



“Wreck-it-Ralph” sequel worth seeing.



The history behind named places on campus.



BSA begins to admit girls into co-ed troops.



THE saratogafalcon



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Underage girls harassed online by college student

BY Callia Yuan & Jayne Zhou

Editor's note: Chen is a pseudonym to protect one source's identity.

“Hey, I go to LG high school and I was wondering if I can ask you some questions if that's okay with you.”

When junior Sally Kim, 16, initially received this message in September from a Facebook account under the alias John Yang, she thought little of the message that seemed to be from a Los Gatos High student journalist.

She first responded “no” to his messages after her friends warned her that there was someone who

had been asking girls inappropriate questions on Facebook. But after another one of Kim's friends said the man might really just be a newspaper student who needed an interview, Kim decided to ask him what the questions were.

“I heard there was someone perverted talking to girls,” she texted the man. But he responded

saying that the “someone perverted” wasn't him, but he “knew who it was.”

Kim posted screenshots of the conversation on her Snapchat story, hoping to spread awareness and get more solid information. After seeing Kim's story, Chen, 16, a junior currently attending the district's Middle College al-

ternative program, reached out to Kim and said that she had also been contacted by the man in July. (Chen requested anonymity from The Falcon.)

Chen told Kim that although she was initially messaged by the John Yang account, the man told

>> **MESSAGES** on pg. 19

“It's a little off-putting, but if the decorations inside the gym are done well, it'll be fine.”
junior Nicholas Sabato

“It's unfortunate for underclassmen because it's the only formal dance they have.”
senior Kay Jewler

“I wish it was somewhere else because it makes the night feel even more special.”
sophomore Jasmin Reddy

“I like the idea of formal at school because I'm really there just to hang out with friends.”
senior Kyle Yu

student opinions

Winter formal

to be held on campus for first time in three years

BY Megan Chen & Christine Zhang

This year's winter formal, themed “A Whole New World,” will take place tomorrow from 7:30-10:30 p.m. in the Large Gym.

The dance commission aims to save money with this change in location, to make up the deficit from the off-campus formals that started three years ago.

Junior head dance commissioner Nicole Wong said that each dance that dance commission runs, including Homecoming, formal and spring fling, has its own budget, and the budget for this dance is around \$11,000.

According to Wong, a couple years ago, the commission didn't include the cost of food into ticket pricing, causing the tickets to be cheaper than they should have been and resulting in a deficit.

The administration has provided the dance commission with a fixed schedule for the locations of all dances for the next few years. The school will have one off-campus winter formal every two to four years.

Wong said that the ticket prices for this year's winter

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Courtesy of TALISMAN

Movember activities canceled due to smoke

BY Annissa Mu & Alekhya Vadlakonda

The school's Movember event, which started on Nov. 5 and was meant to end on Nov. 20, were affected due to the recent fires and hazardous air quality that took place in the week before Thanksgiving.

Inflatable Day, scheduled for Nov. 19, Turkey Trot, scheduled for Nov. 20, a hula-hoop activity and the English Department's outdoors walk were postponed or canceled due to the poor air from the fires that sometimes reached well over 200 on the Air Quality Index in Saratoga. (Information about possible new dates for the events was not available as of Nov. 26.)



Hsu junior class president

Movember is a schoolwide event planned by ASB and the administration. This Movember, unlike previous years, gave clubs an opportunity to participate with their own booth or activity, hosted all around the school in the quad, upper field, lower field and orchestra room during tutorial and lunch.

“The purpose of Movember is to destress high schoolers through the means of physical activities, and to have fun in general,” junior class president Emma Hsu said.

Senior ASB president Roshan Verma said that ASB wanted to involve clubs in more activities because clubs are an integral part

>> **MOVEMBER** on pg. 4

School held despite unhealthy air quality

BY Callia Yuan & Emilie Zhou

On Thursday, Nov. 15, students created a petition calling for school to be canceled the next day because of the smoke from the massive Camp Fire in and near Paradise, Calif. The petition received nearly 2,000 signatures, but the district chose to keep school in session both Friday and Monday and Tuesday during Thanksgiving week.

“While a lot of people believe that it's my decision to cancel school, it isn't,” principal Paul Robinson said at the time. “Each of our school districts have talked with the county superintendents who makes the decision.”

With the Air Quality Index in the area reaching the unhealthy 200-plus range on Nov. 15, many

students reacted angrily to this decision.

One typical comment came from junior Kai Zhang, who remarked, “Now I don't need to visit Beijing.” Junior Brian Zhu added, “I feel like there's a difference when a bunch of schools around the area do cancel, but we don't.”

Many other school districts in the Bay Area, such as the Los Altos School District, Mountain View Whisman School District and Mountain View Los Altos High School District, decided opted to close school on Friday. If districts were to cancel school because of the smoke, they would not be required to add another day of school into the school year, Robinson said, as the school can apply to the state for a waiver

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>> what's inside

■ FALL PLAY

Caesar rules

Drama students take on Shakespeare's “Julius Caesar” in four shows in November. **pg. 6**

■ OPINION

Printing costs

The school should offer cheaper and more convenient printing options on campus. **pg. 7**

■ SPORTS

Girls' water polo

The team beat Aragon at semifinals but fell to Menlo 20-10 in the final game on Nov. 12. **pg. 22**

news >> **briefs**

First online issue of Soundings open for submissions

The first online issue of the school's art and literary magazine, *Soundings*, is now open for submissions and will be published in early December. Interested students should email their poetry, prose, art or photography to soundings2019@gmail.com by Nov. 30, and will receive a notification of acceptance by Dec. 7.

The *Soundings* team, consisting of seniors Anisha Byri, Colleen Feng, Sherrie Shen, Cheryl Wang and Kaitlyn Wang, junior Anishi Patel and sophomore Manasi Garg, plan to release three online issues and one print issue over the course of this year.

Kaitlyn said that the online issues allow more works to be published because the pieces chosen will not have to fit on a specific print layout; she also hopes that the more frequent online publications will provide greater exposure to both students who submit and to students who read the issue.

"We're also hoping that people will enjoy reading or looking at their classmates' work and maybe feel encouraged to share or create their own, and hopefully submit their work for the future online issues," Kaitlyn said.

— Chelsea Leung and Alexandra Li

Incumbent Chang and two newcomers elected

David Guidry, Peter L. Herten and incumbent Cynthia Chang won the three open spots up for election on the Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District's school board in the midterm elections on Nov. 6.

Out of the four candidates, Chang came in first with 35 percent of the votes and Guidry and Herten tied for second with 22 percent of the votes. Denise Ramon Herrera finished last with 18 percent of the votes.

Trustee Rosemary Rossi and vice president Katherine Tseng were not up for re-election and will remain on the board until their terms expire in 2020. According to Robin Mano, the outgoing president of the school board (2014-2018), the school board's primary responsibilities are "setting a direction for the district, providing a structure, ensuring accountability and providing community leadership."

— Shreya Katkere

Midterm elections bring new city council member

After voters submitted their ballots on Nov. 6, many stayed updated through the night about gubernatorial and Congress races, watching as state outlines were filled in with red or blue party colors.

Triumphing over candidates Anjali Kausar and Corinne Vita, incumbents Mary Lynne Bernald and Rishi Kumar and candidate Yan Zhao won the race for the three local city council seats — one of which council member Emily Lo vacated after two terms serving as council member and mayor.

Zhao, a Hong Kong native, works in the high tech industry as an engineer, and serves as president of the Silicon Valley Science and Technology association. A mother of three children, she served on the Saratoga elementary PTA board for three years and currently volunteers on the community planning commission.

"I believe that as people get to know me, they will find that I am a good person with integrity and compassion," Zhao said.

— Allison Hartley

>> **falcononline**



Top Story

Casual gamers attempt to play popular online game League of Legends.

Top Photo

Two students walk down the halls, one wearing a mask to avoid the terrible air quality on Nov. 16.

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

>> **picturethis**



FALCON // ALAN ZU

The annual boys' varsity v. alumnus scrimmage >> Senior Kyle Yu shoots a 3-pointer against the alumnus team on Nov. 23 in the Large Gym. Eventually, the alumnus team outscored varsity 72-68.

FORMAL

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formal, which started at \$40 with ASB and \$45 without, were originally cheaper, but based on an estimate of 350 to 400 students attending, the dance commission would have lost money if the tickets were sold at that cheaper price.

Last year, tickets to Hyatt Santa Clara started at \$50 and \$55. The 2016 formal at San Jose Country Club started at \$40 and \$45, and the 2015 formal at the San Jose Children's Discovery Museum, formal's first off-campus venue, started at \$30 and \$35.

In hopes of inspiring students to enjoy the location as much as an off-campus venue, Wong said that the dance commission has hired a professional decorator this year.

"In previous years, we'd just buy decorations for the dance and hang them up randomly," she said. "But this year we have a professional, so the decorations can completely transform the gym."

Wong said that hues of pink, orange, aqua and purple will drape the walls of the large gym to fit the theme of "A Whole New World," and black curtains will cover the sides of the basketball courts. There will also be an Arabian-themed lounge at the event.

The Large Gym will host the

dance and the dance studio will house the games, including ping-pong tables, air hockey and electronic basketball arcade games. In the small gym, the designated food area, tables of Scoopzilla ice cream will surround a central gazebo, which will hold tacos catered by food truck chain "Madd Max."

"We're hoping that people still come out because it's still winter formal."

SENIOR Kirstin Kruka

This year, along with the usual photo booth at the dance, the dance commission is implementing a new style of photography.

Upon entering the gym, students will walk along a red carpet, and photographers from the company Now and Forever Studios will act as their "paparazzi." An "X" will be placed on the floor and students can quickly pose in front of a green screen.

"It's like snap and go," Wong said. "It's not planned where each person signs up for a slot."

All photos will be posted online after the event, and students can purchase them without having to

fill out paperwork.

"Instead of buying the pictures ahead of time, they'll just take your picture no matter what," senior dance commissioner Kirstin Kruka said. "You can decide whether or not you want to buy it afterwards."

Wong said that the dance is not a step down from any other winter formal just because it is on campus.

"I feel like people should treat this formal like any other formal," she said. "Even though it's a different thing, we just wanted to have some change and something different for the school."

However, some students weren't happy with the ticket prices, especially considering that the dance is on campus.

"It's expensive, but I understand why it's expensive," freshman Victoria Tso said. "A lot of my friends are choosing not to go because they think the tickets are too pricey."

Tso said that she will attend the event this year, but she will not go to future winter formals if she feels that it is not worth the price.

Kruka hopes that students will not be deterred from attending solely due to the dance's location.

"It should be really fun," she said. "We're hoping that people come out because it's still winter formal." ♦

Guidance secretary publicizes jobs available for students

BY SelenaLiu

Guidance secretary Sarah Christeson has recently tried to spread awareness to students about job opportunities through email announcements. In September and October, Christeson sent out emails detailing part-time job opportunities at Banana Republic, AMC Saratoga 14 and Queen's Pumpkin Patch.

According to Christeson, anybody looking for a job can view a list of options underneath the Job Opportunities tab in Guidance on the school's website. Christeson's emails detailed just a few jobs on the school website that were available in the upcoming months.

"[My emails] were meant to be informational — only notifying

students of some job opportunities in the area," Christeson said.

She said job opportunities on the website include organizations that have reached out to the school. Students applying for positions must complete filing a work permit in the office before applying for any jobs.

These announcements sparked interest among a few students.

Sophomore Sarah Wang, for instance, applied for the position at Queen's Pumpkin Patch after seeing Christeson's announcement.

"I wasn't looking for a job, but when Ms. Christeson sent out the email it looked too good of an opportunity to pass up," Wang said. "It seemed like a really fun job, with a bunch of different things to help out with while at the same

time being able to work and connect with kids."

While Wang appreciates the email announcement, she wishes the school would make these opportunities more accessible and widely known. Similarly, sophomore Kathan Reddy, who applied for a job at AMC 14 after seeing Christeson's email, said that the school could better notify students of events and opportunities using both online and offline methods.

"The school could implement a physical way of [notifying students of possible jobs] rather than just emails, like with flyers, papers and announcements," Reddy said. "A lot of the ways the school announces things are through stuff like Facebook, which I don't always see." ♦

Band finishes season well despite setbacks

BY AndrewLi & JeffreyMa

With the conclusion of the SoCal Bands of America tournament on Nov. 3 at Los Angeles Valley College, the marching band's season is officially over.

Although the tournament was only a one-day event, logistics required a three-day trip, so the band left early in the morning of Friday, Nov. 2, for the drive down to Arcadia.

Preliminary rounds of the tournament, where the band competed against 20 other bands, occurred the next day and were followed by finals in the evening.

The marching band was placed in Class AA based on the school's size and won the division, but ultimately failed to place top 10 overall, meaning it also narrowly missed finals.

Instead, the band performed in an exhibition performance that other division-topping bands who fell short of qualifying for finals also participated in.

Director Jason Shiuan said the band faced some challenging conditions. These included a shorter-than-usual field and poor acoustics that absorbed the band's sound. Coupled with the high temperatures throughout the preliminary performances, the conditions gave the show a cramped and constricted feel.

"We sounded really soft, and it sounded like we have very little energy," Shiuan said. "We cannot produce the big sound some other bands are producing. I think our show works better in the nighttime, as it comes more to life."

Despite failing to qualify for finals, Shiuan was pleased with the band's performance, especially since the band finished learning the entire show roughly a week after the Northern California Bands of Amer-

ica tournament on Oct. 20.

"I could see how we had low energy, but I was very happy because even a week before, it was a totally different show, and we evolved it into a very beautiful product," Shiuan said.

The band's performance at the NorCal tournament at Diablo Valley College was commended by the judges even though it was incomplete; additionally, the distance between the field and the audience was larger, leading to a better performance musically than at the Southern California tournament.

"It was a totally different show, and we evolved it into a very beautiful product."

BAND DIRECTOR Jason Shiuan

Shiuan said the somewhat disappointing results in Arcadia did not change the tournament's role as both a great experience and great way to cap off the season.

For sophomore sousaphone player Isaac Sun, the tournament also mattered more than the results. He said that SoCal was a good way to experience competing against "powerhouse bands," and he is looking forward to more competitions next season.

In the end, Ayala High School won first place in finals, Vista Murrieta High won second and Etiwanda High won third.

Shiuan was pleased with the season, regardless of the last competition's results. "What's really important for me is that we walk off the field feeling proud and excited that we did something great," Shiuan said. ♦

Science Bowl begins new practice routine

BY ChristineZhang

As sophomore Enoch Luk buzzed in and gave his answer for a chemistry question about Boyle's Law during the buzzer round of Science Bowl tryouts on Oct. 12, he was ecstatic to hear that his answer was correct, giving him the fourth and final point he needed to make the team.

This year is Luk's first year on the team, and he looks forward to improving his science knowledge and buzzing speed.

Along with Luk, students to make the top 10 cut for the team include senior officers Ethan Ko, Joseph Li and Michael Zhang; senior Nathan Luk; juniors Brandon Wang and Jeffrey Xu and sophomores Rohan Kumar, Andrew Li and Oliver Ye.

The officers held tryouts in the room of their adviser chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu after school on Oct. 10 and 12. On the first day, students took a 20 minute written test covering topics from biology to astronomy, and those who scored well were invited to the buzzer round two days later, in which the officers tested the students' speed in answering practice Science Bowl questions.

Ko said that the officers considered the future of their team when they selected members this year. In addition to the top 10 individuals, they invited underclassmen who showed potential through their written tryouts but did not pass the buzzer round.

Two teams of five students will attend Science Bowl's main competition held at Stanford Linear Accelerator Center Laboratory in the spring.

Ideally, students on each team specialize in different topics of science for maximum possible coverage. These two teams are similar in skill level, and they generally do not compete against each other unless

they both make it to the finals.

The students are currently still practicing as one group, but Ko plans on breaking into the two competition teams earlier than in previous years. With this change, Ko said that each student will have more time to focus on developing areas of specialization.

Additionally, in past years, the group typically met once a week, but the officers this year aim to organize practices twice a week. Nakamatsu said that these more frequent practices have already benefited the group.

"It's going to help build team camaraderie," she said. "I already see that the team seems more cohesive."

Last year's team did not perform as well as they had hoped during their competition last spring, and because of this, Nakamatsu is thankful that several underclassmen showed interest in joining this year.

"I know a lot of people got discouraged after the competition last year," she said. "I wasn't even sure if Science Bowl was going to happen again, so I'm excited that people still want to do it."

As one of the new underclassmen on the team, Luk said that his main focus for this year aim to improve his skills in earth and space science. He noticed that the team favored biology, physics and chemistry questions during practices, so he chose an area in which he felt the team was lacking.

Ko hopes that the changes to Science Bowl this year will bring a long-lasting positive impact.

"It'll probably be more fun because there's going to be a clear goal for each person on what they should achieve," Ko said. "Hopefully, this will also translate to improvement in performance and more interest in the future." ♦

Office integrates new sign-in iPads for counselors

BY AndrewLee & AlexWang

Traditionally, the method for students to get in contact with their guidance counselor on campus consisted of filling out a blue slip of paper with name, reason for appointment, time preference and student ID.

But since the first week of October, the blue slips were no longer there; instead, they were replaced with two iPads, located at the corner of the guidance counter and in front of the guidance hall. Before meeting their counselors, students are required to sign up with Google Forms through the iPads.

The new system converts the same information on the slips of paper onto an electronic device, saving time for both students and counselors in organizing times for meetings.

According to guidance counselor Alinna Satake, the previous system was a lot less efficient. In the past, counselors had to copy large amounts of paper for students fill out, but the electronic system helps both the environment and organization.

"There's no need for us to use such an archaic system," Satake said. "I think doing it online helps us do a better job of keep-

ing track of when students need to be seen; this way we can always refer to [the Google Form] and it can also give us a better idea of being able to track data."

Despite the benefits of using the new electronic system, counselors have noticed that students are having trouble figuring out the new system has changed, and are potentially being turned away because of their initial confusion.

"Student needs are most urgent but we're still early in the implementation," Satake said. "So we're still struggling to get kids into the rhythm of using the system."

As the college application season is in full swing and more students require help with universities, counselors hope that their incorporation of the new system does not prevent frequent visits from seniors at this time of year.

"At first the system was kind of confusing," senior Janice Yang said. "Many students like myself got confused, but after figuring out that the system has converted to the use of iPads, it feels a lot more efficient to schedule with my counselor."

Guidance counselors have noticed and hope to alleviate this issue to ensure that no students are turned away. They have re-

FIRE

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so that they aren't required to fill all required 180 days of school.

However, he said, because of the ventilation systems in schools, school can be a safer place for some students whose homes don't have functioning air filters.

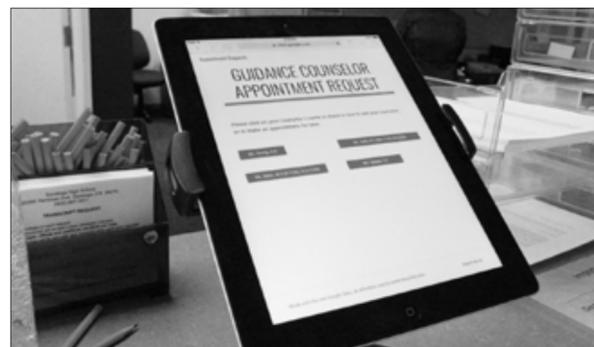
"It's been kind of scary and I think we've come close to the brink of strongly considering canceling school," Robinson said. "One concern is that I'm not quite sure if it's

healthier at home than it is here at school. You're either going to be home or you might go out and the smoke is still going to be there so the air quality is still going to be bad no matter where you go."

According to Robinson, there is no specific Air Quality Index number that needs to be met for school to be canceled.

For schools that chose to not cancel school, precautions and other safety measures were taken to decrease the time students spent outdoors.

"We tried to cut down on any strenuous activities here on campus, provide inside



FALCON // AVA HOOMAN

A new iPad in the office displays a screen with four options, one for each guidance counselor, to allow students to make appointments without filling out paper forms.

quested to get a more permanent stand for the iPads and brackets on the wall between Satake's and counselor Frances Saiki's office so they are more visible to students.

"It will probably take the rest of the

school year for us to get into the rhythm, once we train the new kids that it's not the blue slip anymore, but the online appointment slip to make an appointment," Satake said. ♦

places for students to be and monitor everybody and make sure they're OK," Robinson said.

Due to the poor air quality, various sports and activities were canceled or rescheduled.

