

THE saratogafalcon



Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA saratogafalcon.org Friday >> April 5, 2019
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A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE

LONG-AWAITED WELLNESS CENTER SOON TO OPEN






Workers wrapped up final touches this week on the new student center. It is scheduled to open after spring break. "There's still a few more things the inspector has to sign off on, but everything seems to be in place. We're real excited," principal Paul Robinson said.

FALCON // EDWIN CHEN

County awards MAP for student success

BY PhoebeWang

The Media Arts Program (MAP) was recently awarded the Glenn Hoffman award in the category of student leadership. This award recognizes school programs across the county that have had a significant impact on student success.

"All of the staff members and the students feel honored that we finally got recognized for something that we do and for something that we are proud of doing," said senior Kitty Huang, a student leader for the program. "Regardless of student leadership, we all work very hard on every aspect of this program. The teachers work very hard to put this program together."

MAP coordinator Suzanne Herzman said that working with the student MAP leadership team has been the best part of her job, pointing to events like Smash'n and the 48-hour film festival as notable successes on their part.

One of the criteria for the award is if the program can be replicated. While other schools may not be able to afford the high-tech

>> **MAP AWARD** on pg. 5

Rain postpones Spring Fling week

BY AngelinaChen & AmandaZhu

A forecast filled with rain led the ASB and activities director Matt Torrens to postpone Spring Fling events, including Powder-Puff football, Lip Dub and dress-up days, until the week of May 20-24, when AP testing is concluded.

An email sent out by Torrens Sunday night notified students of the rescheduling, attributing the delay to "the likelihood of inclement weather three of the five days of the week."

Although the Lip Dub was also initially scheduled for Wednesday, it was also moved even though the forecast called for a less rainy day.

Another reason for postponing the Lip Dub was that the coordinator, senior David Berkowitz, felt that the main planners had not practiced enough.

"I'm just hoping for it to look smooth and more streamlined, and not as chaotic as last year," he said.

Though there are many factors that they need to consider, including the distance of the camera from the singers and the volume of the music, Berkowitz has high hopes for this year's Lip Dub.

"I think this year's Lip Dub will be a lot more successful than the previous two years," said Berkowitz. "We started earlier this year and I'm really trying to get everyone to come out to practices even though it's hard to get everyone to show up."

Although PowderPuff will be held in May rather than April this

>> **SPRING FLING** on pg. 7

2 Robotics teams head to Worlds

BY RohanKumar

At their first regional competition in San Francisco on March 15-17, the FIRST Robotics Challenge (FRC) team, the MSET Fish (team 649), earned a spot at the World Championships in Houston. That competition will take place on April 17-20.

After a six-week build season and a month of tuning their robot's software, the team put their robot, now with the finalized name of "Sea Devil," to the test at the competition, finishing as a part of the second-place alliance along with the Bay Orangutans (team 5499) from Berkeley High School and Cardinal Robotics (team 4159) from Lowell High School. The team also earned the Quality Award for the robustness of the robot's design.

In addition, the team earned the Engineering Inspiration award at the Silicon Valley Regional competition on March 29-31 for their outreach programs such as leading hands-on workshops at the Saratoga Library. They also made it to the semifinal round in

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Pokémon pro, Pokémon dough

SENIOR TRAVELS WORLD FOR COMPETITIONS

BY SofiaJones & ConnieLiang

line further pushed his burgeoning interest.

However, it was only after moving back to the U.S. in his sophomore year that Malaviya discovered the world of Pokémon tournaments — ones that come with monetary rewards.

When senior Raghav Malaviya began playing Pokémon as a child, he did it because he loved it. He never expected to make money from it.

Then he began playing the video-game version of Pokémon during eighth grade when he still lived in India.

"I was like 'Wow, this is amazing,'" Malaviya said, noting that the diverse group of players he met from all around the world on-

Since the beginning of his competitive career, Malaviya has risen through the ranks and is now the 10th best Pokémon video game player in the U.S. In two years, he has surpassed the junior

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Quiz Bowl team places second at Cal Cup 3

The school's Quiz Bowl A team, consisting of juniors Jason Hong, Sathvik Kaliyur and Jeffrey Ma and senior Kiran Rachamalla, placed second in the competitive division at California Cup 3 on March 16 after suffering two losses to Stanford Online High School.

The team had a record of 5-1 in the preliminaries and a record of 3-1 in the playoffs.

"Overall, the results were within the general expectation given what we were working with," Ma said. "We didn't have our full lineup so coverage was wonky."

Stanford Online High School is at about the same level as Saratoga, ranked two to three spots higher nationally. However, according to Ma, upsets are common at their ranking. The team's literature and math player, junior Brandon Wang, was unable to attend, which Ma said contributed to the loss.

The lack of a literature specialist was especially detrimental since the tournament used a question distribution called CAST, which has an emphasis on literature and fine arts. Additionally, although CAST is considered regular high school difficulty, it was relatively easy for teams in the competitive division, according to Ma.

"Because of this, a lot of the gameplay devolved into buzzer racing as opposed to knowledge," Ma said.

Ma said this fast-paced gameplay may have also hurt the team.

The B team, consisting of juniors Alvin Liu and Michael Tang and seniors Anuj Changavi and Sarah Meng, had an overall record of 5-3 in the competitive division.

At California Cup 4, the A team had a record of 6-3, landing them in third place in the competitive division. Stanford Online High School placed first and Escobar A placed second.

— Rohan Kumar and Mathew Luo

Annual March Madness tournament returns

The annual March Madness basketball tournament took place from March 12 to April 2 in the Large Gym, during which teams of four competed against each other during lunch time.

In the championship match, Kawhi Me a River (juniors Will Barthell, Leo Cao, Mohan Duvvuri and Siva Sambasivam) beat 4 Year Varsity (sophomores Tyler Chu, Ryan Gilligan, Cameron King and Dylan Li) 15-14, winning the 25-team tournament when the lunch bell rang on April 2.

The teams played games of four on four until one team reached 21 points. The two teams would agree on a point system to use, either a "two's and three's" or "one's and two's" format.

As in previous years, teams could only have two players who played for the school's varsity team, with only one starting player.

The event was run by ASB, and sign-up sheets were posted on the Facebook group page.

Senior class office originally planned to make the tournament a fundraiser, with buy-ins at \$8 per team, but decided not to.

The event offered an opportunity for students to compete in a stress-relieving event.

"It was fun to play teams from all of the different grades. I thought we had a good chance of winning from the start since everyone on our team has played basketball for the high school," Barthell said.

— Justin Guo and Jun Lee

>> falcononline



Top Story

Students should be admitted to colleges based on merit and not immoral acts performed by their parents.



Top Story

Consequences fail to deter students from cheating on assignments.



>> picturethis



FALCON // EDWIN CHEN

Relay For Life >> Freshman Enoch Jung and junior Emilie Zhou work with volunteers at the Relay for Life Walkathon last Friday at the track, exchanging paper clips given after every lap for raffle tickets and snacks.

Annual World Cafe connects the community through ideas

By Ashley Feng & Kevin Sze

This year's World Cafe began with icebreaker activities. Students, staff and parents were then encouraged to take a seat with someone they did not know.

up with," Mohnike said.

With some of the prompts for discussion at the event, many students were able to share their experiences.

Freshman Esther Luan, who attended the World Cafe for her first time, said she "gained a better understanding of our school and the people in it and ideas for what we can do to make our school better."

Luan described how the structured environment allowed for teachers, parents and students to better share their ideas and for new ideas to be brought to light.

The next World Cafe will most likely be held a year from now, according to Mohnike.

"I think the underlying purpose of the World Cafe will always be about connection and bringing parents and teachers and students together to have honest conversations and reality and what the world for our students is like," Mohnike said. "Making Saratoga a place where people want to be and can contribute and feel cared about is special." ◆



GRAPHIC BY KAITLYN TSAI

Participants were asked three specific questions to discuss with their tablemates, which led up to the main issue at hand: how can we leave Saratoga High better than we found it?

"The hope is that we can generate some ideas and improve the situation at the school and in the world with what the group comes

TEDx preserves original goals

By Kaitlyn Tsai

Since TEDx has strict regulations on the type of events carried out in its name, the officers first acquire a license of approval from TEDx. They then search for speakers from the community and school through networking, recommendations and research.

This year, the theme of the event, held on Oct. 20, was "Write Your Own Story." Seven speakers, including senior Kaitlyn Wang, Minocha and history teacher Faith Daly, shared a variety of stories, from becoming a creative writer to raising awareness of disparity in STEM.

In 2014, a group of robotics students, alumni Edwin Pan, Kabir Manghnani and Nicole Lin, founded TEDxSaratogaHigh. Since then, the club has changed its set design, adopted a more aggressive marketing strategy and invited more interesting speakers, Picard said.

Despite these changes, the club still preserves its original goal —

to shine light upon unshared ideas hiding in the community.

"TEDx provides speakers that share innovative, new or interesting ideas that students can then hopefully incorporate in their own lives or gain a better understanding of," the club's adviser, assistant principal Kerry Mohnike said.

These speakers also benefit from delivering their presentations. Minocha said she gained confidence and increased support after her talk.

Ultimately, despite its short history, TEDx encapsulates the TED slogan: ideas worth spreading.

"I hope people take away a variety of or a single idea that can improve their own lives," Mohnike said. "TED stands for technology, entertainment and design, but it's certainly branched out into all kinds of topics; it's just for somebody who has a uniqueness about their life that they can share in a very concise way, and that's what our school would like to do." ◆

Green Team to launch Earth Week activities

By Rohan Kumar

In the week following spring break, the Green Team has organized events and activities to celebrate the planet and remind students of their impact on the modern environment.

"We hope that students will gain an increased awareness for the environment and how they can change their habits to make the world a greener place," Green Team officer Kiran Rachamalla said. "The students have generally enjoyed our activities in the past and have been receptive to them."

This year's Earth Week will commence on April 16, when members of the team will educate students about their carbon footprints through an interactive demonstration in the quad.

Wednesday is "Walk-it-Wednesday" where students are encouraged to walk, car-pool or bike to school in exchange for a donut and a chance to enter a raffle for a hydro flask water bottle.

On Thursday, or "Talk-it-up Thursday," the Green Team will be hosting a speaker series featuring State Senator Jim Beall, former Los Gatos mayor Rob Rennie, as well

as Stanford postdoctoral student Gavin McNichol, who is working to produce a global estimate of wetland methane emissions.

According to Rachamalla, the variety of speakers will allow students to hear opinions and perspectives from people working in different fields.

For "Film-it-Friday," students will be shown a documentary film regarding climate change, "Climate Refugees," during lunch in the Map Annex.

Over the following weekend, Green Team will be partnering with Save Our Shores to clean up a beach in Santa Cruz for "Save-it

Saturday" and leading a hike nearby with a potluck afterwards for "Stroll-it-Sunday."

Finally, students will participate in an eco-art activity on the following Monday to finish off Earth Week with "Make-it-Monday."

The team hopes that various activities throughout the week will inspire students as they approach Earth Day on Monday, April 22.

"We hope for every student to learn something new, and identify one thing they can do to help the environment," Green Team member Riya Jain said. ◆

ROBOTICS

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that competition.

In FRC, each game is played with two alliances of three teams each. The alliances compete against one another to score more points by completing a variety of tasks. This year, tasks included picking up and placing balls and panels and climbing a platform. At the San Francisco competition, the team was the captain of the second-place alliance.

The San Francisco competition began with 79 qualifying matches, where teams played with random alliances. After the qualifying matches, the team was in the

fourth seed. Alliance selection followed, where the top teams select other teams to join their alliance.

The highest seed team in an alliance is considered the alliance captain. After alliance selection, the Fish became the alliance captains of the third seed. After moving past the quarterfinals and semifinals, the Fish were pitted against an alliance with two of the top teams in the area: Bellarmine's Chezy Poofs (team 254) and Mountain View's Spartan Robotics (team 971). The Chezy Poofs were last year's FRC World Champions and had won six regionals at the side of Spartan Robotics before.

After losing 2-0 in the best of three final,

the Fish team was placed as the captain of the second-place alliance, qualifying the team for the FRC World Championships.

"The results were kind of what I was expecting," club president Basil Shama said. Even though Shama felt the team was "really strong going into this year," he said he was not surprised by the loss to world-level teams 254 and 971.

Other than a few mishaps with the robot's climbing mechanism, Shama said that the robot worked according to plan. However, he said a difficult schedule of matches may have lowered the

team's seed from third to fourth for alliance selection. Since the team was placed in sev-



Shama

New GSA club talks about critical, timely LGBTQ issues

By Sandhya Sundaram & Amanda Zhu

After observing an overwhelming demand for a club on campus to create a space to talk about LGBTQ issues and show support, senior Phoebe Wang decided to reintroduce the Gay-Straight Alliance Club (GSA) to the school.

Junior officer Emma Cooper said that on the Saratoga High Confessions Facebook page, many students anonymously expressed their desire for a club for students who identify as LGBTQ.

"There was some sort of club like GSA a couple of years ago, but the officers graduated and it didn't happen last year," Cooper said. "This year Phoebe was inspired to start the club again."

The club meets every Tuesday in Ms. Ryan's room, Room 003. There is also a Facebook group, "Saratoga High GSA" for people to join.

Guidance counselor Monique Young commented that clubs like GSA are necessary to have on campus.

"It's important for people to have a safe space for anyone to come," she said. "[It's important to] bring more awareness about the LGBTQ+ community in a structured environment where kids and teachers and staff come together to support each other."

Young noted that when these issues are unaddressed, people sometimes may say insensitive things due to confusion about topics that they don't understand. As a result, it's important to have clubs that can inform students and give the community an opportunity to talk, she said.

The club has had seven meetings so far. The first one was an introduction to the purpose, goals and mission of the club, while the rest of the meetings covered various topics, such as LGBTQ musi-

cians and poets.

"We're thinking of switching between fun days and informational days where we might talk about activists or LGBTQ famous people," Cooper said.

In one meeting, the club discussed Audre Lorde, a poet and activist for the LGBTQ community. She also presented on Lady Gaga, Troye Sivan and other famous LGBTQ stars.

Cooper said that about 15-20 people attended the first few meetings. She also stressed that the club is a Gay-Straight Alliance, meaning that anyone, regardless of their identity, is welcome to be a part of the club.

"You don't have to be LG-BTQ," Cooper said. "You can just come as an ally or to be more informed."

However, Young thinks that it may even be good to broaden the name further.

"People in the transgender community do not necessarily have anything to do with sexuality," Young said. "So adding to the name in a way or looking and exploring LGBTQ+ and Gay-Straight Alliance together might be a possibility because it's such a big umbrella that covers all those things."

The club also has a Facebook Page in which officers and members post articles, videos and even memes concerning LGBTQ issues.

For example, junior officer Krithi Sankar posted an article about how the film "Bohemian Rhapsody" was criticized for inaccurate portrayal of Freddie Mercury's sexuality. Other posts range from serious topics to more lighthearted memes.

Sankar said that the club could do a better job of reaching out to

get new members through advertising. This would differentiate them from GSA in previous years, when it was not well advertised and not as many people were involved.

Young also hopes that the club will be able to get more involved with the community by spreading awareness and tolerance. In the past, some students came to staff meetings to discuss how the staff could help out, organizing various projects such as making LGBTQ pride flags and passing them out to classrooms.

"Maybe the club can spread awareness or even get involved with leadership to be able to add informational items to the announcements," she said. "Or just do things to spread facts and awareness about the community."

For the future, GSA wants to connect with other schools' GSA clubs.

As a new club, the officers hope to work with these schools and get more information on how to be a successful GSA by creating a space for LGBTQ teens.

"We want to reduce the stigma around being a part of this community and hopefully plan school wide events," Sankar said.

Young is looking forward to see the impact that this club will have on the school and community in general.

"In the last couple of years, there have been so many issues in the news about trans people, being more open and more kids on campus who identify with more backgrounds," Young said. "It's more of an open thing that's happening, so I really think that this club can make a difference." ◆

Spirit commission allowed to innovate

By Kaylene Morrison

Whether it's designing posters for the Valentine's Day tailgate or arranging the serving of hot chocolate during finals week, the three-member spirit commission has put a lot of effort into organizing activities for students.

While the spirit commission, made up of senior Kami Cheathan, senior Sophia Shetler and junior Kaitlyn Thompson, has specific duties to fulfill, it has more creative freedom than many other commissions, which include dance, Homecoming and Spring Fling, rally and outreach commission. Additionally, because the commission does not have rigid guidelines to follow when planning events, often times these planned events are too ambitious and must be modified to become logistically feasible for the Leadership class as a whole.

For example, the Halloween Trunk or Treat, where students handed out candy to neighborhood kids from their cars, was devised after the original plan to have a haunted house in the gym did not receive enough support from Leadership teacher Matt Torrens and the rest of the class. As a result, the commission decided to organize Trunk or Treat, which was very successful.

"After a class period of discussion, we planned on getting a bounce house, having fundraising opportunities and inviting the community to join," said Shetler. "We then had to order everything and make sure SHS students knew about it and signed their cars up."

The commission members also had to plan the logistics of closing the parking lot after school as well as purchase the candy which would be passed out at the event. Prizes for the best decorated car were purchased as well.

"Trunk or treat was our new

thing this year," Shetler said. "It wasn't on our list of duties, but we made that happen on our own."

Along with planning these somewhat unconventional events, some of spirit commission's duties include organizing rally tailgates, decorating the quad before events such as football games and ordering school merchandise such as the T-shirts that are shot into the crowd during basketball games.

The spirit commission is also responsible for creating many of the posters displayed around campus, which promote these and other events.

"Whenever there's an event and you see posters around school, it's probably spirit commission that made those posters," said Thompson.

In addition to creating posters which promote football games and tailgates, spirit commission creates posters promoting events such as dances, basketball quad days, Speak Up For Change, dance team performances, fundraisers and any school event that occurs during tutorial or a closed campus lunch.

In this way, spirit commission has a core mission of being helpful to the other commissions.

"I think a lot of people don't realize that while maybe one commission planned this event, spirit commission did a lot to market that and help that event," Cheatham said.

