

# THE saratogafalcon



Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA  
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## HACKED?

VOTING SYSTEM FIXED AFTER POSSIBLE ASB ELECTION TAMPERING

BY Jeffrey Xu & Callia Yuan

A flaw in the school's online voting system that led to allegations of possible vote tampering in the ASB elections for 2019-20 was fixed in time for the class elections earlier this month.

On Friday, March 8, students who had been previously unable to vote during the ASB elections were happy to find that individualized links had been sent for class officer voting. This time, there were no reported issues of students being unable to vote on 5-Star Students, the voting system used by the school for student government and Homecom-

ing royalty elections.

The issue of students' account being used to vote was present with the ASB elections this year as well as class officer elections last year.

Some defeated ASB candidates and their friends had initially questioned the results amid reports that dozens of students who tried to vote in an online system couldn't do so because their accounts had already been used to cast a ballot.

Sophomore Katie Chen, who had lost her ASB election for treasurer but won her junior class officer election for vice president, thinks at least 40 potential voters were unable to cast their votes in the

ASB election, and that the numbers could have made an impact on the final result. She also suspects some kind of tampering may have been involved.

While a similar issue occurred during last year's class office elections, Leadership adviser Matthew Torrens said that he believes the voting problem for this year's ASB elections was not the same issue as what may have occurred last year. Last spring, the suspicion was that students who had access to other students' information through means such as the binders in the journalism room and the

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## Community rallies to support teacher

200-FOOT FIR TREE CRASHES THROUGH MANTLE'S HOUSE DURING SEVERE STORM

BY Anishi Patel & Ananya Vadlakonda

Severe storms ripped through math teacher Jennifer Mantle's Santa Cruz community of Boulder Creek in the early hours of Feb. 14, uprooting trees and causing dangerous mudslides throughout the mountainous town.

At 12:45 a.m., Mantle and her two children awoke to what they believed was an earthquake, only to discover that their shaking house and shattered glass, walls and doors had in fact been caused by a falling 200-foot fir tree.

"On that day, it was like hurricane winds, scary, like you hear it coming and you brace and you clench and you wait for it to go away," Mantle said. "I was dead asleep, my children were asleep, and it was terror, utter terror. I can't explain it any other way."

The huge fir skidded off the corner of the Mantle house after the initial crash, tearing down walls and sending cold rain and wind screaming into their home.

"I opened the front door and

you couldn't see anything because there was no power," Mantle said. "And then having wind and the rain coming in your house when it's supposed to be your fortress? Scary."

They were uninjured, but amidst a power outage, collapsed roof and protruding branches, Mantle and her children gathered some belongings and evacuated the house, unsure if the tree or even the walls of their house were stable. The fallen tree had also destroyed Mantle's car.

The family stayed with various neighbors for the next several nights, eventually moving into associate superintendent Carrie Bosco's family cabin. On March 11, the Mantles began renting a house across the highway from their old home. They plan to live there until their old home is demolished, rebuilt and eventually greenlighted for occupation — a process that could take months or years.

Although the Mantles' insurance will cover most of the costs of



Mantle

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## Admissions scandal unsurprising to many

BY Kevin Sze & Alex Wang

On March 12, breaking news alerts buzzed with revelations that 50 parents, standardized test administrators and college officials from around the U.S. were charged with taking part in a massive college admissions scandal organized by William Rick Singer, CEO of a college admissions prep company called The Key.

No one in Saratoga was caught up in the scandal, but a few residents in Palo Alto and Menlo Park were involved, according to the Palo Alto Daily Post.

Dubbed Operation Varsity Blues, the case is the largest college cheating scam ever prosecuted by the Department of Justice, and it naturally evoked strong reactions in a college-obsessed school like SHS.

Guidance counselor Eileen Allen said she wasn't shocked by the scandal.

"The pressure to get into these brand name schools is enormous, and I can see how wealthy parents

who were trying to buy an advantage would have sought out a way to have an advantage or guarantee of admission," she said.

Physics teacher Kirk Davis said that his initial reaction to the scandal was "disappointed but not surprised" because he recognizes how easy it is to cheat on standardized tests.

"My wife and I have a child who had learning disabilities and was allowed extended time, and it was proctored by someone from the child's school but we didn't think twice about it," Davis said. "When you get extended time on these things you have to be proctored separately. It could have been proctored by anybody."

Allen also sees how some unethical parents could find ways to cheat or bribe coaches and test proctors to help their students get into better universities.

"If you think about affluent communities and the lengths that parents and students go to in order to gain admission to prestigious

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GRAPHIC BY COLLEEN FENG

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Staff and students offer thoughts about Robinson's successor. **pg. 2**

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P.E. teacher Rick Ellis returns as coach after a 6-year hiatus. **pg. 24**

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**School tests emergency alert system**

The Los Gatos-Saratoga High School District sent out text messages and emails to all parents and students on Feb. 6 to test a new emergency broadcast system. This was the first of annual text messages to test the proficiency of the new safety system, and its results were successful, as students and parents received the notification.

According to Tony Palma, the head of facilities for the district, Saratoga's elementary school district has already been using this system to efficiently distribute crucial information, such as shelter-in-place alerts.

The setup of this new system was intricate and time-consuming, he said. Planning for the test of the alert system involved multiple processes, including confirming contact information, programming the back end distribution channels, and sending out preliminary notices and ultimately testing the "send" functions.

When an emergency or safety-related event impacts the school community, the system allows the district to access the contacts of parents and students in case of an emergency to send text alerts.

— Isaac Le and Andrew Li

**Students hold March for Our Lives walkout**

A student-organized March for Our Lives occurred during tutorial on March 14 exactly one year after the walk out sparked by the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla.

One of the co-organizers, freshman Kaaya Minocha, said she was "impressed by the turnout" of between 50 to 60 students, despite announcing the event just days prior.

The event consisted of two sections, the first being a student speaker section held in the Large Gym and the second being the actual walkout, which occurred during tutorial and didn't cut into any class time.

The student speakers included freshman co-organizer Anouk Yeh, Kate Dinucci and Minocha herself; junior Surbhi Bhat and seniors Ria Jobalia and Simran Malik. Each speaker covered a different facet of gun control ranging from ageism in the conversation to legislative action to combating fear in schools.

For Bhat, the motivation for speaking and participating was in part because of the lack of real action in the more than year since the shooting.

"All that we've gotten is 'thoughts and prayers,'" Bhat said. "We need to do something about guns — peanut butter is more regulated in schools than guns."

The participants exited through the front of the school, marching down Herriman Avenue and Saratoga Sunnyvale Road before looping back around to the softball field. During the march, participants chanted slogans like "enough is enough."

They also fundraised for the cause by selling clothing and merchandise, raising around \$80 in one lunch period. The money will go to the larger March for Our Lives organization, which will be hosting a larger commemorative march of the same name on March 30.

While the event was relatively small compared to last year, the organizers still saw it as a success in helping to raise awareness on the issue.

"We just don't want to live in fear that gun shootings can happen at our schools too," Minocha said. "Everybody still needs to address gun control as an issue."

— Jeffrey Ma and Callia Yuan

>> **falcononline**



**Top Story**  
Student-directed production offers new experiences for both director and actors.



**Top Story**  
Winter Guard kicks off season with new shows and staff.



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**



Moving Day >> Workers transport furniture to the new student center on March 14, which is planned to open in early April. The center will be home to CASSY, the Leadership class and a staff area.

**Search for new principal begins**

by Allison Hartley & Kriti Sankar

As principal Paul Robinson strides down the hall on campus, he reciprocates waves and greetings from students, many of whom fondly refer to him by his nickname of "P-Rob." Robinson, who announced in late January that he will be retiring at the end of this school year, holds a high level of popularity and respect from students and staff that will be hard for a new principal to match.

Staff members like English teacher Cathy Head say Robinson's kindness and care have been among his biggest contributions to the school.

"He genuinely loves Saratoga High. When someone is in a crisis, his heart is most obvious," Head said. "I have never hesitated to go to him when I was in need, and his first and last and in-between response has always been, 'What can I do to help?'"

Additionally, Robinson, 62, has tried to improve the school by checking in with teachers and students about what they need to be successful.

"He's probably the best principal I have ever had in terms of supporting teachers," English teacher Erick Rector said. "He's the first to say, 'I want you to go [to the conference]' and 'I'll get you a sub' and whatever you need to make your classroom better."

Robinson's driving motivation has been to help students and staff maintain a happy and healthy life balance.

During his time as principal here beginning in 2012, he said his goal was for students to "be happy and feel good about where they are in their life because life is challenging," and the school has introduced numerous student wellness efforts, including the CASSY therapeutic support service and the annual Speak Up for Change event.

The ASB president, senior Roshan Verma, said that Robinson, whom Verma described as a "ball is in your court" person, has been continually supportive of the

Leadership class when they need help while still allowing students to take actions on their own.

"If he has concerns, he'll be very vocal about it," Verma said. "He tries to help us work through an idea so that we know for sure everything that's going to be involved with it before we dive in."

**"Robinson is probably the best principal I have ever had in terms of supporting teachers."**

TEACHER Erick Rector

Verma thinks that Robinson's receptive quality will be an important trait in a new principal because student leaders work so closely with the administration to conduct events.

Many of Robinson's most memorable experiences come from attending events at SHS such as sports games, music and theater performances and club functions.

Robinson said he will remember big events like the 2018 Homecoming football game at Levi's stadium and the Rose Parade the band attended in 2012, but he will miss the everyday moments like visiting classrooms and greeting students and staff in the hall the most.

"It doesn't get any better than that and it warms my heart," Robinson said. "I'm probably more nostalgic about it now, knowing that it's going to end and I can see where the finish line is."

In retirement, Robinson wants to spend more time with his three grandchildren in Campbell, but he said he still plans on being present on campus, whether by mentoring new teachers or volunteering to direct traffic in the mornings.

As Robinson finishes his time leading the school, the district is looking for someone to fill the position.

Associate superintendent Carrie Bosco and director of human

resources Annette Grasty received input from community members on March 7 in the staff lounge and through surveys. Interviewing of final candidates will be take place on April 2. A new principal could be announced as early as mid to late April.

Applications for the position were being taken until the deadline March 20 for a job with a starting salary that ranges from \$174,956 to \$195,338, depending on experience, according to the job listing. The new principal will begin working July 1.

In looking for a successor, students and staff highlighted that they would like to see someone who can support the campus in the way Robinson has.

For instance, teacher Mike Davey recalls Robinson encouraging him after the 2017 girls' basketball playoff loss, a game that Davey felt was "taken away" from the girls he was coaching at the time because of poor officiating.

"Being supportive is among the top three traits for administrators," Davey said. "That's undervalued and people that are often the boss don't usually display that trait."

Davey, who has taught here for 26 years and worked with many administrators in that time, also cautioned against a new principal trying to dictate change.

"Some principals have an agenda, which can be good, but we also want a balance between embracing innovation and pushing it," Davey said.

Davey, who played a key role in the development of the Media Arts Program, said that Robinson encouraged the novel idea behind the program, knowing that teachers had varied skill sets and were interested in transforming the traditional curriculum.

Davey has faith that the search will result in a principal who will be a good fit for the highly involved parent and student atmosphere at the school.

But the school's next leader will follow in the large footsteps of one of the most impactful and popular principals in the school's almost 60-year history. ♦

**Music department battle March madness of performances**

**HECTIC MONTH FILLED TO BRIM WITH MANY CONCERTS FOR SCHOOL'S ENSEMBLES**

by Andrew Li & Jeffrey Ma

As second semester kicks into high gear for students with tests and projects constantly looming over the horizon, the music department also dives into its own "March madness" of sorts.

To put it in the words of music director Michael Boitz, "March is the ultimate month of performances for the music department. As soon as we get back from February break, there is something going on literally every weekend."

The month started with the MESH benefit concert on March 1, featuring performances by elementary and middle school chamber groups mentored by high schoolers.

The Winter Percussion and Winter Guard were equally as busy with more than half the weekends of the month occupied with events and tournaments.

Winter Percussion placed first at the American Canyon High School tournament, while Winter Guard qualified for the WGI Regionals at Union City on March 16-17.

The choir has remained busy as well, hosting and performing in the choral CMEA from March 8-9.

The spring series concert lasted through the week of March 10 with the concert bands performing on March 15 and orchestras on March 16.

Looking forward, the department still has the band and orchestra CMEA festival to host from March 22-23, in which all instrumental groups will participate.

In preparation for these events, the ensembles have been diligent with practices both during school time and after, resulting in many conflicts, especially with sports and robotics.

Boitz was especially proud of the individual time management and responsibility of students in the program.

"If I hold up the calendar, there are kids coming and going every single rehearsal from thing or another," Boitz said. "What I love about our group is that kids are able to do athletics, forensics, robotics, and we

work it out so that they can do both."

The woes of intricacies of scheduling are only further compounded by the difficulty of the music and level of musicianship upheld in the programs.

Top groups in the program regularly work on collegiate level music, requiring maximum commitment from both individual members and the group as a whole.

On top of this, many students participate in multiple groups, practicing and performing double, sometimes triple, the normal workload.

For freshman Joseph Jung, who plays oboe in freshman band and Saratoga Symphony Orchestra and vibraphone in the front ensemble and Winter Percussion, the process is both a challenge and rewarding.

"It's hard to juggle sometimes, but usually there's enough time during practice time for you to keep up," Jung said. "I have fun doing it and practicing at home so it's not painful."

The hours of practice culminate in the orchestra and band CMEA Bay Area

Sectional.

The department's hosting responsibility also adds further complexities and stress to the already overloaded month, requiring both large number of student volunteers and early planning, Boitz said.

**"It's hard to juggle sometimes, but usually there's enough time during practice time for you to keep up."**

FRESHMAN Joseph Jung

This stress isn't necessarily harmful; for Boitz and the program, the time investment and stress of the month are what give it meaning.

"These musicians were always chasing a carrot they were never going to catch because we are always trying to make music better," said Boitz. "I feel like, 'OK I've done everything I can do, so let's do it!'" ♦

**Two musicians perform in LA**

by Alex Wang

Senior cellist Thomas Lim and junior violinist Christine Lee will be among the talented young artists performing classical music at Schoenberg Hall in UCLA from March 26-31.

Both Lee and Lim, first chair of the respective instruments in the school's Saratoga Strings orchestra, were recently named to be a part of the YoungArts Los Angeles exhibition.

The event showcases artists from a variety of fields, including music, film, dance, theater, literature and visual and design arts. The event also offers young artists opportunities to work with mentor artists in master classes throughout the week.

To qualify for this exhibition, Lee and Lim each sent in four recordings of classical music across different time periods and written by different composers, which helps judges make a holistic evaluation of each candidate's full musical ability. The main aspects focused on by judges are technique and musicality, Lee said.

For his pieces, Lim needed to send in a movement of a cello suite by Bach, a classical sonata usually written by Beethoven, a first movement of a concerto and a work written since 1950 to represent more contemporary styles of music.

"I took a lot of time preparing for these recordings from March 2018 to October," Lim said. "I spent approximately ten hours recording the four pieces."

Finalists of the competition were invited to the National YoungArts Week in Miami in January. Both Lee and Lim received Merit recognition, so both students were then invited to the regional exhibition in Los Angeles.

"I was super excited to go to LA but pretty scared because there's a lot of pressure to play really well there, but I can't wait," Lee said.

For Lim's performance, he will be playing the Beethoven Sonata he submitted. Lim will also perform the Schumann Piano Quintet and a commissioned piece written by one of the YoungArts winners in musical composition.

During the exhibition, Lee said she is planning to perform pieces from her solo repertoire, pieces that were chosen by the organizers of YoungArts Los Angeles, as well as other chamber pieces.

To prepare, Lee said that she just needs to practice the pieces assigned to her "as best as she can."

Lim's cello career started at age 6 but he actually quit for a couple of years when he was 10. After he moved to the U.S. from Korea, he began to get very serious about cello and practiced intensively.

Then, right before he entered high school, Lim spent seven weeks of his summer at the Meadowmount School of Music where he practiced for more than five hours per day, and he improved tremendously over the course of those seven weeks.

For her part, Lee started playing the violin at age 5. She picked up on the instrument in order to differentiate herself from her sister, who was playing the piano.

Over the years and through many countless hours of practicing violin everyday, Lee has been able to achieve many accolades.

Current concertmaster of the California Youth Symphony's Senior Orchestra, Lee was also accepted into the National Youth Orchestra and is touring Europe with that group this summer.

"I think aside from talent, the thing about instruments is that you need to put a lot of time and practice into it because there's the muscle memory and physical aspect of playing," she said.

Initially, practicing was tough for Lee, she said, and it was her mother who pushed her to continue.

As she kept going, though, she found that music led her to have "amazing experiences" and meet mentors who inspired her to keep practicing and improving on her own.

"Music is an amazing way to express your emotions, and it is really fun exploring all the different possibilities out there to create that sound or feeling that you want to," Lee said.

In the future, Lee said that although she is unsure about what her college major will be, she knows she definitely does not want to stop playing music.

Similarly, for Lim, he said he does not know exactly what he will be studying in college.

However, there is the possibility that he may pursue it in college, depending on where he is accepted.

"I know that in whatever capacity, music will continue to be a part of my life, whether or not I pursue it in college or beyond," Lim said. ♦

**SCANDAL**

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universities just within the normal bounds of accepted practice, you can see how a scheme like this could develop if you have someone who has questionable ethics," Allen said.

English teacher Amy Keys noted how the people implicated in the scandal often believe that they are justified in gaming the system because many others also spend money on helping their children with college admissions through tutors and counseling. However, she said that this behavior and mindset deserves to be condemned.

"I was dismayed at the flagrant flaunting of any kind of rules of propriety and decorum," Keys said. "The fact that it was so blatantly buy-and-sell was absurd and really disgusting."

Allen also believes that the problem is larger than a few dozen parents paying their children's way into universities.

"I think there is a larger philosophical question concerning the gap between the rich and the poor and how this is perpetuated and exacerbated through the college admissions process and educational access in general," Allen said.

While most students in the Silicon Valley do not, as a rule, bribe their way into college, they still have the economic opportunity to take advantage of services that boost students' chances in college admissions, according to The Atlantic. These services include standardized test preparation classes, outside tutoring and college counseling, which in the Bay Area, can be up to \$400 an hour.

Keys sees the need for affirmative action programs, which strives to boost acceptance rates for some minorities who are statistically less economically privileged; she said that affirmative action solves a few issues regarding the fairness of college admissions.

She said that the college admissions process has already been inherently unfair for a long time for those with fewer privileges. However, Keys said that the emphasis on college admissions at Saratoga High comes from a more justified source.

"The difference with Saratoga High is I see students who are working incredibly hard," Keys said. "Yes, they have a lot of advantages because they're in a good school district, their parents tend to be highly educated and their parents tend to be focused on their success in ways that are legitimate, so that's different and I think the scandal should be dismaying to students at the school for that reason."

Though junior Jewoo Im, a competitive rower and potential college recruit, felt disappointed upon hearing about the scandal, he said that he was not surprised because he is familiar with the college recruitment process and is aware of how easy it might be to take advantage of a corrupt person. He said the scandal represents "how things work in real life," even if the steps taken aren't necessarily ethical.

Nonetheless, Davis believes students and parents, including those at Saratoga High, need to recognize that there is more to life than which college they get into.

"Try to go to the best college possible but don't let your admissions define you," he said. ♦

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### HACKING

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SHSTV room with student ID numbers and birthdays allegedly took advantage of the resources and commit voter fraud.

The birthday and ID number information was removed from the information in binders late last spring, which would have prevented the same issue from happening again.

It was possible that student may have recorded the information somewhere, but Torrens confirmed that the IP addresses of the voters for this year's ASB elections didn't have a significant number of votes coming from a single IP address, and few anomalies were apparent in the voting patterns overall.

With the evidence he's seen, Torrens thinks the voting glitches were most likely a systematic error due to the 5-Star software. And due to the strict timetable between ASB and class office elections, the Leadership class had been unable to schedule reelection and recover the lost votes.

One student who was unable to vote in the ASB election was junior Ranna Zahabi. After logging in and being unable to vote, she thought there was simply a glitch in the system. She soon realized, however, that many of her peers had the same issue and that there was a possibility that actual voter fraud was involved.

In the end, the ASB election resulted in junior George Bian as president, junior Jolyn Tran as vice president, sophomore Arnav Mangal as secretary, junior Rohan Rao as treasurer and sophomore Lauren Tan as the Board Representative.

For class office, the winners for the class of 2022 were: president Alexander Yang, vice president Derek Hsu, treasurer Nandini Desai and appointed representative Apurva Chakravarthy.

The winners for the class of 2021 were: president Cynthia Zhang, vice president Katie Chen, treasurer Cameron King and appointed representatives Dylan Li and

Aliza Zaman.

The winners for the class of 2020 were: president Claire Smerdon, vice president Alexandra Lee, treasurer Nandini Desai and appointed representatives Bryan Chu and Nicole Wong.

Torrens said that he, along with elections commissioner Tarun Krishnan and on-campus tech support Larry Jens collaborated after the ASB election fiasco to implement the new individualized link system, which turned out to be a success.

**"I'm really glad that we finally have a new system that works."**

SOPHOMORE Katie Chen

Chen said the new individualized voting system was much better than the previous one.

"The voting system changed and everybody got a secure link," Chen said. "I think that caused far fewer problems in the voting process."

The process for coming up with the system was not overnight, according to Torrens. At the time of the ASB elections, there was much debate over how to solve the voting issue.

Many students, as a result of the problems with 5-Star Students, had suggested that the school return to paper ballots for class office and ASB elections.

Despite the initial potential flaws of the 5-Star voting system, however, Torrens said paper ballots also came with their shortcomings, especially the fact that multiple teachers forget to hand out ballots to their classes or didn't turn them in on time.

In the end, the class office elections this year were fair, with no reported cases of voting fraud, due to the new voting system implemented by the Leadership Class.

"I'm really glad that we finally have a new system that works," Chen said. ♦

## Cuttlefish swim to Worlds

By Jackson Green

The M-SET Cuttlefish FTC Team recently became the first FTC team in school history to make it to the FIRST World Championships.

At the NorCal FTC Regional Competition on March 3 at Independence High School, the Cuttlefish were able to bring home the Inspire Award and qualify for the FIRST World Championships in Houston from April 17-20.

"The Inspire Award is given to the team that has the most outreach, the best overall teamwork and a good robot," junior robot driver Brandon Nguyen said. "It shows we're the best team in general."

The team has been preparing for regionals since last summer, where they went to various places to promote FIRST Programs.

Then, at the start of the season, they got to work building a robot up to the task, which this year includes a variety of me-

chanical challenges. These include lifting the robot up and down from a hook and picking up various objects and putting them in baskets.

"We've been hard at work building our robot," senior team captain Derek Chiou said. "We've been making revisions, iterating through code and ultimately improving our robot."

The team managed to get to the championship thanks to hard work.

"We put in a lot of hours," Nguyen said. "The week before regionals, we spent almost 60 hours in the room; some of us probably spent a little more."

The team plans to change their robot to perform even better at worlds.

Ultimately, the team is thrilled to be going to the world championship.

"It feels great to be going to worlds," junior hardware team member Katherine Peng said. "We've been working for three years to get this opportunity." ♦

### MANTLE

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rebuilding and tree removal, the family still has to pay insurance deductibles, buy a new car, replace lost belongings and pay many other expenses not covered by their insurance.

Upon learning what had happened, friends, students and faculty quickly came to Mantle's support.

A GoFundMe campaign created by one of the Mantle's neighbors was originally set at a goal of \$10,000 to help cover the out-of-pocket expenses. It garnered immense support from friends, family, faculty and students, surpassing its initial goal within 24 hours. The page has since raised \$27,410 for the family.

