not a new notion. For the past decade, the idea of shortening the school week when districts are in financial trouble has become increasingly more common.

According to the Education Commission of the States, approximately 560 districts in 25 states have at least one school that has adopted the four-day school week schedule.

At first glance, having an extra day off seems great. But upon further investigation, maintaining presents more advantages for students and teachers alike.

Advocates for a four-day school week claim it saves money, facilitates teacher recruitment and increases test scores and graduation rates.

Yet results from a 2009-2011 study claim just the opposite; savings are minimal, teacher recruitment is not necessarily better and test scores and graduation rates have been shown to be just the same and sometimes worse than the districts that use a five-day school week.

In theory, a three-day weekend should serve as a break, giving students more time to study for exams and teachers more time to prepare and grade.

But here's the downside: Teachers are pressured to teach the same amount of information

in a shorter time frame.

This could result in rushed lessons by teachers in attempts to stay on schedule.

Consequently, students may struggle to understand the material and scores on AP tests, as just one example, would suffer.

Another major consideration is the effect of longer school days on students.

Seven- to eight-hour school days already feel taxing. By extending the school day by an additional 40 minutes, students and teachers may feel even more burned out and fatigued, resulting in disengaged classes and wasted time for teachers.

The five-day school week is also beneficial for families that may struggle to find affordable daycare options for the off day, or families that depend on five days of school-provided meals.

The biggest upside of the current five-day school week is that the consistent schedule prepares students for the weekly schedule followed by the workforce.

It follows the general schedule of most full-time jobs: five days of work followed by two days, a weekend, or rest.

Naturally, students develop habits based around this schedule and learn how to juggle deadlines, time with friends and extracurricular activities while still attending school five days a week.

The standard school schedule gives teachers more time to explain material and grade assignments, provides benefits for low-income families and helps students get used to the schedule of a real job in order to manage their time more effectively.

Don't be fooled by the extra day of rest that the four-day school week offers: It's more hurtful than helpful. ♦

MILK BEFORE CEREAL

Cereal vs milk. It's a major controversy that divides millions of Americans today. Which one goes first? The majority of people appear to support cereal before milk, but milk should always be poured first.

"Cereal first" apologists claim that they can pour the right amount of milk for the amount of cereal that they want to eat.

But when the milk is poured in, all of the cereal is submerged before re-emerging to the surface. This method makes all of the cereal soggy immediately.

Adding cereal into pre-poured milk means that the cereal stays afloat, keeping most of the cereal dry and crunchy while still allowing some cereal pieces to submerge.

While the rest of you conformists eat soggy cereal by pouring cereal before milk, I am going to continue enjoying cereal at its highest, chosen, crunchy form.

— Edwin Chen

Comic Sans BEST FONT

By far the best life tip I have ever given: Write all essays in Comic Sans. The calming, casual script font will evoke memories of happier times for whoever is grading.

Of course, this use alone is short-sighted and limited. The real power of Comic Sans only reveals itself when you truly embrace it.

Start by changing all the text around you to Comic Sans. That poster on the wall? Reprint it in Comic Sans. The pictures you send in Snapchat? Slather them in Comic Sans. The Supreme logo on your shirt? You know what to do.

You will notice the results immediately. Your mind will enter a permanent calmness as the harmless letters work their magic.

Your friends will abandon you. It is OK. You do not need them. You have Comic Sans.

— Allen Chen

SPOTIFY FRUSTRATES

"Want a break from the ads?" So says the Spotify message and, yes, that would be nice. Sure, I'd even watch a 30-second video if I don't have to keep hearing advertisements about various auto parts.

Yet as "Sunflower" by Rex Orange County finishes, I'm hit with another wave of ads, this time about converting to Premium for only \$9.99 a month.

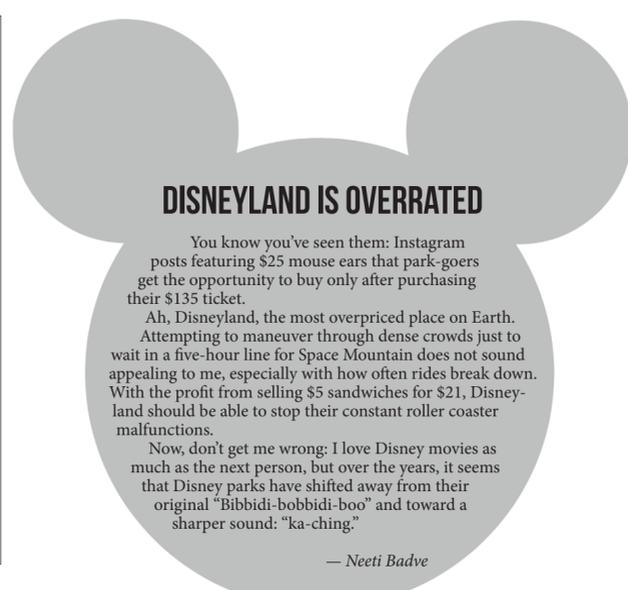
Look, I already knew I was broke. Stop rubbing it in.

Also, why is the mobile platform so much worse than the computer version? If the point of Premium is to allow users to pick their songs, then why let them do that online for free?

Dealing with Spotify is so frustrating that I've resorted to downloading music directly to my phone. It's easy, not that time-consuming, and guess what?

No ads.

— Justin Guo



DISNEYLAND IS OVERRATED

You know you've seen them: Instagram posts featuring \$25 mouse ears that park-goers get the opportunity to buy only after purchasing their \$135 ticket.

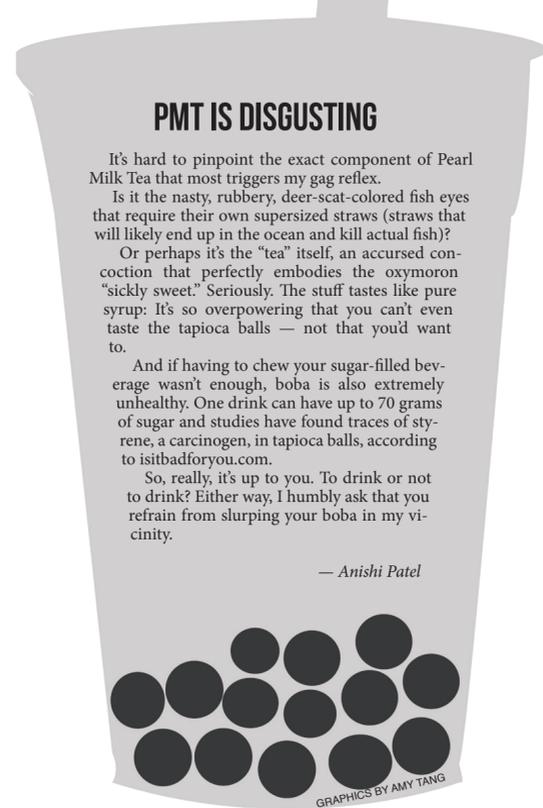
Ah, Disneyland, the most overpriced place on Earth. Attempting to maneuver through dense crowds just to wait in a five-hour line for Space Mountain does not sound appealing to me, especially with how often rides break down.

With the profit from selling \$5 sandwiches for \$21, Disneyland should be able to stop their constant roller coaster malfunctions.

Now, don't get me wrong: I love Disney movies as much as the next person, but over the years, it seems that Disney parks have shifted away from their original "Bibbidi-bobbidi-boo" and toward a sharper sound: "ka-ching."

— Neeti Badve

UNPOPULAR OPINIONS



PMT IS DISGUSTING

It's hard to pinpoint the exact component of Pearl Milk Tea that most triggers my gag reflex.

Is it the nasty, rubbery, deer-scat-colored fish eyes that require their own supersized straws (straws that will likely end up in the ocean and kill actual fish)?

Or perhaps it's the "tea" itself, an accursed concoction that perfectly embodies the oxymoron "sickly sweet." Seriously. The stuff tastes like pure syrup: It's so overpowering that you can't even taste the tapioca balls — not that you'd want to.

And if having to chew your sugar-filled beverage wasn't enough, boba is also extremely unhealthy. One drink can have up to 70 grams of sugar and studies have found traces of styrene, a carcinogen, in tapioca balls, according to isitbadforyou.com.

So, really, it's up to you. To drink or not to drink? Either way, I humbly ask that you refrain from slurping your boba in my vicinity.

— Anishi Patel

PINEAPPLE ON PIZZA

Throughout the last several years, the controversy of pineapple as a pizza topping has inspired numerous articles, memes and songs.

Now, it is finally time to put this dispute to rest.

Pineapple belongs on pizza. Pineapple as a pizza topping shouldn't be frowned upon just because it's a fruit.

We put tomatoes on pizza and technically, tomatoes are fruits.

People who don't like pineapple on pizza just don't have a palette sophisticated enough to truly appreciate the taste.

The pineapple provides a sweet tanginess to offset the heavy saltiness of the meat and cheese, making it a perfect combination of sweet and savory.

Pineapple is a superior pizza topping for only the most cultured of palettes.

— Eileen Bui

SLEEP IS FOR THE WEAK

"I'm going to sleep before 12."
"I'm going to sleep before 2."
"I'm going to sleep."

Sleeping is overrated. My performance on tests when I am running on too little sleep and too much caffeine has shown me that sacrificing a few hours of sleep to study drastically improves my grades because at least I know the material well. Missing some sleep for a night isn't the end of the world — naps and weekends are our saviors. After all, fatigue is temporary, but GPA is permanent!

Many parents and students are under the impression that sleep improves memory and performance, when in reality, sleeping for 10 hours can make people — myself included — feel more disoriented and tired than if they had slept for four. Not only does sleeping for 10 hours make me even more groggy, but it wastes precious time that I could have spent on something else.

Maybe I'll sleep for eight hours tonight, maybe I'll sleep for five. Who knows? Other than eye bags, there's little difference for me.

— Amanda Zhu

BEING BUSY IS FUN

Time is money. Like money, time must be well spent.

While I appreciate having time to de-stress, I love being busy.

Though mainstream media often glorifies Netflix bingeing and naps, nothing can compare to the rush of knocking task after task off a to-do list and the sense of accomplishment that comes with it.

Being busy also means expanding my knowledge and skills through my experiences.

Learning two instruments has allowed me to read and compose music; volunteering has taught me how to work with children.

Granted, it's a lot of work, but my efforts pay off.

At the end of the day, I can crash on my bed and rest assured knowing that I made the most out of my day.

— Kaitlyn Tsai

Environment needs more protection than jobs

By Rohan Kumar

Polar bears are struggling to survive on the receding glaciers of Antarctica. Water levels are rising while glaciers melt, causing floods across the globe. Severe storms are more common; in 2017, Hurricane Maria resulted in a death toll of 2,975 people and devastated Puerto Rico's power grid.

Each of these potentially catastrophic trends is a result of global warming, which, in turn, is a result of carbon emissions.

If people continue to burn fossil fuels at the rate they do today, and if citizens and governments remain largely uneducated about climate change, the environment and the world as a whole will suffer immensely.

According to NASA, sea levels will rise 1 to 4 feet by 2100, potentially leading to the flooding of low-lying communities.

By 2050, glaciers will completely disappear from the Arctic ocean. But, of course, the Trump administration doesn't seem to care.

Throughout his presidency, Trump has been attacking the environment, enacting changes that take away protections of endangered species and deregulate fossil fuel plants.

Recently, the Environmental Protection Agency began to finalize a repeal of Obama's Clean Power Plan (CPP), the nation's first carbon-emission standard for power plants that aims to reduce carbon emissions by 32 percent from 2005 levels by 2030.

Although certain industries will benefit from the administration's actions in the short term, these changes come with scant long-term benefits and

endless threatening consequences.

Essentially, the only benefit of deregulation is that President Trump wins over a stronger supporter base.

Trump claims that these repeals create more jobs in coal mines and natural gas plants, attracting people to his side by showing that he is able to keep his campaign promises.

In general, these reforms are not making jobs; on the contrary, they are hindering job growth.

Job growth in the clean energy sector has been immense in recent years, but the repeal of the CPP has the potential to put back much of the progress that has been made in clean power.

In fact, according to a story in the Kansas City Star, repealing the CPP would deny the possibility of creating 560,000 new jobs and adding \$52 billion in industry's economic value.

The consequences don't end there.

Without the CPP, 12 states that rely heavily on fossil fuels are likely to be unable to meet emission goals set by the Obama administration.

With

these 12 states together producing 40 percent of U.S. carbon emissions in 2014, the failure to meet these goals will result in continued high levels of carbon emissions.

The United States already has one of the highest carbon emission rates in the world.

According to The New York Times, the U.S. accounts for one fifth of the world's carbon emissions, making it critical that we reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

Under President Obama, the U.S. was one of the 195 countries that were part of the Paris Climate Agreement, which aimed to prevent temperatures from increasing by 2 degrees Celsius in the next century.

In June 2017, however, President Trump announced that the U.S. would withdraw. This, along with the repeal of the CPP, makes it nearly impossible for the U.S. to make significant changes to its carbon footprint.

The fundamental issue behind the Trump

administration is that it consistently fails to understand the frightening nature of the problems that face the world.

This becomes glaringly apparent with these attacks on the environment, where the administration refuses to acknowledge the very existence of climate change despite irrefutable evidence.

Because the federal government does not care about the environmental dangers of climate change, states need to fill the leadership void.

Thankfully, California, a leader in fighting climate change, continues to regulate tailpipe emissions on cars, control pollutants and set goals for a zero-carbon future.

Thirteen states have agreed to follow many of California's standards as well.

Despite various attempts by the federal government to lower California's stricter environmental standards, including a recent attempt to reduce regulations on tailpipe emissions, California has stood strong and so have its backers.

As citizens of California, we have an obligation to help out as well.

Switching to hybrid or electric cars, conserving energy at home, using more renewable energy and eating less meat are all ways to reduce carbon emissions.

Anyone can fight climate change and go even further by getting involved in conservation organizations such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) or the National Audubon Society.

We don't need the Trump administration in order to protect the world's people, polar bears and glaciers. We only need our resolve. ♦

Part-time jobs teach lessons not found in classrooms

By Sandhya Sundaram

Early this summer, I was at a gathering with my parents' friends when I was asked about my plans for the summer. They probably expected to hear about a summer program at Stanford or an internship at Google, and their smiles turned into disappointment as I told them about my job as a boat attendant at Vasona Lake.

Although lower-wage jobs such as renting out boats, preparing drinks at Starbucks or making bagels at Noah's Bagels may not be academically stimulating, maintaining a part-time job teaches students important life lessons regarding hard work, money management and personal interactions.

Although my time lifting heavy boats out to the lake and docking pedal boats in the sun was only in four-hour shifts, and not nearly as exhausting as other outdoor jobs, I learned that to make the amount of money that my parents would casually hand me to go to a movie and dinner, I would need to work for four hours. Many adults undergo physical labor in the sun for over 40 hours a week to support their families, and I gained an appreciation for their hard work.

Working a lower-wage job (\$13 per hour) also taught me how to manage my own money.

When I realized how many endless hours I had worked to earn the money I was spending, I was more hesitant to splurge and stuck to saving instead.

I also experienced working with different types of people, ranging from coworkers to managers to customers. When young children attending boating camp made rude remarks like, "I could get you fired if you're not nice to me," I learned to keep my calm and be patient.

When adults chose to ignore my advice of stepping into the boat quickly and ended up falling into the goose poop infested water, I learned to hold my laughter while helping them out.

Even though a summer college program or internship may be more academic and specific to college, it can be extremely expensive to participate, ranging from \$6,000 to \$11,000 or more for 4-6 week programs according to Forbes.

