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# THE saratogafalcon



Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA

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An Independent School Publication

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## New kiln will be installed

BY Anna Novoselov

After a severe rainstorm, water leaks through the temporary patch covering the roof damage from the flue fire that occurred on Nov. 30, 2017. Puddles scatter the tiles near the kiln area of the ceramics room.

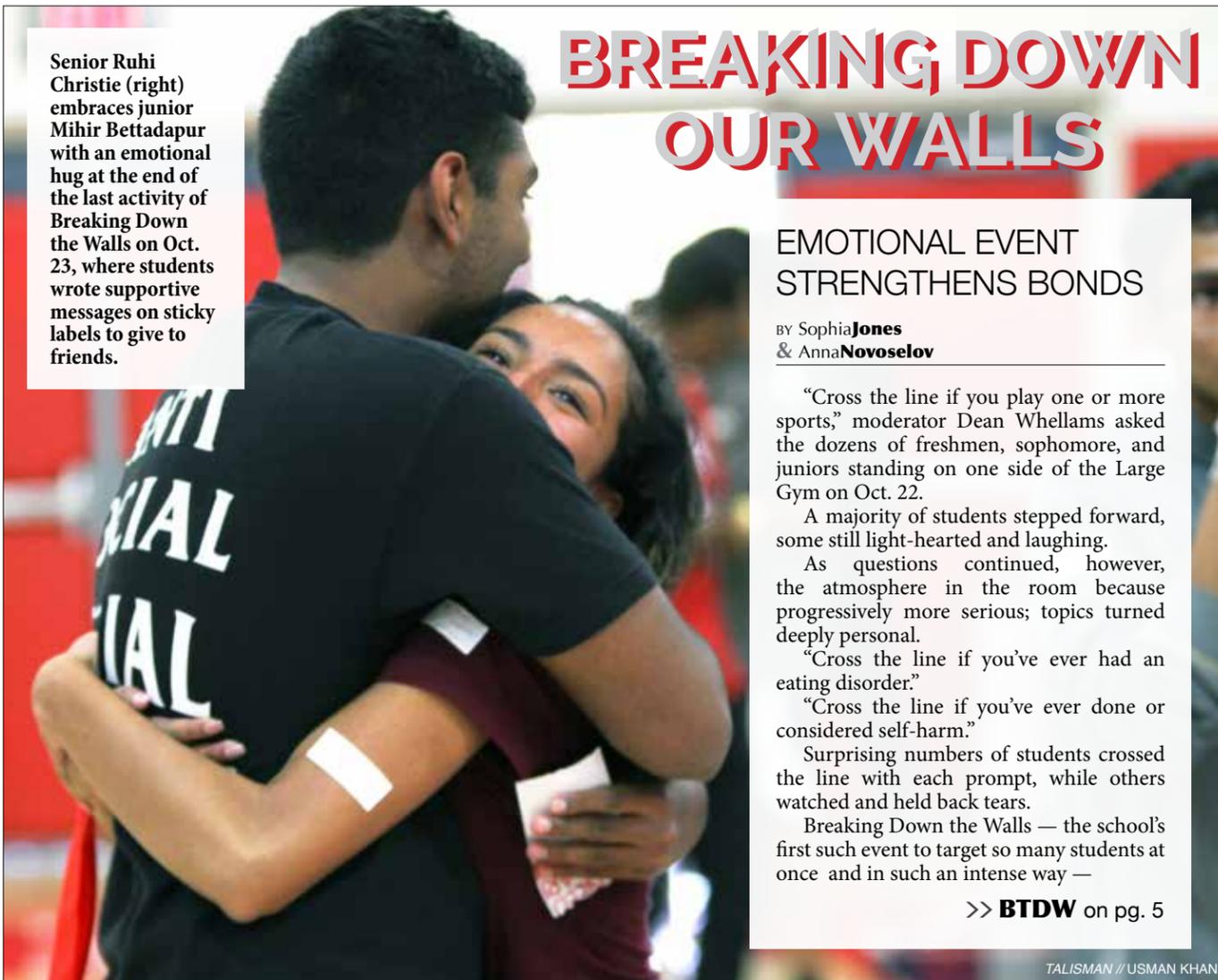
"It's not easy," said art teacher Diana Vanry, who has had to mop up the water every time it rained heavily in the months after the fire, "but I would rather have the new installation to [building] codes, and if it means waiting, I'll do that."

The fire was caused by the buildup of dust and other particles in the exhaust shaft, which ignited when the kiln was turned on. The roof's frame caught on fire, damaging some power and gas lines near the ceramics room, leading to a whole-school evacuation and shortening of the school day.

According to Vanry, new school construction laws mandate that there must be more space surrounding kilns than previous laws did.

Tony Palma, the former SHS teacher who is now the director of facilities and operations for the district, said that the process of repairing the damage requires time and coordination. The repair process is extensive because the school needs to meet certain regulations and codes based on the

>> CERAMICS on pg. 2



Senior Ruhi Christie (right) embraces junior Mihir Bettadapur with an emotional hug at the end of the last activity of Breaking Down the Walls on Oct. 23, where students wrote supportive messages on sticky labels to give to friends.

## BREAKING DOWN OUR WALLS

### EMOTIONAL EVENT STRENGTHENS BONDS

BY Sophia Jones & Anna Novoselov

"Cross the line if you play one or more sports," moderator Dean Whellams asked the dozens of freshmen, sophomore, and juniors standing on one side of the Large Gym on Oct. 22.

A majority of students stepped forward, some still light-hearted and laughing.

As questions continued, however, the atmosphere in the room became progressively more serious; topics turned deeply personal.

"Cross the line if you've ever had an eating disorder."

"Cross the line if you've ever done or considered self-harm."

Surprising numbers of students crossed the line with each prompt, while others watched and held back tears.

Breaking Down the Walls — the school's first such event to target so many students at once and in such an intense way —

>> BTDW on pg. 5

TALISMAN // USMAN KHAN

## Home burglaries cause increases in vigilance

BY Justin Guo & Kaylene Morrison

A burglar targeted two homes on Sept. 25 on Lexington Court, a street branching off Herriman Avenue near the school's front entrance.

Junior Grant Chen's house was hit by the unknown burglar and his family lost a MacBook Pro.

"It was honestly pretty expected because while the violent crime in Saratoga is low, break-ins and misdemeanors are frequent," Chen said. "Our family is taking more safety measures to avoid this by installing cameras and a security system."

Senior Elaine Fan's home was also burglarized, but the perpetrator only took cash, while other valuables like iPads and antiques were left untouched. Her family has installed security cameras since then and have become participants in the Saratoga Neighborhood Safety Watch program, which was reconstructed by councilman

Rishi Kumar in 2016.

Though the program began in Saratoga in the 1960s, it had little effect in recent years because of a lack of leadership and communication among neighbors, Kumar said. The majority of Neighborhood Watch signs posted in Saratoga prior to 2016 went up decades earlier and no remaining effect.

The lack of effective watch programs became a problem as the crime rate began to rise over the past few years. From 2012 to 2016, the number of home break-ins in Saratoga increased from 59 in 2012 to 130 in 2016.

This led Kumar to make crime awareness and safety one of the main focuses of his 2014 campaign to revitalize Saratoga's Neighborhood Safety Watch programs. Afterward, the number of home break-ins in 2017 dropped by 47 percent from 2016 to 69 break-ins, according to data provided by the Santa Clara County Sheriff Office.

>> BURGLARIES on pg. 3

## Alum publishes guide to making college meaningful

BY Daniel Bessonov & Ashley Feng

Class of 2014 alum Nikhil Goel recalls the moment he got into Stanford as one of the single-greatest exhilarations of his life.

Four years later, Goel, now a 2018 Stanford University graduate with a computer science degree, has self-published a 71-page manifesto — "Dreaming of Stanford: How to Rethink High School and the Pursuit of College" — urging students at competitive high schools like SHS to reconsider their motives behind seeking admissions to the nation's top institutions and showing them a road map to greater happiness. He wrote the book with his freshman year roommate, Sanjay Kannan.

The book, Goel said, isn't a step-by-step guide for students looking to get into prestigious universities. Rather, it's meant to stress the importance of finding an individual's unique path. Goel emphasized that he and Kannan want to alleviate some of the unnecessary pressures that exist at competitive high schools, helping readers come to their own conclusions through a framework of difficult but necessary questions.

"Most of all, we want to stress that college is not the end goal," said Goel.

The book is now available in paperback on Amazon for \$9.99, and as an eBook on Amazon and iBooks for \$6.99.

The inspiration for the book came from cumbersome, repeated introspection, both during and after high school, he said. The final decision to write it, however, came after a call Goel received in his senior year of college.

"I got a call from a family friend looking to get into Stanford," Goel said. "And I asked him to tell me about himself. But a few lackadaisical responses later, it was clear he had no idea what he was interested in or why he wanted to go to Stanford."

Goel was left feeling frustrated and decided to write down his thoughts and ideas about high school and the often mindless pursuit of trying to get into elite colleges.

Goel and Kannan then went to work deconstructing their insights into a succinct manual of advice for current high schoolers.

"Starting late sophomore year of high school, there were a lot of questions that were going in infinite loop in my head," Goel said. "How do I define success? Am I spending my time correctly? After the call, I decided to finally put down six years'

>> STANFORD on pg. 5



Goel 2014 alumnus

### >> what'sinside

#### OPINION LGBT history

Senior argues for greater representation of LGBT history in education. pg. 8

#### LIFESTYLES Part-time jobs

Students describe stories from their working experiences. pg. 12-13



**Quiz Bowlers place second at first California Cup**

Members of the school's Quiz Bowl A group placed second in the California Cup 1 competitive division at St. Francis High School on Oct. 27, cementing their position as one of the strongest teams in the Bay Area.

After having an 8-1 record in the preliminaries with the single loss against Escobar High School, the team moved on to playoffs where the top two teams from each of two brackets played against each other.

The A team won both of its matches against Harker and Stanford Online High School during playoffs and advanced to the finals, where they once again faced Escobar and lost 380-245.

The team's captain, senior Kiran Rachamalla, attributed the team's excellent performance to having strong returning players: juniors Brandon Wang, Jeffrey Ma, and Sathvik Kaliyur and Rachamalla. However, Rachamalla was still surprised by the outcome.

"We were kind of expecting it, but there were some exciting matches, and I did not expect to get second," he said.

Playing in the competitive division, the B team had a 4-4 record at the end of preliminaries. The standard division C team had a record of 1-3 and the D and E teams, both in the novice division, had records of 1-3 and 0-5 in preliminaries.

E teams, both in the novice division, had records of 1-3 and 0-5 in preliminaries. ♦

— Rohan Kumar and Mathew Lou

**History Bowl places second at regional tournament**

The History Bowl Varsity A team placed second at a regional tournament hosted on Oct. 28 at Saratoga High, finishing with a record of 7-1. They lost their final round 320-250 to the Pi-oneers, a team of homeschooled students and longtime rival that Saratoga had played over six rounds against.

Varsity B followed closely with a record of 6-1, losing their semifinal round against Varsity A.

Both teams qualified for the national History Bowl, which will be held next April. Neither the JV nor the Varsity C teams made the playoffs.

In the concurrently held History Bee event, juniors Sathvik Kaliyur and Jason Hong placed first and second respectively in the finals round. Seniors Sarah Meng and Kiran Rachamalla also qualified for the History Bee final. All four team members qualified for the national History Bee.

Hong, a co-captain of the team, stressed the importance of self-study to improve team scores in the future.

In the next few months, we want to focus on individual study," Hong said. "For many of our members, it was the first tournament, so we need to help them study and get better."

The next History Bowl regional tournament will be held in February. ♦

— Rohan Kumar and Mathew Lou

>> picturethis



FALCON // EDWIN CHEN

**BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS >> Students work together to untangle themselves from their human knot during a small group ice-breaker activity at Breaking Down the Walls on Oct. 25.**

# New JV and varsity robotics teams promote participation

BY Rohan Kumar

In efforts to change the team dynamics of the previous year, the robotics club has introduced JV and varsity teams to its FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) division this year.

FTC is a robotics competition in which teams build robots to complete tasks that each involve unique mechanics. Throughout the season, which started on Sept. 8 and will continue for approximately six months, the FTC teams will compete in qualifying tournaments, the first of which will be on Nov. 13 for Varsity and Nov. 18 for the other teams.

Instead of having two veteran teams two rookie teams, the two veteran teams have been replaced by one varsity team whose members are chosen based on experience, skill and mentor opinion, as well as a JV team composed of other returning students. There continues to be two rookie teams, similar to previous years.

Senior Derek Chiou, who has been a part of the FTC program since he was a freshman and is now the varsity hardware lead, was the first to suggest these changes. "Most teams only have a few super hard workers," Chiou said, "and since this is my last year, I thought it would be neat to set up a super experienced and hard-

working team to see if we could make Saratoga history."

In addition to grouping stronger team members together, the new system also substantially improves team dynamics for both the varsity and JV teams.

With members on both teams having similar skill levels to each other, one person shouldering the brunt of the work is no longer a problem.

"I think it helps that way because when you have people of different levels on the same team it sort of skews the work," junior Sahaj Rastogi, the varsity software lead, said. "So if you have people of the same level on the same team, it nicely splits it up."

This more equal division of labor is a significant improvement from last year, where three or four members of a 15-person team were responsible for the construction and coding of the entire robot.

"The load has lightened up a bit, definitely," Rastogi said.

For members of the JV team, the changes in terms of skill level have been apparent.

"Now, everyone's on about the same level," said sophomore JV member William Yin. "Everyone participates equally and if someone doesn't, then people on our team immediately go and try to help them."

By lessening the skill gap

among team members, the system helps encourage students in the JV team to take more responsibility than they would normally have taken.

Meanwhile, the varsity team, with dedicated members who often spend over 30 hours each week working on the robot, have already seen significantly increased efficiency. The team was able to complete a robot capable of accomplishing every task in the challenge within five weeks.

Although the new system provides many benefits, one potential problem is having too much talent on one team.

"I don't see the split teams as a problem of putting all our eggs in one basket, but more so creating more opportunities for those with different levels of time commitment," Chiou said.

By creating more opportunities, the new system allows students on the JV team to derive greater benefits from being a part of the program even though they may not perform as well as they would have without the new system.

"All in all, the people on varsity are able to participate in an environment where there is a level of higher commitment," Chiou said, "and the people on JV are now forced to step up and take the lead in order to get things done." ♦

**CERAMICS**

continued from pg. 1

Division of the State Architect state laws related to the construction of public buildings and schools.

"We're trying to line everything up, get all the work identified, and then go ahead and try to get the work to happen at the same time as quickly as possible," Palma said.

Shortly after the fire, the school had various professionals identify the damage, patch the roof so that the room could be used as a classroom and test the facility for lead or any other hazardous materials (of which there were none).

Now, the administration hopes to have the walls around the kiln removed to open the space to allow for new building codes, replace the plasterboard, order a couple new

kilns and repair the roof.

Until the repairs are done, Vary said she is using an old kiln in the ceramics room to fire students' ceramics pieces.

"It's not as efficient as the one [that caught on fire]," she said. "It takes longer to fire projects and get them back to students."

She said that two new kilns are scheduled to arrive in November.

In order to install the new kilns, construction workers will have to reconfigure the revamped ceramics room so that it meets building codes. The kiln area will be made larger by breaking down a storage room wall.

The school hopes that the work will be completed in 2019. Due to the contractors' tight schedules, construction will have to be done during the school day.

"The problem is that we've got

classes going on," Palma said. "We have to make sure that what work we complete disrupts class as minimally as possible."

He estimates that the cost for repairs will be approximately \$60,000, in addition to the \$30,000 already spent.

Palma said that the school is fortunate the fire didn't spread to different areas of the 200 wing. The smoke detector activated and the fire department arrived to put out the fire quickly.

Even with regular building inspections, the reality is that fires can happen all the time, whether it's from an electrical wire malfunction or a large heat source next to a kiln, he said.

"That's why we practice fire drills every year," Palma said. "When an accident happens, we want to be ready to handle it." ♦

**BURGLARIES**

continued from pg. 1

Kumar based the framework of Saratoga's citywide Neighborhood Safety Watch program on the one he launched in his own neighborhood.

"When there was a break-in that occurred back in 2004, I started researching, talking to folks to figure out what would make my neighborhood safer," Kumar said. "I came up with a simple plan: safety deterrents coupled with a Neighborhood Safety Watch program."

Today, the process for registering a group to receive a Neighborhood Watch Grant is relatively simple. It requires groups to define their boundaries, acquire signatures from a majority of households in the area, determine how members will communicate and hold an orientation meeting with the Sheriff's Office. The final step is to register online. Saratoga currently has more than 70 Neighborhood Watch groups certified with the city.

Many of these groups have email lists or other forms of communication organized under a block captain. For example, shortly after two burglaries on Lexington Court, the local block captain sent out an email warning residents in the area. Though these watch groups may have been a factor in the significant crime rate drop, Kumar thinks more can be done.

"I am in favor of surveillance cameras in neighborhoods that will monitor the ingress and egress points [of properties]," Kumar said. "Personally, I want to see every part of Saratoga under a Neighborhood Safety Watch program." ♦

# Seniors motivated to vote in midterms

BY Kevin Sze & Emilie Zhou

Next Tuesday, 18-year-old high school seniors have the chance to vote for the first time.

In the midterm elections, 35 of the 100 seats in the Senate are up for grabs, while all of the 435 seats in the lower House of Representatives are being contested.

In recent weeks, flyers were handed out to seniors in Government/Economics classes with a link to a website that allows students to register to vote. History teachers tied in the upcoming elections with discussions in their classes, emphasizing the importance of voting.

The outreach commission has also been distributing flyers that encourage 18-year-olds to vote.

TIME magazine recently reported that more people, especially younger generations, are finally starting to realize how important voting can be, and that a record of 800,000 people registered to vote on National Voter Registration Day back in September. In addition, more celebrities and public figures, such as Taylor Swift and Rihanna, have used their social media platforms to urge their followers to register.

Principal Paul Robinson called voting an essential part of citizenship.

"I think that any time you can exercise your right to choose and your right to be

a part of the process about who's going to lead you, whether it's in your class leadership or your local leadership or your national leadership, you need to take that opportunity," Robinson said. "If you choose not to because it's inconvenient or you just don't care, then that's actually casting a vote too."

Recent debates over young Americans who chose not to vote in the 2016 election sparked a controversial political advertisement by the company Acronym titled "Don't Vote: a Knock the Vote PSA."

The advertisement had the elderly sarcastically addressing a younger generation and telling them to not vote.

For senior Sasha Pickard, the advertisement was a wake-up call.

"Younger people need to start voting because it affects them and even decisions right now can affect them far into the future," said Pickard. "Younger generations need to vote in order to get policy changes that fit our ideals and wants."

Pickard is eligible to vote this year, and she says an influx of information, including from her parents who support different political parties, has underscored the importance of educating herself on candidates before she votes.

Senior Siena Parsons is another student who plans on voting in the upcoming midterm elections. She said she pre-registered online to vote.



Pickard

# Teachers expose classes to differing opinions

A VARIETY OF PERSPECTIVES NECESSARY IN TODAY'S DIVISIVE POLITICAL CLIMATE

BY Connie Liang & Siva Sambasivam

Almost every day, President Trump is making news for something outrageous or unprecedented.

Whether it be an analysis of his conduct at the North Korea-United States Summit or a story on his handing out candy to White House trick-or-treaters, President Trump never fails to land in the headlines, giving students in AP U.S. History and other classes no shortage of stories to choose from as part of their in class current events discussions.

At the beginning of the semester, APUSH teacher Faith Daly instructed students to print out two articles from two different publications covering the same event.

In class, Daly categorized the noticeably Trump-related articles by topic on the whiteboard, challenging students to keep their eyes out for subtle indications of bias in modern-day news outlets.

"People don't know how to talk about politics as a society, and it ends up with everyone being angry and hurtful and pushing each other into corners and boxes," Daly said.

The activity was designed so students could learn how to spot interpretation in historical analysis but its purpose proved to translate seamlessly into a modern era beset by fake news and plenty of biased sources.

Two years after the 2016 controversial presidential election, the social and political changes set forth by the Trump administration continue to shock many in the nation, particularly on the more liberal coasts. In particular, history and government teachers have found the task of addressing the ever-changing political climate in

taught upon in other classes, and should be approached with a regard for those with all types of beliefs.

One such student is junior Daniel Burgos, who describes himself as right-leaning in his views.

"Sometimes it is hard to speak up, knowing that most of the class, and the teacher especially, will disagree with you," Burgos said. "I would prefer if teachers remained objective and representative of the entire political spectrum."

Burgos said that some teachers do a great job of keeping their own views private, while others inject their opinions and viewpoints in the material being taught.

For example, Burgos was enrolled in a summer U.S. History course taught by U.S. History teacher Matt Torrens when the Supreme Court nomination of Brett Kavanaugh was announced. Burgos applauded Torrens for being able to conduct discussions about the topic in a manner that made him and others comfortable sharing their opinions.

"Mr. T was able to talk a lot about current events in a way that wasn't oppressive on people's views," he said. "There was a lot of debating and discussion and I didn't feel interrupted at any point."

He said that when people brought up their own ideas or opinions, Torrens would simply commend the person for participating and pass it to the next person.

However, Burgos said he has not felt this way in other history classes; in fact, his previous experiences were one of the contributing factors for him taking U.S. History over the summer instead of during junior year.

"I didn't speak up in class because I felt like there was no point to putting my opinion out there," he said. "Nothing good could come out of disagreeing with a teacher. I usually just choose to

not speak out, because you have a lot to lose and not a lot to gain."