Spirit commission advertises events planned by other commissions through posters as well as its instagram page "togaspirit." This cooperation is one of the main highlights of becoming a member of spirit commission, according to Thompson.

"Not only do I get to do the spirit stuff, but it's a commission that allows me to be a part of really the whole leadership class," she said. ◆



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Outreach partners with Stanford for blood drive

BY JunLee & NityaMarimuthu

Around 40 students participated in the March 20 Stanford blood drive in the small gym, organized by the outreach commission. The committee was able to donate 30 units of blood this year.

According to outreach commissioner sophomore Katie Chen, Stanford Blood Center sent volunteers to help draw the blood, while outreach commission worked with other volunteers from Stanford to take care of registration, publicity and organizing the location to be set up for the blood drive.

Due to the lower number of donations this year, junior outreach commissioner Sally Kim said the commissioners were a little disappointed. She felt that the commis-

sion worked harder than previous years, but that the conflicting schedule of the AP Environmental Science trip and the large number of students with colds impacted the donor pool.

"Overall, what we did, I'm not disappointed in our performance; I'm just disappointed on the amount of people who were able to donate," Kim said.

To donate, students had to be at least 16 while those under 17 were required to bring a signed parental consent form. Students also had to meet the height and weight parameters. Some restrictions barred students from donating, specifically if they had traveled to specific areas outside the country within the past three years. Students had to also have no symptoms of sickness within 48 hours of donating.

Due to these requirements, around 30 students were deferred and were unable to donate blood this year. Last year, outreach commissioners were able to recruit around 50 students to donate.

Students were pulled out from class for around 90 minutes, where they were checked in and evaluated before donating blood.

To combat the toll of losing blood and ensure that participants did not faint from blood loss, the commission provided snacks, such as donuts and rice krispies treats, to all donors after their donation.

Junior Sarah Hess, who donated blood, found the experience to be very fulfilling. Hess said that she was nervous at first, but everyone seemed "really calm" and this helped to appease her nerves.

"It was really cool because they have music and it's relaxing and you feel happy to donate," Hess said.

Hess said that she was not allowed to get up after immediately after donating blood and instead

she was made to eat food to recover. She said the snacks helped a lot in the whole process. "It's not as scary as you think it would be and they really take care of you," Hess said. ♦

>> thebigidea

Stanford Blood Drive Restrictions
Due to various requirements, around 30 students were not allowed to donate blood.

Decreasing participation
There were only around 40 student donors this year, compared to the 50 last year.

Final results
Students donated 30 units of blood, or 13.5 liters.

"I'm just disappointed on the amount of people who were able to donate."

JUNIOR Sally Kim

On the day of the drive, students needed to drink plenty of fluids, bring the required forms and a valid photo ID, and were not allowed to skip any meals.

Community feedback used in search for new principal

BY EdwinChen & AariaThomas

"What personal and professional characteristics are most important? What strengths are most essential?"

This was one of the questions asked on a survey that the district emailed out to the community on Feb. 26.

As the district searches for the person to fill principal Paul Robinson's shoes, students, parents and staff have been asked to evaluate the essential qualities they would like to see in a new principal. The survey closed on March 12.

"The next person would have to be somebody who really loves supporting students where they are," Robinson said. "It's about

finding that person that enjoys every aspect of a comprehensive high school."

When Robinson was hired in 2012, the district used a similar survey method to gather information.

The school board received a total of 159 responses on the survey and met with 49 individuals.

The district then interviewed Robinson, who at that time was working as a principal in San Diego, to see if he fit the profile of

what the community was looking for.

"Whenever we interview staff coming to our school, we want it to be a really good fit," Robinson said. "Not everyone that applies and has great experience is a really nice fit."

In addition to using surveys to gather information, the school board conducted input sessions with students from different grades.

Students who participated included freshman Anouk Yeh, sophomore Neeti Badve, juniors Alena Jarrett and Payton Stokes and seniors Dermot Gleeson, Matthew Graham and Phoebe Wang. According to Jarrett, the input sessions were open discussions between multiple students and two members of the school

board.

The discussions covered topics such as what they want the new principal to be like, what they should know coming into Saratoga and changes they should consider making once they get the job.

"I think it was really good," Jarrett said. "People were really honest and they seemed to really value what we were saying."

The school board received a total of 159 responses on the survey and met with 49 individuals. The results of both the survey and the input sessions have been used to create a leadership profile of the desired qualities for the new principal.

According to the portfolio, some of the desired traits include showing genuine, sincere

concern for others, being visible at school activities and in classrooms and follow-through on actions.

The portfolio states the strengths the school has, such as student diversity and excellence in academic achievement, and the challenges it faces, such as academic pressure and mental health concerns. The complete portfolio can be found on the district website.

"Based upon both the job description and the leadership profile, we will screen applicants to identify those to be interviewed and the job description and profile will be used as part of the criteria as we work through the interview process," said Jane Marashian, the assistant to superintendent Michael Grove. ♦

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Leadership listens to guest speaker for service project

BY JunLee & NityaMarimuthu

On March 8 in the Saratoga senior center, 20 Leadership students listened to local politician Ken Yeager as he described the tribulations he had endured on his path to serving on the Santa Clara Board of Supervisors.

Yeager served as the first openly gay member on the board of supervisors. His term ended in late 2018, after completing 12 years of service.

According to sophomore class treasurer Lauren Tan, the trip was initially meant to be the sophomore class service project, during which the students would spend time with the seniors. This changed when the manager of the senior center asked if the Leadership class could listen to the speech by Yeager and give feedback, so the sophomore class instead used the Giving Tree drive in first semester as their service project and half the students from the Leadership class listened to the speech.

The students served as "guinea pigs" as they listened to the speaker, according to Tan.

After Yeager gave his speech, students had the opportunity to ask him questions and clarify parts of the speech that they did not understand in order to help him revise his speech, senior class officer Enzo Cogli-

tore said.

Yeager spoke to the class about the discrimination he felt running as an openly gay man. He described "how people used his sexuality against him" while running for office, and how he learned to overcome this obstacle and persevere, according to Coglitore.

Sophomore class officer Tyler Chu said that he thought the speech was "very powerful" and that it sent a "strong message." Chu found Yeager's perseverance through harsh discrimination to be admirable.

"Yeager tried over and over again to get what he believed was right," Chu said.

Coglitore said he also learned to be more open and accepting to all types of people through listening to Yeager's speech.



Chu

Yeager spoke to the class about the discrimination he felt while running as an openly gay man.

"It's nice to see how politicians present themselves in person and how they interact with others, because I thought what I read about on the paper could be different from what I actually see in person," Coglitore said. ♦



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MAP AWARD

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facilities here, Herzman thinks that the model of interdisciplinary learning is an important aspect of what makes the ideas behind MAP transferable.

Other criteria include having been a program for more than two years, its impact on students, its level of innovation as well as its sustainability.

Herzman said that the program was entered into two categories, curriculum and student leadership.

MAP, through its combination of English, history and media arts, brings "skills that really apply to college and career," Herzman said.

Huang feels that the interdisciplinary, interactive approach to learning has sustained her enthusiasm in MAP.

Both she and Herzman agree that what MAP represents for the community has become something to be proud of, regardless of whether it won an award or not.

"Even if it's activities or Smash'n or the speaker series, we've all been trying really hard to expand the spirit of MAP," Huang said. ♦

Drama students travel to CST conference

By Anishi Patel & Oliver Ye

Drama students attended the annual California State Thespian conference, a program of the International Thespian Society, on March 29. The conference offers multiple events for students to compete in, ranging from individual monologues to group pieces, and some events even incorporate song and dance.

For as long as drama teacher Sarah Thermond can remember, drama students from the school have been attending the CST annually. According to Thermond, the number of students who have attended the competition has varied, but one student has placed top three in their event each year.

"Statistically, it's affecting our odds, but it's a group of really experienced people, so I feel like they're doing their best making smart choices about their categories and their scripts and their partners," Thermond said.

"The conference is a good way to get the kind of experience that is most true to working in theater professionally."

TEACHER Sarah Thermond

Regardless of awards, Thermond said the conference offers students a unique opportunity to receive feedback from qualified judges — all CST judges are theater educators or professionals from the Orange County area.

"I've had a lot of students say that the most useful part of this trip is the [feedback] sheets they get back," Thermond said. "They get feedback from someone who isn't

me, who doesn't have any context for how much they've improved. It's really a good way to get the kind of experience that is more true to college auditions and working in theater professionally."

Experienced members of the team explored multiple events — junior Marly Feigin competed in solo musical and duet musical with senior Mateo Morganstern, juniors Natalie Tjahadi, Eman Ahmad and Emilie Prillwitz competed in duet musical, juniors Ritika Kuppam and Surbhi Bhat, as well as senior Shasta Ganti, competed in monologue events, seniors Raghav Malaviya, Ganti and Morganstern competed with a group acting scene and senior Asha Kar competed in stage managing. Bhat competed in a seven-hundred competitor monologue event, where she translated her speech skills into an individual dramatic performance.

By the end of the tournament, Ganti, Morganstern, Malaviya, Kuppam, Bhat, Feigin, Kar, Ahmad and Prillwitz had all qualified for nationals in various events. However, the drama students will not be attending the national competition, due to scheduling conflicts. ♦

Winter percussion enjoys successful season after initial setbacks

By Sofia Jones & Connie Liang

Last year's winter percussion show featured elaborate choreography and props. This year's show was comparatively simple, using no props and having more of a focus on music.

Despite the different approaches, the results showed to be successful, and the group placed first at almost every competition in the season.

The theme for the season was "Upside Down." It represented by the juxtaposition of scenery on the floor: a thicket of trees to one side and a cluster of buildings on the other.

While the show did not feature any props this year, the bright pink, purple, orange and gold floral-embroidered costumes added splashes of color to the performance.

The show also featured solos from individual sections including the snare, bass and quad lines, a notable distinction from recent years.

"It shows the audience 'here's how everyone plays' instead of everyone playing as a group the entire show," said junior Shveta Subramanian, a snare drum section leader.

The surge in first-year performers further differentiated this season's show from previous years. Subramanian saw

initial struggles because almost everyone in the battery ensemble was new, but gradually, the newbies learned their steps and music, which greatly improved the show.

The new faces were accompanied by a new staff, a change that sophomore Aelfred Moore believes has helped broaden students' mindsets as they discover potential areas of improvement. The new coach was Sean Clark.

"The new directors aren't used to the Saratoga mindset," Moore said. "They constantly tell us, 'You guys may be smart with math and academics, but you need to become smart in a different way by working together.'"

Although many members played different instruments than they did during the marching season, or started entirely new ones, the transition was smooth for many members. With more underclassmen than usual, several students took on more of a leadership role, despite not holding any official titles.

Despite switching over to a new section at the beginning of the season, Moore had to step up by serving as a mentor to the freshmen. He and the one other sophomore in the battery section have found that leading by example, coupled with some critique,



Senior Andrew Stephens and junior Gordon Schwabe play the bass drums at a recent practice.

paves way to an effective learning experience for all.

"I think it's one of the best ways we can handle some of the small details and fixes in visuals, small pieces of the music and the technique," Moore said.

After a rough start to the season — second-to-last place in their first competition — the team has excelled. At their show on March 2 at American Canyon High School, they placed first out of 14 groups, and placed

first out of 13 groups the following weekend at James Logan High School. At their last competition in Stockton on March 30, they placed second out of 14.

"This season was great," junior Rayne Schulman said. "I was a bit worried at first, but by the end of the season, I think we were sounding the best we have in a long time. We learned so much in such a short amount of time, and I can't wait to see how much we can improve in the future." ♦

Junior prom venue revealed

By Neeti Badve & Kaylene Morrison

The junior prom committee announced on March 15 that this year's prom will be held at La Rinconada Country Club in Los Gatos on April 20. It will have a Grammy Awards theme. The venue was chosen for its spacious property and close proximity to Saratoga, making it easier to bus students there.



Alex Lee, Junior class secretary

La Rinconada also provides many photo opportunities, which the committee plans to take full advantage of through the use of backdrops, a photobooth, a scenic view and a step and repeat banner. The repeat banner, a photography backdrop printed with a repeating pattern of logos and emblems, is often used for advertisement purposes and at red carpet events. As for food, choices range from American, Italian and Chinese cuisines and will include a fries bar and various desserts, which junior class president Emma

Hsu believes to be the potential highlight of the dance. This year, couples' photos are being taken for free, and tickets cost less than last year, though they are still relatively high, having started at \$170. Tickets went on sale on March 19 and will go up in price by \$5 every week until April 17, the last day to buy tickets. According to junior class secretary Alex Lee, the ticket prices will benefit the current juniors in the future.

"J-prom is a fundraiser for us so that we can make senior prom amazing and a night to remember as we leave high school," Lee said. Junior Nikita Pawar is looking forward to attending prom for the first time and is excited about its unique location.

"I'm glad it's nearby so we get to spend more time there than normal," she said. "I think it'll be really pretty there because there's a golf course. I'm sure it's super upscale, and I think there's a lot of space and different places to go." ♦

Advertisement for Portfolio Preparation Class at SJ Academy. Includes details on when, where, and contact information.

App Dev begins digitizing campus trophy cases

By Rohan Kumar & Oliver Ye

The App Development club has decided to undertake a new project: the creation of a digital trophy case to supplement the current physical one in the Large Gym's hallway.

Leadership director Matt Torrens approached App Dev in late February in hopes of creating an app or website to display the trophies and accolades from the school in a convenient way — making it easier for students and alumni to view the former students' past achievements.

"We have 30 to 40 trophies scattered around campus. A third of them have never been put out and no one really notices that we have that many trophies," Torrens said.

Besides the trophies kept in the gym hallways, others are stored in a cupboard in the office and cupboards in the snack shack in the gym.

There are even various trophies scattered in obscure locations on campus, such as the storage rooms for volleyballs.

Torrens said having to maintain physical trophies poses both safety and financial concerns. Not only is transporting trophies difficult, with one staff member injured after a stack of trophy boxes fell, but re-engraving trophies is also costly.

Digitizing the trophy case would make it easier for alumni and students to see their trophies and the events that they won. The cabinets that currently house hordes of trophies, such as the basketball, football and robotics trophies, would also be freed to hold other athletic memorabilia.

Torrens also hopes to also completely revamp the gym hallways during the next school year, installing

floor-to-ceiling cabinets and displaying only the most important trophies.

He said that the school is debating whether to display academic trophies alongside the athletic trophies in the new cabinets.

He also would like to consider placing a smart device such as an iPad near the new cabinets as a way for students to access the app.

While App Dev's officers are leading the project, all the members will contribute to and code the app, giving them experience with designing and executing a fully functioning app, while also promoting collaboration and teamwork.

"The project will definitely teach App Dev club members about creating an industrial-level product," App Dev co-president Ujjwal Krishnamurthi said.

Krishnamurthi said that the club is brainstorming ideas for how to best display trophies in an intuitive and effective user interface.

The officers plan to designate specific roles and responsibilities to club members in the near future and organize the project on GitHub, a platform for sharing code.

The project will likely be finished during summer, with students having



to work throughout the rest of the school year to finish it.

Junior Kyle Petkovic said that he is excited to contribute to the app as a member of the club.

Petkovic joined the project because he "liked coding but never looked into it."

He had been hesitant to join the club before, since he had not been aware of the club's activities, but news of the trophy project led him to get involved.

The club is using Flutter, a mobile cross-platform application development framework, created and designed by Google, to construct the framework of the app.

According to Petkovic, few members are experienced with the program, so every member can learn and explore it together.

"Everybody will be learning something new, and hopefully that means I'll be able to contribute something and keep up with and pay attention to the project," he said. ♦

Math teacher opts to relocate to San Diego for wife's health

By Angelina Chen & Amanda Zhu

Math teacher Andrew Shoemaker, after two impactful years at the school teaching classes such as AP Statistics, will be leaving the Bay Area and relocating to San Diego next year in favor of better living conditions for himself and his wife.

"This is the best school I've worked at and I'm really bummed," Shoemaker said. "But there is a certain level of excitement to do something new too."

Shoemaker plans to settle down in south San Diego where he hopes he will be able to provide his wife with the support that she needs.

Shoemaker's wife suffers from Lyme's disease, Hashimoto's and other health complications. Last year some of his students

started a fundraiser to help finance a van so that the couple could travel together as well as help with medical expenses. In total, students helped raise more than \$3,000.

"I was overwhelmed. Even just someone giving me a dollar for my wife's health is amazing," he said. "It brought tears to my eyes, just the help from students and what they gave me."

Because his wife is originally from San Diego, Shoemaker thinks that it will be best for her to have her friends around her and a good support system, unlike in Santa Cruz, where the couple now lives.

After they move to San Diego this June, Shoemaker's wife will also have family who live closer by,

including a cousin in San Diego and a mother in Santa Barbara.

Another complicating factor is that the two rental houses Shoemaker and his wife have had in Santa Cruz, including their current one, have had mold issues that contributed to the worsening of her health. They hope to find mold-free accommodations in San Diego.

In moving to San Diego, Shoemaker and his wife made sure to choose a location where they would both still be able to pursue their passion of surfing, one of the only physical activities she can still do.

However, Shoemaker also knows that it may turn out that San Diego does not work for her health either. They are flexible in

terms of where they might move, because, ultimately, her health is their top priority.

"There's a quality of life that we want to keep, which is why we're moving to San Diego, but we know that it may not work," Shoemaker said. "So we may have to try something brand new, even like Arizona or New Mexico."

Shoemaker still plans to pursue a career in the education. He has an administrative degree, so he may even work in an administrator position or work for a district office to design curriculum for various schools to use. However, he is still going to begin his search by looking for a job as a high school math teacher.

Shoemaker has two masters degrees and has ambitions to become a college professor one day. In particular, he would like to be an edu-

cation teacher and coach students who hope to become teachers on what "good teaching looks like."

Shoemaker said that some of his undergrad professors inspired him to become a teacher in the first place.

"I really connected with some of my education professors and they're some of my influence as to why I became a teacher," Shoemaker said.

Students who had Shoemaker as a teacher said they will miss him.