Junior Jinsu Yim first shared the GoFundMe link on the Saratoga High School

Facebook group after hearing about the situation from her dad, math teacher PJ Yim.

"She's a really great and understanding person, beyond being my math teacher and my dad's colleague," Jinsu said. "I myself donated a small amount and while I wish I could have given more, I'm glad that I helped out a little bit by letting the rest of the school know."

Likewise, several other members of the community sent messages of support for Mantle's family through texts, messages, emails and cards.

"I can't express anything but gratitude, gratitude for the fact that we're all still alive, but also the support from everyone. It keeps you from feeling destitute," Mantle said. "You don't realize how many lives you touch in your life until something tragic happens. It's really heartwarming just to know that we've built a community that's supporting us in this time." ♦

## SHS Math club hosts first middle school competition

By Jeffrey Xu

Hundreds of students streamed into the McAfee Center on Feb. 23 for the 2019 South Santa Clara Valley Chapter Mathcounts to watch the Countdown round and the award ceremony, directed by Toga Junior Math Club (TJMC) adviser PJ Yim.

The contest did not run itself; instead, high school volunteers rushed from room to room, delivering graded papers, proctoring tests and ushering students to be in the right place at the right time.

Having coordinated all of the student volunteers from the high school outreach contest math program, head liaison senior Justin Sun said that the event was an overall success.

According to Sun, the regional competition, consisting of 12 schools, was almost entirely hosted by the club itself, along with its parent coordinators and high school student volunteers. The competition had previously been hosted annually at San Jose State University, with more than 50 schools participating.

"Our job was to emulate how the competition had been hosted in previous years," Sun said. "It was logistically a lot better only having 12 schools rather than over 50."

Due to a lack of schools volunteering to host, Saratoga High School, in partnership with the Toga Junior Math Club, hosted the event.

As the student director, Sun assigned roles to all of the high school volunteers as well as coordinated the testing classrooms to make sure all the tests were being administered properly.

Yim played a large part in organizing the actual event; he set up the opening ceremony, hosted the countdown round, an-

nounced awards and coordinated with the coaches from other schools.

Freshman Jeffrey Hu was one of the ninth graders at the event, and having practiced Mathcounts and Math League competitions in middle school, believes that the event mirrored his own experiences participating in contests.

"I think that the contest went pretty great overall in that no major grading mistakes were made," Hu said. "I guess grading was pretty nice, though it was repetitive. It was cool to see what the general questions missed were."

In order to fundraise for the event, Toga Junior Math Club sought donations from parents from other schools who had students attending the competition. Sun said that the parents were very generous, especially since it was the club's first year hosting the competition and was therefore short on money.

As for the contest results, Redwood eighth-grader Stuti Agrawal took home the title of Countdown champion. As a school team, Redwood placed first in the written rounds, followed closely behind by Chaboya by a quarter of a point. In individual results, Redwood eighth-grader Nilay Mishra placed second overall, losing in a tie-breaker to Chaboya seventh-grader Linus Tang.

Sun, along with Yim and other Toga Junior Math Club volunteers, is already reaching out to potential sponsors for next year in companies that have previously sponsored Mathcounts competitions.

"Despite how tough it was to plan the competition, it was worth it in the end to host and give these kids a good opportunity to compete," Sun said. "We're already looking forward to and planning next year's competition." ♦



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# HOLOGRAPHIC AR: 2019 TOP HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER CAMP CHOICE AT BAY AREA

AS SEEN ON:    

BY ARIN ROBERSON SPONSORED BY: INTEGEM

SILICON VALLEY, California—With the coming of summer, many high schoolers are choosing Holographic Augmented Reality (Holographic AR) summer camps to learn and to create their own 3D movie, 3D game, interactive news report, interactive comic, and/or AI empowered applications while gaining multi-disciplinary skills in science, engineering, technology, art, design, visual communication, and public speaking. Some students are even planning to turn their Holographic AR projects into a portfolio as a mean to stand out on college applications.

Understand that some high schoolers may not know how to program at all, while some may have already taken AP computer courses. All students learn at their own pace, and with a teacher-student ratio of 1:8 they are guaranteed to receive good attention to be successful. We have put a lot of design effort into our curriculum to make sure that every student can succeed. We enable every student to program, design, and innovate with Holographic AR.

Integem also designed a variety of camps to fit different students' strengths and pursuits. When

gamers can create their own interactive Holographic AR 3D game. Games become an immersive experience where no controller or headset is necessary, use your hand and body to manipulate your environment and win.



For students who love film/youtube/movie/art, the interactive 3D movie camp would be the choice. Traditionally, it would cost millions of dollars with a big team to create a 3D movie. Now, students can do it themselves. Moreover, students will be some of the first in the world to create immersive 3D Holographic AR movies with dynamic plots that change based on viewers' choices. Students will learn basic video editing techniques as well as art composition strategies so as to fully immerse users in their vibrant storylines.



Lee struggled academically in her early years of high school and was even held back a grade but taking charge of her life she strove to gain academic success. Given the opportunity, she created a Holographic AR video resume to tell admission officers how she had failed, struggled, fought, and risen through her high school experience. A high-quality video resume would have cost her \$50,000 or more, but with Holographic AR it cost next to nothing in time and money. She was admitted to the Univ. of California, Berkeley. It was her spirit for fighting for a better future, her hard work and dedication as well as her later academic achievements that won the hearts of the admission officers. Holographic AR made it possible for her to engage with admission officers emotionally and helped them better understand her story and empathize with what she had gone through in her life.

Integem's curriculum is specially designed for all computer skill levels, from zero experience to advanced level. Dr. Eliza Du, CEO of Integem said, "because we un-

derstand that some high schoolers may not know how to program at all, while some may have already taken AP computer courses. All students learn at their own pace, and with a teacher-student ratio of 1:8 they are guaranteed to receive good attention to be successful. We have put a lot of design effort into our curriculum to make sure that every student can succeed. We enable every student to program, design, and innovate with Holographic AR.

For students who love engineering and science, the "AI Engineer: Intelligent Holographic AR Program" program would be a great choice. Holographic AR makes it easier to understand the abstract match concepts in AI and also helps to turn AR experiences to solving real-life problems. Students will learn about data sets, probability and statistics theories, and use AI algorithms to create an evolving intelligent AR application that responds to users. All these traditional abstract theories now become vivid and understandable characters, objects and actions in Holographic AR.



Love games? Join the 3D interactive game design camp, where



Holographic AR is a new kind of media that provides students great opportunity to be a pioneer in AI, Movie, Game design, digital art, and news reporting, etc.

So, what is Holographic Augmented Reality? Holographic AR enables users to be taken from the real world and placed in a computer-generated reality. Users can then interact with this reality through a variety of hand movements, facial expressions, and voice commands.

Previously, only a few high school students had the chance to learn Holographic AR in Cupertino. However, in 2019, after collaborating with International Augmented Reality Education Foundation (a non-profit organization), Integem now offers Holographic AR programs to more high school students in several locations in the bay area.

Instead of "talking" about their ideas on paper, students now can show their creative ideas into tangible products/services in Holographic AR. Traditionally, it would take a team of professionally trained engineers and artists working together for months, even years to create a simple Holographic AR experience. Now the Holographic AR programming language iCreator allows people to turn their own ideas quickly into Holographic AR in mere days.

Most importantly, with Integem specially designed curriculum, high school students can learn Holographic AR from scratch to advanced level in weeks. Alice, from Fremont Christian High School, commented, "I liked the way the software was introduced to us, starting with simple projects and gradually becoming more complicated. I felt like I really understood after only a few days of experience".

Learning the Holographic AR technology enables high school students to innovate and pioneer in their interested fields, which are key for their future success. Integem camps are dynamic and diverse, and perfect for students who would like to pursue a variety of interests and skills. Find out more info at Integem's Holographic AR summer camp website: [camp.integem.com](http://camp.integem.com).

\*Find the original article at ABC news: <http://bit.ly/ARHigh>

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# Benefit Fashion show raises \$10,000 for schools in fire-ravaged Paradise area

by Andrew Lee

Junior Benefit commissioner Jeffrey Xu stepped into the Large Gym on March 2, a Saturday morning, each of his footsteps ricocheting across the high-ceiling room. Donning a fresh black tuxedo and holding a heavy cardboard box in his hands, Xu's eyes panned across the floor, imagining the black curtains and elevated runway sprawled against the back wall and the daunting number of hours required to set it up for the big event later that evening.

Xu, along with volunteers, Leadership students, and the other five members of the Benefit commission — seniors Ines Picard, Karen Chow, Isabelle Rieken, Janelle Jin, Michelle Vu — worked tirelessly all morning and afternoon prepping the Small Gym as a model waiting room, the gym lobby as a silent auction display and the Large Gym into a gleaming stage.

Later that night, 160 students took to the runway in pairs and trios to pose in outfits ranging from casual street clothes to extravagant costumes, put together by seniors including Khaira Berkowitz-Sklar, Angela Poo, Grace Stuart, Rachael Bakke, and Tiffany Pi.

Students ran through 13 different themes with an intermission in the middle. The dance team performed after the intermission.

With the help of the Benefit adviser, Spanish teacher Stephany Marks, and Leadership teacher Matt Torrens, the Benefit commissioners coordinated the show to raise money for the Color a Classroom with Love charity, which provides essential school materials to school districts in Paradise, California. Most of the town, including

the schools, burned down during the Camp Fire in October.

Benefit head commissioner Picard especially appreciated the contributions of Marks, saying, "This year, we had a new adviser. She jumped on board to help us out with this enormous event and did such an amazing job, and the commission is very grateful for her."

On the day of the show, the commission also had help from many volunteers, including parent Helen Jarrett and seniors Isiah Vivero, Alec Lockhart and Vittorio Morini Bianzino. They helped with general organization and with music as sound technicians.

"The day of the show definitely gets hectic, but [the volunteers] fulfilled their responsibilities and [helped] relieve so much stress," Picard said. "The show couldn't have happened without them."

Planning for the show began almost six months before the actual show in around September of last year. The Benefit commission worked until December gathering outfit donations, organizing models and theme heads and ordering the set up for the stage.

The silent auction also took place at the show, with 25 possible prizes including a lunch with the principal and free kickboxing sessions at Studio Kicks. Combined with ticket sales and money collected from silent auction and donations, The Benefit commission raised around \$10,000 for the charity.

A major transformation has taken place within the commission as well. The Benefit commission welcomed its first ever male commissioner, Xu, to the team since its inception in 1987.

According to junior model Daniel Ning, the fashion show was a fun experience to be a part of for the first time, and is something



Senior Mackenzie Lee struts and poses down the Benefit catwalk, showing off her outfit on March 2.

he would consider participating in again next year.

"I think the benefit show went as smoothly as possible thanks to the hard work of the commissioners," Ning said. "It was fun and filled with great outfits."

Despite the show's success, however, there were still issues with the show that the commission struggled to deal with during the process of planning for the show.

One major problem was stores dropping out of the show at the last minute unexplained, which caused scheduling conflicts and an overwhelming amount of models who had to find substitute outfits. But since the commission does not have the authority to place contracts, there was nothing the Benefit commission could do to prevent that, Picard said.

"I'd say that the parent attendance to the

show was definitely not what we wanted it to be, but for next year, we're hoping to cut the students as a middle man [to inform parents] and establish direct contact with the parents of students to get more people to come," Picard said.

With all the planning and work that had gone into the show, the show turned out to be a success, garnering thousands for schools that lack necessary materials. Though there were some issues, the Benefit commission is proud to have hosted such a large show, and is excited to see what's in store for coming years.

"The commission is only six people, so it is a lot to take on, but I'm happy to say that the commission did such a great job," Picard said. "The show ran smoothly, and I'm sure Mr. Torrens and all of the volunteers appreciated that. It was definitely a success." ♦

# Junior creates Red-Blue Day app for students

by Selena Liu

Junior Kyle Petkovic always found himself too lazy to check the school calendar to see whether the next day was a Blue Day (periods 2, 4 and 6) or a Red Day (periods 1, 3, 5, and 7). As a result, Petkovic decided to create the website and Android app called Is Tomorrow a Red or Blue Day? It was released last month.

Throughout high school, Petkovic would remember always asking his brother senior Andrew Petkovic what day it was tomorrow. Too reluctant to check the school calendar himself, Petkovic decided to create a website that would help students find out.

The site tells students what day it is and what events are being hosted by the school. Users can also access a master calendar that will say what events are being held at future dates and whether those days are Red Days or Blue Days.

To get the app version of the site onto the Android app store, Petkovic had to pay \$25 and register. While the app version currently has the same format as the web version, besides the app having an option to receive feedback and questions from its users, Petkovic plans to add even more features to the app like notifications.

"When you wake up, the app could effectively tell you what events are being held today at school," Petkovic said. "Every morning at 8 a.m., for example, the app could tell you whether it is a Red Day or a Blue Day so you wouldn't have to remember yourself."

Junior Alex Mah, who has downloaded Petkovic's app, said that he likes how Petkovic put in the effort to include important events from the school planner on the app,

which tells students what events are happening on campus that day.

"I never know what is going on at school," Mah said. "Sometimes, there are activities in the quad during lunch or performances after school, and I'm never informed about them. It's helpful to use this app to find out what things are happening on campus."

Petkovic says he plans to gain useful coding experience by working on the app, since he has aspirations in the field of computer science. In previous years, he learned computer languages like C++ in classes outside of school in freshman year, and he also learned computer science from recently retired teacher Deborah Troxell in AP Computer Science.

Petkovic remembers that his first time coding was for a text-based game for AP Computer Science's final project. After the class, Petkovic has also made two programs for Java.

The Red-Blue Day app Petkovic is his first app for Android, and although he wants to make progress on the app as fast as possible, Petkovic said that the coding process is time-consuming.

"It takes me pretty long to code since I didn't have any prior experience making an Android app," Petkovic said. "Also, I'm pretty busy with school and the ACT so it's hard to find time. Plus once I start working on it, I spend way too much time trying to make it perfect."

But by developing this app, Petkovic plans to further his knowledge about coding and computer science.

"I thought the experience making new things was fun, and I will definitely try to pursue more of it in the future," Petkovic said. ♦



Petkovic  
Coder

# Cast list released for 'The Sound of Music'

by Anishi Patel & Oliver Ye

Preparations for the spring musical, "The Sound of Music," are underway after auditions concluded in late January.

"The Sound of Music" is based on the life story of the Von Trapp family, a famous concert group during the interlude between the two world wars. Maria, their governess, brings joy to the family through song in their Austrian home. As the musical progresses, Maria and Captain Von Trapp fall in love, but the coming of World War II throws a wrench in their romance.

The leading role of Maria Rainer will be played by junior Marly Feigin, Captain Von Trapp by senior Shasta Ganti, and the various Von Trapp children by senior Taylor Hill, juniors Natalie Tjahjadi and Eman Ahmad and sophomores Lauren Tan, Francesca Fernandes, Stephen Ludwig and Chris Linney.

The school last put on "The Sound of Music" in 2002, and this year, drama teacher Sarah Thermond and orchestra teacher Andrew Ford felt that students should once again have the chance to work with the style and historical time period offered by the classic Rodgers and Hammerstein production.

"The Sound of Music" has the advantage of being beloved and family-friendly, while still dealing with some extremely difficult topics," Thermond said, referencing the rise of Nazism and the Third Reich in Germany. The drama program interested a large audience with the family-friendly "Mary Poppins" musical last year, and Thermond is seeking the same kind of success with "The Sound of Music."

"While we didn't want to lose families [who enjoyed "Mary Poppins"] by doing something too dark or risqué, we did

want to give our actors a chance to work on something with a little more sociopolitical weight to it," Thermond said.

Ganti, who recently directed his own student production, is excited to play a character that is experiencing political upheaval — Captain Von Trapp loves his country, Austria, even as it comes under Nazi control.

Ganti sees "The Sound of Music" as resonating with modern American struggles such as the limits of patriotism, racism and fascism.

"If audiences take away anything from my performance, it's that it is still possible to love your country, despite standing against the wrongs that people in charge have committed," Ganti said.

The musical's historical complexity and prevalent themes come with complications, though. "The Sound of Music" has minimal scenes or songs with fewer than eight actors on stage, meaning scheduling for the entire cast has become a challenge.

Student actors must also portray a wide range of ages and sing in different languages, which will make costuming and learning lines more difficult.

Junior Ritika Kuppam, who will be playing a nun, said singing in Latin is difficult because she doesn't know the words. "For now, the strategy I'm using is associating Latin sounds with note pitches, and that's been working well so far," she said.

Additionally, most of the songs in the show are diegetic, meaning the characters refer to each other while singing. According to Thermond, this means the musical numbers will require realism.

"The Sound of Music" will premiere at the McAfee Center on April 26 and 27 at 7:30 p.m., April 28 at 2 p.m. and May 3 and 4 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets will go on sale beginning April 2. ♦

# Class officers employ restaurant fundraisers

by Christine Zhang

As class president Derek Hsu walked into MOD Pizza in Westgate West on Feb. 28, he found the restaurant full of customers for the freshman class fundraiser that day. He and his fellow class office members had advertised their MOD Pizza fundraiser in the days preceding the event, and Hsu was happy to see that their event was indeed doing well.

Recently, underclassmen class offices held restaurant fundraisers to raise money for their respective junior proms. Freshman and sophomore class officers also compared the successes of these events with the earnings from on-campus boba fundraisers.

According to Hsu, the fundraiser, which lasted from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., was located at MOD Pizza because MOD gave them a

higher percentage of the proceeds, and also because he wanted something different from the usual fundraisers at Chipotle and Panda Express. MOD Pizza gives 20 percent of the money raised, whereas Chipotle donates 15 percent.

Hsu said that \$143.53 was raised from this event, well more than the average boba fundraiser. The money from this fundraiser will be going to the freshman class's expenses for prom in 2021 and 2022, he said. This was the freshman class office's first off-campus fundraiser.

"Restaurant fundraisers are bigger, so if you invest and advertise it correctly, then it should be more successful," Hsu said.

The sophomore class office held a similar

fundraiser at Chipotle on Saratoga Avenue on March 9 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Sophomore class vice president Arnab Mangal said that they chose Chipotle because it had brought multiple successes in the past, but this occasion turned out to be an exception.

Mangal said that not enough people showed up to the fundraiser. He said that people bought \$125 in total from Chipotle, but since \$125 was not enough for the restaurant to donate the proceeds, the sophomore class office did not earn anything from this fundraiser. Mangal said that about one in four restaurant fundraisers end up this way.

This fundraiser was the sophomore

class's first off-campus fundraiser this semester. They had one last semester, but despite these fundraisers' general success, the class office tries not to have them too often since there are restaurant fundraisers from several other clubs and class offices as well.

In contrast to Hsu, Mangal said that off-campus restaurant fundraisers take significantly less work to plan and also have no risk of losing money.

"This earns us the money without us having to do a lot of work," Mangal said. "We just advertise, and then after that, the restaurant does the majority of the work."

Mangal said that restaurant fundraisers come in handy when a class needs more money but they are swarmed with work.

"We're busy right now, so we thought, 'You know what, we could just do a restaurant fundraiser,'" Mangal said. ♦



GRAPHIC BY CHRISTINE ZHANG

# Older clubs face low participation as interest shifts

by Allison Hartley

At lunch on a recent Thursday, senior Hanna Zahabi walked into room 603 for a California Scholarship Federation (CSF) meeting, and greeted 11 other students (mostly sophomores, juniors and seniors). Among them were her two sisters and other officers. Zahabi is the president of CSF, a club that has been at SHS since the '90s.

On the same Thursday, about 40 students (mostly freshmen) crowded the tables in English teacher Susanna Ryan's room (003) for a Leo Club meeting and listened to officers freshman officers Selina Chen and Anouk Yeh present a slideshow. They recapped members on multiple club-wide projects like a homeless benefit drive at Redwood Middle School and offered numerous volunteer opportunities such as playing music at the Senior Center, helping out at the Argonaut Carnival and the Redwood Middle School community fair, and running a Hot Chocolate Fundraiser at SHS.

While new underclassman-run service clubs like Leo Club gained popularity this year, attention has shifted away from longer-established service clubs to ones run by underclassmen.

"Club participation is shifting, and that's just a cycle that happens over the years," senior club commissioner Samyu Iyer said. "I think that is natural, and upperclassmen tend to go off campus more than they want to go to club meetings, so those clubs are starting to fizzle out and the underclassmen clubs are starting to rise."

The ASB Club Handbook requires a minimum of seven members, lowered from 10 members last year, not including officers, at each club meeting. Iyer said that this requirement is more similar to a guideline to encourage clubs to reach out to the student body by posting more on social media or gaining recognition by directly talking to students.

"Even if a club has only five people showing up, that's still five students on this campus united over one thing," Iyer said. "If it's really just your friend group of four to five people just chilling and eating together and calling it a club meeting, then that's where we ask if you need to be a school-sanctioned club with a bank account and all the things that come with it."

Especially for clubs that require ASB endorsement to manage funds and function, failing to compensate for the lost interest of

displaced students can threaten the club's life and productivity.

HERO club, which uses its funds to buy supplies for its care packages for the homeless, involves member participation outside of school to hand out care packages at planned walks in San Jose. Low member involvement not only makes club functions tough to organize but can also hurt the club's morale.

"For one walk, we could not get much participation, which really affected the spirit of the club," sophomore secretary Erica Lee said. "We tried advertising to freshmen by telling them it's a good way to get volunteer hours, but that brought freshmen to the assembly, not the actual walk."

CSF is based on serving the community with student scholarships and organizing events like the school-wide gift exchange between students and staff throughout the year. Without the ability to organize larger events with wide member participation, CSF can only make members aware of individual volunteering opportunities that they can sign up for through CSF.

The club continues to make outreach efforts by inviting friends to participate in meetings and posting on social media. With

the participation of more students, Zahabi said the club would want to have many more on-campus events.

"It's harder to spread awareness or advertise at school without the extra members," Zahabi said. "There's less presence in the community, just because we don't have enough people."

But a smaller club size has its strengths, too, Zahabi said. With fewer people, club members become more familiar with each other and decisions about club functions are made quickly and easily, which makes meetings shorter, for better or for worse.

"Everyone is able to communicate with everyone," Zahabi said. "Nobody is worried about 'Oh, the officers are listening to us,' and everyone is on the same level of contribution rather than two or three people running the club."

With the yearly variation of club involvement, students will ultimately associate with clubs that interest them the most, especially with various activities and off-campus food luring students' attention.

"People should not be scared to join clubs," Zahabi said. "It's super chill; they can take some time off of one day at lunch to hang out with different people." ♦

# Students revive academic honor society chapter

by Andrew Li & Alan Zu

After being disbanded in 2015-16 school year, the school's National Honor Society club is back in operation this year thanks to the efforts of juniors Ravina Patel, Ananya Vadlakonda, Rishi Jain and Prisha Samdarshi and sophomore Anthony Liu.

The SHS chapter is part of the larger National Honor Society organization, which "serves to recognize those students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of scholarship, service, leadership, and character" and began in 1921, according to the NHS website.

The organization also offers scholarship opportunities. According to Vadlakonda, members must have an individual service project to apply for the scholarships. In addition to the scholarships, the NHS club in SHS plans to carry out a club-wide service project.

In the past, the NHS club was advised by former history teacher Kim Anzalona, who retired last year.

According to the presentation from the first NHS club meeting in MAP and Leadership teacher Matthew Torrens's room, 506, on Feb. 7, "The National Honor Society (NHS) will serve to recognize exceptional Saratoga High School students who are not only academic achievers but also have a desire to improve their community through leadership and service."

At the first meeting, the officers went

over the application process, and once they accept members, they'll begin discussing and choosing their club-wide project.