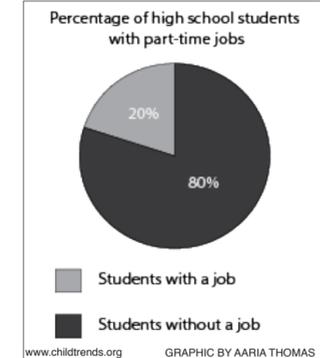
Furthermore, many college admissions counselors and experts say summer programs do not actually increase a student's chance of getting into a prestigious college.

People who look down on students for working a minimum-wage job should reconsider their beliefs.

More than any summer program, a job teaches values of independence, responsibility, communication and money management — skills that can be applied in students' lives beyond school.

Having a job was also a great getaway from summer SAT prep and stress. Students should apply for jobs since they can make money and be more independent.

Even though academic enrichment programs might provide an engaging and fun learning experience, learning how to work at a job matters far beyond the classroom. ♦



Football is harmful to youth, needs more safety regulation

By Kevin Sze

What other culture has people bashing their opponents, all for an oblong shaped ball that bounces unpredictably?

Sure, the entertainment value for football is large. According to Forbes, in 2013 the National Football Association (NFL) revenues were near \$9 billion, making it the most lucrative sports league in the world.

The problem is that we now realize beyond doubt that players are sacrificing their brains and bodies to create this revenue.

The New York Times reported a study in which 111 NFL brains were studied and 110 of them were found to have chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a brain condition that has been linked to depression, memory loss and substance abuse.

Compare football to basketball. According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), 73 concussions occurred over a 17-year period in the NBA. By contrast, according to USA Today, 281 concussions were reported in the NFL for only the 2017 season.

The problem doesn't lie with the players. Far more so than other violent sports such as boxing or wrestling, football's issue lies with its integration into American culture and its enormous fan base, where fans are just waiting to see players like safety Kam Chancellor lay out an opposing wide receiver. Fans sometimes replay the tackles over and over again, tweet them on Twitter, share videos on Facebook and add them to their Snapchat stories, making comments like "Ooooo, that must've hurt."

With this level of popularity and adoration, the sport also greatly affects a younger generation of athletes at the high school or middle school level, whose brains are still developing.

As a country that promotes such a violent sport, we need to be honest with ourselves. Football is deeply rooted in American culture. High school football games have the most attendance out of all other

high school sports. People with minimal knowledge about football host Super Bowl parties. The sport of football has been ingrained into American identity. But as the popularity of the sport continues to flourish, players' health increasingly suffers.

In 2014, Ryan Shazier was drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers in the first round of the draft, and he became a defensive presence and playmaker for the team. In December 2017, Shazier suffered a severe spinal injury after tackling Bengals' wide receiver Josh Malone. Shazier just recently started walking without a cane.

It's time for all of us to recognize that the costs of football just aren't worth the benefits. Players are nearly guaranteed to get CTE as they age; they only play 2.66 years in the league on average.

In light of growing concerns about the dangers of football, the NFL has implemented new rules into the game to make it safer, but these measures are not enough.

In 2017, crackback blocks, an offensive strategy in which a player will spread out near the sideline and seal off a defender from the wide side to open up the field for the running back, have been prohibited.

Wide receivers running a pass route get defenseless player protection, which means that if they haven't had time to clearly become a runner, tackling them is a penalty.

However, the NFL needs to incorporate more precautions before the game can be played with minimal risk of injury. For example, the NFL does not have standardized criteria for diagnosing concussions. It could also implement neck support to minimize concussions.

NASCAR has implemented a Head and Neck Support (HANS) device, which is a restraint that tethers a driver's helmet to a shoulder harness to prevent abrupt neck motions.

For the sake of America's youth, people need to stop idolizing football and leagues need to have better protection for its players, whether that be in gear or in rulebooks, to prevent serious and lasting injury. ♦

Online textbooks lack the benefits of print

BY Kaitlyn Wang

Grumbling about back pain at the ripe old age of 16, students often complain about the additional weight of textbooks they must carry at the start of the school year. It seems they would rather read millions of words on a screen than on a physical page.

Traditional textbooks may seem unnecessary: They are often heavy, expensive and less accessible than online textbooks.

But online textbooks are not always more convenient to use. They place strain on the eyes because our eyes blink differently when they stare at screens — the upper eyelid does not completely move down, according to Time Magazine. As a result, our eyes dry more quickly.

Other symptoms of Digital Eye Strain, caused by prolonged screen use, include blurry vision and pain in the shoulders and neck, the American Optometric Association reports.

Digital textbooks may hurt time management as well. “Reading a textbook” online can spiral into hours spent on social media or other sites a few clicks or taps away, making it difficult to avoid distractions and more tempting to indulge in procrastination.

With print textbooks, readers can create a distance between themselves and potential distractions. Students also have more freedom to decide when or where to read, unrestricted by internet availability.

If internet connection is poor or a website crashes, such as Pearson for AP Biology, the text and homework are difficult to access. Repeatedly disconnecting and connecting to a WiFi network that refuses to cooperate, refreshing a page over and over hoping that a bug has been fixed or trying to read a chapter online during a potential power outage does not exactly help frustrated students learn.

Studies also reveal that print texts may result in better reading comprehension for key points, according to the research paper “Reading Across Mediums: Effects of Reading Digital and Print Texts on Comprehension and Calibration.”

The paper describes a study conducted on 90 undergraduates who read passages either on a computer or in print, then responded to questions after reading each passage. In response to a survey, the students said that they preferred reading digitally and thought their reading comprehension was better for digital texts.

But the actual results suggest otherwise. While students had a similar understanding of main points regardless of medium, when it came to key points, those who read print passages performed better. Print helps students better absorb the detailed information they need to know.

Although a number of correct responses might not be the best indicator of under-

standing a text, the paper also explains how a screen can hurt reading comprehension. Possible reasons for poorer performance include the way scrolling and hyperlinks interfere with the reading process or the way a screen limits access to the text.

Students can access the whole text more quickly and easily when they read in print, while students reading digitally usually have access to only one or two pages at a time.



When reading from a screen, it can be more difficult to remember where information is located as well. Readers often think about the location of a piece of information, a 2013 paper reported, forming a “spacial mental representation” of the text.

Thinking about the location of information on a page helps readers remember a sequence of events more accurately. People who are strong at reading comprehension can better recall and locate where information is.

And of course, there is something irreplaceable about books as tangible objects, as lines of ink contained within a cover. Readers can see their progress, as what is read accumulates on the left and the number of remaining pages decreases on the right.

Handwritten notes or added sticky notes allow readers to interact with the text. It is easier to digest words from a page, and information sticks with the reader, rather than dry eyes and a stubborn headache.

Opting for online textbooks might only trade back pain for eye strain. Instead of requiring even more hours spent staring at pixels, print textbooks give students a chance to step away from the screen, open a physical textbook and read. There’s no need to shift everything online. ♦

Physical textbooks are physical burdens

BY Mathew Luo

Textbooks are dying. The e-revolution has rightfully replaced these expensive, clunky and antiquated teaching materials. Saratoga High, too, should switch to digital to increase efficiency and better cater to students’ needs.

Even the largest print publishers worldwide, McGraw Hill and Preston, are switching to a digital system to supply the growing demand for ebooks.

and allow students who want to continue using print textbooks to rent them.

The switch would also free up locker space and allow students to access the textbook anywhere with a computer or phone.

Students wouldn’t even need internet access if the textbooks were downloaded onto their devices.

Little controversy remains about the switch from physical textbooks to digital textbooks.

The sentimentality and nostalgia often associated with physical books is not generally extended to textbooks, while concerns of screen reading fatigue will reduce to a non-issue with proper lighting, blue light filtration and good reading posture.

In fact, the greatest evidence against digital textbooks comes from research conducted by SAGE Journals demonstrating that physical reading as opposed to digital reading translates to slightly higher retention.

In practice, this may manifest through an association with the distractions of electronic devices.

However, textbook reading is often used as a supplemental tool to other teaching methods, and in the case of science classes, used as a collection of problem sets.

The slightly greater retention of reading print textbooks and the danger of distraction are not reasons enough to warrant lugging around physical copies.

Finally, some argue that spending too much time on electronic devices is detrimental to student health and learning.

However, greater time spent on an electronic device will not hinder a responsible student; vice versa, a physical textbook provides no benefits to an irresponsible student anyway.

Little controversy remains about the switch from physical textbooks to digital textbooks.

The switch to digital rids students of the burden of caring for, using and carrying textbooks.

The transition from physical to digital will also be smooth; keeping all classes stocked with class sets of textbooks and allowing physical textbooks to be rented to students that want them are just two effects that will ensure a smooth transition to digital access.

With the myriad of benefits digital textbooks provide, all schools should take the plunge into the electronic age. ♦

Dance experiment challenges reporter

i-con-ic legend



Connie Liang

Three months later, and the only good thing that has come out of rapper Drake’s fifth studio album, *Scorpion*, is the Shiggy dance challenge. The songs on the album are lackluster and completely overhyped — this could constitute an entire article in itself — but the Shiggy dance challenge that accompanies the song, “In My Feelings,” is exempt from my condemnation.

Unlike other internet trends that have popped up over the years, the Shiggy challenge has captured my attention for one major reason: People are literally jumping out of cars and dancing. The videos typically showcase someone dancing alongside a slowly moving car while the recorder films from the front seat in settings ranging from quiet streets to busy highways.

This challenge can be credited to social media influencer Shaquille “Shiggy” Mitchell, who posted a video of himself jamming out to the “nice and smooth” beat that “just made [him] move” on Instagram in June. After New York Giants wide receiver Odell Beckham Jr. posted his own rendition to Shiggy’s dance, it circulated around the internet with multiple celebrities, including Will Smith, J-Hope and Ciara, creating their own versions as well.

Being an individual who was not allowed for the entirety of her childhood to even stick so much as a finger out the back-seat window, I grabbed this chance to defy the rules of the road and ran with it.

On a recent afternoon, I shoved my wriggling brother into shotgun and climbed in alongside him while my mom, from the wheel, warned about the chal-

lenge’s dangers. Rounding the corner, we spotted my neighbor’s grandmother in the garage, and upon learning what I was about to do, she only smiled. It wasn’t a smile of warm regard, but one of anticipation: She knew I was going to faceplant and was already reaching for the popcorn.

To everyone’s surprise, I didn’t actually do as bad as I thought I would. It only took three or four attempts before I got a recording I was content with.

Afterwards, while watching the recordings, I realized it looked like someone was putting a hairdryer to my head, and my complexion was not too different from that of a tomato. Despite this, and the fact that I had (un)wisely chosen to wear flip flops, I exceeded my own expectations.

Before attempting the challenge, I had watched a myriad of videos on YouTube trying to discern the sequence of particular dance moves most people follow. After trying again and again to mirror the celebrities performing the challenge online, and failing to do so, I became hesitant as to whether I was even qualified to shiggy it up.

However, while the camera was recording, all the memorized steps I had planned to follow slipped from my mind, and I unconsciously left behind my insecurities about my dancing abilities. Going with the flow, I found that enjoying the moment meant more than adhering to a specific set of moves and that there really was no right or wrong way to going about anything — to say the least a viral challenge.

I’m thankful to my mother for being willing to be seen with me in public. I’m also thankful for my brother for agreeing to be squished between me and the front compartment. Most of all, I would like to thank Drake for teaching me that not everything has to be precise, that improvisation in the moment can yield results just as good, if not better. ♦

Fashion fail turns into eventual success

ice cream sand-ae



Sandhya Sundaram

With the rising popularity of “thrifting” — buying second-hand clothes and wearing them to achieve a vintage look — on social media in the past few months, I felt left behind with my ugly hoodies and lazy sweatpants. I thought of the typical outfits I’d see in these posts, with distressed jeans, a color-blocked bomber jacket, some hip boots and cat-eye sunglasses.

I wanted to achieve this look. So I decided to give thrifting a try at Savers, a second hand clothing store chain in San Jose. I left my comfort zone, buying Columbia capri checkered pants that cut off mid-calf and flared outwards. After spending about an hour in the store, I bought the pants for around \$5. The pants were definitely way too short for me, but I reassured myself that I would impress everyone at school if I just got them.

I thought that even though the look was questionable, the risk would pay off when my outfit would be unique and vintage looking.

The following week, I decided to wear my checkered hiking pants to school. When I put them on, the mirror in my room made them look a lot worse than I had remembered them looking in Savers, but I convinced myself that it was the lighting. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

When I got to school, many people felt the need to roast me. Even worse, I had to give a presentation in English class in my outfit.

Junior Meghna Gupta told me that I should “never wear those pants ever again.” Junior Sanya Kwatra told me that she

agreed with Gupta that the fit was really odd and quite stupid looking. Suddenly I felt very uncomfortable in my capris, and even more nervous that I would have to talk about Death Row and mass incarceration to my English class while looking like a fool. It did not help that part of the rubric was based on appearance, and I did not look presentable.

I somehow stumbled through the presentation, mentally preparing myself for the possibility that my outfit might lower my grade. Thankfully, the rest of the day went by fine, but I was annoyed that thrifting was apparently not my skill.

I thought that even though the look was questionable, the risk would pay off when my outfit would be unique

I shoved the pants into the back of my closet and forgot about them until one day in the summer, out of boredom, I decided to cut them into shorts. Without telling people that these were the same pants, I wore them to school again, only to receive many compliments.

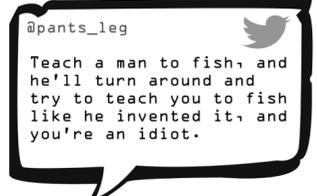
Even though I didn’t have an instant flare for thrifting, I wound up getting creative and decided to repurpose the pants instead of throwing them out. Don’t get discouraged by the flawless thrifting posts you see; they don’t convey the effort and the many failures it takes to achieve a good look. But with a little bit of creativity, you can turn a drab, ugly piece into something worthwhile. Thrifting can be a great way to add unique outfits to your wardrobe at incredible affordable prices, as long as you have the patience and realistic expectations. ♦

Radical feminists should stop labeling men as evil

BY Kaitlyn Tsai

“Teach a man to fish, and he’ll turn around and try to teach you to fish like he invented it, and you’re an idiot,” Twitter user @pants_leg said.

As fourth wave feminism — primarily associated with the use of social media



— sweeps across the globe, posts like the aforementioned have become increasingly common. Across multitudes of platforms, a broad range of perspectives on feminism has developed.

Many radical feminists and social justice warriors, people who are overly aggressive in their support of socially progressive views, have twisted the image of feminism into a male-bashing culture.

One of the greatest issues with radical feminism is the use of ironic misandry, which treats man-hating as a joke. Phrases like “drink male tears” or “#banmen” imply cruelty and violence, and joking about such hatred can easily be misinterpreted.

This tactic of ironic misandry also leads some to misinterpret feminists’ message as one that claims women are superior to men, creating a discrepancy between what

feminists preach and what they stand for.

Feminism is about gender equality, and belittling men is not the proper way to achieve that. Even if ironic misandry is meant to be a joke, it is counterproductive.

“What feminists really hate is the patriarchy — the web of institutions that systematically oppress women,” wrote Sarah Begley, a Time Magazine columnist. “To tear it down, we need as many allies as we can get. Telling half the population that we hate them, even in jest, is not the way to do that.”

Clearly, aggressive and petty approaches to combating anti-feminism only detract from the feminist movement. Thinking before speaking is so simple that it is almost too easy of a solution.

Granted, the efficacy of this tactic relies on how many people do it; however, if even

half of the radical feminists would consider the consequences of their words and actions, it could have a paramount effect on the widespread image of feminism. This doesn’t mean that feminists should avoid speaking their minds in order to appeal to others.