"Even though Mr. Shoemaker was new last year, he kicked off my interest in math and reshaped how I see it as a subject," sophomore Sumhitha Malladi said. "Before his class, I wasn't really interested in math, but Mr. Shoemaker showed me how math can be educational and enjoyable at the same time." ♦



Shoemaker

POKEMON

continued from pg. 1

and senior level and competes in the highest competitive category: master.

The tournaments vary greatly in size and frequency: Local tournaments generally occur weekly; state-wide ones occur monthly; international events only happen four times a year; and there is only one world championship a year.

The game changes annually with themes and rules that differ year to year, but they are always strategy-based games. Much like competitions for other esports, hundreds of people gather at convention centers and face off against one opponent at a time in rounds with multiple players. The winners of preliminary rounds progress through elimination until there is one final champion.

Typically, the reward for performing well at a given tournament comes in the form of additional points, a higher ranking or a cash prize. In December, Malaviya won an event in Anaheim and earned

\$2,000, which he then used to go to Australia over February break, where he won \$1,500.

With that money, he plans to go to Berlin for the 2019 Pokemon International Championships at the end of the month.

Depending on his performance there, he can earn even more money to fund future trips.

"It's not like I can make a huge profit off of it," he said. "It's more of just a self-sustaining game. It's a hobby that funds itself."

The competitions are typically hosted in convention centers by either grassroots organizations or the official Pokemon company, from cities as near as Anaheim and San Francisco to cities as far as Berlin and Melbourne.

Initially, Malaviya's father would accompany him on the various trips but now the senior travels alone. Despite their initial hesitation, Malaviya's parents do not object to his playing, so long as competing does not interfere with his school work or commitment to the drama program, where he has played lead roles, such as playing Mark Antony in the fall play.

In the weeks leading up to a

drama production, Malaviya has to put in hours a day of rehearsal, but he does not struggle to balance this with gaming and school.

"It's a type of game where you don't have to be constantly practicing after a certain point," he said. "I try to play at least half an hour every day."

Although the senior has put years of work into improving his skills, he has not tired of playing. The ever-changing nature of the game keeps it fresh for him.

The games are not the only aspect he enjoys, however. He has made many new friends through playing, and he enjoys watching them play as well.

"After it comes down to the last four people, everyone else is watching the games, so there's a whole new level of your friends going crazy if something happens on the stream," Malaviya said. "The best memory I have is being excited and having a really good time with my friends."

At last year's Pokemon World Championships Nashville, Tenn., Malaviya's friend reached the final round, eventually placing second. Watching that round and



ALL GRAPHICS BY MATHEW LUO

cheering his friend on was a high point for Malaviya.

Some more exclusive competitions are invitation-only, and this year, Malaviya has an invitation to the world championship, which takes place in Washington, D.C., in August.

Although he does not know for sure where he will attend college yet, he thinks that he will continue to play Pokemon.

"I would consider quitting if I ever got too busy or lose interest, but for now I don't plan on stopping until I at least win the world championships," Malaviya said. "I don't see an end in sight." ♦

SPRING FLING

continued from pg. 1

year, its history and origin story are still important, and it's an important part of the school's culture.

Principal Paul Robinson said PowderPuff football has been a part of every high school he had worked at in California so he believes this event goes "way back in American high school histories."

"In the '50s and '60s, this was one of the few ways girls could actually compete in a team sport," Robinson said. "With Title IX in the '70s, girls were finally given the opportunities they deserve to compete as much as boys do."

Robinson also said current football players look forward to PowderPuff because it gives them a chance to teach one of their passions.

This year, more girls are expected to participate in PowderPuff, according to sophomore Erica Lee, who will be playing in the football games.

"Football teams can have a lot of players and it's great to see so many come out and participate," Robinson said. "PowderPuff lives on as a way to bring students together." ♦

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.



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."

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

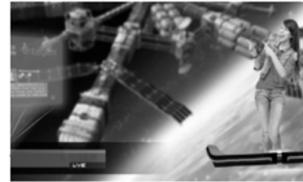
asked about what Holographic AR programs would be good for high school students, Dr. Du said, "it would depend on each student's interest."

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

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.



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.

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

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camp.integem.com



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AP and regular class expectations should be more transparent, realistic

Recently, somewhat dazed and sleepy regular U.S. history (RUSH) students were shocked when a thick packet landed on their desks with a weighty thud. The packets were huge and daunting. They were for a dreaded World War II research paper.

Last spring, when most students first signed up for classes for this year, they most likely expected a light workload from RUSH. After all, it is billed as being an easier class that would allow juniors to focus on their other tough AP and honors courses instead. In reality, the experiences of many RUSH students show a deceptive downside to the class: It includes many projects that take a lot of time and work. In some ways, RUSH turns out to be a more demanding class than APUSH in terms of time commitment, especially for those who aren't fans of lengthy projects or pre-

sentations. According to some students, this situation can happen in multi-level classes like AP physics vs. regular physics and honors English vs. regular English. Because of the timeline of AP testing in May, AP classes don't spend as much time on projects and simulations, instead focusing on lectures, labs and tests.

Although the content in AP and Honors classes may be more challenging, it can also be preferable to students who would rather not do group projects, simulations or presentations. Furthermore, student in general tend to devote more focus and effort to challenging classes than regular classes — and for good reason. Students purposely opt to take AP classes in subjects that they are interested in, while taking regular classes just to fulfill credits. So when regular class

teachers expect too much of a time commitment from their students, it becomes difficult to manage expectations and balance the work. To help students make more informed decisions, teachers should post class expectations with the curriculum and list major required projects before students sign up for classes.

Although the guidance counselors provide students with a list of classes and the average time required for homework during class sign-ups the previous year, this does not inform students about the type of work involved. After the types of projects and homework are made clear, students can choose to take it for the lighter load. But if students prefer to do more projects rather than text-heavy studying for the AP exam all year, they can opt to take the regular class.



In addition to the projected time commitment, spelling out the learning methods used in a class would help students make smarter decisions in planning for future schedules that are suited to their strengths and interests. With the right expectations, students will be more successful in their courses. ♦

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editors-in-chief: Elaine Fan, Sanjana Melkote
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The Falcon staff voted 20-7 in support of this article.

Saratoga lacks late-night studying locations

by Connie Liang

If you've never had to dash to the emptying food court of a Korean grocery store at 10 p.m. the night before a calculus test, consider yourself lucky. I can genuinely say I've never been more stressed than in that moment, with binder paper slipping from my folder like wilting leaves on an autumn day and with the somewhat sketchy, late-night frequenters of H-Mart grinning at me in mysterious inquiry.

In the past few months, there have been quite a number of poorly timed power outages in my neighborhood.

These times bring about the all-consuming pit of despair that wells in the stomach immediately after the lights zap out in the middle of the afternoon.

It's the opening-of-the-fridge to see not a bright light shine across the boxes, but a despot shadow. It's the rapid flickering of the light switch only to realize that despite one's best efforts, there is no light anywhere.

Worst of all, it is the sinking realization that, as the sun itself begins to lurk away, there seem to be no cafes, no restaurants, no establishments within a 50-mile radius that stay open late enough to accommodate for my studying needs.

Call me problematic, but as an overwhelmed junior, this lack of

late-night stores, restaurants, bars, auto-shops — really late-night anything in Saratoga — is a major source of concern, even when there's a power outage.

It's impossible for me and many other students to study at home, a safe haven from school where the bed or couch lingers just around the corner, beckoning for a slumber that will probably last a few hours longer than what was intended.

Plus, my house is just plain loud.

The house presents perpetual distractions, whether it's a family member yelling across three rooms and the dining area to someone who happens to be outside on the patio, a hair dryer or a sibling practicing piano (practically the same sound), or the clanging of a washing machine.

So what's the next step? Heading to the local library or coffee shop downtown would seem like natural choices.

But we are forced to retreat back home, when we see the blinds are drawn and the doors are closed at 5 p.m.

I will call a few of these places out.

The Saratoga library is open until 9 p.m. on Mondays and Tuesdays but is closed at 5 p.m. for the rest of the week.

Big Basin Cafe closes at 10 p.m. every day of the week but it often

stays crowded until right before closing because it's one of the few places available.

It's easy to say, "Just improve your study habits so you won't have to engage in a staring contest with a locked cafe door later on!"

But it's often not that simple. Come junior year, the homework load often piles up to more than four hours a night, which rules out any possibility of finishing before the sun sets.

We are forced to retreat back home, when we see the blinds are drawn and the doors are closed at 5 p.m.

This does not include the many extracurriculars and activities that call for even more time immediately after school, delaying the start time of homework even further.

That leaves the only available time for study at around 8 p.m. to midnight.

For those of us with no permits or licenses, this lack of late-night stores in the local area equates to provoking the hibernating bear of a parent to ask for a ride to Cupertino.

85 Degree Bakery and even the H-Mart food court are viable, fairly close-by options, but even then, parents generally feel uncomfortable leaving their child studying into the night at a store that is miles away.

The same worries arise even if you do have a license, which is why having late-night options for students in Saratoga, a small town where activity seems to revolve around the bustling high school, is the most reasonable option. That way, Saratoga students won't have to default too far away.

Going back to one of the most anxiety-inducing nights of my life, I still remember furiously practicing math problems on papers, Korean restaurant napkins — anything that was within reach, to be honest. And then my phone rang. At first, I ignored the call with a fit of fractions filling my brain, but as the repeated sound slowly overtook my pre-test jitters, I had to pick it up.

It was my dad urging me to go outside ASAP because it was getting late and we needed to be back home.

I argued that there was no light at home, that H-Mart was open until 11, that all things considered, I needed to do well on this math test.

But to no avail. It was time to head home and try to study in a dark, powerless house. ♦

Looking for a place to study?



starbucks
5 am-7:30 pm



sue's gallery
cafe
8 am-6pm



saratoga
library
10 am- 9pm

College scandal court case may dissuade bribes but won't change lasting attitudes

BY Anna Novoselov

With the uncontrollable obsession of entering the nation's top name-brand universities and the growing competitiveness of admissions, it came as little surprise that some parents have pursued corrupt means of cheating the system.

The recently uncovered scandal in which 50 people were accused of bribing college athletic coaches and SAT proctors with outrageous sums of money cannot be seen as an isolated set of incidents.

Behind the scenes, wealthy and powerful figures often influence the college admissions process through legal and illegal means. They go to extreme lengths to get their children accepted to elite universities, in essence stealing spots from more qualified and deserving candidates.

To be sure, many parents seek to confirm their social status and prove that their own success through their own children's successes, including college admissions, a tendency which Robert Feldmanthis, a professor of psychology at University of Massa-

chusetts Amherst, termed "reflect-ed glory."

College prestige is one such status marker that is seen to indicate intelligence and talent.

The high-profile individuals involved in the recent scandal, including "Full House" actress Lori Loughlin and "Desperate Housewives" Felicity Huffman now face criminal charges. Many others were fired by their employers or left their jobs due to the scandal.

According to MSN News, William Rick Singer, the CEO of a college prep company called The Key, orchestrated the scheme by encouraging parents to perform criminal activities in order for their children to gain acceptance into elite universities.

Beginning in 2011, he had his customers "donate" payments

ranging from \$200,000 to \$6.5 million for admission guarantees.

The parents, as well as the children who supported their efforts, should not reap the re-

sults of expelling enrolled students who participated in the scandal, universities should establish guidelines to remedy their application process and uphold its fairness.

No doubt, these changes will be difficult, as colleges often favor students whose parents are wealthy alumni. Harvard, for instance, was accused of providing leniency for legacy applicants, accepting 34 percent of legacy applicants versus 5.9 of non-legacy applicants between 2009 and 2015, as reported by NPR. This disparity is largely motivated by financial reasons.

While the court cases will not change the nature of college admissions, they may galvanize increased emphasis on monitoring such gross deception. Colleges should continue investigations to uncover which students were aware that their parents were committing fraud. Besides

college admissions to ensure the integrity of the process. Perhaps the scandal will force colleges to place more emphasis on merit rather than social status. They may also be compelled to double check the admissions. For instance, college admissions officers may be more inclined to require more proof of accomplishments and begin carefully verifying the information provided by accepted students.

Fearing the fallout, applicants may be more reluctant to lie on their applications. But because identities are largely determined by success and social standing in the United States, cheating is unlikely to go away entirely.

Students and parents can advocate to reduce fraud during the college application season by encouraging admissions officers to emphasize proof of accomplishments and be more transparent about why students were admitted. In a nation so focused on success and prestige, the college admissions process should be refined to guarantee that the dedicated and passionate students are the ones being rewarded. ♦

Colleges should continue investigations to uncover which students were aware that their parents were committing fraud. Besides

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GRAPHIC BY NITYA MARIMUTHU AND MICHAEL WONG

togatalks

Will the scandals dissuade colleges from using 'backdoor' options?

"It won't do anything in my opinion."



senior Nick Barry

"Hopefully, but probably not. Alumni pay-ins keep good resources for current students."



senior Reva Vaidya

"Personally I don't think so because people can always find loopholes in one way or another."



senior Leon Feng

Five positive changes Trump has achieved so far

DESPITE CONTROVERSY, TRUMP HAS FOUGHT FOR MANY BIPARTISAN POLICIES THAT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED

1. ECONOMY Under the Trump administration, the U.S. economy has continued to flourish, with the national unemployment rate as of December 2018, according to the White House, at 3.7 percent, the lowest in 17 years, in part thanks to his pro-business policies and de-regulations such as his executive order "on reducing regulation and control ling regulatory costs," which have grown business confidence exponentially. The GDP is growing at above a 3 percent rate, something that most experts believed was impossible.

2. ISIS Throughout his entire campaign, Trump expressed a hard line against Islamic terrorism, and a lot of progress has been made to combat this terror organization. In July 2017, ISIL's hold of Mosul ended, and in the following September, the U.S.-led a coalition to overtake Rakka, the only major city in Syria left under ISIL control. According to Wilson Center of Newsweek, 95 percent of the ISIS pseudo-caliphate has been liberated.

3. OPIOID Trump declared the opioid crisis a public health emergency in October 2017. According to John Fritze and David Jackson from USA TODAY, the crisis claimed around 72,000 lives last year. Passing new legislation that would fund more treatment options for addicts and eliminating Medicare regulations that impede treatment and facilitate research on non-addictive painkillers, the Trump administration hopes to curtail the growing problem in the United States. In addition, Trump enacted U.S. Postal Service based efforts to screen overseas packages for synthetic fentanyl largely shipped from China.

4. SYRIA The Trump administration punished Syrian president Bashar al-Assad by using airstrikes against a Syrian airbase after this dictator used chemical weapons against his own people, according to The New York Times. By punishing Bashar after his heinous attacks against his people, he reinforced American hegemony and set better standards for human rights throughout the world.

5. PRISON REFORMS After the clemency of Alice Marie Johnson last June, Trump signed massive bipartisan reforms last December to reduce recidivism and improve prison conditions, including prohibiting the use of shackles or physical restraints on pregnant women, releasing terminally ill patients, placing prisoners closer to family and improving feminine hygiene, according to Jamiles Lartey of The Guardian. The bill, known as the FIRST STEP Act, will allow around 53,000 prisoners to be freed over the next 10 years.

Honorable mention: With hospital spending the most of any category in health-care expenditures, Trump has required hospitals to provide transparent information on their standard charges, according to Julie Appleby and Barbara Feder Ostrov of CNN.

While this in theory forces hospitals to compete with pricing and provides more information for patients, the bills posted do not account for insurance discounts or additional charges that may add on, and has been posted in complicated language that is meaningless for the average person. Still, this is a step towards the right direction to more reasonable prices.

Over the course of his first two years, Trump has created a lot of controversy with his statements and governing style. But despite this chaos, his tenure has had some positives that are easy to forget. ♦

— Edwin Chen and Michael Wong

Green New Deal offers outline for future survival of planet

BY Rohan Kumar

Although scientists predict that the end of the human race may come about in the next billion years, a recent report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that a global catastrophe may occur much sooner due to uncontrolled carbon emissions. According to the report, we only have 12 years before the climate warms 1.5 degrees Celsius, beyond which even a small increase would yield devastating natural disasters such as hurricanes and floods and the ruining of millions of lives.

Due to inaction by the Trump administration, Democrats have taken this issue into their own hands. Sen. Ed Markey of Massachusetts and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York recently proposed the Green New Deal, which deals with a wide range of civil issues and outlines several steps to eliminate carbon emissions entirely.

According to NPR, the plan promises to transform the economy through large investments in clean energy technology.

The deal simultaneously attempts to tend to minorities and impoverished communities that may be especially affected by the new policy.

Some kind of policy like the Green New Deal is clearly necessary: Massive reforms will have to take place to reduce carbon emissions significantly in the next decade as dictated by the IPCC report.

But that begs the question: Is the deal too ambitious? Can the Democrats pull off something of such massive scale, especially with a Republican president and Senate who clearly don't see

obvious environmental threats as actual threats?

The truth is that the Green New Deal probably won't become law in its full form. There are simply too many partisan divides, and such radical changes are unlikely to make it through Congress.

Furthermore, the funds required for such a massive societal change are simply not available. Realistically, minor changes such as carbon taxes or small-scale regulations on carbon emissions are within reach, but an entire overhaul of U.S. infrastructure is out of the picture.

In the end, the true power of the deal lies in the fact that it has brought the issue of climate change to the forefront of American politics, especially among the Democratic candidates vying to run against Trump in 2020.

Google searches and tweets involving the Green New Deal have skyrocketed in recent months. Politicians of all backgrounds, from Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey to Al Gore, have weighed in on the issue. Even FOX News has supplemented its daily program with discussions of cow farts in the context of the Green New Deal.

As climate change issues are continuously thrust into the political spotlight, change is bound to happen. Youth activists now have extensive media platforms for their voices to be heard.

More and more politicians are forced to take sides, and as a result, a group of dedicated politicians will likely form to make parts of the Green New Deal into a reality.

In all honesty, these smaller bills will likely be much more palatable for the legislative body.

The Green New Deal was simply too ambitious for the Senate to agree on. However, it has already brought climate change to the forefront of the political atmosphere, which in and of itself is a significant achievement.