The service project will be carried out for years to come, Vadlakonda said.

The application to be part of the NHS for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years consists of prompts asking for grades, leadership roles, service and honors as well as free-response prompts asking about a moment that inspired the applicant. Not all applicants were accepted even though there is no limit to the number of members.

To form the club, the officers had to create a five-member council of faculty members. According to the NHS website, "The faculty council works with the adviser to develop and periodically review local selection procedures and disciplinary procedures."

The faculty council's members are history teacher Margarita Morelle, English teacher Natasha Ritchie, Spanish teacher Gina Rodriguez, English teacher Susanna Ryan and drama and English teacher Sarah Thermond.

The acceptance results came out on March 14 after the officers met with a faculty council to decide on the members.

Those who were not accepted by NHS are still allowed to attend meetings. Vadlakonda said that unofficial members can still contribute as they desire, but will not be eligible for scholarships.

Patel said that the officers decided to

bring back NHS because it implements both scholarships and service projects.

In addition, Patel said that there were few opportunities for such clubs because one of the few clubs that had scholarships and community service, the California Scholarship Federation (CSF) club, has different focuses. For example, NHS focuses more on individual service projects than CSF.

"Although CSF is also a service club on

campus, it serves a different purpose than what NHS will strive to be," Vadlakonda said.

"We will probably discuss volunteering opportunities, tally volunteer points or discuss what we are up to next," Patel said. "Once we implement individual service projects, we will most likely have people present their ideas during a meeting and try to get others to join their initiative." ♦



Patel NHS officer

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# Despite good intentions, survey's implementation hinders legitimacy

The California Healthy Kids survey was conducted during tutorial on Feb. 27 to help the district collect valuable data on and gauge student's behavior and attitudes to a variety of health-related issues.

According to the school website, the official purpose of the survey is to assess "important areas for guiding school and student improvement," ranging from school climate and safety to student connectedness and well-being.

The specifics of the survey ranged from asking about a variety of drugs to questions like "Do you feel like a part of this school?"

Given this purpose, the survey is clearly an important source of information for the district.

Thus it's imperative that the information collected is accurate and legitimate; however, the implementation of the survey had glaring issues.

The legitimacy of the survey hinges upon the degree of truthfulness with which students answer, and the survey's confusing placement during tutorial, essentially rendering large swaths of the data potentially useless.

Coming into school on that Wednesday, most students had no idea that the survey was to be taken during tutorial. The topic and purpose of the survey were left unexplained, leading many to simply not take it seriously and rush through it.

While some students certainly do use tutorial for its intended purpose of getting aca-

demically guidance, a majority use the time for recreation and relaxation — a break from the monotonous concentration of their academic classes. The mindset adopted during tutorial simply does not match the survey's requirements.

Given that this time is used by most students for relaxation and socializing, encroaching upon it is akin to encroaching upon lunch time, eliciting anger and negative responses from students, further derailing the chance that students will take it seriously.

There seemed to be general confusion on the procedure as well. Teachers were instructed to hold their students until the end of tutorial regardless of the survey's length, but some teachers let students go.

Students who did not know about this limitation were essentially encouraged to finish the survey as fast as possible in an attempt to salvage their tutorials, often times tapping the first listed answer.

How should such surveys be administered?

To begin with, the activity should simply be done at the expense of class time.

While some teachers may complain that the survey could take away from valuable class time, the time restraint pales in comparison to other school events and assemblies.

And as cynical as it is, students will take the survey more seriously if it replaces what they would ordinarily be doing in any



MEGAN CHEN

academic class. Additionally, given that the timeframe of the survey is during class, students will be more inclined to take it seriously, since they are not on a break.

The importance of the sur-

vey needs to be publicized and stressed to both parents and students; if they understand the purpose and effects the survey will have on the district and themselves, they will be more inclined to take it seriously. ♦

## Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editors-in-Chief Chelsea Leung Alexandra Li

Opinion Editor Victor Liu

Reporter Jeffrey Ma

The Falcon staff voted 24-3 in support of this article.

# Facebook's research app underscores company's disregard for user privacy

by Leo Cao & Alex Wang

Imagine that someone can see every message, picture or video you send. They can constantly track your location and know what you are searching online. They even want to know what you are buying online and ask to see your receipts. For some teenagers, this "person" is Facebook.

Since 2016, Facebook has been paying people to install a Facebook Research app that allows the company to capture users' phone activity for payments of up to \$20 a month, according to a TechCrunch report. This app essentially gives Facebook access to all of the user's internet traffic, including emails, web browsing activity, location information and private messages in social media apps — including photos and videos sent to others.

This effort is just one part of Facebook's many questionable privacy intrusions, including a similar Facebook app called Onavo Protect, which was banned by Apple in June 2018. Although

the Facebook Research app was banned from the App Store and voluntarily removed from the Google Play Store in mid-February, the very fact of its introduction underscores Facebook's troubles with privacy.

Facebook claims that they told users specifically what data they were gathering and that the users agreed to it. However, the practice Facebook uses here is still certainly questionable, especially considering that it was dubious whether or not the users truly understood the invasive-ness and potential ramifications of the program before signing up. The app requires users to install a "root certificate," a complicated term that few probably understood when downloading the app. The certificate basically allows the company to not only view user internet activity, but also encrypted

information. Moreover, Facebook targeted people ages 13 to 35. Through advertisements on Snapchat and Instagram, Facebook attracted audiences with promises of easy money. Although these advertisements ran under a company called uTest, it was later revealed that it was connected with Facebook's research program.

Asking teenagers as young as 13-years-old to consent to this type of application with any degree of responsibility is absurd. In theory, the program requires parental consent, but a young teenager looking to make some quick money can easily find loopholes around the request screen. Minutes later, the teenager is unknowingly giving all kinds of sensitive information to Facebook.

In looking at apps like this, it is debatable whether companies

should be allowed to pay a user to collect data for their own benefit, and how much compensation is adequate. However, there are kinds of information that should never be for sale, and Facebook crosses the line with the app that gives them limitless data. \$20 per month is not enough compensation for the amount of information Facebook can collect from the user and the company's concealment of how they might use the information.

The goal of the program was to track usage habits in order to get a leg up on opponents in the tech industry. But Facebook is now facing punishments from both Google and Apple, including severe restrictions on the apps that Facebook can offer.

This episode emphasizes just how far Facebook is willing to go to protect its dominance, even if it means severely violating not only the policies of the Google Play Store and App Store but also people's privacy. The pressure to maintain its success is understandable, but Facebook's strategy clearly falls in the wrong. ♦



GRAPHIC BY HOWARD TANG



# Standardized tests do not define students

By Jessica Wang

“You’re so smart — you got a 35 on the ACT!”

Statements like these, which can be commonly heard in the school’s hallways, aren’t just compliments friends give to each other for doing well on standardized tests; rather, they are implicit agreements that higher test scores are somehow indicative of greater intellect. Unfortunately, this mentality, which presupposes that test scores are reflective of student ability, performance or knowledge, has ingrained itself within the academically high-achieving culture that Saratoga students have become all too familiar with.

On the flip side, these kinds of statements also dangerously assume that those without scores as high as a 35 on the ACT are lacking in intelligence.

Despite what the College Board and other creators of standardized tests might tell students, the problem is that the SAT and ACT aren’t actually the best indicators of students’ abilities. The premise that intelligence can actually be measured accurately by standardized tests is a faulty one to begin with.

Tests like the SAT and ACT have similar formats: about three to four multiple choice sections covering English, reading, math and sciences. Scores for each section are averaged to a composite score, which supposedly then provides a measurement of student potential. The problem is that these formats are repetitive and relatively easy to exploit, especially for those with the means to do so.



For this reason, test-prep centers and practice books have minimized their focus on honing students’ existing abilities in reading

comprehension and math, but have instead trained students on the style (but not content) of the tests’ questions and how to navigate the tests’ time constraints in each section.

Too often, students aren’t actually taking in, digesting and synthesizing information anymore when they’re taking the tests with this type of test preparation; rather, they are only trying to blindly buzz through the test while making minimal errors.

In short, there’s no longer an incentive placed on understanding why a certain answer was correct, but instead, there’s a motivation for students to understand why all the other choices are wrong. These tests don’t necessarily measure a student’s intelligence — they determine how well students perform repetitive work.

To make matters worse, students, in their attempts to achieve the best score they can, often take the SAT, ACT or both tests multiple times in order to get a score they are finally satisfied with. Multiple attempts at the test, however, demonstrate another fundamental flaw of the test — it cannot objectively measure a test-taker’s ability.

ties. For example, two students with 35s on the ACT would look almost identical to each other on paper, even if one of them took it just once and the other took it five times.

On top of all this, standardized testing scores still provide only one reference point to a student’s capabilities, and that’s even assuming that the scores are an accurate measurement in the first place.

**These tests don’t necessarily measure a student’s intelligence. They determine how well students perform repetitive work.**

Ironically, even in the case of college admissions, which seems to be the driving reason for all the craze surrounding standardized testing, recent trends have seen schools place less of an emphasis on tests such as the SAT and ACT.

With scandals in the June and October tests last year, along with

the many studies conducted that have shown correlation between high test scores and student wealth and not intelligence, universities have begun to distance themselves from the tests or make submitting scores entirely optional, as was in the case of the University of Chicago.

Rather, universities have begun to pay more and more attention to the intangible factors they think students can bring to the table, such as a strong musical background or a devotion to giving back to the community. A 35 on the ACT undoubtedly still looks nice on a student’s application, but it’s no longer the be-all and end-all in the eyes of an admissions officer; instead, it’s those other things that a single score or two would never be able to explain.

So next time, before mindlessly saying that a friend or classmate is smart because they got a high score on the ACT, students should instead qualify that compliment with something a little more substantial than a number; after all, Saratoga High students, and by extension, all students who take the SAT and ACT, are more than the scores they get on those tests. ♦

# Big Brother paranoia undercuts app’s benefits

By Andrew Lee

Before the rise of cell phones and mobile devices, the ability to know a teen’s location at any time was almost impossible.

Parents, no matter how protective they were, had no reliable way to keep track of their children.

Nowadays, however, tracking a teen’s location has never been easier; multiple free phone applications, such as Life360, allow both parents and children to know each other’s location at any given time.

**If teens are involved in an activity that they do not want their parents to find out about, well lucky them, it works both ways.**

At first glance, the idea of my parents being able to track me seemed scary. With one of these tracking applications, my parents would have the power to know my location at all times, and there would be absolutely no way I could hide it.

Of course, I could always disable my location services on my phone, but that temporary fix to my problem would only buy me so much time before my parents would inevitably find out and make me turn it on again.

After having used a tracking application that my entire family has, I believe that the benefits of tracking applications far outweigh the few negatives.

Obviously, a parent’s ability to locate their child and know what they’re doing can come in handy, especially in emergencies.

In addition, because teens know that they are trackable, they are forced to thoroughly think before they act and minimize any type of dangerous risk that they may be tempted to make.

Attending late-night alcohol-infused parties or other poor life choices becomes tougher to do. Of course, most teens would object to using such applications, as they would feel an extreme lack of privacy.

But, if a teen feels that they need more privacy about what they are doing and where they are going away from their parents, chances are their actions, possibly motivated by a rebellious spirit, could get them in significant trouble.

In this situation, it seems as if all the odds are against the student’s freedom. With these trackers, teens may believe that they now lack massive amounts of freedom. However, from personal experience, I’ve learned that trackers also benefit teens just as much as they benefit parents.

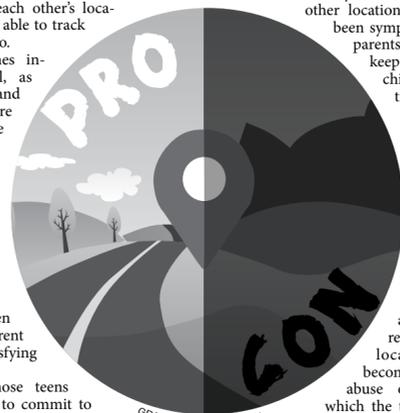
Since these applications allow everyone to know each other’s locations, teens are able to track their parents too.

This becomes incredibly useful, as both teens and their parents are able to locate each other with ease in almost any setting.

Getting separated from your parents has never felt more safe, and knowing exactly when and where a parent will be is a satisfying power to have.

Also, to those teens who still want to commit to edgy activities even with one of these tracking apps, you can now be 100 percent sure that your parents will NEVER be able to catch you red handed. If teens are involved in an activity that they do not want their parents to find out about, well lucky them, it works both ways. Now they can keep an eye on their parents’ locations so they can make sure they don’t meet in person.

So rather than complaining about being tracked and spending unnecessary time attempting to disable their location, it’s better to see tracking apps in a more positive light: They can be used to teens’ benefit, and at the very least are a safeguard in a bad situation. ♦



# Tracking teens invades privacy and ruins trust

By Jayme Zhou

It’s only natural for a parent to want to care for and worry about their children, but when parents install tracking apps on their children’s phones, it goes too far. More detrimentally, tracking apps damage the element of trust that’s integral to every parent-child relationship.

The introduction of tracking apps such as Life360 into the mainstream and the transformation of Find My iPhone from an app that people actually used to find their iPhones. They have become just another location tracker have been symptoms of more parents who want to keep tabs on their children’s locations, which can be a good thing when it comes to safety.

Unfortunately, these tracker apps also create the possibility that the trust and mutual respect from location-sharing becomes a twisted abuse of power in which the teenager often feels “stalked” by their parents.

Personally, my parents have showed me through the years that they have a lot of trust in me to make my own decisions, so their unwavering trust is a natural deterrent for me to make smart choices.

But, had my parents forced me to install Life360 or turned Find My iPhone into their personal tracking device, the trust that my parents and I have naturally built up would take a significant hit.

I’m fortunate enough to have parents who respect my boundaries and will not force a tracker app onto my phone for the paternalistic claim that “it’s for my own good,” as another problem that arises with trackers is the potential overuse of them

by overbearing parents.

For these parents, tracker apps might just be the first step in forcing their children to slowly forfeit more and more of the little privacy they had to begin with, and with all the available surveillance technology there is on the market today, trackers are surely not the last thing those type of parents would forcibly install on their children’s devices.

For children who unluckily have to put trackers on their phones, the apps might mark the beginning of rebellion. In their attempts to defy their parents’ tracking, some teenagers just simply disable the tracker apps or their phone’s location services.

And if their parents punish them for deliberately resisting tracker apps that way, they resort to more drastic measures: spoofing their GPS location services or leaving their phones at home when they leave the house (which defeats the purpose of any supposed safety altogether).

**The apps might mark the beginning of rebellion.**

Tracker apps are ineffective and the information they provide to parents would do little to quell their fears that their children may be in danger.

Often times, the only data trackers give to parents is the battery percentage level and location of their children’s phone.

But that doesn’t give them any more context as far as what their child is actually doing.

While Life360 or Find My iPhone might tell parents that their child is at a friend’s house, the parents would never know if the child was doing drugs and partying, or if they were just hanging out. Put simply, tracker apps, while an intriguing idea on paper, fail to adequately benefit either parents or students.

Instead, the best way a parent can make sure their child stays safe isn’t through some tracker downloaded from the App Store, but through the mutual trust and understanding that comes from never installing a tracker in the first place. ♦

# Redwood Middle School’s math policy harmful to student growth, prevents students from advancing

By Rohan Kumar & Oliver Ye

Many middle schools impose restrictions on what math classes students can take. Redwood Middle School is no exception.

Currently, for instance, the highest math class that sixth graders can take is Algebra 1. Although these policies have been implemented for years and are put into place with good intentions, they ultimately stifle student achievement.

Forcing students to take classes that teach concepts they already know fails to help gifted students maximize their potential. Saratoga has dozens of elite-level math students who participate in competitions annually, such as the AIME and the USAMO, which have much more advanced concepts than those taught in school. As a result, some of these students are more than capable of easily solving all the problems that school math provides.

To begin, there is a wide spectrum of students in terms of math skill. According to registrar Robert Wise, using students who

take Geometry as a freshman as a reference point, there are currently 429 students who have skipped one level in math, 431 students who have skipped two years and over 62 students who are taking courses that are more than three levels faster than the normal pace (not including students that are taking college courses such as multivariable calculus). To limit what math classes students can take is to group all students into the same level of math simply based on age alone; it is denying that there exists skill discrepancies between each student.

The disparity in math skill levels is already evident in the freshman year math curriculum. There are students on either side of the math spectrum, ranging from some who are mastering basic concepts in Sequential Math to the 131 students taking a highly challenging Algebra 2 Honors class to the one student who is already taking AP Calculus BC.

While preventing students from skipping too many levels at once may combat some stress in theory, this problem can be solved in other ways without stifling their poten-

tial. With advice from parents, teachers and counselors, younger teens are fully capable of making academic decisions that work best for them. In fact, if they are too restricted in what they are able to take, their parents may simply remove them from public schools and seek private school alternatives.

**Saratoga has dozens of elite-level math students who participate in competitions annually.**

Of course, it is possible that students will sign up for classes beyond their abilities, so Redwood should allow students to rectify this mistake by implementing a comprehensive drop policy similar to that of Saratoga High. If a class is too difficult, the student should be allowed to drop to a lower level. Currently, although they can shift up

or down one level, students cannot drop a math class.

While some argue that allowing students to skip more math levels will result in students who lack foundations that are required for more advanced classes, many students clearly have these strong foundations, and a comprehensive and well-designed placement test would be able to determine which students have the necessary fundamentals and which don’t. Currently, Redwood does do extensive testing to determine which math level suits a child’s needs, and its current placement system also works to place students into more advanced classes.

Overall, limiting students’ options by restricting the number of math levels they can skip harms much more than it helps. Concerns of student stress can be amended through simple policies such as enforcing a more lenient drop policy and actively involving parents if students are not performing adequately. In the end, schools should teach students useful and challenging content, and not incentivize them to sleep through lectures. ♦

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR: ADMISSION SCANDAL

## ENGLISH TEACHER REFLECTS ON RECENT COLLEGE ADMISSIONS BRIBERY SCANDAL AND ASSESSES OVERALL EQUITY OF COLLEGE RACE

Dear Falcon,

Thanks for writing this important article and for being so thoughtful about it.

You asked me how this scandal should influence our SHS thinking about college admissions, and how it reflects on SHS students. Here’s what we see at Saratoga...

SHS students dedicate themselves to their individual and collective learning and self-improvement every day; they fine-tune their robotics entries; they practice on their musical instruments and rehearse their performances well past dinner time; they march in lockstep fashion and toss flags into the air to prep for their Color Guard shows; they volunteer to help out communities in need; they lift weights with the football team; they study for tests in Calc, in Physics, in Honors Chem; they tutor their friends; they stay up late to prepare for their history presentations; they draft and re-draft their theses and close reading analyses in their English essays;

they stay after on school nights to meet deadlines for this tremendous student paper; they rehearse for plays they themselves have written, and more. Meanwhile, Saratoga parents, teachers, administrators, and other staff work incredibly hard and tirelessly, organizing their entire lives around to coach and support and guide and mentor and cheer on these same students who consistently forego sleep in order to hit the oftentimes stratospheric targets they — we have set up for ourselves.

So yes, of course, we here in the teacher world of Saratoga are appalled about the college admissions scandal — appalled, saddened, and disgusted. Who wouldn’t be, given the corruption on display, the unprincipled nature of these people’s actions, the laziness of it all? To live a life of privilege and entitlement, of plenty and abundance, but somehow still believe that it’s still all right to buy your way into colleges?

How about those other requirements for getting into Prestigious U., such as, for example, taking a rigorous college preparatory course load? That requires having won the cosmic lottery and being fortunate enough to live in a property-tax-rich area with schools gifted with uncountable resources to provide those opportunities.

**Let’s aim just a bit higher and take a bird’s eye view of the college acceptance playing field.**

Saratoga students (and their parents and teachers) play by the rules, rules which stipulate that if we do everything I listed above, if we kill ourselves with AP courses, take on countless extracurricular activities, write well, and forge meaningful relationships with each other, then we will have earned a spot at Prestigious U.

And based on what I see from alumni who return, Saratoga grads in their post-secondary educations continue to work hard and take advantage of the many opportunities that advantage them socially, professionally, and economically as they pursue their careers. The idea that someone could simply use money, power, and connections to rig this game is infuriating to anyone who cares about things like fairness and equity.

But as long as we’re thinking about fairness, let’s aim just a bit higher and take a bird’s eye view of the college acceptance playing field. Even when we are following all the rules, how fair is this college admissions game, really?

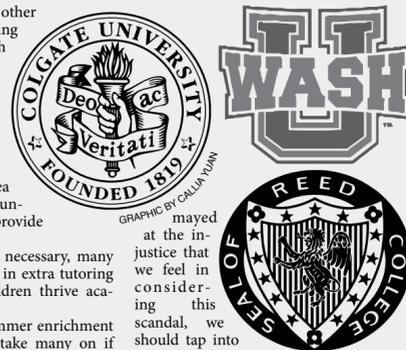
Doing well on standardized tests requires, for many students, test preparation courses and multiple tries at the test. This requires not-so-little sums of money.

Although not always necessary, many families here also invest in extra tutoring to make sure their children thrive academically. Extracurriculars? Summer enrichment programs? Can’t really take many on if you — like some of us in our high school days — had to babysit younger siblings or hold down a job or two, so, again — being a member of family that is economically advantaged will advantage you.

Also going to visit a college may give you a leg up in the selection process — and those trips, and those interviews, cost time and money. Even the college applications themselves require money, limiting the chances of students who have to be more judicious with their applications.

And now, more and more colleges — Washington University, Colgate, Carlton, Reed, even Macalester — follow a “need aware” admissions policy: the applications of students who will require financial aid face a more competitive selection process than those from students who will not require financial aid. Merely being able to show that you have the money to attend that school and pay the full sticker price makes you more likely to get in.

So if we are appalled, enraged, and dis-



mayed at the injustice that we feel in considering this scandal, we should tap into that feeling when we consider in how many other ways the game is rigged against families and students of low income and low levels of educational attainment when they enter the game. Low income students begin the race way behind the start line, and with every year, there are more hurdles that they have to clear, while students whose parents have education, money, time and other resources just run right past.

Yes, we hard working Falcons should feel justified in feeling some revulsion toward those who cut across the field rather than running the whole course to win their place in the race. And yet, we also need to see not just the lane we are running in, but the unevenness of track and the field as a whole as we consider the larger inequities in the college admissions process.

— Amy Keys

## togatalks

How did you feel about the recent college application scandal?

“There are already so many unethical things in the college process that I wasn’t very surprised.”



senior Sohil Pokharna

“I feel cheated because I worked hard but others just paid their way in without working.”



senior Carolyn Ma

“I’m disappointed; the scandal puts a bad image on the area, specifically Palo Alto.”



senior Usman Khan

# Art should not be limited by identity politics

by MathewLuo

Model minorities. Oppression. Hanging on to foreign cultures. A plethora of identity-focused writing seems to dominate literati circles, from writing submissions to speech and debate competitions to the editorial sections of national newspapers.

This focus on identity politics in writing has churned out tirades of the same problems and complaints shared by minorities of sex, race or orientation. Even the most stunning works about identity politics seem tainted because of its inclusion of repetitive and unimaginative themes.

But writing about politics is not the problem. The problem occurs when projecting anger and struggle into the story overtakes literary

creation or objective documentation.

Writing solely for the purpose of identity politics is repressive to writing. To stem all writing from one's struggles and identity politics takes much of the artistry out of the art. These works are focused on documenting the writer's experience but also pushing their agenda. That fiction is focused less on imaginative world and character creation and more on projecting themselves onto their characters.