According to athletic director Tim Lugo, outdoor sports, such as girls' and boys' soccer practices, were canceled and the girls' water polo CCS finals and cross country CCS finals were postponed. For indoor sports, including basketball and wrestling, practices were moderated to ensure the safety of all athletes.

"There are instances like that happen

where it's out of anybody's control," Robinson said. "It's just making sure we're keeping everybody informed and we're trying to do the best we can to hold school when we can hold school."

During this time, numerous fundraisers were also organized and efforts made to help those affected by the fire. The school collected almost \$3,000 in gift cards and donations to send to fire victims in Butte County. Some teachers also organized their own fundraiser, Tacos for Paradise, which was scheduled to occur on Nov. 28, where all proceeds went to victims of the fire. ♦

Exhibit highlights senior's lifelong passion for art

by ManasiGarg

On Nov. 10, senior Hannah Chang held her very first art gallery in a local doctor's office.

She had expected only a few people to show up. Instead, the building was teeming with nearly 60 people on opening night.

They walked around the main lobby, admiring her more realistic pieces or went into an internal room, where Chang's colorful illustrations were displayed.

The gallery will remain open until mid-December and is located at 14911 National Avenue, Suite #3, Los Gatos. It is open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays.

"The gallery was great, honestly," she said. "I was so surprised so many people showed up."

Art teacher Diane Vanry's friend, orthopedic surgeon Terence Delaney, told Vanry his office had free wall space in the reception area and in an internal room. Vanry offered Chang the space to showcase her art.

For the exhibition, Chang chose 30 larger pieces and 50 smaller ones, displaying 80 in total. At home, she has countless other pieces, many of which she is currently working on.

To Chang, this constant work is normal. "I spend over half the day on art, more time than I do on schoolwork or anything else," she said.

Chang did not always dedicate so much energy to art, however. Her first memory of art was when she drew with a pen at a

restaurant when she was a toddler. At first, when she was younger, she pursued it as a fun pastime, but it soon blossomed into a passion.

When Chang first discovered her passion for art, she signed up for an art class in middle school, but she quit after the first few lessons.

"I never liked teachers telling me what to do, so I just bought all the art tools I needed and started painting and drawing," she said.

Since then, Chang has been primarily self-motivated to improve her art skills and develop her own personal style, which she said was influenced by Andy Warhol's use of bright, contrasting colors and the clean lines of Picasso's cubism paintings. Her favorite style of art

is cartoon-like illustrations, and she creates them primarily with watercolor and pen.

While Chang experiments with art often and still dislikes taking organized lessons, last summer she decided to attend California State Summer School for the Arts (CSSSA), an intensive art program.

She said the teachers, rather than being narrow minded, allowed the students to freely express themselves while still guiding them.

They also introduced Chang to many new types of art such as mixed-media and design, helping to branch out her knowledge and skill.

Chang recalled signing up for a painting class at CSSSA and worrying that it would be like a traditional art class where she would have to follow the teacher's exact



Chang



Viewers observe senior Hannah Chang's Los Gatos art exhibit at opening night on Nov. 10.

instruction.

When she walked into the class on the first day, she saw a table covered with guitars at different angles.

"I was thinking, oh no, not an observational drawing because I really don't like those," she said. "Instead, the teacher told us not to [create an observational drawing], and let us paint whatever we wanted using the guitars. I don't prefer drawing from life, so I decided to make the piece abstract with parts of the guitars spread all over the canvas."

Chang said she ended up enjoying observational paintings and painting with acrylic, a medium she said she hadn't done for a while.

Chang posts some of her work on her Instagram account, @hanny__art. Chang said she started an art Instagram not only as a way to create a platform for her works,

but also to jumpstart her website, where she plans to sell prints of her illustrations.

She is still working on setting up her portfolio, and is currently not taking any orders.

While Chang's plans for a business may seem to signify further pursuit of art in college, she said she is still trying to figure out where art will fit into her life after high school.

"I don't know if I want to fully pursue art, or do some other major in college and do art as a side hobby," she said.

Still, Chang maintains that art is sure to be part of her future. "I feel like art has helped me stay in my own bubble and given me a place where I don't have to worry," Chang said. "Because I haven't always been good at academics and I just don't know how to improve in that area, I like to focus on what I'm best at." ♦

Upper field closed during lunch due to littering

by AndrewLi & AlanZu

Because students have failed to clean up after themselves on the upper field, even after multiple efforts and warnings by the administration, principal Paul Robinson sent out an email on Oct. 18 to students and parents announcing the closing of the area during lunches.

"Our grounds crew placed additional trash cans and spoke with a number of students that they need to keep food and trash off of the field," Robinson said in an email to the community. "[Even so,] the field was left with lollipops, food, candy and drinks that have damaged and discolored the field in spots beyond what the school can repair."

Robinson said that after more students began to use the field this year, doing activities such as playing soccer or throwing footballs, the problem reached a "tipping

point" where people weren't cleaning after themselves.

After lunch periods, the upper field was filled with napkins and other trash. As a result, sports teams had to pick up the trash during practices in order to play on a clean field, and the littering problem became so bad that the custodians and athletic director Tim Lugo notified the administration.

The administration was forced to close down the field to keep it in good condition for sports teams, band and others, Robinson said.

Sophomore Shahmun Jafri wasn't surprised when he heard the news because he has seen people litter constantly on the field. He said he once witnessed a student pour a bottle of apple juice all over the bleachers.

Robinson explained that in previous years, administrators and campus supervisors would just tell the students to pick up their trash, and they would do so consis-

tently afterward. But this year was different because students continued to litter the field after multiple warnings.

Robinson also said the decision was not one he was happy to make.

As a result, sports teams had to pick up the trash during practices in order to play on a clean field.

"Ever since we finished that field, we've had it open," Robinson said. "I love the fact that kids love to go up there and run around, throw frisbees and kick soccer balls. I encourage students to have that kind of freedom and de-stress by doing something active."

Jafri enjoyed being on the field during lunch, mainly because "it was an open area compared to the quad, where it is crowded." Jafri also liked that no staff members were on the field to "look over" the students.

So far, Robinson said that closing of the field during lunch has been effective in keeping the field clean and that the administration made the right decision, especially with soccer season starting.

Even so, Robinson said that there is a possibility of reopening the field later in the year if students who want to use the field have "a real commitment to really taking care of it."

Jafri, however, said he doesn't want the field to reopen because "most don't pick up their trash anyways."

"If students don't take their privileges seriously, they don't deserve them," said Jafri. "The field closing down is a good example of that." ♦

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SJART ACADEMY

MOVEMBER

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of campus, and said this mutual involvement would create a closer school community rather than each club's being a separate entity at school.

"We believed that the best way to promote a message of a healthy lifestyle was to do so through the clubs because for a lot of people, they dictate a large part of what they do in extracurriculars and at school," Verma said.

Interact Club, for example, did a push-up activity in the quad on Nov. 7, and Korean Club taught students Kpop dances on Nov. 8 in the small gym.

President of Korean Club, senior Miya Uenaka, said that Movember was a great way to further promote the club and even prepare for more activities that will happen later on in the year.

Korean Club's event, a private K-pop dance lesson during lunch, had a small turnout as Uenaka had expected.

However, the five students who did participate are now also joining their future

Asia Fest performance, proving the Movember activity to be beneficial in the long run.

Uenaka additionally added that Movember can also be beneficial to students' well-being.

"Movember can relieve stress off of students by getting them active and thinking about their health instead of their next test," Uenaka said.

Some teachers, such as Spanish teacher Sarah Voorhees, provided extra credit for those that participated in certain events.

"I figured if students could get out in the fresh air and move around, plus gain some participation it is a win win situation," Voorhees said.

Senior Divya Aggarwal was one of Voorhees' AP Spanish students who attended the foreign language department's hacky sack activity. She said it was nice to see her peers relax and have a good time at the activity.

Overall, Verma agrees with this mentality of increasing exercise and health in students' lives.

"It's important for people to realize that everything that they do should be in the pursuit of a healthy and successful life," Verma said. ♦

Democracy Matters club seeks to inform students

by PatrickLi & AlexWang

During the Democracy Matters club's lunch meeting on Nov. 8 in the room of their adviser, social studies teacher Kirk Abe, junior Shivam Mani argued about the possibility of a recount for Florida's votes following the midterm elections in a discussion with 10 other club members, including club officers senior Kiran Rachamalla and junior Satvik Kaliyur.

Conversations like these happen every Thursday in Abe's Room 505.

Mani said that his primary motive for participating in the club is to inform himself about important current events through their lunch meetings, which typically consist of the officers' presenting events they want to address, followed by an open discussion.

"It's necessary especially for young peo-

ple to talk about politics and current events issues," said Mani, who attends every meeting. "I feel like a lot of people in the country don't pay as much attention as they should be, and there should be a lot more attention on educating young people about the matters of our democracy."

The club had members participate in other active advocating like voter registration drives.

With the heavily contested midterms and other issues, Rachamalla has noticed an increase in club participation. Rachamalla

also emphasized that the club's nonpartisan environment is welcoming to people on all sides of the political sphere.

In hopes of getting more students involved with politics beyond discussion, Rachamalla and the other club members advertised and campaigned for local candidates in the recent city council election. Rachamalla enjoyed "being on the front lines" of spreading awareness for the candidates he supports.

"It was a good experience in public speaking, learning how to diffuse possible problems and use persuasive techniques," Rachamalla said.

"I learned how to convince people that the candidate that I was campaigning for aligned with their values without offending them."

Rachamalla said that he hopes Democracy Matters will encourage students to go

out and campaign for elected officials in the future because "campaigning in person is one of the best ways to exercise our rights and get people elected into office."

The club has also had members participate in other active advocating like voter registration drives and marches against gun violence.

In the future, Rachamalla said that the club will try to invite elected officials to talk to students about how to get involved with politics.

He added that it is crucial for students to be knowledgeable about the political realm.

"Pretty soon we're all going to be eligible to vote and it's important that we have a basic understanding of what's happening in the world so that we can make sure our elected officials are doing what we want them to do," Rachamalla said. "It's important to have that basic civil responsibility." ♦

Leo Club hosts performance during Thanksgiving

by AlekhaVadlakonda

Last Sunday, residents of Saratoga's Our Lady of Fatima Villa Assisted Living Facility enjoyed singing, dancing, and instrumental performances from members of the newly formed Leo Club.

According to club president Anouk Yeh, a freshman who started the club last year at Redwood Middle School and kept it going at SHS, the Leo Club strives to inspire its members to volunteer and create events for causes that they are truly passionate about.

The club has sister clubs in over 140 countries around the world including India,

Japan, Italy, China and Singapore.

"The Leo Club's goal is to provide a platform for members to not just participate in, but also create projects that help alleviate both local and global concerns, whether it'd be working with the local government to host a carnival for special needs individuals or working internationally with sister Leo Clubs in India to help alleviate the pollution crisis," Yeh said.

The club was brought to the school after Yeh and the other officers noticed that stu-

dents tended to sign up for the mandatory volunteer hours in many clubs.

The officers presented their club to ASB and the club commissioners at the beginning of the year, and the club was approved on the first try.

Freshmen club members Elaine Liu, Lily Yang, Maddie Jin, Katherine Chen, Aeshon Balasubramanian, Jordan Heindorn, Bella Lin, Chen and Yeh participated in the Lady of Fatima Villa event. Balasubramanian, who played the piano,

said he participated because he wanted to have a new experience and hoped that the seniors enjoyed the performance.

In general, the officers hope that through their club, members become motivated to volunteer for causes they are passionate about.

"We understood that in high school, a lot of people do go out to serve their community, but mainly for the goal of gathering volunteer hours," Yeh said. "We wanted to change that and inspire our members to serve because they're passionate about the causes affecting our community and because they want to better our culture." ♦



GRAPHIC BY JACKSON GREEN

British freshman adjusts to life in America

by ChristineZhang

As freshman Peilin Zhang, then an eighth grader in the U.K., sat down in her history classroom last spring, her teacher accidentally revealed to the class that Zhang would be moving out of the country at the end of the school year, which was only two weeks away. Zhang's classmates were taken aback, and her teacher immediately regretted his announcement.

"My teacher felt bad about it, but in the end, I think it was easier that he said it because I would have been really sad telling everyone that I was leaving," Zhang said. Zhang was born in Bad Soden, Germany, and lived there until age 3.

She then moved to Manchester, England, where she lived until this past July.

Both of these relocations were due to Zhang's father's job.

Her family moved to the Bay Area because it was convenient for her father's work, and Zhang's family also liked Bay Area schools along with the area's overall atmosphere.

Zhang said that the systems of standardized testing in the two countries are different.

Students in the U.K. take a set of exams called the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), while American students take SATs and ACTs.

If she still lived in the U.K., American would take the GCSE a year from now.

Additionally, Zhang said that U.K. schools are a year ahead of U.S. schools, so she would be in grade 10 there. She is technically repeating grade 9 this year, but she said that she is still learning new material because of the differing curricula between the two countries.

Zhang said that while she had more classes in the U.K., she has more homework here. The classes themselves are about the same level of difficulty.

So far, Zhang is adapting well to life in the U.S., and aside from the contrasting school systems, she said that only needs to become familiar with small cultural and

language differences.

"I've got to get used to the little things," Zhang said. "Some things just kind of trigger me, like people say biscuit here as a bread when it's another thing in the U.K."

Zhang said that certain holidays are celebrated differently, too.

"We didn't celebrate Halloween that much, and we didn't celebrate Thanksgiving at all because that has to do with the Pilgrims," she said. "But Christmas and Easter are really big things in England. We would celebrate in school as well as out of school."

This year will be Zhang's first Christmas in the U.S. Her family plans to pass the holiday similarly to how they did in the U.K. — they will set up a Christmas tree and have dinner with family friends.

Zhang said that her mother has a cousin who currently lives near them, so they will likely eat together this year.

In the meantime, Zhang is missing her friends in the U.K. and said that the time difference between the two countries interferes with their communication.

"I go home, and they're already having dinner," Zhang said. "It's completely weird. Whenever I talk to them, they have to leave early because they have to go to school the next day."

Nonetheless, she is managing to stay in touch. Zhang's friends joke that she is losing her British roots because of the different phrases that she uses.

"My friend was saying how she had some subject next term, but I was saying next semester," Zhang said. "She said I was turning American, but terms and semesters are different. There are four terms in a year but only two semesters."

Zhang said that some people comment about her British accent, but she doesn't mind it very much.

"I thought more people were going to ask me to pronounce certain things like tomato or water, but not many did," she said. "Mostly people ask me to do an American accent and try to imitate my accent, but I'm fine with it because I'm so used to it now."

Additionally, two of her friends here are from Germany, so they use some of the same vocabulary that Zhang does.

Despite all the challenges, Zhang said that she is enjoying her time in the U.S.

"I'm learning a new culture here because of the people around me," she said. "America is the country of dreams, so it's a good opportunity for me to live here and have a good future. I think it's really fun." ♦

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Speech and debate undergoes leadership overhaul

RIVAS UMANA HIRED AS COACH WHILE STUDENTS TAKE ON LARGER RESPONSIBILITIES

by Chelsea Leung & Alexandra Li

After the departure of former speech and debate team head coach Chris Harris last summer, the program, a 501c3 nonprofit organization in which about 100 students participate, is now run by head coach Victor Rivas Umana in an attempt to return it to stability. Umana coached debate last year and has stepped up as head coach and temporary director of the program.

Members of the speech and debate team were told by the parent committee that the school board had launched an investigation into the program under Harris's leadership.

The board did not publicly release the results of the investigation, and school board president Robin Mano declined to comment on the situation.

Umana, who teaches at five other schools and at his own debate academy, is currently the only coach for the debate division. The parent committee is still searching for another debate coach.

Leal and Xiong work at Umana's own Golden State Academy. Leal coaches at Evergreen High, Harker and BASIS Independent. Xiong, who currently attends Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley, also coaches at Evergreen High and Harker and was a competitor at James Logan High from 2009 to 2013.

Before Leal and Xiong were hired, the lack of coaches meant that student leadership, including officers and event captains, were needed more than ever.

After August student elections, senior David Koh is now president. The vice president of speech is senior Ishan Lakhani, while vice president of debate is junior Adhit Sankaran.

Junior Ronak Pai is treasurer and junior Ashwin Ramakrishna is the secretary.

The public forum event is captained by a committee of all participating upperclassmen; senior Reva Vaidya oversees policy.

Captains for LD are senior Victor Liu and juniors Chris Feng and Ujjwal Krishnamurthi, while seniors Arian Raj and Ruchi Maheshwari are the leaders of extemporaneous speaking.

Juniors Connie Liang and Anishi Patel are captains for individual speaking events.

Liang, whose main event is original oratory, said that many of the upperclassmen took on more responsibilities and stepped into de facto coaching positions.

Liang and Patel have been helping younger students with their speeches, advising them with their writing and providing tips and tricks that can help them gain a competitive edge.

Liang also said that the added time and effort in helping the younger kids has made it difficult for upperclassmen to work on their own speeches.

"It's extremely difficult to make every single practice on time because as students, we have an incredible workload in not only homework but other extracurriculars as well," Liang said. "During the water polo season sometimes I went into speech practice and my hair was still dripping wet and I was reeking of chlorine because I just got out of water polo practice."

Despite the challenges, Liang has found that the student-led coaching method has bolstered bonds within the team.

"You start talking to these freshmen that you otherwise wouldn't have the chance to interact with, and it creates a more casual environment where everyone feels comfortable learning," Liang said.

After the addition of Leal and Xiong in mid-November, Liang has noticed slight changes, including better organization and specialized attention for each student in speech.

According to Liang, Leal plans to strategize by using a top-down approach where the professional coaches teach the student leaders, and then these leaders are able to spread out and help the younger members on speech.

"All the student run leadership is still there, but now we have someone who can coach our student leaders," Liang said.

Liang said that older students still help with answering questions and guiding the novices, but the responsibilities of teaching how to write and deliver speeches are lessened.

Koh said that the club, though, is currently not struggling financially, due to around 90 members' donating \$600 each.

This contribution to the club budget has allowed about 15 members to participate in each competition, of which there have been nine so far this year.

Though the club is still undergoing major changes, members are already looking to the future.

As a method for fundraising and recruiting, the club wants to create a camp where they would be able to charge tuition for middle schoolers and freshmen interested in speech and debate.

Koh said that despite all the challenges, he sees the rest of the year as an opportunity for the program to grow.

"I'm very happy with how the club has progressed so far and am optimistic that we can adapt to this setback and continue to compete at a national level," Koh said. "In the future, I hope that the club can establish the leadership framework needed to keep the club going in the years to come." ♦



Koh Club President

Harris' resignation

In mid-November, speech coaches Steven Leal and Jennifer Xiong joined speech coach Vidy Ullal, who was hired at the beginning of this year and previously coached some students at Redwood Middle School.

Harris, who led the program since 2014, resigned at the beginning of the summer.

After Harris' departure, head debate coach Steve Clemons and speech coach Mylan Gray also left the program.

Cast members pull off production of 'Julius Caesar'

by Jessica Wang & Marisa Kingsley

"Caesar, now be still: I kill'd not thee with half so good a will," senior Shasta Ganti, playing senator Marcus Brutus, recited after acting out Brutus' suicide during the Nov. 10 performance of the fall play, "Julius Caesar."

The production opened on Nov. 10 in the McAfee Center, with 210 people attending opening night.

The play's final performance was on Nov. 17.

Drama teacher Sarah Thermond, who directed the production, said audiences responded well to the material, despite the challenges of grasping Shakespearean English.

She explained that there will always be varying levels of understanding among audience members, but the action employed by the characters helped enhance comprehension.

"Our production was action packed enough that even if someone wasn't positive what one line meant, or what a relationship [between characters] was, the audience could understand it enough to follow the story and what was going on," Thermond said. "[They could understand] what people were against each other and things like that."

Yet with a language-heavy show like "Julius Caesar," actors can become susceptible to inadequate vocal technique.

The students must focus on their volume, articulation and pace.

Thermond said she was proud of how the cast stepped up to the challenges of "Caesar."

"I think with the pressure of performing in front of an audience, there will always be one section of the show that gets a little sloppier than it should be," Thermond said. "But we're doing a full-length Shakespearean tragedy — it's kind of a new territory."

Despite the challenges present in each performance, the students were able to put on a production that was able to convey the importance of the narrative — how rhetoric and speech can shape the perception of the truth.