**Advantages of sharing opinions**

Other students believe, however, that when teachers are able to talk about politics on a more personal level, it can be extremely beneficial not only to help students understand the material, but also to ensure that everyone feels comfortable.

Junior Ronak Pai said that he once had a transgender classmate. After President Trump was elected, Pai said his teacher made a particular point of talking about the harms Trump was inflicting on the LGBT community.

"I thought it was really great that my teacher was willing to face possible liability in order for students to feel safe in today's environment" Pai said. "[Teachers'] willingness to tackle such political issues reveals their commitment to their students, even when it comes to non-academic matters."

Many teachers recognize students' viewpoints, and try their best to ensure that everyone feels safe to share

their ideas and beliefs, whether or not the majority of the class will agree with them.

For example, world history teacher Kirk Abe said he tries to present opposing opinions when discussing political issues in class.

"With Trump, I play devil's advocate all the time, and I hope I do a good job at that," said Abe. "Sometimes it makes certain students angry, but I do try play both sides to make people feel comfortable sharing whatever their views may be."

Although Abe wants students to express their beliefs and foster positive discussion, he has zero tolerance for students who put down other people's beliefs.

"I always tell the class at the beginning of discussions that my class is a class of ideas and different perspectives," he said. "Sometimes you are not going to agree, and that's fine, you have the right to disagree, but you don't have the right to put anybody down or be disrespectful. That has no place in my class." ♦



GRAPHIC BY ASHLEY FENG

>> correction

In the Oct. 19 issue, a page 5 story about the boys' dance team left the impression that the administration shut down the team; this is incorrect. There is no officially established team due to a lack of members, not because of an administration shut down.

The Falcon aims to produce content of quality and integrity. Please contact daniel.bessonov@saratogafalcon.org to report any inaccuracies in the issue.

>> falcononline



**Top Story**

Hashtags encourage victims of sexual assault and abuse to speak up about their experiences. on pg. 14

**Top Photo**

Senior Jennah El-Ashmawi leads her group in activities on Oct. 25 during Breaking Down the Walls week.

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



## Lack of attorney-coach dooms mock trial season

BY Kaitlyn Tsai

The mock trial team will not participate in the county competition because the school has not been able to find an attorney-coach for the season.

The team will instead participate in scrimmages in January and February. Once scrimmages end, the club will switch into a more relaxed atmosphere in which the officers teach the new members more about the trial process and organize different law-related opportunities. Additionally, rather than hosting tryouts, the club is allowing members to choose what roles they want to learn.

With a late start to the season, mock trial held its first meeting on Oct. 23, in which members discussed and compiled a timeline for the case, *People v. Klein*.

The case focuses on a criminal threat, a false report of emergency and First Amendment rights.

For the next meeting, the team plans to choose their roles and begin to prepare for scrimmages.

Club adviser Matt Torrens admits that functioning without an attorney-coach is not ideal and will hurt the team's technique, but he said this year also provides

several benefits.

"It allows the older students to teach the younger students and allows us to adapt to the workload of the students — which is heavy," he said. "Another positive is that it's forced us to look at this year's case and not rely on our attorney-coach to tell us what to do."

Junior Christina Xiao, who has played the role of lead attorney, said the largest challenge the team will face this year is competing in scrimmages without coaches.

"Because we're without an attorney-coach, it'll be harder to make sure we're going down the right path," she said. "We'll really have to rely on each other to do well."

Despite this obstacle, both Torrens and Xiao remain confident that being part of mock trial will still be beneficial for students.

"It'll be a good experience for people who haven't had much trial experience, because they'll get to try any position they want and figure out what they're most comfortable with," Xiao said. "It's also a good experience for us leaders because we'll be doing a lot more teaching, so we'll have a better grasp on the concepts and how to teach them next year." ♦

## Dance team begins weight training regimen

BY Eileen Bui & Francesca Chu

Every Friday afternoon, the 19 members of the dance team pile into the fitness room to start their weekly weightlifting session. Under the guidance of instructional coach Kristofer Orre, the girls spend the next hour doing various exercises and drills that work to improve general strength.

The dance team began weight training in September this year when team adviser Julia Peck suggested the strength-building activity.

The team has one-hour sessions once a week, on either Monday or Friday. Peck hopes that weight training will help the team have more success in their upcoming competition season.

"The dance team is very hard working, and they practice long and hard," Peck said. "They compete against some amazing teams and do very well. We thought by giving the girls the opportunity to develop their stamina and strength they could gain just a little edge to make them even stronger as a team."

In past years, numerous sports such as football, baseball, and basketball have been required to weightlift.

These teams weight train to build strength and stamina that is essential for players in these sports and, some may argue, all sports in general.

Even though the dance team is required to weight train, their cheer team counterparts do not practice weightlifting, despite the physical demands of lifting and throwing other cheer team members.

There was initial confusion over the idea of weight training for dance and many members did not enjoy having to come on Monday or Friday afternoons, days when the team never used to meet on.

However, the girls have grown accustomed to the extra hour of practice each week and are slowly starting to appreciate the extra work.

According to sophomore Isabelle Lee, they look forward to seeing the improvements of weight training on the entire team and have already felt like their routines are getting less tiring to complete.

"I remember last year one of our biggest issues was not having enough stamina to keep high energy throughout the entire routine," Lee said. "I think weight training will really help us build our strength, and I'm excited to see what happens this competition season." ♦

## Senior Shasta Ganti stars as Brutus in "Julius Caesar"

BY Anishi Patel & Oliver Ye

This November, senior Shasta Ganti will be taking part in the 10th drama production of his high school career, as Brutus in "Julius Caesar."

The senior can often be found in the Thermond Drama Center, performing his lines.

Ganti said he has gained many invaluable skills through drama, including self-confidence, improved public speaking and a sharpened ability to relate to character's emotions.

"It's made me more empathetic — the ability to relate to a fictional character and portray them well, is definitely similar to being able to understand people's emotions and motivations," Ganti said.

While Ganti is now one of the most experienced students in the drama department, he joined the program purely because he needed the elective credit. Gradually, he

fell in love with the class.

"Shasta was in Drama 1 right from the beginning," drama teacher Sarah Thermond said. "He was one of the only freshmen who signed up to do the play in addition to being in the drama class."

According to Thermond, freshmen often normally only participate in plays if their friends do too, but Ganti leapt at the chance to perform, getting a lead role in the production that year, playing Robert in "Boeing Boeing."

In addition to his passion for drama, Ganti also enjoys classical literature, which plays a part in the drama department's upcoming play, "Julius Caesar."

Throughout the years, Ganti's roles have revolved around stern, serious characters, such as Mr. Sycamore in the 2017 fall play "You Can't Take it With You" and Mr. Banks in the 2018 spring

musical "Mary Poppins," both of whom were overbearing, weary fathers.

But this year, although he was prepared to play Marc Antony, yet another stern character, Ganti landed the lead role of Brutus, an empathetic man who experiences internal turmoil throughout the play as he come to terms with his part in Caesar's death.

"I played [Antony] much as I had other characters, because that's who he is: a stern military officer who's bold," Ganti said. "I played him very angry and bitter at Caesar's death, with a deep voice and belligerent tones."

"But with Brutus, I changed him completely," he said. "When I was talking with Ms. Thermond after casting, she mentioned that it was the distinction I made between how I played Brutus and

how I played Antony, which helped me get the part."

The role of Brutus came with many lines, including lengthy monologues, which Ganti is working to perfect, and the challenge of learning Shakespearean English.

"It is like a new language at times, but now, as an actor, I have a pretty good understanding of Shakespearean English," Ganti said. "Memorizing is actually easy for me because Shakespeare writes in iambic pentameter, which has a rhythm to it, so if the lines don't add up and you're missing a syllable, then you know you're doing it wrong."

While acting, Ganti said he likes to put some of himself into his character and truly experience their world.

"We as people are complex; we're not one-dimensional," he said. "So with characters like Mr. Banks and Mr. Kirby, there's a more focused aspect. But with

>> THE bigidea

### "Julius Caesar"

Where is the performance?  
*The McAfee Center*

When is the performance?  
*On Nov. 10 at 7:30 p.m., Nov. 11 at 2:00 p.m., Nov. 16 at 7:30 p.m. and Nov. 17 at 7:30 p.m.*

How much do tickets cost?  
*For Students/Seniors: \$7.00  
For Adults: \$10.00*

Brutus, it's completely the opposite. He's a very kind, more softer, gentler person."

By the end of his senior year, Ganti will have participated in 11 productions, plus a student production he will be directing in March. Auditions for his production are set to take place in November. ♦

## Outreach commission aims to enrich school events

BY Howard Tang & Aaria Thomas

Plastered on the walls around campus during Red Ribbon week in late September were colorful posters that showed days of the week and the theme for each such as "Sock it to drugs" on Monday and "Team up against drugs" on Thursday.

Students were encouraged to dress according to each theme to show support for the anti-drug cause.

The architect of this event, the outreach commission, is a branch of the Leadership class that specializes in organizing events around the school like Red Ribbon Week, new student tours and Speak Up for Change in January.

"Outreach is about bringing awareness to many topics we all think about but don't necessarily discuss on a daily basis," senior Equity commissioner Iman Laique said. "It's healthy to keep such topics in mind."

The large-scale events are so complex that a single person could not pull them off.

Thus, the seven members of the commission work together toward a common goal. Every member has a specialized role to make sure all parts of each project are completed.

Junior Rohan Rao is the head outreach commissioner. Working with him are senior Usman Khan, the community service coordinator; sophomore Aliza Zaman, the new student commissioner; junior Tarun Krishnan, the elections manager; Laique, the Equity commissioner and junior Sally Kim and sophomore Katie Chen, the outreach commission representatives.

Although they have assigned roles, the members occasionally go beyond them. Chen said that most of the time, they prefer to work together on projects.

Outreach is spread thin over their many events, and collaborating helps make it easier.

"Working as a collective gives us a greater sense of accomplishment," Laique said. "We work better together and are able to split up work and pitch new ideas in the process."

The group's most challenging and promi-

nent event is Speak Up for Change.

"We ask students and teachers to volunteer to share a story based on our theme," Chen said. "It's more impactful if your peers are sharing a story than if we get a random speaker to come and tell our whole school something."

The commission has made Speak Up for Change more intimate each year in an attempt to improve the school's culture. Currently, they are finalizing their theme and working on an outline for the week.

Every year, outreach tries to go beyond what they have done in the past: they improve previously established events like Speak Up for Change by changing the structure and revising the activities in the assembly to better convey their theme.

"They're actually taking on a little bit more this year," Leadership teacher Matthew Torrens said. "They do a wide variety of activities, so they don't really specialize in one particular thing. The outreach commission does one thing a year, and then they move on to the next thing that's totally different."

In addition to school awareness events, outreach also organizes drives throughout the year, such as the Blood Drive in March.

Another event that is popular with students is the Therapeutic Pets event, in which therapy dogs are brought in from the Furry Friends Rescue organization after AP testing to help students relax and de-stress.

Outreach events extend outside campus as well. Members are reaching out and working with the Saratoga senior center for an activity, that is not yet been finalized, for the second semester of the school year.

The commission has also worked with Community Based Instruction (CBI) students to put on a Halloween dance, among many other ongoing projects.

"I love being community involved and working towards improving our environment because ultimately it's our job to do so," Laique said. "It is honestly so fulfilling to be in the position I am now and encourage others to really evaluate how they treat others and why by asking the bigger questions." ♦

## Spirit commission launches new Halloween event

BY JunLee & NityaMarimuthu

This Halloween, Leadership's spirit commission brought a spooky surprise to Saratoga with its new "Trunk-or-Treat" event.

This event was aimed at bringing the community together by providing a safe environment for trick or treating — right out of the cars of upperclassmen.

"We're actually going to have some clubs, classes, and team sports fundraising as well on the side of this," said senior Sophia Shetler, one of the spirit commissioners. "So it's for fundraising for all our sports and clubs and also it's to bring the community together."

The event took place in the school front parking lot from 5-7 p.m., and students

parked their decorated cars and handed out candy to trick-or-treaters. There also was an inflatable bounce house, an area of hay bales for photos and some extra crafts for children to do. Using ASB budget money, the school provided all the candy.

Spirit commission chose an earlier time in the day for the event so that students and community members would have time for traditional door-to-door trick-or-treating. Since Halloween fell on a school night, Leadership also did not want to impede upon students' studying or homework time.

"The juniors and seniors just didn't want to spend all night doing this, and as a parent,

I know that when my kids were younger we appreciated going out a little earlier when it was still light out," said ASB and leadership director Matthew Torrens. "And so 5 o'clock, it's still light and 7 o'clock, it's dark so it's a nice transition."

The idea for a trunk-or-treat was influenced by a popular church event. In some neighborhoods, churches have neighbors hand out candy, creating a safe environment for young residents to trick-or-treat.

Since spirit commission hosts tailgates for football games, they did not have a lot of events around October and November due to the end of the football season. The commission decided to take on



Shetler

going through, but I can definitely be there for them if they want to talk to me.

In the afternoon of Oct. 22, the Link Leaders and senior volunteers gathered in the gym to be trained for their designated day. Later in the week, they led small groups through activities that could help people break past barriers and become more comfortable with each other.

Junior Link Crew leader Ashleigh Abe thought that the week was a valuable and eye-opening opportunity. The training day on Monday was primarily focused on the introductory aspect of the program, so Abe expected a rather light-hearted day and was surprised by how quickly emotions got intense.

"Some kids seemed pretty closed-off, so the crossing the line activity was a great way to open up without having to say a single word, which must've felt really relieving," Abe said.

At first, some students seemed hesitant to share personal stories since they were mostly surrounded by strangers, but as the day progressed, they were more open to talking to new people.

### "Every individual person on campus had a role in making this happen. It took the entire school community to make this come together."

ADMINISTRATOR Kerry Mohnike

"The idea is that a student from any grade level, from any interest, can feel comfortable talking to another student who may be completely different," Mohnike said. Mohnike said that research has proven that it is easier for students to learn when they feel connected to the place where they go to school.

"We wanted the program to help us address some of the things that we sometimes suffer on this campus — such as being overly comparative with one another and overly competitive with one another — and understand that a lot of us are in the same boat," Mohnike said. "We're trying our best to do our best."

The event was "logistically intense" and complicated because the administration had to coordinate with teachers and figure



FALCON // EDWIN CHEN

Senior link leader Jannah El-Ashwami participates in a small group discussion during Breaking Down the Walls in the Large Gym on Oct. 24.

out which day to send students to the program, Mohnike said.

However, she said that the teachers were willing to accommodate and make it easy for students to make up missed work without unnecessary stress. They had experienced Breaking Down the Walls during a staff development day before school started so it was easy to get them on board.

"Every individual person on campus had a role in making this happen," Mohnike said. "It took the entire school community to make this come together."

### The courage to share

After the program, Krishnan said that many people went up to students who shared a personal experience and tell them that they were really strong and that their story had an impact on them.

The speaker, Dean Whellams, said that he owes much of the positive response to the event to the effort that students put in.

"When the kids engage and get something out of it, that's only because they decided to give it a chance," he said. "We couldn't force the kids to learn, but because they were open-minded, they had the awesome experience that they did."

The response was so positive that many seniors were disappointed that they were not included in the program; some even chose to miss classes to participate in the event. However, according to Mohnike,

the entire senior class was not officially included because of funding issues and time limitations.

Senior Isaiah Vivero was one of those who wished seniors had participated, saying, "I think all seniors should have been involved, because especially before we go into the real world and leave our bubble, it will be helpful to know we're not all alone."

According to class secretary Khara Berkowitz, the senior class officers hope that seniors can participate in a stepping over the line activity similar at the beginning of second semester.

She said that the activity would break down some barriers and give many seniors the opportunity to get closer to one another. Berkowitz said that the moderator directing the senior activity would need to know how to address personal issues and be sensitive to people feeling upset.

Senior Link Leader Simran Malik, who participated in the program, said that she got the chance to talk to her friends and even strangers "on a much deeper level as opposed to casual conversation."

"I think that we will still be connected to the people we meet in highschool, even when we go off to college," Malik said. "Whether people continue to communicate daily, once a week, once a year, or even just keep the person as a memory, the stories that people shared will stay with us for a long time." ♦

tance of students betting on themselves and their own interests.

### STANFORD

continued from pg. 1

worth of ideas onto paper."

The book provides systematic approaches for students seeking to figure out what they want to do based on how many interests they have. There's the "scattershot approach," which consists of working through a list of everything a student might even remotely be interested in; the "1-month approach," which investigates how to decide between a few, competing interests; and the "moonshot approach," which encourages students who already have a particular interest or two to master them.

The book also emphasizes the impor-

is that the circumstances they grow up in are likely drastically different than those of their parents; although parents mean best and want the best for their kids, the "mold for success" they so often preach likely doesn't exist.

As both a Saratoga alum and Stanford graduate, Goel hopes that his age and background will give weight to his advice.

"Back when I was in high school, all the advice I got about relaxing and taking it easy from my parents, teachers, and counselors went right over my head. I had a mentality of 'they didn't go to high school in the Bay Area, so what do they know?'" Goel said. "But since I've both graduated from SHS and went to one of these schools, I hope that I can be someone that people listen to and

relate to."

Goel hopes that the book will help students shape their own futures and put things into perspective.

"If a student goes through the steps outlined in the book, and arrives at the conclusion that Stanford is still their dream school, all the more power to them," said Goel. "But the real value in the book is getting rid of the voice in the back of your head that says, 'what if?' You should do things because you want to, not because of external influences like teachers or parents. Ultimately, you get into Stanford, spend four years there, but what happens after you graduate?" ♦

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# Senior pursues wearable tech startup to help bikers

By Howard Tang

While spending time in big cities like San Francisco, senior Rohan Pandey noticed a problem: Some bike riders, especially those new to the area, had difficulty checking directions and figuring out where they should go.

"There are around 37,000 bikers [in San Francisco], and every time I go there, I see different kinds of people who would pull onto the side of the road, take out their phone and check Google Maps," Pandey said. "That's a big problem."

From this inspiration, Pandey began engineering a safer method of navigation. His solution: pairs of screenless navigation armbands for bikers, using haptic (vibration) feedback to communicate with the user and provide directional assistance.

He calls the product Pulse and will soon begin a Kickstarter campaign to fund the project at pulse.bike.

The bands vibrate according to directions. A vibration on the left wrist indicates a left turn and a vibration on the right wrist indicates a right turn, while a vibration on both wrists indicates a U-turn. As a rider approaches a way point, the vibrations increase in frequency. Upon arrival at the waypoint, the vibrations become continuous.

Pandey started this project at Leangap, a startup incubator he attended during the summer. There he began to work with a team of seven people. Although most of the members have since dropped out of the project, Pandey and senior Ryan Wang from Los Angeles are still pioneering their product.

A poll of 300 bike commuters conducted by the team showed that 85 percent of the bikers used a GPS of some form, and of those, 82 percent thought it was a hazard. Half of them had to pull over at some point and check their map and the other half checks their map while they are riding, essentially endangering themselves.

Although people who commute to work or just get around by bike usually know their normal path, the times when Pulse is needed the most occur when they need to go somewhere new, such as a friend's place or a new meeting location. Another significant benefit of Pulse is that bikers can take advantage of Google Maps' dynamic directions that change with the constant fluctuations in traffic.

We've talked to a lot of potential customers and we're doing our best to make it a reality.



SENIOR Rohan Pandey

"You might know what the main path to work is, but you don't know what the fastest path is at each exact moment because you haven't checked Google Maps for

a while," Pandey said.

The team has gone through several stages of developing and testing. At first, they were just using Bluetooth instructions to turn on and off an LED light. They then began to build vibrational motors in a box. Eventually, they created two separate wristbands that communicate over Bluetooth where the vibrations were completely in-sync with where the rider is and in relation to the next turn.

"We sat around in a car and drove around for an entire day just practicing with the bands, and we wrote code in the car to make adjustments and keep the bands working," Pandey said.

The team had to adapt the bands to be able to navigate the intricate roadmaps of San Francisco. The team fetches directions from the Google directions API and implements them in their code.

Although the Kickstarter fundraiser was planned to debut on Oct. 26, the date has been pushed back due to technical difficulties in

the making of their video trailer.

Pandey and his team are aiming to raise an initial \$55,000 which will primarily go toward the manufacturing process, as well as further testing of the device and the addition of features. They have a fully functional prototype and a fully functional application.

"The main thing we're working towards right now is Kickstarter," Pandey said. "We've talked to some manufacturers, but we're moving that off until we raise enough money on Kickstarter to see which manufacturers to pick and how much bandwidth we have for testing."

He sees Pulse as a promising product and feels much more optimistic about it than about previous projects he has worked on. He is working on a provisional patent paperwork, although it is not his priority at the moment.

"We've talked to a lot of potential customers and we're doing our best to make it a reality," Pandey said. ♦

# Marching band prepares to wrap up successful season

By Connie Liang & Sofia Jones

The marching band members are grappling to adjust to new changes in their final show as they head to Southern California for their final competition.

Among the changes, the band design team's decision to add more elaborate visuals, such as leg motions, into the program has proved challenging and even controversial to some members.

This decision came as a result of the band's second competition on Oct. 20 at NorCal Bands of America, at Diablo Valley College, where the band placed fifth out of 11. This result contrasted with the band's first competition the weekend prior at the Tournament of Bands at Cupertino High School, where they placed first in their division.

The new leg motions include elongated stretches, lunges and ripple effects, none of which were part of the original drill. The band's theme this year is "A Dream Within," a reflection on the changes in thoughts and imagination that people undergo as they age.