For example, take Jenny Zhang's BuzzFeed article "They pretend to be us while pretending we don't exist." Zhang writes about her annoyance at white authors who envy her for being a minority author. She suggests white authors should stick to writing about their own identity politics.

Zhang's piece generalizes all white people in the same way that she claims whites generalize minorities like her. She refutes the claim that minorities need to write about a narrative of suffering, but holds a track record of often writing about her suffering as an Asian American.

## Writing solely for the purpose of identity politics is repressive to writing.

These narratives of identity politics and personal struggles are too often carbon copies of each other, rarely providing a new perspec-

ive. The value of memoirs stem from the triumph, uniqueness and power of the writer's experiences.

To write solely about identity politics is to inherently make an imitation that is neither fiction nor memoir. That writing is limited by the writer's political views and anger but not validated by the writer's experiences.

There are some modern-day Malcolm Xs or Booker T. Washingtons, but the vast majority do not share the same poignant experiences that made these men and their memoirs so great.

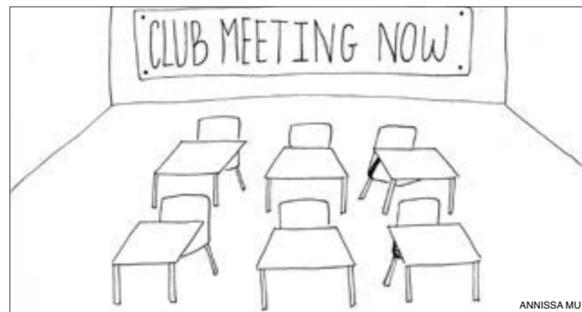
The quarter-African French writer Alexandre Dumas focused his writing on high adventure, creating the lovable protagonists D'Artagnan and Valois, distinct from himself. Dumas is the most read French novelist, not because

he is part-black but because his novels are unique and interesting on their own.

To create something beautiful and enjoyable is the best form of validation. Rather than writing works that cry out for pity, a theme too often found in the personal works of minority artists, writers should send the message that, despite their struggles and background, they were able to create something meaningful.

The best forms of art and writing have an elegance and flow to them. To strive to create beauty, rather than to push an agenda, counterintuitively allows the influence and perspective of the author to shine through.

Quality art stands alone. The experiences of artists should enhance their work, not define it. ♦



# Stricter rules necessary for club participation

by SelenaLiu

Despite initiatives in the past couple years by club commissioners to increase participation and legitimacy, too many clubs continue to be mostly dead in everything except name. Even then, more and more clubs are still getting approved, which means that there are even more clubs diluting the subpar quality of groups on campus. One obvious problem occurs when students who are interested in clubs that meet on the same day have to choose between the two or three options.

So, what can the school, or at least ASB, do to remedy this problem?

The most obvious and effective solution is one that establishes more stringent rules on creating new clubs as well as cracking down on existing clubs that have proven to do little for enriching student lives with a severe lack of current attendance or actual activities.

The school already has around 70 clubs, and while this isn't to say that the school's existing clubs don't cater to the student body's diverse interests, the large number of clubs, coupled with the evidently decreasing membership numbers, suggests that perhaps there are too many of them. To make matters worse, there are new clubs always being added to this already-long list every year.

The number of clubs that come and go with each passing school year also spells trouble, because it demonstrates a lack of continued commitment to the clubs. Far too often do graduating senior officers neglect their clubs and let them slowly die off near the end of the school year.

On the other hand, eager freshmen are also quick to submit club application forms at the beginning of the following year, leading to a continuous cycle of clubs that never stay permanent.

If there is no standing tradition with many of the established clubs, then it's hard

for the newer ones to gain a foothold and attract more students.

To combat this problem, stricter rules, which would establish a better vetting process to separate those who are making clubs to fill an extra line on their college application resumes and those who are truly passionate about their club's goals, could serve the school well in putting an end to the four-year cycle that clubs seem to currently be undergoing.

Likewise, ASB could use a method to consolidate or simply reduce the sheer number of clubs that already exist, which could, in turn, see a gradual increase in membership for the ones that remain. ASB could also put a cap on the maximum number of clubs each year so that clubs applying for approval would need to include legitimate plans for club activities in their applications.

In addition to these two major changes that could potentially revamp the school's club attendance for the better, the school could also bring back the big, printed calendars that were used last year. That way, officers would not have to worry if their last-minute Facebook post or email was buried with all the other notifications or never seen at all. And, for the students who barely use social media or check their emails, perhaps the printed calendars in the hallways would be the only way they could know about upcoming club meetings.

None of these arguments are to say that ASB isn't doing their job properly or that there is still much to be desired. ASB has already slowly been moving in the right direction when it comes to approving new clubs and placing checks on old ones — the stricter rules created by the club commissioners in the last couple of years have demonstrated just that. However, if the ASB were to make club acceptance requirements even tougher, students would have to choose from fewer — but more active — clubs. ♦

# Student requests for humanities classes are impractical

by JeffreyMa

In spite of its relatively small student population, the school has done a surprisingly good job in offering a diverse selection of electives, ranging from ceramics to marine biology and journalism to music.

A long-held criticism of this varied curriculum, however, has been its lack of humanities courses, specifically citing the imbalance between high-level humanities and STEM courses; outside of the core curriculum and its potential AP or Media Arts Program counterparts, the only substantial offerings that fit the bill have been AP European History, Creative Writing and Journalism.

In the light of registering for next year's classes, this criticism of the school's curriculum is at very least unhelpful if not simply incorrect.

## Why should new humanities courses be added if even existing ones fail to attract substantial interest?

While the journalism program has always maintained a strong presence in the student population (hence you can read this publication), even it is on a downward trend in terms of student enrollment. Comparatively, other currently humanities geared elective courses have suffered from weak student interest and few to no sign-ups.

AP European History fluctuates between one to two classes depending on the year, while its counterpart in the English department, Creative Writing, fares much worse probably due to its lack of honors or AP credit, being relegated to being offered every other year after failing to even draw a dozen students during last year's registration process.

For AP European History's one to two periods, just the core sciences alone sport nearly a dozen across chemistry, bi-

ology and physics. Computer Science and the engineering courses are likewise numerous and filled.

The question stands: Why should new humanities courses be added if even existing ones fail to attract substantial interest?

Calls for further introduction of humanities courses have cited the recent introduction of AP Art History, which drew substantial student interest in informational meetings; however, Art History as a course is less of a true humanities course and has many more art elements — the College Board taxonomizes the course as under "Arts."

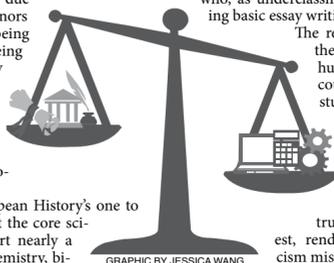
Because of this, the course is able to circumvent the lack of student interest exhibited by existent humanities courses by drawing not only from humanity-oriented students but also art-oriented ones. Furthermore, it combines visual arts and AP credit into one clean bundle, a two-for-one deal of sort that would appeal to many AP-hungry students.

Even if there was a real need for another humanities course, it is extremely difficult to say what class would attract enough interest to be a sustainable class for multiple years. Most subjects within humanities are covered by both introductory and advanced offered: languages by the foreign language department; literature by English 9-11 and AP English Literature; philosophy by AP English Language; history by World History to AP U.S. History.

The few viable options that have potential to fit this bill all have individual weaknesses. The most natural choice would be AP World History, which could be offered as an alternate choice to normal or MAP World History (the technicality here is that it would not be a true elective as it would be considered part of the core curriculum). But offering this course would entail teaching AP-style essay writing to sophomores, who, as underclassmen, are still mastering basic essay writing.

The reality at SHS is that the imbalance between humanities and STEM courses reflects what students are interested in.

Current humanities course are more than enough to span the entire spectrum of possible interests, rendering student criticism misplaced. ♦



GRAPHIC BY JESSICA WANG

# Weird food combinations expand taste palate

eat with esha

Esha Lakhotia



"Are you really going to eat that with that?"

This is a common question I get every-time I sit down to eat. My food choices are unpopular to say the least.

Whether it be Oreos with hummus, french fries dipped in ice cream, salty chips with Nutella or peanut butter with pickles, my food choices are often ridiculed or gagged at.

I have had a weird appetite ever since I was a kid.

I hate regular foods like milk, tomatoes or blueberries and have the need to make most of my meals myself in order to satisfy my odd tastes.

One thing my friends make fun of me for is my obsession with ranch dressing. I have it with pizza, chicken, fish, fruits, veggies, nuts, fries, burgers, cheese and even sometimes by itself.

Another common snack I make is scrambled eggs with ketchup and ranch and tortilla chips. First, I scramble two eggs on the stove and season with salt, garlic powder and curry powder.

After mixing the eggs with equal parts of ranch and ketchup, I then take my tortilla

chips and dip it into the egg ranch ketchup concoction. Sometimes, I add cheese or hummus on top.

## There are so many different ways to combine different foods, yet people are so close minded and stick to their regular meals.

Food, of course, is a highly flexible concept. There are so many different ways to combine different foods, yet people are so

closed minded and stick to their regular meals.

I think people should try to be more open to different types of foods and other cultures.

You don't necessarily have to eat my weird food combinations the way I do, but there are so many unique flavors and dishes that the world has to offer like jambalaya or vegemite.

Living in the Bay Area, we have access to practically every different culture's food in a 10 mile radius.

Instead of eating the same three meals that you're accustomed to, try to branch out. Who knows — maybe you'll find a new dish that you will want to add to your daily menu. ♦

**Sampling AROUND the World**

- SomiSomi**
  - Pros: Good flavors, friendly
  - Cons: Small store space, too filling
- Sweet Honey**
  - Pros: authentic, light food, great quality
  - Cons: expensive, too crowded
- kandoo cafe**
  - Pros: wide variety, good food, nice ambience
  - Cons: dessert was hit or miss, a bit expensive

GRAPHIC BY MANASI GARG, SHAMA GUPTA AND ALLISON HARTLEY

# Cooking breakfast turns out easier than expected

crusty zhang

Christine Zhang



Although I had never done it before, I didn't think accomplishing the challenge of making breakfast for a week by myself would be very difficult.

After all, I had cooked on the weekends before and even on some school mornings, but generally, my dad gets up earlier than I do to cook breakfast for my older brother, senior Michael Zhang, and me on school days.

So to cook for myself, I set my alarm to 7:15 instead of my usual 7:30 a.m., thinking 15 minutes was more than enough to make a decent breakfast.

Unfortunately, my week started out rough. On Monday, I had an English unit

test in first period, and I had hoped for some last-minute vocabulary cramming time in the morning. I didn't want to get up even earlier, so I forced myself to stay up even later the night before to study, as any typical procrastinating high school student would do.

I made a Chinese egg pancake, which ended up tasting fine. It took less than 10 minutes to prepare and cook the meal, meaning I lost a precious five minutes of sleep for nothing, and I left the house around 8 a.m., the same as usual. I went through the rest of the day like any other school day (I think I even scraped a decent score on the quote identification section of my English test).

The next day, I had another test, this time in second-period AP Computer Science. However, cramming wouldn't help much for that class, so the fact that I was making my own breakfast didn't really affect me.

I chose to simply toast a bagel and smear

some cream cheese on it. Again, other than waking up 15 minutes earlier than usual, the day was an ordinary day.

On Wednesday and Thursday, I cooked for my brother as well as for myself. He only eats with me on Blue Days since he sleeps



GRAPHIC BY JAYNE ZHOU

through his free first period, but Wednesday was a special occasion when he had to get up rather early on a Red Day. He took his eggs without even a thanks, and I doubted the idea that he actually noticed that I made them. Friday was the day before February break, and by this point, I was too tired to

care much about cooking.

I threw a pancake on the stove and let the fire burn for a bit too long as I tried to force some energy into myself, resulting in one of the sides becoming significantly darker than the other side. I didn't mind, though, since the pancake ended up tasting okay.

Overall, I felt that this week wasn't too different from any other school week. Getting up earlier didn't turn out to be that big of a problem: 15 minutes was only slightly earlier than normal, and I didn't get unusually tired at night. Nothing else was really different about my morning routine, and my breakfasts were fine since I already knew how to cook simple foods. Nonetheless, I suppose it was a valuable experience.

Cooking is an essential life skill, but apparently, thanking your sibling for preparing your breakfast isn't. ♦

March 22, 2019

LOVE HATE

# Sibling Relationships

## Sisters debate who really has it worse

vadlakonda sisters

Alekhya and Ananya

As the younger two siblings in a family of three sisters, we both fully believe that we've had more than our fair share of struggles being the younger children. Although Ananya, who is a junior, was technically the youngest for only less than a year, she likes to say she's experienced a number of pitfalls having an older sister, Amulya Vadlakonda, a Class of 2017 alumna.

It's practically a given, an established fact, a *donnée*, that as the younger children, we're stuck with the hand-me-downs, our designated middle seat spot in the car and the easy target on our back for our older sister and cousins.

But since we're so close in age, Ananya often likes to take credit for protecting Alekhya from all the downfalls of being the youngest child while Alekhya complains that

Ananya's whole existence as a barely older sibling is a flex that ends up dictating Alekhya's life.

Alekhya:

Being technically the actual youngest sibling in the family, I've had to deal with the pressure of having two older sisters. And even though many people say being the youngest is the easiest, it's most definitely not.

From pretty much the very beginning, I have had to deal with living under their shadows. My oldest sister, Amulya, gets most of the attention just for being the oldest.

Most of my baby pictures are me sitting on Amulya's lap or Amulya teaching me to play piano or Amulya sitting with me. Now don't get me wrong, I love all this sisterly love, but c'mon. Where did my spotlight go?

But that wasn't supposed to last for long, with Amulya leaving for college a couple of years ago when I was 14 and opening up a vacancy in our family. Yet Ananya so quickly and happily snatched that role that no one had a chance to blink.

So this leaves Ananya with only one year of being the youngest child and two years of being the oldest child living in the house. The two to one ratio shows she has spent more time as the oldest sibling than as the youngest sibling, while I'm here strutting zero for zero: zero opportunities to be considered the oldest child, so therefore zero opportunities taken.

Always having been the youngest child, I've had to deal with certain struggles Amulya will never understand and Ananya will only slightly get.

Every day, I wake up hoping for a nice, peaceful house. But no, I wake up and the upstairs bathroom is already being used, so I've got to make the trek downstairs to the other bathroom. And that long trek of 15 stairs is not what I would like to start my day with, thank you very much.

Ananya:

Alekhya, you may think your petty morning struggles are the worst thing to ever happen to a sibling, but don't even get me started on what it

means to feel real trauma.

It was 2009. I sat on the ground in my living room with my mouth open in awe and sheer disappointment, which would soon turn into what felt like perpetual sadness. Our oldest sister Amulya, along with two of our older cousins, broke the news to me: I was born the day after Oreo Gold Mine had closed down. It was gone. Disappeared. Nothing left. I couldn't even visit the site where it had supposedly been before it closed down because it had just vanished. Right off the map.

They would reminisce in front of me and talk about their time in this amusement park where they saw oreo statues. There were restaurants and ice cream shops where all the food was oreo flavored. The place seemed like oreo heaven to me, a 7 year old who was clearly obsessed with her oreos.

But I found out the cold, hard truth two years later. Apparently there was never such a thing as Oreo Gold Mine. Not here. Not anywhere. It was all just a fib by our wonderful cousins.



## My brother drives me crazy

pc muthu

Muthu Palaniappan

When I turned 16 and passed my driver's license test, I could not be more excited. Ever since middle school, I had been asking my friends' parents for rides to and from places because my mom often worked late and could not drive me. My driver's license was my ticket to freedom.

I was having the time of my life:

driving to school, driving to get food, driving my friends to places. However, my life turned around when my brother, 2014 alumnus Minu Palaniappan, came home for Labor Day Weekend.

He walked into my room and demanded I hand over the car keys. I, being the understanding sister, started yelling to my mom about how I needed the car during the day. Sadly, my mom gave into my brother's pleas and decided he deserved the car because "he's older."

I've heard this excuse too much, but I still don't understand the logic behind it. How does age cor-

respond to right to drive a shared car at will?

The way that I view it is the complete opposite. Since my brother is older, he has had more time to drive the car (without me threatening to take it from him). I, on the other hand, have never exclusively driven the car, so it should be my turn now.

That being said, I do understand that my brother needs the car sometimes to go to something like a doctor's appointment. But realistically, the majority of my brother's drives are unnecessary.

For instance, my brother claims

he needs the car to drive to the SHS basketball courts, which are a short 15-minute walk from our house. For the duration of his time playing basketball, the car is parked at the school, not being used for any good.

Instead of driving, my brother could walk to the courts, and I could use the car for my own activities.

Ultimately, the fight for the car between my brother and me is very real. There is an unfair advantage to being the older sibling, and unfortunately, I will never have that privilege.

## My little sister constantly takes my things

mana c-u-later

Manasi Garg

It was 8:03 and I had 4 minutes to get ready and sprint to school, and as usual, I was stuck standing in front of my closet, commiserating over my lack of clothing. I couldn't find the nice shirt I wanted to wear, and my jeans were nonexistent. At 8:09, I gave up and went to school in my pajamas.

The source of all this frustration? It wasn't my pickiness—no, it was my 12-year-old sister, Niraali.

See, my sister thinks that the closets in our house are communal. Right now, she's probably

wearing one of my mom's shirts, one of my dad's jackets and my leggings. Because I'm her older sister, I'm the target of most of her thievery.

And that day, she had taken one of my favorite shirts without asking me and worn it to school. She then came home to proudly display the pasta sauce stain on it. (It was white, by the way.)

That's the problem with younger siblings. They think they're entitled to bother you whenever they want and eat all of your food, and that they own everything you own. That they can just take your things without even asking you.

Sometimes she takes my things for, well, a slightly understandable reason, like if she needs a pair of my sunglasses for a class skit, or an extra pair of socks for PE. But

other times, there's just no rhyme or reason behind her actions. Seriously, why does anyone need one glove? Just one, singular glove? What's the point?

It's to antagonize me, obviously. It's a proven fact—nothing brings a younger sibling greater joy than to utterly infuriate their older sister or brother.

She takes the last bag of chips. She uses up all the hot water. She takes books from my bookshelf as she pleases. She uses my hairbrush and my chapstick. She wears all my clothes, even the ones that don't fit her.

And yeah, I can complain. But it's not long before the voices of my parents ring out, chiding me—"Be mature, Manasi! You're the older one. Set a good example."

Right. I'm the one who has to

be mature.

Still, at the end of the day, I will painfully admit that, despite her annoying habits (of which she has many), I love her. Not to get too sentimental, but we're only going to live together for 2.5 more years before I head off to college, or whatever life has planned for me—and while I won't miss her daily deprecations, I'll probably miss her. Having a sister is like having a built-in partner in crime. She is a person to complain to, a person to dance with, a person to get into messy food escapades with. If or when everyone else is gone, I know that I can always count on her to stick with me.

She's already announced her plans to take over my room the second I leave for college, though. Some things will never change.

"I LOVE MY BROTHER AND EVERYTHING, BUT BECAUSE HES IN THE 'WEIRD MIDDLE SCHOOL STAGE' RIGHT NOW, HE CAN BE SO IRRITATING. HE ALWAYS THINKS HE'S RIGHT AND STEALS MY FOOD." - JUNIOR JEFFREY XU

Source: Brandon Galle

ABOUT 1 IN 3 KIDS WHO HAVE A SIBLING FIGHT. CHILDREN WHO ARE OF THE SAME GENDER AND ARE CLOSE IN AGE ARE THE MOST LIKELY TO FIGHT VERY OFTEN.

"MY SISTER IS IN COLLEGE AND I LOVE AND HATE WHEN SHE COMES HOME. I REALLY ENJOY THE FOOD SHE MAKES, BUT SINCE I'M SO USED TO BEING THE ONLY CHILD AT HOME I FORGET I NEED TO PLAN AROUND HER SCHEDULE AS WELL." - SENIOR ALEXANDRA LI





Penn Badgley plays the role of stalker Joe Goldberg in Netflix original series "You." Courtesy of NETFLIX

## New dark original series 'You' features 'Gossip Girl' actor

By Esha Lakhota & Muthu Palaniappan

Recently, Netflix has been releasing several binge-worthy original TV shows. Of them, "You," has been a crowd favorite with over 40 million streams.

"You" follows the life of Joe Goldberg, played by former "Gossip Girl" star Penn Badgley, and Goldberg's obsessive and stalkery ways. Goldberg discovers a young woman named Beck, played by Elizabeth Lail, and yearns to be with her romantically. In order to reach his goal, Goldberg spies on her compulsively and even kills several of the girl's friends, whom he sees as threats to his dream relationship.

At first glance, the story and show seem extremely creepy. Who would want to watch a stalker justify murder for 12 episodes?

**All in all, the show breaks barriers and portrays concepts that are rarely talked about.**

Despite this dynamic this Netflix Original is addictive. We both finished the 10 episodes in less than a week.

The intricate details of Goldberg's plans are well thought out and the idea of watching a show from the villain's perspective is a novel perspective.

It was interesting to see his thought process and his actions often left us in disbelief.

In some parts, we even sympathized with some of Joe's actions, but later snapped out of it after we realized he was an actual sociopath who stalked a girl to get close to her. The show is complex in that Joe made the people he killed seem less of a victim as he accurately pointed out their flaws and how they negatively affected Beck's life. It was disturbing how

we found ourselves going along with his choices from time to time.

Along with Joe's obsession with Beck, he also becomes very involved with Beck's friends and acquaintances. For instance, in the first few episodes, Joe kills off Beck's ex-boyfriend.

As the show progresses, Joe kills off Beck's best friend and therapist. Since Joe is obsessed with Beck, he feels threatened by the other people in Beck's life. He figures that if he kills them off, he will be her sole friend and lover.

On top of that, Joe plays it off as if he is grieving for Beck and her friends. When Beck tells him news of the deaths, Joe becomes the compassionate and supportive boyfriend she needs, which pulls Beck in even more.

Along with Beck and Joe's plotline, the show hints at Joe's past. In various episodes, characters question Joe about his background, but he constantly brushes it off. The audience has more knowledge than the characters on the show, but in total, it is still limited.

In the last episode, a major character from Joe's past returns to his book store. Throughout the season, the audience presumed this character was dead, but as usual, Netflix ended the show's season with a major cliffhanger.

The girl that returns was Joe's previous obsession; his previous Beck.

Fans of the show are very eager to see how the plot unfolds, as there were so many unexpected turns throughout the season.

All in all, the show breaks barriers and portrays concepts that are rarely talked about.

For the most part, the show has been received well, with over 90 percent on Rotten Tomatoes and several positive articles in newspapers and magazines.

The show got renewed for a second season after being widely applauded by Netflix users. The first season ended with a cliffhanger, so we can't wait to see what Joe will do next. ♦

## High schoolers relate to teenage issues in British show 'Sex Education'

By Alex Wang & Leo Cao

Sometimes, it is interesting to see a story that ignores formalities and embraces the truth. Human beings, like many other creatures, like to have sex. But that doesn't mean they are automatically good at it, know what they want or know how to get it. This fundamental drive is evident throughout the majority of Netflix original series "Sex Education," directed by Ben Taylor and Kate Herron, but the sex portrayed doesn't compromise the show's heartfelt situational comedy and eccentric cast.

"Sex Education" is a British Netflix show set in an affluent neighborhood with a private academy. The show mainly follows the teenage lives of Otis Milburn (Asa Butterfield), the son of a sex therapist who is afraid of sex himself, and Maeve Wiley (Emma Mackey), a rebellious loner with an absent family. Otis and Maeve unexpectedly become friends and start a sex therapy clinic, where Otis gives advice on sex and relationships for money.