"Julius Caesar" is also studied in multiple English 10 classes.

To English 10 and 11 Honors teacher Amy Keys, the most valuable lesson she presents to her students when teaching the play is the use of language in manipulation.

"I think understanding manipulation is extremely valuable, way beyond Shakespeare," Keys said. "It's in every turn of life, especially the in times that we live in now: understanding what people are saying and how they say it."

Keys sees the pacing of the story as the most difficult aspect.

If the actors fall victim to off-kilter pacing, the show can become boring.

Yet, when Keys went to see the drama production's interpretation, she was impressed by the overall pacing and the engaging performances.

"After each scene, you had a good sense of their character and what they were saying," Keys said. "I thought many who hadn't read the play would understand what was happening."

Contrary to its title, the play centers on the character Brutus, a senator of the Roman Republic, and his crucial role in the assassination of dictator Julius Caesar and its aftermath.

Thermond said she hopes that both students and audience members realize that the play twists the rigid dichotomy of good and evil — a recurring concept in Shakespearean tragedies.

For example, Shakespeare offers justification for Brutus' role in the murder of Caesar: Brutus' loyalty to Rome is greater than his loyalty to Caesar, the "noblest Roman of them all" as described by consul Marc Antony in the play.



Courtesy of SARAH THERMOND

During the Nov. 17 production, Brutus, played by senior Shasta Ganti, delivers a monologue after helping the other senators kill Julius Caesar, played by senior Dermot Gleeson.

"I think we avoided doing what a lot of productions do in terms of deciding if Caesar is really dangerous. Or deciding if Cassius is really a complete liar. Deciding if Marc Antony is wrong to do what he does, or if he's acting out of sincere hurt from his friend's death," Thermond said. "I feel like our version is pretty sympathetic toward everybody." ♦

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School should offer cheaper printing

During a school day, students often find themselves needing to print hard copies of or finish up a homework assignment. In many cases, paying a visit to the library is the go-to solution.

Unfortunately, students are sometimes unable to find coins to pay the library's printing fee of 25 cents per printed page, thus preventing them from printing out their assignments and turning in their homework on time.

Although 25 cents might not be a lot for an entire print job, this cost can pile up quickly if students need to print at school often, making printing expensive for students.

Because of the library's cost of printing, many students have turned to other outlets, such as the Journalism Room, along with various other teachers' classrooms, which give students places to print without a cost.

However, they may have found that recently, the printers in the Journalism Room have become unavailable for use. This is because students' frequent printing of their homework assignments has caused the \$100 ink toners to run dry every few weeks. In turn, journalism adviser Michael Tyler has chosen to remove the toner cartridges dur-

ing some tutorials in an effort to prevent students from printing there.

Tyler said the journalism program can't continue to pay for so much toner for non-journalism purposes.

All of this suggests needs to give students more and better on-campus printing options. The primary complaint from students is that the cost of printing in the library is too high. While it is reasonable that the library must be able to cover its own printing costs, data collected by OfficeLink suggests that the average cost of printing a typical black and white page is only between 5 and 8 cents. The library does not offer color printing.

A better price to charge students could be 10 cents per page like other schools, such as Lynbrook, do. Ten cents is significantly lower than the current price but still makes up for expenses.

The school could also try facilitating the purchasing of a large number of printing pages at once near the beginning of the school year and refilling their pages when necessary. This change would also allow the library to budget more easily around costs



MEGAN CHEN

as all students would pay the fees in advance.

Yet another possible solution could be using the new student center being built in the 800 wing as a place for printing stations, where students can print at a more reasonable cost. The central location could serve as

a convenience for students to print, so perhaps ASB could begin fundraising for printers — and also make money by offering cheaper-priced printing.

Simply put, the current cost of printing in the library is a ripoff, and students need more reasonable options on campus. ♦

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

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The Falcon staff voted 33-1 in support of this article.

YOUR OPINIONS ABOUT THE FALCON

THE FALCON WELCOMES SIGNED OPINIONS ON ITS STORIES. TELL US WHAT YOU THINK OF OUR WORK.

Op-Ed: 'Dreaming of Stanford' author responds to columnist's commentary about his recent book

by Nikhil Goel

Here's how it happens.

You've gotten into your dream school. What a rush! But after a few months, you have no idea why you're there. Was chasing this dream — someone else's most likely — worth it in the end?

At Stanford, I quickly realized that a four-year university was not for me — education was more than problem sets, required courses, and degrees that might signal competence to potential employers I didn't care to work for. I had curiosities that a rigid education hindered. Gradually, I saw that I was not alone in this frustration, that almost every Stanford student I met — the beacons of intelligence and future leaders of America — were in the same position, regardless of their major.

Most disconcerting were conversations with high school friends at similar colleges — 19 year-olds suffering from major depression. Winners of the rat race.

This motivated my friend Sanjay and I to write "Dreaming of Stanford: How to Rethink High School and the Pursuit of College," a manifesto on high school, self-definition and self-education. It's something we'd want a younger sibling to carry

around in their backpacks at all times, motivated by a few key questions: Why did we so badly want to go to Stanford? What was the opportunity cost of getting in? And did going to Stanford solve any of our existential angst?

After deconstructing the last eight years of our lives for answers, we condensed our insights into a 71-page tome of advice. When it came to discovering ourselves, this book would have saved us a whole lot of money, energy, and time.

The rest of this article will address Kaitlyn Tsai's Oct. 30 column titled "Despite important ideals, book won't make a dent in college admissions mania." First, it's an impressive piece, full of depth and nuance.

Additionally, I'm happy that Tsai found that it was not "another boring read on what students should do to achieve their Ivy-League dreams," instead feeling "more hopeful and motivated to further develop [her] interests after reading the book."

My principal curiosity with Tsai's article, however, is that she recognizes the core issue, verbalizes it clearly, but then says she won't change, nor will anyone else. Her reasoning is that the mental barriers to betting on

oneself are too high; they simply cannot be breached.

Tsai writes that "reading the advice is entirely different from believing in and following through with it" (though in the book, we give concrete steps to take). This is like the couple that breaks up before even trying to make it work. The driver who sees the pothole coming from a mile away, but drives into it anyway. It's an exercise in fatalism.

Let's say "Dreaming of Stanford" isn't the answer. Can you think of any other literature, about Stanford, by Stanford students, that can advance this kind of argument?

And unlike others you might have heard, we're not repeating the same clichés. We'll never say "follow your passion."

In fact, we say that "passion" is a toxic word and isn't the right way to approach interest development. An entire section of the book is devoted to the rejection of the word "passion."

I can't blame anyone for their initial skepticism. I did not pay attention to this type of stuff when I was in high school because it mainly came from teachers, most of whom didn't go through a similar competitive Bay Area high school.



Goel

Looking back, they were right, and I wish I had listened. But we are not your teachers. We are not your parents. We are not your counselors. We are just two, overthinking 22-year olds who encourage you not to move through life mindlessly.

We understand the pressures you're under. And now we're helping you bypass years of crisis-fueled introspection and mind-numbing angst through a framework that you can implement now.

Now. Not once you graduate from high school. Not four to eight years from now after you get your college degree. Not 12 years from now after you've gotten that second promotion at Goldman Sachs or Google, finally making your parents proud. Not after marrying that specific shape and color of human that society expects you to marry. Now.

A high schooler recently asked me, "How do I know if I'm even making progress toward getting into college?" You can't. There is no checklist.

So enough fitting yourself to an invisible mold of As, HYPSM (Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, and MIT), ACTs and SATs. Enough BS activities. Enough blaming well-wishing parents. It's time you stop living someone else's life. ♦

Dropping class shouldn't elicit peer judgment

by ManasiGarg

Two months ago, I dropped AP Computer Science.

It was one of the hardest academic decisions I've ever made. For weeks, I went back and forth. I made multiple pro-con lists. I argued with my parents. I talked to both my counselor and my teacher, multiple times.

The rewards of dropping the class seemed immense. But thinking about actually leaving the class made my stomach knot up — after all, if I dropped, I wouldn't be taking any AP classes. What would my peers think? What would colleges think? And most importantly, what did dropping what others had dubbed "an easy A" course imply about my own intelligence?

At Saratoga High, where it seems like every other person has a position at a Stanford research lab or an internship with a tech startup or has performed at Carnegie Hall, it's easy to feel like you're always falling behind. To mitigate this fear, students often push themselves beyond their limits, loading up on AP courses, extracurriculars, volunteering and more. But there are only 24 hours in a day — you can't commit to and

excel at every activity or class.

With students juggling such tightly packed schedules, sometimes the only feasible decision is to decrease workload and manage time is to drop a class entirely or switch into a lower level class of the same subject. Unfortunately, in our academic-centric school, there's a stigma that's undeniably intertwined with choosing "easier" classes for the sake of maintaining a healthy balance among all our activities.

Dropping a course feels like a sign flashing "I am not good enough," or "failure," to your peers.

This year, 184 students dropped a course, leaving an unscheduled period, and 113 students dropped a course and then replaced it with a lower level (such as dropping Algebra 2 Honors and replacing it with Algebra 2), according to registrar Robert Wise. Yet as common as such drops are, the negative view on dropping a class still pervades.

The school's intense academic environment often pressures students to remain in higher level courses, even if they can't keep up with the material.

Because students are always comparing themselves with their peers, dropping feels like admitting to a weakness. Especially when so many other students are going above and beyond in terms of academics and extracurriculars, considering dropping or actually dropping a course feels like a sign flashing "I am not good enough," or "failure," to your peers. Whether or not other students comment, their judgment feels implicit. It is already tough to admit to yourself that you may need to drop a course; it feels like a blow to your own capabilities.

But judgment from others adds unneeded weight to an already daunting decision. Students need a clear head, free from the opinions of their peers, to analyze both the pros and cons of dropping a course, and peer pressure may misguide someone into remaining in a course they may otherwise want or need to drop.

Additionally, it is unfair to assume that just because a student is dropping a class, they lack intelligence or drive. There are

countless other reasons a student could be dropping a course. Some may use the extra time to be productive in ways more fulfilling to them, or to prevent excessive stress and maintain their mental health.

For example, it seems unintuitive and even counterproductive for a prospective humanities major to needlessly endure in a STEM-related AP course and vice versa, especially if that class is negatively affecting their academic performance elsewhere and if the class doesn't align with their interests.

Regardless of a student's reasons to drop, they shouldn't feel as if they are lesser than their peers. While some students may not be able to shake off their own self-doubt, it is easier to gain self-acceptance with support from friends and family.

And if a student makes the tough decision to drop, it is most likely for a good reason — one that will end up benefiting them in the long term. Luckily, there is a fairly simple way to, if not fully remove, at least curb this negative stigma. Students should focus on what courses work best for them and their interests, not concern themselves with what classes their peers are taking — or dropping. ♦



Guys' preferences for traditions matter too

by AndrewLee

Despite — or perhaps because of — all of the hype surrounding formal, the dance often proves to be a stressful and chaotic event that many students try to prepare for in advance — sometimes even months before it happens.

Much of the focus centers around girls, whether it be what dress they are going to wear, which friends they ask to their preformals and who they ask to do their makeup the morning of the dance.

So what about the guys? With everything that girls have to stress about, the issues that boys have to deal with for formal must pale in comparison. Aside from all the talk about which girl to ask, guys appear to have relatively few concerns. But contrary to popular belief, there are many things that guys have to deal with or worry about when it comes to formal, possibly as much as girls.

When it comes down to it, many guys feel as if they do not have as much freedom in choosing formal activities, especially events like preformal and choosing what outfits to wear to the dance. Sure, it can be argued that anybody can decide whether or not they conform to the pre-established culture of formal, but social pressure on boys to follow through still exists, and people should try to involve more of their input.

Traditionally, guys are expected to be the ones to ask someone to go to formal, prepare an elaborate asking, pay for his partner's ticket, wear attire that matches his partner's taste in color and attend his partner's pre-formal, among other obligations. Asking someone to formal can be stressful, and buying two tickets can be painful to every guy's wallet.

Even preformal, which is supposed to be a relaxed, get-together opportunity to take photos with friends before the dance, can end up being one of the most awkward and

stressful part of formal for many guys.

Although they can have a choice, most guys are expected to attend the same preformal of his partner's friends, meaning that they will spend their preformals with people who they mostly do not know. With issues like peer pressure regarding this expectation, not conforming with this norm could be seen as selfish or mildly "socially unacceptable."

Although this tradition might not pose a problem to large friend groups of boys and girls that are going to formal with each other, many guys have to deal with a dreadfully long event where they virtually do not know any other guy who is there. While attending the preformal of his partner's friends may make her happy, it definitely can put the boys in an uncomfortable situation where they are forced to linger around and socialize with guys they are unfamiliar with.

The same could be said about choosing which color tie to wear. Although this doesn't necessarily add more stress before an event like preformal and isn't necessarily a custom that always has to be followed, guys should still be able to have more input on what color he and his partner should match to wear.

Contrary to popular belief, guys do have a preference when it comes to what clothes they want to wear and what colors they think they look better in. Furthermore, ties are the one article of clothing a guy can wear that can differentiate him from the monolithic swarm of black and grey suits everyone else wears to formal. But of course, ties pose nowhere near as much of a problem as dresses, and it's safe to say that a majority of guys are most definitely kind enough to allow their ladies to choose their color.

In the end, all pairs going to formal are different, but giving guys more opportunities to express their preferences can be a little more beneficial to all. ♦

Critics of on-campus venue are misguided

by MeganChen

To the disappointment of many students, Winter Formal will be held on campus in the gym on Dec. 1. For many, the prospect of an off-campus venue combined with the formal dress code is the main motivation for students to attend, especially underclassmen, for whom is this the only formally dressed dance.

Students have complained that the school can afford expensive events such as Breaking Down the Walls, which cost \$40,000, but seemingly can't pay for another off-campus formal.

However, despite the drastic changes to Winter Formal this year and subsequent student backlash surrounding it, the new venue on campus isn't as bad as some students might make it seem.

Although it is disappointing for students who are used to having formals off campus, most fail to recognize that the school had on-campus formals only three years ago; we're simply returning to how things were in the past. For most other schools in the area, including private schools, formals are held on campus, and some schools even have prom on campus.

Many have also complained about the high prices of the dance compared to other off-campus dances. Winter Formal three years ago at the Discovery Museum started at \$30, the dance two years ago at the San Jose Country Club started at \$40 and last year tickets started at \$50 for Hyatt Santa Clara. This year's tickets start at \$40, as opposed to \$20 for Homecoming.

Although \$40 seems expensive for a dance, students should understand that the budget for Winter Formal has been gradually decreasing over the past few years. Because the budget for formal is separate from all other school events, including other dances, prices need to be

high in order to raise enough money to hold off-campus formals in the future.

Complaints about the prices are also based on the misconception that all school activities come from the same budget. However, Breaking Down the Walls's large budget came from the administration, while the dance commission has a separate, limited budget for formal.

The school had on-campus formals just three years ago; we're simply returning to how things were in the past.

Because of formal's more limited budget, students will be the ones who are at-large supporting the event with ticket purchases.

The prices also reflect the extra elements of formal that other on-campus dances don't have. Since the school no longer needs to pay for buses, the money will also go to additional features that haven't been added to the dance in previous years. These changes include arcade games, professional decorations, taco and ice cream catering and even an Arabian themed lounge, which makes \$40 sound like a more pretty reasonable price. If anything, students should be glad that they can still attend a dance with so many features despite the shrinking budget.

Students should change their mindsets about an on-campus formal; the venue is a key aspect, but far from the most important part of the dance. Instead, students should look forward to the memories and experiences they will get from this year's Winter Formal. ♦

100-WORD RANTS

LUNCHES: MAKE THEM EITHER BIGGER OR CHEAPER

by AlanZu

Lunches in the cafeteria are small: Macaroni is sold in tiny plastic containers, and soup is in tiny cups. But prices for such items is expensive; for example, salads in regular-sized hot-dog trays go for \$4.50.

Whenever I buy lunch, I feel cheated. I only have so much money to spend on

lunch each day, so I am forced to buy the cheapest items in order to have enough to eat. Recently, the cafeteria began selling half sandwiches for \$4 — a further outrage, especially since it used to sell whole ones for the same price.

School lunches should improve in one of two possible ways. Either lunch prices should decrease, or lunch quantities should increase. ♦

CUTTING: ASKING OTHERS TO BUY LUNCH COUNTS

by JacksonGreen

I'm waiting in line to get some food at the cafeteria, with about five people in front of me.

Suddenly, someone walks over to the second person in line, hands them some money, and says, "Hey, can you get me chips and a cup of noodles?"

This really gets on my nerves, mostly

because they essentially just cut the entire line, and nobody (except me) seems to care.

To all of you people out there who like to do this, you might think that you're not cutting in line because you're only "giving your friend the money to buy food," but please, just go to the back of the line and wait like the rest of us. It doesn't take that long. ♦

DESKS: WHY ARE THEY ALWAYS SHRINKING AS WE GROW?

by ShreyaKatkere

In elementary school, I remember having desks wide enough for 16-year-old me to take a nap on. Now, I barely have enough space to fit two pieces of paper on most high school classroom desks. Why do our desks at school progressively get smaller as we get older?

For high school students, it's often already hard to fit a textbook and a note sheet on one desk. But when we need to use laptops in class to complete an online assignment, our other materials either go in our laps or onto the floor. It's hard to take notes when a Chromebook takes up the entire space on the desk.

If anything, elementary school students should have the smaller desks be-

cause they don't have anything to put on their desks, and we high school students should get the bigger ones, because now we actually have a use for them. ♦



AIR DRYERS: GROSSER THAN PAPER

by AllisonHartley

Every time I finish washing my hands in the bathroom, my heart breaks. There are no paper towels to dry my hands — only the rusting white machines with no significant drying value that blow bathroom particles on my hands for over a minute are available.

Since I'm a germophobe, the air dryers in the bathrooms are not an option

for me — they concentrate the spores from the air and spit them back onto my freshly washed hands, leaving them more germ-covered than before. Worse yet, the dryers don't even do what they're supposed to do: dry my hands.

Paper towels aren't a wasteful luxury; they are a necessary item for good and proper hygiene. And don't even get me started on those nasty flip-flop bathroom passes. ♦

POCKETS: TOO SMALL TO FIT STUFF FOR GIRLS

by ChristineZhang

I've tried many times to stick my phone into the front pocket of my jeans, only to have the pocket nowhere near big enough to fit my phone.

There's no point in tiny pockets. I can only use them to stash spare coins. And don't get me started on fake pockets.

and I find them highly uncomfortable. When I put my phone or wallet in my back pocket, I can't sit down properly, and it barely holds my phone anyway. But even if I put my phone or wallet there, I run the risk of it falling out or being stolen without me ever knowing.

To all clothing companies out there, if I'm spending over \$20 on a pair of jeans, I expect that it will come with real, working pockets, not useless ones. ♦

TABLES: QUAD TABLES ARE A RARITY DURING LUNCH

by MuthuPalaniappan

In freshman year, I sat at a table every lunch and peacefully ate with my friends. However, now as an upperclassman, I've noticed a lack of lunch tables in the quad.

When the bell rings, freshmen sprint out to secure a lunch table. But students who come from classrooms farther from

the quad are forced to eat elsewhere. Some students have resorted to eating in classrooms, or even on the ground amongst the planters.

Whether the shortage is because of an increase in the student population or a decrease in lunch table population, the school needs to do something to fix this crisis. Let's get this bread? More like let's get these lunch tables. ♦

GRADING: DOESN'T HAVE TO BE EXTRA PETTY

by ElaineSun

I used to never have to worry about the quality of my homework. Unfortunately, that has now changed. Ever since I entered high school, some teachers have taken points off my homework for the most trivial things.

Now, I perpetually worry about not showing enough work even though I completely understood a math problem, or forgetting to put page numbers on my MLA format paper and subsequently getting half credit on the entire essay. Sometimes, I understand where teachers are coming from when they dock points for minor infractions on our homework. They want us to understand the material we learned in class, but taking off 10 points from a 30-point

assignment just because we did not correct our own homework with red pen does exactly the opposite of helping us learn the material. ♦



PACKETS: AN EXTRA COST FOR APPLICATIONS

by MuthuPalaniappan

The college application process is super expensive. Each school already has an application fee, which can sometimes cost up to \$100, and on top of that, the school charges \$25 for teacher recommendation packets.

Since most college applications require teacher recommendations and SSRs, the packets are a way for SHS to

organize the student's college list and deadlines. However, the student also has to request teacher recommendations on Naviance. So what's the point of having both?