The Green New Deal is bound to be a political lightning rod through the smaller bills that the democrats are pushing. The ideas that the deal brings to the table have the potential to help preserve the planet and remake parts of the economy that clearly aren't working. ♦



Doing chores create beneficial habits

BY Justin Guo

A common trend in Saratoga nowadays is that parents take on household chores — washing dishes, cleaning, taking out the trash, cooking, laundry — so that their kids have more time to focus on their education.

This isn't to say that kids have no idea how to do chores at all; rather, it suggests that many don't have much experience with chores they will inevitably need to tackle after high school. Sooner or later, teens are going to have to learn how to do their chores, whether they like it or not.

While they can rely on the assistance of their parents for now, teens will have to be independent once they go to college and beyond. Even if they have roommates, the chores are split up.

One of the biggest problems with starting chores too late in life is that there are nuances to be learned within each distinct task.

For example, when washing a small amount of dishes, teens might learn to use the residue soap at the tip of the detergent bottle instead of trying to squeeze out the perfect amount of detergent and potentially ending up with too much.

Just like with any other skill, no one is going to be able to do chores perfectly on their first few attempts.

Habits help build teens' discipline, while discouraging the development of bad habits in the long term.

These attempts serve as learning experiences for future endeavors. It's much better to make mistakes doing chores under parental supervision rather

than later on. With practice, teens will inevitably develop a new level of familiarity that allows them to do their chores more efficiently and with less agony involved.

Additionally, when teens do chores, they begin introducing positive habits into their lives. For example, they might develop the habit of washing the dishes immediately after eating dinner, or taking out the trash by themselves once they notice the bag getting a bit full.

In a more general sense, these habits help build teens' discipline, while discouraging the development of bad habits in the long term.

Another relevant side effect of doing chores is that it alleviates pressure from siblings and parents and can help improve familial relations, fostering appreciation for the work teens often take for granted.

Just like how doing 97 SAT practice tests is meant to pre-



pare students for the future, learning to do chores has the same intention. Although parents may believe more emphasis should be placed on education, life skills are equally important for success in adult life.

In the end, chores are inevitable tasks that we all must face eventually.

They don't even take that long; washing the dishes usually won't take more than half an hour. Taking out the trash isn't exactly a lengthy process either.

At the cost of a few minutes out of their day, doing chores early on can have many benefits for teens in the long term. ♦

togatalks

What is your opinion on the Green New Deal?

"It is really important to pass the law because the environment is drastically changing because of what we are doing. Climate change directly impacts humans."



freshman Cici Xu

"I thought it was pretty insane that people took it seriously. Climate change is happening, but a lot of the solutions proposed are not going to help. She also proposed a bunch of social services that are outlandish and have nothing to do with the environment."



senior Rohan Pandey

"In order for this bill to even work, a proper source of funding has to be secured for this expensive proposal. The ten years that they are allotting for the Green New Deal is simply not enough. It's going to be rushed and not work well."



senior Chloe Peng

"The Green New Deal is a necessary step towards what we need during this environmental crisis. But the proposal covers aspects that are not related to the environment, such as social services. The proposal should focus more on the environmental issues."



senior Anisha Byri

When I reached the tender age of 8, my parents allowed me to use the email account they had created for me years earlier.

For the next five years, I communicated with my family and friends solely via emails, Google Hangouts and brief calls on my older sister's hand-me-down Palm Pixi, bequeathed to me in the sixth grade.

Now, upon opening Instagram, I find a shocking number of accounts belonging to middle and elementary school students.

Many post pictures with friends, follow celebrities and comment on their friends' posts — all seemingly harmless activities.

Yet as more children use social media, the danger of such early and extensive usage skyrockets.

Although the world is shifting into a digital era, growing accustomed to using social media at an early age only paves the way to an addition to presenting a certain image online.

This dependency then causes younger students to lack in-person interaction with others, and by extension, certain aspects of social intelligence.

When friendship is conducted primarily online, many children miss out on the personal and sometimes intimidating aspects of communication, wrote Rachel Ehmke of the Child Mind Institute.

They may also waste free time on social media instead of exploring hobbies and activities needed to help them grow.

Constant exposure to the picture-perfect

Not only are these expectations unrealistic, but they also prove detrimental to children's mental health.

According to a study by the Royal Society for Public Health, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram correlated to a lack of self-esteem and an increased feeling of depression, wrote Ehmke.

Even more problematic is the fact that

Being constantly exposed to such content may result in young students beginning to adopt manners inappropriate for their ages, such as swearing, cracking crude jokes and dressing like the Instagram models they see on their feeds.

These pre-teens mature too early, acting older than they really are before they are even ready for those behaviors.

Consequently, many of these students find themselves getting physically or emotionally hurt and not knowing how to properly handle more mature issues like relationships.

This isn't to say that every pre-teen should completely cut themselves off from social media and revert to using Gmail and flip phones for communication.

But their social media usage must be monitored and restricted to age-appropriate content such as slime videos, so they can learn to turn away from their screens and focus on extracurriculars and healthy, in-person friendships rather than devoting their time and attention to increasing the number of likes, comments and followers they have. ♦

-Kaitlyn Tsai

Exposure to social media at a young age presents unrealistic expectations

lives of models and celebrities can also place unnecessary and unhealthy expectations on adults, even more so for impressionable, younger students.

These expectations cause pre-teens to focus too much on shallow, materialistic matters, leading them to strive for high numbers of followers and perfect bodies before theirs are even fully matured.

most social media platforms are not built for younger students. Virtually every platform has an age restriction for people above the age of 13 — and for good reason.

Although there are PG pages and accounts sprinkled here and there, many people post pictures, memes, or videos that normalize drugs, explicit language, insensitive jokes and dressing provocatively.

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE UNDER 18 WHO USE VARIOUS SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



Source: Science Daily

GRAPHIC BY AMY TANG

Awareness is not the same as education

SCHOOLS SHOULD REQUIRE MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION HAND IN HAND ALONG WITH PHYSICAL EDUCATION

BY Neeti Badve

Today in America, about 17.7 percent of youth, approximately 10.8 million people, have been diagnosed with anxiety, depression or behavioral problems related to them.

With teen stress, anxiety and trauma at an all-time high, the topic of conversation is slowly shifting toward mental health education. Administrators are understandably worried, as suicide is still the second leading cause of death for American youth.

People want to know how they can help make the situation better, leading administrators to ask students, "What can we do?"

For starters, schools have to change the way they address mental health. Though steps have been taken in the right direction with more programs teaching students about mental health, physical fitness is still seen as a priority over mental health nationwide.

What many fail to understand is that physical and mental health go hand in hand. In his talk "Capitalism Makes us Crazy," physician and internationally renowned trauma expert Gabor Mate notes that

society only focuses on what physically makes people sick.

Our current medical model "separates the mind from the body, so that what happens emotionally is not seen to have an impact on our physical health."

Being mentally ill can take as much of a toll on a person's body as being physically sick, as mental health affects the way a person views themselves, views others and manages emotions and situations.

Mental illnesses like depression can make it seemingly impossible for teens to get up in the morning and will themselves to do simple tasks. Every task feels like it requires more effort than one can exert.

Whereas an adjusted diet or exercise regimen may fail to solve the problem, the proper mental help, support and perhaps medication will.

Society continues to perpetuate the myth that mental illness can be cured by "being happy" or "trying new things." But people with serious mental illnesses need to be regarded with the same seriousness as people with physical disabilities, and the stigma surrounding them is insensitive and unnecessary.

Mental illnesses cannot be ignored, and they do not just "go away." Current mental

health education teaches skills to identify mental illnesses and tell when something is out of the ordinary.

We are then told to reduce the burden of stigmatism by understanding mental illness as a biological condition and not a psychosocial one, ignoring the societal cause of the issue and blaming it on genetics instead.

However, studies conducted in Germany, Australia, England and America have shown that thinking about mental illnesses in this way has just increased discrimination and stereotypes surrounding them, associating them with unpredictability, chaos and dangerousness.

The flaw of the current mental health education system is that it fails to take into account or even discuss the social conditions that cause young people to suffer from mental illnesses in the first place.

Schools should mimic the "restorative justice" system when addressing this issue. This system, first made for disciplinary action, forces administrators to understand the roots of a student's actions instead of merely punishing them for their actions without regard for the whole person.

The same idea can be used to address mental health: paying attention to the root of

the problem instead of only acknowledging it. If a doctor tells someone they have appendicitis, but does nothing to treat the appendix, you would think something is wrong with your doctor.

Being able to identify mental illness is a step in the right direction, but properly educating a school about treating mental health would help those affected and increase empathy among other students, improving the emotional health of a school as a whole.

Targeting toxic factors of a school such as the deteriorating image of self-worth, parental and peer pressure or academic or extracurricular stress would benefit the community.

Programs like CASSY are a great step forward for this way of thinking and educating.

Mental health awareness is not the same thing as mental health education. Our society is a clear indication that people are aware that mental illnesses do exist, shown by the thousands of studies, surveys and calculations conducted.

However, people need to stop being satisfied with "being aware" and need to be educated on how to actually lower these alarming statistics. ♦

Mental illnesses cannot be ignored, and they do not just "go away."

Mental health is just as important as physical health.

Mental health awareness is not the same thing as mental health education.

Society continues to perpetuate the myth that mental illness can be cured by "being happy" or "trying new things."

Going head to head in dessert challenge

what a neeti idya

Neeti Badve and Nitya Marimuthu

The following is a verbatim transcript of our thoughts as we faced our "Chopped" challenge.

Our competition was based on the famous Food Network TV show, in which four contestants face off in three rounds — appetizer, entree and dessert — with one chef eliminated or "chopped" each round until one victor remains.

Due to our lack of cooking knowledge, we decided to simplify our challenge to a dessert face-off. We each selected four items for the other to use, one of which had to contain chocolate. Anything in Neeti's kitchen was fair play. Afterwards, we'd have one hour to cook and plate our creations.

Nitya: As I opened my basket, I saw a banana, maple syrup, cinnamon and dark chocolate bars infused with different flavors like ginger. My brain raced as I tried to conjure up a recipe from my hours spent watching needless food videos.

And then it hit me. Maple syrup, banana, cinnamon ... pancakes! It did not cross my

mind that this was a breakfast food, but that thought would only occur to me later.

Neeti: I opened my basket to find a maple and brown sugar flavored oatmeal packet, plain Rice Krispies, Kirkland-brand Nutella and strawberries. Perplexed by the oatmeal, I started mixing the Rice Krispies and Nutella, eventually deciding to roll them into balls.

Nitya: My two favorite flavors in the world are chocolate and cinnamon. The one food item that combines this is the age-old comfort drink Mexican hot chocolate.

I chose to selectively forget some of the spices that go into Mexican hot chocolate, and decided that I would only use ginger chocolate. Ginger, cinnamon, cayenne ... all the spices taste the same anyway, right?

Neeti: While Nitya started reciting the wonders of Mexican hot chocolate, I got to work on my Rice Krispie balls.

However, I found that it was impossible to make Rice Krispie balls with just Nutella as a binding agent, so I mixed in the oatmeal.

Nitya: In case you didn't catch the hint, the ginger chocolate was a BAD mistake. Despite tasting the bar before tossing it in, I chose to ignore the overwhelming ginger-bread-like baseline that knocked out any sign of dark chocolate.

Neeti: While rolling the oatmeal and



The finished product: reporters' desserts look edible and actually quite delicious.

Rice Krispie balls, I remembered the strawberries. And being the culinary genius I am, I realized I could stuff strawberries with extra Nutella Rice Krispie mixture.

I started feeling confident. My balls were done and my strawberries were cut out and pitted. All that was left to do was plate.

Nitya: Since mama didn't raise no waster, I attempted to fix my mess of a sauce. I added more plain chocolate, maple syrup and some milk, hoping to drown out the discerning taste of ginger.

There wasn't much more I could do at this point than slather on the chocolate syrup and hope for the best. I added bananas

on top to earn some presentation points and hopefully sweeten the unruly dish.

After giving both of our culinary concoctions a shot, I conceded that my pancakes were not a dish I would willingly eat, therefore making me the loser of this challenge. Pancakes are best left to the professionals.

So what did we learn? Two types of spontaneity, yet one worked and one didn't. Was it the knowledge? Definitely not. Was it the chocolate hazelnut butter? Probably yes. Was it the ginger out to ruin plans? Definitely yes. Future chefs, be warned. A "touch" of ginger can ruin lives. ♦

Spending \$10 a day reduces stress and saves money

BY Daniel Bessonov

As soon as I rolled out of bed, I headed to a local breakfast place and realized that a one-egg omelet would take me back seven George Washington's, I knew limiting my daily budget to \$10 was going to be a difficult task. But, in the words of iconic rapper Lil Dicky — "What we do? We save that money!"

To complete the day with under \$10 spent, I had to establish two simple rules. I can use, eat or take advantage of any already existing items or resources.

Anything else? I'll have to spend money. Leaving the breakfast parlor in shame, I headed back to my car to drive home. I would have to figure out a new arrangement for today's food.

My breakfast consisted of one egg, a half-

eaten apple and what was once a lava cake but could now only be characterized as a chocolate-y mound with a mix of dough, an unidentifiable type of sprinkle and some kind of crunchy food that definitely shouldn't have been on a lava cake.

But then came my second dilemma. As I was getting into my car to meet up with a few friends for lunch, I saw my "low gas" indicator light up. An ideal situation for an already ideal day. Fueling up wasn't a choice, so I turned to my 'ol trusty bike and helmet.

Unfortunately, my friends were headed

to Valley Fair, and I wasn't about to head out on a three-hour bike endeavor across highways and bridges; this was the day's second casualty — a missed opportunity to socialize. Still, it was nearing 4 p.m., and I had to figure out how to kill another three hours before the sun set.

Not abandoning the whole bike idea, I set out on a venture to explore my neighborhood. Contrary to my expectations, it actually turned

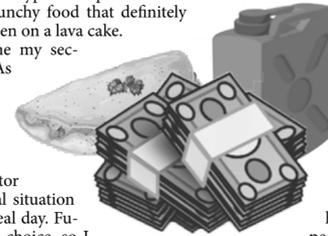
out to be pretty fun. I discovered a park a couple miles from my house I had never seen before, befriended a squirrel af-

ter tossing it a half-eaten strawberry and got in my first leg workout in three years.

At the end of the day, as I feasted on a homemade salad consisting of leftover chicken, lettuce and some lackluster celery, I pondered the experience. Although a \$10 budget robbed me of a couple hours of socialization and some normal food — I was able to concentrate, rediscover nature and most importantly, save some money.

Even more fundamentally, limiting my spending forced me to realize just how much I rely on parent-provided spending throughout the day. It may not seem like I spend a lot, but with a day's activities, I can easily rack up bills up to \$50, \$60 or even \$70.

Not going to lie — Lil Dicky might be onto something. It's time to save that money, especially with college on the horizon. ♦



GRAPHIC BY KEVIN SEZE

Don't judge onion banana juice by its cover

phobi wan cannoli

Phoebe Wang

"It tastes like onion and banana juice!" Impressionable 5-year-old me watched the screen with rapt attention as Avatar Aang, the protagonist of "Avatar: The Last Airbender," spit out the strange yellowish liquid given to him by Guru Pathik in the episode "The Guru."

"That's because it is," Guru Pathik replied. I've been a fan of "Avatar" since I was a small child, so when the life section editors proposed a story on trying this strange concoction from a childhood memory I thought I would never have the chance to try, I knew I had to seize this opportunity.

Anyone who has eaten a raw onion knows that it has a bit of a spicy taste with a pungent odor, and I knew that in order to make this drink taste good I would have to figure out a way to deal with it. My mom,

who apparently did not completely trust me in the kitchen, suggested caramelizing the onion before blending it with the banana. I also did some research that said soaking the raw onion in milk or baking soda takes away some of the onion's strong taste.

As such, I prepared five different bowls to taste the difference: raw onion, cooked onion, raw onion soaked in baking soda, raw onion soaked in milk, and raw onion soaked in both milk and baking soda.

After whipping up all five bowls, the onion banana juice sat in front of me, it was yellowish with the consistency of a Yoplait. After much hesitation, I picked up my first bowl and took a sip. And it wasn't that bad. The first one I tried was the plain onion banana juice. As Avatar Aang said, it did taste like onion banana juice, with all the spiciness and sharpness onions have and the sweet creaminess of bananas.

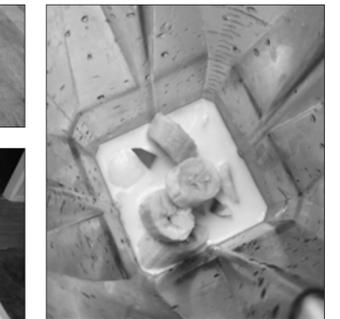
The next one was the baking soda onion. This one tasted less spicy but otherwise the same as the first one. The milk soaked one tasted the same, with reduced onion flavor.

The most interesting combinations were the grilled onion and the milk and baking



The process: Although it sounds easy, creating onion-banana juice takes multiple steps.

soda combination. The grilled onion banana juice was sweet and smelled of grease. It was delicious for the first few mouthfuls if you could ignore the smell. The baking soda milk combination eliminated the onion smell and taste from the juice, so it only tasted like banana milk. I managed to finish



FALCON // PHOEBE WANG

the whole bowl, but not the other bowls. Rewatching "Avatar: The Last Airbender," I now wonder how Avatar Aang lasted a week on this concoction, and how Guru Pathik drinks it exclusively. My fire chakra is glad that I only had to drink onion banana juice once. ♦

April 5, 2019

Watch your back: siblings versus siblings edition

thomas
the train

Aaria Thomas

During the summer of 2016, my 8-year-old sister and I spent a few days with our friends in Denver. What had started as a typical two-day sleepover turned into an all-out prank war.

My sister and I were staying with my friend Jane and her 8-year-old brother. On the first morning, my friend Jane and I decided to sleep in, and our younger siblings got bored. We awoke to globs of Vaseline being smeared across our faces, and immediately, Jane and I retaliated by hurling pillows at them.