Sophomore trombone player Sam Koog thinks the new additions may be counterproductive to the overall production.

He finds that the consensus among students is similar in that more focus should be placed on perfecting the show they already have rather than adding more components to it. Initially, it wasn't definite as to whether or not the leg motions would actually be used

in competition, so many members didn't see the purpose or need of practicing seriously, Koog said.

Drum major junior Alena Jarrett also thinks that the changes added have led to some confusion, and that many last-minute revisions left some members unsure of what to do during a competition.

"The band seems to be having trouble grasping all the changes," Jarrett said. "People have to think about which of the changes made is the final, which can detract from other aspects of the show, like the music."

Regardless of the concerns, the new choreography seemed to work out on Oct. 27 as the team competed at the Foothill Band Review at Foothill High School. The team placed first in the percussion, woodwind, brass and auxiliary categories, as well as winning the music sweepstakes award. The band also placed second in their class division for the field show.

The band is preparing to wrap up the season with its final competition in Los Angeles from Nov. 2-4 at the SoCal Bands of America, which will feature 20 bands including Lynbrook High School, Ayala High School and others. With such little time left in the season, members are ready to finish the season on a strong note.

"The band is a lot more focused and dedicated than in years past," Jarrett said. "I'm sure they'll be able to handle all the changes being thrown at them, and be able to end the season feeling proud of all they've done." ♦

# Commissioners simplify club creation process

By Jun Lee & Michael Wong

This year, senior club commissioners Samyu Iyer and Cameron Lin have taken measures to simplify the process of creating a club in an effort to bolster club interests and support new endeavors.

"We really wanted to focus on making the process more accessible to everyone and pretty easy to fill out," Lin said. "We got a few complaints from last year that there were a lot of forms to fill out."

Until last year, the process to form a club required an email proposal in order to receive the initial application form.

"We sort of got rid of that step," Iyer said. "We thought that it was a little unnecessary, and we're trying to encourage more students to try making a club for something they're truly passionate about."

Now, Iyer and Lin have transferred the initial steps online. An online-submitted form found on the ASB website detailing the club's intent and structure must be sent to club commissioners for approval. If approved, a panel of ASB officers will listen to a prepared pitch during tutorials or weekends to determine whether to admit the new club.

During this presentation, all seven members of the commission listen to the club's proposal and vote on it, majority rule.

"It's not specifically something we're looking for other than real passion," Iyer said about the in-person proposal. "We want to sense that they have enough to carry them through the entire year."

Club commissioners hope that this mitigates the difficulties of forming a club in previous years.

"Just being a club is a lot of work, and the needing to do the paperwork side of it was [too much] for the clubs," Lin said.

Another change that club commissioners made was the frequency of submitting club minutes. While clubs last year were required to submit a detailed summary after each meeting, these written notes are now monthly requirements.

For senior Sally J. Lee, secretary of FBLA, the change is convenient because keeping track of specific details during each meeting is no longer required. The new policy allows clubs to debrief monthly activities and see whether they have met their goals, keeping the intended purpose of minutes in mind.

"It's not only helpful in that it makes our lives easier, but it's also helpful for the club officers in assessing and reflecting on what they've done," Lee said.

The new system has not seen a significant increase in applications. Still, Iyer encourages students to take the initiative.

"It's a little easier if you're interested," Iyer said. "Go fill out the application and anyone can do it." ♦

# GirlUp and Be the Change Club place focus on global issues

By Sandhya Sundaram & Amanda Zhu

Among the school's service clubs, two new clubs based around global issues and awareness have emerged: Be the Change club, shedding light on the refugee crisis, and GirlUp Club, focusing on female empowerment.

Be the Change (BTC), which meets every Monday during lunch in history teacher Mike Davey's room, is dedicated to helping students find more accessible ways to make an impact on world issues. Currently, BTC members are centering their efforts around the escalating Syrian refugee crisis.

In the first informational meeting on Oct. 1, there was a great turnout, which was "really excit-

ing to see," according to Krishnan. "I think a lot of people were touched by the things we said and the way we presented our club," Krishnan said.

Since then, the number of attending members has dropped, but the officers hope to gain more interest through fundraisers and events throughout the year.

The panel discussion, set to occur during second semester, will potentially feature refugees, professors, refugee organizations and UN workers as speakers. The officers also hope to hold a long-term letter writing campaign at the end of the school year in which they reach out to the government

and discuss ways that the United States can help refugees.

"Refugees need our help — there's a lot of them — and they don't have food or clothes in some cases," Krishnan said.

"They have to wear the same thing everyday, they live in camps and many women get raped."

Ultimately, Krishnan and other club members want to be part of helping ease the situation.

"Every person has a voice, but your voice is amplified when other people can make your voice stronger," said Krishnan. "We're trying to create the strongest voice that we can, and we want to use that voice to be heard by our government."

To focus on issues both applicable at the school and beyond, junior Jolyn Tran started the GirlUp club, which meets every Tuesday during lunch in English teacher Emily Wu's room, primarily focusing on creating an environment for girls to voice their struggles and to empower underprivileged girls around the world.

"We not only want an open forum for girls, but also a club to make a lasting impact in the world," Tran said.

To start, GirlUp will hold a toiletries drive to supply women with feminine hygiene products that they would otherwise be unable to get, and the officers of GirlUp are discussing which organization to donate their profits to.

Within local communities, Gir-

lUp plans to aid underfunded San Jose schools by talking to young girls about self confidence. On an international level, Tran plans to support and fundraise for girls in Uganda so that they can have better access to an education.

Turnout was successful in the first few meetings where members, largely underclassmen, passionately discussed the Brett Kavanaugh Supreme Court confirmation hearings.

Addressing current local and global projects and topics, GirlUp started with the purpose of giving girls a time and place to speak up.

"I wanted the club just to be a place where girls can openly talk about themselves and their issues pertaining certain topics like confidence," Tran said. ♦

## 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.

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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# BDTW: a step in the right direction

"Ugh, if I miss Friday's classes for Breaking Down the Walls, I have to make up my in class lab and so much homework."

Though there were some complaints like this uttered last week due to the BDTW program that spanned a total of five days and caused students to miss entire school days, the program was beneficial for encouraging compassion and understanding among students.

Students have been taught from a young age to treat others the way the way you want to be treated or to never judge people based on their appearance, reputation or other surface-level assumptions; however, it is often difficult to change long-standing habits.

But physically being a part of an emotional activity in a supportive environment is a truly impactful experience, and it can often be hard to describe the atmosphere that existed during the BDTW days to parents or others who did not attend the program. Many students discovered through the eye-opening experience the types of problems that friends and classmates face.

Ultimately, the program further pushed the message of not being able to hate those whose stories you know and tugged on many students' heartstrings.

The assembly on Monday featured Dean Whellams, the BDTW leader, and his own experiences. He proved to be a talented storyteller, engaging with the audience by asking questions and sharing funny and heartwarming stories.

Tuesday through Friday produced unexpected results. Initially, some Link Crew Leaders saw the week as a burden that would cause them to miss two days of school. Many students

expected their classmates to leave the gym complaining about how much work had to be made up from the day's missed classes.

Instead, the emotional experience resonated with many attendees, and a majority of students were glad they attended.

BDTW may not be a magical experience that can produce universal empathy, but those who eagerly participated and wanted to learn something largely felt the full effect of the experience.

By the end of the week, even seniors who were not Link Leaders showed up willingly to participate in the day's activities.

The activities before lunch consisted mostly of surface-level conversation and games. For the most part, the activities were fun but not extremely impactful.

The conversations that students had throughout the entire day in small groups and with partners allowed people to learn more about their peers, whom they would not have spoken to otherwise.

Many students made new friends and got to know others they had seen around but never had a conversation with before.

The pre-lunch activities were necessary to promote a supportive environment and led up to later activities.

After lunch, students took part in Cross the Line, an activity that left many students with tears in their eyes.

The heart of the activity touched on sensitive issues such as substance abuse, eating disorders, self-harm, depression, life-threatening diseases, life as part of the LGBT community, academic stress, body image and suicide.

Bringing yourself to cross the line is often easier than speaking or explaining your story in an

everyday conversation, when heavier topics might not be mentioned.

The purpose of Cross the Line was to create empathy and closer bonds among students.

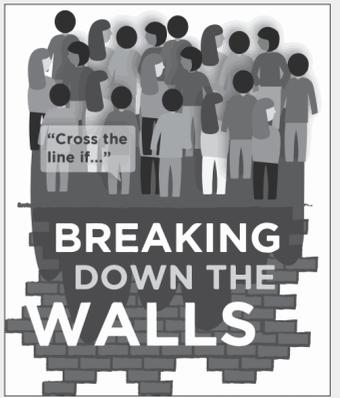
Not only did the people on the sidelines learn a little about those who did cross the line, but the activity helped students realize that they're not alone in their difficult experiences.

Even for those who mostly observed during the activity, it was difficult and heartbreaking to watch friends and peers cross the line on tough questions, especially when someone completely unexpected walked out into the middle of the gym floor.

Following the activity, students had small group discussions and a large group discussion; the day ended with students writing notes to people in the gym, with many providing support and opening up to others, encouraging future conversation. Every tear shed was matched by an equally emotional hug.

Was it worth missing class and in some cases having more homework?

It was. The program, though it may not have been life-changing,



GRAPHIC BY ASHLEY FENG

will be a memorable part of many students' experience here.

It is important to teach the student body that caring for others and being available for others is an integral part of being a good person in general.

Though expensive at \$40,000, the program was not a waste of time or money.

Missing a day or two of school to promote empathy among the student body was a nice change of pace from classes and — for seniors — college applications.

A week of collaborative, bond-promoting activities and emotional conversation may not be not enough to drastically change the lives of 1,350 students, but it is a step in the right direction to promoting empathy

among the school. ♦

## Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

**Editors-in-chief**  
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The Falcon staff voted 27-3 in support of this article.

# YOUR OPINIONS ON THE FALCON

THE FALCON WELCOMES

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From the editors:

We encourage our readers to submit short comments about stories or the newspaper itself. Please email any suggestions, criticisms or praise about each issue to feedback@saratogafalcon.org and we will do our best to print it here in the Opinion section. ♦

— Elaine Fan and Sanjana Melkote

Meg Battey, English Teacher



"I think that the students in the Falcon work really hard and they put out a really strong product. The opinion stories address some very controversial issues a lot. Sometimes I disagree with the opinion stories; for example, once there was a story about how bad the play that the English 11 Honors students had to read over the summer was. Overall, I think that the Falcon is very well-done and something I try to read as often as possible."

Prosper Chiu, Junior

"I think that sometimes, the newspaper reporters made up quotes or titles to make the story article more relevant or interesting, but it makes some people mad when they read the stories and realize it's not the truth. But other than that, all the articles are really interesting and overall the newspaper is pretty dope."

*Dear Prosper, We deeply regret any misinformation or false quotes printed in The Falcon. We expect our reporters to uphold accountability as a core value of journalism. We strongly encourage readers like you to report any misrepresentations to the editors and we will do our best to address them in future issues.*

— Elaine Fan and Sanjana Melkote

Madelyn Jin, Freshman



"The section on the front page about band placing first in the division was definitely heartwarming for me. Even though the band and guard have achieved a lot this season already, I never or almost never notice any mention of them in their shows, especially the first competition of the season, as mentioned in the Falcon, they deserve more recognition than the school is currently giving them. Having a story about the band's successful show on the front page of the Falcon definitely gave the band and guard a spotlight and congratulated them on their run. The article was really well written in that it emphasized the work and effort that was put into Tournament of Bands, and I hope the band and guard continue to be recognized in this way in the future."

# History needs to be more LGBT inclusive

BY PhoebeWang

Freddie Mercury, the lead vocalist for the band Queen who died from AIDS in 1991, is finally getting his own documentary called "Bohemian Rhapsody," which is to be released Nov. 2.

Undeniably, Mercury and his career are a huge part of 20th century popular culture and it's great news that his story will finally be told. However, when the initial trailer for the movie was released on May 15, not everyone was excited.

The controversy: Mercury's bisexuality was a big part of his life and death, yet it was not adequately represented in the trailer.

Granted, trailers usually do leave a lot of the movie's actual content out, but this does not excuse the apparent misrepresentation of an important aspect of Mercury's life. A new trailer released on July 17 featured a quick fix: a brief shot of Mercury holding another man's hand.

The flames of this controversy have died down, but this incident only serves to highlight how the entertainment industry portrays history as primarily cisgendered and heterosexual.

Furthermore, the journey of LGBT civil rights in America is given less emphasis in contemporary culture and coverage of civil rights history. This disparity only shows young members of the LGBT community that for America, LGBT people and their struggles, both past and present, don't matter.

As far as I can tell, the closest that the non-Media Arts Program history classes come to discussing LGBT people in history is Alan Turing's story, when World History teachers show sophomores the film "The Imitation Game." Turing's role in WWII was instrumental in cracking the Nazi code, but what makes this film stand out is that it covers Turing's homosexuality, and his experience as a gay man

in the 1940s and in the anti-Soviet period of our history.

Furthermore, even though LGBT persons are briefly mentioned in MAP history classes, the classes don't go into the LGBT civil rights movement with the same depth that we do the African American civil rights era or the women's movement.

Unfortunately, besides the brief mentions of the Stonewall riots, the Don't Ask, Don't Tell military policy and Obergefell v. Hodges in U.S. History, there doesn't seem to be much about LGBT history in our textbooks.

The absence of LGBT history in the curriculum is concerning. In World History, teachers show a short clip where a local mom interviews several students at a nearby prestigious college about the Holocaust to demonstrate their lack of knowledge about this event of human suffering.

If I were to perform the same experiment and ask students about the LGBT civil rights movement, I'm guessing very few would know who Frank Kameny, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. of the LGBT community, is. (Kameny organized many of the earlier gay rights protests during the early '60s and is largely seen as the father of the gay rights movement.)

They wouldn't know of police persecution at gay bars, of the protests before Stonewall and of how the AIDS crisis in the '80s and '90s provoked anti-gay acts of hate. They wouldn't know that the witch hunts of the Red Scare weren't limited to just communists but also homosexuals.

What's concerning about this phenomena is that when we don't learn about this

history of oppression and protests, we can pretend that it never happened. When we ignore a people's story, we can pretend that they don't exist. And that's frightening.

In addition to this, it doesn't help when we have leadership in this country that promotes the prejudiced ideas and discrimination that already exists against members of the LGBT community. Under the Trump administration, more conservative areas have gone from silently homophobic to proudly homophobic.

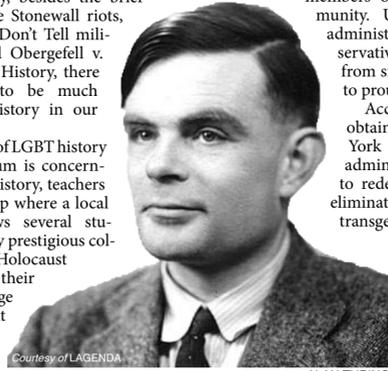
According to a memo obtained by The New York Times, the Trump administration plans to redefine sex so that it eliminates the existence of transgender people.

Not only is this stance scientifically inaccurate, but this also is clearly a political move aimed at discriminating against a marginalized community and using it for political gain.

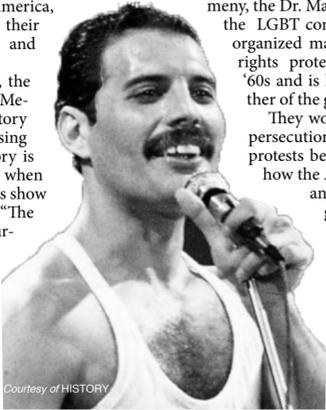
Trump says it's a "scary time for men" (by which he means rich, white, cisgendered men), and he couldn't be more wrong. It's a scary time for women, for people of color and for LGBT people. It's scary for LGBT youth to know that the U.S. may become a place where they're not safe to be out.

This is all the more reason why we need to share LGBT stories: By doing so, we can begin to reform the anti-LGBT culture. It is through stories that people learn to feel compassion and understanding for people with different experiences and ideas.

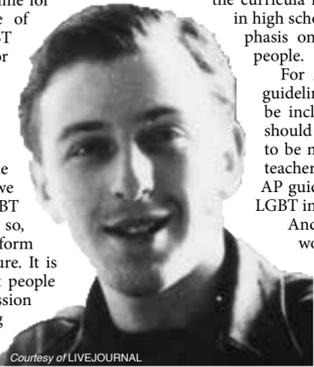
And maybe one day, we won't have to worry about whether or not LGBT icons will have their stories told accurately. Instead, we will finally be able to share and appreciate their contributions to society. ♦



ALAN TURING



FREDDIE MERCURY



FRANK KAMENY

# Reading for pleasure results in empathy, better grades

BY RohanKumar & AariaThomas

Long, mahogany banquet tables covered in delicious entrees, luscious desserts and self-filling cups are packed with chatting students donned in flowing black robes. Stately arches hold up the ceiling of the dining hall, which resembles the starry night above.

At the front, the headmaster, an old man with a large white beard and half-moon glasses, gives a speech to begin the school year.

This is the world of the Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling, undoubtedly one of the best sets of young adult fiction series around the globe.

The unfortunate truth, however, is that many high schoolers never visited the beautiful, intricate world of Harry Potter, or that of any other fictional story, for years.

As teens become more and more engrossed in academics and extracurricular activities, they have

less and less time to spend on recreational reading.

Many students find this loss insignificant: Who cares about losing out on leisure reading if it means getting better grades? We already spend plenty of time reading articles and curricular novels on Cliffnotes two minutes before a test.

However, reading for school is accompanied by a large amount of additional work. With every chapter, students have to take notes and analyze what each detail means.

This too often makes it schoolwork merely something to get out of the way before moving on to the next assignment. At that point, students are not reading for pleasure; they're just studying. And there's a big difference between studying and having fun.

Reading in their free time allows people to simply sit and enjoy the story. There is no anxiety about finishing the next pages and the work tied to it.

Readers can truly focus on soaking in the writing, and not obsessive note taking for a later grade.

Reading for fun also comes with a host of benefits, including some that may actually contribute to students' grades and ability to do well on tests.

In addition, recreational reading comes with substantial psychological value. In the article "The Benefits of Reading for Pleasure", writer Jeffrey D. Wilhelm details the various benefits that reading provides.

For example, when engrossed in a book's

world, readers develop the ability to engage with others.

Relating the story to one's own life helps develop a growth mindset and a more optimistic worldview. Some argue that spending time studying is much more important than attaining an optimistic worldview. Well, maybe if students read more, they might not need to study as much.

While reading, students passively acquire knowledge. Maybe it's not the solution to that disgusting quintic your math teacher told you to solve, but it is important knowledge all the same. Specifically, readers are exposing themselves to new ideas, voices and words.

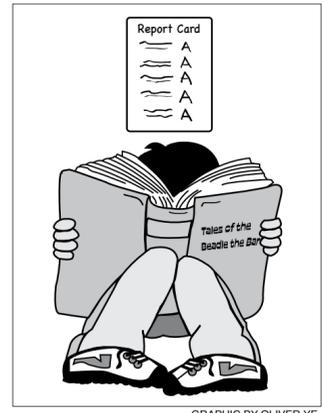
On top of this, reading for fun stimulates students' creativity, helping them develop their own voice that can be applied to both their fiction and nonfiction writing.

The exposure to a variety of books gives students the resources to experiment with different writing techniques and manners of approaching a topic.

This can be useful when writing an essay; changing the perspective or purpose of the piece can make it stand out.

Reading in one's free time can also be a great way to escape academic stress. "Reading for Stress Relief" published by the University of Minnesota reveals that reading is a highly effective way to relax, capable of reducing stress by up to 68 percent.

When reading a novel, students are transported to a different world, where APUSH



GRAPHIC BY OLIVER YE

reading quizzes, AP Biology tests and "The Crucible" literary analysis essays don't exist. With all this in mind, we think it's high time to pick up that tattered Harry Potter book that has been sitting untouched on your shelf since you were 7.

Read for the reading's sake, not to pass an English quiz.

Read because you enjoy it, not because your mom forces you to. And most importantly, read because you want to be a better person. ♦

# Vote! The midterms can change everything

BY EdwinChen & JustinGuo

The 2016 presidential election showed the American people the epitome of what could happen when people don't show up at the polls. According to CNN, voter turnout in 2016 was at a 20-year low, with only 55.4 percent of eligible voters casting votes. This is deeply troubling.

The Nov. 6 midterm elections are a pivotal moment for our nation. The last two years have been troubling times in Washington, and recent events such as the Kavanaugh hearing highlight the train wreck of the current administration.

In light of these events, it is increasingly important for Americans, including eligible 18-year-olds at this school, to take to the polls. Every single ballot counts, regardless of how insignificant it may seem.

This year, 435 House of Representatives seats are up for grabs, while 33 Senate seats are available. In the House elections, Democrats need to win 23 seats in order to flip the House. Democrats are starting with the 23 Republican-held districts that voted for Clinton, but they are utilizing other opportunities in cities populated by college graduates in opposition to President Trump in order to gain more seats.

Meanwhile, in the Senate, the odds of a Democratic takeover are looking doubt-

ful. Twenty-six Democratic seats are up for grabs, while only nine Republican seats are being voted on. To win back a majority, Democrats would not only have to keep all the seats that they have, some of which are in regions where Trump has gained favor, but they would also have to pick up two seats. This is possible, though there is little room for error.

No matter the results, the midterm elections will have a significant impact on the foreseeable future of America.