The online system seems much more organized and efficient without wasting all the paper and money needed for packets. It doesn't seem like we need another unnecessary cost and hassle in this already overwhelming process. ♦

Wrong call in having class

by Shreya **Katkere** & Selena **Liu**

With Saratoga reaching an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 234 the Thursday before Thanksgiving break, the air quality was deemed "very unhealthy" by Saratoga's weather station. That would have been the moment for education officials to cancel school, but unwisely chose not to.

While the normal air quality in Saratoga is equivalent to smoking only half a cigarette every day, air quality worsened so much on Thursday night that breathing smoke was equivalent to smoking six cigarettes every day, according to Pix11 News Station.

Despite these alarming health warnings, on Friday, students had to walk for prolonged periods during passing in the school's outdoor corridors to reach their classrooms because of the Santa Clara County's continuing of classes in public high schools.

While many schools in the county that continued classes on Friday, like Homestead and Wilcox, were generally unaffected by the smoke due to indoor hallways, Saratoga High made its students particularly susceptible to the smoke, since students could reach their classes only by walking outside.

Not to mention, many private schools in the Bay Area with lower AQI smoke levels than SHS also decided to cancel classes.

On a petition to the school board sent on Nov. 15, many students complained the

smoke was making them suffocate, cough and even vomit.

The school addressed these complaints in their Air Quality advisory, stating, "If you or your child is particularly susceptible to respiratory or heart trouble, please follow medical guidelines first and keep the school informed of any special precautions or absences."

What the school failed to realize is that the entire student body was susceptible to hazardous smoke conditions. By stating that only those with "respiratory or heart trouble" should reconsider coming to school, school officials demonstrated a lack of concern for most students' well-being.

The school and Santa Clara county ignored the clearly unhealthy air quality on Thursday night and demonstrated that they prioritize the school days over student well-being by not canceling school.

As massive fall wildfires are seeming to become the new normal in California, schools are clearly going to have to think harder about specific policies regarding poor air quality. ♦

School made the right call

by Jeffrey **Ma** & Callia **Yuan**

After the Butte County blazes earlier this month, surrounding areas were impacted by bad air quality. Prior to Thanksgiving Break, air quality indexes swelled from a healthy score of 50 to a hazardous 240 in Saratoga.

Students, teachers and parents alike raised questions about whether having class was the safest or best choice for student health.

Despite pressure to cancel school, the district board and Santa Clara County made the correct choice to keep schools open.

Colleges where the AQI went up to the mid-300s, were the first to cancel, and many high schools in the Bay Area, such as Los Altos High, followed suit.

However, unhealthy air is generally a much greater health concern for college campuses, since students often have to get to spread out classes out in the open, as opposed to the relatively closed and tight layout of high schools. While often times the only effective method for colleges to ensure student health is to cancel classes,

high schools can mostly corral students to stay indoors and minimize exposure to hazardous air.

While outdoor hallways made it impossible for students here to completely avoid the smoke, staying indoors for as much times as possible, kept students' contact with it to a minimum.

Petitions and complaints to have school canceled were mostly focused on Friday, Nov. 16, after announcements that San Francisco and East Bay schools were canceling for the day. Calls for mirroring those schools' decisions fail to account for the poorer air quality and higher AQI numbers in those corresponding areas.

On that day, San Francisco exhibited an AQI well above 200, squarely in the "very unhealthy" section of the spectrum, with serious adverse health effects. The city's usual fog was replaced by a thick layer of heavy smoke, greatly decreasing visibility as well. By contrast, Saratoga and the South Bay as a whole remained below 200 — not good but not quite crisis level.

On social media, many students joked that going to school could be carcinogenic and the air quality was akin to Beijing or New Delhi's. Students who adopted this joking perspective failed to see the real issue — such a view only trivialized the actual situation. The temporary poor air quality we endured pales in comparison to the damage and deaths the fire caused in Paradise and surrounding areas. ♦



GRAPHIC BY KAREN CHOW

Calling tests 'easy' only damages others' self-esteem

by Christine **Zhang**

"Oh my gosh, that test was so easy. I finished 20 minutes before the bell even after checking my work twice."

Comments such as these often follow tests or quizzes. Some students even make similar remarks about classwork or math homework problems, telling their classmates how quickly they finished a problem set or got through a reading.

But no matter how innocuous or harmless they may seem, these types of comments are often hurtful. It does not matter how easy anyone might have found a test; no one should ever say that an exam was "easy."

Not only do these remarks heavily discourage others who might have found the test more challenging, but it does absolutely nothing but inflate the egos of those who say them to unhealthy levels.

If a student who struggled on a test hears a classmate say that the assessment was easy, they will likely feel incompetent at the subject and may lose motivation. Feelings of hopelessness often ensue, especially when the student cares about the subject, and lowered self-esteem levels become inevitable.

As many counselors would say, an innocent comment made by one student can quickly become a hurtful one that damages the self-esteem of their peers. The last thing a struggling student needs is the belittlement of their supposedly smarter classmates. The student might feel pressured to work harder to match their peers, but this desire should stem from their own determination rather than the burning sting of a classmate's insensitive comment.

Due to the competitive nature of Saratoga High, many students feel the need to be a step ahead of their peers, even if it means

bragging and showing off to assert that they are more advanced in a particular field.

Worse yet, the competitive drive bred by boastful comments only exacerbates the existing culture of competition, incentivizing those who can call tests or assignments easy.

It does not matter how easy anyone might have found a test; no one should ever say that an exam was "easy."

Students might also make these comments about a test to increase their own self-confidence and assure themselves that they did well, but they should keep these thoughts to themselves. Although it can

be frustrating to not speak out loud, several others might be spared from feelings of worthlessness or incompetence.

This problem with calling schoolwork easy also pertains to homework in STEM classes. Especially the application of a tough concept is required, students who couldn't fully follow the lesson may need help with homework, which is no reason for them to feel like they are failing the subject.

There should be no shame in asking for help, and remarking that the problem is easy only humiliates students who are slower in learning. It's understandable that students want to feel more confident in their own abilities, but they do not have to undermine the hard work others in the process.

Scoring well on a test or quickly finishing a problem set should be a silent victory, not one that has to be shared with the entire classroom or rubbed in the faces of peers. ♦

Trump agenda cannot truly deny transgender rights

by Marisa **Kingsley**

According to the Movement Advancement Project (MAP), only 45 percent of the national LGBT population lives in a state with a high policy tally — defined as "the number of laws and policies within a state that help drive equality for LGBT people."

This statistic means that only 17 states have laws that guarantee the protection of all people of the LGBT community. Sadly, a recent proposal by the Trump administration seeks to decrease this number further.

On Oct. 21, the transgender community was shaken when The New York Times acquired a memo that showed the Trump administration is considering legally defining sex as "based on immutable biological traits identifiable by or before birth."

While Trump's trial balloon might generate praise from his supporters, it would deny fundamental rights to transgender people. And this change signals a dangerous future that might have severe, far-reaching consequences for those communities if Trump's ideas manifest into real policies.

According to CNN, the American medical community currently recognizes sex as something classified by biological traits, and gender as socially constructed traits exhibited by men and women. Thus, there has been a call for guidelines that protect people who don't fit into those boxes, such as those who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming; several courts have enacted laws that protect these citizens by prohibiting sex stereotyping.

The education department defined Title IX, a federal civil rights law that forbids discrimination based on sex in schools that receive government funding, to include discrimination based on gender identity.

Yet Title IX doesn't include the definition of "sex" or "discrimination." This is where the recent memo comes in.

According to the memo, the Trump administration seeks to change the legal definition of sex in Title IX to be "the sex listed on a person's birth certificate, as originally issued ... unless rebutted by reliable genetic evidence." If adopted, this change could deny transgender people the federal and fundamental civil rights that guarantee

protections in education, employment and access to health care.

Early in Trump's presidency, his administration rescinded the Education Department's recommendation that allowed students to use facilities and pronouns that match their gender identity. In October 2017, former Attorney General Jeff Sessions revoked guidance that protected transgender workers from discrimination. Trump has also signed an order that would ban transgender military recruits.

The administration should not seek to undo case laws that protect transgender citizens, and states have their own laws to protect such people. Transgender people are highly vulnerable to discrimination and in need of such protections.

Many people, including transgenders, other members of the LGBT community and other allies, have reacted angrily to this proposal.

Science has proven that despite what many conservatives may believe, being transgender is not a choice a person makes — or one that can be reversed. Many studies have shown that transgender individuals more closely represent the brain of the gender they identify with, rather than the one they were born as. Due to rejection, harassment, discrimination or violence by

their family, peers, employment agencies, or healthcare providers, and have a much higher risk of committing suicide, as evidenced by the 41 percent of transgender individuals who have reported attempting suicide.

Letting transgender individuals express themselves for who they are is absolutely vital. We must treat these people as valid members of society. Someone's gender expression or sexuality does not determine their worth — that's saved for their character.

Things like respecting pronouns and correlating bathroom use, covering for gender reassignment surgeries are small prices to pay for the increased quality of life for transgender individuals.

There are an estimated 1.4 million transgender people in the U.S. Laws should be made to seek to protect them. Representatives are elected and appointed for the purpose of serving all people, and when they specifically exclude transgender people, they are doing the exact opposite.

No matter what the Trump administration does, nothing can erase transgender individuals and those of us who recognize and support transgender people must advocate and vocalize their support; we must raise each other up, and save our judgment for their character and morals. ♦

New downtown restaurant worthy of praise

by Ava **Hooman** & Muthu **Palaniappan**

Despite the limited space available in downtown Saratoga, several hole-in-the-wall restaurants there have become surprisingly impressive. Indo Cafe is one of these places.

The Indonesian restaurant is hidden behind the UPS store in downtown. It faces a back parking lot, hiding it from passersby; customers must walk down the alley between the Rose Market and Mio Vicino to find it. Since the restaurant is so hidden, we came to know about it only after looking through Yelp for restaurants to eat at for lunch.

The restaurant has only a few tables, but its menu is extremely extensive. They have small plates, a variety sides, curries, rice combos and an original list of drinks and pastries.

It felt more like eating in someone's kitchen, as the kitchen was exposed and

the tables were not formally set. Customers looked relaxed in the friendly and informal environment.

We ordered both the vegetable curry and the padang rice combo. The curry, which was \$11, was very tasty and can be ordered spicy or mild. Included in this dish was bamboo shoot, an unusual ingredient that added a great flavor. The rice combo, also \$11, included steamed rice, beef rendang, chili egg, chicken saté and young jackfruit curry. A variety of other spices and flavors completed the dish, making it a customer favorite.

For dessert, there was a lack of options. We ordered the cafe's only offering, bubur campur. For \$8 we were afraid it might be a bust, but we were pleasantly surprised by the combination of rice pudding, mochi and black glutinous rice pudding. What may sound like a questionable combination at first quickly proved to be a tasty surprise. The dessert was a pleasant explosion of sweet flavors and we both came to the same



FALCON // ALEX WANG

Hidden behind the UPS store in downtown, Indo Cafe offers an extensive and tasty menu.

conclusion that it was easily the best part of our meal.

Although the restaurant is hard to find, the food and friendly service makes the experience worth it. The food is priced rea-

sonably as a majority of it contains meat and rare ingredients. So next time you find yourself wondering where to eat next, just make a quick stop to Indo Cafe for an amazing meal. ♦

TOP 5 STORES FOR CHRISTMAS GIFT-BUYING

<p>① LUSH</p> <p>TO-BUY LIST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -BATH BOMBS -FACE SCRUBS -MASSAGE BARS 	<p>② YANKEE CANDLE</p> <p>TO-BUY LIST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -SCENTED CANDLES -CANDLE HOLDERS -NIGHT LIGHTS 	<p>③ Typo</p> <p>TO-BUY LIST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -BULLET JOURNALS -FOUNTAIN PENS -SKETCHING KITS 	<p>④ Bath & Body Works</p> <p>TO-BUY LIST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -HAND SANITIZERS -SHAMPOO SETS -BODY SPRAYS 	<p>⑤ GameStop</p> <p>TO-BUY LIST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -NEW GAMES -HEADSET -XBOX
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GRAPHIC BY SELENA LIU

Lunch date with a celebrity: meeting Ronan Farrow

the hart-throb

Allison Hartley



There are a nearly infinite number of possible lunch dates — amazing athletes, attractive actors and well-known politicians, but my top pick is Ronan Farrow.

I first discovered him on a regular day after school when I sat with my mom facing the TV, my feet propped up on the coffee table and my attention split between the newscasters and my phone. My mom mentioned something about some guy named "Ronan Farrow," whom I wasn't familiar with. So I took to Wikipedia, a great source of knowledge, to find out more.

Before I could even get to the overview, I was struck by a gorgeous — if pale — portrait of Ronan. So, I read more.

Ronan, a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist and former diplomat in the State Department during the Obama administration, broke the story about the Harvey Weinstein sexual assault scandal in

the pages of The New Yorker magazine. He started college at age 11, made trips to Sudan with his mother, the actress Mia Farrow, and received a Juris of Doctor degree (J.D.) from Yale Law School at age 21.

Now at age 30, Ronan wrote his most recent book "War on Peace" about the diminishing role of the State Department.

He's estranged from his father, the controversial director Woody Allen who married Ronan's adopted sister back in the '90s. Because of his lack of resemblance to Allen, Ronan is rumored to be the biological child of famed singer Frank Sinatra, Mia Farrow's ex-husband before she married Allen.

By the time I took a deep dive into Ronan's Instagram, part of me was outright fangirling. Not only is he good-looking and smart, but his captions show some good humor.

Before I could even get to the overview, I was struck by a gorgeous — if pale — portrait of Ronan. So, I read more. Ronan, a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist and former diplomat in the State Department during the Obama administration, broke the story about the Harvey Weinstein sexual assault scandal in

the likes of Ronan Farrow, we would meet for lunch. I'd leave the choice of restaurant up to him because I wouldn't know where to take such a busy journalist. And, if I'm really lucky, maybe his mother Mia Farrow would swing by. Maybe.

I can easily imagine myself being anxious about my sweaty palm when I shake his hand, trying not to betray my eagerness.

Throwing out that caution, I'd accidentally bombard him with questions: Do you realize you effectively sparked the #MeToo movement? What do you think about the impact you've made? Then I'd kick myself for not playing it cool.

Before stumbling over my own order, I would be shocked by his choice — Ronan Farrow likes clam chowder? Wild.

My own life would seem as pale as him in comparison to what he is working on. Of course, this is lunch, not an interview, so it would be rude

not to talk about my own life. But, whatever I tell him, he will never know about that column I wrote about having lunch with him.

The conversation would likely turn to some current events. Knowing Ronan, he would be the one writing the topical stories, but I would try my best to be able to sound relevant.

Based on his multiple Instagram captions referring to Pokemon, I wouldn't be surprised if he said something like, "This is the size of a baby Squirtle," amidst it all.

I'd laugh, not really knowing who or what a Squirtle is.

The waiter would arrive with the bill too soon — or possibly not soon enough (I'm not eliminating the possibility that Ronan is a terrible lunch date). More likely, I would secretly glare at the waiter for effectively ending our conversation.

I would snatch the check — I would certainly not allow Ronan Farrow to pay for my lunch — and thank him for meeting me. As we leave, I would probably embarrass myself by trying to say something witty, and casually suggest that we keep in touch.

Maybe I wouldn't play it cool, but if I landed a lunch with Ronan Farrow, I must have been doing something right. ♦



Courtesy of Eonline.com

November 30, 2018



A Whole New World

STUDENTS SHARE THEIR FORMAL TIPS AND TRICKS

Tip: do not ask too early

Goody
-2-Xu's

Jeffrey Xu

"Hatred," she texted me, changing our Messenger chat emoji to an angry face.

"LOL," I responded, enjoying these midday text conversations more and more. I had been meaning to ask her something — a dance or a movie or a study date; it just never seemed like the right time.

Palms sweaty, I contemplated my next move. I had known her since freshman year, but we had barely talked enough back then to even be considered acquaintances. Fast forward a couple years, and with every playful insult I could feel that our non-romantic friendship was blossoming.

Was that enough for me to ask her to Winter Formal? I wasn't sure. It was only early September. Was this a good time? Screw it, I decided. What did I have to lose?

"Winter formal?" I texted back.

Confused, she asked me to clarify what I meant. I could sense that our conversation, which originated with my lightheartedly making fun of her height, was about to take a very serious turn.

"I mean, since we hate each other so much, we might as well go to winter formal together, right?" I offered, still trying to continue the joke.

"Haha, very funny," she replied. And then silence. Did she think I was joking? Perhaps this was the downside of making our entire conversation a big meme.

"So can I get an answer?" I asked, trying to add a little more urgency behind my question to convey my sincerity.

As the three dots appeared on screen, indicating that she was typing, the suspense grew. I could hardly handle it. My heart was pounding in my chest, so loud that I could not even hear my own mother calling me upstairs for lunch. After what seemed like an eternity, I finally received a response.

"Oh, so you weren't joking," she replied.

And? What was her verdict? It was as if my future hinged upon her next words. And I suppose in many ways, the future did indeed hang in the balance.

"Ummm I'll respond in a couple months."

What now? A couple months? That seemed like an awfully long time for a simple response to a straightforward question. But, in her defense, I suppose it was a pretty weighty decision. In retrospect, perhaps asking in September about a dance in December was too proactive.

Deference beats rejection, I comfortingly told myself. It would be easier on my feelings ... or so I hoped.

I was assured that time would tell. Yet, for an entire month, it was impossible to decrypt my potential date's intentions.

The good news for me: After a month and a few days, she said yes. So now, all I have to worry about is her not changing her mind and pray that she actually shows up to the dance. ♦

Heels: invest in high quality shoes

Wang-
ster

Jessica Wang

Michael Jordan once said, "It's not about the shoes. It's about what you do in them." Unfortunately, this truism certainly does not apply to Winter Formal, the school dance where half the venue ends up littered with abandoned high heels.

The actual dance is about three hours, but including pre-formal and other obligations, the entire time spent at formal-related activities will probably average around five to six hours. One hour is spent taking pictures, which, for the sensible girls out there, is the only time that their feet will spend in heels.

For those who love to suffer, or just love an extra couple of inches of leg, never fear: Beauty is pain and spending six hours in pretty torture devices will definitely hurt.

Many girls tend to make the mistake of prioritizing their clothing over their shoes. Yes, the dress needs to be cute, but I recom-

mend that you first invest in a quality pair of shoes, because in the end they're the ones to support your entire body weight. Better material, fit and durability are honestly worth splurging a little on.

Higher-end brands generally use sturdier, yet more comfortable and breathable material, which will significantly reduce the possibility of getting blisters within the first hour of dancing; higher quality heels also actually have padding on the sole so your feet aren't incredibly sore the next day.

Most of this seems blatantly obvious, but why spend more when the same style is being sold for much less? It's hard to believe, but there are legitimate reasons certain brands such as Sam Edelman and Steve Madden are more expensive than others.

When more expensive brands design a shoe, the shape of the foot, the ankle and the width of the heel, for example, tend to be all taken into account when producing a heel, which means "pretty leg lines" when people wear them. A nice pair of heels becomes an enhancement to the dress rather than an add-

on; if you plan on attending formal for multiple years, this means that the same heels can be paired with a great variety of cheaper dresses.

That being said, when it comes to school dances, stilettos too often become a kind of unintended weapon. Think of those times when either someone steps on your foot or you step on theirs. And the amount of pain is inversely proportional with the diameter of the heel. If your feet weren't hurting before, they sure are now after being stabbed in this manner.

Ultimately, the most pain-free course of action is to just slip on a second pair of comfortable shoes and drop the heels: After all, formal didn't happen unless you took the pictures to prove it.

For those who want to tough it out, chances are you won't be alone in your 3.5-inch open-toed black heels with the ankle straps. But there's not shame in abandoning them, because even the most expensive heels can't prevent the inevitable suffering your feet might experience on the big night. That's what ibuprofen and prayers are for. ♦

Fashion on a budget: suits

Lee-ve
me alone

Andrew Lee

When it comes to Winter Formal, everyone seems to rush out at the last minute to buy their unique dress or suit, desperately trying to find a fashionable set of attire for the big annual dance. But with this surge of purchases in formal clothing, many students are met with a dreaded "out of stock" in red text on every single website or ridiculous pricing on suits and pants, regardless of whether they are being rented out or not.