Jane, who had taken the most Vaseline to the face, went into the bathroom first. She came back into the room holding a coin covered in tape in her hand. Her brother and my sister had tried to make the sink faucet spray by taping a coin to it.

We had to get revenge. The first part of our master plan was to wash our faces and put the coin back on the faucet.

When we came down the stairs, they were waiting for us. They asked us if anything had happened when we were in the bathroom. Being the experienced actors that we are, Jane and I exchanged confused glances and said no. Their eager grins faded into looks of disappointment.

Later that day, my friend and covered the doorknob of her brother's room with a thick coat of the Vaseline used against us earlier in the morning. We waited patiently, and, sure enough, Jane's brother came sprinting up the stairs and lunged for his door. His hand slipped from the doorknob and he lost his balance, almost falling over.

My friend and I knew that after the doorknob prank, our siblings were going to do

something to get us back. As a preventative measure, later that night when everyone else was asleep, we took yarn and set trip wires all over the room. Then, we took the yarn and created a web behind the door to catch our siblings when they tried to come in.

Unfortunately, the trip wires and web did not work as planned. Our siblings were easily able to access our room.

The next day, it was clear they were running out of ideas. Their pranks became less clever as they decided to throw ice cubes at us to wake us up.

At this point, Jane and I changed our strategy. We downloaded the app "Wi-Fi Camera" to aid us in spying on our siblings.

The app allowed us to use one phone as a camera and the other as a receiver to see what was being recorded. We connected our phones using this app, and hid the phone with the camera in a lamp, where it had a full view of the bedroom.

We used the recordings to find out what our siblings were planning, and even scare them.

One time, Jane and I were watching them rifle through the desk in her room. We crept up halfway up the stairs and yelled "We can see you." Through the camera, we watched our siblings jump and knock pencil cups off the desk. Similar pranks worked well until they found the phone we set up to record them.

The last prank in the

two-day war was done by Jane and me. We baked everyone cinnamon rolls and prepared everything normally except for one small ingredient swap. Instead of giving our siblings cinnamon rolls with frosting, we topped the freshly baked rolls with mayonnaise.

We expected our siblings to spit them out and be disgusted, but to our dismay, they seemed to enjoy the mayonnaise-cinnamon rolls. Although this last prank didn't exactly work out, we still think it contributed to our overall victory against our siblings.

The end of the prank war did not necessarily mean we stopped arguing with our siblings, but it gave us an opportunity to all do something together. We had a lot of fun and the prank war gave us something to remember and laugh about even after we returned to California. ♦

FOOD

Toothpaste Oreos and mayonnaise marshmallows become 'delicious' treats

super
nov-a

Anna Novoselov

"Here, have an Oreo!" my friend said as she held out an Oreo with teal filling a few years ago.

Smiling, I took it and bit off a sizable chunk.

"Is this mint...?" I warily asked as I looked up and saw my friend trying to contain her snickering. Slowly, I glanced at the half-eaten Oreo on my hand and pulled off the top half.

Something didn't seem right. The "filling" seemed a little

too liquidy and wasn't flatly pressed; instead, it stuck to the cookie's surface, as though it had been quickly smeared on.

"It's toothpaste!" my friend laughed. The realization sunk in. She had pranked me.

Fortunately, she had used toothpaste and not another spreadable substance like mustard — the most disgusting condiment known to man — or wasabi, which would have burned my completely spice-intolerant tongue.

Toothpaste doesn't even taste bad. There's a reason why people always reach for the blue bean boozled jelly bean: whether you get toothpaste or berry blue, you won't choke on your own saliva or drown gallons of water as you would if you had gotten the dead fish or barf flavor.

Still, I was embarrassed that I had fallen for such a simple prank.

"You're evil!" I laughed, throwing my

Oreo on the table. Tossing me a mischievous look, my friend ran to her room as I pretended to be mad.

A few seconds later, she emerged holding out a couple of actual Oreos as an apology gesture. Warily, I took them from her, taking off the tops and touching the filling to make sure that it wasn't toothpaste again. I was not going to fall for the same trick twice!

Fast forward a couple days, I became inspired to prank my younger sister in a similar way. However, I wasn't as nice as my friend.

In the middle of the day on April 1st, I took a marshmallow and carefully carved out the inside, making an indentation for a "delicious" filling. Then, I opened up my fridge, searching for the perfect ingredient.

Like a gleaming trophy, a jar of mayonnaise stood in the center of the fridge. Immediately, I took it out and got to work, stuffing globs of the creamy condiment into the marshmallow.

Sprinkling a few pinches of salt into the crevice to give it that slight touch of flavor, I set my creation onto a spoon and surrounded it with a pool of jam to mask the oozing mayo and pungent smell.

"Try this! I just made it!" I called

down to my sister while trying to maintain a poker face.

Unsuspecting, my sister lifted the spoon up to her mouth and bit into the marshmallow. Suddenly, her face became transformed by disgust and she sprinted to the sink, gurgling mouthfuls of water to save her taste buds.

"April Fools!" I said, holding out a few squares of chocolate along with a spoonful of jam without the mayonnaise marshmallow — my own apology gesture.

I admit, I felt a little guilty. But luckily, my sister forgave me.

Maybe she'll get me back eventually. But until then, I'll be alert by lifting the tops of Oreos and refusing to eat marshmallows handed to me on spoons! ♦



PRANK WAR

PRANKED
When practical jokes go wrong

FAMOUS APRIL FOOLS DAY PRANKS

The Peppa Pig fan club fails

b-allen-ced

Allen Chen

The nightmare started a few weeks ago, when, on a whim, I signed up for an April 1st prank story using an idea from a meme. The general plan was to put up signs for a nonexistent club in an attempt to lure people into a teacher's room. Unfortunately, I hadn't thought through any of the specifics. I had a rough idea for an obscure cosplay event to maximize the embarrassment of the victims, but otherwise nothing.

In order to assist with planning the operation, I drafted my meme group chat. When prompted for a fandom that was "kind of obscure but still accessible," my partners in crime responded with only a fraction of a second's delay. "Wild Kratts," typed a Pepe chat head, who immediately changed

her mind and enthusiastically suggested "PEPPA PIG!111!" instead.

The pink, rebellious kids show character, who had become something of a meme after being banned in China for being "counterculture," seemed perfect at the time. It was appropriately meme-y, not too outdated, while still being just about believable. However, I probably should have realized the situation I was about to get myself into.

Operation Peppageddon had been born. My end goal was to get a full room of people in Peppa cosplay — an overambitious dream at best, and an indicator of a mental breakdown at worst. To achieve this high bar, we would need much more preparation.

After some more discussion, we decided to ask English teacher Amy Keys if we could use her room. How did this happen? I lamented as I stood in front of Keys's room, mentally preparing myself for the absolute sus-fest that was about to occur. My unofficial partner in crime, the owner of the Pepe chat head, walked in just in time for us to

ask. Thankfully, Keys took it pretty well, although she was understandably dubious. "Will anyone get hurt? Not necessarily physically but spiritually," she said, only half joking.

"Yes, there's going to be some spiritual pain involved," I admitted after an awkwardly long pause.

Somehow, we were greenlit to use the room, as long as we didn't overlap with any actual clubs. Now, we only had to pick a date and begin spreading the lies.

Faced with extreme scheduling constraints, I conscripted another friend to help with logistics and started working on the signs. We went through a few drafts of increasingly bad signs, pushing the limits of believability, before settling on a multicolored, Comic Sans-covered mess that had many letters too bright to see. The trouble started pretty

much from that point, as the date was pushed further and further back by printer issues and a general lack of motivation. But, with a quickly approaching deadline we settled on March 27 and put up a few signs around campus.

On the day of the event, I donned a hastily made,

somewhat nightmarish Peppa Pig mask and went to Keys's room to wait for my victims. After no students arrived at the club for the first few minutes, we decided to venture out into campus to bring the club to them. More than a little self-conscious of my unusual choice of face wear, and mostly blind, my friends led me around the school yelling at random passerby to "go to Keys." Through the tiny eye holes I had made, I could see people both recoiling in horror and breaking down in laughter. After a few minutes of parading, we returned to the room with a total of zero new recruits.

Ultimately, around five people visited during the end of lunch while we were waiting there, in two large groups. Both groups quickly left when they discovered the desolate state of the club, but not before having a laugh at the Peppa we had drawn onto the whiteboard.

Clearly, the prank was a bust, hardly attracting enough victims to count as a success. Honestly, I'm surprisingly relieved at how few people were exposed to our antics. To anyone who was frightened by my Peppa mask, I apologize. I promise that when we make this an official club, I'll make a less scary one. ♦



PEPPA PIG

Taco Liberty Bell

On April 1, 1996, Taco Bell announced they had purchased the Liberty Bell and would be renaming it the "Taco Liberty Bell." To make their prank more convincing, they took out full-page ads in six major newspapers. After outraged citizens protested at the Liberty Bell, Taco Bell revealed it was just a prank.



Welcome to Chicago

On April 1, 1992, the Los Angeles Airport pranked passengers descending from the air with a huge sign that read "Welcome to Chicago."



Flying Penguins

On April 1, 2008, BBC released a video of flying penguins in Antarctica. BBC claimed these penguins fly to South America during the winter to enjoy the sunlight instead of staying in the cold Antarctic weather. Later, it was revealed BBC had used special effects to carry out the prank.



SOURCE: HOAXES.ORG

Author accurately captures Bay Area youth experience

BY Samantha Yee

Walking into an Adult Book Club at the Saratoga Library, all I knew was that author Kelly Loy Gilbert would be discussing her most recent novel, "Picture Us in the Light."

A part of me expected to see a cliché gathering of moms or high-strung 20-year-olds at a panel interview. Instead, I was introduced to a circle of aunts and grandmothers conversing directly with Loy Gilbert about topics that hit rather close to home. It was alienating to be the only teenager in the meeting, but strangely liberating.

The book's protagonist, Danny, is an artist with a scholarship to the Rhode Island School of Design and a set career path in mind. The story is set in the Bay Area, Loy Gilbert's home. There are parallels to real places in the Bay Area within the book, as well as the familiar competitive but sheltered schooling culture.

Many of the book club attendees identified with this element of the story through their own kids. One guest pointed out that their granddaughter is constantly worried for "no reason."

This then begged the question of why so many high schoolers are so stressed, when we have "nothing" to worry about—most of us are provided with all our basic needs like food and a home. One participant thought that

"this kind of pressure is unnecessary," reiterating that each child is different with a variety of college routes that they can go down. Unfortunately, people in this area often don't see it that way.

In "Picture Us in the Light," Danny isn't the stereotypical Bay Area student who goes into STEM, but he's still going to the notable RISD.



Courtesy of FANGIRLISH

She explained how people she knows that have lived in places similar to the Bay Area "reverberate" with past memories of academic stress, even after their education was over.

Loy Gilbert describes the Saratoga pocket as a bubble. Most children are unaware of how sheltered and fortunate they are.

"In Saratoga, Cupertino and other areas, [food insecurity is] not something you see, and it's a very brutal issue affecting the community," Loy Gilbert said.

I left the book club with a reclaimed sense of what it is to be a student in the Bay Area, and how older generations reflect on our mindset. The novel's reflection of Bay Area academic culture turned out to be more accurate than I imagined.

In reading this book, the Adult Book Club members also seemed to have similar thoughts. Loy Gilbert addressed them afterward: "What was fun was that we're not used to reading about teenagers, but we all get so much out of it."

One question that was brought up was, "Would the book have worked in any other setting?" There was a chorus of loud sighs and relatable head-shaking as soon as this was mentioned.

"Anywhere you have pockets of academically high performing places, I think that [the mentioned academic pressure] happens," Loy Gilbert said.

Many of the book club members believed that a mindset like this is immature. In Loy Gilbert's book, Danny is portrayed as just as imperfect, living a sheltered, Bay Area lifestyle full of unhealthy competition.

For Danny, despite the accomplishment of getting into a renowned school, there's still a lingering unsatisfied feeling and an unhealthy need to keep amping up personal goals and talents.

One participant addressed the option of community college, which a lot of students vying for excellence don't even consider. I recall my own parents encouraging me to go to any school of my choice, "as long as it's not something like West Valley."

Perhaps the best word to sum this up is "anemoia," defined as "nostalgia for a time you've never

Lo-fi music offers unique listening

BY Justin Guo

Low fidelity music, often shortened to lo-fi music, is a relatively new form of music purposely recorded to include technical flaws such as distortions in sound or added background noise. Artists intentionally downgrade the audio quality of their track to emulate the aesthetic of being recorded on old recording hardware.

Over the years, lo-fi music has spawned many similar styles and subgenres, including the illustrious lo-fi hip hop genre that started in the late 2010s.

The absence of lyrics as well as the gentle ambiance calms the listener's mind.

Alternatively known as chill-out music, lo-fi hip hop is often described as an electronic blend of jazz and hip hop, with an added bassline and a melodic tune that is often guitar or piano. The melody usually loops itself, but with different integrations of instruments or varying background sounds.

On the surface, many of these songs sound the same, but looking closer, subtle nuances emerge within each track. What's even more impressive, though, is the emotions that these songs evoke.

Perhaps the best word to sum this up is "anemoia," defined as "nostalgia for a time you've never

known." Though not officially a real word, the word describes exactly what it feels like when you listen to a lo-fi hip hop song: vague longing for something or someone that you can't exactly identify.

Lo-fi hip hop has quickly gained popularity on mainstream sites such as YouTube, SoundCloud, Spotify and many others. YouTube is lo-fi hip hop's biggest claim to fame due to the site's livestreams. These livestreams have played a big role in building a well-reputed community surrounding the lo-fi hip hop genre.

The livestream chats are almost always filled with hundreds, perhaps thousands, of other listeners. Users chat about endless topics, ranging from frustrations at work to the latest Ariana Grande song. Above all, the chats foster an altogether friendly and welcoming environment, with administrators and bots keeping the chat almost entirely free of racist, sexist or otherwise degrading remarks.

Sophomore William Yin, a fan of the genre, said he likes listening to it while studying.

"It is soothing music paired with a drum beat that you can 'bop' to," he said.

For studying, lo-fi offers a better alternative to other genres. The absence of lyrics as well as the gentle ambiance that lo-fi hip hop supplies calm the listener's mind, leading to greater concentration.

"Lo-fi makes me more productive because I usually work to the beat of the music; but unlike lyrical songs, I'm not sidetracked by the singing," Yin said.

'Apple of my Eye' teaches reporter a lesson in love

BY JunLee

During the Chinese New Year activity in my Chinese 2 class, we watched a Taiwanese romance movie called "Our Times." The film had a lasting impression on me, piquing my interest in the Taiwanese teenage life it depicted. Afterwards, I set out on the hunt for another good Taiwanese romance movie and found "You Are the Apple of My Eye," which ended up immensely changing my perception of love.

"You Are the Apple of My Eye" is a 2011 Taiwanese romance film based on director Giddens Ko's autobiographical novel of the same name. The film, based on characters and events from Ko's real experiences, follows a group of high school classmates learning lessons in life.

The movie has a profoundly compelling story, and the setting and characters are ordinary, allowing most viewers to relate and empathize with characters' emotions and experiences.

A good balance of humor also makes it an enjoyable watch. Language plays a key role in the Taiwanese film, especially when Hokkien, a language spoken in Southern Min Chinese dialect group, is integrated into the movie; the characters speak with sarcastic but funny swear words that undoubtedly provide a kick to audiences who understand the language.

The film starts with Ko Ching-Teng, the main character, reminiscing about the old days in 1994 when he and all his friends had a crush on Shen Chia-Yi, an outstanding student from their class whom they chased after for years. Shen Chia-Yi develops a deep friendship with

Ko-Teng, helping him study through his final year in high school. Later, Shen asks Ko-Teng if he would like her to answer to his confession, but Ko-Teng is scared, so he tells her that he will hear it the next time they meet. Unfortunately, at the end of the year, they all go their separate ways for college. The story follows Ko-Teng as he continues to try to win over Shen, but she ends up marrying someone else.

Personally, I enjoyed the ending of this movie. Ko-Teng's response to Shen finding the right person for her even though it wasn't him shocked me. It changed my perception of love: If I really like a girl, I imagined it would be impossible to see her dating another person or not liking me back because I'm not enough for her. But I realized that I was wrong. If I truly like a girl, I should be happy for her when she finds love, and I should be supportive of whatever makes her happy.

Because the movie doesn't end in an ideal way, it portrays a more realistic representation of relationships. Furthermore,

the movie's ending emphasizes that not everything will always work out in a way you want it to, but it's always better to learn from the experience and move on. Because of Ko-Teng's decision to let Shen go, the movie also illustrates that sometimes, a single action can change a person's life forever.

The story comes from a sincere heart, recounting the director's own experience with a universal theme. I believe everyone's first love story is something worth recounting, given the bittersweet moments and the lessons that can be learned from it.

"You Are the Apple of My Eye" will warm your heart, but at the same time, it will induce nostalgia. Its wistful tone encapsulates how people change and how memories can morph as people grow. ♦



GRAPHIC BY ANISHI PATEL



GRAPHIC BY FRANCESCA CHU

'SKAM' mimics reality

NORWEGIAN TV SHOW UTILIZES REAL-TIME CLIP RELEASES, LAYERED PLOTS AND CHARACTER SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

BY Neeti Badve

I remember it as clear as day. There I was one year ago, scrolling through my Instagram explore page, when a post about a random Norwegian show popped up.

And I thought the same thing that you're probably thinking right now: Things happen in Norway? But I was intrigued, so I dove into the world of "SKAM."

Right off the bat I could tell that the show did not use a stereotypical teen drama format. The word SKAM, which translates to "Shame" in Norwegian, is probably most famous for its unique distribution model.

Episodes are originally released as clips during the week in real time, meaning if a scene is supposed to occur on Saturday at 10:15, the clip will drop on the official SKAM website on Saturday at 10:15. At the end of the week, the clips are compiled into one episode, which is then released on television.

"SKAM" follows a group of students at Hartvig Nissen School in Oslo, an actual school in the capital city.