But slamming men and expecting them to endure the attacks will not win any support. Rather than lashing out on social media and inadvertently supporting the misconception of “crazy feminists,” advocates for gender equality should be more straightforward to gain support.

The feminist movement began in 1848. Victory is long overdue, and it is up to us to achieve progress by adhering to manners, refraining from inappropriate jokes and keeping in mind that feminism stands for equality. ♦



September 28, 2018

TACOBELL: EFFICIENT AND AFFORDABLE FOOD

By Amy Tang

Lunch was designed for Taco Bell. The purple and gold colors of the store are no coincidence: Taco Bell sells food for royalty.

Taco Bell is located approximately 7 to 12 minutes from campus, depending on traffic and the aggressiveness of the driver, and is surrounded by more boujee options of food, including Ikes and La Cueva, two stores which both serve delicious lunch items.

But, of course, I am a poor, cash-strapped high school student who has a budget of \$50 a week, and I cannot afford to spend \$15 on lunch, nor do I have the time to order La Cueva over the phone or Ikes online.

Taco Bell is for my fellow low-maintenance people who are nice to their bank accounts and don't want to endure the hassle of always having to plan ahead on lunch destinations.

The drive-thru line is usually very efficient and I can get back to school on time even if I leave campus at 12:15. Once, my friend and I made it through the drive-thru in 3 minutes.

When people think of Taco Bell, they think bean, cheese, beef, chicken and tacos all squished together in a disgustingly processed meal. But trust me, Taco Bell has your every need and desire at a fraction of the price that other lunch locations demand.

Hear me out. Want a taco? Order a taco. Want a deluxe version of a taco? Get a Cheesy Gordita Crunch. Want something

without beef? Chicken quesadilla. Vegetarian? Cheesy rollup. Vegan? Nacho fries. Something that's easy to eat while driving? Crunchwrap supreme. Feeling healthy? Soft taco, Fresca style. Drink? Baja blast freeze. Fizzy drink? Spiked lemonade.

Also, Taco Bell's \$5 boxes are the epitome of bargain eats. For \$5, customers receive a special item with two tacos and a drink. The special item changes every month or so, but previous items include nacho fries, double gordita crunch, a Chalupa Supreme and Chicken Chalupas. Lettuce, tomatoes, cheese and avocado ranch perfectly arranged inside a shell of hot fried chicken make Chicken Chalupas my personal favorite item.

After discovering the endless wonders of Taco Bell, I realized that I don't even crave Mexican food like La Cueva or Chipotle anymore. I only crave Taco Bell.

Taco Bell isn't a low-quality meal option — the Mexican version of McDonald's — as some people might think. It is convenient, versatile, delicious, affordable and quick, making it the best lunch destination near campus. ♦

>> THE verdict

TACO BELL

Location
5389 Prospect Rd.

Best item
Chicken Chalupas

Price
\$5.00

"Taco Bell isn't a low-quality meal option — the Mexican version of McDonald's — as some people might think."



LA CUEVA: HEALTHIER MEXICAN FOOD

By Daniel Bessonov

While the peasants of Saratoga High pull up to the measly Taco Bell drive through, the real food connoisseurs park their cars in the adjacent parking lot. In the same plaza that houses O'Reilly's auto parts also lies La Cueva — a gem of 21st century lunch-dining.

La Cueva, in all aspects, is a superior Taco Bell. Quesadillas? Tacos? Name it, and La Cueva's got it, except healthier and tastier. With just as affordable prices as Taco Bell, La Cueva becomes impossible to pass up.

Although you can't go wrong with anything on the menu, the \$2.75 super taco is my favorite. Served with cheese, beans, sliced avocado, salsa fresca, tomatillo sauce and your choice of meat, the super taco is a savory meal. But if tacos aren't your go-to, the chicken cheese quesadilla is just as delicious. Although rather simplistic, the quesadilla is served on a crispy flour tortilla with guacamole, sour cream

and salsa fresca, and packs the perfect punch — with cheese that'll melt on the tip of your tongue and chicken that'll crunch with every bite.

But it gets even better. With every meal, La Cueva will provide a bag of its own signature fried tortilla chips. I can't speak for the majority, but the majority knows that these chips are easily the world's greatest snack.

So trust me when I say this: La Cueva is a superior lunch destination. ♦

>> THE verdict

LA CUEVA

Location
18486 Prospect Road

Best item
Super Taco

Price
\$2.75

"La Cueva, in all aspects, is a superior Taco Bell. Quesadillas? Tacos? Name it, and La Cueva's got it, except healthier and tastier."



SARATOGA BAGELS: LOCAL CAFE LUNCH SPOT

By Ashley Feng

Located in the small plaza near Safeway just 5 minutes from campus, Saratoga Bagels offers a variety of bagels, bagel sandwiches and drinks as well as a lively atmosphere during the lunch period.

On my first trip to Saratoga Bagels, I was overwhelmed by the number of affordable mouth-watering menu items; with options ranging from bagel breakfast sandwiches to healthy salads, Saratoga Bagels's wide selection of tasty options can be purchased for \$3 to \$8.

When I got there, the line was almost out the door, and I was anxious that I would be late arriving back at

school. However, the staff was quick and friendly, and I got my bacon omelette bagel sandwich within 10 minutes, even with the large number of people who had ordered before me.

In terms of flavor, the bagel sandwich I ordered tasted heavenly. The bagel had been toasted to perfection, and the fluffy egg tasted amazing with the addition of the crunchy bacon. The portions were also generous and kept me satisfied well into my afternoon class. The addition of a well-stocked fridge of cold drinks and cream cheese spreads provided extra variety and convenience along with the selection of bagels.

Saratoga Bagels deserves a rating of five out of five, because of its close proximity to school, affordable prices and fast and reliable service. It is a great choice for the next time you go off campus for lunch. ♦

>> THE verdict

SARATOGA BAGELS

Location
12840 Saratoga-Sunnyvale Rd.

Best item
Bagel Sandwiches

Price
\$5.00-9.00

"...Saratoga Bagels offers a variety of bagels, bagel sandwiches and drinks as well as a lively atmosphere during the lunch period."



PANDA EXPRESS: MUST-TRY HIDDEN MENU ITEMS

By Jun Lee

On late nights, my brother and I sometimes go to Panda Express and order orange chicken and chow mein. Along with fast service, the restaurant offers food that is savory, delicious and cheap, making it the perfect spot for a quick bite. Panda Express is located near Westgate Mall in Saratoga and is about 10-minute drive from school, which it is also close enough to school for off-campus lunch; students don't have to drive like characters in "Fast and Furious" to get back to class on time.

Although Asian-American students make up a large portion of the school, there aren't many affordable Asian restaurants near campus, especially for poor high school students. Panda Express is undoubtedly the most reasonable choice, with prices usually ranging from \$8 to \$12.

One of my go-to orders is the fried rice with orange chicken; the combination of the sweet taste of fried rice mixed with the tanginess of orange chicken is a taste that never fails to satisfy.

Aside from the regular orders, the secret menu is full of surprises, and for a regular Panda Express customer,

there are many delicious foods to discover.

Prepared with soy sauce, eggs, peas, carrots and green onions, the brown fried rice is a hidden delicacy on the secret menu. Not only does its amazing flavor make it a "must try" for everyone, but it's also a healthier alternative than the original white rice version. I also recommend the orange chicken with bacon; the sweet taste of orange chicken with the savory taste of bacon is a combination that can't be missed.

Going off campus for lunch is a privilege, and the precious time should be well spent. While McDonald's or other fast food chains provide a quick lunch, Panda Express offers an extraordinary brand of Asian-American food, satisfying students' lunch needs of tastiness and timeliness. ♦

>> THE verdict

PANDA EXPRESS

Location
1320 El Paseo De Saratoga

Best item
Fried rice with orange chicken

Price
\$6.90

"Aside from the regular orders, the secret menu is full of surprises, and for a regular Panda Express customer, there are many delicious foods to discover."



Top Lunchtime Hotspots

REPORTERS SHARE THEIR FAVORITE BUDGET-FRIENDLY AND EFFICIENT DESTINATIONS FOR LUNCH

BY AnanyaVadlakonda

Oh, Shonda, you lost me at incest. Thirteen years, 14 seasons and 317 episodes ago, then-medical intern Meredith Grey of executive producer Shonda Rhimes' hit show "Grey's Anatomy" introduced us to "the game," saying "a person either has what it takes to play or they don't." When I started watching this show three years ago, I would have never realized that "the game" referred not only to the characters' tumultuous years at Grey-Sloan Memorial Hospital, but also to the torture that Rhimes has been putting us through season after season with her unsettling, albeit incredibly creative, plot twists. But after 14 seasons, it's time to finally put an end to the show. The series originally focused on the lives of five interns — Meredith Grey, Cris-

tina Yang, Alex Karev, George O'Malley and Izzie Stevens — but as the show progressed, it started to portray the other characters solely in relation to Meredith. Now don't get me wrong, I never had a problem with that until recently, because, after all, the show is called "Grey's Anatomy." I was in love with the show, to the point where even after almost all of the original cast left and the storylines became overused, Ellen Pompeo, who plays Meredith, is still my celebrity crush. In Season 12, Meredith's storylines began to fall flat. At the beginning of the show, her main plot and character development revolves around her love interest, Dr. Derek Shepherd (aka, McDreamy); her mother, Dr. Ellis Grey, whose shadow Meredith can't seem to escape; and the second half of the "twisted sisters," Dr. Cristina Yang. Then Rhimes kills off both Shepherd and

Dr. Ellis Grey, and Sandra Oh, who played Yang, walked away from the show. To make up for the gaping hole in her storyline, Rhimes begins playing around with Meredith's love life, and consequently with all of our hearts. Meredith cycles through a series of partners who could never compare to Shepherd, and judging by the promo, she'll have another this upcoming season. Rhimes needs to realize that fans will never be satisfied with any love interest for Meredith besides Shepherd. She should either bring him back from the dead or move on with the show to a more creative storyline. Perhaps the show could focus on Meredith's inspirational medical innovations instead of her love life or delve deeper into one of the other characters. Meredith's closest family — her half sister Maggie Pierce and her sister-in-law Amelia Shepherd — would be brilliant options for

new storylines. I was so excited when they brought Pierce onto the show, because as a cardiothoracic prodigy she was able to fit into Yang's position perfectly. So naturally, my wish was for Pierce to find her soulmate, her "McDreamy." There were so many potential partners to choose from, but Rhimes decided to pick Pierce's biological dad's wife's son, practically her half-brother, as Pierce's love interest. It's gross. It's pretty much incest. This is just one example of the show ruining its characters just to stay on air. When will enough be enough, Shonda? However, there's nothing I can do to stop Season 15 from airing. So I am begging, please make this the final season. Fifteen is a pretty number. It evenly divides into 5. Plus, the show has already made history with Season 15 as the longest ABC drama to air. But I'm over it. ♦

YouTubers' problematic pasts catch up to them

BY SandhyaSundaram

Through content like beauty videos, makeup tutorials, story times and challenge videos, YouTubers like Tana Mongeau, Jeffrey Star and Laura Lee have gained millions of subscribers and followers. But their popularity has been endangered recently after newly uncovered footage and tweets came to light exposing offensive and racist comments made by the three in the past. Jeffrey Star, now a 32-year-old self-made provocative musician, makeup artist, influencer and founder of Jeffrey Star Cosmetics, was slammed by Twitter users in May 2017 for his history of racist comments that he made as a 19-year-old. Footage of Star openly using the n-word and offensive language and involving in public disputes with other influencers divided his viewers into dedicated supporters and people who wanted nothing to do with him. Recently, YouTuber Shane Dawson filmed a series that included behind-the-scenes footage of Star's business as well as personal details of his life. The documentary brought up Star's battle with depression, self-harm and identity. Star apologized for his racist comments, saying that he directed his anger badly when he was 19 and depressed. He wants to move on from his past, but people continue to dig up information and cause drama. While some claim that a person's past is part of who they are, and the offensive comments Star made shouldn't be ignored, others argue that this behavior happened 13 years ago and he has since grown into a completely different person. Junior Veda Sethuraman, an avid Star fan, feels that Star has a great personality, but thinks he constantly receives unnecessary backlash for actions and words he said when he was in a troubled stage of his life. "I just think he's a person that's different and untraditional compared to most famous people," she said. "Everyone makes mistakes and I guess he's just someone that comes off as harsh and judgemental." Sethuraman said that watching Dawson's videos and learning about Star's childhood and early adulthood struggles made her realize that he was "polarized because of who he was and who he wanted to be." Most recently, beauty guru Laura Lee received backlash for her old offensive tweets. Lee tweeted, "Tip for all black people if you pull ur pants up you can run from the police faster... #yourwelcome," in 2012. She also said, "How do you blindfold a Chinese person? Put floss over their eyes," among many other blatantly racist comments. In her apology, Lee blamed her upbringing for these comments. "As a small town girl from Alabama I wish I had the cultural education six years ago that I have now," Lee said. On the other hand, Lee made those tweets when she was 24, an old enough age to know better. Fans felt that Lee had faked tears and sought sympathy instead of addressing the issue and owning up to her mistakes. Her racist comments could not be credited to ignorance or naivety because they were meant to stereotype and degrade other people. In the month of August alone, Lee lost almost 600,000 subscribers on her YouTube channel, according to Social Blade.

Unlike the cases of Star and Mongeau, Lee argued that she was young and ignorant, a not-believable excuse since she was an adult when she made those remarks. Furthermore, her apology barely addressed the issues and was viewed more as seeking pity and dodging blame than owning up to her mistakes. Some people may not know or fully comprehend the hatred and years of mistreatment captured in racial slurs; however, making deliberate comments about a race and stereotyping is something that cannot be attributed to ignorance. Sethuraman sympathizes with Star and other YouTubers who have apologized for their mistakes. "Because of who [they are], it's publicized and people will always give them so much grief about it," Sethuraman said. ♦

"As a small town girl from Alabama I wish I had the cultural education six years ago that I have now."