Fortunately, unlike almost everything in life, there exists a solution to such a dilemma, especially when it comes to formal-suitable clothing for boys.

If you're late into the dress-up game and come to face this problem, the answer is easy: Forget about private, expensive tailors or the ever so alluring Men's Warehouse; instead, look into discount retailers such as Nordstrom Rack or Burlington Coat Factory.

After all, not only do these large discount stores offer the

best prices, but they give customers the freedom of mixing and matching different pieces of clothes.

Having had a disastrous experience leading up to my first high school formal last year, I ended up relying on these stores as my personal saviors in the days before the hectic winter dance. As I scrambled to secure a date and prepare for my many exams at school, looking for a formal outfit was the last thing on my mind.

On top of the already \$40 to attend the dance, I had to find a way to avoid the ridiculous prices of Men's Warehouse and various other tailors. Call me cheap if you will, but paying several hundred dollars for an outfit to wear during a three-hour event was just too much of a bullet to bite.

But everything changed once I stepped foot into the Burlington Coat Factory located in the WestGate mall.

The store was a huge warehouse of every single piece of clothing you could ever need, from scarfs and watches to coats and rain jackets.

After several trips to Burlington Coat Factory for pants and a jacket (finding the right sizes was most difficult) and Nord-

strom Rack for a pair of comfortable, padded dress shoes that adequately looked the part, I was able to put together a decent outfit with the help of my mother and formal date.

The total cost of my purchases added up to a little over a \$100, a bargain compared to the steep price of around \$175 to rent a suit from Tuxedo Warehouse.

To anybody who is interested, I looked FINE. No, really, I thought I looked all right. Sure, maybe the suit was a tad too large and the pants a little too long, but it wasn't the end of the world, especially since these issues were easy to hide in photos.

In the end, formal turned out to be a blast. I got more compliments than criticism, especially from my date, which was much more than I could have asked for.

But as thankful as I am to Burlington Coat Factory and Nordstrom Rack for their lower prices, I hate to admit that this year I will not be returning to buy my formal outfit from these retailers. Peer pressure has gotten the best of me, so don't be surprised if you see me in a nicely tailored, well-fitting and expensive suit, the kind you're less likely to find at Burlington Coat Factory. ♦



'The Crimes of Grindelwald' fails to impress Potterheads

by Manasi Garg

"The Crimes of Grindelwald," released on Nov. 16, should have been full of the spellbinding sorcery of J.K. Rowling's storytelling. But in the second installment of the "Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them" movie series, despite the portrayal of four wizarding cities and the blossoming cast of new wizards, there isn't much magic.

The first movie, released in 2016, had a lackluster plot, but my hopes were high for the second movie, which promised new characters and an introduction to the dark wizard Grindelwald, played by Johnny Depp, who was briefly introduced in the original Harry Potter series as Albus Dumbledore's friend-turned-enemy.

Technically, the movie delivers on those promises, but it is overfilled with subplots and filler scenes.

"The Crimes of Grindelwald" was supposed to follow Obscure Credence Barebones and the people tracking him down through Europe. Credence's importance is heavily downplayed — we are told that he is essential to the impending wizard battle between Grindelwald's evil forces and the world's magical ministries, but urgency is never conveyed.

The other goal of the movie was to introduce the audience to Grindelwald's evil, but this falls flat. When compared to the Harry

Potter world's original villain, Voldemort, who incited fear, Grindelwald comes off as more of a silver-tongued dictator.

Additionally, the subplots of characters such as Leta Lestrange dilute the movie's excitement. The whole movie feels like a setup for the next movie, down to the lukewarm twists and weak cliffhanger.

That's not to say the movie is entirely lacking, as I genuinely did enjoy it. Eddie Redmayne's portrayal of Newt Scamander is fantastic; he makes the character more lovable than in the first.

The movie also contains more nods to the canon material of the original Harry Potter series and, like the first film, the technical artistry and graphics are also gorgeous.

In truth, most die-hard fans of Harry Potter like myself will still like the "Fantastic Beasts" series simply because it returns us to the world J.K. Rowling created. However, a less invested general audience probably won't be too interested in the remaining three movies of this series set to release in the future.

If you want to see "The Crimes of Grindelwald," don't bother going to the movies. Save some money and watch it a few months from now in the comfort of your own home, where you can binge watch the original Harry Potter series right afterwards as a reminder of the true magic of Rowling's world at its best. ♦

'Bohemian Rhapsody' lacks emotional punch

by Marisa Kingsley & Muthu Palaniappan

Before watching the biographical film "Bohemian Rhapsody," we barely knew anything about the 1970s rock band Queen. The band was big when our parents were growing up, so why would a movie about it now be relevant now? Sparked by curiosity, we decided to watch the highly anticipated movie.

"Bohemian Rhapsody" stars actors Rami Malek, Ben Hardy and Mike Myers. Malek plays the band's frontman, Freddie Mercury.

The movie follows Mercury's life and outlines the brief period when Mercury left the band.

The movie does a great job of keeping viewers captivated via visuals. The shots are colorful and lively, and the music is highly engaging.

As for the storyline itself, though, "Bohemian Rhapsody" is a little lacking.

Queen was one of the biggest bands of their time, so the filmmakers could have put in a little more effort to keep the script more interesting.

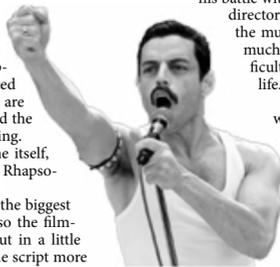
Despite this, we still enjoyed portrayals of the band, and the dynamics between the actors were lively and still kept us invested in the plot.

Mercury was a showstopping and captivating stage presence marked by his larger-than-life personality. Malek does an excellent job of portraying the frontman's quirks and flair.

The rest of the cast also gives good performances considering the lackluster script they were given. The dialogue, at times, feels cliché, without any personality. In addition to the weak writing, "Bohemian Rhapsody" only somewhat outlines Mercury's struggle with his sexuality and his battle with AIDS. Although the directors seem to emphasize the music, they didn't pay as much attention to the difficult details of Mercury's life.

Our conclusion: We would recommend the story of Queen as movie with a killer soundtrack and excellent cinematography.

But, it lacks the emotional depth we hoped for with a powerful artist. ♦



Rami Malek as Freddie Mercury



GRAPHIC BY CALLIA YUAN

'Wreck-it Ralph' sequel truly does break the internet

by Ava Hooman

As I walked into the local AMC 14 for Disney's sequel "Ralph Breaks the Internet," I was excited to return to the virtual world of Ralph and Vanellope after a six-year hiatus since the first movie, "Wreck it Ralph."

The movie, released on Nov. 21, involves arcade game character Ralph, voiced by John C. Reilly, and his friend, virtual racer Vanellope, voiced by Sarah Silverman, traveling to the world wide web in search of a replacement part to save Vanellope's arcade game, "Sugar Rush."

Although there is a new motive for the video game characters, "Ralph Breaks the Internet" contains the same underlying theme of a core friendship between Ralph and Vanellope.

The movie's plot moves fairly quickly, cutting into scenes filled with different cameos from Disney Princesses to Star Wars characters and even Tinkerbell.

However, with all this action, the emotion seems to be lost, especially after watching the tear-filled first film.

With the immense success of the original movie, directors Rich Moore and Phil Johnston may have taken the emotion a step back or two once they were reminded of the 4- to 12-year-old target audience the film had. Though some movies for children lack the emotional depth of reality in order to keep the young viewers uplifted,

it may actually be a wise decision to include some of those realities to educate children while still entertaining them.

As is usually the case, this sequel did not live up to the original.

With that being said, the creativity and animation the movie provides are commendable and the shocking end credits scene alone is a reason to head out and see the film. The series is not going anywhere and with talk of a third movie coming out in the future, watching the movie even with its flaws wouldn't be a bad idea. ♦



COURTESY OF DISNEY

'Creed II' is a predictable but satisfying follow-up

by Leo Cao & Alex Wang

Punches strike, blood flies and music hype up the mood in another heated fight scene in "Creed II," released on Nov. 21.

"Creed II" is the sequel to 2015 film "Creed," which itself is a spinoff of the popular "Rocky" series from the 1970s and 1980s. From the opening scenes of "Creed II," viewers have a general idea of where the movie is headed.

Michael B. Jordan's Adonis Creed starts out on the top of the world after winning the heavyweight championship. Simply put, there is no place for him to go but down. Echoing the basic outline of "Rocky II," he will reach rock bottom, and then crawl out of the hole for a triumphant return.

While the story is familiar, it is so well executed that viewers will not mind the predictability.

There are still some surprises. Rocky Balboa, played by Sylvester Stallone, has a unique narrative in the film, and Adonis's fiancée, Bianca, played by Tessa Thompson, acts as more than just a supporting character for Adonis. And most importantly, Ivan Drago, played by Dolph Lundgren, the villain from "Rocky IV," returns with his son

Viktor Drago.

Like the first "Creed" movie, "Creed II" focuses on legacy. In "Rocky IV," Rocky defeated Ivan Drago after Ivan killed Adonis's father in the ring. Ivan returns with his son, who has been training his whole life for a fight with Adonis.

Jordan pushes himself to add a great amount of depth to his character and create a deeply emotional performance. Moreover, his physical conditioning is remarkably impressive. According to his trainer Corey Calliet, Jordan "dieted hard, trained hard, and did a whole lot of boxing."

The fights in "Creed II" are stunningly personal. Adonis and Viktor make every jab and hook feel real. The camerawork is exceptional, often lingering disturbingly close to the fight, making the audience feel as if they are in the fight.

The film has a different director — relative newcomer Steven Caple Jr. replaces Ryan Coogler, who is instead an executive producer — but "Creed II" matches the original "Creed" in quality. For fans of Rocky, "Creed II" is a creative and well-executed sequel.

The only question left is where the series will go from here, as Adonis Creed now has his own legacy to maintain. ♦

Choice-based game is 'episode' of trouble

by Isaac Le & Andrew Li

As we played *Surviv.io*, a simple but addicting game, an ad featuring virtual characters popped up on our phone screens.

"Should we kiss?" a man asks a girl while hugging another girl.

"Yeah, go for it," the first girl responds.

Every day, we view this and similar pop up ads for the game "Episode: Choose Your Story" on our phones, and proceed to rapidly click the top right corner of our screens in order to close the disturbing ads.

"Episode: Choose Your Story" is a free mobile life simulation game that allows its players to take on the lives of multiple customizable characters. The game features hundreds of preset stories for players to experience, such as "Loving Bad" and "Troublemaker."

After seeing Episode ads come up so much, we finally decided to give Episode a shot. We immediately had suspicions that this game was going to be just as disturbing as its ads. Our fears were only confirmed as we played through the game.

We chose to play the story "Troublemaker" and, upon starting the game, we were asked to customize our character, who could only be female.

When we were picking out her dress, there were three choices, only one of which could be accessed without spending real money for in game currency.

After finishing our character, who we named "Isaac," we then had to compete with another girl in a high school setting to win over a "bad boy" named Brody to complete "Troublemaker." In the story, Brody smokes a lot with his friends, and the other girl bullies the in-game Isaac.

The game is targeted toward children ages 12 and up, but many of the topics, including drug use and sexual content, presented in the game are more mature and not suitable for 12-year-olds. Even as 15-year-olds, we felt uncomfortable playing the game.

Throughout the course of the story, we were also unable to proceed without seeing multiple pop-up advertisements.

At this point, we decided that this game was awful. "Episode: Choose Your Story" is completely inappropriate and not suitable for young children, and the fact that the targeted age is 12 and above is ridiculous.

Our advice is to not play the game at all because of its repetitive plots and tasteless content. Overall, we give Episode one-quarter out of five stars. ♦



COURTESY OF EPISODE STUDIO

The Sims free mobile game impresses me

by Elaine Sun

As I browsed through the top charts in the App Store last month, I noticed that The Sims Mobile video game app crowned the list.

Usually I wouldn't play any life-simulation games: I'm an avid fan of .io games; I particularly enjoy narwhale.io, a game in which worm-like narwhals try to cut other narwhals in half with their horns. However, I decided to download The Sims Mobile because I've always wanted to play it and the app is free.

The Sims, first released as a computer game in 2000, is a game in which players create and control avatars, called Sims, in a virtual world. Sims can create relationships, pursue careers and explore hobbies. The free mobile app version, called The Sims Mobile, came out earlier this year.

The first thing I noticed when I downloaded the app was how much storage it took. 250 megabytes? My poor phone already has no storage, but with the deletion of a

couple apps, I was ready to play.

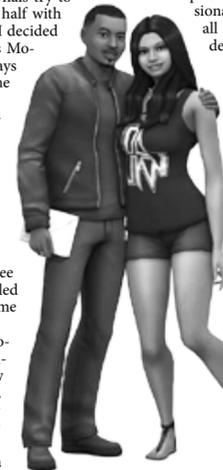
The first exciting task I encountered was designing my Sim, and I tried to make my Sim look as much like me as possible.

After I was satisfied with this new version of myself, I put her into the virtual world, and she landed a job as a barista and began developing her livelihood.

For a mobile game, the graphics are exceptional. The shapes look three-dimensional, the sound effects are nice, and all the architecture in the game is detailed.

However, The Sims isn't really a simulation of real life. It is more of a game where players advance their status, from relationships to professions to hobbies, and try to complete tasks and receive awards. It is probably possible to finish the entire game, but it would take a great deal of time and dedication.

The final verdict: The Sims Mobile is an exceptional game and is much better than narwhale.io because of its endless availability of activities. While the amount of storage the game takes could use some improvement, the level of detail is amazing for a free game, and I'm very disappointed I didn't discover it earlier. ♦



COURTESY OF ELECTRONIC ARTS



GRAPHIC BY SELENA LIU

Novices struggle in playing League of Legends

by Megan Chen & Callia Yuan

League of Legends, or LoL, is a third-person multiplayer online battle arena game, with its most popular mode being 5 versus 5 players. Since its release in 2009, LoL has become one of the most popular PC games, with over 100 million active players a month.

As avid fans of high-quality Facebook mini-games like 8-ball Pool and Endless Lake, we wanted to further advance our expertise in online games and challenge ourselves in the more difficult realm of PC gaming by playing LoL.

The gameplay itself seems simple enough: Players compete as unique champions that start at the same level and level up by killing NPCs, or minions, as well as enemy champions.

With each level, players can improve their champion's abilities, becoming more and more powerful as the game goes on.

The goal is to destroy a core structure at the end of the map, referred to as the "nexus." The paths are blocked by enemy turrets that can attack champions within a certain range, causing most of the gameplay to center around these turrets.

Having learned these basic rules, we each downloaded the game to gain a better understanding of why LoL is so popular.

The game walks new players through a couple tutorials so that they can grasp the basics of the game and try out champions.

However, even with these tutorials, neither of us was confident in our gaming skills.

In our first game, we were overwhelmed by the choices of support items available in the store, and still unsure of how to best approach enemy champions. We also died every time we were approached by the enemy champions and had no clue what our champion abilities were.

As a result, we asked experienced players like freshman Andy Chen, also known as Megan's little brother or "Chendy," to join our team and help us improve. Although matchups are usually random, players can create teams of up to five people with their friends.

With Chendy's skill and expertise, we were able to improve tremendously and experience the true greatness of the game.

We also learned more advanced strategies and techniques through YouTube videos from pro-gamers like Biofrost.

After learning about other aspects of the game we hadn't previously known about, like buying specific items in the shop and using combos, we realized that the game required a lot more strategy and skill than we first thought.

Pressing all the keys at once, like we had done in the tutorials and bot games, wasn't cutting it, and Callia peaked at 19 deaths in a single game. Instead, we applied what we learned and strategically upgraded our champion skills and items.

However, one criticism we have for the game is its slow pace. Games usually exceed half an hour, and the longest professional match has stretched over 90 minutes.

As we were essentially cycling through deaths and therefore "feeding" the enemies, we kept getting overpowered, and the last half of the games was frustrating and boring.

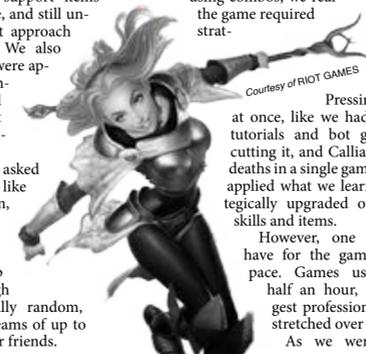
Then we got smart and read through a couple of lengthy guides on how to play specific champions. This allowed us to return with more confidence and knowledge. We started being able to survive longer, mainly by knowing the right moment to start running away.

With more gameplay, we were actually able to experience what we decided to be the most fulfilling aspect of the game: killing enemy champions.

Although games were still long, our abilities to actually kill enemies made our experience much more intriguing, and we started to understand how the game gained its popularity.

This is not to say, however, that we became good players. Because we were playing with high-level players, some of our team members hinted at our relatively woeful skills and complained about having to "carry" the team.

Even so, we enjoyed our dive into the game, and we also fear that more nights will be dedicated to playing LoL instead of studying. ♦



COURTESY OF RIOT GAMES

Thermond Drama Center honors impactful parent

BY Marisa Kingsley & Elaine Toh

As cold morning air rushes through the doors, a soft melody hums from a piano that sits in front of an expanse of windows covered in posters with pictures of previous productions and upcoming events, clusters of friends chatter, lounging on faded blue couches.

For many years, the Thermond Drama Center, near the main entrance of the school, has provided a sanctuary for drama students, and few know this more than drama teacher Sarah Thermond.

Thermond, a 2007 alumna of the school, also used the space as a student back when it was called The Little Theater. Yet with the space renamed to the Thermond Drama Center in 2011, it is common for her students to associate the name with her. In fact, it is named after her mother, Cathie Thermond, a longtime department supporter, volunteer and patron.

Beginnings of theatrical tradition

As a student, Sarah was an active member of the drama program, becoming president of the drama club during her time here. At the time, though, the program was in more difficult financial straits than it is today.

In stepped Cathie Thermond, a former business major who began assisting with the management of ticket sales and dealing with copyright issues to perform shows. At the same time as Sarah Thermond graduated and went off to the University of Southern California, then-drama teacher Kath-



Named in honor of parent Cathie Thermond, the Thermond Drama Center hosts student-directed productions, ComedySportz and small drama class performances, allowing students to express creativity aside from drama.

leen Woods was hired by to lead the Palo Alto High School drama program. With the drama department led by a new teacher, Cathie decided to stay and help by assisting the directors with budgeting and recommendations for shows that would best fit the students.

"My mom said, 'Oh, I don't want to leave a brand new person in the cold. I was going to stop when my kid graduated, but let me help ease the transition,'" Sarah said. "But then over the next five years, there was a new drama teacher roughly every year, so she kept saying, 'Oh, I want to help them transition. I want to help make this happen.'"

Throughout all the staffing changes, Cathie was the one who made sure that the drama program continued to exist, Sarah said.

To honor her mom's heroic efforts, the school renamed the Little Theater as the Thermond Drama Center on Sept. 13, 2011. Specifically, they wanted to honor Cathie Thermond's contributions to the program: co-founding the boosters group, helping with props and costumes and chaperoning for drama field trips. Although her mom's initial reaction to the naming was embarrassment, Sarah said that her mom appreciated the kind gesture, adding that the recognition from the students was more meaningful than the name itself.

Cathie said, "I even asked them to not do it since so many people had helped with the program and refurbishing the space. I did think a name change from Little Theater to Drama Center was appropriate because the room is used for so

much more than performances — it is the center of drama activities on campus. After I realized that they were going to rename the theater no matter what I said, I was of course very honored and humbled by the generous act."

For Sarah, the drama center has created a space beneficial to both drama and non-drama students alike during her time here. Though most drama classes at other schools are taught in regular classrooms, which don't have enough space for students to integrate any technical elements in their rehearsals, the Thermond Drama Center allows the school to provide a space for performances.

"[The drama center] really helps our students, who do go on in theater when applying to colleges, to have experience working in

the McAfee but also in a black box space, especially our technicians," Sarah said. "That's been an important part of their building their portfolios and getting accepted at incredible drama schools."

Similar to her students, Sarah values the drama center, and the building's connection to her mother. Despite Cathie's not being a theater person while growing up, she helped the program and grew to love it, Sarah said.

"Knowing that my mom made such a big contribution to this school that there is a building named after her, to me, it just reminds me of how supportive she was always to me about going into the arts and to students who aren't her kid too," Sarah said. "I think especially in this kind of economy and in this area, there is a lot of push on kids to go into pragmatic careers and humanities careers are no longer seen as pragmatic."