**We were taken aback at the amount of sexual content that the directors chose to portray.**

Otis and Maeve's friendship and the clinic end up putting both of their relationships with others to the test, deeply affecting each of their personal lives. The obstacles they face and the people they encounter encapsulate much of the teenage experience, albeit on a more dramatic scale.

When we first watched the show, we were taken aback at the amount of sexual content that the directors chose to portray, but the captivating storyline kept us hooked.

The show presents a great irony that carries on throughout the series: How does a boy who is afraid of sex and has no experience give advice on such matters?

This irony drives the story along and creates a rich characterization of Otis. While many teen comedies involve male virgins and their struggles in pursuit of sex, Otis proves to be a caring and observant protagonist who supports other people's desires.

Furthermore, the show really struck a chord in us because of its relatively accurate interpretation of teenage life, especially the social situation in high school.

All in all, the show breaks barriers and portrays concepts that are rarely talked about. One aspect that it portrays well is the relationships between friends and classmates. The obstacles they face show the toxicity and peer pressure that happens in school.

The character Aimee, played by

Aimee Lou Wood, feels this especially because the popular kids that she hangs out with always push her around. She ends up being more of a servant than a friend and recognizes that she is always fake. In fact, she does not even know what she wants out of a relationship because she always does whatever pleases others. She finally overcomes her struggles and becomes more independent, eventually ditching the group of popular kids.

Another part of teenage life that the show depicts accurately is family life. Otis and his mom, played by Gillian Anderson, have a stressful relationship, characterized by his mom's constant intrusions of his privacy regarding his relationships and sexual behaviors.

For Otis, he just wants independence and to have his sex therapist mom stop stalking him and his activities; meanwhile, his mom just wants him to be happy and safe. This tenuous relationship between parents and students is often apparent in teenage life, and the show does a good job of portraying it.

The show also pays its dues to the LG-BTQ community. One of Otis's main beneficiaries is Eric, played by Nutti Gatwa, his gay best friend. In addition to homophobia, Eric has to deal with bullies who tease him about being a band geek. He earns an unflattering nickname after having an erection in public. Eric, enthusiastic but inexperienced, understands his sexuality but is trying to figure out how to present himself to the rest of the world.

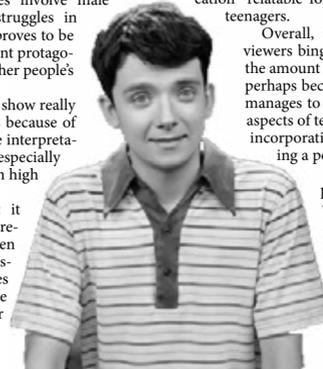
However, it does blow up some aspects to an unrealistic proportion. For example, the show mainly focuses on characters who have sex often, portraying it as a very common occurrence among teenagers. Eric even says in the first episode that "everyone has had sex over the summer."

Later on, though, the show acknowledges that this belief is wholly incorrect through the character Lily, who feels pressured to have sex in order to fit in. Otis eventually tells her that while it may seem like everyone is doing it, in reality, most people aren't.

High school students at many schools, including Saratoga, have encountered similar false beliefs, therefore making "Sex Education" relatable for many high school teenagers.

Overall, the show will keep viewers binge-watching. Despite the amount of sexual content (or perhaps because of it), the show manages to tackle many serious aspects of teenage life, while still incorporating humor and sending a positive message.

The characters and plot are both well developed in a way that will make viewers feel empathy in times of distress and excitement for the characters' successes. We recommend this show for those looking for a relatable story. ♦



Asa Butterfield as protagonist Otis Milburn

## 'How To Train Your Dragon' sequel delivers

By Leo Cao & Andrew Lee

Released on Feb. 22, the sensational "How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World" ends the "How to Train Your Dragon" trilogy with a rather shaky story, but it still an emotional conclusion that witnesses the charming relationship between the young viking leader Hiccup and his trusted dragon partner, Toothless, reach its epic ending.

The film suffers from a cluttered, unorganized plot, wrapped around the narrative of Toothless finding his soulmate.

After defeating king dragon-trapper Drago, Hiccup has transformed his viking village into a dragon utopia.

Unfortunately, there is a new threat who is determined to exterminate every dragon. The new antagonist, Grimmel, is an imitation of previous villains.

He is determined to capture and kill Toothless and contrives a plan that involves distracting Toothless with a gleaming lady-dragon.

The story line does feel somewhat rushed. The Vikings' exodus from their home appears completely unnecessary.

Though it does emphasize Hiccup's development as a commander of his people, leading them to a new land in hopes of dis-

covering a secret dragon world.

However, for a younger audience, the flaws in the story are easily overcome by the captivating love story between Toothless and his partner.

While Grimmel's efforts are convoluted and absurd, Toothless's romance is the obvious heart of the film.

Watching Toothless attempt to impress the "light fury" with his outlandish mating dances is funny and adorable.

Hiccup's perspective of this story adds fascinating scenes.

Additionally, the film includes impressive visuals and is a showcase for just how ambitious creative animation has become.

In the initial scenes of the Vikings' home, the audience can tell that the animations of Berk, the architecture and pas-

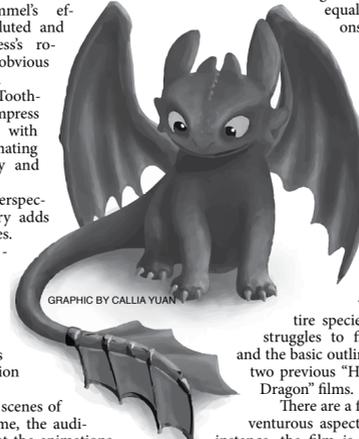
sionately designed characters are downright awe-striking.

The community has developed into a metropolis filled with brightly-colored buildings and crowded with equally colorful dragons.

The thrilling narrative element is executed well, even though the main motivations are somewhat confusing.

The ambitions are great — for example, using a villain that has allegedly single-handedly wiped out an entire species — but the film struggles to fill in the details, and the basic outline is similar to the two previous "How To Train Your Dragon" films.

There are a few daring and adventurous aspects of the film. For instance, the film is including lengthy segments of silent flirting and dancing



## 'Captain Marvel' wins fans with MCU lore

By Elaine Fan

Long before it hit theaters on March 8, "Captain Marvel" had already stirred controversy among fans of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).

On one hand, fans were excited to see actress Brie Larson portray the first female superhero lead in the MCU. While female heroes have held major roles, "Captain Marvel" is the first of 21 total films that is dedicated to a female hero.

On the other, disrupting the historically male-dominated superhero club did not come without difficulties. Twitter users accused Larson of a wooden performance in the trailer, urging her to smile more. Larson's response was a series of Instagram stories of male superheroes with Photoshopped smiles, playfully whites hilariously out of place with their furrowed brows and dramatic stances.

In an ironic turn of events, the film revealed a similar scene that had been written into the script before Larson's public clapback made headlines. As Larson's character examines a map, a man tells her that she would look prettier if she smiled more.

"That's just a depiction of the female experience," Larson noted in an interview with Yahoo Entertainment. "So it didn't really bother me that much when I saw the reaction because that's just how it goes."

Director Anna Boden thinks many women could relate to that scene. Telling women to "smile more" is considered a relatively common form of female objectification as it implies women's emotions and appearances exist to satisfy others.

Despite these hurdles, "Captain Marvel" brought in a \$153 million domestic haul and \$455 million worldwide for its opening weekend, making it the second highest grossing film of 2019.

The star-studded cast is led by Larson, who won Best Actress for "Room." Jude Law, British-Asian actress Gemma Chan, Ben Mendelsohn, Samuel L. Jackson and Reggie Lee — who delivers some of the

most comedic moments in the movie.

Admittedly, the film itself isn't amazing enough to be a groundbreaking Oscar hopeful, but it's still an enjoyable watch for enthusiasts and casual viewers alike. The film is a crucial puzzle piece before the "Endgame" release on April 26.

As if a reflective pause to preface the Avengers finale, Captain Marvel's origin story offers a glimpse of Earth's past before the Avengers even existed. The story follows Vers, a hot-headed Kree warrior with no recollection of her past, and her role in an intergalactic war against the shapeshifting Skrulls.

The movie is a bit hard to follow in the opening scenes due to exposition, but the fun kicks off when Vers quite literally crashes into 1995 America, falling through the roof of a Los Angeles Blockbuster. In pursuing Skrull intruders on Earth, Vers finds an unexpected ally in Nick Fury, a S.H.I.E.L.D. agent, and begins to discover evidence of her history on the planet. This setting allows for cheeky '90s references, a fun soundtrack and the appearance of a young Nick Fury sans his iconic eyepatch.

Although some criticized the movie for promoting a heavy-handed, outdated brand of feminism, I found the themes of female empowerment cheesy at times, sometimes humorous, but never offensively overbearing. Rather, the story teaches self-discovery and persistence: we watch as Captain Marvel repeatedly stands back up when told by others what she cannot do at various stages of her life, culminating in the film's final battle.

Lastly, don't forget to stay behind for both of the after-credits scenes, one of which directly connects to "Endgame." For both avid fans and casual watchers, "Captain Marvel" is worth watching. Packed with classic Marvel humor, likeable characters and heartwarming moments, this origin story sends an important message to women who feel restricted by their gender. Beyond that, it offers a universally relevant story of finding yourself amidst the forced standards of those around you. ♦



Brie Larson stars as Captain Marvel.

## YouTube accounts create bizarre music sub-genres

By Annissa Mu

In response to the common complaint of mainstream music's lack of variety comes the arise of a plethora of edited song tracks, made to transform popular tunes into something new and exciting. Through these edited audio tracks come new subcultures and music genres that people love and share.

Browsing through these kinds of audio is a great way to find calming study tunes. For example, I find that piano, music box and even 8-bit covers are effective background music for studying, thanks to its combination of a familiar melody and simpler median.

**Through these edited audio tracks come new subcultures and music genres that people love and share.**

Edited audio also doesn't always have to be background music. It can serve its musical entertainment at the forefront of our attention, just like the songs we listen to while simply driving or taking a walk.

The most prominent example of this is probably nightcore, which is made by jacking up the speed and pitch of any given song track. It seems like a small change but the given effect has made nightcore incredibly popular. In fact, some of its videos have amassed over 100 million views on YouTube.

I was personally obsessed with nightcore in middle school because I somehow found that it sounded better and more exciting than the original song.

It also introduced me to a great number of artists that I love today, like Panic! At the Disco and Fall Out Boy.

Eventually, I grew out of nightcore, though, and it now sounds pretty annoying. However, the intense and squeaky sound of it will always hold fond memories for me. I sometimes still visit old nightcore YouTube videos just to experience the nostalgia of my middle school days again.

Another strange music edit is 8D audio, in which the music is manipulated to make it sound like the source of the sound is pan-

ning around you. By adjusting the volume of specific areas in your device's speakers, it makes one part louder than another and in turn creates a locomotive effect. There's also usually an added echo to create an ambient atmosphere that often makes it feel like you're at a concert, sitting alone in a huge stadium.

I think 8D audio is really cool, but I would never listen to it extensively because the echoing eventually starts to get annoying.

Another type of edited audio that plays with your sense of location and one that I really enjoy is "playing in another room" edits. To make these, songs are overlaid with various audio and effects to make it seem like the song is playing in a specific setting, such as the bathroom at a party or a car in the rain. I find these kind of tracks quite soothing because it detracts from the intensity of the original song and slightly muffles it with another pleasant sound such as rain.

One genre of edited music that I wish there were more of is Vaporwave. Vaporwave is defined as a microgenre of electronic music, featuring and mixture of mood music styles such as jazz, R&B and Funk. There are a few original Vaporwave tracks, but most of them are sourced by manipulating original '90s songs.

Generally, to make Vaporwave, the chosen song is slowed down and given additionally funk beats or filters. There is also an increased emphasis on the backtracking rather than the main vocals. This drastically transforms the tone of the song to one that I like to describe as a retro, electronic acid trip.

I thoroughly enjoy the laid-back yet trippy atmosphere Vaporwave creates, and the transformations from the original tracks are fascinating. Unfortunately, Vaporwave is now known more for its visual aesthetic rather than its auditory origins, so the creation of Vaporwave music has stalled quite a bit recently.

From the stylization of Vaporwave to the varied songs of nightcore, edited audio brings forth a massive supply of unique music and sounds. If you ever feel fed up over the same 10 songs that are constantly being repeated, try exploring the library of edited music fully available on YouTube. You might be surprised how much you like it. ♦

## Winter Guard utilizes 'eighth period' for practices

by Christine Zhang

The members of the Winter Guard team tiredly trudged back to their bus after their competition at Oak Grove High School on March 2, proud of their performance as a result of the hard work they had put in over the course of several months to perfect their routine.

The school's varsity Winter Guard team practices from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday, and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays without shows.

If the team has a show, they begin rehearsing at noon on Saturday and return to the school around midnight or 1 a.m.

The varsity team consists of 17 members, while JV consists of 2 members.

The Winter Guard season started in early November and will end with World Championships in Dayton, Ohio, from April 3 to April 6.

Senior member Casey Holt said that the team generally places in the top three for regional competitions.

Holt has been a part of guard

since her seventh grade, and due to the time commitment that it requires, Holt said that she now builds her life around color and Winter Guard rather than fitting it into her schedule.

Sophomore varsity member Nikita Kadambi agreed that guard, especially Winter Guard, is a huge time commitment.

In addition to the regular Thursday evening and Saturday practices from the fall season, Winter Guard's higher level of technique and performance requires them to meet for additional rehearsals.

They added rehearsals on Tuesdays as well as the ones on Tuesday and Saturday.

Because the Winter Guard no longer has to perform with the band, they no longer have the practices that color guard had right after school with the marching band during which occurred during eighth period.

Kadambi said that she enjoys evening practices far more than eighth-period practices since the team is more relaxed at night.

"Everyone is calmer at night, and it's not very agitated," Kad-

ambi said. "In eighth period, everyone's just coming off of school and people are still thinking about school, so it seems more busy."

Because evening rehearsals are three hours long compared to the 90-minute eighth-period practices, Holt said that the team gets much more done during the night.

Kadambi also said that, due to the higher time commitment, Winter Guard causes more stress for her since she has more schoolwork as a sophomore this year.

"It's definitely harder because you're thinking about your routines and you have trouble balancing your schedule," Kadambi said.

Despite the time that Winter Guard takes up, Kadambi said that the experience is well worth the commitment because of the friendships that she has made with her teammates.

"You get to talk and share evenings practices with your teammates in Dayton," Kadambi said. "You create a lot of bonds with your team and you also go on trips, which are really fun." ♦



Senior Alexandra Propach, along with the rest of Winter Guard, practices after school in preparation for upcoming Senior Night performance.

## Saratoga Symphony Orchestra musicians demonstrate dedication to art in rehearsals

By Andrew Lee

"Let's go, let's go, it's 2:20, let's tune... A... B-flat... A."

Music director Michael Boitz's microphoned-voice rings loud and clear through the spacious, high-ceiling Room M101, filled with around 100 students.

As other students stream out after the end of sixth period, students who are a part of the Saratoga Symphony Orchestra. It is primarily composed of fourth-period strings and third-period winds, who have just begun their after-school rehearsals during this so-called eighth period.

These students are the highest-ranking musicians in band and string orchestra, attending required rehearsals right after school during second semester Mondays and Wednesday. The rehearsals often last for more than an hour each.

On weeks with predominantly Blue Days, students are required to come in on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:20-3:45; on Red Day-dominated weeks, they come only on Wednesdays from 6-8:30 p.m.

On some days, members of the orchestra meet twice due to this



Music director Michael Boitz conducts the rehearsal for the Saratoga Symphony Orchestra (SSO) in the McAfee Center during 'eighth period' as they practice for an upcoming performance on March 23.

schedule, once during the school day and again after school.

This is the case for junior Emma Hsu, a viola player. She treats these orchestra rehearsals as an entirely different class that is separate from the normal fourth-period orchestra class.

"The repertoire we play in SSO is always different from what we play in fourth period," Hsu said. "The time we spend in SSO is almost equivalent to another whole period."

Senior Janice Yang, who plays the cello in SSO, said the extra

hours spent in the music building after school is entirely reasonable.

"Just like sports or robotics or speech and debate, it's a commitment," Yang said. "It's not a hindrance to my schedule but rather a part of it."

For Hsu, the rehearsals can

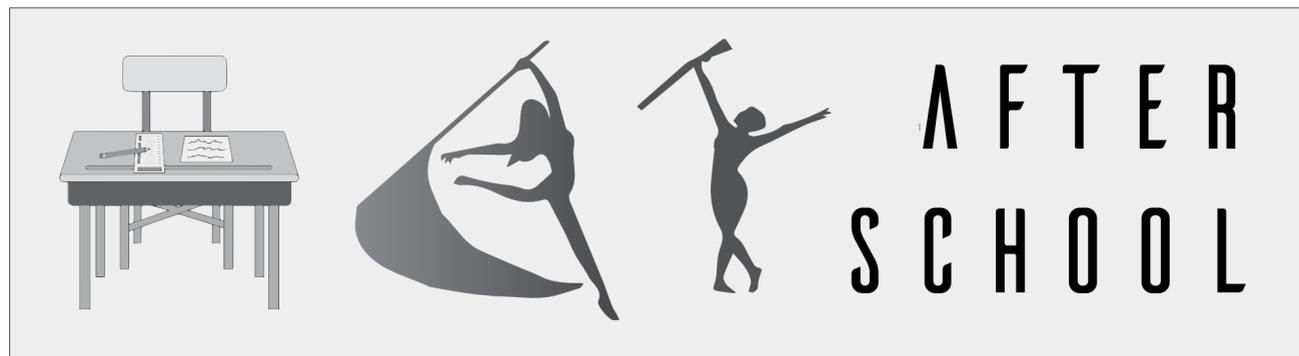
sometimes be inconvenient but are always manageable.

"Especially because SSO starts second semester, I often do have conflicts with it because I have a sport and academics are more rigorous, but I am usually able to work around it, as I essentially treat SSO like a separate class," Hsu said.

During these rehearsals, the musicians spend time practicing different pieces that they learn in class, in the preparation for upcoming events. Students also are occasionally given the chance to listen to guest performers and speakers. Recently there was a performance of Leo Kim, a skilled clarinet player attending University of Michigan School of Music.

Although Yang does admit that the additional orchestra rehearsals are like having a whole extra period tacked on some days, she enjoys it and uses it as a break from academics.

"SSO is definitely a positive aspect in not just my academic life, but my high school experience as a whole," Yang said. "The music, people, stories and life lessons are completely worth the time and effort we put in." ♦



## Detention provides opportunities for productivity

By Shama Gupta

When sophomore Juan Vintimilla sees campus supervisor Jeanine Sevilla opening the door to ones of his classes, he tightens a little, hoping his tardies haven't added up into a detention yet again.

Since he lives in the Santa Cruz Mountains, a 30-minute car ride from the school, he often finds himself running late to his first-period class.

Detention is held on Blue Days and Fridays from 2:20 to 3:20 p.m., sometimes becoming an eighth period as students must attend two detentions a week once given a detention.

History teacher Todd Dwyer, who often oversees detentions, said his room is usually quite full.

Naturally, the number of students increases as the semester goes along and students' tardies or cuts end up accumulating to reach the maximum of five.

Usually there are 35 to 40 people that ultimately attend the detentions regularly.

During this time, there is no talking, no eating, no sleeping and no usage of phones.

With nothing left to do, students use the one hour of time to focus on schoolwork. The time after-school, he says, can be very productive for people as the quiet

work area almost forces students to work on what needs to get done.

In fact, some students find that the time that they spend at detention becomes valuable for productivity.

Dwyer said that "it's kind of odd that at the end of detention, the students thank me. Only in Saratoga do students in detention thank you for an hour of productive time."

With homework and sports practices after school, Vintimilla uses the one hour in a distraction-free environment as best as he can.

From his perspective, it is one of the few opportunities to have an hour of time to study or use that time in order to get something done.

"Detention is sometimes very

beneficial," Vintimilla admitted. "It's a good way to just organize yourself when you have a lot to do but not enough time to do it."

**"Only in Saratoga do students in detention thank you for an hour of productivity time."**

TEACHER Todd Dwyer

But it certainly isn't something that Vintimilla looks forward to. Already having seven periods in his schedule, he is used to having to stay at school after most people have gone home.

But along with track practices at 4 p.m., he admits that it becomes fairly difficult to attend the detentions right after school on Blue Days, and right before his practices.

Likewise, many still say detention is sometimes thought of as one of the most dreaded punishments on campus.

Detention's after school time slot proves to be inconvenient for many. Nevertheless, students believe that the time spent in detention can be useful to the students having to attend them as they find it a productive use of their time as students.

Even so, Vintimilla said, "There are times when detention feels like the longest hour of my life." ♦

## Cyber High classes offer credit recovery options

STUDENT REMEDIATES CREDIT WITH EXPOSURE TO DIFFERENT CLASSROOM FORMAT

By Allison Hartley

While most students flow out from campus after sixth period on Blue Days, junior Hannah Murray heads to special education teacher Lauren Taylor's classroom, takes out her computer and gets ready for her online class.

She sits alongside about 15 other students with soft music and a silent movie playing in the background.

Although Taylor takes attendance and supervises the class, she mainly helps students to complete course credits online during the "eighth period."

Students learn on a Fremont-based non-profit online program called Cyber High.

Cyber High is designed for students who fall behind in credits or who had struggled to keep up with the instruction in the specific classes.

Since she missed her sopho-

more year, Murray enrolled in the recovery classes on Cyber High to complete course credits for 10th grade English and history in the fall semester.

It has been a good option for her because it gives her "an extra period" to catch up on school work," she said.

After completing her 10th grade credits, Murray has worked on 11th grade English and History classes on Cyber High.

"Cyber High is pretty easy since most of the courses are meant to be as easy as possible to help people recover for credits they've missed," Murray said. "The history courses are a little sporadic because they're a lot of info, but the English courses are easy as long as you read the books quickly."

Most students and parents are recommended to explore enrollment in recovery classes to complete course credits by school counselors.

Usually, the student enrolls in order to remediate credits for a class or the student finds this option more suitable to his or her learning style.

"If anybody needed to recover from a course quickly, I would go to that class," Murray said.

**"Cyber High gives them another opportunity to make up those credits."**

TEACHER Lauren Taylor

The Cyber High classes are A-G approved, which means that they will prepare students for a four-year college and that the student will graduate with the complete set of A-G credits.

The classes have five units each that consist of modules, activities, and quizzes to gauge student prog-

ress for the final exam at the end of each unit.

The online structure of the classes allows students to study on their own schedule and at their own pace, and the courses often help students avoid retaking courses over the summer.

"The classes are fully independent and self-sufficient, so all the curriculum is already online," Taylor said. "The quizzes provide the student with feedback to let them know if they're understanding the content."

Because of the self-paced nature of the classes, the roster for Taylor's eighth-period class changes regularly. This allows for students to exit the class when they complete the credit and for other students to enroll in the specific classes.

Due to the flexibility in its nature, students are also often excused from the class for sports and other commitments.

"In the life of a high school student, sometimes things happen in life and things happen to them; that makes it difficult for them

to put forth their best effort in a class," Taylor said.

She describes this opportunity as a second chance for students.

"They may end up not getting a passing grade in a class at some point throughout their high school career," Taylor said, "and Cyber High gives them another opportunity to make up those credits and still graduate A-G ready." ♦

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#### Cyber High

**What is Cyber High?**  
Cyber High is a non-profit online learning program.

**Do Cyber High classes count for credit?**  
A-G approved, Cyber High classes do count for credit.

**Why do people choose Cyber High?**  
Students choose Cyber High courses to remediate credits for classes they had previously struggled in.