YOUTUBER Laura Lee

Leaked music irritates artists, may boost sales

BY AngelinaChen & ConnieLiang

In April, a Twitter user posted a picture of himself clutching a copy of singer Ariana Grande's fourth studio album "Sweetener," leaking the cover image four months before its intended release date. Clearly irritated, the singer fired back a few hours later with a close-up picture of the fan's unpolished fingernails, mockingly stating that her music is "too good for this." Although none of the actual songs on the album were leaked, the cover reveal was enough to set Grande off on a Twitter rampage harsh enough to banish all those with unmanicured cuticles to their graves. Most mainstream artists have experienced the threat of anonymous individuals leaking or posting songs online before their official release dates. Songs can be leaked when copies fall off trucks, or company emails are hacked, among other methods. "It can be accidental, but once the file is available online, any individual with a copy and a cavalier attitude can anonymously post and make it available to download," Chris Mooney, senior director of promotions and strategy at music distribution service TuneCore, told CBS News. Whether intentional or not, according to XXL, album leaks hurt the workers involved with the album's holistic production more than the actual artist. The artist will earn money regardless of the method their music is released to the audience. The graphic designers creating the album cover, engineers mixing the records and workers manufacturing the CDs all lose money and time, bearing the brunt of such leaks. It is those who depend on the revenue generated from producing the album who will have their work go to waste as the entire release plan is upended. As such, some artists go to great lengths to prevent their work from being leaked. In the behind-the-scenes footage for her music video "End Game," singer Taylor Swift explains that even her background dancers don't know the song ahead of time. Instead, they dance to a click track, a metronome that keeps track of the beat, while Swift herself uses personal headphones. Others are forced to release their songs earlier than anticipated in order to counteract the

potential damage of a leak. Singer Lady Gaga had a famous meltdown in 2013 after seeing a clip of her unreleased song, "Applause," online. According to the Huffington Post, the singer took to Twitter in 2013 to fire back at those responsible for her song's early release, tweeting "Lord in HEAVEN WHY?" and "YOU JUST COULDN'T WAIT THIS IS TOO MUCH FOR ONE SATURDAY." One tactic some artists use to protect their music from being released early is to keep the entire album a secret. When asked how singer David Bowie's album "The Next Day" escaped being leaked, Claire Suddath, an entertainment reporter for Bloomberg Businessweek, said, "I think a lot of people didn't know that he was going to release an album until right before it came out. So no one was really looking for it." Despite this, Mooney suggests that leaks, while they may hurt official album sales, actually increase the popularity of the given artist: the reaction over a leaked album generates free publicity. A 2012 WBUR segment describing a study conducted by economist Robert Hammond of North Carolina State University supports Mooney's view. By looking at the difference in sales when a song is leaked versus when it is released as planned, Hammond found that album leaks can potentially benefit album sales in the future. Junior Sanmati Nakil, who describes herself as "impatient," certainly looks out for upcoming leaks. She doesn't see why listening to leaked songs is such an issue, and believes it is merely a faster way to gain access to music that will eventually be released to the public anyway. "Once [a song] has been released officially, I'll of course listen to it on Spotify, but before that, why not?" Nakil said. When asked if she would listen to a leaked song, sophomore Kailan Auld said, "If the release date is far, and I really like the artist, I will probably listen to the song." Whether it's one week or a few months earlier, songs will continue to be leaked and artists will continue to be caught off guard. The ethical issues that emerge from listening to leaked albums will remain muddled on both sides of the issue as producers lose monetarily while delighted listeners, like Nakil, receive an early present. ♦

Editors' PICKS



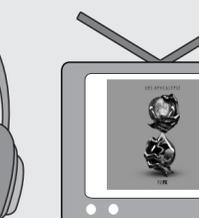
Movie: "The Nun"
Directed by Corin Hardy



Book: "One of Us Is Lying"
By Karen M. McManus



Album: "Astroworld"
By Travis Scott



TV: "American Horror Story" Season 8
GRAPHIC BY FRANCESCA CHU

Dance commission hires new DJs this school year

BY KyleneMorrison

Electronic dance music filled the quad at the Back to School Dance on the first Friday of the school year. Some students seemed to be enjoying it, while others seemed to be unsure of themselves. Music like this hadn't been played at any of the dances for the past four years. DJ Sir Edgar is the first new DJ to perform at one of the school's dances since before the class of 2019 entered as freshmen. According to activities director Matt Torrens, the school was consistently hiring DJ Delicious in an effort to alter students' style of dancing. "About four years ago, the administration sat down with the previous activities director and said, 'We're having a problem with the freaky dancing, so we need to talk to the DJs about playing music that doesn't encourage that,'" Torrens said. Four years later, the administration has achieved its goal. Torrens credits the change to DJ Delicious's appropriate music selection and the fact that incoming students have gradually transformed the school's culture. Because of this, dance commission was informed last spring that it was allowed to look for new DJs for the upcoming school year. "We chose Edgar because he was rated number one on Yelp, and he seemed like a good professional DJ who would bring new vibes," said head dance commissioner junior Nicole Wong. Though the change in music was refresh-

ing and fixed the problem of predictable music selection, students seemed to be dissatisfied with the music at the Back to School Dance. "During the dance, you could see that it was a different style of music," said Torrens. "It was more electronic. It didn't appear from my vantage point that the kids were dancing as much." Wong agrees with this assessment. "I liked the songs he played, but he was a little too techno for me," she said. Due to the negative response to DJ Sir Edgar's music selection, he was not hired to DJ at the Homecoming dance. However, the dance commissioners were faced with too pressing a time crunch to go through the process of finding another DJ, getting its choice approved by administration and contacting and hiring the new DJ by Sept. 15. Because of this, they returned to DJ Delicious for Homecoming. For winter formal, the commission is looking into hiring a new DJ, and the music at spring fling will be provided by senior Vittorio Bianzino. According to Torrens, the senior class has picked DJ Delicious for their prom, and the junior class is undecided. Wong has a rough idea of the qualities she and the dance commission will be searching for in a DJ for winter formal. "I think the ideal DJ is someone who can read a crowd well," she said. "I know there will always be haters but I think overall if a lot of people say it's good the dance would be enjoyable." ♦

Fashion week catfights fuel the media's adverse portrayal of women

BY AnishiPatel

Cardi B and Nicki Minaj made headlines at the New York Fashion Week Harper's Bazaar Icons party after Cardi threw a red heel at the "Chun-Li" singer's head, claiming Minaj had insulted her child. According to Idolator, Minaj took to Queen Radio to deny the accusations: "This woman is at the best stage in her career, and she's out here throwing bottles and shoes... I never had to f*** a DJ to play my songs." Since then, the internet has exploded into debate over which of the two icons was in the right. While the controversy undoubtedly makes for profitable publicity, the two "rap queens" should be using their platforms for better purposes than New York Fashion Week catfights. The consequences of their animosity go beyond the meme-worthy lump on Cardi's forehead. The media first began portraying Cardi and Minaj as enemies when Cardi's "Bodak Yellow" became a chart-topper in 2017, as society is wont to do with women in competing positions of power. But instead of immediately shutting down the rumors, Cardi and Minaj let the media's predictions come true, leaving a trail of snide remarks and liked Twitter comments for celebrity gossip sites to speculate on. "Women tearing each other apart is a narrative pop culture loves to promote. Shade and side eye have replaced women being supportive of each other," wrote Lisa Whittington-Hill in THIS magazine. Constant female celebrity feud coverage weakens efforts in women's equality as well. With outlets like Seventeen churning out glossy articles on 2017's top 10 celebrity feuds (the majority of which are between women), or timelines of Taylor Swift and

Kim Kardashian's spat history, these influential women are depicted as dramatic and petty, instead of talented and hardworking. When contrasted with coverage of male celebrities' disputes, which seems to leave gossip outlet headlines faster than similar news involving women, it is clear to see the "tearing each other down tone," as Whittington-Hill puts it, is reserved for women. In order to minimize such articles, women in entertainment like Cardi and Minaj need to stop adding fuel to the fire. A New York Fashion Week catfight only legitimizes unjust viewpoints, and cooperation between two of the rap industry's largest female stars could have gone a long way in sending a message of solidarity. The sooner prominent women make a point of supporting each other, and the sooner the media quits making headlines out of questionable VMA facial expressions, the better. ♦



Rapper Cardi B exits the Harper's Bazaar Icons party with a lump on her forehead. Courtesy of WireImage

Will they last?

by: Amanda Zhu



TV actress Priyanka Chopra and singer Nick Jonas first appeared together at the Met Gala in 2017, but only started dating in late May. They became engaged at the end of July when Jonas rented out a Tiffany's store to find Chopra the perfect ring. The couple had a traditional Indian engagement party per Chopra's request, which shows respect and dedication on Jonas's part. Love knows no age, but Chopra and Jonas do have a significant age gap — perhaps the biggest obstacle to their long-term prospects.

Long-term prospects: we're hopeful



Singer Justin Bieber and model Hailey Baldwin first met in 2011 during his "Never Say Never" tour, and rumors of the pair being involved began in 2014 and were confirmed in 2016. The two seemed to separate after Aug. 2016, but in April 2018, they were photographed together again. Bieber proposed on July 8. They've known each other a long time, but their relationship has ended badly once before. In an interview with "The Times UK," Baldwin said that there was a long time that they weren't friends after their breakup, and there was "a lot of weirdness that went on."

Long-term prospects: questionable

upcoming CONCERTS

Jay-Z and Beyonce Sept. 29, 7:30 p.m. @ Levi's Stadium
Fall Out Boy with Machine Gun Kelly Sept. 30, 7 p.m. @ SAP Center
Childish Gambino with Vince Staples Oct. 2, 7:30 p.m. @ SAP Center
5 Seconds of Summer Oct. 3, 8 p.m. @ Event Center at SJSU
 GRAPHIC BY CALLIA YUAN

Veteran teachers adjust to different classrooms

BY Nitya Marimuthu & Howard Tang

Students visiting their former teachers after a long summer may have found their teachers relocated after playing a large game of “musical classrooms” over the summer.

This relocation was part of an effort to place teachers closer to their department colleagues following the departures of former teachers, principal Paul Robinson said.

Five veteran teachers have new rooms this year: P.E. and history teacher Richard Ellis, English teacher Susanna Ryan, history teacher Faith Stackhouse-Daly, Spanish teacher Sarah Voorhees and math and engineering teacher Audrey Warmuth.

“Teachers within the same department like to be close to one another because they support each other in many ways,” Robinson said. “While it’s ideal to do that, we also don’t like to move people out of a room they’ve had unless it’s absolutely necessary.”

For teachers with split schedules in which they teach different subjects on different days, moving around is common. Both Ellis and Warmuth have a lot of experience migrating between classrooms.

Since both teachers split time between a subject with a designated area and another core subject, they only use their rooms for a few periods.

Ellis and Warmuth are sharing Room 304 this year, since both need a non-designated classroom during part of each school day.

This new teaching schedule has been more convenient for Warmuth. In the past, she had to switch between the engineering

room and her math classroom on the other side of the campus, making it hard to prepare for classes.

“I had to walk across campus every period, and a teacher would come in right after I was done,” Warmuth said, “so even if I were at the end of my day, I would have to leave again so someone could teach. And then, I would have to circle back later to clean up my room and get ready for the next day.”

This year, she is in the engineering room for the entirety of even days. On odd-period days, she is in the engineering room for first period only, after which she switches back to the Room 304.

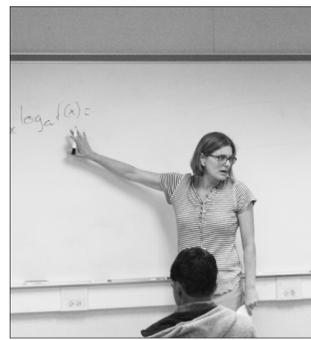
“I can stay in the room to grade my math homework and prepare my math,” Warmuth said. “I can get my work done when I’m still thinking about math, which is really nice, so this year is much better than last year.”

Ryan moved into the more spacious Room 003 this August after English teacher Carrie Bohls left the school for another job at the end of last year.

Ryan said she is still moving her belongings even after spending her summer to setting up the new classroom.

While Ryan misses her Room 408 because it was so close to the quad and many school activities, she hopes Room 003 will maintain a similar atmosphere, especially after the new student wellness center is built.

“I know it will be really nice when this construction is done; there’s going to be a lot going on [near my room] which will make it feel more central,” Ryan said. “It’s a good move, but any move is hard, even if it’s a good one.”



Top: English teacher Susanna Ryan works with freshman Garrick Zhang during tutorial. Bottom Left: Spanish Teacher Sarah Voorhees prepares her presentation for Spanish classes. Bottom Right: Math teacher Audrey Warmuth explains L'Hôpital's rule to AP Calc BC class.

Male vocal group transitions into Acapella Club

BY Sofia Jones

When most of the members of Glee Club graduated last spring, it meant not enough members remained to sustain the group. But that didn't mean the end of singing clubs on campus.

To replace Glee Club, senior Nirav Adunuthula has started Acapella Club this year with choir teacher Andrew Ford as the adviser. The club is for any singing-enthusiasts, regardless of whether they were in Glee.

“I wanted to start an acapella club to dismiss the idea that in a choir or large group, people will only sing classical songs that some find boring,” Adunuthula said. “This club will be great for anyone who loves to sing, and wants to sing more upbeat, current songs.”

Adunuthula also started the club after being inspired by a male acapella group that he is in, called “Enchord,” which was started by alumni Kevin Wu as a chance to sing fun

music outside of choir class. This group performed at many functions, such as Pancake Breakfast and Saratoga's Got Talent.

Senior Deyshna Pai has expressed interest for a women's acapella group to be made as well. Since sophomore year, she has been working on arrangements and recruiting people to form a women's acapella group.

“Having a close-knit group of people to try new songs has been a really helpful thing,” Pai said. “It was a way to test out what worked and what didn't, which was a great learning experience.”

So far, there is no women's group, but the Acapella Club has 10 members so far. They hope to sing more difficult and diverse music and sing original arrangements.

Members of Acapella Club say they are willing to put in the effort to make the club the best it can be this year, because many of them are dedicated to singing and have loved it from a young age.

“When I was younger and went to Pan-

cake Breakfast, I always saw the male acapella group,” sophomore Akshar Sarvesh said. “It seemed really fun and intriguing, and it really made me want to join as soon as I got to high school.”

“Having a close-knit group of people to try new songs has been a really helpful thing. It was a way to test out what worked and what didn't.”

SENIOR Deyshna Pai

Sarvesh originally hoped join Glee Club, but chose not last year, citing a lack of familiar faces and an involved adviser.

“Even though people loved Glee Club,

it just couldn't work out,” Adunuthula said. “The club was more like a group of seniors having fun and singing, rather than an actual organized club, which made it kind of hard to get anything done.”

Due to a lack of activities, fundraisers and advertising at Club Fair, the Glee Club was not able to attract new members and generally had a low profile on campus.

By contrast, Adunuthula plans to keep Acapella Club active by encouraging both under and upperclassmen to join, ensuring that there will always be a sustainable number of people in the club. Adunuthula hopes to organize private gigs, or get paid to perform. They also have some competitions to perform at, such as the California Harmony Sweepstakes at the end of the school year.

“We still have a lot of little complications to work out, but we're confident in the future of the club and hope the club will stay and have a lasting impact for many years to come,” Adunuthula said.

Fundraiser leaves teacher grateful for support

BY Eileen Bui & Mathew Luo

Nearing the end of 2016, math teacher Andrew Shoemaker's wife was diagnosed with Lyme disease. Shoemaker faced the costs of supplements, medical visits and a sleep apnea machine for his wife along with his recent relocation from Hawaii to California.

Shoemaker said that he began sinking “into a medical bill debt hole.”

Upon hearing of Shoemaker's financial situation, sophomore Jonah Noralahi began a fundraiser

on GoFundMe to pay for a conversion van that would allow Shoemaker and his wife to vacation and relieve their financial pressure.

Although Shoemaker was thankful for Noralahi's gesture, he didn't expect much would come from the fundraiser.

In the end, though, it generated \$3,272 through donations from 37 people. Students donated sums from \$10 to \$500, citing their appreciation of Shoemaker's teaching as their primary reason for donating.

“He was the best teacher I've ever had,” Noralahi said.

Although Shoemaker was thankful for Noralahi's gesture, he didn't expect much would come from the fundraiser.

When Noralahi caught wind of Shoemaker's situation he believed he has to do something to help them.

Shoemaker planned to use the donations to buy a van to take a

cross country road trip over the summer, which would have been their first vacation in over two years.

However, he decided to put off purchasing the van because his wife fractured her foot a few weeks before the trip.

“My wife was immobile for a couple weeks from her fractured foot,” Shoemaker said. “Her bones are more fragile because of the diseases she's dealing with.”

The money is in a savings account while Shoemaker continues to shop for a suitable van. In the meantime, he said his wife's condi-

tion has improved but that she still suffers effects of autoimmune diseases like Hashimoto's disease and Lyme disease.

While the fundraiser hasn't resulted in a van yet, it showed him how much his students cared for him.

Sophomore Arash Amiri, who donated to the cause, said, “I never had a more caring teacher and one that was willing to make the class do extremely well. After seeing what he had done for us, the least I could do was contribute I am so glad that I am can donate to Mr. Shoemaker with my friends.”