After volunteering for 16 years for the program, Cathie continues to believe it's "the intersection of literature, language, history, psychology, music, visual arts, practical life skills and technology."

For Cathie, drama teaches students creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and compassion. As a result, Cathie said that it was difficult to not be attached to the drama program as she can still be found produce the fall play and spring musical.

"I'm really happy to see my mom's commitment to all of those kids who really depended on her for a lot of consistency and support and that there is something on campus that acknowledges that," Sarah said. ♦

Trimble conference room named in memory of inaugural principal

BY Krithi Sankar & Jeffrey Xu

While former history teacher Dr. Hugh Roberts was working as a teacher in Alaska, he received a letter from Dr. Vernon Trimble, the man who had just been selected as the principal for a new high school in Saratoga.

In the letter, Trimble asked Roberts to join the faculty.

"It was an offer I could not refuse," Roberts said.

Now, almost 60 years since the school's 1959 opening, Trimble has left a profound legacy in starting the school and, as a result, has the main conference room near the principal's office named after him: the Trimble Conference room.

As the school's first principal, Trimble had to take on several responsibilities.

He came to be in charge of building a strong staff and administration, overseeing campus construction, choosing the school colors and mascot and creating school traditions.

Roberts knew Trimble because he one of Trimble's students back when Trimble taught English at Los Gatos in the early 1950s.

Trimble invited many of his past students from Los Gatos to help start the school with him, including Bert Pfister, the first English department chair, and Benny Pierce, the first football coach.

To be sure, founding a new school was no an easy task.

The day before the school opened, heavy wind and rain hit the newly built campus, to the point where one of the gym walls fell down, Roberts said.

Though the school's opening didn't go as planned, Roberts attested to Trimble's determination despite the obstacles his administration had to overcome.

The Trimble conference room serves many purposes, including guidance coun-

selor and administration meetings, staff potlucks, college information sessions and more.

It even has its own email address, trimbleroom@lgsuhsd.org.

The email, despite its charming ring, serves no specific purpose.

While the room's official name is the Trimble Conference Room, principal Paul Robinson said that many refer to it as simply the main conference room, as opposed to the guidance counseling room.

The guidance counseling room is named after the first assistant principal, Gerald Zappelli.

Robinson said the Trimble room was named just before Robinson became principal seven years ago, in honor of Trimble's contributions to Saratoga High as its first principal.

"Vernon kept everyone's spirits up and made everyone feel more like we were creating a small community."

FORMER TEACHER Dr. Roberts

Although Robinson never met Trimble in person, Robinson said that it must have taken a lot of planning and work to get the school started and to establish its culture.

"I'm sure that Dr. Trimble and Mr. Zappelli and all the teachers played really big parts about what this school was all about," Robinson said.

Roberts, now 84, had known Trimble ever since his senior year of high school and taught under his administration from 1959-1989 and attested to Trimble's personal characteristics.

He said that Trimble was "a well-organized, thoughtful old school gentleman

with a quiet, calm strength and great sense of humor."

Roberts also praised Trimble's aptitude for teaching and treating his students well, which created a passion in students for subjects that they didn't originally have.

In Roberts's case, this was in his senior year, when he had Trimble as his English teacher in 1950 at Los Gatos High School.

"He treated everyone with respect and got it in return," Roberts said. "I especially learned to love Shakespeare."

Described as "calm, thoughtful and supportive at every turn" by Roberts, Trimble significantly contributed not only to establishing the culture of the school but also supporting members of his staff and administration.

"Vernon guided us through an opening that didn't go smoothly," Roberts said.

His legacy continues to live on as his impacts to the school and the community are often remembered.

"Vernon kept everyone's spirits up and made everyone feel more like we were creating a small community by dealing with problems together," Roberts said. ♦

>> the bigidea

SHS Through the Times

When was the school founded?
The school was founded in 1959.

Who is the conference room named after?
With the intent of honoring the first principal of Saratoga High School Dr. Vernon Trimble, the school decided to rename one of the conference rooms after him because of his impact on the community.

What was Trimble's legacy?
Trimble was in charge of building a strong staff, overseeing campus construction and choosing the school's mascot among many other duties.



New 'Palace' gives English Department bigger home

BY Shama Gupta & Allison Hartley

For occasional special lunches, English 10 and AP Language teacher Ken Nguyen will cook on a portable cooktop while a dozen other English teachers bustle throughout a large room that has views of many roofs on campus.

The new English Palace, adjacent to the MAP annex and the robotics room, provides a productive workspace and a calm on-campus gathering space for the school's largest department.

The longest serving English teacher, Cathy Head, said that around 15 years ago, as the leaks in the ceiling from the sinks in the art room above were patched, the beginnings of the English office formed downstairs. What used to be a row of lockers was sealed and given to the English department to fashion into an office. Teachers furnished their limited space with a mini-library, a meeting table and a refrigerator.

Head said that the old locker bank they had adapted, which is

under the current English office, was like a "dungeon" — a dark, stuffy room cramped with a small library, few VHS tapes and CDs.

Around the same time the space was rebuilt for the English office, longtime teacher and department chair Genevieve Palace retired.

While the maintenance department re-painted the room and the door, the department decided to dub it the English Palace in her honor.

English teacher Erick Rector recalled Palace as a person whose presence was always light and appreciated. Rector, a Saratoga High alumnus, recalled being a freshman in one of her classes.

"She was one of the original English teachers; she was amazing, and loved by everybody," Rector said.

While honoring Palace, Head said they also enjoyed the irony of naming what they thought of as a glorified closet as a "Palace."

Since then, Head said the English department's meeting room has moved multiple times — most

recently, two years ago to the upstairs room previously used as the band pound. The new space is a large, sunlit room featuring a wall of windows and a sink.

Since the addition of the music building near the McAfee Center, the old band storage room was cleared out and the English teachers moved their Palace directly upstairs to enjoy their new second-story view.

"The new room is bright and happy, and has windows and fresh air — a cross breeze. It's amazing," Rector said.

The old room down below, which the English department was using now serves as a drama storage.

The department routinely uses the Palace for collaborations such as department meetings, individual grade team meetings and the grading of students' twice-yearly writing assessments.

Along with the work-oriented functions, the English teachers chat and eat at the long tables in the Palace during lunch, when they often bring food to share.



The English Palace, named in honor of longtime English teacher, resides in the 900 building as a conference room for the English department.

Although the old office had the same purposes, the second-story location offers more natural light.

Nguyen said that lunchtimes are always bustling; the teachers like to talk about their day, recent TV show discoveries and occasionally big news topics.

Nguyen even bought a portable cooktop to use in the Palace when

he brings ingredients to chef up a lunch for himself.

The Palace ultimately provides a convenient homey feel for English teachers at school.

"Several of the people in our department are avid cooks,"

Head said. "It's got a whole lot of potential with a sink, now, and it's so happy and bright." ♦

BY Alex Wang

Students walking into the school's weight room see the words "Ray Goñi Fitness Center" hanging on the red walls, serving to remember Ray Goñi, the longtime teacher and coach at Saratoga High as well as a well-loved Saratoga community member who passed away from cardiac arrest due to a lung tumor in 1999.

"He was a strong community guy," athletic director Tim Lugo said. "When he passed, he left a big hole in the school and they wanted a way to memorialize him."

The weight room was formally named "Ray Goñi Fitness Center" after moving from the current wrestling room to where it is now.

When the weight room was further renovated in 2014, Lugo and a member of the school's maintenance staff, Brian Moran, wanted bigger letters on the room's wall to honor Goñi.

"It was very touching for Goñi's family to see Ray Goñi's name up on the weight room wall, as prominent as it is now," Lugo said.

Goñi's many achievements at Saratoga High have left a lasting legacy. He came to the school in 1968 as a PE and history teacher and quickly became the coach for girls' soccer, football, baseball and wres-

ling. As an assistant head coach and defensive coordinator of the football team for 31 years, Goñi helped lead the team to five CCS championships.

"Winning all the championships couldn't compare to seeing all the kids again," Goñi said in a 1998 interview in The Falcon.

In August 1998, however, Goñi started to experience medical issues. He first had two blocked arteries, then a kidney stone and then tumors in his brain and lung. For months, he endured surgeries and antibiotics, yet still worked with the football team in the early stages, and then welcomed visitors and joked around in the hospital later on.

On April 14, 1999, Goñi passed away. Afterward, Saratoga High honored Goñi with a memorial service, where about 1,100 people from the community came to hear Goñi's friends and family share stories of what Goñi had done for them and the community.

Goñi's family still carries on his legacy of giving back to the community. His widow Debbie is a teacher at Foothill Elementary School and his three sons played football at Saratoga High and are graduates of the school. His youngest, Daniel Goñi, is now a linebackers coach for the Falcons.

Every now and then, Lugo said, Daniel will wear one of his father's old shirts and



The Ray Goñi Fitness Center carries on the legacy of longtime teacher Ray Goñi as it is used by students and teachers regularly.

bring out throwback look jackets as a way to remember his father.

"The players dig on the fact that Daniel's legacy goes way back," Lugo said. "In this program, there's a lot of community members who played football here and knew his dad. I think it's awesome that the community means so much to him and I love having him on staff because of that tie to his dad's past." ♦

Teachers use film to supplement curriculum for students

BY Shreya Kulkarni & Jayne Zhou

As Oskar Schindler, played by Liam Neeson, transports a group of hard-working Jews into 1940s German occupied Poland, where he puts them to work and provides a safe haven from the concentration camps, the entire class stares intently at the re-enactment projected in front of them, disgusted by the terrible conditions exhibited during the Holocaust.

"Schindler's List" is just one of several films shown in Mike Davey's MAP World History class to reinforce what students learn in lectures and readings.

History and English classes alike often show films in class with the purpose of giving students a richer understanding of the causes and effects of history as well as the points of view of historical figures.

"When students watch documentaries, they learn about how the audience is supposed to feel when they are watching the film," Davey said.

For instance, Davey, World History teacher Kirk Abe and APUSH teacher Faith Daly show "Saving Private Ryan" in their classes. The movie paints a picture of the WWII D-day invasion on Omaha Beach.

"It was like a pin could drop after I showed 'Saving Private Ryan,'" Davey said. "We talk about the sacrifices we make to win the war, and the clip from 'Saving Private Ryan' was able to demonstrate [the gruesome nature of the invasion] better than I could do by lecturing or a student could do by reading about the topic."

In addition to World History, students in English 11 Honors watched the film "12 Years a Slave," based on the mid-1800s novel by Solomon Northup about his experience of being a slave, to supplement Toni Morrison's "Beloved."

"12 Years a Slave" gives students a deeper understanding of the horrific conditions slaves had to endure, English 11 Honors teacher Natasha Ritchie said.

"What movies can do sometimes that a book can't do is really help you visualize and really draw emotion," Ritchie said.

Junior Devin Shah enjoyed watching "12 Years a Slave," saying that it helped him envision slavery more vividly than he would have been able to from only having to reading books on slavery.

"Watching '12 Years a Slave' helped me empathize with people going through slavery and it gave me a stronger connection to the characters in 'Beloved,'" Shah said.

Ritchie said that, similar to literary elements like metaphors, students can also learn from the variety of film techniques used in "12 Years a Slave."

"Everything in the film has meaning: the sound, the acting, the dialogue, the scenery, the juxtaposed shots," Ritchie said. All of these contribute to what is an extremely meaningful film."

The use of films aligned with the curriculum in classes are able to highlight what books cannot and give students a different method of learning.

"Visual stories further deepen understanding of what students are learning," Ritchie said. ♦

Students offer perspectives on college admissions in light of Harvard lawsuit

By Selena Liu & Jeffrey Ma

A district court lawsuit against Harvard University's admissions process has raised much discussion on what constitutes a fair college admissions process in a nation where the ideas of racial acceptance and equality are becoming increasingly important.

As a school with a 60 percent Asian student body, according to U.S. News, Saratoga High is the kind of school that will be especially affected by the outcome of this lawsuit.

In the lawsuit, Students for Fair Admissions, a nonprofit member organization founded by Asian-American students who had been rejected by Harvard University in last year's college admis-

sions process, accused the Ivy League school of "artificially capping the number of qualified Asian-Americans from attending the school to advance less qualified students of other races," according to The New York Times.

In its defense, Harvard argued that many Asian-American students did not meet an adequate personal rating criteria, which evaluates a student's integrity and personality. The university argued that failure to meet this personal rating standard, and not racial discrimination, resulted in fewer Asian-American applicants being admitted than would otherwise be the case.

The outcome of the lawsuit is still undecided. Both parties expect to hear a verdict from the Massachusetts district court by early 2019, but the case may

travel up to the Supreme Court, as the high court issued a statement of interest on Aug. 30. In that case, the final verdict may impact whether affirmative action — accepting equal numbers of black and Latino students as those of Asian and white students — will be eliminated from every college's admissions process entirely.

The lawsuit claims that Harvard uses a de facto quota system to cap the number of admitted students in each racial category, undermining academically qualified Asian-American students from a fair chance in college admission decisions. In fact, statistics from Harvard's admissions office indicate that the university would accept twice as many Asian-American students if admissions were based solely on academic merit,

leading the student body to resemble that of UC Berkeley, where there is no affirmative action and more than 40 percent of students are Asian.

The Asian-American students in the lawsuit argue they are victims of institutional discrimination that should not be allowed. Despite the effects of Harvard's decision-making process, questions about the outcome of the August lawsuit have drawn attention to Asian-American college applicants and the possible discriminations they face in the process.

Given the case's relevance and potential importance to the school, The Falcon spoke to a number of students and allowed them to withhold their identities in the hope of receiving their most candid responses. ♦

Do you think colleges should continue affirmative action to preserve racial diversity?

JUNIOR WHITE GIRL

Race-based affirmative action has a lot of flaws and puts poor Asians and Caucasians at a great disadvantage. Additionally, if we are trying to move toward a society where race doesn't matter, paying so much attention to race can't possibly help. It clearly isn't fair to Caucasians who have worked harder or are better in a certain subject but get denied because of their race.

That being said, there needs to be affirmative action, especially income-based, in order to stop the trend of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.

Education is the way to get out of poverty, so the system must be set up where the unfortunate have a chance to utilize that. Here in Saratoga, we obviously have an advantage compared to someone from a low-income family. Most likely, we can afford tutors, have better teachers, regular internet access, etc. when that's simply not a reality for a lot of people. To make it fairer, there must be income-based affirmative action.

Income-based affirmative action would have a similar result because African Americans and Hispanics are more likely to be in the lower class, but this way it doesn't put poor people who already are at a disadvantage at an even bigger one. ♦

SENIOR BOY WHO IS MIXED CAUCASIAN AND ASIAN

The idea that Asian Americans are discriminated against so much is overblown. It is necessary to not just take the people with the highest grades, test scores and competitions scores, which in many cases are Asian Americans.

People say that schools like Harvard or Stanford shouldn't give blacks and Latinos advantages over Asians because Asians are more academically suited to the school as shown by their more impressive activities or scores.

My issue with this is that one of the big factors when people are talking about the draw to schools like Harvard and Stanford are that the schools allow us as students to get a different perspective than Saratoga, that there are opportunities to network and meet people. The UC system isn't allowed to consider gender or race in their admissions, so as a result Berkeley ends up looking a lot

like Saratoga or Lynbrook. Berkeley's culture focuses mainly on grades, test scores and how impressive your activities are and as a result gets filled with Asian American students who grew up in affluent neighborhoods with straight A's, perfect SAT scores and standard "Asian" activities.

Once you start doing admissions the way the people in the Harvard case are arguing for (based off solely off how impressive your scores, grades and activities are) you end up like Berkeley, which certainly isn't a bad school — it's actually a great school — but my guess is the majority of the Saratoga students would prefer the current Harvard or Stanford school climate. The issue is you can't have both this pure meritocracy for admissions while still maintaining the diversity, experience and networking that draws so many students to these top

private schools. In the Harvard case people complain that the average SAT score of an Asian student is like 100 something points higher than that of a Latino student, but that doesn't mean that the Asian students who are admitted are more deserving than the Latino ones.

For admissions to these top private schools, SAT scores are mainly a checkbox, so if Asians overall have a higher SAT score, of course the Asian students who end up getting into Harvard are going to have a higher average than the Latino students who were accepted, whom nonetheless are still very qualified and deserving. ♦

SENIOR ASIAN BOY

If the Supreme Court sides in favor of Students for Fair Admissions, I think we'd definitely see admission rates go up across the board for Asians applying to top universities. Rather than expecting all students to come out of high school as cookie-cutter perfect with 15-something SAT's and 4.-something GPAs, universities should admit students that show skill, passion and dedication to their extracurriculars.

Ethnic and cultural diversity are great, but the current way universities are going about diversifying their campus is not only racist, but quite ineffective. If universities value diversity, and their claims that Asian students are all identical due to their SAT's and GPAs are true, then it would only make sense to give more weightage to the areas that bring real diversity — of both character and background.

An extracurricular-focused admissions process would be better for diversity by their own standards as well as by academic standards.

By changing the current system in which students are crushed into a pair of numbers, universities could be turned into flourishing campuses where all kinds of people are admitted to due to their diverse personalities, backgrounds and passions. ♦

SENIOR ASIAN GIRL

I am pro affirmative action because I believe that it is hard for minorities in America, as they experience discrimination regularly. This is one way to counteract that and level the playing field. It's hard to feel the effects of discrimination in the Bay Area, so it's easy to pretend that

it's a problem of the past when that just isn't the case for the vast majority of Americans.

I am Indian and I have selected "Asian" on my college apps. I know that it may slightly hurt my chances of getting into a school, but I don't mind because people who have not

been as fortunate as I have also deserve a fighting chance in the college admissions process.

Colleges should continue affirmative action in order to counteract the USA's history of racism while refraining from using quota systems. ♦

ALL GRAPHICS BY ELAINE TOH AND JEFFREY XU



GRAPHIC BY CALLIA YUAN

MESSAGES

continued from pg. 1

her that he would send a friend request from his real Facebook account. Viewing the man's actual profile, Kim discovered that the man is 21, graduated from Saratoga High in 2016 and attends West Valley College. (The Falcon is not using his actual name because he has not been charged with a crime for his alleged behavior.)

Kim continued messaging the John Yang account, asking why no one from Los Gatos High knew him and why he had only four friends on Facebook.

After she eventually confronted Yang with his real name and asked if he was the same person through messaging, he began to apologize profusely.

"I'm really sorry," the man said. "Are you going to tell other people though? I just hope this conversation would stay between us. I mean, I apologized three times. Does that not count?"

It wasn't enough for Kim. "You'll be hearing from my lawyer and the school authorities," Kim said, to which he "sad reacted" and responded with a bribe of \$180.

Kim then told SHS administrators about the situation, and they began working with the sheriff's department to investigate the issue further. No charges have been filed in the case, according to school resource officer Russ Davis.

The SHS administration declined to comment on the situation.

Although they are not acquainted in per-

son, Chen said she has encountered the man at West Valley twice before, and recognized him through the photos on his real Facebook account.

"I saw him and didn't say anything," said Chen. "He didn't see me though." Chen said she didn't find the man, who has a slight physique, particularly alarming or intimidating.

"He talked about how he would meet me at Saratoga High if I wanted to."

JUNIOR Vivienne Nguyen

Junior Vivienne Nguyen, who was 15 at the time, also received messages from the man that were much more disturbing and that eventually became extremely sexually explicit and asked for sexual favors.

As he continued to message her, he also began to show that he knew an alarming amount about Nguyen.

"He talked about how he would meet me at Saratoga High if I wanted to," Nguyen said. "He even knew [who I hung out with and where]."

The John Yang Facebook account has since been deleted, but it appears that John Yang wasn't the only alias the man was using. Other girls revealed being messaged by a Daniel Yang, David Yang and other aliases. Kim believes the man most likely changed the name of his Facebook account every two

to four months, but it's possible that multiple accounts were used.

Besides Kim, none of the other girls reported the incident to school officials or sheriff's deputies after being texted.

Sophomore Allison Ha, 15, unaware that Yang was messaging other people, said that she "didn't think anything of it" after he reached out to her on Facebook. Ha never responded or received additional messages.

Chen told her parents only after school authorities called her in to question her, while Nguyen didn't tell anyone because "it didn't really seem like a big deal" to her.

Kim said that her parents were alarmed when informed of the situation and that they initially thought she had posted something online that made her the man's target. Kim, though, said she had not done anything to attract attention and doesn't know why he decided to message her in the first place.