The show produced four seasons from 2015 to 2017, with each season focusing on the story of a different character within the group, highlighting his or her particular real-world struggles with peer pressure, sexual abuse, mental illness, homosexuality and religion, while the other characters develop in the background. What's even better is that not a single season's main character is a straight, white male.

Isak, the only male lead and focus of Season 3, comes to terms with his sexuality in this season. He meets Even, whose outgoingness lures Isak out of his shell, allowing him to stop living his fake life.

Soon enough, Even's story becomes just as important as Isak's. It gives a voice to

people with bipolar disorder, showing his manic and depressive episodes.

The most striking quality of the show is how real everything feels. From its portrayal of modern problems to the tangibility of the characters' personalities, "SKAM" feels like it really does take place in our world.

The creator and mastermind behind the project, Julie Andem, said that she wanted to create a show fit for the digital age. Hence, all the characters have their own Instagram accounts, and the official "SKAM" website displays updated text message conversations between characters. Everything from locations to music is hand-picked and intended to serve a distinct purpose in the plot. The tiniest details, like the words of a song, could have a hidden message.

The actors themselves had little acting experience before the show and were very close in age to their characters. This, combined with their regular clothing and lack of set makeup, makes the characters feel even less fictional.

With all the interlocked components, it's so easy to get invested in these characters' lives. Watching the show is like living life with them, step by step, feeling their pain when they are hurt and empathizing with their happiness.

Andem's grasp of social media and commitment to overall authenticity unravels the teenage mind in a uniquely raw way, showing just how complicated and diverse teenagers can be, and her success is evident.

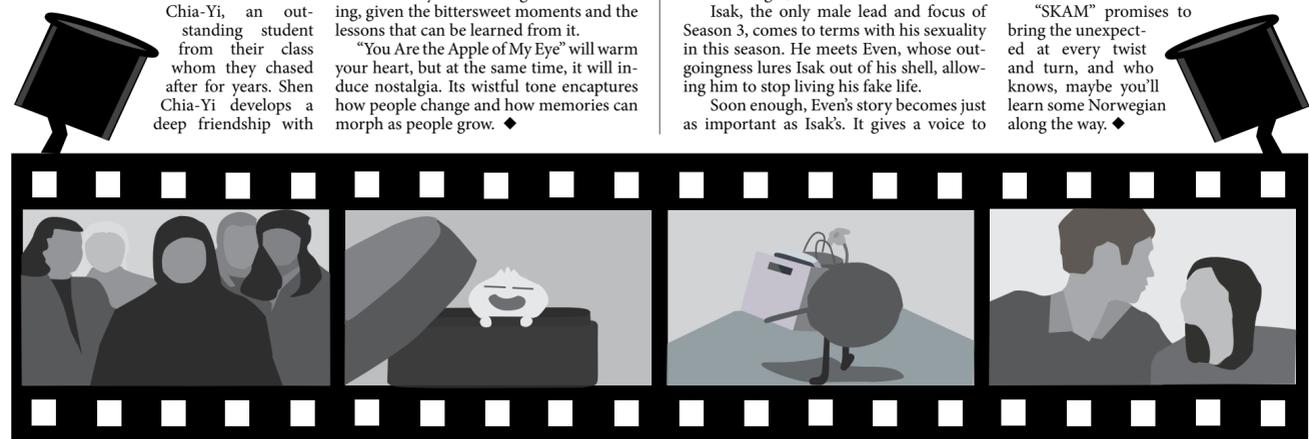
"SKAM" promises to bring the unexpected at every twist and turn, and who knows, maybe you'll learn some Norwegian along the way. ♦

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT: NEARBY ENTERTAINMENT SPOTS

Sky High is a place of nostalgia, reminding many of past birthday parties. The experience itself, bouncing recklessly without reprimand, is still extremely entertaining. However, after revisiting Sky High, I discovered numerous downsides that detract from its fun factor. During the day, the place is swarming with small children constantly kicking and shoving each other. Also, with the majority of visitors being under 18, you need a parent-signed waiver, which is extremely inconvenient if you decide to go to there on a whim. It is also not inexpensive: \$17 per hour plus the two dollars for special socks you have to wear when there. The food is also unreasonably overpriced and mediocre at best. The premise of Sky High is a great idea that could be very enjoyable; however, the high price and dirty facility teeming with kids makes Sky High a fairly unpleasant experience. ♦ RATING: 2.5/5

Walking through the building's overly grand doors, faint '80s music filled my ears. On Yelp, Lvl Up is listed as an arcade bar/restaurant; however, I would describe it as primarily a bar/restaurant with the after-thought of an arcade. In total, Lvl Up had about 20 arcade games, mainly the classics, along with a handful of pinball machines and board games. The food seemed to be their main focus. Lvl Up serves classy, well-priced bar food: chicken wings, salads and sandwiches. All of it was fairly tasty across the board. However, I recommend staying away from the soggy glob they call a chicken sandwich. There are also some inconveniences that take away from the experience. After 8 p.m., the restaurant turns into a bar, meaning no one under 21 is allowed in, making it problematic if you're looking for something fun to do late at night. Money spent at the arcade also begins to add up after playing just a few rounds of Pac-Man. Lvl Up was a nice experience with a fun atmosphere, good food and relatively few downsides. ♦ RATING: 4/5

From its sketchy facade Beat the Lock does not look like much, but upon walking into the escape room the consideration and cleverness of the company is clear. Some may be intimidated to participate in an escape room because getting out of the room seems nearly impossible. However, Beat the Lock makes the experience entertaining even if you don't escape. The staff was extremely friendly and helpful, giving us additional clues when we were struggling, and even accommodating when I was 15 minutes late. The pricing is fairly affordable at about \$30 per person. Generally participants are given about an hour to escape but depending on your wit the time varies. Overall, I recommend going to Beat the Lock. The rooms are well thought out with a level of difficulty that is challenging yet solvable. With the addition of welcoming staff and low prices, Beat the Lock is the place to beat. ♦ RATING: 5/5



GRAPHIC BY EMILIE ZHOU

Pixar short films display increasing diversity

BY Emilie Zhou

In the summer of 2018, crowds piled into theaters, eagerly waiting to watch Pixar's "Incredibles 2." Audience members, however, were surprised to be greeted by Pixar's new animated short, "Bao," which was released and shown in theaters before the film. "Bao," directed by Chinese-Canadian director Domee Shi, is the first Pixar short written and directed by a woman. In addition, in celebrating Chinese culture, "Bao" has been an important step for Pixar's diversity and inclusivity in their films.

"Something like 75 percent enrollment in animation schools is now female. That's going to create a shift in the industry," Shi said in an interview with Time magazine. "I feel like 'Bao' coming out is a signal of change — that such a big studio has gotten behind such a culturally specific short led predominantly by women."

The short, inspired by Shi's own childhood growing up with immigrant parents, also received the 2019 Oscar for Best Animated Short. With the help of other Chinese Americans on her team, such as production

designer Rona Liu, Shi was able to capture specific details of Chinese culture and create a storyline based on shared experiences.

"I think what matters when telling diverse stories is that those people are also the ones working behind the scenes," senior Emily Zhou said. "Bao" was the first short directed by an Asian American woman, and you can see how that influenced the film."

In the film, a dumpling miraculously springs to life and provides company to a lonely Chinese mother who is dealing with empty-nest syndrome.

The mother is given a second chance at parenthood as she raises the dumpling and watches the dumpling grow and mature. The two spend time going grocery shopping and buying Chinese pastries together, but as with any relationship between a parent and a child, the mother and her dumpling son face conflicts when he enters his teenage years and becomes increasingly more rebellious and independent.

And while the short is about a Chinese family, the messages regarding cultural clashes, family and coming of age are universal and relatable to many.

"All children go through a period of distancing themselves from their parents," Slate Magazine writer Inkoo Kang wrote. "And while a greater appreciation of parental dedication is a universal experience, that realization can be more fraught for immigrant children, whose parents have often sacrificed an unknowable amount of themselves for the sake of their children's futures."

However, in a statement released to The New York Times, Rashida Jones, who had terminated her work in "Toy Story 4" due to "philosophical differences," said that "there is so much talent at Pixar [but] it is also a culture where women and people of color do not have an equal creative voice."

According to Pixar producer Becky Neiman, who produced "Bao," the studio is trying to expand the kinds of stories they tell and the types of storytellers that tell them. As a result, "Bao" and other recent films, such as "Coco" and "Sanjay's Super Team," mark the progress Pixar has made in diversifying, as each film celebrates and shares the unique aspects of different cultures.

"I pitched two ideas along with 'Bao,' not knowing if Pixar would ever go for an idea

this weird but also this culturally specific, but those were the reasons they liked it," Shi said in an interview with Cineplex. "I think they've really come to embrace, to really value stories from different backgrounds."

Pixar has also recently started its SparkShorts program to "discover new storytellers, explore new storytelling techniques, and experiment with new production workflows." They are working with people of different backgrounds, cultures and ethnicities to bring their artistic visions to life or tell their individual stories.

For example, "Float," one of the SparkShorts that will be released later this year, is directed by Filipino-American director Bobby Rubio and will feature Filipino-American characters.

Another one of the SparkShorts, "Loop," will focus on the interactions between an autistic girl and her canoeing partner to reveal the importance of learning how others experience the world.

"I am proud to tell our stories," Rubio wrote in a series of tweets. "I know what it means to be underrepresented [and] I'm going to do my best to tell more!" ♦

Apps Evaluated

4:20



User-unfriendly: why Snapchat can't compete with Instagram, Facebook

BY Anna Novoselov

Five-hundred-day Snapchat streaks and dog-ear selfies are commonplace among Gen Z and Millennial age groups, and photos taken with Snapchat filters and geotags have even made their way onto other social media platforms like Instagram.

Snapchat's unique face filters and temporary messages attracted millions of users and resulted in the app's initial exponential growth in popularity starting in 2011.

Users were drawn to the platform's informal design and personal feel.

Fast forward to 2019, Snapchat is reporting declining engagement as more people turn to sites such as Instagram and Facebook, which now offer many of the same features.

In 2016, Facebook investors worried that Snapchat could harm Facebook's profits by stealing its users.

Now, however, many Snapchat investors are afraid the app will continue on its downward spiral.

Younger generations especially have abandoned Snapchat in favor of Instagram, choosing to post short videos, polls and boomerangs on Instagram Stories, which were introduced in August 2016. Despite initial criticism against Instagram Stories and how they copied Snapchat, the feature now has more than 2.5 times as many users as Snapchat Stories, according to Investor Place in a Feb. 2019 article.

Furthermore, in February 2018, the app introduced a major redesign that separated content from friends and public figures, making it difficult for users to watch stories from their favorite celebrities. Many labeled the update a jumbled mess.

In fact, according to The MacRumor, more than 800,000 people signed a Change.org online petition asking Snapchat to revert back to the original design. Unwisely, Snapchat simply responded by saying that the update may take some time to get used to.

This step and failure to listen and adapt to its users' wishes killed Snapchat's forward momentum.

Facebook, for its part, has also continued to display stable growth and holds the record for the largest number of new users per month, according to Target Journal. To compete with other social media sites, Snapchat could include more personalized content on the Discover page and introduce more video editing tools (such as Instagram's boomerang), as well as considering user input when altering the app.

In the end, the social media apps that provide a degree of permanence and an appealing virtual world will inevitably attract the most users. ♦

forward momentum.

Even though Snapchat moved users' stories back to the discover tab in May 2018, Snapchat's popularity did not recover.

"Snapchat's declining popularity makes sense," junior Snapchat user Lauren Hansen said. "The advertisements on Snapchat get muddled with people's stories and it's harder to see your friends' posts."

Although Snapchat's initial public offering (IPO) in 2017 debuted at \$17, the price fell to a low of \$4.82 in December 2019. It rose slightly to \$9 in February, but the value is still much lower than investors' projections.

Instagram, on the other hand, is growing faster than ever. Search Engine Journal reports that in June 2018, 1 billion people actively used the platform, with 500 million checking their accounts every day.

"Instagram has an easier format," Hansen said. "It's easier to find people [than on Snapchat] because you can just search for them."

Instagram's focus on visual content makes the app enjoyable, and many users can scroll through people's feeds to recount memories or see how their preferences and lives have changed over the years.

Snapchat, however, is based on temporary content, so users aren't inclined to put much effort into posting.

Stories disappear after 24 hours and direct messages disappear after the receiver has opened them.

While people can choose to save specific chats, many often forget to tap every line they wish to save, and can relate to asking "Wait, what did I say again?" upon receiving a reply.

Facebook, for its part, has also continued to display stable growth and holds the record for the largest number of new users per month, according to Target Journal.

To compete with other social media sites, Snapchat could include more personalized content on the Discover page and introduce more video editing tools (such as Instagram's boomerang), as well as considering user input when altering the app.

In the end, the social media apps that provide a degree of permanence and an appealing virtual world will inevitably attract the most users. ♦

Going viral on TikTok not as simple as it seems

BY Sofia Jones & Sandhya Sundaram

Many popular Instagram celebrities, such as Jacob Sartorius, Loren Gray or Danielle Cohn, started out on the app TikTok. Originally called Musical.ly, the app was primarily a platform for users to share short videos of themselves lip-synching to popular songs or scenes from films. However, after relaunching as TikTok in 2016, the app has expanded into all that and more.

The main demographic of the app has shifted since rebranding as well. Musically was full of young teens trying to seem provocative and gain fame through looks and choreography. TikTok, however, has a larger focus on humorous videos and editing, which is reminiscent of the now-dead platform Vine.

With the success people have been receiving on this platform, we decided to give it a shot to see if we could recre-

ate the fame or simply gain an appreciation for the app.

(We will not be releasing Sandhya's account username since we both have hopes of getting into college without admissions officers seeing us dancing in the bathrooms during newspaper class.)

The process of creating a TikTok begins with choosing a song or scene and filming the video. However, the best part is adding trendy filters and futuristic cinematography effects.

We were immediately overwhelmed by the infinite options we had, from the wide array of music choices to the dance moves we added.

Our first TikTok was made to "ICY GRL" by Saweetie, one that we hoped would go viral. This was our moment. We went along with juniors Anishi Patel and Connie Liang to the girls' bathroom by the

Spanish wing. Unfortunately, Mr. Yeilding's Spanish class was having their "siesta" at the same time and had to witness the entire experience.

We filmed many choreographed moves like opening the bathroom stall doors in unison and filming a faux fight scene. It took us an embar-

rassingly long time to create this, but it was definitely our proudest moment.

Even though we may not have gotten

the celebrity status we were hoping for, the ease of creating content makes this app very appealing, and we will be sure to keep creating TikToks in our free time. We'll keep telling ourselves that it only takes one viral video to become famous. ♦



'Twitch' creates gaming community

BY Justin Guo & Michael Wong

A notification pops up. A stream has just started, and clicking it leads to a live feed. At the sides of the screen, trimmed with perhaps a touch of the streamer's personality, brief pop-ups indicate the usernames of the newest follower and subscriber.

Occasionally a notification bell accompanying a donation may come through the chat, sometimes even celebrated with a funny text-to-speech sound clip. In the middle is the gameplay, any one of thousands of games depending on the streamer's liking, and near the bottom, a webcam reveals who is playing the game.

This is what a typical stream looks like on the popular streaming website Twitch.tv. Often shortened to just Twitch, it is a live-streaming platform where people view anything from video games to live vlogs.

Developed in 2005 as Justin.tv by then-Yale students Justin Kan and Emmett Shear, Twitch has seen tremendous growth and gathered millions of users from around the globe. In 2011, it was acquired by Amazon for \$970 million.

Over the years, Twitch has become home for professional gamers, streamers and video game enthusiasts; it is used widely in the school's gam-

ing community among other related platforms such as Discord or Steam.

Its 15 million daily active users have been a key element in the growth of eSports. Major eSport tournaments such as League of Legends' World Championships, Dota 2's The International and Counter-Strike: Global Offensive's Major Championships have been hosted on the site with millions of views. Even traditional sports have turned to Twitch. NBA's G-League made a deal last year to stream up to six minor league games per week. NFL also struck a deal, streaming Thursday night games with interactive extensions to predict game scores and stats against other viewers.

As a user-focused service, Twitch has placed a lot of emphasis on enhancing the interactivity of its viewer experience. A stream chat allows viewers to communicate live with each other and the streamer, whether it be discussing the stream and the streamer's life, or simply spamming blocks of text.

Twitch is perhaps most famous for its popular emotes—small icons depicting facial expressions that are extensively used in stream chats to express a wide range of emotions. For example, one of Twitch's trademark emotes, monkaS,

is a picture of a frog nervously sweating with its eyes dilated, oftentimes used during intense or stressful gameplay moments.

With its growth and increasing popularity, Twitch has become a lucrative career option for those who are able to find audiences.

Streamers make money through ad revenue, donations, subscriptions and sponsorships. Anyone can follow a stream, and the app gives them a notification when the stream goes live. Streamers receive about half the revenue from a \$5 subscription, the other half going to Twitch.

Sophomore Daniel Izrailevsky has streamed on and off for the past two years as a hobby, mainly playing League of Legends and Yu-Gi-Oh! for around 50 viewers at time.

"It was always a hobby," Izrailevsky said. "Interacting with new people and the relaxed environment was a nice way to unwind and enjoy the games I played more."

Twitch is an important medium for people to learn about games, interact with other passionate viewers and take a break from studying.

From its early days as a general-interest streaming service, Twitch has evolved into the largest video game streaming platform in the world.

If Twitch's explosive growth is any indication, it will continue to bring viewers closer together through its streams as it spawns new, iconic moments and memes in gaming history. ♦



April 5, 2019



Cafeteria staff Barbara Herrera inputs the cost of a student's purchase into the cafeteria's checkout system.

ID card scanners help lunch lines move faster

BY Rohan Kumar & Oliver Ye

Every day during tutorial and lunch, dozens of students file into the cafeteria, grab their entrees and snacks, scan their ID cards and walk out within minutes.

Barcode scanners, along with new software for cafeteria computers, now help expedite the lunch-buying process, requiring only a couple taps by cafeteria staff members to complete a purchase. The technology also provides a detailed digital log of a student's balance, although it does not currently include which items students purchase.