Science classes highlighted in senior's mural

BY Aaria Thomas

The once empty wall opposite the science wing is now home to a landscape of the Earth, ocean and space. Various shades of the ocean and Earth replace the original beige tiles. Sea organisms dot the blue background, while fossils remain buried deep beneath the surface of the ground. An orange planet stands out brightly against the vast darkness of space.

This new addition to the science wing was created by senior Hannah Chang for a “20 Time Project” in her Anatomy and Physiology class last semester. Chang continued to paint the mural throughout the summer and is set to finish it by the end of October.

“20 Time” is a project in which students use 20 percent of their

class time to work on a project without instruction from a teacher. Former Biology and Anatomy and Physiology teacher Kristofer Orre found that by assigning this project, students were encouraged to explore their passions and become more independent learners.

“I think sometimes there is a disconnect between how we foster learning in our classes and what learning is really like,” Orre said. “In school we as teachers often tell kids what to learn, why to learn and even how to learn it. The problem with this is that you're not going to be a student forever, and when you're done with school, it's up to you to decide these things.”

He wanted his students to choose a project where the result would benefit other people. Students came up with ideas that raised awareness for social issues or designed experiments to solve problems relating to science.

Chang said that she was thinking about including art in her project but wasn't sure how. The science department had been discussing plans for a new mural, so Orre made the suggestion of painting it for her project.

Creating a mural this big on a campus was not something Chang had any experience with. However, she was excited about the opportunity to do this new project. Her eagerness made

it easier to pull the project together. With some input from the science department, Chang sketched out the design of the mural.

She spent most of the class time dedicated toward “20 Time” planning the mural. Chang researched topics from seven of the science courses offered at Saratoga (biology, chemistry, physics, earth, marine, anatomy, astronomy and environmental).

Chang's project was not centered around one specific issue; rather, her goal was to showcase the different sciences at the high school. She incorporated what she researched about the subjects into her mural to make it an accurate representation of science at Saratoga.

“It absolutely blew us away with the level of detail she incorporat-

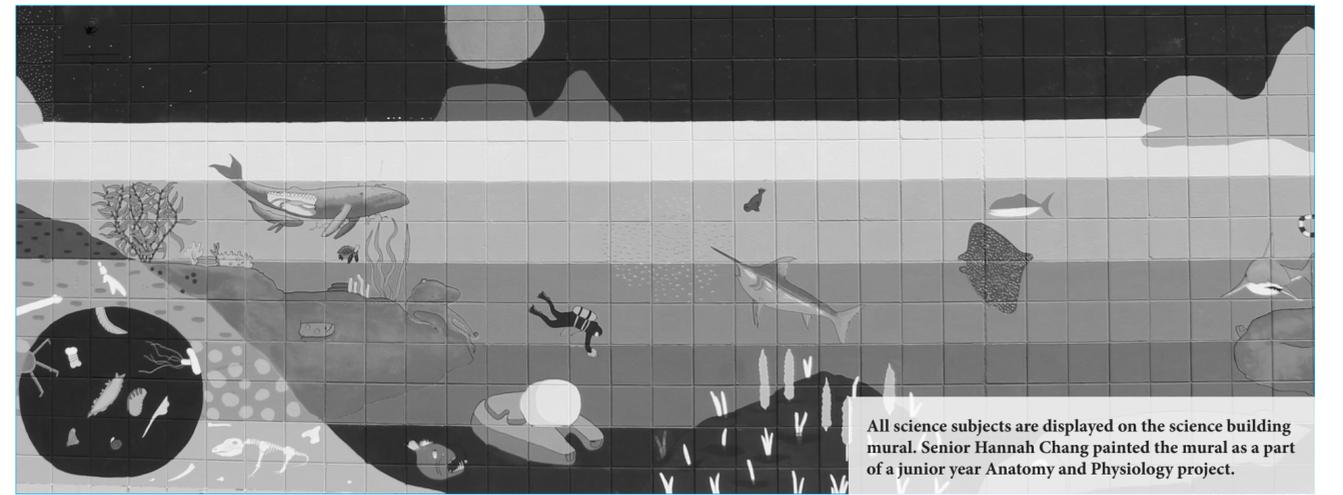
ed,” Orre said. According to Orre, the mural not only brightens the corridor but also provides an excellent visual of the scientific concepts that students explore.

Chang is honored to be able to decorate a wall at Saratoga, and she had a great experience completing her project. Not only did she learn more about the different types sciences, but she combined her learning with something she really enjoyed doing.

“She's really going above and beyond what the project originally intended,” Orre said. “[Chang] is an exemplification of how this project allows students to tap into their own intrinsic motivation, in this case her love of art, to take on something more challenging than they've ever done.”



Chang



All science subjects are displayed on the science building mural. Senior Hannah Chang painted the mural as a part of a junior year Anatomy and Physiology project.

FALCON // EDWIN CHEN

Mural inspired by American classics shows bitter reality

BY Anna Novoselov

When they walk past room 006, students notice an elaborate mural inspired by “The Grapes of Wrath” by John Steinbeck and “The Great Gatsby” by F. Scott Fitzgerald. While upperclassmen might be reminded of the themes of the two classic novels, underclassman might wonder what the mural's components represent.

“Once you take English 11, you can finally analyze it and understand what it all means,” senior Kay Jewler said. “It's a fun puzzle to try to solve on the school walls.”

Jewler, along with seniors Karen Chow, Cameron Lin and Anisha Byri, painted the mural last year for their second-semester English 11 Honors final project, which required students to interpret the course in a creative way.

The mural features images from both novels and depicts the disparities between the United State's economic classes, revealing that the American Dream is not always accessible to everyone.

The main elements of the mural are two hands; the bottom left manicured hand holding pearls represents the upper, wealthy class while the top right weathered hand with grape vines wrapped around it represents the poorer, farming class.

In the middle, an asphalt road with Gatsby's yellow car stretches between the two hands, and on the bottom right, blue windowless

buildings illustrate the closed off nature of the wealthy.

The mural conveys that the road creates a divide between the poor and wealthy areas and people can only reach the wealthy side by being born there, Chow said.

English 10 and English 11 Honors teacher Amy Keys explained that while there are many wealthy communities — especially in places like the Silicon Valley — to whom “the American Dream is very vivid and tangible,” there are also “populations that feel very shut off from accessing and achieving the American goal.”

“I hope the mural inspires other students ... If you love two things, they don't have to be separate.”

SENIOR Karen Chow

According to Keys, the mural displays this divide — which is prevalent in American history and current events — in a creative, aesthetically pleasing way.

“It was neat that they showed the proximity and tantalizing closeness of these opportunities for different groups of people,” Keys said.

A green sun with spreading rays concludes the scene. It was inspired by the green light — which

represents an individual's desires — at the end of the dock that Gatsby lived by.

“I think the mural piques people's curiosity when they walk past,” Keys said. “It's like a little teaser, like a trailer of a movie.”

The four girls began the process in early May. Jewler said that they considered the main symbols of the books and how to tie them together. They presented different ideas and sketched out designs until they reached a consensus.

After Chow sketched the mural and received approval from principal Paul Robinson, the maintenance staff and the school board, the girls began painting. They worked on it almost every day after school over the span of five weeks as well as 12 hours a day over Memorial Day weekend.

Jewler said that working on the mural was a fun, relaxing break from the academic grind. The girls talked, listened to music, cracked jokes and got to know each other better.

While most projects involve clear set guidelines, the English 11 Honors final project allows students to explore their interests and connect them to literature. Chow combined two of her interests, art and English, in a meaningful way that will last for years.

“I hope the mural inspires other students,” Chow said. “If you love two things, they don't have to be separate; you can put them together.”

The yellow car from “The Great Gatsby” travels the road between the wealthy and poor, underneath two giant hands. Four students painted this mural for their English 11 Honors final project.

FALCON // EDWIN CHEN

Braces have transcended their negative image

By Allen Chen & Oliver Ye

When chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu woke up one morning, her mouth felt sore, a sensation lingering from the nightmare she had just escaped. The details of the nightmare were hazy, but the ache in her mouth felt familiar — even though she last wore headgear and braces as a teen back in the 1980s.

Nakamatsu wore braces for around two years starting in seventh grade. Memories haunt her in her sleep because having braces was a painful experience — and not just physically.

"I was very embarrassed," Nakamatsu said. "I remember the rubber bands that you had to wear, and they'd shoot out of your mouth every now and then."

Like many during that decade, Nakamatsu was familiar with the geeky, loser image around braces. Braces have traditionally been considered nerdy, but in recent years, as the dental devices have gained traction, the stigma around them has lessened.

According to The Atlantic, over 4 million people across the country now wear braces, a contrast to three decades ago, when the count was closer to 2 million.

First used by the upper class in the 1800s, braces resembled headgear more than their current form. Eventually, the clunky headgear became less a sign of wealth and more of a major but necessary inconvenience.

It wasn't until the '70s that the wired, rubber-bound brackets commonly associated with modern braces began to replace headgear. America's youth began to asso-

ciate braces with nerds or losers. Getting braces was equivalent to social suicide: a life that the nerds of classic '80s movies, including Katie Simpson of "She's Out of Control" and Brian Johnson of "The Breakfast Club" knew all too well.

Nakamatsu remembers being affected by this stigma as well. She had to wear her headgear at home and at night, and she begged her parents to not force her to wear it in public. Even so, she remembers the humiliation she felt when she had to wear it outside the house.

"I have a memory of my parents making me wear headgear when we went to the mall one day, and we ran into the cutest guy at school," Nakamatsu said. "I was mortified."

Increasingly commonplace, braces are no longer a stroke of bad luck but just another part of a person's appearance.

Although most people usually get braces in middle school, more and more adults are choosing to receive braces — even some celebrities. Tom Cruise got them at 40; Emma Watson at 26; and Faith Hill at 45.

Braces have not only lost their bad rep, but have even become fashionably acceptable — Karl Lagerfeld and Carine Roitfeld models were spotted sporting the metal bands on the runway and on set for a shoot, as noted by The Globe and Mail.

Dental Devices in Detail

<h4>Braces</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - apply pressure to straighten teeth - improve dental health 	<h4>Headgear</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - helps align teeth and influence jaw growth when used with braces - treats severe under/overbites - often used on young patients
<h4>Metal Braces</h4>	<h4>Ceramic Braces</h4>
<h4>Lingual Braces</h4>	<h4>Invisalign</h4>
<h4>OVERBITE</h4>	<h4>UNDERBITE</h4>

SOURCE: ORAL-B
GRAPHIC BY CONNIE LIANG AND KAITLYN WANG

Braces may have gained more acceptance due to increasing expectations regarding how teeth should look and improving technology being used in orthodontic appliances, including braces' smaller size and more colorful design.

Increasingly commonplace, braces are no longer a stroke of bad luck but just another part of a person's appearance.

"I thought I would look weird at first, but after I looked into the mirror after getting my braces, it seemed pretty normal," sophomore Dylan Overby said. "I've had braces since eighth grade, and nobody has noticed my braces until I mention it to them."

Many teenagers have qualms about the physical discomfort of braces rather than their appearance. The wires and brackets can cause pain and make it difficult to eat or play an instrument.

Junior Riya Kalra, who has had braces

since seventh grade, said that the first times she got them tightened, the pain would overwhelm her, leaving her unable to focus. After a few months, she became more accustomed to the tightenings.

"It's not just straighter teeth," Kalra said. In her opinion, the temporary discomfort is worth enduring. "Braces help prevent other problems when you get older."

Braces not only ensure straightening of teeth, but can also prevent tooth decay, cavity formation, gum infections and even enhance digestion.

Reflecting on her experiences, Nakamatsu sees a shift in perception of braces between when she was a teenager versus now.

"It doesn't seem like kids are as embarrassed," said Nakamatsu. "I do remember a couple students being very excited because they were getting their braces off, but it seems different now." ♦

FACEBOOK FRENZY

Facebook usage in student culture persists despite privacy breaches

By Neeti Badve & Sandhya Sundaram

On March 21, Mark Zuckerberg broke his silence and admitted that his company accidentally allowed the biggest user data breach in internet history. Since 2014, the political firm Cambridge Analytica had been collecting private information from over 87 million Facebook members, attempting to influence voter opinion in favor of their own candidates, people including Ted Cruz and President Donald Trump.

It left Facebook users shocked and scared about the fate of their personal data on the internet, forcing people to consider how their daily lives and even personalities could be influenced if strangers could gain access to their personal account information. Taking a more wary stance on their internet activity, people all across the world have deleted accounts, attempting to wipe any trace of their Facebook use.

Students and teachers of Saratoga High use Facebook to spread class information, receive updates for extracurricular activities, and help each other with homework. Although the school does not explicitly require students to create Facebook accounts, many students choose to for the convenience of receiving information and staying up to date in classes and organizations.

The school has a Facebook group with 911 members in which Leadership posts announcements about school dances, rallies, Homecoming or boba fundraisers. Clubs and students also post on the group. Additionally, grade levels have Facebook groups for information specific to their class.

Some academic classes, like the Media Arts Program, The Falcon newspaper staff and the marching band have Facebook groups that enable easy communication of reminders, announcements and photos.

Extracurricular activities and clubs also have Facebook groups for sports, Benefit Fashion Show, Bombay in the Bay and Homecoming dances.

Many students create separate groups without teachers or adults to facilitate discussions regarding homework and advice.

All of this means students are hard pressed to be part of the school community without a Facebook account.

Junior Allen Chang often relies on Facebook homework help groups to keep track

of assignments and to get advice from others. Chang likes how the site is simple and intuitive to use.

"It's one of the best-designed websites out there, and because it's very well-designed and aesthetically pleasing, a lot of people want to use it," Chang said.

Chang said that he does not see the benefit of school groups using any other platform since most people have Facebook accounts and are familiar with the interface. Chang also attributes students' reliance on Facebook to procrastination.

Users also have to worry about viruses, which have plagued Facebook since its creation and continue to return. September marked the second time this year that the Facebook video virus has appeared. Created in 2013, this virus sends users a link with their profile picture and a supposed YouTube video of themselves. If users click on the link, they may download malware onto their device, passing the virus on to their Facebook friends through Messenger.

According to 2-SpyWare.com, users received one to 10 malicious video links a day, and the only way to stay safe was to delete the conversation every time.



"I found it to be really sketchy, but it was personalized with my name and little emojis."

JUNIOR Liviya Katz

Katz fell for this scam when she received a Facebook message from a friend. Thinking that her friend was trying to share a video, Katz tried opening the link on multiple devices, wondering why it was so suspicious. Finally, the link prompted her to sign in to her Facebook account, revealing her username and password.

"I found it to be really sketchy, but it was personalized with my name and little emojis," Katz said. "I think that's what got me."

This situation spurred many awkward explanations for Katz. The virus sent the same message to about 35 of Katz's Facebook contacts, including her uncle, her cousin, a friend's mom and many people she had not spoken to in years.

Because of concerns like these, other high schools in the area have given up or limited Facebook use over the years, yet Saratoga High continues to rely on it for communications, even with growing concern from parents because of Facebook's controversial privacy practices.

Having used technology like Google Classroom or Schoology at Redwood Middle School, freshman Linnea Bradley expected that high school would be similar.

Bradley's parents were hesitant when they found out that Bradley would need a Facebook account for coordinating extracurriculars, receiving help for homework, and receiving information from teachers and students about a class.

"My dad doesn't really like Facebook and he deleted his account," Bradley said. "He thought they were tracking him and they may know too much about him."

Bradley wound up getting a Facebook account to make sure that she would receive information about school events, but took precautions like not giving out personal information such as her school or actual birthday.