Some girls told The Falcon that they were contacted as early as July 2017 by the man. None of the girls, besides Kim, had even questioned the man after being asked sexually explicit questions.

Being a potential victim of online targeting is an alarming reality for teenagers. According to PureSight.com, "one in five U.S. teenagers who regularly log on to the internet says they have received an unwanted sexual solicitation via the Web." Social media's accessibility makes personal information like school, age and appearance easy to find.

According to deputy Davis, there are laws in place to protect people from internet harassment. He said, "There's a penal code

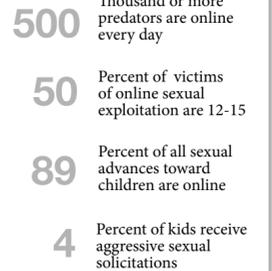
section for annoying and harassing someone through social media; in that case, there is also one that protects against making a fake social media account of somebody with the intent to harass."

Asked why the man hasn't been charged, Davis said, "It's one of those things that unfortunately must be a long repeated offense for it to become a crime" and therefore for charges to be filed.

The case has since been closed from the law enforcement side, Davis said.

"If someone else encounters a situation like this, all I can say is, ignore them," Davis said. "And if it continues, the safest thing to do is report it to an adult." ♦

>> falconfigures



SOURCE: patch.com

Boy Scouts opens doors to accepting girls

By Shama Gupta & Allison Hartley

In 2013, then-senior boy scout Ryan Andresen's Eagle rank application was denied by the Pleasant Hill-based Mount Diablo-Silverado Boy Scouts Council after 12 years of scouting experience, including fulfilling rank requirements, earning at least 21 merit badges and demonstrating extensive leadership.

Ironically, Andresen, who built a "tolerance wall" as a Scout project, soon discovered that the reason for the organization's rejection was that his homosexuality did not correspond with membership standards. As a result, the Andresens began their campaign to support the quest for homosexual boys to be embraced by the scouting organization.

A year later, Pascal Tessier became the first gay Eagle Scout, overturning the organization's ban on "open and avowed homosexuals." One year ago, Boy Scouts of America (BSA) announced another new policy that goes against the organization's conservative roots: It will incorporate female scouts into the traditionally all-male program.

The organization will also be opening the upper ranks of Boy Scouts to girls in February by creating co-ed troops. The program's name will then also change to Scouts BSA in order to avoid confusion with the unaffiliated Girl Scouts organization.

While the Girl Scouts organization is made up of thousands of troops across the country, their programs and activities differ from those in BSA. For example, Girl Scouts

do more activities based on the arts, while Boy Scouts prioritize the sciences and outdoor activities like camping and hiking.

While the decision to include girls in the troop ultimately lands on the adult scoutmaster, co-ed BSA troops will share an identification number and participate in outings together.

Scoutmaster Tony Chun of the Los Altos-based BSA troop 888 said that they will have a sister troop made up solely of girls starting next year. The sibling troops will be participating in the same activities, have the same meeting times and will take part in ceremonies such as the opening and closing flag ceremonies together.

In order to differentiate the two troops but acknowledge the relation, the sister troop number will have a "4" in front of it, resulting in "Troop 4888." The two troops will be managed by the same parent committee, he said.

Like existing BSA troops, the sister scout troop will have a scout-elected Senior Patrol Leader and a female scoutmaster over age 21.

Sophomore Boy Scout Arnav Mangal, who has participated in scouting since elementary school, said he was proud of the organization for opening the door to scouts

who are a part of the LGBTQ community.

"Boy Scouts should be open to any boy," he said. "The main purpose is to unite together and to learn new skills that you use in life. Just because of the way someone feels about other boys doesn't mean they can't be a part of the same activity."

Mangal also agreed with the change to allow girls into troops. He said adding girls changes the dynamic of the troop but also allows girls to partake on new adventures.

"I think that it is great that girls will get the same opportunities that Boy Scouts have had for years," Mangal said. "Some boys may feel uncomfortable at first because of a sudden change, but changes are just a part of life."

In Mangal's opinion, skills like wilderness survival techniques and shooting sports that aren't taught in Girl Scouts are

"great things for everyone to learn." Junior Connor Galvin, who has earned the rank of Eagle Scout, thinks the addition of girls to the troop will have minimal impact on his troop. Since the majority of activities in life include males and females working together, the change will flow smoothly, he said.

Although the existence of co-ed troops is a new concept in the U.S., countries like Canada have successfully used a joint mod-

el for many years.

Galvin said there is currently only one elementary school girl on her way to joining Cub Scouts with Troop 566 of Saratoga, but local BSA troops are actively looking for girls to join their troop by handing out flyers.

Chun said that the inclusion of girls will benefit the scouts as well as their parents, since it provides an opportunity for parents with children of both genders to have their children participate in the same activities.

Girl Scouts USA, however, is currently suing Scouts BSA over trademark infringement in a Manhattan federal court. Girl Scouts believes that BSA's rebranding has caused the public to confuse Girl Scouts and BSA as a joint organization or to think that Girl Scouts no longer exists.

In response, BSA has stated that they applaud Girl Scouts for character and leadership lessons that they instill in their scouts.

Despite the dispute over nomenclature, sophomore Girl Scout Nitya Marimuthu, a sophomore, agrees that BSA has taken a step in the right direction by becoming more gender inclusive.

"If you really want to join Boy Scouts, or you really want to join Girl Scouts, your gender shouldn't limit you to which one you can join," Marimuthu said.

While the organizations cannot foresee the effects of integrating mixed gender troops, one sentiment from the scouts themselves remains consistent: They will welcome their new troop members.

"I'm totally open to girls joining Boy Scouts," Mangal said. "Every scout is a scout." ♦



GRAPHIC BY KAITLYN WANG

FOOTBALL

Season ends on a heartbreaking, high-scoring CCS loss to Los Altos

by LeoCao & AlexWang

Chants of "CCS" rang in the stands after the Falcons won their senior night game 54-27 against Los Altos on Oct. 26. They cruised through their last game at Lynbrook 55-0 on Nov. 2 and traveled to Gonzales High School on Nov. 9 for the opening round of Division 5 CCS play.

In an evenly matched game, the Falcons saw victory slip away in the fourth quarter, losing 54-49.

Senior running back JJ Wang said that the game was one that the Falcons could have won, but lost thanks to turnovers.

"It was unfortunate that we lost; however, as a team, that was one of our best games," Wang said.

Building on their momentum and qualification for CCS, the Falcons practiced hard during the week to give themselves the best shot to try to win the game against Gonzales, wide receiver George Bian said.

However, the game against the Spartans turned out differently than they had hoped. After making an immediate impact in the first quarter with two touchdown catches and a 14-13 lead, Bian, the team's star receiver, was sidelined for the rest of the game with an ankle sprain.

"I was really upset that I couldn't play because I might have been able to make some big plays for our team," Bian said.

In the second quarter, the Falcons moved on from Bian's injury and kept the game even. Both teams found the end zone once and the Falcons went into halftime 21-20.

Coming out of halftime, the Falcons made a big splash. After stopping the Spartans on the first drive, Stokes threw a screen pass to junior wide receiver Max Muilenburg that he took 97 yards to the house, making the score 28-20 after the point after.

In return, the Spartans kept pounding

with their rushing attack and marched to the field for another score. On the ensuing drive, the Spartans fumbled the ball on a rush and a Spartan defender recovered it and raced 74 yards down the field for a touchdown. This back-and-forth scoring went on for the rest of the game.

Going into the fourth quarter, the Falcons led 35-34. Each time one team scored, the other would respond with a touchdown of their own.

"During the fourth quarter, I could almost feel the tension in the air," Bian said. "Sitting on the sidelines, I was extremely angry that I couldn't play because of my ankle, but I could feel the determination in our players to fight every down. There wasn't a single person on our sideline that doubted we had a chance to win."

As the game clock wound down, the Spartans managed to find the end zone one more time with an 18-yard rushing touchdown, putting them ahead 54-49. The Falcons got the ball back after kickoff on their own 20-yard line, ready to march down the field to try to win the 5-point game.

After moving the chains for a first down, Stokes launched a deep shot downfield to Wang for 33 yards that set up one last try for a score on the 36-yard line. Stokes took the snap, rolled out to his right and let the ball fly to the end zone. Muilenburg, who was covered by two Spartan defenders, leaped up to make the catch, but the ball was batted away, sealing the win for the Spartans.

After the loss, the team was devastated because the game had represented the end of all their hard work and time put in throughout the season. The seniors were hit especially hard because it was their last high school football game, Bian said.

After moving down to the less competitive El Camino League this year, the Falcons managed to turn around a 1-4 start to their season and win five straight league games,



Courtesy of NICOLLE and JASON WANG
Junior receiver Max Muilenburg runs with the ball after catching a pass against Gonzales on Nov. 9. He ended the day with 221 yards and two touchdowns, but the Falcons lost 54-49.

returning to CCS after missing the playoffs last year with a 1-9 record. With their 5-1 league and 6-4 overall record, the Falcons came in as the fifth seed in the tournament, which is based on league and school size.

The Falcons plowed through the Lynbrook Vikings the previous week. The result was a 55-0 blowout where the coaches rested some of their starters, most notably Wang and Bian, and instead, gave the backups more opportunities to play.

Playing the backups seemed to make no difference on the outcome, though, as senior Justin Chao rushed for 80 yards and two touchdowns and senior Dorian Glon caught two passes and rushed for a touchdown, contributing to a team total of eight touchdowns.

The result was not at all surprising be-

cause the Vikings scored only 53 points the whole season, while they have given up 514 points to opposing teams.

"I think we gained confidence not only because of the Lynbrook game but because of the past five games that we won in a row," Wang said. "The wins brought us closer together as a team and helped us to play with better chemistry."

For next season, the younger players are working hard to improve their game. A majority of the team played varsity for the first time this year, so with a season under their belt, they will look to find even more success next year.

"We will try to work super hard in the weight room and on the practice field to improve upon our skills and team chemistry," Bian said. ♦

GIRLS' GOLF

CCS qualification tops off a successful season

by ShamaGupta

Leaving Saratoga at 5 a.m. on Oct. 30, the seven members of the girls' golf team made the one and a half hour journey to Laguna Seca Golf Course in the Monterey Peninsula for the one-day CCS tournament — a huge accomplishment for the program.

When they reached the golf course, the sun started to rise as their long day started. Above all, they were just happy to be there. In the end, they finished seventh out of the 13 teams that qualified. While only the top three teams advance to NorCals, the team enjoyed competing against the top talent in the area.

"The competition was definitely fiercer [than regular season and league matches]," senior captain and No. 1 player Janelle Jin said.

It was well worth the experience, sophomore No. 3 player Jane Loo said.

The team played an 18-hole course at Laguna Seca. As the day started, each member of the travel team teed off with two other players, both from a different school and of an equally matched golf merit.

Jin said the team could have performed better at Laguna Seca.

"I know I had a bad day," she said. "I also know the rest of my teammates didn't play as well as they could have, but considering even that, I think we did pretty well."

"I was just so happy we even made it to CCS. It's been a very long time and it just really made my day."

SENIOR Janelle Jin

Jin was particularly excited to have made CCS after a tough league matches this year and her four strong seasons on the team.

"It's been a very long time and it just really made my day," she said.

Reflecting on her last four years playing golf and the team's season, Jin said, "I'm really proud of how far we got this season." ♦

GIRLS' TENNIS

Falcons fall to Cupertino in CCS, handicapped by injuries

by AndrewLee & JayneZhou

Coming off of a 11-7 league record during the regular season, the girls' tennis team was determined to make a strong final effort during the Division 1 CCS competition, but their hopes fell short to a tough Cupertino team.

The Falcons were the fifth seed in the bracket and received a bye for the first round. On Nov. 6, they beat Silver Creek at home 7-0.

On Nov. 8, the Falcons went on to face Cupertino in an away match, where they fell 5-2. The team's journey through CCS came to a close in the quarterfinals, a disappointment compared to last year's CCS, where the team lost to Saint Francis in the semi-finals.

With top player Rini Vasan unable to play from a torn wrist and No. 2 singles player Monica Stratakos out of the competition due to a leg injury, the team was already severely handicapped before CCS.

"The team had been working especially hard this season even though we didn't have our top two players," doubles player

Sanya Kwatra said. "I'm proud of the team and the work we've done this season."

Cupertino's performance in the tournament was also fierce, with its team going on to face Los Gatos in the finals. (The Wildcats won the competition.) In addition to missing players, this strong opponent proved to be an obstacle that the Falcons were not quite well equipped to overcome.

"We were put in a difficult position without two best players benched from several injuries," doubles No. 1 Vivian Lin said. "Hopefully, next year, we'll have Monica back in good shape."

On Nov. 6, the Falcons faced Silver Creek at SHS. The Falcons were able to dominate the match with a 7-0 win, which advanced the team to the quarterfinals.

Even with the loss to Cupertino, the Falcons enjoy a strong team history and culture. Players feel that they had worked extra hard this season to make up for the lost talent.

"I'm really looking forward to see what the team will accomplish next season," Lin said. ♦



Vasan No. 1 singles player

Senior diver accepts University of Hawaii D1 offer

by MeganChen & JayneZhou

"If you want a spot on this team, you'll get it," the University of Hawaii diving coach told senior Annika Doney during her visit to the Division 1 diving school in mid-October 2018.

Her decision to accept the offer culminated years of effort.

Doney began diving in the beginning of eighth grade following the end of a gymnastics career that began years earlier. Feeling like it was time for a change, she followed the rest of the girls on her gymnastics team that were also shifting their efforts to diving, she said.

"Diving was really similar to gymnastics

in terms of flexibility and air awareness," Doney said. "I liked staying with the people I had done gymnastics with for years."

Since she had been diving for four years, "stopping her diving career at the end of high school seemed very abrupt," which factored into her decision to continue the sport through college.

Doney described the process she went through to decide on a school as thorough.

Her local coach contacted other schools' coaches, and she received offers from schools such as University of Nevada Las Vegas, UC Davis and University of Denver.

However, when visiting University of Hawaii, the school's diving coach immediately offered Doney a spot on the team, and Doney accepted the offer as her home for the next four years.

"There were a lot of things I had to consider. My mom even made a pros and cons sheet," Doney said.

Doney felt that University of Hawaii fulfilled all her requirements. At the school, Doney will be able to dive Division 1 with a strong team and train under two coaches.

Doney also visited the school and said that the location was one of the deciding factors in her choosing of the school. In

addition, she received a merit scholarship from the school.

Once Doney accepted the coach's offer, her official application to the school began a couple months ago, when she sent coaches a document that tagged her as an athlete, so the admissions office can take the needed steps to accept her.

Doney still faces the normal university application deadlines and procedures, but she said she doesn't have to face the large amounts of stress that other students might feel thanks to her guaranteed spot on the team.

"If I'm going to be competing at a D1 school, I want to be as relaxed as I can, and Hawaii is a really good school for that," Doney said. ♦



Doney Switched from gymnastics

Highly ranked squash player lands at Brown

by AvaHooman

In early November, senior Esha Lakhotia, who is ranked as the 11th in the US girls' under 17 squash player, received a likely admission email from the dean of admissions at Brown University letting her know that she had a guaranteed spot at the school.

Lakhotia has been playing squash competitively for the last seven years. She began playing at Bay Club Santa Clara with her older sister Aarushi Lakhotia, a 2017 SHS graduate who is now attending George Washington University and playing squash there.

Lakhotia has been practicing at clubs around the Bay Area six times a week and has participated in competitions every month since fifth grade. A year and a half into playing the sport, Lakhotia began participating in regional competitions and within a few years, advanced to national tournaments.

With her success in squash, Lakhotia realized she was interested in continuing to play the sport in college.

"I didn't start playing squash for college, but after watching my teammates and sister receive offers from great schools, I decided I should also pursue that especially because I had always planned to play squash for as long as I could," Lakhotia said.

At the beginning of her junior year, with the help of her coach, Lakhotia contacted schools like Yale, Columbia, Cornell, Brown, Stanford, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton and Tufts. She primarily sent out short emails, with the intent of "getting her

name out there" so schools could watch her at future competitions.

During nationals that took place on Mar. 2018 at Harvard, she met with Ivy League coaches. With help from her own coach, she contacted those schools more by sending her squash resume, which is posted on the US Squash website, along with an academic transcript and test scores.

"I began to realize that this was all coming together and I worked really hard to maintain contact with all the coaches in order for them to keep their interest in me," Lakhotia said.

To get a feel for the campus and squash teams, Lakhotia scheduled overnight camps at four schools during spring break. At each school, she played squash with current team members and asked them about her likelihood to be recruited.

Lakhotia signed up for squash summer camps at Brown and Cornell in order to get a feel for the atmosphere. Though both colleges had completely different positive aspects, she thoroughly enjoyed both for different reasons.

"I really liked the Open Curriculum that Brown offered since I am interested in many different subjects and I want to be able to explore more ideas. At the same time, I really enjoyed the Cornell atmosphere and the science program," Lakhotia said.

In a twist of events, Lakhotia received spots from both of the Cornell and Brown coaches after the camps. After both camps, Lakhotia was still indecisive about which school she wanted to attend. She spent hours researching about both schools, talking it over with her parents, and making



Courtesy of ESHA LAKHOTIA
Senior Esha Lakhotia, ranked 11th in the nation for squash, trains for nationals that took place on March 2018 at Harvard University. Lakhotia attended squash summer camps at Cornell University and Brown University, ultimately choosing to attend Brown University.

a pro-con list.

"Both schools are so amazing and I wish I could go to both but I had to make a really hard decision that would determine the rest of my future," said Lakhotia.

Lakhotia finally decided to commit to Brown and knows it will be a great school for her to succeed with both her squash and academics.

After committing to Brown, Lakhotia applied binding early decision to the school in late September. She had already given

them her academic history and test scores, leaving no surprises for the admission officers. She had planned to apply only to one school as long as she received her likely letter by November, letting her know that if she maintains her current track record she will be admitted into the school, which she did.

"I am extremely fortunate to have been offered a spot at the school, and it's a great feeling to finally see all of my hard work paying off," Lakhotia said. ♦

Hulme commits to Emory University for D3 volleyball

by MeganChen & JayneZhou

At the end of her sophomore year, standout volleyball player and current senior Katie Hulme began her college application process.

After sending countless emails to college recruiters and sending endless videos of her games, her application process finally came to an end early this year when the senior committed to Emory University in Atlanta, whose team competes at the Division 3 level.

Impressively, Hulme is a relative newcomer to the sport, having started playing volleyball in eighth grade. Before Hulme delving into volleyball, she played club soccer for the De Anza Thorns club team in middle and elementary school.

This fall, she played outside hitter for the school team and a middle for her

Vision Volleyball club team.

"In eighth grade, I was just done with soccer, so I quit," Hulme said. "I started playing volleyball with friends, then I made varsity freshman year, and it just progressed from there."

Club volleyball exposed her to the possibility of playing volleyball in college. She said the club she played on was "really big on recruiting."

"It was really during the end of sophomore year and beginning of junior year that I was really reaching out to coaches, calling them, sending them my tournament schedules and making videos," Hulme said.

For Hulme, the stress of the application process occurred mostly a year ago during the recruiting process, and her current application process is less stressful compared to other non-athletes. She only has to apply to Emory, which she "knows I'm going to go to."

According to Hulme, she had multiple offers from Division 1 schools to play volleyball, so the decision to play for a Division 3 school was tough.

She had offers from schools like Columbia, Princeton and New York

"I decided to go Division 3 because of academics and because volleyball is less time-consuming."

SENIOR Katie Hulme

University; however, the lack of scholarship money from the Ivy Leagues made them less appealing.

"I was really looking to go Division 1 and I had several Division 1 opportunities, but when I talked it out with my family, I decided to go Division 3 because of the higher quality academics, and because Division 3 volleyball is less time-

consuming," Hulme said.

The opportunities offered at Emory were ultimately what sealed her decision.

"I could study abroad at Emory, where I wouldn't be allowed to at the other schools," Hulme said. "Division 1 schools are also pretty big on offseason and over the summer I would have to stay on campus and not go home."

Her major also clashed with the rigorous schedule necessary to play for a Division 1 school.

She said her major of choice, pre-med, would be hard to tackle at a Division 1 school. She also considered the great pre-med program at Emory a factor in her decision.

Hulme looks forward to her future at Emory and sees it as the perfect place for her to balance her passion for volleyball and her interest in medicine.