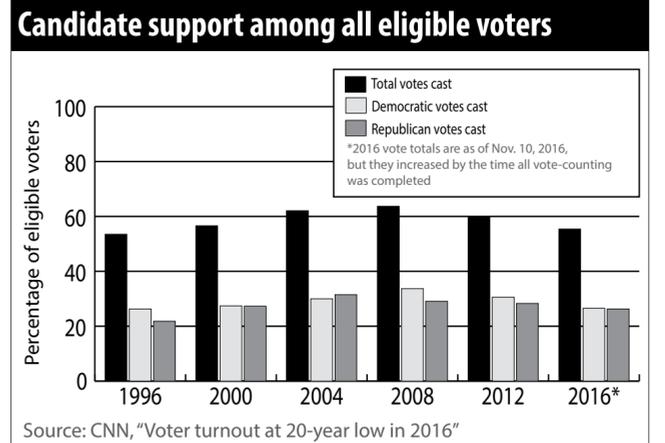
If the Democrats are able to turn either legislative body, Trump's agenda will be much harder to pass for the next two years.

In addition, if Democrats win the House, there will be more investigations into the misdeeds of the Trump administration and campaign. Currently, the committees, which possess subpoena powers, are controlled by the majority party, Republicans. If Democrats can flip either house, they will run those committees.

Participating in the midterm elections will also have a significant impact in your local community as well.

Prop 10 is currently one of the most controversial items being voted upon this election in California.

Prop 10 allows for local rent control ordinances and hurts both homeowners and tenants by allowing the regulation of single-



family homes, which in turn drives up living costs and puts bureaucrats in charge of housing, leading to fewer available rentals and higher rents for the majority of renters. This and dozens of other decisions are on the ballot. For eligible students and adults alike, voting in the midterm elections is a critical responsibility now more than ever. ♦

# Extreme political correctness silences opinions

BY KevinSze

In 2015, UC Santa Cruz apologized to students after serving Mexican food at an official school night party themed "intergalactic."

Believing that the space theme correlated with the term "illegal alien," students deemed the Mexican food served inappropriate and staged protests.

At UC Berkeley, speakers such as right wing provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos have induced violent protests on campus when they come to present their conservative beliefs.

This culture of excessive political correctness has become all too prevalent in higher education, shutting down dissent and endangering free thinking.

For 50 years, researchers from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) surveyed incoming

college freshmen on their worldviews, aiming to find trends in political opinion.

In 2016, the HERI published a study that stated that current college students have been characterized to be "most willing to shut down speech they find offensive" out of all college students in previous years.

By no coincidence, student protests in response to seemingly offensive statements have also been on the rise.

A FiveThirtyEight article found that many of these protests demand increasing diversity through sensitivity training, speech codes, public apologies or even resignations of people who have expressed an unpopular opinion.

Hand in hand with these protests is an increase in students who lean towards the left on the politi-

cal spectrum. The study found that the highest share of students since 1973 now consider themselves left-wing in their views, and the highest share ever of college students now claim themselves to be far left.

For my part, I support students' desire to make their campus a safe and friendly space.

I do believe that every person, no matter their race, sexual orientation, age or religion, should be given a voice in their community and should not be harassed for their beliefs.

But often times, extreme political correctness takes it overboard.

For instance, the popular sitcom "Friends" was under fire in 2016 for being homophobic.

A video on YouTube titled "Homophobic Friends" is a montage of the six characters making jokes about their sexuality and being

offended when they were called "gay," which was regarded as funny in the time when the show aired.

Viewers complained that "Friends" should change some of the jokes in each show to be more inclusive.

The first episode of "Friends" aired in 1994 and the last episode aired in 2004. Standards were clearly different then, and people shouldn't be angry at a sitcom that aired over a decade ago for having jokes that are deemed inappropriate now.

Even if people think the jokes were inappropriate, we should not be offended so easily. People are entitled to any opinion they want to have, whether we like it or not. We should be able to take a step back and understand both sides of an argument instead of leading with emotion.

Having differing opinions is what has made America into the melting pot of cultures and ideas that we pride ourselves in. Fear of reprisal stifles debate, which shuts down different opinions. Debate is what drives our country forward because new and better ideas are born through earnest, truth-seeking conversations.

America practices freedom of speech, but the current trend of shutting down opposing and uncomfortable views — on both the left and the right — undermines those ideals.

Finding balance is key to creating a safe but open space for everybody. ♦

# Pumpkin spice lattes disappoint

BY AllenChen

Whenever fall rolls around, there's always a sudden spike in pumpkin spice products. Typically, Starbucks leads the charge with its infamous Pumpkin Spice Latte. Throughout the season, other brands join the horde until every grocery store becomes an orange-brown blur.

This year, the pumpkin spice fiasco has gotten an even earlier start, with Starbucks releasing its latte Aug. 28 compared to last year's Sept. 1. In addition, many more brands have joined in this year, with available products ranging from pumpkin spice bubblegum to pumpkin spice phone cases.

This is not OK. Pumpkin spice, despite its initial appeal as a seasonal special item, is literally just a bunch of spices mixed together. You could make a Pumpkin Spice Latte with just a regular latte and two spoons of cinnamon and nutmeg.

The most scandalous crime of pumpkin spice is that it doesn't even have any pumpkin flavor in it. The best way to explain why

this annoys me so much is with another misnomer: orange oil. It sounds like it should be something you drizzle over a barbecue for extra tang, not something you drizzle over a house to exterminate wood-eating pests.

Similarly, pumpkin spice sounds like spice from pumpkins, not the orange-ish pumpkin-less powder that gets dumped onto everything during the fall.

It's as if the word pumpkin was only tacked on to make it seem more seasonal. Imagine if the Pumpkin Spice Latte was just the Spice Latte. The word pumpkin is just added to boost fall sales.

They might as well just slap on some more seasonal words and sell the same drink year-round. In the winter, snowball spice latte. In the spring, anti-allergy latte. In the summer, why not just call it the sun-baked iced latte?

In order to combat the pumpkin spice scourge, I have decided to go around throwing pumpkin pulp at anyone I find consuming pumpkin spice-flavored creations. Maybe they'll catch some in their mouth and realize that their beloved pumpkin spice actually tastes nothing like a pumpkin. ♦

# Christmas belongs in December

BY AnnaNovoselov

Walking into Michaels in early October, I was presented with rows of fake fall foliage, plastic pumpkins, scary skulls and other decorations celebrating Halloween and the wondrous season of fall.

But as I started walking to the back of the store, I noticed an out-of-place display featuring Christmas ornaments, green plastic trees and bright lights — a display that should have been in storage.

Christmas was months away, almost a quarter of the year, so why were such decorations even there?

I was infuriated: The Christmas season starts the day after Thanksgiving, not in the middle of fall. Imagine Santa Claus crashing fallen leaves beneath his black boots instead of leaving footprints in the white snow. It's just not right. Listening to holiday music and singing Christmas carols two months early

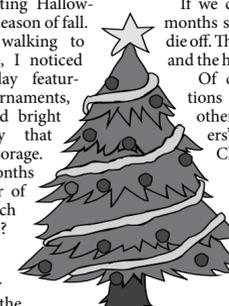
results in the Christmas season losing some of its excitement and joy. "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" and "All I Want for Christmas" have no place among Jack-o-lanterns or Thanksgiving feasts.

If we celebrated Christmas for three months straight, much of the joy would die off. The festivities would be spread out and the holiday wouldn't seem as special.

Of course, those holiday decorations I saw at Michaels were another attempt to exploit customers' tendency to spend big for Christmas by luring them in.

Even so, there is no logical reason to celebrate Christmas this early, except for monetary greed, fueled by susceptible consumers manipulated by the pretenses of joyous spirit imposed upon them.

So instead of being swept up by distant jollity, let's enjoy the fall with its beautiful changing colors and light breezes and save the Christmas season for December, when it is a respectable time to put on a Santa Hat and shuffle holiday playlists. ♦



# College counselors should not change unique writer voice of personal essays

BY FrancescaChu

*I'd cut out some of the description of feeling empty inside. I think it's too personal, and you don't want colleges to think you're depressed. Focus more on times when you felt happy, like when you felt like you could change the world or something. You know, something inspiring. And we need to work on word choice that'll make you sound smarter.*

So goes a typical essay-editing session with my college counselor. I nod and promise to think about the suggestions, because I know he wants me to take his advice. After all, as he's said multiple times, he's helped get plenty of kids into great colleges before me, so he knows what's best.

But here's my problem: If colleges want to get to know each individual and understand what makes them unique, how can anyone know what should be written except the actual writer?

I understand that most college counselors have only good intentions and are providing students with their best and honest opinion about how to write the most impressive es-

say to get into college. However, after essays undergo several rounds of editing with a college counselor, the writing often loses the voice and personality that makes it unique to the writer.

It's hard for students to authentically show who they are when college counselors are telling them to omit or change key words or sentences, or when counselors are adding their own fancy, sophisticated vocabulary to supposedly reveal the applicant's intelligence.

For example, I've been told that something I've written is too personal and isn't what people usually want to share in their essays.

But what if the personal issue I'm writing about is important to me, and I want to be transparent about it and let colleges know?

Counselors are entitled to their own opinions, but they shouldn't make it sound like I'll really hurt my chances of getting accepted into a college that I want to attend if I don't take their advice, which often means following a format that even I can see through.

Then we get to the wording. My counselor tells me I shouldn't sound like I'm having a conversation with my friend when I'm writing. But isn't that the point? The admissions officer should read my essay and feel like they know who I am.

If I were the type of person who has a sophisticated vocabulary and usually uses fancy language in my writing, then of course I should do so in my essays.

But that isn't me. I don't need to use words like "elucidate" and "quintessential" in my essays. Each person has their own personal voice and writing style and should use whatever words they think will capture their personality best.

Don't get me wrong; it's important for students to carefully think through the all aspects of their essays from content to diction, and it will take several drafts and revisions before an essay becomes the polished, finished product that colleges see.

But these essays should actually be personal "personal statements."

And in the end, the writer is the only one

who should be deciding what to write about and how to convey the meaning of their experiences.

College counselors should realize that there isn't a rubric that lays out the rules of what a college essay should or shouldn't be.

The essays are supposed to reveal what kind of person the applicant is, so students should write whatever it is that they think colleges should know.

Students should feel free to share a time in their life when they felt alone or depressed and shouldn't be encouraged to shy away from sensitive or hot-button topics.

They should be able to use whatever words they believe represent their personality.

Having said all of this, I should also say I am thankful for my college counselor, because he often does provide valuable advice for my essays, like making sure I stay on topic and actually answer the prompt.

However, students should only take counselors' ideas into consideration if they truly believe it will help and if the advice feels right to them. ♦

# Serenading students with 'Shrek' songs is not a good idea

BY SofiaJones  
& SandhyaSundaram

As underclassmen headed for the quad to begin lunch on Oct. 15, they were probably expecting to eat lunch calmly and talk to some of their friends. Instead, they saw two girls walking uncomfortably close to them while singing (screaming?) the lyrics to "All Star" by Smash Mouth and "TiK ToK" by Ke\$ha.

Inspired by QPark, a YouTuber who films himself singing and dancing in public to popular music like "FEFE" and "In My Feelings," we decided to see students' reactions to our singing in public (and secretly hoped we would be something of sensation-causing hit).

During a Falcon class period, we nervously brainstormed for an hour trying to find a well-known song that was the perfect blend of classy and trashy to make lunch-eaters uncomfortable.

When someone suggested a classic song from the "Shrek" soundtrack, we instantly knew we had found the perfect option. No one would be able to resist a good old "Shrek" song. However, we could not have been more incorrect.

Holding up a sign that said "sing along if you know the lyrics," we walked up to our first victims: a group of freshman girls chatting by a row of lockers. We were pretty nervous to start with. At best, we could get a couple kids to have fun and sing with us, and at worst, we could be humiliated and shunned by underclassmen.

Since we vaguely knew the freshmen, some of them eventually sang along with us, probably out of pity. Passers-by were extremely confused as to what was going on and made sure to not approach us, as though we were reeking of BO.

Motivated by our mild success with the first group, we made our way to another group of freshmen; however, we were met with very different results.

At first sight, two of them could not bear the sound of our screeching, and felt so repulsed that they left. We enthusiastically sang to the remaining survivors and were met with blank stares. Eventually they turned their backs on us and resumed their conversations.

One kind-hearted freshman girl sang along but probably only because she felt bad that the rest of her friends refused to look at us.

For our grand finale, we decided to creep behind the bushes by the office and pop out, screaming "TiK Tok" at freshman boys eating at their tables. They refused to acknowledge our presence, and carried on with their conversations.

This whole experience was embarrassing at first, but once we decided that we should go all out without caring what others thought, it became a lot more fun.

Although our hopes of starting a flash mob of singing didn't pan out, we managed to get interesting reactions from people, and eventually stopped being self-conscious of others' judgments as we just enjoyed ourselves. ♦

# Don't let perfectionism run your life for you

BY SamanthaYee

It's not uncommon for students to be pushed to "get organized," whether that means labeling endless folder tabs or sorting pens by brand name.

Most would love to live in the fantasy world of Ikea display rooms and YouTube lifestyle videos; but unfortunately, actually living out the epitome of organization is a walk through a minefield.

Tidy space, tidy mind. Anyone can appreciate the satisfaction a deep-cleaned room or freshly straightened binder, but exactly how far can this

When I fell into a cycle of organizing and reorganizing my computer desktop about a year ago for the sake of my freshman year, I found myself getting lost in the chaos of categorizing. It started with few digital folders, but quickly escalated to a folder within a folder within a folder, which was vastly more confusing than it needed to be.

I would rename and transfer these thirty folders at least once every week, moving them across the screen to suit whatever unrealistic expectation I wanted. The color-coding became addictive.

The question I asked myself frequently was "is this where it's supposed to be?" And when the answer was no, I would sweep everything off my desk no matter what was on it and sort through every stack of paper in my drawers. I found myself getting preoccupied with organizing my materials instead of actually being productive.

From the second semester of that year, my worst moments occurred. When one of my notebooks would fall apart, instead of simply picking up where I left off in a different notebook, I rewrote everything into the new one. Not only was this a waste of paper (I would later use the old notebook for candle fuel), it was a massive waste of time.

While my intent was a systematic working environment and life, my habits escalated into a vicious cycle of perfectionism that kept me up at night. Even during the latest hours of my homework procrastination, I forced myself to sculpt my room into absolute coordination.

Too close to summer, when I admitted to myself that I, in fact, had a problem, I put myself into my own version of reverse therapy. I started keeping binders and textbooks

ers and textbooks in random stacks on a shelf and occasionally would let a stray pen on the desk be. I started writing in only ink so I couldn't fall back into my method of "erase-and-start-over" so easily. Most importantly, I spent less time working on the precious notebooks that I had practically worshipped.

Although this realization was a bit too late in the year for further corrections, ultimately, I forced myself into the mindset that sometimes, you just have to let things be things, and not let them control your life in a negative way. Living in complete chaos is far from what most people would want, but the polar opposite is a pressure that no one should have to defer to. ♦

# AMAZON: THE PRIME OF MY LIFE

BY RohanKumar

I hate traditional shopping. It's just wandering aimlessly through an overly clean, crowded, noisy mall and looking through the entire store even though you just came to buy black pants.

And why go to get the black pants, when the black pants could come to you? Hence the business model for Amazon, the one-stop pampering shop for nearly every single person in the world.

Want a new copy of "Lord of the Flies" to replace that dog-eared one the school gave you? On your doorstep in a day. Want a \$195 Philips Sonicare smart electric toothbrush? Just wait a day or two, and it'll be in your mouth before you know it.

You can order corn flakes with Amazon Pantry, organic vegetables with Amazon Fresh and the perfect tux that you'll never wear after prom with Amazon Wardrobe.

If you don't trust online shipping to get you your salami sandwich to you in one piece, you can go to Amazon's recently purchased Whole Foods stores to buy it. Amazon has even unveiled In-Car Delivery, where they bring parcels to wherever your car is parked, unlock your car and put the parcel in it. To be completely honest, I trust Amazon a lot, but I don't trust them enough to let them in my car.

When it comes to shopping, Amazon beats going to brick-and-mortar stores 11 out of 10 times. Many argue that in person, you can come across something new, and if you don't like something you can immediately get something else. With Amazon, you can do both: It constantly gives you suggestions that actually makes sense and if you don't like something, you can just return it.

My family also depends on Amazon the way I depend on pearl milk tea: a little bit too much. This dependence, however, became truly extreme when I was old enough to realize how unpleasant in-person shopping really is.

If I forgot that I had a project until the day before the deadline, I just ask my dad to get materials from Amazon and I'll be done on time. (My dad works for Google, yet he still has the newest version of Alexa.)

Quite frankly, this dependence on Amazon doesn't disturb me. If it gets me the stuff I need when I need it, then I'm happy.

Economists are saying that Amazon is becoming a monopoly and must be stopped before they have the marketplace cornered.

I say, Who cares? Let them become a monopoly. In fact, I say let them run the government.

It'd be a lot better than what we have now and we might even be able to get other countries to like us. Everyone loves Amazon, so everyone would love the U.S. by the transitive property.

Amazon clearly knows how to make people happy. They have the variety, the style and the marketing to garner the support of everyone. And most importantly, they have one-day shipping!

From the way I describe Amazon, you may be wondering, "Are you addicted?" That's a hard question. Let me answer with my answer and a question of my own. Yes, and why aren't you. ♦

GRAPHICS BY ELAINE FAN, KEVIN SZE AND CALLIA YUAN



GRAPHIC BY FRANCESCA CHU

# College representative visits not constructive

BY RahulVadlakonda

With college application season upon us, it is a daily occurrence to hear an announcement over the intercom about a college presentation taking place during tutorial or lunch.

These presentations, which take place in the office, Library Research Center or the MAP Annex, are intended to provide prospective students with information about various colleges, allowing students to ask representatives any questions they might have.

Although these presentations seem beneficial, spending 35 minutes during tutorial listening to one person giving one perspective about a campus where thousands of perspectives could be heard isn't as useful as it seems.

When students enter these presentations, they are often get a pamphlet and possibly a business card from the representative or a sign-up card for an email list.

While attending this presentation and subscribing to an email list might show demonstrated interest to a college, this is a very small or sometimes unconsidered factor in the process of making an admissions decision.

If students are keen on going to that college, such as an Early Decision school, it's probably better if they actually visit the college.

Also, students can easily find the information presented during these presentations online or in the hundreds of emails that colleges send to prospective students every day.

The pamphlets handed out by representatives are also mailed to students' homes, making the information redundant.

For rarely attended or lower-tier uni-

versities, presentations tend to get very minimal attendance as students are more inclined to show interest in higher-ranking ones.

As a result, not only does the time spent for the event's arrangement get devalued, but it also wastes the admission representatives' time and effort to come to the school.

**Listening to one person giving one perspective about a campus where thousands of perspectives could be heard isn't as useful as it seems.**

Although some argue that a major benefit of attending these presentations is the opportunity to ask more specific questions to somebody knowledgeable about the college, students often ask meaningless questions just to appear interested in the college.

However, since college reps see more students in the months they present, it is highly unlikely they will remember any of those students.

Many of these questions could also easily be answered by sifting through the College Confidential website or researching the college's website, which are much more accessible resources that also provide a wider variety of perspectives.

Seniors would truly benefit more by studying chat forums of students who attend the universities rather than merely accepting the one-sided story presented by a college representative. ♦

# Volunteering not meant to be an onerous chore

BY JustinGuo

"Ugh, I really don't want to go to volunteering tomorrow. I need more time to study for my math test."

Students often complain that volunteering takes up too much time on top of school and extracurricular activities.

Volunteering has become such an expected extracurricular requirement to a lot of high school students that it has lost much of its meaning and value.

The idea of volunteering is for people to make time in their schedule to do stuff they enjoy and benefit the community.

But nowadays, many students look at volunteering and community service as a chore that stands between them and acceptance to a prestigious college — and that's not necessarily their fault.

Students who took the time to volunteer were driven by genuine passion for a certain cause. But when they received acknowledgement from colleges for volunteering, other realized that they could also volunteer to look just as good.

And as time went on and an increasing number of students began to catch onto the trend of volunteering, three distinct groups of people began to form: those who have figured out exactly what they want to volunteer for, those who want to contribute to the community but don't really know how, and finally, those who volunteer just to fulfill the necessary requirements.

Those in the first group of people know exactly what kind of volunteer work they want to do and have found a convenient place and time to do it. These people epitomize the ideal student volunteer, but they do not represent the majority of students.

Most students fall into either the second or third category. Since those in the third group don't feel any emotional connection

to the volunteer work, the primary problem of finding meaningful volunteering activities is for those in the second group.

Those in the second group want to make a meaningful impact in the world, but struggle to find out what that is exactly.

And due to the previous standards set by past generations of students, students in this second group feel pressured to do any sort of volunteering just to appear on the same level as the first group, even if they don't necessarily like what they are doing.

This eventually results in a vicious cycle: As current students continue to force volunteer hours onto their college applications because of the expectations set by previous students, future generations of students will continue to participate in volunteering opportunities just to stay on track. Consequently, it has become increasingly hard for colleges to differentiate students that genuinely care about volunteering from those who volunteer just to look good.

But what all students need to realize in general is that it's OK to try out certain volunteering opportunities a few times to see what interests them. If anything, that experience gives students a good idea of what not to volunteer for if they didn't like it.

Students should try to find something enjoyable and do it, regardless of what they think colleges want. In the end, all the extensive hours a student accumulates over the years are condensed into a single line on their college applications.