### togatalks

Is detention an inconvenience or productive?

"It is an inconvenience because a lot of times it interferes with sports."



junior Nikhil Sridhar

"Detention is actually a very productive place to work."



sophomore Purab Mecwan

"I think detention is very inconvenient because most people don't even get anything done."



junior Lucy Liang



## SCIENCE DEPARTMENT'S LAB TECH FOLLOWS A CHILDHOOD AMBITION

BY Manasi Garg

Wearing a white lab coat, carefully organizing various substances while mixing chemicals together in a test tube, the science department's lab technician, Cynthia Cheng, feels at home in the rooms of the science building.

Although few students may know that the school has a lab technician, Cheng's job is integral in keeping science classes running.

The school introduced the position of lab technician in the 2017-2018 school year at the request of the science department. The hiring allowed teachers to focus more on other duties such as lesson planning, grading and helping students, assistant principal Brian Thompson said.

For chemistry honors and physics teacher Jenny Garcia, having a lab technician has been a blessing.

"It takes a huge burden off the process of being a science teacher," Garcia said. "I spend more time with other parts of my life involving school. Time you aren't spending running around looking for materials or setting up labs, you are spending making sure your curriculum is better and more appropriate, and it gives us more time to work together as teachers."

**"She has a background in working with families and students who love science. I thought she fit all of the descriptors that we needed."**

VICE PRINCIPAL Brian Thompson

Garcia also said she tries new labs with Cheng before deciding whether to incorporate them into a class's curriculum. Cheng's responsibilities as lab technician are vast and vary day by day.

Her primary role is to help science teachers prepare for upcoming labs by primarily setting up materials, equipment, tools and chemicals.

She creates solutions with the right molarity and amount of chemical solution, sets up and takes down labs, orders and purchases chemicals from Flinn Scientific and delivers and picks up the various equipment and supplies.

For Cheng, her job is the culmination of her childhood dreams. Growing up, she remembers both of her parents working as scientists at universities in Hong Kong — her father was a Chinese medicine researcher and her mother worked with a biology professor — so she envisioned her future would be spent working in a lab as well.

Even throughout her high school years, Cheng loved science and working in the lab.

"I think I did all the experiments for my group all those years when I was in high school, and I especially liked doing chemistry labs," Cheng said.

As she grew older, Cheng's interests took a new direction. Although she went to school in Hong Kong until 11th grade, in her senior year of high school, she and her family moved to North Carolina. There, she discovered new interests outside of the lab to pursue.

"I guess here in the U.S., there's a lot more different options I can choose in college," Cheng said, "but in Hong Kong it was limited; we could only choose between business or science paths."

While becoming a lab scientist may have been her dream throughout her childhood, Cheng ultimately went to North Carolina State and majored in electrical engineering. She made that decision after she had discovered that she enjoyed the logical and problem solving aspects of engineering.

Additionally, it was because it was something "new for her, and for a lot of other girls."

Cheng eventually obtained a master's degree in electrical engineering at Stanford University. Although she had considered getting a PhD degree as well, Cheng decided to join the workforce immediately after earning her master's.

For 20 years after graduating with a master's from Stanford, Cheng worked as a hardware engineer. Then, six years ago, she quit her job in order to spend more time with her children. But she discovered she didn't like being a stay-at-home mom only, saying she "isn't a person who can sit at home and do nothing."

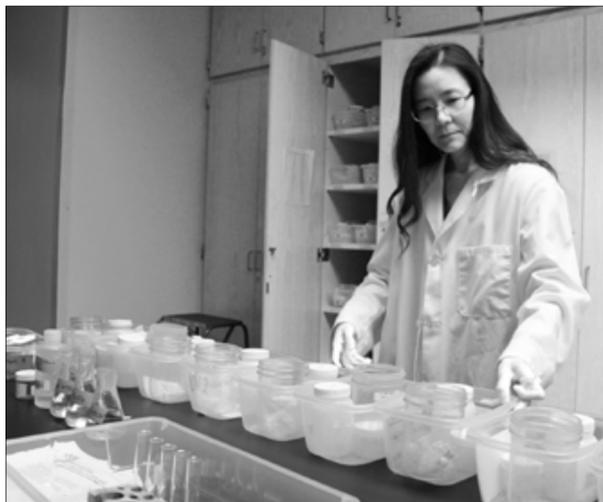
Returning to work, she had her first job as a librarian at the Campbell library.

Additionally, she began to volunteer at Argonaut Elementary School because one of two her daughters attended it at the time, and for the past four years she has worked as Argonaut's lead art docent coordinator, a job that requires her to remain organized and work hands on.

After having volunteered consistently at her daughters' schools, a friend suggested that she look into getting a job at Argonaut school. Cheng went on the district's employment website to see what jobs were available. Although she was originally looking for jobs at Argonaut, a posting for an SHS science lab technician immediately "caught her eye and her heart."

"Applying to this job was a very different experience for me," Cheng said. "This was the first time after college that I ever had to ask others to write recommendation letters for me, and I had to dig out my high school and college diplomas after more than 20 years."

Cheng had to submit her resumé and



FALCON // ALAN ZU

**Lab technician Cynthia Cheng prepares the lab setups for upcoming labs for science classes such as Biology and Chemistry on March 19.**

three recommendation letters that she obtained from the principal of Argonaut, a teacher she had worked with, and a colleague from her previous engineering job. She also went through an interview process with Thompson.

"We were looking for people who understood science and chemicals and lab equipment and also had a passion for helping kids and being supportive of our teachers, and Ms. Cheng has that background," Thompson said. "She has a background in working with families and students who love science and is someone who wanted to do a little bit more to help our school. I thought she fit all of the descriptors that we needed."

"I really enjoy working with everyone at SHS, especially all the science teachers," she said. "I am learning a lot from them, and even then there's still more to learn. The best part is knowing that students are learning from these labs. Hopefully, my job makes a little positive impact on their lives and their learning experiences." ♦

**"In Hong Kong it was limited; we could only choose between business or science paths."**

LAB TECHNICIAN Cynthia Cheng

Cheng has said the problem solving skills she acquired from her previous job, engineering, has allowed her to succeed at her current job, even when there are multiple labs to prepare in a day and other responsibilities to take care of.

She works as lab tech for the full school days on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and in the afternoons on Thursdays and Fridays.

She typically works at Campbell Library on Wednesday and Thursday mornings, and on Friday and Saturday for a few hours, although her shifts experience occasional changes.

She purposefully has flexible hours at the

### >> THE bigidea

#### Lab Technician

##### Who is the lab technician at the school?

For the past two years, Cynthia Cheng has been the lab technician for the school's science department.

##### What is a lab technician's role?

A lab technician prepares essentially everything for experiments done in the science classes at the school, specifically preparing solutions and calibrating the equipment.

##### Why did Cheng become a lab technician?

Having been exposed to the plethora of opportunities in this country compared to Hong Kong, Cheng decided to become a lab technician to live out her childhood dreams.

## Summer programs cost thousands, but they sometimes fall short of promises

by Shama Gupta & Alekhya Vadlakonda

Just weeks before summer program applications were due in early March, students filed into chemistry teacher Jenny Garcia's and biology teacher Kristen Thomson's classrooms, hoping ask for recommendation letters to support their applications. They fought for the last spot on their teachers' list; the teachers had set limits on the number they would write.

Although many students deem summer programs to be a near necessity, their frequently high costs make them unattainable for many across the world, and sometimes the programs do not satisfy students' expectations. The downsides hardly seem to matter in affluent Saratoga.

#### Economic inequities

Many programs cost thousands of dollars for less than a month of curriculum. The California State Summer School for Mathematics and Science (COSMOS), a program that focuses on multiple STEM subfields, such as nanochemistry, marine biology and large data computing, costs \$4,000 for four weeks. Other summer institutes, like UC Berkeley's pre-college program, range from \$13,700 to \$15,000 for six to eight weeks.

By allowing a student to show interest in a specific subject area, the programs can supplement a college application, yet it's apparent that these programs add to the opportunity gap that divides rich and poor.

Critics, too, see this problem forming. According to The New York Times, Kimberley Quick, an associate from the Century Foundation, said that "students who could not afford to spend their summers taking extra classes were being left further behind in what she called 'the college access game.'"

Low-income students are also essentially blocked from benefiting from summer programs that give students credits or tech material that will help in future classes.

As summer programs shift from being a burden for children who did not pass a class to being a sought-after form of education to get ahead, the programs start to advantage high class students and discriminate against less affluent students.

#### Worth of program

The other problem often overlooked

when applying to summer programs is the overall worth of the program considering its costs. Typically, students take part in programs hoping to gain knowledge and new experiences, rather than looking at its cost and weighing the benefits.

Junior Elaine Wang, for example, attended COSMOS last year and a program at Smith College in Massachusetts in the summer of 2016.

There, student life is made to mirror a day in the life of a college student. Wang, who had chosen to study physics, attended lectures and lived in college dorms.

But at the end, Wang felt unsatisfied with the result.

"I thought I'd go for some topics that I wouldn't be able to learn at school, such as physics at the nanoscale. But to be honest, I don't think I am going to use what I learned, since I don't think I am going to do physics when I grow up," she said. "But other than that, it was an experience — just something to do over the summer."

Wang said that the program wasn't a scam, though; it did offer her exactly what was promised. But in her opinion, a better choice is to simply apply for programs that "cost less and are more applicable to the real world, like research or paid internships."

Despite her experience, Wang feels that some summer programs may be worth it. Factors like students' prior knowledge in the field, their hopes for the camps and depth that the course goes into influence the effectiveness and worth of the camp.

In her opinion, there are many cases that make these programs more of a fair trade. She said that if a student is highly interested in the topic, and they really want to explore more before they commit to it, the summer program can have value.

She also believes that the worth is dependent on what the student chooses to do with course material after it's over.

"Some people were really interested in environmental science, and they finished their research [after the camp], which I think makes it more worth it," Wang said.

In an effort to be more money efficient, Wang decided to apply for internships for the coming summer rather than to summer programs. She feels that the application process and the experience of an internship will be more rewarding than that of a summer program.

#### The advantages

Senior Hanlin Sun had a notably good experience with his summer program.

The summer before his senior year, Sun attended a program at the UC Davis called the Youth Scholars Program. Going into the program, Sun was already interested in the area of work that he applied for, bioengineering, and he wanted to continue working in a lab through that program.

This initial interest was sparked through a summer program he attended the year before, at the University of South Florida where he worked with mentors and a team and "realized he loved the team environment of bioengineering."

At YSP, Sun was exposed to working in a lab and going through a project, along with having "an absolutely amazing experience in all aspects."

**"When you get into the real world you have to find out things by yourself so I think taking on challenges alone is really important."**

FRESHMAN Sajiv Shah

He worked with a professor one-on-one and investigated the genetics of *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*, which causes billions of losses in agricultural losses every year.

Sun sees the Davis program as vital in his educational journey so far.

"I am sure this experience will prepare me when I'm going into internships during college," he said.

Along with the academic advantages the program provided him, his summer was also one that he enjoyed socially.

Sun said, "The kids I met were all great and had burning interests and passion in their respective fields of interests. We had a great time together and I still keep in touch with my friends from the camp."

#### Alternate approach

Brothers Sajiv Shah, a freshman, and Dhruv Shah, a junior, have taken another approach on their summers for the past few

years, one that interests them and minimizes the money spent.

Since elementary school, they have worked on and completed many projects in their free time, both together and individually. Sajiv said one of their latest summer projects was to build a "self-flying drone that is built to follow your hand," which they did last summer.

Last summer they also set a goal to try and automate their house. Sajiv said that they used an Arduino and electronics to put a system on their garage door so that it can be opened from their phones.

To do this, they bought a basic coding platform online and locks to install with the automation of a doorbell. In total, most of the projects that they took on cost about \$50. Their most expensive project, the self-flying drone, cost \$800.

Sajiv said that taking on these projects at home helps him learn from his mistakes and teaches him how to approach challenges by himself while doing research on a topic that interests him.

"When you are taught something, there is a basic curriculum, and you're given information," he said. "When you're doing something at home, you have to find out more by yourself. When you get into the real world you have to find out things by yourself so I think [taking on challenges alone] is really important."

Sajiv and Dhruv say they don't have anything against summer camps. Rather, they are just more mindful about the true benefits of the program.

Sajiv said he would apply for a program if the program's topic is something he is already interested in, and he knew what the course material was.

"If I knew the exact credentials of who is teaching it, and if I knew that the connection that I'm making with the person that's teaching me could give me more information or more access to opportunities, I think that would be very worth it," he said.

Sajiv also noted that many students tend to boast about the program they plan to attend or the campus they will be staying at, but believes that his peers should pay attention to the substance of the program rather than the small details that do not matter as much in the long run.

"It's what you do with what you learn," Sajiv said. "It's not where you go." ♦

## Dieting: upperclassmen attempt new eating habits

<p><b>George Bian</b> Buffing up for the gridiron</p> <p><b>Goals:</b> By maintaining a healthier diet, Bian is able to shed more fat and build more lean muscle which will help improve his athleticism.</p> <p><b>Methods:</b> He began a diet with a three-to-one ratio of calories of protein to calories of carbohydrates.</p> <p><b>Timeframe:</b> One cheat day per month, one month at a time. Implemented end of 2018 football season.</p> <p><b>Results:</b> His max squat improved by 50 pounds and his power clean by 40. His body fat percentage has decreased.</p>	<p><b>Jolyn Tran</b> Eating ethically to help the environment</p> <p><b>Goals:</b> "I'm hoping to do my part in reducing greenhouse gases during the raising of animals," Tran said.</p> <p><b>Methods:</b> Following a pescatarian diet that prohibits any meat besides fish and seafood.</p> <p><b>Timeframe:</b> Started a little more than one month ago.</p> <p><b>Results:</b> She has not seen much weight loss and is considering adjusting her diet to include chicken.</p>	<p><b>Isabella Taylor</b> Pursuing veganism to combat animal abuse</p> <p><b>Goals:</b> Curb animal cruelty and environmental impacts of the meat and dairy industry.</p> <p><b>Methods:</b> Veganism: not consuming, eating or using animal products.</p> <p><b>Timeframe:</b> She has been vegan since last June.</p> <p><b>Results:</b> She has more energy and has lost 15 pounds. She said she has better understanding of the planet.</p>
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REPORTING BY ALEX WANG

GRAPHIC BY ELAINE TOH

# A tale of two immigrants' experiences

## THE DOWNSIDE: GETTING DEPORTED FROM AMERICA DISRUPTS LIFE

BY SelenaLiu

Former sophomore Min Lee, who immigrated to the U.S. from South Korea at the beginning of high school, thought she had established a solid student life in Saratoga High as a freshman. She took challenging courses at school, went to volunteering every week, participated in sports and was even on the robotics team.

But all of Lee's hard work crumbled when her visa expired and she was deported in the middle of her sophomore year. After being deported, Lee began attending international school in South Korea.

"Suddenly, I had no school to go, since this was all unplanned," Lee said. "I barely got into an international school, but even then, we still had problems. I couldn't even say goodbye to my friends."

According to the Migration Policy Institute, immigrants from foreign countries, in order to stay in the U.S., must own a permanent residence in America, be an immediate relative of a U.S. citizen, or qualify for an employment sponsorship.

Lee's sudden visa expiration was because of withdrawal of this employment sponsorship for her father, who was requested by his company to return to South Korea after spending the last two years working here. Since Lee neither had relatives or a permanent residence, she was rejected in her application for a new visa. Now, she is banned from living or even traveling to the U.S. for the next three years.

The sudden change in academic environment has not only impacted Lee's studies, but has also changed her life as a whole. Comparing her current life in South Korea to her life in Saratoga last semester, Lee said that her current life is far more restricting in many aspects.

"Even though it is an international school, the curriculums and rules here are kind of different," Lee said. "I have trouble making friends here, and this school isn't as flexible as Saratoga. For example, this school does not accept courses taken outside of school for credit."

After her three year ban of returning to America is lifted, Lee also plans to pursue an education in the U.S. again.

In international school, she is rebuilding her extracurricular involvement in robotics, sports, and volunteering. Lee also wants to

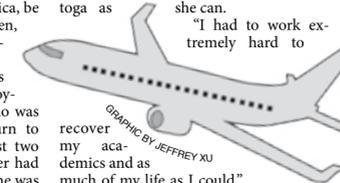
make her high school life in South Korea as similar to the one she had in Saratoga as she can.

"I had to work extremely hard to

recover my academics and as much of my life as I could," Lee said. "But even then, I really want to return to America once I am allowed to again." ♦



Lee Former SHS sophomore



## THE UPSIDE: IMMIGRANT BENEFITS FROM LESS RIGOROUS SCHOOLING

BY SelenaLiu

When junior Jingyu Kang traveled to America with his family for the first time as an elementary school student and toured many top universities in the U.S., Kang became determined that he wanted to come to the U.S. to pursue a higher education. However, attending school in South Korea at the time, Kang realized that he was at a disadvantage.

Therefore, in seventh grade, Kang and his family immigrated to Saratoga in hopes of having a better chance of being admitted to a top college, and after spending almost five years in the U.S., Kang is still grateful for the opportunity to attend school here.

Kang remembers his South Korean school life up until immigrating was filled with studying. Not only did Kang attend classes at school early in the morning, but he also attended cram schools, or hagwons, in the evening.

According to BBC News, all this studying is in preparation for the Korean College Scholastic Ability Test, or Suneung, an "eight-hour marathon of back-to-back exams, which not only dictates whether students will go to university, but can affect their job prospects, income, where they will live and even future relationships."

Kang said that one big part of why he immigrated to America is the less intense academic schedule, as well as a greater breadth of academic and extracurricular opportunities.

"What I like about the American school system is that students here have less homework, which means more time to pursue activities that actually matter to them," Kang said. "I can find many opportunities and internships here just as a high school student, and I can also take whatever classes I want to take."

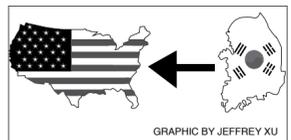
Nevertheless, Kang still faces difficulty in some aspects while attending school here.

"There are some classes that I struggle with, like history and English," Kang said. "It was also harder to make friends. I remember how there were no other Asian students in [the middle school I went to] and how I was scared of interacting with the white people."

Despite this difficulty, Kang still feels grateful not only to his parents, but to the school for letting him have these opportunities.



Kang Korean immigrant junior



"Although it was hard to get used to the completely new environment, I think the system where you have lots of things to try and learn whatever is meaningful to you is awesome," Kang said. ♦

# Do difficult classes require expensive tutoring?

## SOME EMBRACE THIS HELP WHILE OTHERS LABEL IT AN UNNECESSARY CRUTCH

BY ManasiGarg & ChristineZhang

Two years ago, then-freshman Akshar Sarvesh enrolled in the hardest class he had ever taken: Precalculus Honors with PJ Yim.

Knowing the challenge he was taking on, he and his mother did what many Saratoga students do: They decided to get a private tutor, in this case Dhanya Premakumar, a well-known math tutor in the area.

With the school's academically competitive environment, it's hardly a surprise when students choose to take AP or Honors classes, even if the classes push them to their limits. Some of these students end up dropping the class, but others use tutors to help learn the challenging material.

Questions about tutoring include whether hiring them is fair and whether they lead students to develop a dependence on always needing outside help.

Sarvesh said that after struggling in his first semester of Precalculus Honors even with extra help from his tutor, he realized that having a tutor to guide him was important, and he appreciated the decision that he and his mother made. Later in the school year, he became more familiar with the style of Yim's class and managed to keep up with its pace but continued his tutoring sessions.

This school year, Sarvesh continued using Premakumar's services for his AP Calculus BC class, also taught by Yim.

Once a week, Sarvesh meets Premakumar in a two-on-one private session, along with junior Krishna Minocha, to go over the math topics that he has learned in class. Premakumar reinforces the material by deriving formulas and giving extra homework problems to better prepare Sarvesh for his upcoming classes and tests. Premakumar charges \$60 per hour for her services.

From a Facebook survey of 95 students, 27 said that they have private tutors for one

or more of their school classes. The most common subject for tutoring was math, closely followed by science. Ten students said that they had two tutors, and one said that they had three.

The Jay Koo Academy, a popular private tutoring company in the area, charges \$270 per 110-minute private session. According to tutors.com, however, the average price for a private math tutor is \$40 per hour, although it may range from \$25 to \$90 for different locations.

Some students such as junior Eric Che think that tutors can hinder independent learning. He has never had a tutor.

"I think it's good to learn things by yourself because as you grow up, you have to learn how to do things independently," Che said. "Tutors can be unhealthy because you automatically rely on them instead of doing your work by yourself."

Che said that students may be driven to find private tutors because they want education from an outside professional. But he also believes that there are sometimes incorrect associations between tutors and success.

"Whenever someone's not doing well in a class, they can say, 'I can just get a tutor,'" he said. "They believe that by having tutors, they'll automatically do well in the class."

When Che was struggling in his English class, he chose to deal with his troubles by talking to his teacher instead of turning to a private tutor. He said that teachers are free resources to students, and that "it's nice to take advantage of what you already have."

Even though Che has chosen not to go to a paid tutor, he said he does not look down or think lower of his friends who have tutors since he thinks each person learns in a different way.

AP Physics teacher Kirk Davis has noticed that few students come during daily tutorials to ask him questions except on days before tests. Davis said that while outside tutoring can be effective, students might as well ask him questions for free instead of paying a tutor for the same knowledge.

He does not know which of his students have tutors and has no intention of trying to find out as long as their tutors do not cater their sessions to his particular class.

"What I am concerned about is that some tutors try to teach to a specific class as opposed to the subject," Davis said. "There are tutoring services I know that tailor their tutoring classes to a specific teacher, and I think that becomes problematic, especially when the tutors try to get access to tests."

Satake said that private tutoring is not a cure-all for struggling students. Before resorting to expensive and perhaps unqualified tutors, Satake said students should check the school's free tutoring center for peer tutors who have taken the course prior.

Satake also said that while learning should be challenging, taking a class should not require a "course preview" during the summer or any other form of outside tutoring. Rather, she suggested that students who are not ready for a course should not take it.

However, junior Claire Smerdon, who has private tutors for AP Calculus BC, AP Chemistry and the ACT, said tutors can be an important tool in students reaching their potential.

"When you take a hard class, like an AP or honors class, you don't have to take it because you're great at that subject," Smerdon said. "You can take it because you want to be stretched, and you can also take it because you want it on your college applications. There's a lot of different reasons besides just being good at the subject."

She said having a tutor can be especially beneficial if the student is willing to put in extra work and make use of the resources the tutor offers.

However, Smerdon said too much reliance could hinder a student's work ethic in the future.

"Tutors can give you a lot of structure," Smerdon said. "But depending on how much you rely on your tutor, it could get to a point where if you go to college, you could be overwhelmed with not having someone who can give you the answers, and having to problem-solve and study by yourself."

Smerdon receives tutoring from South Bay Learning Academy for private tutoring sessions in Calculus and Chemistry, both of which cost \$90 an hour, and from AJ Academy for ACT, which costs \$250 an hour.

Sarvesh said he realizes tutors alone can't magically make a student's overnight geniuses in a tough subject like calculus, but they can help them tackle challenges they might not otherwise attempt.

"I want to be going as far as I can, and if a tutor is necessary to help me get there, then that's what I have to do," he said.

Sarvesh added that getting private tutors is ultimately an individual choice.

"You shouldn't feel obliged to take a tutor, but you also shouldn't feel shameful when you do take a tutor because there's nothing wrong with it," Sarvesh said. ♦



# Slowing down high-speed fashion

## FAST-FASHION BRANDS PROFIT FROM CONSUMERISM AT THE EXPENSE OF WORKERS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

BY ManasiGarg & AllisonHartley

Two years ago, 2010 alumna Chiyo Hartley looked around the expansive wholesale clothing market in the fashion district of downtown Los Angeles. The long boulevard stretched endlessly before her, lined and cluttered with colorful little vendors trying to sell their apparel.