"After one day on the campus, I got this feeling that's hard to describe, but I knew it was my school," Hulme said. "My hopes are to win the NCAA tournament again, study abroad, make some life long friends and get into a great medical school!" ♦

November 30, 2018



WINTER SPORTS



GRAPHIC BY CALLIA YUAN

YOUNGER BOYS' BASKETBALL TEAM FACES A NEW SEASON WITH OPTIMISM

Head Coach: Patrick Judge
2017-2018 record: 15-11
2017-2018 recap: The Falcons finished fourth out of the seven teams in the league. The boys made CCS, but were eliminated in the second round by Sacred Heart Cathedral.
Key Additions: freshman center Giulio Bianzino, senior forward Patrick Li and junior guard Siva Sambasivam
Key Matchups: Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monta Vista
Star Players: senior point guard Hanlin

Sun, senior shooting guard Kyle Yu, senior forward Shih Dhindsa
Key losses to graduation: center Neal Iyengar, guard Harrison Fong, guard Will Turpin
League: El Camino Division
Prognosis: Despite the loss of many key players to graduation, senior captains Kyle Yu and Hanlin Sun both said that the team has potential.
 "I think the team is going to be pretty good this year," Yu said. "We have a shot at winning league."

While it may seem that Yu is optimistic in his prediction given that the team consists of both smaller and younger players than last year, Yu said that the difference in the size and age of players is accounted for by their better team chemistry this year, which has allowed them to run more complex plays and create more opportunities to score.
 "We've gotten a lot more tactical this year with executing plays," Sun said. "We still want to play fast, but we just want a little more structure."

Sun predicts the Falcons will "definitely make CCS" despite having smaller players on the court, because they have many players who can shoot or "get to the basket."
 Looking forward, Sun said seniors are excited for their last season.
 "I'm definitely super excited for my senior year," Sun said. "This is the last time I really ever get to play organized basketball." ♦

—Leo Cao and Jeffrey Xu

BOYS' SOCCER HOPES FOR ANOTHER DEEP RUN IN CCS AFTER LOSING MANY SENIORS

Head Coach: Chris Stott
2017-2018 record: 11-7-2
2017-2018 recap: The team advanced further in CCS than ever before, making it to the semifinals, but lost to Sacred Heart.
Key Additions: senior center back AJ Lee, sophomore Coen Poelmann, sophomore Kyle Massie
Key Matchups: Milpitas, Palo Alto
Star Players: senior striker Owen Keogh, junior striker Joe Bruun-Jensen, senior center back AJ Lee
Key losses to graduation: Solomon Bailey, Timothy Kobara, Neil Rao

League: De Anza Division
Prognosis: After a successful season last year, the team is ready to adjust to the more difficult upper league.
 Senior Owen Keogh said that the team needed more recruits during tryouts because 18 players graduated and many of the remaining players have injuries.
 According to Keogh, the team currently has 17 players, and is hoping for 24 players. The tryouts were delayed because of the smoke from the Butte County fire.
 Because of the lack of players, the team might be weaker, Keogh said. For example,

because many midfielders were previously seniors, the team "lost a lot of strength," according to Keogh.
 With these losses, the coach's main goal for the team this year is just to stay in their league.
 According to senior Joe Bruun-Jensen, the team also plans to continue weight training after starting to lift last season.
 The team has not had any practices as of Nov. 26 due to the smoke, but they have a general plan in mind once competition starts.
 "Our game plan is trying to defend and

not allow them to score," Bruun-Jensen said.
 Despite the loss of talent to graduation, Keogh said the team's new players will have time to adjust to varsity soccer.
 "I think at the start of the year, if we get early losses, then it will be OK," Keogh said. "But as we move forward in the season, I think we will get better, so the younger players will be able to get more experience and keep up with what varsity soccer is like." ♦

—Andrew Li and Alan Zu

WRESTLING LOSES BLOM BUT ADDS MORE MEMBERS

Coach: Kirk Abe
2017-2018 record: 0-14
2017-2018 recap: Top wrestlers Allie Liddle and Linus Blom made SCVAL All-League, but the team struggled to fill certain weight classes.
Key Additions: sophomore Tushar Shrivastav, freshman Chris Okuno and senior Ryan Busse
Key Matchups: Santa Clara, Los Altos
Star players: seniors Sarah Daoudi and Maddie Stuart, sophomore Morgan Bruun-Jensen

Key losses to graduation: alumni Alexander Liddle, William Sabato and Vladimir Kataev; sophomore Linus Blom (transferred to Los Gatos)
League: De Anza Division
Prognosis: Last year the Falcons had to forfeit dual meets because the team could not fulfill certain weight classes. This year, they hope to reverse this trend.
 According to senior Victor Chen, last year the team had "studs that could pull off wins" in Liddle and Blom. This year, the team has enough wrestlers to fill the entire

roster, but with 15 new wrestlers and only six returning ones, Chen said that the season may be "a bit rough." Nonetheless, the abundance of new members shows that the team's recruiting has gone well.
 The major change this year is the return of Kirk Abe as the team's coach. Abe took on the role after previous coach Daniel Gamez left to coach another school. Abe coached 10 years ago and had experience wrestling in high school.
 Chen said that the previous coach focused more on the conditioning and men-

tal aspect of wrestling, while Abe will focus on techniques.
 Furthermore, the team has ramped up its fundraising this year, selling food at football games and after school. On Oct. 26, during the football team's senior night, the team sold Abe's homemade Thainaris, rice with curry chicken in a tofu wrap. However, Chen said that the team is still \$1,500 shy of the money needed to pay entry fees for tournaments. ♦

—Isaac Le and Alex Wang

GIRLS' WATER POLO

Team advances further in CCS than ever before

BY Andrew Li & Alan Zu

Senior Maddie Stuart lobbed a shot from halfway across the pool and into the goal during the last two minutes in the team's second CCS game against Aragon on Nov. 6. The two teams were tied up to the last two minutes; the lob broke the tie, leading the Falcons to a 5-4 victory.
 "I don't think anyone expected it to go in," senior defender and driver Sarah Daoudi said. "It felt super nice because we could all breathe again, have the lead and try and finish off the game as winners."
 The Falcons went as far as they could in Division II CCS but lost 20-10 in the finals vs. Menlo on Nov. 12.
 The girls won their first game 6-4 against Santa Cruz on Nov. 3. In the match, Saratoga did not score any points in the first half, but they rebounded and scored five goals in the third quarter and one in the last quarter.

After the first game, sophomore Morgan Bruun-Jensen said that the team had achieved a great start in CCS.
 "We were undefeated in our league, so it's been good compared to other years," Bruun-Jensen said. "During our league game, we won by more than 10 points every time."
 When the girls entered CCS, they were most worried about facing Harker, because Harker always put up good fights. However, Harker lost its first match, so the Falcons did not have to play them.
 After the semifinal win against Aragon, senior goalie Sammy Mokhberi recounted an interesting event.
 Halfway during the CCS semifinals match, a player from Aragon screamed in frustration during the second quarter.
 "We all started laughing," junior goalkeeper Sammy Mokhberi said. "The game was overall dramatic."
 The game against Aragon was "extremely close," Mokhberi said.

"Aragon was good, but we were better, so we won," said Mokhberi. "It showed that we conditioned more than them, and we worked harder."

"It showed that we conditioned more than them, and we worked harder."



JUNIOR Sammy Mokhberi

In the CCS championship game, they were down 5-0 after the first quarter, but followed up with four goals in the second quarter. They ended up scoring six more goals in the second half, but fell short.
 The girls finished having advanced further into CCS than any previous SHS girls' water polo team.

Mokhberi said the game against Menlo was challenging because Menlo's team had many skilled players. The match was the first game the Falcons lost by such a huge margin this year.
 "It sucked that we lost, because we had an undefeated regular season," Mokhberi said. "We were still happy, because it was the first time we ever made it that far, placing second in CCS."
 Next year, the team will be "much weaker" because seven seniors will be graduating, Mokhberi said.
 She added that most of the players graduating are starters, and after the year ends, there will be only five players on varsity. The team will have to build up their numbers and pull up JV players.
 Mokhberi is looking forward to next year's season.
 "Next year, we will be in the upper league, so we need to work twice as hard in conditioning and focusing more," Mokhberi said. ♦

GIRLS' BASKETBALL DRIVES FORWARD FROM PREVIOUS SEASON'S INJURIES

Head Coach: Danny Wallace
2017-2018 record: 22-5
2017-2018 recap: Lost to Aptos High School in CCS semi-finals
Key Additions: junior guards Anhmy Tran and Ranna Zahabi, sophomore center Bereket Bailey, freshman center Amarangana Tyagi
Key Matchups: Los Gatos, Palo Alto
Star Players: sophomore guard Jane Loo, junior guard Anika Prasad
Key Losses to Graduation: Harshini Ramaswamy, Chloe Fung
League: De Anza Division
Prognosis: After last season's successful though injury-riddled season, coach Danny Wallace hopes to overcome the challenge of competing in the tough De Anza League. Even before the conference competition begins in January, the team

must maintain at least a 6-6 record during the preseason in order to qualify for CCS.
 "Last year was a great testimony for playing hard — we were a young team, and we made our stance that we can compete at a higher level," Wallace said. "We're just going to take one year at a time."
 After last season's slew of injuries, including junior Ella Parr's torn ACL and senior Kirstin Kruka's concussion, among others, the team will focus on staying healthy, reducing muscle pain and maintaining their health by emphasizing care like muscle rollers and yoga practice.
 "If all of the variables come together, I truly believe that we can compete in the De Anza League and be the top three," Wallace said. "I'm not saying we're going to win it all, but we have a shot."
 Sophomore guard Jane Loo said that

the team will shift the way they play as Wallace incorporates new drills in practice to improve team chemistry.

"I'm not saying we're going to win it all, but we have a shot."



COACH Danny Wallace

With its strong bench and Loo directing the offense, the team will look to centers sophomore Berry Bailey and seniors Kirstin Kruka and Kitty Huang to rebound and guard Anika Prasad to score.

Wallace emphasizes that the whole team will work together to score, rather than relying on a few select players.
 "It's important to make sure everybody is on the same page," Wallace said. "The most important player is the team — trust your team, and you're in good shape."
 Since the team is traditionally under-sized, they will take advantage of their speed with a fast-paced transition offense. The team will also run a full court press against teams like Los Gatos, which lack skilled ball handlers.
 "Every year, I change due to what my team is capable of doing," Wallace said. "I never say 'This is the only way.' I like to look at my team, analyze and move forward for what's best for the team." ♦

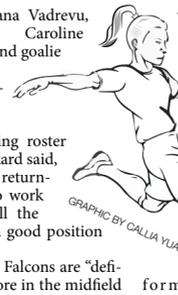
—Manasi Garg and Allison Hartley

GIRLS' SOCCER LOSSES UPPERCLASSMEN PLAYERS

Head Coach: Ben Maxwell
2017-2018 record: 5-8-6
2017-2018 recap: Last year they had 14 people on varsity and the entire team worked hard to communicate well, leading to a successful early season. Unfortunately the team did not make CCS, maintaining many injuries in the season.
Key Additions: goalie junior Adrienne Chan, sophomore forward Michelle Lim
Key Matchups: Mountain View, Los Gatos and Palo Alto
Star Players: senior center defender Sasha Pickard
Key losses to graduation: center midfielder Chloe McGee, outside backs Al-

lison Borch and Sadhana Vadrevu, forwards/midfielders Caroline Chen and Daphne Liu and goalie Christina Walb
League: De Anza Division
Prognosis: Since half the starting roster graduated last year, Pickard said, incoming talent and the returning players will have to work hard this season to fill the empty spots, finish in a good position and make CCS.
 Pickard said that the Falcons are "definitely going to feel it more in the midfield

without [alumna] Chloe McGee to distribute and hold that key spot during the game."
 This year's team has just two seniors, but Pickard said that there are new freshmen who play at a high level of club soccer. With this new blood, the girls' soccer team hopes to focus on team chemistry early in the season to condition the team to perform better together.



GRAPHIC BY CALLIA YUAN

"Since there will be a lot of new people, we will definitely have to bond quicker and stronger so our dynamics and chemistry on the field is good," senior forward Jennah El-Ashmawi said.
 El-Ashmawi also said that the team is still looking to recruit more players. Having lost the core of the team due to graduation, the Falcons are working hard to prepare for a challenging season to face key rivals.
 "It's gonna be a tough season, but everyone's definitely ready to put in the work," said Pickard. ♦

—Ava Hooman and Esha Lakhotia

Hoop Dreams: Freshman works to measure up to senior brother's stellar reputation

BY Christine Zhang

"Hey, look, it's Hanlin's little brother!" Freshman Weilin Sun, then a sixth-grader, turned around as he heard someone mention his elder brother, senior Hanlin Sun, who was then a freshman. An eighth-grade member of the Redwood Middle School basketball team was looking at Weilin, and Weilin gave a half-hearted wave as he sighed and returned to his dribbling.
 Weilin began playing basketball in kindergarten, following Hanlin into the sport. When he started on the Redwood team in sixth grade, he realized that the other players recognized him because of Hanlin.
 "A lot of people knew him," Weilin said. "Once he left for high school, people called me Hanlin's little brother."
 In addition to participating on school teams, Weilin plays in AAU, a competitive basketball organization that plays eight to 10 tournaments in a season. He estimates

he plays 10 or more hours per week with his school and club practices.
 Hanlin, on the other hand, plays exclusively on the school team when basketball is in season. The varsity team has practices or games six days a week, with each practice lasting around three hours.
 Hanlin has also played the sport since kindergarten. He was a member of AAU teams in his middle school years as well, but he no longer participates in them.
 Hanlin said that he is not used to practicing in the same place as his brother.
 "It's kind of crazy because he's always been at a different school than me due to our age difference," Hanlin said. "I haven't been at the same school as him since elementary school, so seeing him [during] JV practices is trippy sometimes."
 Because of Hanlin's reputation as an exceptional basketball player, Weilin said that he needed to prove his own worth to the other members of the team rather than have his brother's achievements define

him.
 "When I was in middle school I didn't appreciate being called my brother's brother," Weilin said. "I was like 'I have a name, but then I thought I have to prove that I have my own name.'
 Sophomore Isaac Sun, a fellow member of the basketball team who is close to Weilin and has interacted with Hanlin, acknowledged the pressure on Weilin.
"A lot of people knew Hanlin. Once he left for high school, people called me Hanlin's little brother."
 FRESHMAN Weilin Sun
 "Hanlin's a really popular person outside of basketball, so Weilin already has that reputation being known as his younger brother," Isaac said. "Weilin just has really big shoes to fill."
 Hanlin does not view his reputation as a detriment to Weilin's status on the team, instead believing that it should "fuel him

to do better and motivate to play harder."
 The two brothers do not usually practice together. Weilin said that they played together when they were younger, but they now practice with their own teams. Occasionally, Hanlin watches Weilin's games and tells him where he needs to improve.
 Isaac said that Weilin and Hanlin have different roles and styles when playing basketball, which can be unfair when others compare them.
 "It's tough knowing that others expect Weilin to match Hanlin when they don't even play the same way," Isaac said. "Still, Weilin is really impressive for dealing with it so well."
 Weilin is 5'8" and plays small forward, and Hanlin stands at 5'11" and plays point guard. Although they both enjoy playing defense, Weilin said that he likes to drive to the basket while Hanlin is a better defender and enjoys leading and managing the team.
 Despite the expectations that Weilin faces, the brothers have a close relationship.
 "There's not really tension between us," Weilin said. "I know my brother's a lot better than me, so I respect him for that." ♦



Weilin freshman JV basketball player



Hanlin senior varsity basketball player

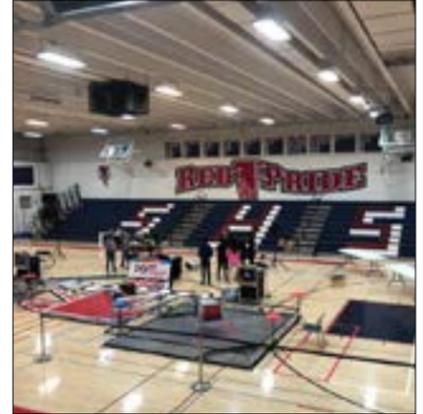
>> snapshots



FALCON // ALAN ZU



FALCON // ALAN ZU



Courtesy of DEREK CHIOU



FALCON // AVA HOOMAN

Freshman Giulio Bianzino tips off in a game against Piedmont Hills on Nov. 20.

A student walks through the hallways with a facemask to protect against the smoke before November break.

Drama students perform the school play "Julius Caesar" on Nov. 10.

The Betafish robotics team sets up FTC robotics competition in the big gym on Nov. 10.

ISSUE *Highlights*

"Let's get this bread? More like let's get these lunch tables."

— reporter Muthu Palaniappan on the school's lack of lunch tables (pg. 9)

416

the number of students who have a total weighted GPA of 4.0 or higher as of Nov. 14, according to school registrar Robert Wise

SCAN FOR FALCON ONLINE

"To anybody who is interested, I looked FINE. No, really, I thought I looked all right."

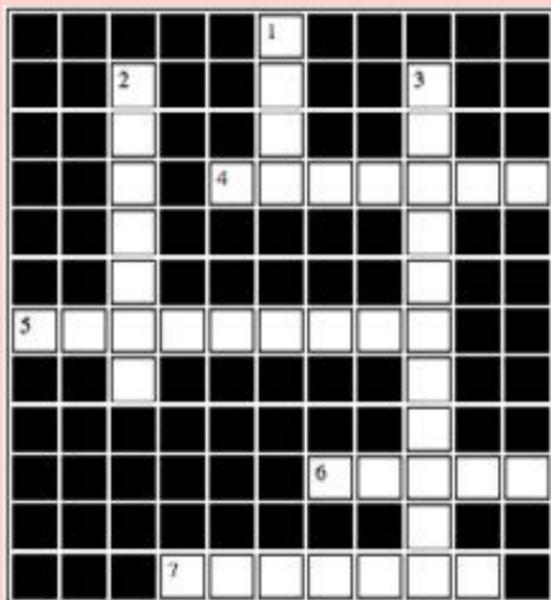
— reporter Andrew Lee on his winter formal outfit from Burlington Coat Factory

GRAPHICS BY CHELSEA LEUNG, ELAINE SUN AND JAYNE ZHOU

FALCON

CROSSWORD

The answers are all somewhere in the issue! Can you find them?



Think you've found the answers? Go here to see if you're right!



Down

Across

- 1. The fitness center is named after him. (Pg 17)
- 2. The _____ team won the Nov. 23 basketball game. (Pg 2)
- 3. Wrote the fall play (Pg. 6)
- 4. Here, printing costs 25 cents per page. (Pg 7)
- 5. The school's literary and art magazine. (Pg 2)
- 6. Speech and debate's new head coach. (Pg 6)
- 7. Something you would buy from GameStop. (Pg 11)

CROSSWORD BY JACKSON GREEN

topten

WAYS TO GET INTO THE HOLIDAY MOOD

- 10** COUNT DOWN THE DAYS
25 days until Christmas also means 38 days until second semester.
- 9** REACH OUT TO OLD FRIENDS
"Hey Bartholomew, I mean, uh, Reginald, nice seeing you after so many years."
- 8** "UH HUH." "YEAH." "AWESOME"
Use these key phrases to survive any long-winded story from Uncle Fritz during the family Christmas get-together.
- 7** PRAY FOR SNOW
If the smoke didn't warrant canceling school, maybe some snow will.
- 6** LISTEN TO HOLIDAY MUSIC
"Believe" by Josh Groban will mean more about having faith in last-minute finals studying than Christmas magic.
- 5** JUDGE YOUR NEIGHBORS' LIGHTS
Clearly, the darkness surrounding your lawn justifies putting your neighbor's lit-up lawn under the microscope.
- 4** MASQUERADE AS A CHRISTMAS-THEMED CHARACTER
You might think you make a great Santa, but really you're just a Grinch.
- 3** WEAR AN UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER
It's the only time of the year when your subpar fashion choices become cool.
- 2** PUT OUT COOKIES FOR SANTA
Who cares about the obesity epidemic as long as he can still squeeze through the chimney?
- 1** BUY GIFTS (FOR YOUR TEACHERS)
No, that doesn't mean your grades will suddenly be rounded from a C+ to an A-.



>> Victor Liu and Jeffrey Ma

GRAPHICS BY ELAINE SUN