Volunteering pushes the idea of altruism and giving back to the community, but when people think selfishly about colleges, they undermine the entire purpose of it.

So instead of adopting a quantity over quality mindset regarding volunteering, students need to realize that they should be volunteering for their own sake and benefits — not for college applications. ♦

# MINIMALISM:

A trend in sculpture and painting that arose in the 1950s and used simple, typically massive, forms.

Recently, I cleaned up my mess of a desk and found myself tossing out mountains of scratch paper, miscellaneous old toys and several very worn out books.

While many of the items I threw out had some sentimental value to me, I realized that, in the long run, a lot of it was unnecessary junk that just took up space in my room.

And there lies the fundamental reason for minimalism: Clutter adds to the distractions in your life and reduces the overall quality of living.

It seems that people over dramatize this idea, thinking that in order to be considered a minimalist, they must get rid of most of their personal belongings or maintain a budget of under \$100 per month.

All I'm suggesting is try to implement this philosophy in stages and see how it pans out.



Read the full versions of these stories on the Saratoga Falcon website.

- Justin Guo

I refuse to part with my electronic Star Wars battleship set, or my collection of seven TinTin books that I haven't read in three years, or my LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT 2.0 set. Why should I?

People often say that minimalism is the best policy, arguing that you shouldn't keep what you don't need. And I counter: There's no need to get rid of things that don't impact you negatively.

Everything has a purpose, regardless of whether you use it or not, and everything has the potential to be useful. If there is no harm in keeping something, even the smallest probability that it can help is worth it.

This principle does not only apply to physical things, like my collection of 17 Rubik's cubes that have been covered by a curtain for nearly two years now. On my phone, I never uninstall games until I run out of storage. Even in terms of my extracurricular interests, I like keeping my options open.

- Rohan Kumar

November 2, 2018

# Senior works as ski instructor

BY Anna Novoselov

A short 3-year-old girl dressed in black pants 10 sizes too big and four top layers, including a big poofy jacket and a bright rainbow vest, clung to senior Taylor Hill's legs with tears streaming down her face. Despite Hill's gentle nudging, "the little snowman" refused to put on her skis and join the other children on the magic carpet.

"I tried everything," said Hill, who works as a teacher's assistant at North Star's Kid's Ski and Snowboard School in Lake Tahoe. "I tried showing her how to put on her skis, play games with her, and go up the carpet with her, but she just wouldn't ski all day."

At the end of the day, she explained the situation to the child's parents and was relieved when they understood.

But, hill still dreaded coming back the next day because the girl was a two-day student, and Hill "was really nervous that she wouldn't have a good time."

But then everything changed.

"She came back the next day and she was one of our best skiers," Hill said. "She was super enthusiastic and just wanted to be on the hill."

The instructors try to get the children used to the feeling of skis by throwing plastic dinosaurs around and having the children put them into a bin, all while wearing one ski. Whereas the little girl wouldn't even do this the previous day, she now cried because she wanted both skis on.

"It was like night and day — a complete change the second day,"

Hill said.

Hill said that the majority of her job revolves around dealing with crying 3-year-olds who are often scared of skiing and being away from home. Her responsibilities include helping out in the boot fitting room, transporting the children to and from the lesson area (ironically called "The Beach"), catching children at the bottom of the magic carpet, picking children up when they fall and cleaning up.

Two years ago, Hill took a lesson with an instructor at North Star. This instructor in turn recommended her for the job. She attended the North Star's Kid's Ski and Snowboard School as a child and enjoyed it, so she decided to take the opportunity.

Now, Hill works over holidays and any weekend that she can, although it is difficult to go to the ski resort often due to the long drive. While in Tahoe, Hill stays in her mom's one-bedroom condo, from which she walks to work.

So far, she had worked a total of two-three weeks and hopes to continue, earning her certificate and becoming a full instructor in January. As a TA, she earns minimum wage: \$10.50 an hour.

Although she does not ski as part of her job — in fact, skiing experience is not even necessary to apply — Hill said that she loves her job because she enjoys being with kids and teaching them the sport she loves. While the 3-year-olds can be difficult at times, she said that working with them has helped her gain patience.

"I learned to be more sympathetic towards others," Hill said. "The job impacted my life by giving me a valuable work experience as well as allowing me to become more self-confident." ♦

"One of my students didn't like art but his mother insisted on me teaching him. He would sit down for like five minutes and get up and do something else. One time he was so angry he flipped the entire table over and threw my phone across the room."

Hannah Chang (12)  
Art Teacher

More than 1 in every 4 high school students over the age of 16 work

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS

"I went into the back freezer to check if we had another cream flavor a customer wanted. When I was leaving I went to push open the door but it wouldn't budge. I then proceeded to lean with my whole body to try to open the door but it still wouldn't budge. I even tried kicking the door! Eventually I started knocking, and a coworker came to rescue me. And when she opened the door to let me out, I realized I had been pushing on the wrong side of the door."

Julia Hoffman (11)  
Ice Cream Shop Worker

# Bad Customer Experiences working at a tea shop

tang-erine



Amy Tang

It's 10:08 p.m. on a Friday. As I finish closing the cup sealing machine, a woman walks into the store, blatantly ignoring the "closed" sign outside, and makes a beeline to the counter asking for a honey peach green tea. When I politely inform her that we're closed, she responds with, "You can't just make one more drink?"

T4, located on Pollard Road in Los Gatos, closes at 10 p.m. on Fridays. I happen to work closing shifts often, because of after-school activities.

Customers don't always understand how the closing process works. At 10 p.m. sharp, we wash the shakers, clean the measuring cups, refill the syrups and powders, then seal the containers with honey and the cream powder that's used to make milk teas.

We then proceed to pour out the tea because we make fresh tea every morning before opening. By 10:05 p.m., depending on how fast the employees work, there is

about a 0.2 percent chance that we still have any tea left. So if it's 10:08 p.m. and I say we can't make tea, it doesn't mean that I'm too lazy to make another drink. I mean that we would have to wait 30 minutes for the tea machine to brew a new batch of tea, then we would have to turn the sugar machine back on, pour syrup, shake the drink, then reclean the shaker and refill the syrup.

After school shifts aren't any better. Some of these middle school kids are so rude. If you're going to be loud, can you at least be polite?

When a 10-year-old customer asked for an order of Asian popcorn chicken, I asked him if he meant "basil popcorn chicken" because there's no Asian chicken on the menu. He then proceeded to tell me that we did in fact have Asian chicken, and when I told him no once again, he giggled and said, "Well, you should then, because you're Asian."

Also, some people have the audacity to order a cup of only boba. That's it. Just a full cup of pure boba. If you do that, I will charge you for 10 boba add ons, which is \$5 instead of the \$3.50 it costs for a normal drink.

What actually might be worse are people who order water with toppings. Honestly, what possessed you to come over to T4 and order a cup of water with boba?

Working part time at T4 has exposed me to an entirely new world, where rude customers and interesting concoctions will never stop. Despite the downfalls, I love working part time because of people I've met who have become my close friends. ♦

# My Part Time JOB

Students share their working experiences



# Freshman teaches Chinese instrument

BY JunLee

Freshman Selina Chen exits her parent's car in the parking lot and walks into the Cupertino Sunflower Learning Center. She prepares for her class, checks attendance for her eight students and says, "Dajia-hao. Kaishiba" (Hello, Let's start).

Unlike students in high school who go to after-school programs to learn a subject, Chen teaches a class. In particular, she teaches young children to play the guzheng, or the Chinese zither, a traditional string instrument.

What makes her qualified to teach the subject? For one thing, she lived in China for 11 years, and she has been playing the zither since she was 6. Additionally, being fluent in Chinese, Chen is able to speak to her students in the language and reinforce language skills their parents want them to learn.

Chen teaches her class twice a week: eight students are in her first class and seven students are in her second class, ranging from kindergarten to second grade and third to fifth grade.

According to Chen, her two classes are exactly the opposite; while the first is boisterous, the second class is much quieter and reserved.

With her first class, she has had to use her improv skills to rope them back on track. Her classes are divided into two 30-minute sessions, with a break in between.

"To play Chinese Zither you have to tape plectrums onto your fingers," she said. "I call these plectrums 'fingernails' in Chinese. I assign each student a number to match their plectrum. After class, one day, my student asked her father, 'Is your fingernail number 2?'"

Her father was extremely confused. After a long time he finally figured out that she was talking about plectrums."

Chen plans to donate the money that she earns from her teaching to the school's LEO club, which is a youth volunteer and service club sponsored by International Lions; it encourages members to come up with ideas and create projects they are passionate about. As secretary, Chen wanted to do her best to support the newly formed club.

Unlike most students who have jobs, Chen is relatively young; only 14. But she believes that her age shouldn't discourage learning centers from hiring her.

"During the interview, the principal of the center asked me if I was a junior or senior, and they were very surprised when I answered freshman. After the interview, I was asked to do a demo class, and I did really well on that," Chen said.

According to Chen, one benefit of working during freshman year is that she doesn't have as much school work to worry about compared to upperclassmen.

"Being young doesn't mean I can shy away from the responsibilities of a teaching job. The standard age of working might be reasonable. However, once I proved to officers that I can perform well on teaching zither, the age wasn't a problem anymore," Chen said. ♦



BRUCE MUNRO AT MONTALVO: "STORIES IN LIGHT"

by Eileen Bui & Colleen Feng

Bruce Munro is a UK based artist who focuses on large scale light exhibitions. He has opened exhibitions all over the world, but his most recent showcase is open at the Montalvo Arts Center from Oct. 28 through Mar. 17. Munro uses multiple light techniques, one being fiber optics, which is light passing through glass fibers, to create his artwork. The exhibition is called "Stories in Light," because of the many pieces inspired by the Chronicles of Narnia.



SILVER SEA 9.5/10



BACCHUS SPRING 9.3/10



RAMANDU'S TABLE 9/10

Silver Sea pays respect to another C.S. Lewis book: "The Voyage of the Dawn Treader." Munro uses 6,250 glass spheres arranged in the shape of 25 lilies to recreate the scene in which King Caspian sails into a sea of lilies. Multicolored fiber optics inside the spheres cause them to shift from white to various shades of blue, resulting in the lawn resembling an ocean. This installation takes up the main lawn in front of the villa and is largest of the 10; however, visitors can only walk around the lawn, not among the lilies. Overall, this exhibit is very appealing due to its grand scale and mesmerizing lights.

Munro chose the fountain at the center of Montalvo's Italianate garden to create this piece. Inspired by "Prince Caspian" by C.S. Lewis, the installation is a celebration of Bacchus, the Roman god of wine. Munro used 90 plastic bottles, fiber optics and a projector to create an unending fountain of wine.

This piece automatically captured our attention as it was the brightest exhibit, placed in the center. We really liked how Munro utilized recycled soda bottles as an eco-friendly option, and manipulated glowing fibers to look like the flow of a fountain.

One thousand plastic lawn flamingos stand hunched on the Charmaine Garden Terrace of Montalvo's facility. Lights above the birds shift serenely from red to orange to yellow, mimicking the shift from dusk to dawn. For this exhibit, Munro was inspired by a pink lawn flamingo his father brought him from the United States. The exhibit is also a homage to C.S. Lewis' "The Voyage of the Dawn Treader," in which a flock of white birds swoop down to eat a feast on Ramandu's Table. This exhibit is highly engaging due to the uniqueness of the flamingos. It makes for a great photo opportunity. ♦

FALCON // EILEEN BUI AND COLLEEN FENG

TICKET PRICES:  
\$25 Adults  
\$18 Seniors  
Montalvo members:  
\$5 discount

#WhyIDidntReport

GRAPHIC BY EMILIE ZHOU

DR. CHRISTINE BLASEY FORD AND ONLINE MOVEMENTS: HOW A HASHTAG CAN GIVE ASSAULT VICTIMS A VOICE

by Sofia Jones

"I have no doubt that, if the attack on Dr. Ford was as bad as she says, charges would have been immediately filed with local Law Enforcement Authorities. I ask that she bring those filings forward so that we can learn date, time, and place!"

This was tweeted by President Donald Trump in response to the sexual assault allegations made against now Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh by Dr. Christine Blasey Ford. Ford claimed that Kavanaugh attempted to rape her in high school, but Trump stated that the amount of time elapsed between the alleged incident and the time reported was an indicator that Ford's statements were exaggerated or fabricated.

Many people, however, understood

Ford's decision to wait 37 years before making the allegations. Victims who report their assailants are heavily scrutinized and are often assigned blame for being assaulted.

In response to Trump's opinion, thousands of people brought forth their personal stories, using the hashtag #WhyIDidntReport, to share their own experiences with sexual harassment or assault, and what kept them from reporting the incidents.

Actress Lili Reinhart revealed that a man of power took advantage of her, and tweeted that she did not report "because I didn't want to lose my job or make people think I was a drama queen. #WhyIDidntReport."

There were many reasons victims stayed silent. Some needed time to process trauma, some worried about being accused of lying and some were not even aware that what

they had experienced was actually assault.

For ages, there has been a stigma around sexual assault. False claims are rare — between 2 and 7 percent, according to the American Psychology Association.

According to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, 2/3 of sexual assaults are not reported to the police. The fear of being put in the public eye can keep people quiet, regardless of the validity of their claims.

This was not the first hashtag revolving around sexual assault: Other notable hashtags such as #MeToo, #TimesUp and #WhyIStayed have been circulating for years. Through hashtags like these, victims tell their stories and provide rationale to dispute inevitable victim-shaming.

These hashtags have provided people with an outlet for their feelings, and they

have united people globally as serious issues are brought to light. Some believe hashtags are paving the way to real change; others think that internet discussion does nothing proactive to battle the issue of sexual assault, if it is not followed by major action.

In reality, these hashtags are already starting to change toxic rape culture. By giving victims a way to share their experiences, there is less stigma around reporting their abuse. Fewer and fewer people have to fear being antagonized as a result of speaking up.

Something as simple as a hashtag has proved powerful enough to provide people with the confidence to share their stories. Slowly but surely, people are realizing they are not alone in their struggles, and that they have a community to turn to in a time of need. ♦

Arts and culture clubs draw fewer members than academic clubs but still reflect genuine interest

by Kaitlyn Wang

Two years ago, the Creative Writing Club died out because of low membership.

Similar cases have occurred when attendance at club meetings dwindles or senior officers fail to pass on their club at the end of the year. Besides Creative Writing Club, other arts and culture clubs such as Ukulele Club, Ecoart Club and Urban Dance Club no longer exist.

While academic clubs explore broad subjects, arts and cultural clubs often cater to more niche interests. But the likelihood of fewer members does not necessarily mean that club commissioners hesitate to approve arts and culture clubs.

"What we're looking for the most is true passion among the officers, and we tend to see that more in arts and culture clubs," senior club commissioner Samyu Iyer said. "They found a group that shares an interest and that's what we love to see."

Iyer sees academic clubs as often "more college application fodder than anything

else," which shows during the club application process.

A slight majority of this year's clubs are academic clubs. According to the ASB website, there are 14 academic clubs, nine service clubs and 10 arts and culture clubs. No matter what the club's mission is, however, as long as the officers "truly care about what they're doing," it is all right if the club has low membership, Iyer said.

"I love it when more unique interests are brought to the school," Iyer said. "If it benefits a group of students, regardless of how small or how big, we want that."

But clubs that focus on specific interests may experience an on-and-off existence over the years as interest fluctuates.

Because of its dwindling membership, Photography Club did not exist for two years before it was revived in 2017.

According to junior Ritika Kuppam, the Photography Club secretary, meetings consist of photography tutorials and photoshoots for students to practice techniques and tips they learn about in meetings.

Predicting that the club will have around 20 to 25 active members this year, Kuppam remains optimistic about the number of members Photography Club will retain.

Other clubs feel pressure to brainstorm ideas to attract more students.

Senior Nirav Adunuthula, who is starting the men's acapella group En Chord, recognizes that membership may be difficult because "it doesn't seem like you're going to get much out of the club unless you enjoy singing."

According to Adunuthula, the club provides chances for volunteer hours — caroling in the winter and performing in retirement homes in the spring — as well as recognition and positions.

Devoted to a specific interest, the club draws members who are already involved in singing on campus. Most of En Chord's members are in choir.

"Surprisingly, we had a couple of people join from outside of choir this year," Adunuthula said. "That's nice, and what we were hoping for."

While En Chord has a few members who are not in choir, Noteworthy, the women's acapella group on campus, recruited many students outside of choir on Club Day. For students who could not do choir this year because of schedule conflicts, the club is a great chance for them to still come sing, co-director Carolyn Ma said.

Compared to broad academic subjects, specific activities like photography and singing appeal to fewer students. While classes enter and leave the school, students in certain grades have stronger interests in some areas than others, so low membership in a club might not necessarily indicate a decline in appreciation for arts and culture.

But the small size of arts and culture clubs could reflect an emphasis on academics, especially STEM subjects, at SHS.

"I definitely feel like math club and science club get more popularity," Kuppam said. "However, clubs like ours are gaining popularity steadily too, as the school does have incredible arts facilities that help kindle students' passions for creativity." ♦



'A Star is Born' remake exceeds expectations

by Kaylene Morrison & Emilie Zhou

When we first watched the trailer for "A Star is Born," we were excited that Lady Gaga was starring in the new film, but uncertain about whether Gaga would be able to portray her character convincingly.

But after watching the movie and almost being brought to tears, we were pleasantly surprised at how well executed the film was.

Despite being the fourth remake of the original 1937 "A Star is Born," the 2018 version exceeded expectations. The film earned \$95 million within the first 10 days of its release on Oct. 5 and has made approximately \$140 million worldwide.

The romantic drama, directed by Bradley Cooper, stars Cooper as Jackson Maine, an alcoholic country rock musician, and Lady Gaga as Ally, a talented but struggling musician.

The film follows their tragic love story and highlights some of the challenges and downsides of stardom.

The four variations of the movie all follow the same overall plot, but this remake of "A Star is Born" seems to address many of the problems found in the earlier versions.

For example, Cooper's and Gaga's characters demonstrate amazing chemistry, which was lacking in the 1976 film.

In addition, the

soundtrack has greatly contributed to the film's success. The film's soundtrack includes covers of well known songs as well as original songs sung by the characters.

Unlike the 1976 version, where the music was "awful" and "instantly forgettable," the songs sung by Gaga and Cooper were powerful, catchy and full of emotion. According to Vox, "Shallow," one of the songs written by Ally, is "almost certainly a shoo-in for Best Original Song at the 2019 Oscars."

Although Gaga is not widely known for her acting, the pop-singer's performance is impressive and realistic.

"I want to tell great stories that pull from real places inside of me, from real pain, from real emotion, from my real life," Gaga said in an interview with "Los Angeles Times."

Though Cooper directing is successful in fleshing out the character's personalities and flaws, he delved too far into the backstory of Jack. Instead of focusing on his main asset, Lady Gaga, he decided to focus on the retelling of the overdose story of the alcoholic.

Despite this, "A Star is Born" is undoubtedly the most down-to-earth remake of the original 1937 movie; the emotions portrayed by Gaga and Cooper's characters are complex and genuine and the plot is intricate and well-developed. ♦

Oscar-worthby music: A STAR IS BORN

1. "SHALLOW" Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper
2. "ALWAYS REMEMBER US THIS WAY" Lady Gaga
3. "I'LL NEVER LOVE AGAIN" Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper



'Halloween' is good for a classic scare

by Samantha Yee

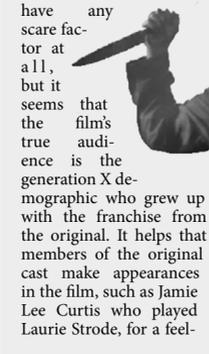
It's common to see several brutal murders in a horror movie for the shock factor, but as I watched the death count rise alarmingly quickly in the 2018 "Halloween" film, I began to question the necessity of the excessive murders. How many deaths could the series get away with without becoming overdone or cliché?

Mask-wearing psychopath Michael Myers commits an incredibly wide array of random murders around his hometown, although never succeeding in killing his sister, Laurie Strode, after 11 movies.

This year's remake chronicles Strode, 40 years after surviving Myers' last attack. When Myers inevitably escapes the mental institution, she's trained and ready to get rid of him for good.

"Halloween" is less terror-inducing and more a "fun" party movie (at least, for those that enjoy horror); it provides scenes to laugh at during comedic bits and moments to mock-scream at during the jumpscare and obligatory horror tropes.

It's not to say that the 2018 film isn't well-executed or didn't have any scare factor at all, but it seems that the film's true audience is the generation X demographic who grew up with the franchise from the original. It helps that members of the original cast make appearances in the film, such as Jamie Lee Curtis who played Laurie Strode, for a feel-



ing of nostalgia. There are also multiple references to the 1987 original that are welcome callbacks for any diehard fans.

On the other hand, those who have an appetite for more intellectual horror might find the 2018 "Halloween" overplayed. It had the potential to be a psychological movie that looks into the mind of the franchise's iconic killer.

Instead, it seemed as if the writers had a checklist of tropes they needed to use, alongside their counter for the exact number of deaths that should occur.

Such clichés include but are not limited to: deliberately panning away from gore, the unarmed teenager running through a forest at night and of course, the murderer surviving after being rammed by a car, locked in a burning house and shot in the head multiple times.

If you're looking for a psychologically compelling movie to watch while gripping the sides of your seat, you'll find "Halloween" doesn't have the right plot or shock factor.

But for horror fans who enjoy a "blast from the past" with better effects, this 2018 remake delivers. ♦



'The Hate U Give' moves audiences

by Neeti Badve & Nitya Marimuthu

"It's impossible to be unarmed when it's our blackness they fear!"