Before this technology was implemented three years ago, students could only pay at the cafeteria and food cart using cash. Now, students or their parents can deposit money on school ID cards, scan the card at the lunch line and have the payment deducted from

their online balance. While the lines still remain long, they now move much faster.

Junior Alex Pan was a freshman when the changes were implemented. He now helps with handling transactions in the cafeteria and noticed that cash transactions were slower.

"Instead of having to get the cash and give the change back, I can just say, 'You're good,' and input the money while they are moving and the next person is getting their card out," Pan said.

According to food service manager Pam Carlino, the lunch staff simply input the cost of

the student's items using an interface with buttons for various dollar amounts. The software also allows students, parents and lunch staff to access an online log that shows the amount of money on an ID card. This technology is now in use in three locations: the four lunch lines, the snack line

and the food cart.

Many nearby schools also use automated payment systems as well, including Redwood Middle School and the elementary schools, adding to the ease of using the system here.

In the near future, potentially next year, Carlino said that a new software that records item purchases may also be introduced.

This way, parents would be able to view the specific items that are being purchased, not just dollar amounts. Knowing how the money is spent allows for more accountability in student purchases. With parents being able to view what items are being purchased, students may make healthier choices.

"The lines are horrible; everyone still complains about them," Carlino said. "But I do think it goes faster now and it may change again next school year." ♦



Pan Volunteer

Teacher wellness programs bring many benefits for staff

BY Mathew Luo & Aaria Thomas

Saddled with dozens of essays and quizzes to grade, recommendation letters to juggle and lessons to plan, teachers can feel just as fatigued and overwhelmed as their students.

The teacher wellness programs, introduced last fall, were designed to combat burnout and promote closeness among faculty and staff. Although this program is quite experimental, it has already paid its dividends, assistant principal Brian Safine said.

The programs are organized by the District Wellness Committee that includes 12 district employees, but the sessions themselves are run by teachers. The committee brainstorms ideas, then reaches out to teachers to find willing hosts. Programs vary from educational presentations to fitness workouts. For example, a recent teacher wellness program on March 5.

"The programs are in breakout sessions where staff members

can choose which topic they want to learn about," Safine said. "I've been to the financial literacy presentation and the healthy cooking session, and found both to be very valuable."

Science teacher Kristofer Orre, who is on a special assignment to help the district's teachers for the next two years, helped with setting up the technology and Canvas support on the last wellness day on March 5 and hosted a CrossFit workout design session on the same day in the weight room.

"We created a workout, I taught them how to scale or modify the movements to their ability, and then we did the workout," Orre said. "The staff could use some of the CrossFit methodology to design their own workouts that would fit within a short amount of time, but also give them good results."

The school faculty has one out of four annual after-school wellness days left, but the "on-site wellness" subcommittee is organizing more activities, according

to assistant principal Kerry Mohnike, who chairs the committee. These activities include a staff talent show planned for this May.

The committee is not currently planning to expand their activities to Redwood Middle School or the elementary schools. However, Mohnike said that they are open to collaboration in the future.

According to Safine, the teacher wellness programs have been positively received by teachers. Not only do the programs provide time for teachers to take care of themselves, but they also provide a space for teachers to share their expertise with each other, he said.

"Educators are in the business of caring for others," Safine said. "We enjoy being around young people and we enjoy caring for young people. But [sometimes] we're not very good at taking care of ourselves. So in one sentence, these sessions have allowed us time after school to take care of ourselves, which we often overlook during the regular business of running a school." ♦

Students and staff manage food waste

BY Anishi Patel

National school lunches compounded an annual \$1.2 billion in food waste during 2013, according to the U.S. National Library of Medicine, but for a small school like Saratoga High, the problem seems to be easier to manage.

Even though the majority of students are well-off and likely have plenty of surplus food at home, strong ethnic and cultural cues mandate food conservation for many students. For junior Siyona Suresh, whose parents grew up in a small village in Kerala, India, family values have always frowned upon food waste.

"My parents have always taught me not to waste food," Suresh said. "I think it's because they know the value of food, having lived in countries where poverty is more visible than here in the U.S. Those values translate to how they raise their kids."

On campus, the cafeteria plays a large role in regulating food waste, namely by using data from previous years to purchase and make appropriate amounts of food.

But before food can be composted, the EPA advocates for "source reduction," or minimizing the volume of surplus food generated. Families can follow these guidelines by buying and cooking meals appropriately, something culinary club president senior Sally Lee's family practices.

"After my brother moved out, we started having a lot of food waste because we were used to cooking for four," Lee said. "Now we try and make enough food for just that day, so we don't have as many leftovers."

Lee suggested others try the same: regulate the cooking process and limit personal portions to produce less surplus food.

"Food waste is a sad issue most people gloss over. Right now, we're privileged to have all this food and all this wealth, but there are people who are in need of food," Lee said. "If we try to be more thoughtful with how much we're eating, and be more grateful, that could change the mindset most people have." ♦

Organic waste such as leftover salad, tomato tops or celery

scraps are put into maintenance crew member Lubomir Drapal's special "chicken barrel." Drapal, who cares for around 20 chickens at his home in the Santa Cruz Mountains, collects this barrel at the end of each day and mixes its contents with chicken scratch. The resulting blend is both nutritional and eco-friendly.

"The chickens will eat anything you give them," Drapal joked. "It's a great thing [the cafeteria] is doing; otherwise, the food would end up in the garbage can."

Drapal also puts his household food waste into compost bins, and with the resulting nutrient-rich soil, he grows raspberries, onions, lettuce and cucumbers.

Composting makes up the fifth tier of the Environmental Protection Agency's Food Recovery Hierarchy, below other food-management options such as feeding the hungry and donating. By composting organic waste, methane emissions from rotting landfill food can be limited.

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ACCORDING TO OLIO, A FOOD SHARING APP AIMING TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE...

the annual value of food wasted globally is worth \$1 trillion and has the ability to feed one billion hungry people



GRAPHIC BY EILEEN BUI

Yearbook staff works hard to preserve memories

by Justin Guo & Siva Sambasivam

Starting in the early 1960s, SHS students have looked forward to receiving a volume of the Talisman yearbook in May. Students typically flip through the pages, trying to find any stories or photos about themselves or their friends before getting the final pages of the book signed by their teachers and friends.

But what students generally fail to notice is the amount of time put into the creation of the yearbook. One class period, 35 students, 80 classes a year — amounting to a total of over 8,000 hours poured into the book that will preserve high school memories for decades.

The Falcon took an in-depth look into the staff hierarchy of the yearbook staff as well as the production of the Talisman.

Production cycles set the framework for the class

The production of the Talisman is split into six “cycles,” based on a planned timeline. For example, the early cycles in the year cover events that happen in August and September, such as Back to School Night and fall sports, while later cycles cover spring sports and events like the Benefit Fashion Show.

One class period, 35 students, 80 classes a year — amounting to a total of over 8,000 hours poured into the book that will preserve high school memories for decades.

For each of these topics, a “spread” is assigned to a partnership of two reporters and a photographer. A spread is simply a page, or pages, in the yearbook.

After spreads are assigned by the editors-in-chief (this year: seniors Anisha Byri, Kitty Huang, Chloe Peng and Kimi Uenaka), the assigned photographer tries to take photos for the spread. The reporters lay out the pages in Adobe InDesign.

For most of the spreads, the editors create templates for reporters to follow. However, every partnership gets to work on at least one breakout spread — more freeform spreads that the reporters get to design themselves. Breakout spreads are usually reserved for special trends or events, while normal spreads about sports or routine events generally follow a tradi-

tional format to keep the yearbook’s structure consistent.

These breakout spreads allow reporters and layout artists to use their creative side, as the spreads don’t have to follow a certain template.

“At first, I found the breakout spreads really intimidating,” sophomore reporter Tabitha Hulme said. “But I really enjoyed being able to have complete freedom to create a spread that had no limitations.”

According to Huang, these spreads provide a lighter and more fun side for the yearbook. This year, for example, the Talisman will have feature spreads about the different ways students get to school, and “trend” spreads about fashion and memes, among others.

Occasionally, the Talisman will have half cycles between regular production periods. The primary purpose of these half cycles is to work on the less time-consuming parts of the yearbook such as senior ads in order to help the staff get work done but not feel swamped at the same time. In essence, half cycles are just smaller assignments that go along with the normal cycles.

Every three or four weeks, the reporters have a deadline to finish the spreads by the dreaded “dropdead” deadline day, similar to the newspaper’s “deadline night,” where every story and spread in the cycle must be signed off and ready to be sent to printing plant of Walsworth Publishing Co., located in Marceline, Mo.

Though dropdead is an important deadline, the yearbook’s plant deadline is much more important: It’s when the staff digitally submits their spreads to Walsworth (the publisher) and they get to see the progress of their yearbook and what they need to do next.

The yearbook staff has a bit more leeway than newspaper in the sense that they can go back and revise their submitted layouts if necessary at a proofing stage, while the newspaper staff, after having printed and distributed their issue, can only look for any potential mistakes in the issue, learn from them and try improve on the next issue.

However, there are still consequences set in place to prevent the yearbook staff from slacking off. Primarily, students will lose points on their grade if their spreads are late.

The EICs will also struggle to put together a final product if spreads are late or unfinished.

And if the staff repeatedly fails to meet their respective deadlines, yearbook adviser Mike Tyler may decide to

cut pages from the final yearbook.

Leadership structure depends on seniors

The yearbook’s leadership structure is similar to that of its newspaper counterpart.

At the bottom of the pyramid are the sophomores and juniors who are first-year yearbook students. Affectionately called “yearbies,” their main tasks are working on the spreads and stories that they are assigned to.

Above them are the copy and layout editors, who edit stories and spreads respectively before they get to the EICs.

The EICs are basically responsible for the production of the entire yearbook, reviewing and editing every story and layout that will go in the final product. They have the most control and the most responsibility.

This year, the staff is split into two teams, with each team being led by two EICs.

For the EICs, their work begins before the school year. After EICs are picked by Tyler the previous spring, the editors begin planning the book and also attend a summer yearbook camp — this year’s one was at Chapman University in Orange, Calif.

After the EICs came back from the camp,

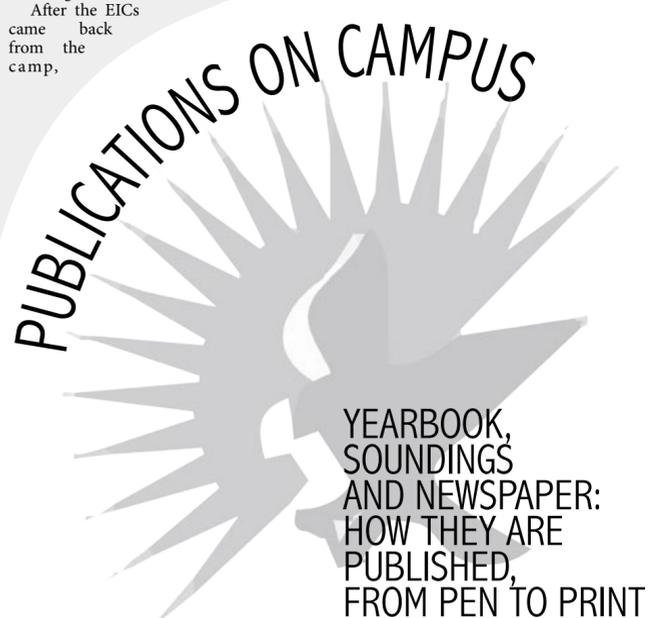
they had a solid plan and vision for the book and began planning specific spreads.

As an adviser who’s now in his 22nd year at the school, Tyler provides support and advice throughout the process. He reads and signs off on the final spreads and stories, giving suggestions for what reporters should do to make the yearbook better.

Also, the editors receive help from their yearbook representative, Nicole Gravlin. With her background in design, Gravlin played a major contributing role in helping the EICs figure out the final design for the yearbook, and she has also resolved a lot of questions or concerns that the EICs had along the way.

But in the end, it is still a student-run production with the EICs having the final say on every decision made throughout the year.

“I think it’s great that it’s a student-run class, but it can be challenging at times,” Hulme said. “The yearbies really depend on the upperclassmen to teach them the certain rules and guidelines they need to follow. And because there are so many stages to get our ideas and spreads signed off, we have to have a connection with the upperclassmen.” ♦



Soundings revamped with web version and more issues

by Howard Tang

Since 1986, Soundings, the school’s literary and art magazine, has published collections of photography, art, prose and poetry. Its underlying philosophy, as stated by the editors of the 1988 issue, is to “encourage both conscientious reading and exemplary writing.”

This philosophy has remained relatively unchanged over the 33 years between its inception and the present. While continuing to provide a platform to promote creativity in literature, the program has begun to lean more toward the recognition of art.

“We saw that there wasn’t really a lot of ways that students could express their interests in these arts at the school, so we wanted to continue the tradition of Soundings to students’ thoughts and ideas of the world

around them,” said senior Anisha Byri, a Soundings staff member.

Although part of the journalism program, Soundings currently does not have an adviser. Journalism teacher Mike Tyler, who is the adviser for the school newspaper and yearbook, works with the group to arrange for the printing of the publication but does not assist otherwise.

The word “soundings” refers to the nautical term of measuring the depth of a body of water, but in this case, it refers to the measuring of the depth of student writing.

This year’s Soundings staff has already published one web-only issue in December and is planning to run a print issue before the end of the school year.

The theme for their next issue, which they hope to publish in mid-May, is “halcyon,” which can refer to a species of kingfish-

ers mostly present in Africa and Asia; a “period of time in the past that was idyllically happy and peaceful,” as defined by the Oxford Dictionary; a mythical bird that breeds in a nest floating at sea at the winter solstice, charming the wind and waves into calm; or an ancient Greek myth.

According to senior Cheryl Wang, a Soundings staff member, the tale tells of a woman named Halcyon, who jumped into the sea to join her lover who died there. They then emerged from the sea as a pair of halcyon birds and found happiness afterwards.

“We wanted to communicate this idea of great sorrow and finding happiness after hardship,” Wang said. “We know that there is going to be a wide theme of submissions to Soundings, so we didn’t want to find a theme that would restrict any of the works that came to our magazine. Since

‘halcyon’ is such a versatile word with multiple meanings and associations, we felt it was the strongest choice for our theme this year.”

Soundings has traditionally been published once a year, but the current staff decided to revamp the publication a little to showcase more student works, Wang said. Although they originally planned on running three issues this year, they predict that only two will be completed. This year, Soundings also introduced the addition of an online issue.

Another gradual change that Soundings has noted over the years is a drop in the number of submissions. While issues in the 1980s received more or less 150 pieces of writing, the December issue only collected around 50 works.

The staff leaves the accepted submissions untouched except

to correct grammatical mistakes or to shorten the works to resolve spacing issues.

The Soundings staff is looking forward to an ambitious issue to showcase some of the best creative talent on campus, incorporating works they have acquired all throughout the year. For the final issue, they have recruited four new members; sophomore Henry Weng, junior Connie Liang and seniors Arin Chang and Elaine Fan; to their previously seven-member team consisting of Byri, Wang, sophomore Manasi Garg, junior Anishi Patel and seniors Sherrie Shen, Kaitlyn Wang and Colleen Feng.

“A lot of us on the team are seniors, and this is our last year to work on Soundings,” Wang said, “so we’re hoping that this issue will be a memorable one that we can look back on in the future and be proud of.” ♦

Revealing newspaper secrets: what goes on in the J-Room

Printers whirring, editors scribbling red corrections on layouts and students loading food onto their already overflowing plates are common sights during deadline night the Monday before an issue comes out. Students work to push their stories through editing and rush around the room, copy editing, putting finishing touches on graphics, and tracking progress on the masking tape “spreadsheets” on the whiteboard.

The next day, the finished layouts are uploaded as PDFs and sent to Folger Graphics, a commercial printer in Hayward, Calif. On Friday that week, the staff distributes copies to classrooms and mails copies to a list of roughly 500 subscribers who are members of the PTSO.

It’s safe to say that most readers look at the issue without thinking about the job put into each graphic, story and layout.

Headlines, for instance, have to capture

the gist of the story, draw readers in and also fit the space allotted for them by the page designer. Stories must highlight key facts and mix them with input from sources. Ideally, stories also grab the reader’s attention and keep them entertained all the way to the last word.

Some readers may not realize that the Falcon is divided into two staffs of roughly 35: fourth and fifth period. Each one usually produces one issue per grading period, for a total of 12 in the year. While six weeks may seem like a long time to produce one issue, there are hundreds of jobs that must be done to produce issues that average 24 pages. Staffers earn their grade depending on how much they’ve contributed to each issue.

Based on my almost two years on staff, here are some other little-known truths about being on The Falcon staff.

—by Anna Novoselov

1. Getting assigned stories is like winning the lottery

At the beginning of each cycle, section editors present their story ideas to the staff, discussing possible angles and crowdsourcing for more suggestions. The entire staff is asked to vote on a package (similar stories that appear as a group under a certain theme) in sections like Lifestyles and Entertainment.



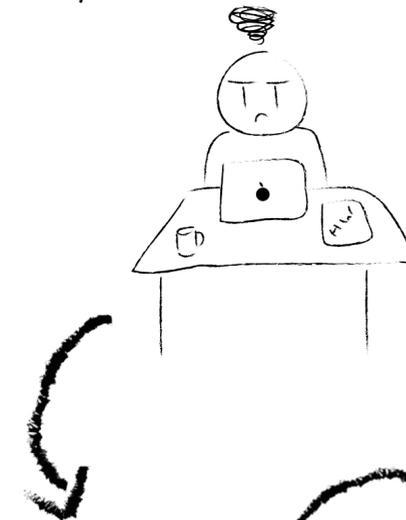
The whole staff chimes in during this democratic process, but for some mysterious reason, the total number of votes never adds up the number of people in the class.

Most of the time reporters email section editors with their story requests and possible focus (each staff member even had his or her own Falcon email address ending with @saratogafalcon.org), but sometimes the editors have people sign up during discussions. Reporters, especially chickadees (the named given to first-year staff members), shoot their hands up and anxiously hope that they will get the chance to earn contributions.