She had previously worked in the fast-fashion industry as a private label purchaser with a reseller's license that allowed her to purchase unbranded clothing in bulk for popular brands to re-label under their name.

But as she gazed around the countless shops, each one piled high with hundreds of the same article of clothing, she realized how much would go to waste. Not all of those clothes would be bought, and of those that were purchased by companies, most wouldn't even be sold in the cycle of fast fashion.

"Everyone is buying the same things, and everything is just being made for the least amount of money possible," Hartley said. "But there's not really a need for so much more clothing to be produced."

Fast fashion is an industry in which companies mass produce clothing at breakneck speed to offer trendy (and often poor-quality) clothing at cheap prices. Fast fashion gained traction in the 1960s, when people began to embrace cheap clothing and ever-changing trends, which opposed the previous tradition of brands' releasing only a few seasonal line-ups per year. But recently, attention from advocates like the environmentalist organization Greenpeace and the Netflix documentary "The True Cost" has exposed the fast-fashion industry for its often harmful practices.

Fast fashion is the second largest polluter in the world, right after the oil industry, and also exploits cheap labor from workers in developing countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Cambodia.

It also exacts a heavy environmental toll. Discarded clothing piles up to 10.46 million tons in landfills, according to The Balance. In fact, in 2012, 84 percent of unwanted clothing from the U.S. wound up in either a landfill or an incinerator, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The industry has also committed grave human rights abuses against factory workers. The workers often toil away in life-threatening, poorly constructed sweatshops and are grossly underpaid. In Cambodia, the average hourly wage of garment workers for a 48 hour work week is 3,500 riels, which is the equivalent of \$2.53 in purchasing power parity (PPP), and in India, the average hourly wage is the equivalent to \$2.27 PPP, according to the brand sustainability consultant group Sustainable Brands.

In 2013, the Savar factory collapse in Bangladesh killed 1,134 workers in an eight-story building called Rana Plaza. People knew it was in disrepair, but when workers pointed out cracks and structural issues to managers, factory owners never took action.

Despite these issues, the majority of consumers are unaware or uncaring of fast fashion's ramifications. Fast-fashion companies such as Zara, Forever 21, H&M, Topshop and Primark have removed fashion seasons. Rather, they release thousands of new designs daily and make them available for only a short period of time.

The consumer develops a fear of missing out (FOMO), something that Harvard researchers call "a sense of tantalizing exclusivity" and drives the fast-fashion industry's success.

Fast fashion has also encouraged quantity over quality — consumers buy four times the amount of clothing than they did in 1980, and often wear the clothes for only 35 days before discarding the garments for new ones, according to the sustainability

web publication Green Matters.

This trends shows up all over the U.S. and especially in wealthy areas such as Silicon Valley. Senior Tiffany Pi said that growing up and being surrounded by malls meant she was used to buying and quickly discarding clothes. She recalls that it was normal for her to just go to Forever 21 and buy multiple \$5 tops that she would wear once or twice and never touch again.

Pi has stopped shopping at retailers like Forever 21 and H&M and offers her old clothes to friends before donating them since most donated clothes are later thrown into landfills when they are not sold, where they continue to harm the environment.

"I used to have a chair full of clothes that I never wore," Pi said. "But I figured out it didn't actually give me a lot of happiness to own that much clothing."

### Sustainable fashion

In response to the issues with fast fashion, public outcry has led to a new wave of fashion directly countering fast fashion — slow fashion, or sustainable fashion.

Sustainable or slow fashion takes multiple forms: as ethical fashion that does not exploit workers, as environmentally clean fashion, and as lasting, high-quality fashion. The goal is to have a net environmental and human impact that is close to neutral.

Although many sustainable fashion brands are smaller productions and less well known, each is dedicated to alleviating one or more of fast fashion's problems.

One prime example is Hartley's own clothing brand, Civil Rags, which recycles vintage clothes. The mass amounts of clothing waste she saw while working in the fast-fashion industry stuck with her as she and her sister 2007 alumna Sachi Hartley built their brand, an LA-based sustainable fashion company that they began as "a passion project" two years ago.

Currently, the store operates by selling its products online, in flea markets, in art galleries and in coffee shops. Like many other slow fashion brands, their production level is small. Some sustainable fashion companies, however, are breaking through to the mainstream market.

For example, Reformation sprung up in 2009 as a stylish, ethical alternative to large fast-fashion companies, and has since opened brick and mortar stores around the United States. Their slogan is "Being naked is the number 1 most sustainable option. We're number 2." The company is dedicated to reducing carbon emissions and saving water, and every quarter they release a sustainability report that outlines its gains as well as goals for the next quarter. The clothes are made of organic fabric and dyed with non-toxic chemicals, and workers are treated fairly in the new LA factories.

Patagonia, one of the first sustainable fashion brands that has achieved widespread popularity, also boasts similar benefits. Patagonia offers a program called Worn Wear that tours in the U.S. and Europe, mending and sometimes reselling pieces that customers bring to them.

However, these brands are expensive, making them less appealing to many consumers than their cheap counterparts.

Most people cannot afford to spend upwards of \$100 to \$200 on a dress, the average cost of a Reformation or Patagonia piece.

Still, it may be possible to shop at these clothing stores, assuming a certain level of financial stability, in a way that prioritizes quality over quantity. These clothing brands are so expensive because they adhere to high

standards by upholding workers' rights, helping the environment and using high-quality material.

Senior Isabella Taylor is an avid proponent of sustainable fashion and believes that everyone should be mindful of their purchases and consider how the clothing will hold up in the long term, instead of satiating their sudden fashion whims. She encourages people to consider quality over quantity.

"I believe that a lot of kids at Saratoga High can afford slow fashion," Taylor said. "I think it would make more sense if you just buy less, and when you do buy things, it's higher quality and you actually treasure it for longer."

But for those who simply cannot afford expensive slow fashion brands that create original clothing, there are other cheaper alternatives.

An obvious one is second-hand or thrift shopping, as many people are now looking to own vintage or refinished piece.

Hartley said her passion for vintage and sustainable fashion comes from thrifting.

"I think that a lot of people are maybe a bit intimidated of thrifting because there are so many clothes to sift through, but there's always little gems to find, and I'd say that thrifting is a good start to supporting sustainable fashion," Hartley said.

Oftentimes, thrifting is even cheaper than fast fashion products, and because the pieces are reused by the buyer, they will not go to waste and harm the environment.

Other companies, such as Civil Rags, don't directly sell vintage clothing.

Rather, they buy vintage fabric from warehouses and refinish it to create new clothing. The two owners scavenge through warehouses for the highest quality fabrics available, then transform it into a piece. They typically only have one or two articles of any given clothing in stock because vintage fabric comes in limited supply.

Hartley said one of the most rewarding experiences with working on Civil Rags is when a customer finds a piece they love.

"We're helping find this beautiful article of clothing a second life, and it's awesome because it's all unique and original clothing that'll fit and enhance the style of the person who bought it," Hartley said.

"A lot of people are maybe a bit intimidated of thrifting because there are so many clothes to sift through."

ALUMNA Chiyo Hartley

Society will take its time to completely turn away from fast fashion, especially because multinational corporations like Forever 21 and H&M play such a large role in the consumerist world, but consumers can take conscious steps to reduce the impact of their fashion choices, these advocates say.

One convenient way consumers can access information about brands is the app Good On You, which rates brands on their sustainability. It is based on three impact categories: "People" (labor policies, working conditions, wage and auditing practices), "Planet" (energy use emissions and resource footprints) and "Animal" (use of real animal skins/fur and leather production), giving consumers easy access to judge brands' ethics and decide for themselves whether or not they would like to shop at a certain store.

"I'm not asking you to stop shopping fast fashion altogether," Taylor said. "Just try to make a conscious effort to not make that decision when you can."

Editor's note: Chiyo and Sachi Hartley are related to reporter Allison Hartley. ♦



### FAST FASHION

- H&M
- Zara
- Forever 21
- Charlotte Russe
- Topmark
- Uniqlo



### SLOW FASHION

- Patagonia
- REFORMATION
- Reformation
- Alternative Apparel
- Everlane
- Outdoor Voices



SOURCE: The Good Trade, Franker

ALL GRAPHICS BY ELAINE TOH

TRACK & FIELD

# Ellis returns as coach, focuses on form

by Shama Gupta & Allison Hartley

The sun was setting as sprinting coach Rick Ellis crouched in the fourth lane shouting encouragement to the boys' varsity 4x400-meter team as they dashed down to the finish in the last event of the dual meet against Wilcox on March 14. The race would go a long way to determine the meet's overall winner.

As junior Alex Taylor, the fourth leg Saratoga runner, came down the 100-meter stretch, the team lined the inside of the field, cheering for him to give everything he had in the close race.

Taylor gave his all but tripped as he dove to the finish, falling slightly behind Wilcox's relay A team and finishing second.

In the end, the team lost to Wilcox with the JV girls team losing 61-57, frosh-soph boys losing 76-52, varsity girls winning 66-59 and varsity boys losing 67-59.

Head coach Archie Ljepava said it was the closest Saratoga High has come to beating Wilcox in many years, and he praised Taylor for "leaving skin, blood and tears" on the track to score points for the team.

The team won the dual meet against Fremont on March 7 at Saratoga, with varsity boys winning, varsity girls losing and both JV teams winning. They will compete with Cupertino on March 28 and with Homestead on April 2.

## The return of a former coach

Ellis, took a six-year hiatus from coaching track and field, looks to the rest of the season with excitement to develop the Saratoga sprinters at the highest level.

His career at Saratoga started in 2001, when Ellis moved from his position as a teacher, football and track coach at Salinas High School to become a social studies teacher at Saratoga High. He then took over the track program because of the unexpected passing of former cross country and track coach Marshall Clark of a heart attack during a run in 2001.

In 2004, he passed the baton to current head coach Archie Ljepava and took a break from coaching track until 2012, when he coached for one season, but stepped down again because of family commitments.

Feeling that he had a little more time and that his kids were getting older, Ellis returned to coach sprints in 2018.

"This year, I was working with my freshmen in our athletic PE class, and we were doing all of our sprints exercises, and I was like, 'I enjoy doing this. This is fun,'" Ellis said.

The sprints team alone includes roughly forty new faces and running forms for Ellis in his first year back to remember and evaluate — a considerable responsibility, and a work in progress as Ellis is "just trying to get to know their names, much less how they sprint."

So far, Ellis has affected his values for form and technique using drills and weight room workouts that are familiar to some students who were in the seventh-period athletic PE class — an approach that is much different from last years.

"Last year we put a lot of work in overall; we tried to work people into running right," Ljepava said. "It fared well in the end, but [Ellis's technique] is a better fit this year since he's teaching the younger kids the right running mechanics. The key is teaching the proper running mechanics and then workload, instead of just workload."

Athletes have noticed the new structure of workouts in practice and the emphasis on form.

"I like [the new workouts] because it makes track seem more serious because we have done a lot of intense workouts this year, and they have made us better as a team and everyone is in good shape," girls' sprinting captain Sasha Pickard said.

Ellis believes that to shape a successful athlete and successful future for the team, the team will place a higher priority on weight lifting because of its considerable effect on explosivity for sprints.

"In order to maximize the start you have



Long distance runners seniors Nirav Adunuthula and Hugo Huang and juniors Kole Tippetts and Shivam Verma run in the 1600 m event on March 14. The track and field team welcomed back history Rick Ellis as a coach this year after a six-year hiatus.

to be explosive and powerful," Ellis said. To compare two people starting at an identical level of athleticism, Ellis said that "if one strength-trained, and the other didn't, the first would be better — stronger, more explosive, more powerful. It's just a fact."

An ideal situation for him would be to create a seventh period for track athletes similar to the workout schedule that the football team uses throughout the year in which the team could practice weight-lifting and conditioning during the fall season, so they could "hit the ground running on day one."

During the regular season, runners are placed in dual meet races strategically to gain points as many for the team, with strong sprinters often running up to four different events.

The latter part of the season, however, requires a different approach, where each athlete must specialize in their stronger events to qualify for a position in meets such as the El Camino league trials, the Santa

Clara Valley Athletic League meet (SCVAL), and CCS.

In preparation for these meets, Ellis plans to decrease the volume of workouts in favor of higher intensity drills.

"I couldn't make a student's time drop significantly, but I could drop a 15 second 100 meter to a 14.5 or 14.2 just by getting more explosive and being aware the body is working," Ellis said. "Once you get into the groove of [the workouts], you become like a well-oiled machine and you know exactly what you're doing and everything is working in unison."

The coaches believe that athletes will fare well if they trust progress of the training, come to practice with positive attitudes, and persevere through the season.

"People still mess around and I bark a little at times. But generally, kids want to be here and nobody is forcing them to," Ellis said. "They might be here for different reasons, but [usually] it's because they want to be here, and that makes it fun." ♦

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL

# Young team builds trust

by Karen Chow & Manasi Garg

Racing across the court, junior setter Mohan Duvvuri maneuvered through his teammates as he tried to set up a play during a tough match against rival Los Gatos on March 15. He dived for the ball and back-set perfectly to senior outside Derek Chiou, who smashed the ball down for a point.

Although the boys have had a rough start — starting the season 2-3 — this kind of teamwork is what makes the Falcons believe they can rank within the top three in their league for the fifth year in a row. They hope to qualify for both CCS and NorCal championships like in the recent past.

"The team this year has really good potential; we just need to work hard because we are such a young team," Chiou said. "Despite being young, everyone is very talented."

Although the game against Los Gatos ended in a 3-1 loss for the Falcons, they believe they gained valuable experience they hope to learn from the next time they face the Wildcats. The first set, which the boys won 25-18, was led by senior outside Usman Khan's quick hits and strong blocks. However, the boys were unable to keep up their momentum, losing the second set 25-20, third set 25-15, and fourth set 25-17.

On March 13, the team fell short again

to Harker 3-0. The team was unable to fully gain rhythm as a team.

"Harker is one of the top teams in the league, but I know we have the potential to beat them," senior opposite hitter Joshua Lee said. "Because we are a young team, we are focusing on building our trust and solidifying our fundamentals."

Earlier, on March 6, the Falcons won 3-1 against Cupertino. The Falcons easily won the first two sets both 25-14 with Lee's backrow attacks, however the Falcons has trouble with passing during the third game and fell short 25-23. The boys were able to pick it up in the fourth game, winning 25-20.

Though the Falcon's had a tough time blocking the first two sets against Homestead, they were able to win the third and fourth set with Chiou and Lee's alternating hits winning 25-18 and 25-17. However, they were unable to continue their momentum falling short 15-9 in the last match.

In their first match of the season on Feb. 27, the Falcons won 3-2 against Lynbrook. This tight match was keyed by junior libero Cameron Chow and Duvvuri due to Chow's great coverage on the back court and Duvvuri's alternating sets.

"Because this is my first year playing libero, I knew it was very important to shoe my teammates they could trust my passing," Chow said. "I passed as best as I could and I'm glad it paid off." ♦

SWIMMING

# Falcons beat Eagles in smooth start to season

by Patrick Li & Oliver Ye

Starting the season on a strong note, the swim team surfaced ahead in a home meet against Los Altos on March 8, 385-292. The meet also marked the boys' varsity's first individual victory in four years, with a sub-score of 112-57.

Top performers included sophomore Tommaso Bianzino, junior Oscar Khowong, and senior Lei Otsuka — placing first in five collective events. Bianzino won the 200-meter freestyle, while Khowong and Otsuka both swept the 200-meter individual medley and 100-meter breaststroke in their respective divisions.

According to senior Daniel Bessonov, however, the key to the team's success wasn't the first place victories — but rather the second, third, and fourth place finishes in almost every event.

"Everyone on the team stepped up and held their ground in almost every event," Bessonov said. "Anytime you looked at the pool, you would see a line of swimmers with Saratoga caps leading each race."

Prior to Los Altos, the team fell in a tough match against Los Gatos on March 1. This year, according to senior swimmer Andrew Gao, the team is much more bal-

anced. Both boys and girls varsity teams have a number of unexpected, standout swimmers.

"We have people from every grade level stepping up and exceeding expectations," Gao said. "Our team used to be super top heavy, but this year seems to be changing that trend. Almost everyone is seeing rapid improvements."

Albeit the season has just started, swimmers have high expectations for this year's CCS qualifications.

"As seniors, it's our job to encourage the underclassmen to give it their all each and every practice," Bessonov said. "By the looks of it, a lot of athletes are going to be qualifying for CCS for the first time this year."

The first meet this year fell a week earlier than in prior seasons. According to Gao, this slightly threw off the swimmers — but also forced the team to concentrate on training and zone in.

"Having a week less of swimming definitely threw everyone off from an endurance point of view, but also kind of served as a reality check," Gao said. "Our strong start is partially due to the fact that we all had to dial in earlier."

The team has high expectations for their next meet on March 22 against Gunn. ♦

BOYS' TENNIS

# Falcons endure early-season defeats, gear up for challenging season ahead

by Andrew Lee & Alan Zu

Junior Ronit Pattanayak, the No. 3 singles player, bent down low, readying his racket in anticipation for his opponent's serve. The match was well into the third set tiebreaker, and a weary Pattanayak and his nervous opponent Monta Vista junior Andy Feng shuffled their feet, muscles straining with each groundstroke.

Pattanayak's match was one of the last players still on the court; the team scores were tied 3-3, and a win by Pattanayak would mean Falcon victory.

Pattanayak ended the match with a loss at the team's first league match-up against Monta Vista on Feb. 28.

As Monta Vista was the league champion at the end of last year's season with the Falcons coming in second, the boys' tennis team was surprised to see such a close match against a team they've had historical struggles with.

Most recently, the Falcons were able to win 4-3 against Homestead on March 14 and 5-2 against Los Gatos on March 13, but

fell 4-3 against Gunn on March 12 and 4-3 against Monta Vista on Feb. 28. Though the loss against Monta Vista was expected due to their strength in past league rivalries, the loss against Gunn came as a surprise, as the Falcons have not really struggled against that team in the past.

Especially with the many new sophomore and freshman additions to the team, such as No. 2 doubles players freshman Benjamin Bray and Anthony Zhang, the team has been giving the newer players more opportunities to play to see how they perform on the court.

"As a team, we mostly understand that our loss against Gunn was a good wake-up call for everyone to start training harder and getting serious," No. 1 singles Derek Pinai said. "We have a lot of new players, and testing them out in different places in the lineup is crucial at the beginning of any season."

After the two early defeats in the first matches of the season, Coach Florin Marica made several changes to the lineup. Sophomore No. 4 singles Anay Koorapaty was moved down to No. 1 doubles, while

freshman No. 2 doubles player Zhang moved up to take the spot. The following matches against Los Gatos and Homestead resulted in victories.

"I think that the minor changes were crucial, as it is helping us determine whether a doubles team can have chemistry on a court or not," Pinai said. "We will probably be making more adjustments throughout the season, so the lineup could stay flexible for a little bit."

Considering the two jarring defeats as an abrupt reality check at the beginning of the season, the team is still confident that they will be able to succeed through future league matches with hard work and careful attention to their performance.

"I don't really worry about the team doing well in the rest of the season, as the team is training harder and is being more serious about consistency with practices and execution," Pinai said. "Though the losses to Gunn and Monta Vista could have been avoided, I still think that they were important in helping newer players understand the competitiveness of this league." ♦



No. 2 singles sophomore Stefan Meier serves a ball against Homestead on March 14. The team ended up winning 4-3.

BOYS' GOLF

# Talented team looks to win league after hot start

by Leo Cao & Alex Wang

Sophomore Albert Jing tapped the golf ball with his putter on the final hole against Monta Vista on March 4. The ball glided along the green and then sunk into the hole for a birdie.

That shot sealed the win for the team and it "felt pretty good," Jing said.

Before Albert and his twin brother, sophomore Geoffrey Jing played their rounds, the team had been down by five strokes. With strong play coming from the duo (they beat their opponents by nine strokes), the team managed to make a comeback and won the match 182-192 since the last place score is dropped from each team.

Starting with the match against Monta Vista, the travel team, consisting of seniors Daniel Kraft and William Liu, junior Kevin Sze and sophomores Michael Burry and Albert and Geoffrey Jing, has had a four-match winning streak, with the most recent win coming against Gunn on March 14. The team smoked Gunn 190-221 and Milpitas 189-234 on March 11, while narrowly

beating traditionally talented Palo Alto 193-198 on March 6.

Their 4-0 record places them at the top of the De Anza League as of mid-March since all of the other teams have lost at least one match. Albert Jing and Sze are individually ranked first and second in the league respectively.

Their biggest match of the season so far occurred on March 19 against a strong Cupertino squad. (The Falcon was unable to cover this match in the print issue due to printing deadlines.)

While the team has seen a lot of success so far this season, Liu believes that they can still improve. Against Gunn, Liu said that while the team won by more than 30 strokes, they each had moments when they could have played better.

"Conditions were great, and we all played rounds that were easily capable of being under par, and for myself, further under par," Liu said.

Similarly, against Milpitas, Albert said that the main reason for the team's win was Milpitas's inexperience with tougher competition.

"We won by a lot because Milpitas

moved up a league and they weren't really good," Albert said. "We played decently well but Milpitas played really badly."

## "Our team has the capability to win this league and make it to states."



SENIOR William Liu

Nonetheless, the team's hard work has been paying off for them this season, especially for the Jing brothers. Albert said that he practiced a lot during the offseason to improve his play. He also said that he can play better in tournaments compared to when he is just practicing because of the increased pressure.

"In tournaments, I really want to do well for the team," Albert said. "Sometimes in practice, I don't care enough to play closely. Also, I play with my brother in matches and

we have some sort of chemistry; either both of us do really badly or both of us do really well."

For the season, the boys have high expectations because all of the members of the travel team are returning players. Although Liu did not play on the travel team last year, he played on the team two years ago.

Since the team sent only individuals to the second round of CCS last year, Albert said he is hoping that this year, the boys can make it to the second round of CCS as a team and possibly send some players to NorCals.

Liu said that his goals for this season are primarily to enjoy himself more on the golf course, which will only come with playing better. However, he recognizes that the team is confident enough to have at least four "solid scores" per match.

"Like many other players, I want to play the best golf I can play," Liu said. "I think our team has the capability to win this league and make it to states, so we'll see how we do from there. I trust my teammates to continue to improve and I know as a team we can always go lower." ♦

BADMINTON

# Falcons narrowly beat Gunn for first league win

by Jeffrey Xu & Christine Zhang

Freshman varsity boys' singles No. 1 Adrian Mar leapt into the air, executing a perfect smash deep into his opponent's court, winning his match and earning the Falcons three points. His teammates cheered, and they pulled closer to a victory during the match against Gunn at home on March 14.

Along with Mar's win were victories from varsity boys' singles No. 2 junior Alvin Ren, varsity girls' doubles No. 3 sophomore Manasi Garg and junior Katherine Peng and varsity girls' No. 2 singles sophomore Katie Chen. While the team lost most of its varsity No. 1 matches, it compensated for the point difference through the several No. 2 and No. 3 wins.

In the end, the score was tied 15-15 with

the Titans. However, due to a greater number of games won by the Falcons, they won in the tiebreaker, securing their first win of the season.

On March 12, varsity fell 25-5 to Cupertino with wins from No. 2 girls' singles sophomore Katie Chen, No. 2 mixed doubles seniors AJ Lee and Serena Ying and No. 3 mixed doubles sophomore Wilson Fung and senior Sherrie Shen.