This line, spoken by lawyer and Black Lives Matter activist April Ofrah at the funeral of a murdered black teenager, is one of many memorable moments in the newly released movie "The Hate U Give." The movie debuted in local theaters on Oct. 19.

Inspired by Angie Thomas's award-winning novel of the same title, the movie highlights the issue of racially targeted police brutality.

After Starr Carter, the young black protagonist of the film, witnesses the murder of her unarmed childhood friend by a white officer, she is faced with the issue of speaking out against injustice and standing up for her community or keeping herself and her family safe by staying quiet.

"The Hate U Give" comes during a trying time in America, with continuous and building tensions between the Black Lives Matter movement and the justice system.

It addresses a wide range of current issues: from the socioeconomic loop that those at the bottom of the pyramid experience, to police violence.

As the movie opens, it's a bit like a cringy teen film, filled with casual pop culture references, cheesy lines and white people attempt-

ing to dance to rap music. At first, it seems to be stereotypical and overdone, with the characters appearing forced and rather flat.

This radically changes after the inciting incident, as the movie morphs into a poignant and raw story of the experiences of the black Americans who face injustice in our current societal system.

The combination of the complex characters and the powerful dialogue is carefully crafted to provide multiple perspectives to the complex issue of police brutality.

Filled with drama, comedy and a compelling storyline, "The Hate U Give" is a gripping film that goes to just the right extremes to express the corrupt system that many black individuals face.

"The Hate U Give" awakens viewers to the idea that corruption has no boundaries, and it will prey on the innocent, the weak and the young.

This point is driven home by the fact that even the youngest characters are aware of the anger and inequity around them.

For someone who is looking for a deep, honest movie that will provide entertainment while also leaving the viewer with a lot to consider, we highly recommend "The Hate U Give." Be prepared to embark on a journey filled with sudden action, tears and heart-wrenching moments. ♦

"It's impossible to be unarmed when it's our blackness they fear!" -author Angie Thomas

## A theater for all: McAfee rentals encourage community enrichment

BY ConnieLiang

Sitting on the outskirts of the campus, the McAfee Performing Arts and Lecture Center lies dormant during most school days, only used by large gatherings of the student body on select occasions such as course selection presentations.

It is during the afternoons and evenings, however, that the building tends to come alive. Brimming with community members gathering eagerly in the packed hallways, the 569-seat McAfee Theater regularly hosts performances and seminars for a long list of organizations — providing art and cultural enrichment one rental at a time.

Flanked on both sides by restrooms, the McAfee's main entrance opens into the front lobby, featuring a concession stand and a control booth right behind. Inside the double doors, the sloped steps and seats lead to the orchestra pit and then the stage itself. Farther back, behind the stage, a hallway runs between two dressing rooms, a green room and two exits.

**In fact, the McAfee has proved immensely popular with organizations looking for an affordable yet high-quality venue.**

School faculty and community members dreamed of a cutting-edge theater in the years before the McAfee's 2006 opening. The previous theater, which is now known as the ThermoDrama Center, had outgrown its space in the building that also houses the cafeteria. "It had been a long time discussion of how to find the funding and all the things that go into building a new center," said Benjamin Brotzman, who serves as coordinator for the McAfee.

The McAfee opened after the family of Eric McAfee, a local entrepreneur and venture capitalist, contributed a final chunk of \$1 million. The rest of the fund-

ing came from a Measure B bond passed in 1998 and from donations made by over 1,200 families — some of whom are honored with engravings on seat armrests. The final project cost around \$8.6 million.

Initially, the theater catered mostly to students, specifically those involved in the music and drama programs. However, it wasn't long before the community caught on to the possibilities of a modern auditorium and a newly emerged interest in rentals took ground.

"People from all over the Bay Area want to use the space because it's a good location, somewhat central to a lot of different areas and a good price structure based on similar theaters," Brotzman said. "And people just really like working here."

This certainly was the case with Usha Srinivasan, mother of sophomore Urmila Vudali and founder and president of the non-profit Sangram Arts. In early October, Srinivasan coordinated the Saratoga Mosaic event, a dance performance featuring traditional dances ranging from the Chinese Fan dance to the Indian Ghoomar to the Mexican Folklorico.

Srinivasan thinks the local demographic reality of immigrant minorities coming here often results in certain ethnic groups clustering together to form "cultural silos."

"It's natural but it's not optimal because it represents a missed opportunity for us to mingle and enjoy the rich diversity that's only possible in a place like America," Srinivasan said.

She hopes that events like the Saratoga Mosaic can unite people of different backgrounds under one multi-cultural performance. In a small town like Saratoga, where the high school forms the heart of the community, the McAfee is the optimal place to do just that, Srinivasan said.

"We're using the art as a way to break down those silos and allow people to come together in a very non-threatening, enjoyable way," Srinivasan said.

Srinivasan isn't the only renter to have found that the McAfee perfectly suits their needs. Among others, the theater has hosted famous artists like the pianist Lang Lang, professionals like DreamWorks animator and story artist Rob Koo.



Courtesy of PRASANNA NARAYANAN

**Sangram Arts hosted an intercultural show on Oct. 5 at the McAfee Performing Arts Center. Senior Annie Xu along with junior Liza Ovsiannikov, freshman Taisia Ovsiannikov and students from Cupertino High School and The King's Academy performed a dance called Superstars, which is based on the theme of the popularity of supermodels.**

On a lesser-known scale, the Saratoga Symphony, Saratoga Community Band, San Jose Wind Symphony and Steinway Society of the Bay Area are all local music organizations that regularly utilize the facility — and for a good reason, as online reviewers have pointed out.

The McAfee, which has its own Google Reviews page, has amassed an average 4.7 star rating from a total of 67 reviews, many of which praise the audio and lighting team and state-of-the-art maintenance.

Google local guide Patricia Hendricks commented that the McAfee Center embodied "a very nice, intimate performance and art center with excellent acoustics" while fellow Google guide Robert George said that the theater "makes [him] want to come back for other performances."

In fact, the McAfee has proved immensely popular with organizations looking for an affordable yet high-quality venue: it's either rented out or used by the school almost every Saturday and Sunday of the year, resulting in Brotzman rarely taking "weekends on the weekend."

"We're just so full," Brotzman said. "I've rented the whole space already for the year and I've probably turned down 10 to 15 groups because there are no available dates."

The rental procedure consists mostly of check transactions and paperwork. After an initial deposit of \$500, organizations are required to submit a \$42 application fee, a completed Facility Use Application, a signed McAfee Center House Policies Agreement and a copied General Liability Insurance document. Hourly rental rates range from \$200 for nonprofit organizations to \$250 for those of for profit.

Brotzman believes, ultimately, that it's the theater's top-notch equipment and spirit of community that compels organizations looking for a venue to return again and again to the McAfee.

"I think the McAfee is crucial in that we have a fantastic place to see our youth creating and performing their art," Brotzman said. "Art brings people together and the youth brings families and friends together, and I think that a mixture of those two make the McAfee really important." ♦

## Hydration stations reduce plastic water bottle use

BY KayleneMorrison & KaitlynWang

Periodically throughout the school day, students and teachers slip in and out of the Journalism Room to fill their water bottles. As of Oct. 23, the hydration station has "saved" almost 8,000 plastic water bottles.

The school's hydration stations are located in the Journalism Room, the cafeteria, the park in front of the swimming pool, the McAfee Center, the weight room and the gym lobby, as well as outside of the music building and at the sports plaza and softball field. The installation of hydration stations throughout campus has encouraged students to drink more water and bring their own reusable bottles.

"There's lots of hydration stations going in around because we know our students use them," principal Paul Robinson said. "We know it's better for students."

He also said that the regular water fountains around campus provide filtered water but that the hydration stations make refilling water bottles much easier.

The school often installs hydration stations when construction or renovation occurs, he said, such as the construction of the music building last year.

The new student center in the 800 wing will also include a hydration station, and the school might include another in the 900 wing when it renovates the robotics room and builds a new classroom, Robinson said.

**"[Hydration stations are] probably saving a lot of money, and a lot of people don't recycle the plastic water bottles that we buy at school."**

JUNIOR Nikita Pawar

Water from the drinking fountain in the 900 wing is currently not filtered, so the water has been shut off. Once the school modernizes the building, water will be made available.

The hydration stations usually cost anywhere from around \$2,500 to \$3,500, maintenance and facilities director Brian Moran said. Filters, which are replaced twice a year, cost around \$75.

Because of the high cost, junior Nikita Pawar doesn't think additional hydration stations are necessary.

"I feel like we don't need more, but I think it's good to have them, maybe at least two," Pawar said. "It's probably saving a lot of money, and a lot of people don't recycle the plastic water bottles that we buy at school."

While the stations are expensive, parent donations have funded the installation of a few, including the ones in the McAfee Center and Journalism Room.

"What's interesting is once we started to do some of these with construction projects, people want it more," assistant principal Brian Thompson said. "The Journalism Room one was funded by PTSO. That was a special project that was put in based on the journalism kids wanting one for that area of campus."

While all of the water fountains and hydration stations have some type of filter, the newer ones have more "industrialized filters," such as the hydration station that will be installed in the 800 wing. As hydration stations increase the convenience of fill-

ing water bottles, they encourage students to bring their own reusable water bottles.

"I would think that with the bottle fillers that are available, students probably use them to fill up their water bottles instead of buying a bottle of water," Moran said.

Pawar used to buy plastic bottles of water from the cafeteria, but she now brings a Hydroflask to school instead.

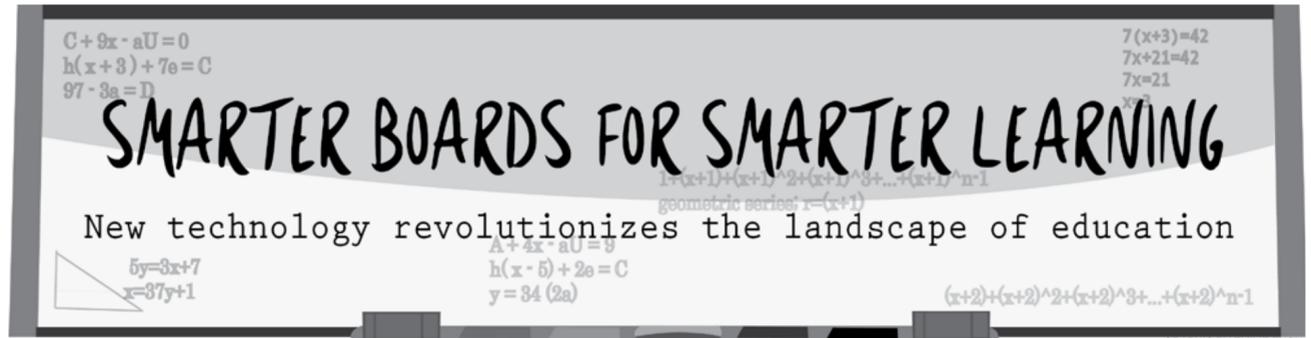
"I realized that I probably spent at least \$20 just buying water bottles last year and then not reusing them," Pawar said. "Once I had my Hydroflask it's been a lot easier to fill it up because of the stations."

Thompson agrees that hydration stations not only encourage students to bring reusable water bottles, but also help people remember the importance of drinking water.

"I think that because of the hydration stations, students are less inclined to use plastic water bottles and more have started using hydration flasks around campus," Thompson said. "I see kids not only during the school day but after school during sporting events going to certain stations and filling up their water and just being more conscious about staying hydrated." ♦



GRAPHIC BY ELIENNE PEU



GRAPHIC BY EMILIE ZHOU

BY EdwinChen & AariaThomas

In World History teacher, Melissa Hesselgrave's classroom, students sit grouped together peering intently at Chromebooks. The sounds of students' voices is matched by keyboards clacking. Students work together, jumping from documents to graphic organizers, typing their answers to questions about the French Revolution and watching the page count grow.

Some students are noticing a big change in their classrooms this year. The curriculum is the same. The teachers are the same. But the way they learn has been revolutionized by new technology being added into classrooms.

Student learning has changed dramatically from what it was a few years ago. Computer carts are becoming a more frequent sight around campus and smart boards and short throw projectors are popping up in many classrooms. Teachers find that using these devices can have an enormous benefit in students' learning.

Hesselgrave currently uses Chromebooks and Google Drive in her classes to share documents.

"It has been a good way to share a lot of text and documents," Hesselgrave said. "Students aren't given a stack of papers, which I think can seem really daunting. It used to be like 'here are all these documents that now I have to work with and annotate.'"

So far the transition from paper to online is going well. Many students are responding positively to the new format.

"Adding tech like Chromebooks to our classrooms has really changed the way I learn," sophomore Andrew Xiao said. "Now, I carry fewer binders, making my load less. I can access my homework on the go."

Integrating technology into classrooms doesn't just help the students, it helps teachers with their lessons as well. For Hesselgrave, it has made teaching her classes easier.

She said that making graphic organizers online allows her to make last-minute edits without reprinting dozens of worksheets.

Other teachers are incorporating technology into their classes and lessons in other ways to facilitate teaching. Many departments throughout the school use different types of smart boards to teach their lectures.

Math teacher Kelly Frangieh uses an interactive whiteboard and uses e-beam to write on it. E-beam is an attachment that turns the board into an interactive surface that she can write on with a special pen.

This is her second year using this new board and she finds it preferable to her older smartboard that didn't work well with the class.

"There's a lot of cool tools in the software that I like to use," Frangieh said. "I can make lines and squares and highlight, things like that. And then I just really like to be able to save what I do, so that students can access it on Canvas."

The e-Beam technology was originally recommended to teachers by math teacher PJ Yim.

Yim said that a close acquaintance who worked for SMART, the company that makes the smart boards gave him a sample a couple of years ago. Once he had the time, Yim, with the help of now retired teacher Debra Troxell, gave the smart board a try. Though he was doubtful of the new board, he soon learned and enjoyed its benefits.

**"Learning how to type quickly, to take notes on laptops, to do shared graphic organizers and to send professional emails is really useful."**

TEACHER Melissa Hesselgrave

However, there are downsides that come with new technology.

"I see kids playing games on computers and stuff," Xiao said. "I mean, it's pretty abusive of all this new stuff, but that's kind of inevitable."

Despite this, teachers still think incorporating technology into classroom is important for students' futures.

"It's a skill set that all students should learn to be familiar with and comfortable with because it happens a lot in college and it will happen in your future workplaces

too," Hesselgrave said. "Learning how to type quickly, to take notes on laptops, to do shared graphic organizers and to send professional emails is really useful."

To help students accomplish these goals, the administration is working on improving the technology already on campus, and incorporating more into classrooms, such as TVs and speakers for classes that depend on videos to teach.

Principal Paul Robinson said some classrooms are very up to date with technology and some aren't. The ones that aren't will be "refreshed and redone." Assistant principal Brian Thompson is collaborating with new tech groups from the district in projects for updating classrooms.

"This has been an ongoing technology project for the last couple of years," Thompson said. "Some have televisions and sound; other classrooms have the interactive system with a short-throw projector. Some teachers didn't want interactivity so they just have a short-throw projector system."

About half of the teachers' classrooms on campus are involved in the project, and many teachers are open to integrating more technology into their schoolwork.

According to Robinson, teachers are requesting to add technology like Chromebook carts or smart boards into their classes.

Some teachers are also using tech beyond the typical Chromebooks and built-in speakers that the school typically offers. Chinese teacher Mariam Fan is using Google Cardboard to teach her AP students about Chinese tourist destinations.

"It gave students the chance, especially students who did not have chance to go [to the tourist destination], to feel visually that they've gone to that place," Fan said.

AP Chinese student senior Kyle Yu found that Google Cardboard allowed him to see "what it's like to be in that tourist destination."

Technology is an effective tool to use in any field. When it is applied to education, it can help increase students' understanding of certain topics.

"I've got the best teaching staff I've ever had in my life," said Robinson, who has been a teacher and administrator for more than three decades. "And once we get them working with even better technology, the sky's the limit." ♦

### MEET THE DEVICES

How Technology is Used at School



#### Chromebook

Inexpensive computer that allows students to access useful applications and collaborate.

COST: \$300



#### eBeam

Attachment that turns a board into an interactive surface and comes with many convenient tools.

COST: \$500



#### Google Cardboard

Virtual reality head set that uses students' phones to visualize concepts and locations in 3D.

COST: \$15

GRAPHIC BY ROHAN KUMAR

## Green team continues environmental work

BY AngelinaChen & SamanthaYee

Throughout the year, the fruits of up to 140 Green Team members' efforts can be seen on campus — whether that be the labeled waste bins or school events like Earth Week — but it's not so obvious how much time goes into planning and executing these projects.

Led by senior club president Annie Xu, the Green Team has been working to bring awareness to protecting the environment. The club helped start many beneficial projects for the school, organizing the addition of recycling bins to every classroom, and recently proposing the installation of solar panels on campus to the school board.

The Green Team has consistently been pushing for various long-term conservation projects to enforce environmental conservation culture at school.

The club members are taking bigger steps to accomplish older projects that have been gradually coming into fruition.

One of the biggest projects in the works is the addition of solar panels on campus. This concept has been in consideration for about 10 years in the Los Gatos Saratoga Union district. According to Green Team co-president sophomore Winston Liu, if the necessary steps are taken, implementation should take only about four to five years.

The project was originally pushed back because of concerns with the aesthetics of solar panels in the parking lot. This year, the

club plans to put together a petition to see the new approval rate of the idea, and further the project. They are also working with the Los Gatos conservation club to garner resident, student, teacher and parent opinions.

"Basically, the gist is that we are really looking for support from the community to get this on board, because it has failed so many times," Xu said.

Other concerns are the cost of the project, but according to club treasurer sophomore Riya Jain, the money saved on energy and electricity would outweigh the cost of buying the solar panels.

Another one of the Green Team's oldest projects has been promoting a better recycling culture at school. They have been working on the problem for

around two years with a lackluster response.

Last year, they ensured that every classroom had a recycling bin after finding out that about a third of the classrooms didn't. Now, they're working with teachers again, giving them stickers to "lead the students the way in this culture of recycling," Xu said.

"We had posters up all over campus and scratch paper to try to get people to say, 'hey look, do you see those grey bins; I know they're grey, but they're recycling' and other tips on recycling," Xu said.

Another project the Green Team put into motion was the vertical garden by the science building, built last year by graduates Ayush Gupta and Anthony Ding. Their goal was to prove that urban gardening was possible in order to

decrease the land use for agriculture.

Working with previous Agricultural Club presidents and engineering and design teacher Audrey Warmuth, they were able to effectively plan the project, to prove that urban gardening was really attainable.

Last year, the Green Team carried out Earth Week from April 16 to 20, and it won't be any different this year.

According to co-media team officer junior Risa Carter, club members and officers worked hard during meetings to plan last year's Earth Week activities.

"We really want to make sure people are having a conservative environmental effort in making sure that they are doing things 'green friendly,'" Carter said. ♦

# THE MEDICAL FILES

SARATOGANS RECOUNT STAGES OF JOURNEY TO DOCTORHOOD

## SABRINA CHEN: STUDENT

"Three days, one five-hour flight, two more 8 a.m.-5 p.m. interviews and one stress test later, I was exhausted," Chen wrote on Oct. 9 on her blog, The Meaning of Meraki.

Having graduated from Johns Hopkins University last spring, Chen is now taking a gap year to complete her medical school interview process and continue doing research. (She finished her undergraduate studies one year early.)

Despite pre-med's reputation for being cutthroat and competitive, Chen found her experience at Hopkins to be satisfying and educational without being overly difficult.

She found that her greatest academic hurdle was not her classes but rather the MCAT, a standardized test covering topics ranging from physics to sociology and biology that is obligatory for medical school applicants.

"The MCAT was a huge beast of a test," Chen said, noting that the popular assumption concerning the MCAT's difficulty is correct. "Up until I started preparing, I was unaware that the test was 7.5 hours long and would take me 800 hours to prepare for."

Chen spent her undergraduate years majoring in Molecular Biology, Cellular Biology and Neuroscience while doing research and volunteering at clinics at and around Johns Hopkins.

In one opportunity, Chen worked for over two years in a clinical electrophysiology lab, using electrodes attached to the scalp to measure the brain waves of children with autism.

"It seemed like science fiction to me, being able to understand things about the brain without surgically cutting into it," Chen said.

Chen said she decided to become a doctor when she was a middle schooler after she witnessed the death of a relative suffering from terminal pancreatic cancer.

When Chen was 11, her 23-year-old cousin Adam was diagnosed with end-stage pancreatic cancer. Opting out of surgery and chemotherapy, Adam and his family turned to a traditional Chinese medicine doctor who promised to cure him with an herb drink two times a day with no painkiller.

"My grief turned into fury on the morning that Adam passed," Chen said. "The doctor had lied, and Adam's pain had amounted to nothing."

Chen decided that she would become a doctor who is 'attentive, analytical and grounded in evidence.'

After taking a visual systems class through her neuroscience major, she is leaning in the direction of becoming a physician specializing in ophthalmology, the study of medical and surgical eye disease.

At the moment, Chen is traveling around the country to interview at different medical schools. When she returns, she will be working in an ophthalmology office in San Jose as a medical and research assistant and decide on a medical school by April 30.

Even with a decade of studies and residency ahead of her, Chen is excited about the path she is on.

"In graduate school, I intend to continue participating in research and community health volunteer programs," Chen said. "I've learned the significance of sympathizing with patients' narratives and interacting with patients rather than the illness. I've fallen in love with my specialty."

Morrison found his first two years of medical school at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine to be competitive and daunting.