In addition to all the groups that use Facebook, some teachers have come to rely on it as well. Citing ease as his primary reason, English teacher Jason Friend encourages his AP Language students to join a Facebook group to share articles, videos, class announcements and anything related to course material.

"It is an easy way of sharing information that often gets to people in a way that Canvas doesn't, since people don't check their emails anymore," Friend said.

Although he has considered switching to other sites, Friend said he has found himself valuing Facebook's efficiency.

"Students use so many different platforms, but Facebook has been around long enough that the saturation of everybody essentially having an account makes it useful," Friend said. "The minute you go to a different platform you lose what's most useful."

Switching to a new platform presents problems, so many teachers avoid doing so.

Recently, though, some groups and classes have taken the leap away from Facebook. The school asks students to enter a number and text a specific code to it, subscribing users to updates on high school events. The school itself has an Instagram account where it displays pictures and announcements of school games or activities.

Despite various social interfaces come into use the Saratoga campus, Facebook continues to dominate as the primary source of information for students.

Even as a schoolwide interface with an announcements feature, Canvas takes a backseat to Facebook because it does not allow students to make announcements to their fellow peers. There is no feature for students to create and post to their own groups, which makes it useless to students intending to send out a message.

Although Facebook continues to be the dominant player in social media, the Cambridge Analytica scandal serves as a reminder to students, both incoming and veteran, of the importance of exercising caution with it. ♦

laboration and team-based projects, while also guaranteeing privacy. AP Computer Science teacher Thomas Wang uses Piazza, a Q&A web service. Founded in 2009, it serves as a combination of a forum and a wiki to contribute to the

By the Numbers

1 in 10 FB users deleted their accounts after the Cambridge Analytica Scandal

2 billion Active daily users

317,000 New status updates every minute

SOURCE: sproutsocial

overall learning experience of students.

Fremont High School uses text messaging and Instagram rather than Facebook to get information out to students.

The school asks students to enter a number and text a specific code to it, subscribing users to updates on high school events. The school itself has an Instagram account where it displays pictures and announcements of school games or activities.

Despite various social interfaces come into use the Saratoga campus, Facebook continues to dominate as the primary source of information for students.

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VTA bus route changes will impact students

By Justin Guo & Anna Novoselov

When the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority announced the discontinuation of bus Route 53 in the fall of 2017, De Anza College students protested against the decision. The route, stretching from West Valley College to the Sunnyvale Transit Center, ultimately remained after protests successfully led to reconsideration, but now, current routes — including Route 53 — are once again being reconfigured.

After six months of community and board meetings, VTA approved a plan last April that will take effect next June. The proposal includes several changes to existing routes and the creation of new routes and two new Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) stations: one in Milpitas and one in San Jose.

A VTA spokesperson said the organization considered community input but also

looked at budget realities. In many areas, the bus serves few people. On Route 53, seats remain fairly empty; thus, the board decided to reconfigure and combine routes to increase revenue and ridership.

However, these changes would impact students who do rely on public transportation to get to school and after-school activities. Busy parents often do not have time to drive their children, and students may not have a driver's license or access to a car.

One such student, Middle College senior Leena Elzeiny, frequently uses the bus to get to West Valley College and De Anza College. Since Route 53 is the only one that goes through Saratoga and to the two colleges, Elzeiny has found it "really valuable." This route allows students who may not have an alternate form of transportation a cheap, easy way to get to classes.

The 53 bus stops near Saratoga High, De Anza, West Valley and Redwood Middle, so Elzeiny thinks more young people would use public transit if they were aware of it.

"The demand is there," Elzeiny said. "It's just that nobody recognizes it as an option."

Drawbacks and benefits of bus usage

Many students see the bus system as archaic or inconvenient and do not know its schedule. According to StreetsBlog, 62.2 million fewer people in California boarded buses in 2016 than in 2012. This decline may result from lower gas prices, higher numbers of private vehicles and ease of travel.

"The time it takes to get places [using the bus] is much longer than the time it takes using private transportation," said junior Sarah Smalls, who plays hockey with the Girls JV Sharks team. Because of her unpredictable hockey game and practice schedule, she finds it more practical to drive herself, since she has a license and her own car.

Smalls said she has never needed to use public transportation because she previously carpooled or was driven by her parents.

However, the bus still provides transportation to many individuals. Elzeiny, for instance, started using public transportation during the summer after sophomore year, when she traveled to Sunnyvale for Girls Who Code, a camp that empowers young girls. Since both of her parents work, she

has had to find a way to commute by herself.

Elzeiny said that public transportation is inexpensive and enjoyable. While riding, she reads, draws, listens to audiobooks or catches up on work, free from distractions.

"It's probably the most efficient my down time has ever been," she said.

"The demand is there. It's just that nobody recognizes it as an option."



SENIOR Leena Elzeiny

Another Middle College student, junior Callie Bonne, depends on Route 53 to travel from her house to West Valley College. If the route were eliminated, she would need to find an alternative method of transportation, such as carpooling, biking or walking.

"I couldn't get to school as easily," Bonne said. "[VTA] is a reliable system."

The new bus Route 53 will operate between Valco Mall in Cupertino and the Santa Clara Transit Center, no longer passing through West Valley. Although the new Route 51 will run from Moffett Field in Mountain View, through De Anza and to West Valley, covering many of the locations originally covered by bus Routes 53 and 81, a few spots will be discontinued.

This change would hurt those who rely on public transportation through specific bus stops; they would have to account for transportation time to the new locations, for they may be farther from their homes.

While the buses are usually on time, arriving at each stop in one-hour intervals, those who take the bus would need to coordinate their daily schedules with those of the buses. This is not possible for students who have inconsistent daily lives.

For those who cannot drive by themselves yet, public transportation is a trustworthy service. Sophomore Isaac Sun takes the bus two to three times a week to get to volunteering and after-school classes.

Consequences of ridesharing apps

After surveying 2,000 people, researchers at the UC Davis Institute of Transportation Studies indicated that 6 percent of people who use apps like Uber and Lyft said they rode the bus less.

The study, by Regina R. Clewlow, Ph.D, also claims that Uber and Lyft seem to worsen traffic by adding vehicles to the streets.

In contrast, public transportation offers environmental benefits such as conserving energy and reducing air pollution. According to a study by Delaware, buses use 8.7 percent less energy per passenger mile than the typical automobile and emit only 20 percent as much carbon monoxide.

While attending Girls Who Code, Elzeiny said that she saved 20 miles of gas every day she went to camp for seven weeks.

"The idea of making a small difference every day is my main motivation for taking the bus," Elzeiny said. "That change has become my lifestyle." ♦

>> thebigidea

VTA Route Changes

Why is VTA reconfiguring Route 53?
Few community members use Route 53 now. To improve ridership and revenue, VTA is reconfiguring and recombining current routes.

How is Route 53 changing?
Instead of operating between West Valley College to the Sunnyvale Transit Center, Route 53 will stretch from Cupertino's Valco Mall and the Santa Clara Transit Center as of June 2019.

How does Uber/Lyft affect public transit?
According to a study conducted by researchers at UC Davis, using Uber and Lyft leads to reduced bus ridership and may contribute to more severe traffic.

CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA SCANDAL SIMPLIFIED

- 1 DATA SCIENTIST
ALEKSANDR KOGAN
CREATED A FACEBOOK PERSONALITY QUIZ AND SOLD THE QUIZ DATA TO...
- 2 CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA.
THE LONDON-BASED POLITICAL CONSULTING FIRM THEN USED 'PSYCHOGRAPHIC PROFILING' TO TARGET POLITICAL ADVERTISING AT UNKNOWNING FACEBOOK USERS.
- 3 PRESIDENT TRUMP
HAS TIES TO THE FIRM: IT WORKED ON HIS 2016 ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

"THIS WAS A MAJOR BREACH OF TRUST, AND I'M REALLY SORRY THAT THIS HAPPENED" - ZUCKERBERG VIA CNN

ALL GRAPHICS BY CONNIE LIANG

SOURCES: Youtube, CNN, USA Today, Just Jared

Spanish exchange student finds connections and acceptance through basketball team

By Justin Guo & Kaylene Morrison

Standing 6-4, senior Pau Garcia de la Cuadra towers above the sea of students as he makes his way to the quad. Garcia, who transferred from Nuestra Señora del Pilar in Valencia, Spain, just two weeks prior to the start of school, is still adjusting to the culture and layout of the city and American school in general.

With the help of his sister Sofia, who graduated SHS last year under the same exchange program, Garcia successfully applied to attend the school for the year through International Student Exchange (ISE).

Garcia is currently enrolled in the J-1 visa, which allows Garcia to live in the U.S. for up to a year for academic purposes.

He is staying with junior Marly Feign's family and will be hosted by senior Hanlin Sun next semester.

News of his arrival was first spread throughout the varsity basketball team. Garcia has been playing basketball since freshman year, and his height has allowed him to excel at the sport. Garcia began training with the varsity basketball team soon after coming to the U.S. Prior to Garcia's arrival, the team was relatively undersized, having lost all three of its tallest players from last season to graduation. Sun, a fellow varsity player, said that he is confident in Garcia's abilities to be an asset to the team.

"Pau will definitely help us this year. He's around 6'4" and is really long, so he'll help us inside on defense and rebounding," Sun said. "He's pretty skilled right now, but the biggest thing for him is to adjust to the physicality and speed that we play at."

Garcia said that he enjoys the intense environment and the level of physical play of varsity basketball, despite the difficulty of getting used to it.

"It feels like it's the WWE sometimes," Garcia joked.

During practices, the coaches call less fouls in an attempt to get the team used to the level of physical play at the varsity level. Varsity head coach Patrick Judge said that this is because one of the weaknesses of the team is the team's size and toughness.

"Using a coaching strategy from my past, we have stopped calling hardly any fouls, especially in the paint," Judge said. "Over time it is my hope that all of our athletes, especially our big guys like Pau, no longer expect fouls to be called and play through any contact they might experience."

Garcia said that in Spain, fouls were rarely called as well, but here he notes that the defensive help is a little more intense.

When Garcia gets the ball in the paint, he has traditionally been trained to make moves to score. However, since the help defense in this league is so quick and well practiced, Garcia can barely dribble the ball before players from the other team start surrounding him. Because of this, Garcia has begun learning to look for his open teammates more often when he gets the ball in the paint. And since the team excels at shooting in general, developing this habit is important regardless. In addition, Garcia is still getting used to his new teammates and their styles. Given time, Garcia said he will be more comfortable with them and play more confidently.

Garcia said that the basketball team, and the numerous team-bonding activities they do, has really helped his transition to the school. For example, the basketball team often goes out to get food after workouts.

"Here, everyone on the team really likes each other and has fun on the court."



SENIOR Pau Garcia de la Cuadra

"In Spain, we would always have a team dinner after the season ended, but it didn't really matter, because the season was already over," Garcia said. "Here, we go out to eat almost every weekend, and I am able to become much better friends with my teammates because of it."

Garcia has had his first experiences of eating Five Guys, In N Out and Chipotle with the basketball squad, and to him, being able to enjoy his time playing basketball and bond with his teammates has been the best part of coming to the US.

The team even went to K1 Speed Racing for a night as a reward from the coach for working really hard throughout the summer and into the start of the school year.

Garcia described it as one of the best experiences of his life.

"Our coach got us the entire arena for a night, and it was amazing," Garcia said. "We had a [friendly] competition, and I only got



Photo Courtesy of Coach Patrick Judge

Pau Garcia de la Cuadra (bottom right) poses with the varsity basketball team after their team bonding event at K1 Speed Racing on Aug. 31. Garcia said that moments like these with his teammates have made the transition to Saratoga much easier than he anticipated.

third, but it was still really fun to hang out with teammates and go racing."

Garcia said that this camaraderie within the team fosters leadership and trust. In Spain, everyone plays their own style of basketball, he said, but here, all teammates are on the same page with one goal — winning a league championship.

"Here, everyone on the team really likes each other and has fun on the court," Garcia said. "The leadership from Hanlin [Sun] and Sehij [Dhindsa] is much better than back in Spain."

Despite having missed the summer trainings, Garcia said that the opportunity to play basketball was one of the main reasons he came to the U.S., so the time commitment isn't really a big deal for him.

Garcia hopes that he can reach a skill level that would allow him to get into college on a basketball scholarship and stay in the US. However, if applying to colleges proves to be too difficult for him, he is content with moving back to Spain.

"It's very difficult to go to college in the U.S. for me," he said, "I am trying to apply with only basketball so it looks like I am going to go back to Spain and try to go to the UK, Germany, France. That's not what I want though. I want to stay here."

Aside from basketball, Garcia's biggest challenge has not been the language barrier;

as most would assume; being able to speak with some of the Spanish teachers as well as friends who speak Spanish has made the transition easier, too. Instead, Garcia's biggest obstacle has been getting used to suburban Saratoga.

Garcia's home in Valencia is a dense metropolis, a bustling city similar to New York. Saratoga, however, is mostly residential, and since non-residential areas are few and far apart, travel by car is the main transportation method.

"Here everyone uses a car, while in my city you can see a lot of people walking because it's a city where you can walk," Garcia said. "But here all the people say 30 minutes is very close, but for me very close means five minutes."

As Garcia continues to get more accustomed to life in the U.S., he has begun to enjoy it. Assimilating into the community has been a bit difficult for Garcia, but he feels that being part of the basketball team has helped him adapt to the environment and enjoy life in Saratoga. In the hallways, for example, his teammates often exchange greetings with Garcia, and he can't wait until the season gets started in November.

"I've only been here for a month, but being part of the basketball team has been awesome, and I really hope we can do well when the season starts," he said. ♦

GIRLS' TENNIS

Falcons try to regain footing after early-season losses

By Angelina Chen & Amanda Zhu

No. 1 doubles player Juhi Patel stood, knees bent, eyes following the ball that would ultimately be the difference between a victory or a loss against Palo Alto High on Sept. 21. Patel and her partner, senior Divya Aggarwal, played a tiebreaker round with hopes of prevailing against their opponents.

As the ball came over the net, Patel volleyed the ball back to her opponents, making it impossible for her opponents to return the shot, ending the game with a 4-3 victory.

Other than this league victory, they have dropped two other matches as of Sept. 25: a 4-3 loss to Los Altos on Sept. 18 and 6-1 drubbing at the hands of Monta

Vista on Sept. 13.

One reason for the losses has been a leg injury to the No. 1 singles player, junior Monica Stratakos. At the same time, new team members like Aindri Patra and Sanya Kwatra are adjusting to their new roles on the varsity team.

For her part, Aggarwal said the team's goal this year is simply to do better than they did last year and make it further in CCS. Last year, the team made it to the semifinals of CCS, where they were defeated by Saint Francis.

The players all play outside of their regular school practices, which prepares them for the matches. Although the team is already strong, Aggarwal thinks individuals still need to dedicate more time to attend-

ing matches.

According to Aggarwal, many members on the team are busy, so they are not always completely dedicated to attending practices or matches. This results in the lineup being bumped up, which in turn, leads to a lot of losses. This problem was especially prominent in the Stanford Tournament the team participated in on Sept. 8, where they placed seventh out of 16 schools.

Patel also said that the players are still "getting into the rhythm." They were off to a strong start as they won both their practice matches against Gunn and Lynbrook in August.

"We're working hard both in practice and in our own time in hopes of defend-

ing our high rank from last year in the De Anza league," said Patel.

Aggarwal believes the team's chemistry is good, saying players are keeping up good communication during points and socialize with each other after games, and spend whole days together during tournaments.

"I think we have a really strong team this year," Aggarwal said. "We have a good chance of getting past where we got last year and moving on."