The Falcons faced Monta Vista on March 5 without Mar. The team sustained a 28-2 loss, their only two points coming from a win by Ren.

The Falcons originally planned to play Milpitas on March 7, but the game was rescheduled due to a conflict on Milpitas's part.

The Falcons are 1-2 as of March 15, but head coach John Li, the father of freshman JV player Christian Li, is confident that the

Falcons can improve and possibly compete to win the De Anza league, which also consists of Gunn, Monta Vista, Cupertino, Lynbrook, Milpitas and Palo Alto.

Li's newly implemented policies and drills greatly increased the rigor of team practices and improved the team's overall performance during matches.

Instead of letting players directly play practice games during practice, he is focusing more on drills that target both footwork and stamina, aspects that he believes are essential to in-game performance.

"The efficiency of footwork is going to help us win games," Li said. "Once you get tired, you can't get into position, and all your shots will be delayed and behind. So that's why I started having the team do running and climbing stairs to build that stamina and endurance."

Li has also adopted a much more hands-

on approach to coaching; almost every practice, he joins a game with the players to coach his teammates and opponents.

While he does not allow players to choose their partners and events as they had been able to do in previous seasons, he still takes player input on their chemistry with other players, as well as their relative strengths playing different events.

Li said he took the coaching job here since several of the students he used to coach, who were also alumni of the school, convinced him to do so.

Li is optimistic about the Falcons' chances in the weeks ahead, when they will play opponents like Lynbrook on March 26 and Milpitas on March 28.

"I think we can stay in this league because we have some good players, and if we play our cards right, I think we can win," Li said. ♦

# Mostly empty bleachers can be full again

the  
hart-throb

Allison Hartley

The tightly packed middle section of the gym bleachers jeered when the referees called a foul against the boys' Del Mar basketball team on Feb. 16, and fans cheered with zeal when they scored. Across the steps in the home section, a few families of Saratoga players would scowl at the Del Mar families, and the JV boys' basketball team and handful of up to 10 spectators would shout praise at the home team.

This particular game was the first in CCS, timed the Friday before February break and was a home game that directly followed the girls' win in their CCS game. All in all, it seemed like the stands should have been full.

But as I filed into the section rightmost section with the Saratoga fans during the first quarter, I had the choice of three or four completely clear rows. Once I took a place on the bleachers with my friend, the rows remained vacant.

Quad nights, when all four basketball teams play back-to-back, usually garner a decent gathering of 100-200 fans, and football games that usually attract several hundred, especially marquee matchups like games against Los Gatos or Homecoming contests. Even so, most sports generally attract the same group of consistently supporting parents, a few spirited staff members and perhaps the counterpart JV or girls'/boys' players in the stands. Dates and times aren't widely circulated, save for a few senior nights.

This lack of support hasn't always been the case here.

2005 alumnus Danny Wallace,

now the coach of the varsity girls' basketball team, remembers a time when the home bleachers flooded with an average 300 to 400 fans for his basketball games.

Wallace also recalls SHS fans filling up the football stands even at away games like at Los Gatos.

Comparing the number of fans from more than a decade ago to now suggests that the presence of sports on campus and in the community has declined — or the attention has shifted elsewhere.

Wallace attributes the decreased interest in supporting sports to students' additional commitments in school and increasing extracurriculars and even an changing mindset for social interaction.

"As a coach now, I see kids all the time that are stressed out of their minds; they don't have time and they can't commit to things," Wallace said.

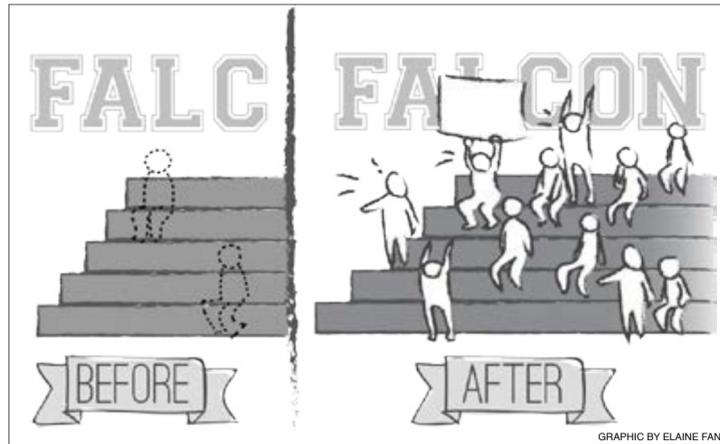
"When I went to SHS, kids were working hard, but kids were a little stressed, but not at the extent that they couldn't make it to events."

Academic commitments notwithstanding, there is no doubt that students are more engaged with technology, especially social media and gaming, than they were in 2005.

Students' constant interaction with technology may eliminate the desire to attend spirit-entertainment at the school like rallies and sporting events, Wallace said.

"Kids using technology are more sheltered because they want to be in their technology bubble rather than pushing boundaries and wanting to see these events," Wallace said. "Our school used to be great because everyone had their groups of friends that wanted to come together and have fun."

Although the accessibility of technology might have filled the entertainment void left by sports,



students' attention might have already shifted away from school sports.

Junior football player George Bian believes that support for football parallels the team's success.

"If we work hard as a team and put on a show, then the community will begin to notice and the stands will begin to fill up on Friday nights," Bian said. "It all just depends on how badly we want success."

While the key to piquing interest in sports will not be a single solution, teams, even those sports that are [not] as popular with spectators, can increase their presence on campus, if they want to.

As Bian said, success will often make a name for a team — but not if nobody knows about that team's stellar record.

To increase students awareness, players should advertise highlights and game schedules on social media and around campus and prop-

agate their own excitement for their sport. If a friend asks another friend to support their game, it's more difficult to decline.

To encourage student support, many teachers even offer extra credit for attending school sporting events, but while this solution may be popular with students who are happy with the grade boost, this only treats the symptoms of a school culture with little preference to sports.

Although students may attend a game and have a fun time, it's still difficult to regularly overcome the deterring door fee and the common effect of a tightly packed after-school schedule.

Even so, there are some dedicated students and a consistent number of spirited parents who regularly attend sporting events and represent SHS pride in sports.

"As a student-athlete, I'm extremely grateful for the support that our sports teams receive from

our community," Bian said.

Junior Simrita Advani said she usually attends a couple of basketball, softball, volleyball and football games per season with two or three friends to support her friends who play.

"Watching school sports helps create a positive atmosphere for the players as when there are more people watching, players try harder and get hyped up, and it helps with school spirit," Advani said.

The school's culture can only stand to benefit from more support for its sports — a more spirited school is usually a friendlier, happier school, and athletes will appreciate other students making time to show up and care.

After all, students are more likely to remember rooting on epic victories against schools like Los Gatos and Palo Alto than studying for a chemistry quiz or watching yet another recommended video on YouTube. ♦

# 'Trying' golf, a sport of skill and intellect

wang-  
ster

Alex Wang

I pull back my putter and gently tap the golf ball. The ball rolls for a little bit and then nestles into the hole. I do a fist pump like Tiger Woods and write down another birdie on the scorecard.

That's what it looks like on TV, and it's how I thought my first time playing golf would go. I couldn't have been more wrong.

I wanted to try golf, the quintessential old man's sport, thinking, "How hard could it be?" After playing video games like Golf Clash, where 300-yard drives were the norm, I thought it would be easy to match that on the course. Furthermore, I wanted to see if my friend junior Kevin Sze was truly deserving of the numerous awards and trophies he has won for golf. After all, it's not that difficult to swing a club a few times — or so I thought.

Kevin and I, along with junior Leo Cao, booked a tee time at Deep Cliff Golf Course, a relatively easy 18-hole course in Cupertino. I had to borrow Leo's clubs because

I didn't have my own. After stepping into the tee box of the first hole, I immediately got nervous. There were a few people around, and they were going to watch me swing and probably miss the golf ball.

Meanwhile, Kevin coolly pulled out some sort of binoculars that measures distances and looked at the flag far in the distance. "About 270 yards," he said. "That shouldn't be too hard."

I squinted at the flag and thought that there was no way the distance was only 270 yards. It had to be at least 500.

Focusing back on hitting the golf ball, I swung my club as hard as I could. Whoosh — I missed the ball entirely. Embarrassed, I tried again — another whiff. When I finally made contact with the ball, it made a beeline drive into a tree, traveling a grand total of five yards.

Then, Kevin placed a ball on the tee, took a few practice swings, and whacked the ball. It landed on the fairway. Leo proceeded to smack his ball as well, with his ball flying high and landing in the same general area as Kevin's.

Watching this, I felt that I needed to redeem myself, so I placed another ball on the tee. I swung and missed. And again. And again. At this point, Kevin,

who was pretty annoyed at my terrible play, told me to pick up the ball and start playing where his ball landed.

Trying to hit the ball from the ground was not any easier. I would swing the club and miss too right, and then I would adjust and miss too left, and then I would adjust and miss too high.

Eventually, I picked up the ball again and started putting from the green where Kevin's ball had landed. Before putting, Kevin would squat down and "read the green" to look for small slopes or bumps. Trying to emulate him, I also squatted down, but to me, everything just looked flat. Somehow, Kevin saw a slope, and when we went to hit the ball, he was right.

He ended up sinking the ball in one stroke for a birdie. Meanwhile, it took me three putts to hit the ball in the hole, for a total count of eight strokes on a par three hole.

As I got closer to actually hitting the ball, I started looking through Leo's wide array of golf clubs to decide which to use.

To me, they honestly all looked the same, so I would just pick a random one out, often to the laughs of Leo and Kevin. I didn't really understand what was funny, nor did I understand what each club was used for, except for the



putter and driver. To this day, I still can't tell the difference.

Before the sixth hole, I had picked up the ball on every hole and hit the ball about twice. As I stepped to the tee for this hole and swung — thwack — the ball went flying. It was my first and probably best shot the whole day. Kevin looked through his binoculars and reported that it only went about 150 yards, but for me, that was progress.

Throughout the rest of the day, I was able to play a few holes without picking up the ball, but sometimes, I had to yell "Fore!" to warn others that a ball was heading toward them. It was fun until I realized that I was hitting more balls at people than in the direction of the hole.

After wrapping up the 18th

hole, I looked at the scorecard, seeing it was not full of birdies, nor pars, but rather X's. I had told Kevin to mark down an "X" for each hole I picked up the ball, so my final score was the algebraic expression  $12X+38$ . Basically, I was unable to hit the ball on 12 of the holes and shot 38 on the other six. On the other hand, Kevin shot 58, which was two under par, and Leo shot 75.

In the end, while I was not the golf master that I hoped, I still had a fun time golfing with my friends, who were clearly a lot better than I was, and I now have more respect for professional golf players.

I want to try playing again, but I think it's more likely that I will be dominating others in Golf Clash than dominating actual golf in real life. ♦

# Alumnus Joel Schneidmiller plays part on UC Irvine's highly ranked volleyball team

By Chelsea Leung  
& Alexandra Li

From 2014 to 2017, the boys' volleyball team rose to new heights under the skills of 2017 alumnus Joel Schneidmiller, a star outside hitter who was perhaps the best male volleyball player in the school's history.

The 6-foot-6-inch Schneidmiller led the Falcons with his powerful spikes and effective blocks; the team won CCS for the first time ever in 2015 and then again in 2016. They also went to the NorCal championships in 2015 but lost in the first round, returning to take first place in 2016 and 2017.

Now in the middle of his second year with UC Irvine, Schneidmiller, who currently has an undeclared major, trains with the Division I Anteaters six days a week, working on all aspects of the game with a heavy focus on defense and passing. The team is currently in the middle of their season and is ranked third in the country behind Long Beach State and Hawaii.

"College volleyball is definitely way more intense and rigorous than club or high school, but that's what I like about it," Schneidmiller said. "With so many personalities and competitive people in the gym at once, it can get a little chippy sometimes and frustrating, but I think it's a good thing."

Schneidmiller has noticed many differences between his high school and college years, with one being his height. On his old teams at Saratoga High and Bay to Bay Volleyball Club, Schneidmiller was the tallest player; on the Irvine team, however, Schneidmiller's height does not stand out.

"It was definitely a different level. I was used to be one of the top players, but as soon as I got to Irvine, I saw that everyone who plays D1 volleyball is good," Schneidmiller said. "What really matters is how much work you put in once you're here, and that will be the difference."

Still, Schneidmiller is a valued player on the team; last season, he earned multiple Big West Men's Volleyball Freshman Player of the Week awards, ending with a season high of 19 kills in a single game.

Last year, at the national championship, Irvine lost in the quarterfinals during the first round of playoffs to Ohio State University. This year, though, Schneidmiller feels that they have a good chance, especially as one of the collectively tallest teams in the country. He said that the main challenge the team has faced this year is learning to trust their other teammates and coaches.

Schneidmiller added that the team is focusing on simple and repeated exercises to improve their ball handling. For example, they continuously pass the ball and touch the ground between passes to improve their control of the ball in game settings.

Among other special equipment, the Anteaters have a machine that can serve balls up to 70 mph, allowing them to practice for the serves they can expect to see from the other top teams.

Going into college, Schneidmiller sometimes found it difficult balancing academics and sports but said that the staff at Irvine have helped him select classes and manage the academic workload.

Schneidmiller noted that players inform

their professors of the conflict dates at the beginning of each quarter, usually resulting in lenient professors and makeups. Tests are also occasionally proctored on the road or taken with a coach in a hotel room; Schneidmiller said that overall, they have "enough time to finish the work that needs to be done."

Reflecting on his high school experiences, Schneidmiller said that he learned a lot under coaching from Bay to Bay and from former varsity boys' volleyball coach Jason Cardoso, who left Saratoga High the same year Schneidmiller graduated.

"Bay to Bay taught me basically everything I know about the indoor game," Schneidmiller said. "And Jason Cardoso helped to show me my true potential. I am very grateful and won't forget what they've done to get me to where I am today."

But while being on the Saratoga High team strengthened Schneidmiller's skills, the team itself also learned from Schneidmiller's strong play and leadership.

"Having Joel on the team was honestly a once in a lifetime opportunity," said senior Joshua Lee, who played with Schneidmiller during his freshman and sophomore years. "Whether Joel was back row or front row, he was always a threat to other teams, which led to more opportunities for other hitters on our team."

Last summer, Schneidmiller had the opportunity to train with the national team when the team had a lack of players. Schneidmiller was able to practice with them for two weeks; he found it a great experience and hopes to play with the national team again.



2017 alumnus Joel Schneidmiller enjoys much tougher competition at UC Irvine.

After college, he said, he hopes to go pro in Europe, but is currently focusing on college and winning the national championship.

Schneidmiller is grateful for all that volleyball has allowed him to do. He said that without it, he would likely be attending junior college. But with volleyball, he has the opportunity to make the most out of a school like Irvine.

"The program at Irvine is different and I really like the way it's run here," Schneidmiller said. "I also love my teammates, so being able to go through all this with them has been really rewarding." ♦



BOYS' BASKETBALL

## Hillsdale prevails in quarters

On Feb. 19, the Falcons lost to Hillsdale 63-45, eliminating them from the quarterfinals of the CCS Division 3 tournament.

The Falcons found themselves continuously being outbreathed by the Knights in the paint, losing several potential scoring opportunities. "They had a big post man that kept getting the rebounds and hurting us in the paint," Yu said. "We couldn't stop him."

Head coach Patrick Judge's main focus throughout the CCS games was for the players to stick to their normal principles during the season, which were to shoot 3s, pass and cut.

Senior forward Patrick Li was out that game due to an ankle injury suffered in a regular season game against Lynbrook. In the end, the handicapped Falcons crumbled against

the well-disciplined Hillsdale defense. The Falcons advanced to in the quarterfinals after their first round 60-52 win against Del Mar on Feb. 16 at home.

The top scorers for against Del Mar were Yu and senior forward Dhindsa, who put up 20 and 16 points, respectively. Sophomore guard Tyler Chu had six blocks.

Yu believes that better ball-handling and perfecting 3-pointers will help the boys improve their overall performance next year.

Despite a disappointing finish, Yu said that the season was still a success. "We could have made it further in CCS playoffs but fell a little short," Yu said. "But we all still had a lot of fun playing together." ♦

-Leo Cao and Jeffrey Xu

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

## Falcons fall to Aptos in semis

Following the league season where the girls had a 4-8 record, the team competed in the CIF Central Coast Section (CCS) playoffs, where they lost 54-36 to Aptos High School in the semifinals on Feb. 21 at Del Mar High School. The team also lost to Aptos last year in the 2018 CCS semifinal round.

Aptos continued on to win the CCS championship game 58-37 against South San Francisco High School, the 2018 champion that beat Aptos.

Saratoga beat Pajaro Valley High School at home in the second round 62-38 on Feb. 16 and won again against Mills High school 53-41 on Feb. 19, which advanced them to the semifinals.

"In the first few games of CCS, the whole team played really well against Mills in order to get a rematch with Aptos," sophomore guard Iris Lee said.

Although the girls faced a comparatively low-scoring first three quarters against Aptos at 46-19, they had a strong fourth quarter where they scored 17 points compared to Aptos's eight.

"Coach (Danny Wallace) said we played scared — scared of the team and scared of the school," Lee said. "But we are getting better every year, and next season we can learn from that experience." ♦

-Allison Hartley

WRESTLING

## 3 go to tourney; Chen gets 12th

On Feb. 14 and 15, senior Victor Chen, and senior Carolyn Ma and sophomore Hunter Hawley competed in CCS, which is a 32-man double elimination bracket for each weight class.

Chen placed 12th in the 126-pound weight class, winning two matches, while Ma won one match in the 131-pound weight class and Hawley won none in the 195-pound weight class.

In his first two matches, Chen beat Alforde Joaquin from Abraham Lincoln and Francis Woods from Sacred Heart Cathedral.

On day two of the tournament, Chen

faced much tougher competition. His first match was against the first-seeded wrestler, Victor Jacinto from Gilroy, whose better movement and technique bested Chen.

During his final match, Chen faced the sixth-seeded wrestler, Ethan Rossi from San Benito, and lost by one point after the ref did not count his takedown.

"I felt like I definitely could have gone further and placed in the tournament, so it was a little disappointing," Chen said. "But I felt really glad that I could qualify for CCS since it was a goal for me since last season." ♦

-Isaac Le and Alex Wang

\* The girls' soccer team lost 1-0 to Woodside in the first round of CCS.

>> snapshots



Courtesy of Bassil Shama



Courtesy of Jon Jow



FALCON // ALAN ZU



FALCON // ALAN ZU

Clockwise from left: FRC shows its robot "Sea Devil" before SF regionals.

MESH musicians, including both high school and elementary school students, perform at their concert on March 1.

Sophomore class officers sell tickets during Club Rush on March 15.

Junior Surbhi Bhat speaks during the March for Our Lives walkout during tutorial on March 14.

>> >> >>

"Whether it be Oreos with hummus or peanut butter with pickles, my food choices are often ridiculed or gagged at."



— reporter Esha Lakhota on strange food combos (pg. 13)

highlights

\$270

the amount of money the Jay Koo Academy charges per 110 minute tutoring session (pg. 22)

>> >> >>

"It's kind of odd that at the end of detention, the students thank me. Only in Saratoga do students in detention thank you for an hour of productive time."

— teacher Todd Dwyer on detention (pg. 18)

GRAPHICS BY KAREN CHOW AND ELAINE FAN

Confused about life? I've got some great advice

pc muthu



Muthu Palaniappan

Being an AP Lang student, I have recently finished our ethics unit. Throughout the unit, my classmates and I, imitating the New York Times Magazine's Ethicist advice column, thought long and hard about various ethical dilemmas and tried to choose the best course of action in each one. Inspired by the Ethicist, I have decided to offer some advice to students who have submitted posts via the SHS Confessions Facebook page. None of these dilemmas are deal with ethics, but it's clear that all of the question writers need some good advice.

#2227: "I have never had a good sense of fashion. Before transferring to a public elementary school in Saratoga, I went to a private school with a uniform. I have never thought of dressing more fashionably before, but now I want to expand my wardrobe. Problem is, I have been dressing the same way for the past five years so I'm afraid that if I suddenly change now, people would judge me for it. When I buy clothes different from what I'm used to wearing, I wear them at home with no problem, but I get embarrassed going to school in them, so I end up wearing the same old stuff anyway."

When it comes to fashion, I realize how hard it is to go out of your comfort zone. Especially at school, it is easy to feel like people are judging you. However, when you really

think about it, do you regularly judge people for what they wear?

I don't think many people do. If anything, the only reason you would comment on someone's clothing is to compliment it. I personally only notice outfits and care to think about them when I like what the person is wearing. So, I think you should try to wear your new clothes to school, but it is easier said than done. Maybe try wearing a new outfit for only one day of the week at first so you can test the waters. And if you think people are staring, it's probably because they like your new outfit!

#2185: "I'm a senior, and for the past two years, all my friends talk about is guys, and it gets to the point where our only conversations are about boys. One of my friends has liked about six guys so far, none successful, and she keeps talking about them. How do I tell them that their lives should not be dominated by guys, and that they should find other things to talk about?"

This one is very relatable; I think we all have one friend who gets really caught up on crushes. Whenever I find myself in a conversation like the one you described, I try to find a way out of it.

It sounds kind of cold to just leave a conversation, but if you aren't contributing to it or you aren't engaged by it, why are you wasting your time talking about guys? I don't think it's in your place to tell your friends to change their topic of conversation, but I think that it's perfectly fine for you to distance yourself from them when you hear them start talking about it.

If they find it enjoyable to talk about crushes and guys 24/7, let them be. You

should find another person to converse with, perhaps about something you find interesting. Not everyone is guy-obsessed, so I am sure you will find a great person to talk to!

#1283: "I'm really stressed out and I don't know how to cope with this. I need to sleep. I'm so tired but I can't sleep because then I will fail my classes, so what do I do?"

I think this one hits close to home for a lot of students. One thing I figured out in my junior year was that the only reason homework seemed to take so long was that I wasn't being efficient. Whether it be looking at my Instagram feed every two minutes or not understanding what I was even doing on my homework assignments, I found that I was not working intelligently. Whenever I have to do my homework, I turn on music and put my phone on the other side of my desk. Another thing I started to do was to work outside of home.

I always go to a coffee shop to do my homework, and I find that I am most efficient there. For some reason, I pick up my phone less when I'm in an environment where everyone else is being productive.

Also, I think it's really important that you understand what you are actually doing on your homework assignments. For instance, if you are doing math homework, read through your notes once before starting your homework. If you know how to do the problems correctly, it will give you a small confidence boost and I assure you that you will finish your homework faster. All in all, it feels like the homework load is really heavy, but if you use your time efficiently, you will be able to get some sleep at night. ♦

topten

WAYS TO COPE WITH REJECTION

- 10 Rest thy head upon thy pillow  
As the bard said, "sleep is the cousin of death."
- 9 Drink your sorrows away.  
Stay hydrated with water and other non-alcoholic beverages — crying expends a lot of the body's liquids.
- 8 You can do better than har.  
Not her, har. I mean Harvard.
- 7 Take ibuprofen.  
If it can dull your headaches, it can dull your heartaches, too.
- 6 Put yourself back out there.  
Try again, or in the wise words of SHS confessions, "shoot your shot."
- 5 Try retail therapy.  
Purchase \$170 prom tickets, even if you don't have a date.
- 4 Rewatch your favorite K-dramas.  
Live vicariously through the love life of your beloved oppa.
- 3 Raise your standards.  
"Ufts, I didn't want to attend Stanford anyway."
- 2 Reject their rejection.  
"No u" works every time.
- 1 Resort to bribes.  
USC might change its mind if you have a "talk" with their crew coach.

>> Victor Liu and Jeffrey Ma