Through medical board exams, rotations and sub-internships, Morrison caught a glimpse of the demands of his profession ahead, waking up at 5:30 a.m. to go to the clinic only to stay until midnight, or being on call overnight with too much responsibility in his hands.

Although Morrison is excited to become a doctor, he is also aware of the challenges ahead. "The amount of lucidity experienced can vary greatly from person to person, according to psychology teacher Hana Chen. She

said that some lucid dreamers are only able to shape basic elements in their dreams such as bits of conversation, while others have full control over their lucid dreams.

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For Park, the main downside of lucid dreaming is that it sometimes results in a night of restless sleep.

"I like lucid dreaming because it's entertaining, but sometimes I feel like lucid dreaming is tiring because my brain is still conscious so it's not really resting," Park said. "After I lucid dream I get really tired, so when I wake up I still want to sleep."

According to an article in Psychology Today, in a study conducted by the University of Adelaide, participants repeated a mantra each night — "the next time I am dreaming, I will remember that I am dreaming" — before sleeping. Participants who fell asleep within five minutes experienced an 86.2 percent increase in the frequency of lucid dreaming.

Not surprisingly, the internet abounds with advice on how to experience lucid dreaming, including websites and videos, some with more than 3 million views.

Since dreams themselves are hard to find a reason for, lucid dreams are as equally shrouded in mystery.

The self-reporting aspect of dreaming tends to make studying it unscientific, Chen said.

"Dreaming is super hard to measure because you could wake up and be like 'I had a dream about unicorns!' and I don't really know if you did or you didn't," she said.

One theory is that lucid dreaming could be advantageous if dreams are a practice



Sabrina Chen (left) with fellow co-president of the Hopkin's Women's Pre-Health Leadership Society at an annual conference featuring guest speakers, round table discussions with doctors, network opportunities and more.

Being a doctor requires not only dedication but a decade-long process of intense education, internship and practice.

A high school graduate on the medical track faces three or four years in undergraduate work, the MCAT test and an extremely selective medical school application process. The process is so difficult that only 20 percent of college pre-med students actually become doctors, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

After entering medical school, students undergo four grueling years of labs, lectures and exams. For the last two years, students do clinical rotations, leading to the final phase of residency. In their residency, students work 80 hour weeks, under the mentor of a physician, without pay and with only one day off per week. Only after three to five years are students allowed to graduate and begin work in the medical field.

Despite these challenges, the three Saratogans profiled here, Sabrina Chen (Class of 2015), Elisha Garg (Class of 2005) and Harry Morrison (an SHS parent) have all gone down this path. Each has found their studies and work not to be a burden but rather an enriching experience and opportunity.

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# LUCID DREAMING

STUDENTS SHAPE EXPERIENCES BEHIND CLOSED EYES

By Nitya Marimuthu & Kevin Sze

Freshman Su Min Park was in the middle of a water polo game when suddenly, a shark burst out of the water next to her, its jaws widening to devour her whole. The beast looked exactly like the one from the movie "Jaws," which Park had watched earlier that night. She concentrated, conjuring special powers to kill the shark. As Park was ripping the shark's jaw open, she awoke to her dad's voice calling out for her to wake up.

Park was experiencing a lucid dream — a state that only some people have regularly.

Lucid dreaming is generally understood to occur during Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep and is a phenomenon where people are aware they are dreaming. The abilities of lucid dreamers range from controlling basic elements inside their dreams — actions of themselves or others — all the way to shaping the whole plot of a dream.

In a 2004 study, German scientists attempted to grasp a better understanding of lucid dreams, determining that by the age of 19, as many as 51 percent of people had experienced a lucid dream, but the frequency decreased with age.

Very few studies have been able to qualify how many people regularly experience lucid dreams since lucid dreaming is hard to measure. An article in the Huffington Post claims that about 20 percent of people have lucid dreams at least once per month.

For her part, Park says she has lucid dreams almost every night.

Likewise, senior Raveena Rao says she has lucid dreams 60-70 percent of the time, but she can only control certain aspects like small details rather than the entire dream.

"People have this misconception that since you are able to control your dreams, you're always going to dream exactly what you want," Rao said. "But in my case I have a dream, and within that theme of the dream I'm able to alter what goes on within that dream. I'm usually not able to change the entire dream, just what actions or things happen in those dreams."

The amount of lucidity experienced can vary greatly from person to person, according to psychology teacher Hana Chen. She said that some lucid dreamers are only able to shape basic elements in their dreams such as bits of conversation, while others have full control over their lucid dreams.

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Chen said that some lucid dreamers are only able to shape basic elements in their dreams such as bits of conversation, while others have full control over their lucid dreams.

"Some people can say 'tonight I want to dream about xyz' and control the full plot of their dream from start to finish," Chen said.

Currently, explanations for the cause of lucid dreaming are almost purely theoretical. Chen said that lucid dreaming may be acquired or genetic, but to at least some extent, it seems to be a learnable skill.

**Stages of Sleep**

- Stage 1**
  - light sleep
  - drowsiness
  - regular breathing
- Stage 2**
  - deeper sleep
  - slower breathing
- Stages 3+4**
  - deep sleep
  - no eye or muscle movement
  - hard to wake up
- Stage 5**
  - REM: Rapid Eye Movement
  - dreams
  - irregular breathing

**CYCLE REPEATS EVERY 90-120 MINUTES**

SOURCES: National Sleep Foundation, ASA, NIH  
GRAPHIC BY KAITLYN WANG

## ELISHA GARG: RESIDENT

Starting her final year of residency at Stein Eye Institute at UCLA, Garg is getting close to starting her professional career as an ophthalmologist.

"I initially planned to go into something more researched based in health care, but after going to college, I really liked the long-term impacts as well as the short-term gratification from connecting with people that came with becoming a doctor," Garg said.

Throughout her first two years of medical school at UCLA in 2009, Garg attended classes similar to a high school schedule, with five days of scheduled courses. However, the material was always changing and led to long nights of studying and researching.

"Medical school is not an easy life," Garg said. "It is a very long road that requires very long commitment."

Her last two years of medical school consisted of clinical work six days a week. During this time, she worked scheduled shifts under attending physicians or residents of different medical branches and stayed until dismissed, essentially working an unpaid job.

Clinical rotations required long hours, comprising of many overnight shifts, and sometimes Garg

worked for virtually 24 to 30 hours straight.

Garg found that the best coping mechanism was to reframe it as an experience rather than a chore.

"Stress always trickles backwards, so no matter where you are, you are going to think that this is the most stressed you have ever been," Garg said. "It's important to take a step back, because as long as you work hard and enjoy what you do, there is no reason to be stressed."

Garg has found her experience with residency to be more rewarding than her time at medical school because she is able to work hands-on in her future branch of medicine.

Though Garg is not allowed to work more than 80 hours per week and is required to have an average of one day off each week, this can still mean that residents work two weeks straight before receiving their day off.

"A lot of times, my days off don't even fall on traditional weekends. They are odd days in the week, like a Tuesday or Wednesday, but it varies with the program," Garg said.

Nevertheless, Garg is pursuing what she loves and taking her time to live through it. As Garg prepares to finish her residency next summer, she continues to stay passionate and focused about medicine.

"In all fields, people are so focused on the destination and think, 'Once I achieve this goal, I will be happy,' but that's not how life works," Garg said. "Satisfaction, fulfillment and happiness come from going through the process."

Morrison also spends one or two days a week as a diagnostic radiologist, composing reports by deciphering x-rays.

After focusing on math and science at UC Berkeley, Morrison intended to become a research scientist; however, his mother pushed him to consider medical school.

She reminded him of how he took care of his partially paralyzed dog throughout high school and helped him realize his natural disposition toward being a nurturer.

"My mother said that the role of a physician would fit who I am," said Morrison. "Looking back, I think she was right."

## HARRY MORRISON: PROFESSIONAL

As an interventional radiologist, Harry Morrison, father of junior Kaylene Morrison, reviews x-rays and performs "keyhole" surgeries, named after their target and minimally invasive treatment. His typical day starts at 8 a.m. and ends at 6 p.m.

Often having to stay late every fifth day not knowing when his shift will be over, Morrison has an unpredictable schedule. Sometimes he has to go back to the hospital in the middle of the night.

Many students are excited to become doctors due to high pay or financial stability, but Morrison believes that this type of thinking is unhealthy.

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"My mother said that the role of a physician would fit who I am," said Morrison. "Looking back, I think she was right."



Courtesy of HARRY MORRISON

Although the work of a practicing physician is demanding, bettering the lives of others continues to motivate Morrison to put in the necessary hours.

"It does involve self-sacrifice, of putting the needs of others before your own, Morrison said. "You need to feel that changing someone's health outcome in a positive way is the most gratifying aspect of your job."

Many students are excited to become doctors due to high pay or financial stability, but Morrison believes that this type of thinking is unhealthy.

"The material and social standing rewards of being a physician are not sustaining in the long run," Morrison said. "If you think it is right for you, it is a job for which you will never have a doubt about the value of what you do."

# Review: Despite vital goals, book doesn't make a dent in college admissions mania

By Kaitlyn Tsai

After graduating from Stanford this past spring, 2014 Saratoga High alumnus Nikhil Goel and his roommate Sanjay Kannan published "Dreaming of Stanford: How to Rethink High School and the Pursuit of College." The book is a guide on how students should approach their goals and the college process, advice that Goel and Kannan developed through their personal experiences.

As a sophomore still on the outside of the college application process, I expected the book to be just another read on what students should do to achieve their Ivy-League dreams: become valedictorian, participate in prestigious competitions and summer camps and ace the SAT or ACT — or both.

Instead, the guide slapped me across the face with almost the exact opposite message, essentially preaching that college is not an end goal. To my surprise, the book still remained fairly realistic. Topped with sprinkles of millennial humor, it breaks down the college process, beginning with how to find a true passion, to setting goals and values, to the proper ways to approach school.

In the first chapter, Goel and Kannan establish that college begins "the second you stepped onto your high school campus."

While they agree that few high school students truly know what they want to do in the future, they claim that students should explore their passions during this time to figure this essential question out; thus, they proceeded to outline different ways to discover and develop such passions, depending on how clear each student is on his path in life.

While "Dreaming of Stanford" provides valuable advice and insights on the college process, such as "working smart is better than working hard" or "college is not an end goal," it would take far more than a 46-page guide to transform the mindsets of students.

Although I felt more hopeful and motivated to further develop my interests after reading the book, my instinctive response to phrases like "getting all A's is not a mark of success" was derision; after all, many of Goel and Kannan's messages directly challenge ide-

als that have been ingrained into students' brains. Students may read the book and feel uplifted, but reading the advice is different from believing in and following through with it.

Personally, I would not approach my goals too differently after reading this book, especially not by sacrificing precious studying time and my grades to explore my interests like Goel and Kannan suggest. I suspect most students would likely do the same.



# Winter Programs at Elite Prep

## SAT Winter Boot Camp

Elite's SAT Winter Boot Camp is an intensive preparation course help over six days during the December break, plus eight more weekends in January through March, leading up to the March 9 exam.

SAT Winter Boot Camp December 26-28 & January 2-4   6 days	SAT Winter Boot Camp Continuation January 12 - March 2   8 weekends
<b>Testing &amp; Class</b> 8:30am- 5:30pm	<b>TESTING:</b> Friday PM — 3:30, 4:00, 4:30pm OR Saturday AM — 8:30am-12:30pm <b>CLASS:</b> Saturday AM — 8:30am-12:30pm OR Saturday PM — 1:30pm-5:30pm

## ACT Winter Boot Camp

For students aiming for the February 9 ACT, Elite's ACT Winter Boot Camp offers rigorous preparation over two weeks during the December break, plus four more weekends in January and February, leading up to the February 9 exam.

ACT Winter Boot Camp December 26-28 & January 2-4   6 days	ACT Winter Boot Camp Continuation January 12 - February 2   4 weekends
<b>Testing &amp; Class</b> 9:00am- 5:30pm	<b>TESTING:</b> Friday PM — 3:30, 4:00, 4:30pm OR Saturday AM — 9:00am-12:45pm <b>CLASS:</b> Saturday PM — 1:30pm-5:30pm

### ELITE PREP CUPERTINO

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### FOOTBALL

# Winners of four straight, Falcons look to punch their ticket to CCS with victory tonight

BY Siva Sambasivam & Rahul Vadlankonda

After starting the season with a 1-4 record, plagued with injuries and careless mistakes by an inexperienced team, the football squad has regrouped and reeled off four straight wins. They most recently showed a dominating performance in their bye week, dismantling Los Altos on both sides of the ball and winning 54-27.

Because of this recent success, the Falcons are one win away from a CCS appearance — a victory at Lynbrook on Nov. 2 — which initially looked like a long shot after the first few weeks of the season, with half of the starters playing varsity for the first time.

With a victory at Lynbrook on Nov. 2, the Falcons will be able to return once again to the CCS playoffs, something quite impressive considering how far behind the Falcons started off and that for more than half of the starters on the team, this season is their first time playing varsity in their careers.

**“We know that every time we get the ball, we are going to score. So all we need is for our defense to get a couple stops, and we will win”**

QUARTERBACK Payton Stokes

Tack on the fact that Lynbrook is winless this entire season, and has only scored 27 points all year, it is looking extremely likely that the Falcons can turn their streak into a 5-game winner, while also continuing their momentum into their first few CCS playoff games.

“We have been developing really well, and executing our gameplan on the field over the past few weeks, and our morale and confidence has been sky-high,” junior wide receiver George Bian said. “If we are able to pull out a win at Lynbrook, we will have a ton of momentum going into CCS, and hopefully we can go really far.”

The team attributes its recent success to two main factors: first, getting all their players healthy and back on the field, which allows for players to stay rested during games, and second, the development and improved execution of such a young team, especially the defense's ability to carry out

big plays, according to junior wide receiver Tyler Prowse.

“Getting everyone back on the field and healthy, along with some of our other injured players has been a huge boost for us. We are able to have more bodies allowing us to stay rested during games,” junior wide receiver Tyler Prowse said.

Some players are still injured, including junior wide receiver Ryan Gilligan and senior tight end Peter Owens, but players like junior cornerback Chase Cheatem and junior defensive tackle Will Seifert have been able to return to the field.

With these players back, the team is able to implement some of their more complicated plays, especially on the defensive side, as more bodies allows for the coaches to call more versatile plays.

Additionally, even most of the healthy players were not at full strength, and were getting sore and tired quickly throughout the game, according to Stokes.

For these players, the bye week was instrumental in helping them feel rejuvenated, which aided in their game against Los Altos.

The Falcons' vast improvement on defense since the beginning of the year has also been key during this four game run, as it has not only alleviated pressure on the offense, but has also allowed the team to get out to comfortable leads early in games.

In the game against Los Altos, the defense wcame up with four turnovers throughout the game, including three interceptions. As a unit, they were able to effectively get stops on demand, allowing the offense a comfortable lead to keep scoring.

“We weren't really executing on defense at the beginning of the year, but now we understand the playbook much better, and our defense is able to make a ton of big plays and get turnovers like it did [against Los Altos],” said Prowse.

As for the offensive side, the team has been firing on all cylinders recently, putting up 55, 48 and 54 points over their last three games.

Junior quarterback Payton Stokes has continued to connect with his favorite receiver, Bian, who followed up his record setting 4 touchdown performance against Gunn with another terrific game, once again breaking his own record, with 10 catches for 209 yards, and 5 touchdowns.

According to Stokes, it's Bian's work ethic and ability to make quick in-game adjustments based on coverage that has allowed him to reach places that no Saratoga



Sophomore running back Tyler Chaffin-Price takes a handoff from quarterback Payton Stokes. The Falcons' high powered offense has scored 55, 48 and 54 points in their last three games.

High receiver has ever reached.

“Not only does George work out a lot and work super hard, but our chemistry together is amazing,” said Stokes. “If I notice something about the defense I tell him what I want him to change and where I want him to be, and he is always there on the next play.”

Because of some of the eye-popping numbers that the offense has put up during this winning streak, players are as confident as ever in their team's ability to put points on the board.

“We know that every time we get the ball, we are going to score,” joked Stokes. “So all we need is for our defense to get a couple stops and we will win.”

Although the competition in the most recent weeks has been relatively easy comparatively, players are not scared of facing some of the better teams that they lost to earlier in the season during the first few weeks of the CCS playoffs.

Back then, players were not well developed yet and the playbook has expanded a lot. They can throw new looks at those teams, and with the better overall play, Stokes believes they can definitely beat some of the teams they will likely face in the division.

“If we keep executing the way we are on offense recently, and keep follow the game plan, we can definitely beat some of those teams we lost to earlier in the year, and

hopefully win CCS,” he said.

Although they are able to pull out wins in commanding fashions over the past few weeks, some players still think that they need to tighten up some of their play to be able to continue winning when the difficulty of opposition ramps up in the playoffs.

For one, penalties have been quite out of hand for the Falcons recently, especially ones that occur after certain plays on the field.

For example, junior defensive end Tyler Ouchida got ejected from the game against Los Altos, and suspended for the next game because of an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty stemming from some of his trash talk on the field.

According to Bian, these penalties have been rampant for the past couple of weeks, and although they have not hurt the team as much because of the comfortable leads that the team has had, the penalties can prove extremely costly and detrimental against higher level opponents during a potential CCS run.

But as far ahead as players are looking, the team still needs to win today at Lynbrook to make CCS.

And if they are able to continue their impressive play from over the past couple games, they will no doubt be able to take care of the Vikings and bring a five game win-streak, and a ton of momentum, into the CCS playoffs. ♦

### GIRLS' WATER POLO

# Team prepares for CCS match against Santa Cruz

BY Colleen Feng

For the first time in the past four years, the girls' varsity water polo season will continue after league playoffs.

After achieving a 22-3 overall record and a second place finish in the league playoffs, the Falcons qualified for CCS. They will play their first game vs. Santa Cruz Nov. 3 at Lynbrook.

The team lost 5-4 to the Harker Eagles in the league championship match on Oct. 26, after beating them earlier in the season. Even with this loss to Harker, the girls were seeded first place after their dominant regular season, and head into their match against Santa Cruz with confidence.

Throughout the season, the players have endured many injuries and illnesses, but they were able to push through them and achieve their best overall record in 14 years.

The girls won their first game of the league playoffs in a 10-0 blowout over Cupertino on Oct. 23, and their second game

16-3 against Monta Vista on Oct. 24, just one day later.

At the end of conference play, the girls defeated Harker 2-0 on Oct. 18 and Cupertino 16-3 on Oct. 16.

They started their season 18-0. But they lost to both non-conference matches to Los Gatos 12-3 and Mountain View 13-5 during an Oct. 13 tournament.

Senior attacker and sprinter Maddie Stuart thinks the team has a great chance of making a deep playoff run, especially considering that they have won or come close to winning almost all the games they played this year.

Despite the loss in the league tournament, the Falcons still were able to achieve an undefeated league record of 13-0.

Coach Jerome Chung said the team has experienced many achievements compared to the teams of the past.

“By any standard the girls have enjoyed a great level of success and are looking forward to finishing strong,” Chung said. ♦



Junior Thalia Morganstern defends a shot against Harker during the Falcons' senior game on Oct. 18.

## GIRLS' GOLF

## Falcons cap off successful regular season with two wins

BY Shama Gupta &amp; Kevin Sze

With a league record of 7-3, the girls' golf team advanced to CCS after playing well at leagues, which was held on Oct. 24 at Santa Teresa Golf Club.

On Oct. 16, the Falcons won 218-232 at Los Gatos, and on Oct. 15, they won 206-226 against Lynbrook.

The girls were happy to finish their season with these two wins, sophomore No. 2 player Jane Loo said.

The team's match on Oct. 10 against Palo Alto was a 191-232 loss, their second loss against Palo Alto. Loo said that the girls struggled because they played from farther tees than usual. She said that though both teams were playing at longer tees, Palo Alto's team is skilled at hitting farther distances.

The previous match against Palo Alto on Oct. 8 resulted in a 198-214 loss.

The Falcons won their matches against Gunn 202-214 on Oct. 2, Los Gatos 214-237

on Oct. 1, Monta Vista 233-201 on Sept. 27 and Lynbrook 172-185 on Sept. 25.

The team said they felt satisfied with their previous performances because they worked hard all year.

**"Everyone is always happy and we're always looking forward to our next match."**

SENIOR Janelle Jin

"I think the season is going really well, and everyone is working very hard to improve in general," said senior captain Janelle Jin, the No. 1 player.

Along with the team victories, Jin ranked as the top player in the league, meaning she consistently had the lowest scoring average.

"I'm very honored," Jin said. "I never

thought I would be the top player since our league is relatively competitive."

Reflecting on their accomplishments, Loo pointed to having "depth in the team" with a multitude of good players, including freshman Savannah Lin, junior Sally Kim and senior Kristin Murakami. This differs from most other schools, where the team is carried by two or three highly skilled players.

The travel team, made up of six varsity-level players, is "very strong in general, giving [the team] a strong advantage," Loo said.

Loo added that their team bond is strong, which helps in their game. The team often likes to go out to watch movies and get food.

"Our whole team bonds very well. Everyone is always happy and we're always looking forward to our next match, where we try to beat our opponents again," Loo said.

The Falcons started CCS on Oct. 30, at Laguna Seca Golf Course in Monterey. ♦



TALISMAN/MARK GUIDRY

No. 1 player senior Janelle Jin at the La Rinconada Country Club on Oct. 16.

## GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

## Team loses first playoff match against El Camino

BY JunLee &amp; OliverYe

As she noticed a tip from the opposing team, El Camino, junior libero Lauren Hansen immediately dived forward, making a skillful save and barely getting the ball up. Moving smoothly, junior setter Gabby Mandu immediately jumped up and set the ball perfectly to outside hitter Katie Hulme. Hulme, the team's captain, leaped up into the air and smashed the ball cleanly over the blockers and into the ground. The crowd roared.

This smooth yet powerful play was the result of the time and effort the team put in during the year.

During the Division III playoff game against El Camino at home on Oct. 27, the girls struggled during the first and second sets, losing 25-22 and 25-19, but clawed back and won the next two sets 25-21 and 25-17. They dropped the final set 15-11, ending their season.

Despite moving down from the De Anza to the less competitive El Camino league, players still found themselves struggling early in the season. However, they managed to rebound, ultimately placing fourth in the league and earning a CCS bid.

A large part of the early season struggles lay in the team's youth since they had only three seniors. Of the remaining players, five were juniors and the rest were underclassmen. The sophomores and freshmen had to

adapt to the higher playing speed and competitiveness of the varsity games, Hansen said.

The team's overall inexperience was a factor in the Falcons' 3-0 loss against Los Altos on Sept. 11 and another 3-0 loss to Gunn on Sept. 20.

After a string of four consecutive losses to Monta Vista (3-2), Cupertino (3-2), Los Altos (3-0) and Fremont (3-0), the girls rallied back to win their next three games against Santa Clara by the score 3-0 on Oct. 9, Wilcox 3-1 on Oct. 16 and Milpitas 3-1 on Oct. 18, which was their Senior Night game.

Another problem the team had to overcome was the extended absence of their head coach, Steven Chiou.

While Chiou was in Japan and Taiwan for personal reasons, JV coach Chad Kingi stepped in to coach varsity.

Kingi provided the team with different ways to think about certain scenarios in the game.

"Chad's practice [was] usually more advanced than what coach Steve did," Hansen said. He made things harder and more strict, but it was really interesting to see his point of view coaching the team."

During practices, Kingi placed an emphasis on combating the problem of serve receiving, a major weakness of the team. The team expects a stronger performance next year as a result of this year's rebuilding season, which fostered greater communication between under and upperclassmen.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NOW AND FOREVER

Katie Hulme receives a serve on the team's senior night. The girls' beat Milpitas 3-1.

"I think we were on a bit lower level at the beginning of the season, but we've actually improved a lot," said Kingi. "The upperclassmen and underclassmen learned about each other's habits and got comfortable with each other, enabling them to reach their potential."

With the large influx of underclassmen this year, many upperclassmen have stepped up to take charge and make the transition smooth. Two key parts of the team have been Hulme and Hansen. ♦

Hansen helped freshman Jordyn Sin with her defense, while Hulme worked on creating team bonds and making sure they play run smoothly.

"We ended up improving a lot, so by the end of the season, we were having a lot more fun and working a lot better as a team," Hulme said.

Hulme has been part of teams that made CCS all four years of her time at SHS and will be going on to play at Emory University as a middle blocker. ♦

## FIELD HOCKEY

## Early-season losses pave way for late-season success

BY AnnaNovoselov

As the season began in August, field hockey players focused mainly on perfecting their own skills and improving their individual fitness.

This self-focus was natural because there was a wide range of talent on the team — from experienced seniors to sophomores who played JV for one year.

Over the course of the season, though, the group of 11 became tighter and learned to play more cohesively and rely on each other's strengths.

"I think that we've all learned each other's skills and how to use them in a game," junior left fullback Hannah Beine said. "We started to play more as a unit, and not as individuals."

Their improved teamwork was obvious

when they were able to finish their season well, winning their match on senior night 3-0 against Monta Vista on Oct. 23 and their

**"I think we've all learned each other's skills and how to use them."**

JUNIOR Hanna Beine



last game against Lynbrook 2-0 on Oct. 26.

"We all wanted to play well for the seniors," Beine said.

Sophomore forward Maria Wronka said

the girls were mentally prepared and benefited from coach Nanu Sidhu's advice. She hopes that next year the team will stay fit and have the right mindset, from the beginning of the season.

Despite the girls losing 3-0 to Presentation on Oct. 16, senior goalie Judy Yang viewed this loss as a sign of improvement, since the Falcons lost their first game against Presentation 7-0 on Sept. 13.

She also said that she saw improvement from practice to practice and from game to game.

"We've gotten a lot better at basic skills like passing and trapping and we also mesh better as a team," she said. "We've had a lot more bonding and gotten to know each other well, which translates to communication on the field."

But the team's cohesiveness on the field

did not always lead to victories.

The team ended with an overall record of 3-10-4 and a league record of 3-7-4. Top players included Beine, and juniors Maddy Davis and Sarah Rieken. Despite their late-season run, it was too little, too late, and the Falcons were not able to qualify for CCS.

Despite this, Yang predicts the team will do better next year, as many of the younger players have already played at the varsity level this season.

Although the team might have not performed up to the expectations they had for their final record, Yang still is thankful for the time she spent with her teammates during her final season.

"It's a little disappointing that we didn't do as well as we hoped, but it was a great year and I had a lot of fun with the girls," she said. ♦

## Football safety comes under intense scrutiny

BY MathewLuo

During the Homecoming game at Levi's Stadium on Sept. 21, junior Will Seifert, who plays defensive tackle and gunner for the team, suffered a helmet-to-helmet collision and collapsed on the field. Paramedics rushed in. Seifert eventually woke on a stretcher in the field, having no recollection of which play it was or even how he received the blow.

While Seifert seemed to suffer no lasting complications from the collision, returning to the field later in the year, his concussion reflects a worrying fact about injuries in contact sports, football especially.

Athletes are being injured despite their protective gear and the numerous safety regulations introduced in the past couple decades.

"During games, high schoolers are hitting each other at 110, 120 percent," Seifert said. "There's going to be complications and injury no matter what protection football players wear."

Football players suffer a wide array of injuries, so there is no

most common injury football players face, head coach Tim Lugo said. Injuries ranging from muscular sprains to ligament tears are common for any football player.

In exceedingly rare cases, even high school football players sometimes die each year from football related injuries. About four deaths annually in the U.S. occur from direct trauma while playing football, according to The American Journal of Sports Medicine.

**"There's going to be complications no matter what protection football players wear."**

JUNIOR Will Seifert

These injuries and deaths have led some to protest football and even advocate the banning of the sport entirely, especially at the high school level and earlier.

For his part, Lugo called these criticisms and calls for banning

the sport overblown.

"Football, the NFL, is the most watched sport in America," Lugo said. "So the public sees football injuries and attack the sport, even though it doesn't have the highest injury rate."

Numerous regulations and training changes have been instituted to increase the safety for players in recent years. Among these, the most influential were a transition to a more rugby-like tackling style by tucking the head away while tackling and the introduction of rules against helmet-to-helmet contact.

These new regulations and training methods have slowly trickled into high school play. In high schools nationwide, football teams are limited by regulation to a certain number of tackling hours per week. At Saratoga High, coaches teach the safer style of tackling and have instituted year-round conditioning to strengthen the neck and back.

Despite these advances, Seifert thinks still greater improvements can be made and even has one radical suggestion: playing the



COURTESY OF NOW AND FOREVER STUDIOS

Falcon players tackle a Santa Clara running back during the Sept. 21 Homecoming game at Levi's Stadium. The game raised safety concerns when junior Will Seifert was carted off the field after a hard hit.

sport without helmets.

"In rugby, players don't tackle into each other at 110 percent," he said. "If football players didn't think that they had safety with their gear, they would be less reckless."

More pertinent to high school, Lugo has advocated for other schools to hire on-campus coaches

such as Spanish teacher Bret Yeilding the way Saratoga does. On-campus coaches, he said, are able to teach the game in the right way.

Overall, Lugo is optimistic about the safer direction football is going in.

"What people don't know is that football is the safest it's been in decades, maybe ever," he said. ♦

## GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

## 7 to run in CCS meet

BY NityaMarimuthu

After a successful season thus far, the girls' cross country team hopes to continue their momentum into the CCS finals on Nov. 10 at Crystal Springs in Belmont. The top seven runners on the team will race on the hilly 2.95-mile run that the girls have run twice this season. CCS qualifies took place on Oct. 30 at Crystal Springs as well.

Coach Danny Moon said that he thinks the team has a good chance of finishing seventh or eighth this year as opposed to last year's ninth-place finish, as athletes are racing faster overall than the last five seasons he coached.

Senior captain Siena Parsons is also optimistic about CCS. To Parsons, the team's constant dedication has contributed to successes.

In order to qualify for the state meet later in November, the team will have to place in the top three at CCS. If the team does not advance, individual runners in the

top 14 qualify for states.

As the competition for CCS remains high, Parsons hopes the team will be able to send their two fastest runners, senior Elizabeth Kardach and junior Julia Hoffman, who have given the team consistent successes in previous years. For the rest of the team, Parsons has feasible expectations, hoping they will achieve personal records and avoid injuries.

The team ran a 3.1-mile course at Baylands in North Sunnyvale on Oct. 17 and came in ninth out of the 13 teams competing. The team also ran at the Lynbrook invitational, a 2.1-mile meet on Oct. 25 at Lynbrook High School, and came third out of nine teams.

The state meet will be held on Nov. 24, and will be a 3.1-mile run at Woodward Park in Clovis, near Fresno. ♦

*Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the Crystal Springs meet on Oct. 30.*

## GIRLS' TENNIS

## Injuries change Falcon lineups

BY AngelinaChen &amp; AmandaZhu

At the start of playoff season, the tennis team is facing significant challenges, especially injuries to top players.

On Oct. 23, the team lost to Los Gatos 5-2. On Oct. 18, the Falcons beat Homestead 5-2 but lost to Cupertino 4-3 on Oct. 16. The team also beat Palo Alto 6-1 on Oct. 11 and won 4-3 against Los Altos on Oct. 9.

Despite these wins, the team has been struggling with the increasing number of players getting sick or injured, resulting in constant lineup changes.

Early in the season, the No. 2 singles player, junior Monica Stratakos, suffered a stress factor in her ankle, but she is almost completely recovered.

In the meantime, the No. 1 player, senior Rini Vasana, has struggled to recover from a wrist

injury that should sideline her for around three weeks, including at least the early part of CCS, which starts on Nov. 5.

In addition to Stratakos and Vasana, junior No. 3 singles player Annissa Mu, junior No. 2 doubles player Katie Lam, and junior singles player No. 4 Varsha Horantur suffered other minor injuries, although they have all managed to make speedy recoveries.

"Annissa, Katie and I had wrist injuries but we played through it because we couldn't lose anymore people," Patel said.

Due to the rash of injuries, many players have had to shift up a position — for instance, Mu moved to No. 2 singles and Horantur moved to No. 3 singles.

As of right now, the team finished with a league record of 7-4.

"Everyone's still working very

hard and trying to make it to CCS," current singles No. 4 player Sanya Kwatra said, "I think it's a lot harder because we've already lost a lot of matches that we were supposed to win, but we're still trying."

An example of the struggles that injuries have contributed to are the Falcons' two matches vs. Cupertino.

On Sept. 25, the girls won 6-1. But the injury-plagued team ended up losing to them 4-3 on Oct. 16.

Despite the team's current struggles, Kwatra remains optimistic as their morale remains strong.

"Monica was out for the first half of our season, and now our No. 1 is out for the rest," Kwatra said. "I think it makes everyone a little more nervous for the matches, but we're all still working very hard and trying our best." ♦

## BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY

## Lacking star runners, team predicts solid results at CCS

BY MathewLuo

Having just finished their final league race at Crystal Springs on Oct. 30, 11 members of the boys' cross country team are continuing their speed training in preparation for CCS at Toro Park at Salinas on Nov. 10.

Seven runners — freshman Harry Dance; juniors Kole Tippetts, Shivam Verma and Jonathan Zhao; and seniors Nirav Adunuthula, Hugo Huang and David Berkowitz-Sklar — are in the starting lineup. Three to four reserve runners are training with them.

With a strong season behind them, the runners think they have a good chance of placing high at CCS.

This year, the varsity team improved on its performance from last year, placing third or better at all league meets and setting up for a top middle finish at CCS. Last year's strong sophomore class along with tougher conditioning led to a dominant performance this year by the juniors on varsity.

"The season's been going well," Tippetts said. "With the conditioning we got a lot more work ethic than last year, which translated to better races and better times. Almost every varsity boy PR-ed by at least 20-30 seconds per race."

Throughout the season, there was tough competition among the other runners such as junior Alex Pan and senior Eric Pors, who had similar times to the top seven and were challenging them for spots on the varsity lineup. Over 11 runners were vying for the seven varsity spots.

Strong performances are expected from star runners Tippetts, Verma and Dance at CCS. Each has improved throughout the season, and they have consistently been top three to four for all the league races.

Other runners are not far behind. All ran strong seasons themselves, with Zhao improving the most of them and PR-ing all of his previous records by at least a minute or more. With a good race, Zhao can hope to perhaps place fourth or fifth in the Saratoga squad.

With this close speed spread, the team can expect a fairly consistent result by finishing closely together.

"One of the strengths of our team is that run close to the same speed and we come in all at the same time," Tippetts said.

As team scores are calculated by adding each runner's place and ranking teams from lowest score to highest, a consistently fast spread can beat a team with only one star runner and more weaker ones. With their similar speeds, the Falcons could be able to teams despite not having superstar runners of their own. The team's cohesive speed could benefit the team in ways that a single great runner cannot.

Certainly the team did come in at the same time at the Mt. SAC race at Arcadia, Calif., on Oct. 19. Seven boys ran the invitational, one of the largest cross country meets in the nation, placing sixth of 23 in their Division III heat.

Berkowitz-Sklar had the most unexpected performance, running a 17:07 and

edging out both Dance and Tippetts. Dance followed in second with a time of 17:12, followed by Tippetts in third with 17:25.

With a strong team that runs together as a cohesive unit and a string of strong performances, all that remains for the team to do is to stay uninjured, taper down practices and work on speed and hill drills before CCS.

Even so, the runners this year are not nearly fast enough to match 2018 grad Amit Nag's time of 15:55 at Crystal Springs in his league finals race, and Tippetts does not expect any runners to make the state finals.

Nevertheless, Tippetts said the team as a whole has made steady progress.

"One of the strengths of our team is that we come in all at the same time," he said. "Even if we don't have any superstars, we can still place highly if the other teams only rely on theirs." ♦

*Due to printing deadlines, The Falcon was unable to cover league finals at Crystal Springs on Oct. 30 in this print edition.*

# Supercell, please buff my precious Elite Barbarians

luova hound



Mathew Luo

It's 6:45 a.m., and I'm asleep, savoring my first non-Clash Royale dream in a week. Still asleep, I look around, noticing flashes of blurry color and jumbled text. I'm in a lucid dream!

Then my gaze drops down, and suddenly I'm conscious of my hands, my feet, my phone, my Clash Royale app open ... four cards in hand and 10 elixir in the bank?!

My eyes sweep up the phone's screen, resting on my opponent's three towers, which stand across the arena, mocking me. Thinking quickly, I drop my six-cost Elite Barbarians card at the bridge. Now I have four elixir.

My beautiful Elite Barbarians sprint across the bridge to attack my opponent's left tower. The Princess on the tower shoots her puny arrows, which barely dent my Barbarians' hitpoints.

My elixir bar fills slowly as I wait in suspense for my opponent's response. Five elixir. Now six ... I hover my finger over my Rage Spell card, waiting, waiting.

Wait, my opponent isn't playing any cards! My barbarians smash his left Princess

Tower, then his central King Tower for a three crown victory! I've won! I've won! The battle finishes, and a beautiful super magical chest appears in my chest slot in slow motion.

My alarm rings at 7:15 a.m., waking me from my tranquil dream. I smash the alarm and rub the bleariness out of my eyes. Then excitement grips me. I can't wait to request 40 more Elite Barbarian cards from my clan!

Clash Royale loads. The chest of cards that unlocked overnight springs open. I donate a total of 40 cards to my clanmates' requests, then I request 40 Elite Barbarians of my own.

Time just flies by. After only six matches, it's 7:45. I have to hurry to dress now, or I'll be late to school and get another detention.

I still get to physics class at 8:17.

Physics is a terrible bore, so I just think of Clash Royale and doodle my time away. Before long, tutorial starts. By then, I've gotten six pairs of Elite Barbarians drawn on my paper. Their glorious cartoonish figure and yellow mustache soothe the pain of the physics test I got back during the period.

I pack up my bag and sprint to the library to grab a spot on the only comfortable couch. Some kid looks at me funny for panting while collapsing into the couch, but I don't let him distract me from my intense matches of Clash Royale.

My first opponent is a filthy Royal Giant user, but with my flawless gameplay, extreme

skill and high-leveled Elite Barbarians, I take down all his towers for a three crown victory. My opponent quits in frustration, so I spam the laughing face emoji at him to show him my respect. A huge grin splits my lips and I start laughing hysterically.

My second opponent is a dirty, no-skill noob Lava Hound user. I take his left tower and he takes my right in the first three minutes of the game, and things look about even when the game drags on into overtime in the fourth minute.

With just 30 seconds left to spare, my opponent three-crowns me with his disgusting over-leveled Balloon! What a card. I let out a string of curses as my opponent "pays me some respect" by plastering the screen with crying emojis. I hear my friends laughing at me across the library aisle. My blood pressure starts rising — I'm fist-poundingly, blood-vessel-poppingly enraged.

I look up. Whoops, it's already 10:18. I can't do homework with only two minutes to spare in tutorial, so I head over to Mrs. Warmuth's room for calculus. Somehow, a whole 33 minutes just passed.

The day drags by, and I don't even play Clash Royale during lunch because instead I have to do the APUSH notes I procrastinated on. Who even has time for APUSH when they could be taking towers and crushing noobs?

It's 2:15 now, and I'm supposed to be

doing homework in the library before cross country practice starts. I read somewhere that work is supposed to be easier if you get your blood pressure up, so I flip out my phone again and boot up Clash Royale for the fifth time.

This time my opponent's using Elite Barbarians, like me, so I know he'll probably be highly skilled, also like me. I match him blow for blow until the middle of the battle when the WiFi cuts out and a little red low wifi symbol flashes on the screen, taunting me. When the game finally connects again, all my towers are smashed and my opponent's spamming the laughing emote. Boom-boom. Boom-boom. My heart's pumping.

Five hours later, it's 8 p.m. I ran pretty badly during cross-country practice, so the coach recommended that I take some salt pills to get my electrolyte levels up. He doesn't know that my salt levels are actually too high from playing Clash Royale.

Now, homework starts. I'm up until 2 a.m., but I get a small reprieve at 9:15 when I get to request 40 Elite Barbarians again. English and AP Chemistry are familiar enemies now, just like over-leveled Royal Giants and Hog Riders.

Man, junior year sucks. I collapse into bed at 2:15, dreaming peaceful dreams of Clash Royale and blissfully knowing that just five hours later I can live the same day over again. ♦

## ISSUE Highlights

30+

the number of hours the varsity robotics team spends each week working on their robot in season (pg. 2)

"To be completely honest, I trust Amazon a lot, but I don't trust them enough to let them in my car."



— Rohan Kumar on Amazon's new In-Car delivery (pg. 11)

\$8.6 million

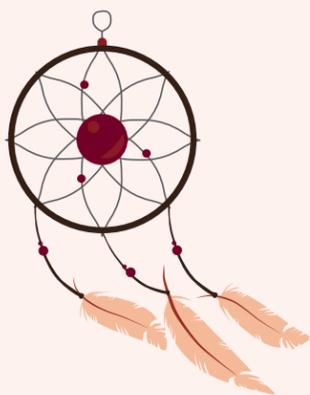
the cost of building the McAfee Center (pg. 16)

"In order to combat the pumpkin spice scourge, I have decided to go around throwing pumpkin pulp at anyone I find consuming pumpkin spice flavored creations."

— Allen Chen on pumpkin spice (pg. 9)

60 to 70

percent of senior Raveena Rao's dreams that are lucid (pg. 19)



GRAPHICS BY HOWARD TANG, CALLIA YUAN AND JAYNE ZHOU

## >> snapshots



FALCON // EDWIN CHEN



FALCON // EDWIN CHEN

**Top:** Senior Sanjana Melkote leads freshman Sahil Shaik, junior Sahaj Rastogi and other students in untangling themselves while playing the human knot game on Oct. 25 during Breaking Down the Walls week.

**Left:** Senior Dermot Gleeson, playing the titular character, lies dead in front of other cast members during the rehearsal for the fall play "Julius Caesar" on Oct. 29 in the McAfee Center.

## topten

### ORANGE THINGS THIS FALL

- 10 CHEETOS**  
Crunch these bois, but not in Patel.
- 9 NEMO**  
The only thing I'm finding these days is sadness.
- 8 Donald Trump**  
Wait, didn't we say cheetos already?
- 7 RED ORANGE COUNTY**  
Alexa, play "Four Seasons" by Rex Orange County.
- 6 CANDY CORN**  
Halloween is over. Get this sweetened plastic out of here.
- 5 TRAFFIC CONES**  
Maybe if we put some of these out, we'll learn how to drive without denting our cars.
- 4 FANTA**  
Is this real life or just Fanta-C?
- 3 LIL-PUMP-KINS**  
Go watch Kanye and Lil Pump perform "I Love It" on SNL. Now.
- 2 FALL LEAVES**  
Because leaves fall in the fall, duh.
- 1 ORANGES**  
Are oranges orange because they're oranges or are they oranges because they're orange?

>> Francesca Chu and Amy Tang