Along with Stratakos, several players have been competing as singles: Rini Vasan, Varsha Horantur and Alyssa Pina. In addition to Patel and Aggarwal on the doubles side, players include Katie Lam, Vivian Lin, Sanya Kwatra and Khiara Berkowitz. They are coached again this year by Florin Marica. ♦

After losing Homecoming game at Levi's, Falcons look to bounce back against Mountain View

By Siva Sambasivam & Rahul Vadlakonda

Following a 1-9 season last year, one riddled with injuries and tough losses, the football team dropped down to the lower El Camino League. But after winning its first game against Santa Teresa, the Falcons have stumbled in non-league losses to Silver Creek, Sacred Heart and Los Gatos.

Most painful of all, they lost their much-anticipated Homecoming game last Friday against Santa Clara 26-21 at Levi's Stadium. It was their first league game. A week earlier they traveled to Los Gatos and fell to the Wildcats 48-7.

The Falcons travel to Mountain View tonight for their next league matchup. The Spartans enter the game with a 2-3 record, but are coming off an impressive 58-34 win against Gunn.

During the Homecoming game, the Falcons got into a hole quickly as they struggled to stop the Bruins' rushing attack and were unable to prevent Santa Clara from converting on third down. The Bruins got out to a 12-0 lead within the first quarter and a half, from two rushing touchdowns from their quarterback Nick Garcia.

After the Falcons got the ball back on the ensuing kickoff in the second quarter, they began to find their rhythm. The team capped off a 75-yard drive with a 21-yard touchdown pass from Stokes to junior wide receiver Tyler Prowse.

Their defense was able to stop the Bruins' next drive, but a 40-yard field goal attempt before the half failed.

The Falcons trailed 12-7 at halftime. The Falcons' momentum carried over into the second half, with Stokes driving the team down the field on their first drive and running the ball in for a 2-yard TD. The score put the Falcons ahead 14-12.

At this point, the Falcons defense was finally able to hold up, stopping the Bruins on their next two drives. The Falcons' offense however, was not able to convert either of these opportunities, and senior running back J.J. Wang fumbled on the team's own 21-yard line, a costly turnover.

The Bruins pounced on this opportunity, scoring on a 10-yard touchdown pass, taking the lead, 19-14. After this momentum shift, the Bruins' defense was able to get a quick 3 and out, giving the ball back to Garcia, who scored an 8-yard rushing touchdown, with 8 minutes left in the fourth quarter.

On the next possession, Stokes led the

Falcons on an 80-yard drive, capped off by a 50-yard touchdown pass to junior wideout Max Muilenburg, cutting the deficit to 26-21 and keeping the Falcons in the game.

The defense was able to force a missed 36-yard field goal from the Bruins, giving the ball back to the offense with 4 minutes left on the clock, and all three timeouts remaining. Trailing by one touchdown, Stokes had one final chance to put the team ahead.

The offense was able to convert two first downs, but with around 3 minutes left, Stokes threw an interception on a pass intended for Prowse. The turnover gave the ball back to the Bruins, and one first down sealed the win for the Bruins.

Toward the end of the contest, a scary play brought a hush over the stadium. Defensive tackle and special teams gunner Will Seifert was injured on a blindside hit on special teams. He lay on the ground unconscious for several minutes while medical personnel rushed onto the field. Even though the hit was legal and no penalty was assessed, Saratoga coaches were upset at the dangerous nature of the block.

After regaining consciousness, Seifert was carted off the field in a neck brace. He spent the night in a hospital and was released the next day. He is out for the foreseeable future, and as such a versatile player, it is a huge loss to the team.

"I think that we are going to keep our head up and work hard the rest of the season."



JUNIOR George Bian

Despite the team's recent struggles compounded with likely season-ending injuries to both Seifert and sophomore wide receiver Ryan Gilligan in an earlier game, junior wide receiver George Bian believes that with their toughest stretch of the year behind them, the team can still regroup and make some noise for the rest of the season, and perhaps the playoffs.

"For the last few weeks we haven't really been playing our best because we have been playing the three toughest teams on our schedule. We are going to play easier teams in the upcoming weeks and should do bet-



TALISMAN // LEI OTSUKA

Senior running back J.J. Wang runs the ball during the team's Homecoming game against Santa Clara at Levi's Stadium on Sept. 21. Wang finished the game with 103 total yards.

ter," said Bian.

Bian said that the Falcons held their own against a tough team like Santa Clara, a positive sign that can help the team's morale and prospects going forward.

"Although losing those three games has affected our morale, I think that we are going to keep our head up and work hard the rest of the season, and start getting some wins," Bian said.

Since the Falcons have only lost one league game, their prospects for a league title and a CCS appearance are still a realistic possibility, especially being in the B-division with easier competition.

"Coming into the season we wanted to win CCS, and because we are in the El Camino League, I still think that that is our ultimate goal," said Bian. "But after losing our first league game, we need to win the rest of our five league games, so we are treating those games as all playoff games."

Despite having a losing season so far, coach Tim Lugo is hopeful that as the younger players get more experience, and develop more at the varsity level, the team will be able to execute better on the field.

The team's current roster includes numerous sophomores and juniors in their first year on varsity, such as free safety Tyler Chaffin and receiver Kelly Huesby.

"Those guys are all contributing," he said.

"We did not bring them to the team to sit on the bench, but there is a growth process when you start sophomores on your team."

Lugo said he is optimistic for the rest of the season because of the untapped potential of some of these players combined with the lower league competition.

Although the Falcons were not able to win at Levi's, Bian believes that having the football game at the stadium brought the entire community together, and gave a boost of morale to the football team.

"Just having the whole community out there supporting Saratoga High, that's what it's all about. It is not necessarily about winning or losing, it's just about bringing together our community and having fun at the event," he said.

As the Falcons look forward to their game against Mountain View, many of their players have another motive to come out and play their best.

The Falcons former JV head coach, Stephen Matos, is now one of the varsity coaches for Mountain View. Bian is looking forward to showing their improvement.

"Coach Matos was our coach when we beat Los Gatos two years ago, under the last second. It is going to be a really awesome game, because we get to show him what we have learned, and hopefully come out with a win," Bian said. ♦

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

During rough start, Carter remains a bright spot

By Oliver Ye & JunLee

Diving across the court to pick up an especially tricky tip, and then immediately scrambling to get up, junior right side hitter Risa Carter called for a set, jumped high and smashed the ball past the Lynbrook blockers and down onto the ground. She pumped her arms in the air, encouraging her teammates as they went in for their group cheer. With Carter's efforts as a mother figure, the Falcons won the tough battle against Lynbrook High 2-1.

With a record of 4-8, Carter has been a source of optimism this year, keeping the girls' hopes at a CCS appearance alive.

The past five years of her volleyball career have helped enhance not only her skills, but also her leadership. Faced with the loss of many key players graduating or leaving this year, such as Riley Carter, Dasha Gousseva, Hannah Fan, Belle Strawn, Paige Hansen, and Michelle Vu, the team has struggled a bit in the competitive

El Camino Division. However, Risa stepped up to help the team, cheering her teammates up and cracking jokes get over problems smoothly. "Risa is probably the funniest person I've met, and to have her on our team really brightens our mood," junior setter Lauren Hansen said.

Carter started playing volleyball when she was in middle school, in part due to the influence of her sister, 2018 alumni Riley Carter, who is now playing the sport at USC.

"[Riley] played volleyball when she was in middle school, and I watched her become a really good volleyball player, so I was inspired to start playing too," Risa said.

Risa started playing volleyball as a sixth grader in Redwood Middle School's volleyball team. Since then, volleyball has become an essential part of her life.

Though she joined the school team when she was in middle school, it wasn't

easy to become a good player with her level of skill.

"I was not the best volleyball player for sure when I was in sixth grade, but through practice, I have definitely improved," Risa said.

Risa has also joined clubs outside of the school to become a better player, not only for herself but also for her team. She has tried to focus on her leadership in order to help the team more bonded, making her one of the key players on the team.

"She is super supportive and uplifting, which helps out the other players when we don't feel very confident," junior libero Lauren Hansen said. "We've played together since middle school and on competitive teams, and she's just such a genuine person."

The girls lost their first match against Los Gatos 3-0 on Aug. 24 but fought hard to win their next matches 3-2 against Scotts Valley on Aug. 27 and 3-1 against



Carter

BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY

Team improves speed and strength training

BY Mathew Luo

Only seven weeks into the season, the boys' cross country team has competed at two invitational meets, the Earlybird Invitational and the Stevenson Relays, volunteered at a runner's station for eight hours at the Santa Cruz Ironman and run a total of 300 miles.

Despite this flurry of activity, cross country runners still spend most of their effort in their daily conditioning for strength and stamina.

"This is coach Ian Tippetts' second year coaching cross country, and this year he's really working toward building us up as a team," senior Nirav Adunuthula said. "We're doing strength progressions, weight lifting, hill repeats and speed work in preparation for getting to our top speed by the end of the season."

In addition to running on weekdays, the team has also been doing off campus hill workouts on Saturdays and weight lifting twice a week.

"We have to train for both speed and strength," junior Kole Tippetts said. "But at a certain point, like where A team is at, we have to stop because it gets hard to train both speed and strength together."

Stamina-wise, the team has been training with 6-mile long hill repeats both near the high school at Villa Montalvo and on off-campus terrain at Fremont Older.

This conditioning, in conjunction with

strong juniors such as Tippetts and Shivam Verma and talented freshman runners such as Harrison Dance and Sina Salehi, has allowed the Falcons to perform well at both the Stevenson relay, which took place at Pebble Beach on Sept. 7, and the Earlybird invitational, which took place at Toro Park in Salinas on Sept. 14.

The Stevenson Relay was a 1.6 mile invitational race, consisting of three heats of seven runners each.

The first group scored fourth in their division and sixth overall; the second scored fourth in their division; the third scored third in theirs.

"Our team ran really well overall," Tippetts said. "But one thing that really impressed me at Stevenson's was freshman Harrison Dance's performance. Harry ran an amazing 8:21, beating Nirav and my predictions for him by about a minute."

The Earlybird Invitational was a 3.1 mile hilly race, consisting of 10 separate races segregated by grade and gender. The seniors scored 11th out of 17; the juniors 13th out of 23; the sophomores 23rd out of 28; the freshmen 10th out of 32. Individually, the team scored six personal records that invitational.

Both Adunuthula, who ranked first in his senior squad and achieved a personal best by 20 seconds at Earlybird, and Tippetts, who ranked first in his junior squad and ran his best time by 50 seconds at Earlybird, expressed satisfaction with their individual



Courtesy of IAN TIPPETTS

Junior Kole Tippetts turns a corner at the Stevenson Relay in Pebble Beach on Sept. 7.

performances and the team's record at the two races.

"I ran hard and got a pretty good kick," Adunuthula said. "I was pretty happy with my PR. The real performance was with Dance, who actually tied with Tippetts with a 17:25."

While the records at Earlybird and Stevenson were impressive, Adunuthula said that there's still much room for growth. Right now, the team is working on improving its leadership and looking to increase its strength and speed, ideally peaking at the end of the season.

By working on running together during

practice and mixing strength, stamina and hill training, the Falcons are working on not only nursing talent but also creating team cohesion and a faster overall team.

"We have a group of really fast juniors, all running together, and we have new talent like Harrison Dance and Sina Salehi," Adunuthula said. "There's about 12 runners fighting for the seven spots on varsity. This is the fastest we've been in my four years at high school; I'm excited to see what we can do this season." ♦

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the Lynbrook meet on Sept. 25.

GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

Kardach crosses finish line first at Lynbrook meet

BY Nitya Marimuthu

The afternoon sun glistened off the bright red track on Sept. 10 at Lynbrook High School, reflecting a red glow onto senior Elizabeth Kardach's face as she sprinted down the final stretch, leaving the competition far behind.

It was the Lynbrook Center Meet, the first meet of the season for the girls' cross country team, and it included six other teams: Lynbrook, Milpitas, Wilcox, Cupertino and Santa Clara.

The rest of the Falcon team stood nearby on the bleachers — after successfully finishing their respective races — screaming and clapping as Kardach finished first.

The team came in second place on the 2.1-mile course behind Lynbrook. Top runners for the team were Kardach, who got first overall with a time of 13:01.0; junior

Julia Hoffman at 14th place with a time of 14:07.1 and senior Siena Parsons in 17th place with a time of 14:24.1.

"This is the first time that a female runner from Saratoga High has come in first overall in three years in a meet.

Out of the 45 girls running from Saratoga, three of them achieved a personal record this meet, including Parsons and Kardach, who improved on her best time for the distance by a minute.

"Honestly a lot of the freshmen are doing well, and the new sophomores, new juniors," Hoffman said. "Our biggest issue the previous year was that some of the seniors didn't always come to all the practices. That's still kind of an issue but less so now but the people that do show up are really strong so we're going to have a great varsity team."

For most meets, the race is split into

waves based on competition level. Varsity A runs first, followed by Varsity B, with JV last.

At Lynbrook, however, the race was split into grade levels, with the freshmen starting first and the seniors last.

"Our biggest issue the previous year was that some of the seniors didn't always come to all the practices."

JUNIOR Julia Hoffman



Coach Danny Moon prefers the regular setup. With most meets, the girls who place in the top seven runners get to run varsity

the next meet. He feels this setup allows a better challenge.

"I feel the athletes running as varsity and JV allow the athletes to run head to head," Moon said.

However, Hoffman was happy with the meet's style and the results.

Since Hoffman has run the meet every year since she was a freshman, she has a good sense of what the meet is like and what her goals should be.

"It's gotten a little better in my perspective just from having run it multiple times before," Hoffman said. "I was just kind of proud of my placement [this year] because last year I didn't do as well as my freshman year, [but this year] I got sixth, which I was happy about." ♦

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the Central Park meet on Sept. 25.

Sophomore uses fantasy sports to raise money for charity

BY Neeti Badve

With NFL season well underway, millions of fans have drafted, picked and made bets within their fantasy football leagues in hopes of winning money for their own wants and needs.

So it is perhaps surprising that sophomore Ajay Gupta has taken a new approach that contrasts with the usual betting: using fantasy sports to raise money for good causes.

With his idea, Gupta and his younger sister created Project 4 over the summer, an organization aimed at taking the hobby of fantasy sports and using it to fundraise for various charities. For his first event on the FIFA World Cup, Gupta sought to benefit the Bay Area Women's Sports Initiative (BAWSI), an organization that allows young girls with disabilities to play sports.

"Throughout the whole event,

we were in contact with BAWSI's CEO Jennifer Smith, and we even got former U.S. Women's soccer legend Brandi Chastain to fill out a bracket, which was really cool," Gupta said.

Project 4 had been formulating the June pool and instructions since April, yet in order to get started on its operations, Gupta needed to tackle the problem of ensuring his plan cannot be seen as gambling, which would make it illegal.

After a call with a lawyer, Gupta was told that Project 4 could not award a prize to the winner; in this case, people donating money to be a part of a pool could be accused of gambling.

By the time of the pool, Project 4 had recruited 75 people to try to pick the most winners out of the games throughout the World Cup.

Gupta sent out notices through BAWSI's Facebook page to the organization's contacts and used

social media to spread awareness about his cause.

However, they were posted late, not giving people enough time to join the pool.

Sophomore Arnav Mangal was lucky enough to register on time for Project 4's World Cup pool.

"I decided to join because I enjoy watching the World Cup, but finding out about my money going towards charity made me want to participate even more," Mangal said.

Mangal knew his contribution would be put to good use.

"I knew it would be a great experience, and clearly, the idea was a success with the amount of money raised for the foundation," Mangal said.

Smith and Chastain helped with the logistics of the event from BAWSI's side and ensured the money was coming through with accurate data.

Through player donations,

Project 4 raised over \$3,000 for BAWSI.

"Coming in I had no idea what to expect and ended up getting a fairly good turnout," Gupta said.

Excited about his previous accomplishment, Gupta was determined to apply it to the football season, this time choosing a widespread issue that continues to affect teens all over America: depression.

"We've selected a charity that focuses on preventing teen depression because it is a very relevant issue in this area and in our generation," Gupta said.

In order to participate, individuals must donate \$20 directly to the charity to join a "Pick 'Em" pool set up by Project 4 to play against other players.

The "Pick 'Em" method is a basic pool where members predict winners for all the games for that week, earning a point for each correct outcome as the week goes by.

As the games finish, players will receive a report generated by the pool with a summary of their standings and total points gained from that week.

"I chose to create the project in this way because from my experience, fantasy sports become a lot more interesting when there are friendly rivalries that emerge," Gupta said.

Although Gupta intended to hold his second event during NFL regular season, he will instead try to run it during playoff season due to the increased excitement and drama.

Ultimately, Gupta hopes that Project 4 can inspire people and encourage them to use their passion for good rather than greed.

"At the end of the day, I just really wanted to make something where people can channel their love for sports into raising awareness and funding for good causes around them," he said. ♦

FIELD HOCKEY

Girls optimistic despite lower numbers

BY Anna Novoselov

Continuing a trend of recent years, the field hockey team is struggling with low numbers.

With only 13 varsity players and an injury that has kept one player sidelined, the team has only one substitute, meaning the starters have to play almost every minute of the game. Even with this obstacle, the girls remain optimistic.

"The players have the same desire to win and work hard," sophomore Allison Ha said, "so we can keep up the intensity during games."

The team tied Monta Vista 1-1 On Sept. 20 at Monta Vista, tied Lynbrook 2-2 on Sept. 18 at home, lost to Presentation 7-0 on Sept. 13, and tied Homestead 1-1 on Sept. 11. The Falcons are 0-3-3 as of Sept. 21.

The girls are focusing on endurance, communication and team dynamics to improve their performance.

The girls are focusing on endurance, communication and team dynamics to improve their performance.

Last year, the team had four seniors, three of whom had played field hockey for all four years of high school. Although there are only three seniors this year — right defense Autumn Zuleeg, forward Cameron Webster and goalie Judy Yang — Zuleeg said

that the five sophomores on the team show a lot of potential.

The captains are Zuleeg and juniors Hannah Beine and Sarah Rieken and the coach is Nanu Sidhu.

Rieken said the girls have a good team dynamic and get along very well. She hopes that, as an upperclassman, she will be more of a leader and help everyone stay focused during practice.

"The team is positive and energetic," Rieken said. "I want to win games and I think we're capable of that."

Sophomore center forward Allison Ha said that the girls need to work on communicating on the field and coaching each other. She wants them to help each other out and give feedback about how to improve.

Practices are largely focused on raising fitness levels and learning how to play as a

team, despite varied skill levels. Zuleeg said that she hopes that each player will focus on her weaknesses and improve.

Ha said the hard work has given her increased endurance and speed, allowing her to run for longer amounts of time without getting tired.

"I'm really optimistic about the season because of how much passion is put into the practices," Zuleeg said.

The hard work and grueling practices unite the team and form strong bonds between players. Zuleeg credits field hockey for creating lasting friendships and giving her the experience of being on a team.

"Sports give you a lot of connections and suffering together, through sprints, coaches yelling at you and injuries," Zuleeg said. "It really connects you and bonds you in a way that you can't get anywhere else in school." ♦

GIRLS' GOLF

Team sees potential for strong league and CCS runs

BY Kevin Sze

After the Sept. 10 match against Monta Vista, the girls' golf team crowded around a golf cart to take a picture after their 209-241 victory.

Though golf might seem like an individual sport, senior Janelle Jin knows that to achieve their lofty goals, their success will depend on a strong team effort.

"I'm hoping that we will score better than last year and make it to league finals and possibly CCS as a team this year," Jin said. "I think our team has improved a lot in terms of acting as a team; in my freshman year, the traveling members weren't as close to the non-traveling members, but now, I think our team as a whole seems more tight knit and like a family."

Junior Sally Kim feels that the closeness of the team has driven all of the players to a different level.

"We're always playing against each other," she said. "We want to beat each other and it's made all of us work harder, which translates to better scores in competition."

Coach Dave Gragnola sees plenty of potential in his team this year. With new and experienced competitive golfers, the team is ready to make a run at leagues and CCS.

Gragnola said, "The whole team is playing with great energy and poise. Janelle is playing at an impressively high level and is currently the number one player in the league."

Hopefully for the team, they'll continue their strong run and achieve their goals. ♦



Left: Senior Janelle Jin watches her shot during a home match at Saratoga Country Club on Sept. 10. Right: Junior Sally Kim carefully sets up for a putt during the match at Saratoga Country Club.

TALISMAN // MARK GUIDRY

GIRLS' WATER POLO

Transfer player helps Falcons

BY Colleen Feng

As the coach calls for the girls' water polo team to get ready, everyone scrambles to the locker room. Senior starter and set player Emma Ford pulls on her cap and goggles and walks out to the deck to meet everyone for water polo practice.

Just last year, Ford was playing water polo at a school in Massachusetts. Although she is new to Saratoga, she is adapting to playing on the team.

Ford has been playing water polo for seven years and recently came here for her last year of high school. Previously, she went to Los Gatos High School for her freshman and sophomore years, playing on a CCS winning team, and then moved to Massachusetts for her junior year.

However, after coming back to the Bay Area this year, Ford made the decision to attend Saratoga instead of Los Gatos, saying she didn't like the social environment at Los Gatos.

Ford said she is adapting to the team quite well, mainly because she knew two other players from a club team beforehand.

"Everyone on the team is really nice and they were all very welcoming," Ford said.

So far, the team has performed significantly better than last year, which concluded with a 1-19-1 record.

With a 5-0 conference record, the girls have defeated Milpitas 22-3, Lynbrook 23-6, Monta Vista 20-3, Santa Clara 20-6 and Wilcox 21-6.

The Falcons also played at a Lynbrook invitational tournament on Sept. 14-15, taking victory over Santa Clara 17-4, Lynbrook 17-6 and Santa Teresa 14-7.

At their first game on Aug. 24 against Half Moon Bay, Ford played for most of the game, and she said the team worked really well together and she enjoyed playing as part of the team. The girls won 13-3.

"The game made me feel like I was part of something special," Ford said.

Coach Jeremy Chung said Ford has been performing well this season, scoring several goals and excelling in team defense and team passes.

Just last year, Ford was playing water polo at a school in Massachusetts.

"She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience," Chung said. "She communicates in a calm way with her teammates and creates a great environment for the team."

According to Ford, the main difference between water polo at Los Gatos and the team here is the work ethic.

Ford said that at her old school, people would not try hard for the sake of the sport, as they were only interested in getting school credit.

"The main difference about the team is the practice environment. Everyone works really hard and has fun doing it," she said.

The girls' water polo team will be playing Santa Clara on Oct. 2 and Monta Vista on Oct. 4.

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the games at Cupertino on Sept. 25 and Wilcox on Sept. 27. ♦

BOYS' WATER POLO

Goalie sidelined for the year



Coach Jacob Young guides his team during a game against Santa Clara HS on Sept. 11

BY Sean Oh & Phoebe Wang

It didn't take long for the Falcons to face a major obstacle: Starting goalie senior Nick Bray sustained a concussion after experiencing three impacts to the head during the team's first preseason game against Half Moon Bay on Aug. 23 and is out for the season.

As a result, junior Nima Aminzadeh has stepped up to fill Bray's position, even though he normally plays field.

So far, Aminzadeh has been adjusting well to the changes.

"Staying in the game the whole time and being hit in the face is difficult, but I really enjoy playing goalie," Aminzadeh said.

According to coach Jacob Young, one of the biggest hurdles of playing goalie is getting "the courage to want to be hit by the ball."

Since the goalie is the last line of defense, the team depends on the goalie for leadership and moral support, Young said.

"Aminzadeh has much to learn, but I am impressed by his sacrifice to the team and his progress," Young said.

With the loss of Bray, the team is overall "trying to find [its] strengths and weaknesses so far," junior captain Grant Chen said, and is adjusting to new talent and compensating for any changes.

The team has been working on communicating and playing together as a unit. Chen said he expects to have a "pretty decent season."

On Sept. 18, the Falcons won 15-10 against Milpitas and on Sept. 20 won 10-7 against Fremont, bringing their league record to 2-4.

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the games against Cupertino and Wilcox on Sept. 25 and 27. ♦

>> snapshots



FALCON // MUTHU PALANIAPPAN



FALCON // EDWIN CHEN



FALCON // ALAN ZU



FALCON // EDWIN CHEN

Senior Kimi Uenaka performs in the Color Guard dance during the senior Quad Day on Sept. 21.

Senior Victor Liu crashes the junior Homecoming Quad Day finale while wearing a class of 2020 T-shirt. "I did it because I wanted to show my support for the junior class," Liu said with a smile.

Sophomore Wilson Fung TAs for Sara Tseng's fourth-period Chinese 1 class in early September.

Rally commissioners dress as characters from "Harry Potter" during the Homecoming rally on Sept. 14.

buzzworthy >> Boba pizza fascinates and repulses

BY Chelsea Leung

Have you ever seen those pictures of cursed pizza skulking around the internet? Of course, there's pineapple on pizza. But scroll down just a bit and you'll find Tide Pods on pizza, corn dogs (with the wooden stick still inside) on pizza, candy corn on pizza and fried eggs on pizza. You name it, it's probably been put on a pizza.

The latest innovation in cursed pizza, though, is not adorned with potentially harmful objects like half-liquefied Tide Pods and burnt corn dog sticks. Rather, this cursed pizza has a topping that is extremely popular and actually quite delicious — when

in other culinary creations.

Yep, that's right. The newest cursed pizza is boba pizza.

The most famous photo of boba pizza comes from an August post by the Instagrammer @nini_food0822. She describes the dessert as being in perfect harmony with the cheese and both salty and sweet. The photo was taken at Foodie Star, a restaurant in southwestern Taiwan's Chiayi City that sells the pizza for the equivalent of \$4.50 USD.

With a thin, perfectly browned and thin crispy crust that curls up at the edges, the dish looks like any other gourmet pizza. But upon a second glance, you realize that the

gleaming black spheres baked into the warm cheese are not olives or some other mysterious otherworldly pizza-belonging deliciousness — they're boba.

Somehow, the boba in the photo appears to have survived the high baking temperature and is only just softened enough to stick to each other. Though some pearls have partially melted into the cheese, most retain their classic ball shape.

Considering the beloved status on boba on campus, student opinion on this strange invention appears to be mixed. If given the opportunity to try boba pizza, senior Janelle Jin said she would pass on the boba pizza and would rather stick to normal tea drinks

and pizzas. On the other hand, sophomore Wilson Fung, a fellow boba aficionado, said he would be "down to try it."



"We have many weird foods now, so I wouldn't be surprised if it tasted OK," he said.

Unfortunately for Fung, Foodie Star appears to be the only currently known peddler of pizzas crowned with boba. If you would like to try the fantastical combination of tapioca pearls, melty cheese and crispy crust, you'll have to buy a plane ticket (or swim, if fresh saltwater is also your thing) to Taiwan. And don't come back! ♦

Juniors compare Hot Cheeto knockoffs

ATTEMPTS AT HEALTHIER VERSIONS OF SPICY SNACKS FAIL

(Ja)E-Z and Be-yuan-ce



Callia Yuan and Emilie Zhou

Trader Joe's garnered attention in May when the popular chain released Spicy Cheese Crunchies, a supposedly healthy version of the ever popular Flamin' Hot Cheetos from Frito-Lay.

For \$1.99, customers get a 6.5 oz. bag of gluten-free, all-natural, spicy cheese-flavored corn snacks.

Many reviews praised Trader Joe's for the snack, which they claimed to be better tasting than real Hot Cheetos, so we decided to compare the two chips as well as other different Hot Cheeto knockoffs.

For example, in a review written by Mantou Joe on an online blog, the author enjoyed the more mild flavor of the Cheese Crunchies and found that the Cheese Crunchies were a great Hot Cheeto substitute for those that can't handle spicy foods.

Compared to Hot Cheetos, the Cheese Crunchies had "more of a warm chili spice that sits in the back of the mouth vs. a numbing or burning spice that clears your sinuses."

As people who eat Hot Cheetos a lot,

we were excited to try the chips out, as other healthy versions, like the baked ones they sell at school (ugh, gross), didn't live up to expectations.

Sadly, we were also greatly disappointed by the Trader Joe's version of Flamin' Hot Cheetos.

Not only did the cheese crunchies lack spiciness, the texture was clearly not up to par with the normal fried Hot Cheetos, or even with the healthier alternative baked Hot Cheetos.

Other knockoffs we tried, like the Jalapeño Barbara's Cheese Puffs, had a crunchy, airy texture while still being gluten free and baked.

The strange taste and disappointing texture outweigh the health benefits, setting the Trader Joe's Cheese Crunchies far below classic Hot Cheetos.

Although the Cheese Puffs weren't spicy whatsoever, they had an astoundingly similar texture to normal cheetos and an overall better taste.

On the other hand, the Trader Joe's chips didn't have the same satisfying crunch, and

were super dense, to boot. The Cheese Crunchies were also very dry, making the chips taste old and stale.

Our main issue with the chips, however, was the taste. The "real cheese" and lack of "artificial flavors or scary synthetic colors," as Trader Joe's advertises, couldn't compete with the wondrous taste of MSG used in normal Hot Cheetos.

While Hot Cheetos are known for being flaming hot and spicy, the Cheese Crunchies were more savory and had a distinct sour aftertaste, likely from the onion and garlic powder used in the coating.

In addition, the coating was extremely powdery and barely left residue on our fingers after eating them, unlike the Red 40 and Yellow 5 found in greasier Hot Cheetos.

Overall, we wouldn't recommend these as an alternative for Hot Cheetos. The fact that the Cheese Crunchies lacked spiciness was a real let down, especially since the spicy, finger-staining red cheeto dust is a signature part of what makes hot cheetos so popular and irresistible.

Compared to Hot Cheetos, the Cheese Crunchies have only 40 fewer calories and 5 grams less of fat.

Unfortunately, the strange taste and disappointingly inadequate texture outweigh the health benefits, setting the Trader Joe's Cheese Crunchies far below classic Hot Cheetos. ♦

topten

WAYS TO IMPRESS TEACHERS

- 10 Spam your teachers with emails. Be sure to include a hook, a thesis, body paragraphs and a conclusion.
- 9 Bring your teachers coffee. Even though they've probably already had five cups by the end of tutorial.
- 8 Spend tutorial before test day in your teacher's room. Your teacher will know you tried when you fail.
- 7 Don't have your phone out. That includes sending snaps of the gum on the underside of your desk.
- 6 Remember to bring your unfinished homework to school. So you can finesse it during tutorial.
- 5 Think outside the box. Rate your teacher 11 on a scale of 1 to 10.
- 4 Help out your classmates. Especially when the teacher's watching.
- 3 Raise your hand as much as possible. Your arms will get stronger even if your teacher ignores you.
- 2 Stare unblinkingly into your teacher's eyes. At least he or she will know you're paying attention.
- 1 Go to the bathroom a lot. Your teacher would appreciate your taking those nasty flip flops out.

>> Rohan Kumar and Oliver Ye