Soon after, section editors update the issue Google spreadsheet with a list of stories and reporters check to see what stories they were assigned and the deadlines for each.

Reporters are tasked with interviewing sources, transcribing interviews (for many, the most despised task of journalism), writing and sending the rough draft of each story to section editors all within a little over a week. All of this editorial work is done in Google Drive. For a story to appear in print, it must be signed off by section editors, editors-in-chief and adviser Mike Tyler.

2. Three tests in one week? An essay and a Socratic seminar? That’s nothing compared to writing 5+ stories in a couple of days.



During the first week of production, the workload of newspaper may be comparable to AP classes, except without the grade bump. No, we don’t just sit around playing slither.io on the J-room iMacs, as outsiders might think.

Usually, LESI (Lifestyles, Entertainment, School Scope, and In-Depth) stories are due the Friday the week after discussion, and NOS (News, Opinion and Sports) stories are due early in the following week.

Homework in classes like math and chemistry competes with the push to get stories written before deadlines. But if the prospect of failing a STEM class is too large or if the reporting proves difficult, writers can simply beg for mercy from section editors and ask

for extensions. Usually they agree on a more reasonable time that preserves sanity and GPAs.

While many sources can be easily contacted through Facebook messenger or through email or interviewed during tutorial, lunch, or the newspaper period through callouts, other interviews require much more work. Students often interview members of the community, conduct research online or reach out to notable former Saratoga residents. For a recent issue, a reporter attempted to contact Saratoga High school alumnus Steven Spielberg and was put on hold for unreasonably long periods of time by several different people before finally giving up.

After interviewing comes the dreaded task of transcribing. With

headphones in their ears, reporters attempt to type out their interviewee’s exact words, making frequent typos and rewinding several times to ensure that they did not miss anything. The difficulty of the task is amplified greatly if the interviewee speaks quickly or mumbles.

Finally, students start writing stories by coming up with a thematically appropriate, attention-grabbing lead, adding direct and indirect quotes as well as transitions while also interspersing the research they’ve done. Each section of the newspaper has a distinct tone of writing — for example, Lifestyles stories tend to be lighthearted while news stories take a more formal tone, so writers have to adapt and alter their tone for each section.

4. Deadline night: The panic sets in and students push through the last stretch.



3. Dummies aren’t just foolish people



As deadline night approaches, section editors draw dummies (layout plans) and give them to staff members who sign up to be layout artists on the whiteboard after standing in a long line and shoving through people pushing to grab markers. Layout artists then have to meticulously put in every photo, byline, story and other element on the page in InDesign, all while making sure that components are one pica (.167 inch) apart.

Furthermore, each story has to reach the end of a rectangular text box, which may be accomplished by adding paragraph tabs or deleting fragments of sentences. Reporters must be careful while making these minor edits because deleting content carelessly could lead to grammatical errors. After the last word of each story, a little black diamond is placed to mark its end.

On deadline night, the staff gathers in the J-Room (303) until 8:30 p.m. to finish last-minute edits and put together the final version of the newspaper. After a few hours of work, a much needed break is provided by parents who bring in delicious food, including a themed main course (such as BBQ, Mexican or Chinese), fruit and dessert.

People rush around, talking and printing, while a few students sometimes slump on the couches in the front of the room to rest. Looking at an empty-looking copyediting chart, Tyler sometimes expresses doubts that the staff will manage to finish the issue, but miraculously, every-

thing seems to get done right before the Tuesday 5 p.m. final deadline.

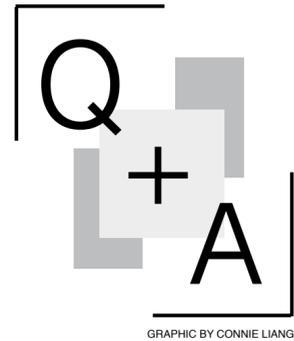
On Thursday, 2,000 print newspapers arrive hot off the presses, but more work remains. Students complete self-evaluation forms where they document their work for grading purposes that day.

Sometimes they’ll also label and rubberband the newspapers for bulk mailing. No matter what, either fifth or fourth period will distribute the papers to each classroom on Fridays.

Students get a two-day break that weekend until the issue cycle restarts the following Monday or Tuesday. ♦

Heroic history behind Kevin Moran Park

IN 1970, SHS GRADUATE DIED WHILE TRYING TO STOP UNIVERSITY RIOTING



BY Mathew Luo
& Kaitlyn Tsai

Plant Operations Supervisor Brian Moran, (1971 SHS Alumnus) has announced that he will retire at the end of this school year. Moran supervises the maintenance, custodial, and grounds crew at Saratoga High School that keeps the campus in good shape — everything from fixing broken air conditioners to maintaining the athletic fields.

What is less known about him is that his older brother Kevin, (1966 SHS alumnus), passed away at age 22 on April 18, 1970 from a stray police bullet as he was trying to quell a riot against the Vietnam War while he was a student at University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB).

In order to commemorate Kevin Moran's life, the City of Saratoga built Kevin Moran Park shortly after his death. Today, the 10.3-acre park has children's play areas, picnic tables and a tennis court among other features, and serves as a peaceful area for people to enjoy the outdoors.

Kevin Moran passed away just weeks before graduating from the university with honors in economics. Kevin and nine other siblings graduated from Saratoga High between the years 1966-1979. Nearing the 49-year anniversary of Kevin's passing, Brian Moran spoke to The Falcon about how the event shaped his life.

Q: What were the circumstances of Kevin's passing?

Moran: Demonstrations and riots against the War in Vietnam were happening on college campuses around the nation. UCSB did not escape this as the protests turned violent.

In April of 1970 agitators, outside groups and some students rioted in Isla Vista, where the University is located, and attempted to burn down the local Bank of America building. They also rolled over police cars and set them on fire along with dumpsters in the area.

The Santa Barbara police department called over the LA Police Department. Previous to that, there was a call in the university from the student body president asking moderate students to go out to try to quell the crowd, to stop rioting and burning down the bank.

My brother and a number of his roommates went out. They were being pelted by rocks and bottles from the angry crowd. He and his roommates went in the bank to extinguish a fire and came out.

There's a bit of a mystery about how Kevin was shot. There was an inquest done, and apparently a police officer shot and hit a wire. It hit my brother at about one o'clock in the morning. He was rushed to the hospital, but he was dead on arrival.

He passed away on April 18, 1970, just six weeks from graduating with an honors degree in economics.



GRAPHIC BY CONNIE LIANG



Kevin Moran 1948-1970



Clockwise from upper left: Maintenance Supervisor Brian Moran, brother of Kevin Moran; Kevin Moran's 1966 SHS graduation photo; scenes from Kevin Moran Park; the outside of Bank of America in Santa Barbara after 1970 when Kevin Moran was killed. It is now the site of the university's Embarcadero Hall.

Courtesy of BRIAN MORAN, QUIRKY BERKELEY, CITY OF SARATOGA, JASON LOUIE

Q: How did you, your family, and the community react to Kevin's passing?

Moran: Our parents woke all of the family up at 5 a.m. and gathered us together to tell us the horrible news. They also contacted my older sister Rita and brother Terry that were away at college. We were all shocked, saddened, and in disbelief. It was very tough on our family and you can imagine how my parents felt ... overwhelmed with heartache. I'm sure at the time I was angry with those that caused the riot and put others in harm's way.

"Kevin's actions that night were so much more than protecting property."

MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR

Brian Moran

There was a tremendous outpouring of love and support from friends, the local community, and all over the nation. My parents received hundreds of cards and letters from across America with folks sharing their grief with us. We received condolences from then-governor Ronald Reagan by phone and a letter from President Nixon. The City of Saratoga decided to name a new undeveloped park in his name between Cox and Prospect Avenue.

Kevin Moran Park remains a valuable neighborhood and community park. The Bank of America created a college fund for the rest of us. UCSB created the Kevin Moran scholarship award, which still is in place in his honor. When I reflect on Kevin's brief life I'm saddened by what could have been for him ... meaningful career, marriage, kids, grandkids, and the love, joy, fulfillment, and sorrows that come from a life well lived.

Q: What do you hope people learn from the incident of your brother's passing?

Moran: Over the nearly 50 years since Kevin's death, his short life continues to be an inspiration for me and my brothers and sisters. I take great comfort in believing that he has long since been reunited with our Creator and our wonderful parents that brought him into the world. My hope for the current student body is that they too would be inspired through Kevin's brief but well spent life.

Kevin's accidental death was indeed a tragedy for our family. The larger tragedy would be if he wasted his life. He did not. Like students today, Kevin walked the same hallways back in the early and mid 1960s. He was preparing himself to take a responsible role in his life while being aware of and caring for those around him. It wasn't all about him.

Kevin knew right from wrong and lived his life with uncommon integrity and courage. Kevin and his roommates

Q: What does it mean to be hero?

Moran: The definition of a hero or of heroic actions would be — it sounds cliché — going beyond the call of duty, getting involved and caring for those around you even though it may be costly. Kevin's actions on that fateful night so long ago answers the question. Kevin responded to a call to bring peace to a dangerous situation that desperately needed a peace-maker, not a cowardly rock thrower or arsonist, nor one of the many onlookers that did nothing but stand on the sidelines to see what would happen. Kevin's actions

courageous actions that night were not driven by, 'we're going to protect property,' they wanted to do the right thing. And the right thing was to calm the crowd and to peacefully stop the riotous conditions.

Do the right thing in your life. When challenges come in your direction that require immediate attention, and they help someone else, don't hesitate. Don't put yourself in serious physical jeopardy, but reach out, and help someone if they're in need. Try always to do the right thing.

Another important thing, for anyone, is that a long life is not guaranteed. Your life is a precious gift and it goes by quickly. There is a reason why you are here on this planet. God has a plan for your life. Spend your time wisely and always reach out to help others and be of service wherever you can. Develop your gifts and talents to the fullest and share them with others to make a better world.

that night were so much more than protecting property. Along with his three roommates they responded instinctively knowing that violence and destruction was wrong. In Kevin's case, those instincts were shaped by my parents through their faith, love, and guidance for him. Heroic actions don't have to be large either; they can be small little things that no one sees. It's fine if no one names a park after you, and you're not on a magazine cover. They can be little things where you just do the right thing when doing the right thing is difficult and maybe costly. ♦

Acclaimed expert and former Stanford dean warns against dangers of overparenting in McAfee talk

BY Kaitlyn Wang

On March 12, news about perhaps the largest college admissions scandal in history broke. Subsequent stories revealed wealthy parents who were allegedly willing to cheat and bribe so their privileged children could enter elite schools like Yale and USC.

News of the scandal made Julie Lythcott-Haims's message delivered the night before at the McAfee Center all the more relevant.

Hosted by the PTSO, the event featured Lythcott-Haims, the author of the New York Times bestseller "How to Raise an Adult." She urged the audience to let their teens make more of their own choices, even if those choices sometimes lead to heartache and failure.

Parents from Saratoga and Los Gatos High attended the event, followed by a Q&A session and book signing. Nearly 400 people attended the talk.

"The response was universally positive with the people that I heard from," assistant principal Brian Safine said. "Parents said things like, 'This is such a good reminder about when and how to intervene in my child's life and when to let them figure things out for themselves.'"

Children were less aware of their own selves and what they wanted.

"How to Raise an Adult" resulted in Lythcott-Haims's TED talk, which has been viewed more than 4 million times on the TED website. Safine also described the positive response Lythcott-Haims received when she presented to teachers during a staff development day two and a half years ago. The



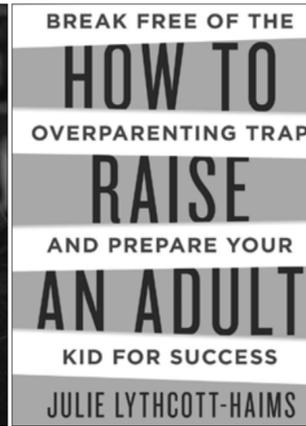
Julie Lythcott-Haims, author of "How to Raise an Adult" and "Real American."

staff gave her a long standing ovation at the end of her talk.

Lythcott-Haims's second visit brought a more personal perspective from her own experiences as a parent. Lythcott-Haims, who has a 19-year-old son at Reed College and a 17-year-old daughter at Gunn High School, shared anecdotes about herself and her family. Her sense of humor evoked laughter in the audience.

Science teacher Jennifer Lee, who attended the event and has listened to several of Lythcott-Haims's talks, appreciated the power of her honesty.

"Everything she says is from the heart; there's an element of truth to it," Lee said. "She's not trying to talk at teachers, parents and students. She's very real about, 'From my professional life, I can tell you what to do. But I'm also a parent. Even though I know



Courtesy of KRISTINA VETTER, STANFORD DAILY

what I'm supposed to do, I know how hard it is to do things the right way. I make the same mistakes that everyone else makes."

Lee's first year as an undergraduate at Stanford corresponded to Lythcott-Haims's first year as the dean of freshmen. Working as "Dean Julie" for a decade, Lythcott-Haims was concerned for a set of children she saw who were overparented and trained like dogs in Westminster dog shows, she said.

At Stanford, Lythcott-Haims saw that parents grew increasingly involved in their students' lives — more parents were even going to college with their kids and staying. And children were less aware of their own selves and what they wanted.

Too often, finding your passion sounds like searching for a book in the library, according to Lythcott-Haims.

"Find your passion by January 1 of se-

nior year," Lythcott-Haims joked. "Actually November 1, thanks."

While overparenting may result in short-term benefits, there are long-term losses. Children lose the development of self-efficacy: They do not know how to handle, to hope, to dream. Their sense of worth and value becomes tied to their GPA, leading to higher levels of anxiety and depression.

Lythcott-Haims also discussed the importance of teens doing chores or having a part-time job. Both activities build a strong work ethic, fostering the mindset that an individual can contribute to a community.

Rather than "fix something or save someone," sometimes it's best to simply listen and strategize how students can problem solve by themselves, according to Safine.

"We want to empower our students whenever possible to steer their own ship," Safine said. "Don't decide something for a student that they can do or decide on their own is something I try to keep in my mind both as I work with teenagers here and as I raise my own child."

In a month when college acceptances come out, Lythcott-Haims said these decisions do not determine a student's future. There are 2,900 four-year colleges in the U.S., and at least 10 percent of those are institutions of learning where students would receive a comparably great education.

Lee found it interesting that the day after Lythcott-Haims's talk, news about college admissions scandals broke, presenting a "neat side by side comparison of messages" regarding how parents decide to support their kids. For Lee, a main message from Lythcott-Haims's talk is the importance of self-understanding and self-efficacy.

"It's important that you know who you are and speak up for what you believe in," Lee said. "Know what you care about, be OK with what you care about. And be OK speaking up for what you believe in." ♦

Humanity's impact on environment exacting steep price

BY Rohan Kumar
& Oliver Ye

According to research conducted by NASA, over the past two decades, global temperatures have risen by over 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit and sea levels have risen by 8 inches. Animals are being forced to migrate toward the poles and ocean pH levels from increased atmospheric carbon dioxide levels are hurting marine biodiversity.

These statistics are often in the news. When people hear about climate change, they may initially think about protecting natural areas, but the consequences of environmental issues are impacting communities on all continents.

Awareness about the environment's influence on public health issues may reduce the disconnect between those who are as not directly affected by environmental issues immediately and those who are suffering from them.

When junior Selina Yang first visited Nepal in 2017, she saw a massive disparity in the quality of life between there and here. Nearly everywhere, including the capital city of Kathmandu, had significantly poorer infrastructure, housing and facilities than typical U.S. cities. Many citizens do not have electricity, close to half lack proper sanitation, and poor structural integrity makes many houses prone to damage during earthquakes. She also noticed that many citizens lacked access to clean water because of water pollution by untreated sewage disposal.

"Many if not most people there

didn't have the most basic human need: water," Yang said. "Children played in dirty rivers while the older locals told me of their corrupt government, doing nothing to solve their clean water crisis."

While staying in an apartment in Kathmandu, one of Yang's friends used tap water to brush his teeth and ended up with severe diarrhea for the next two days.

"Many if not most people there didn't have the most basic human need: water."

JUNIOR Selina Yang

Yang has visited Nepal twice, for two weeks in the winter of 2017 and two weeks in the summer of 2018. During the summer, Yang joined the humanitarian organization Water In Nepal to provide pipes, water tanks and filtration systems to the Godawari community. Together, they raised \$18,000 to aid over 200 homes, restoring several ruptured joints in the water system and providing newer and more durable pipes for six different village schools.

Yang's experiences in Nepal exemplify the importance of environmental health: Without it, basic human resources are contaminated and thousands of people suffer the consequences.

As a testament to this, The New

England Journal of Medicine associated climate change to lives lost. In a 2019 report, the publication reported that climate change causes at least 250,000 deaths worldwide every year because of malnutrition, malaria and other side effects.

In the U.S., many of these problems are negligible because of the strong health-care infrastructure in place. However, there have been recent reminders that climate change destroys the lives of thousands. The hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Florence destroyed billions of dollars worth of property, displacing thousands and leaving many homeless.

In 2017, hurricane Maria killed 2,975 people and left millions without power for 11 months. According to scientists, the recent California wildfires are also linked to droughts that have plagued the state for the past couple years. These natural disasters, which are occurring more frequently, have been linked to climate change.

The environment's health is deteriorating rapidly along with the lives of people and animals. When biology teacher Lisa Cochrum visited Borneo in Southeast Asia in 2007, she witnessed the consequences of deforestation. Driving to the lodge where she stayed, Cochrum saw countless logging trucks passing by.

"After a couple hours of it, we went dead silent," Cochrum said. "It was very emotional for us to actually see them pulling out the forest trees and realize that we were about to see the gibbons and



Courtesy of WATER IN NEPAL

Three men install pipes in the Godavari community in Nepal.

orangutans that were literally going to be extinct the next day." Cochrum also traveled to India, where she met women who had participated in or lived near the mining industry.

Not only did the women experience harmful long-term effects of being exposed to mining sites for long periods of time, but their children were harmed by the living environment as well.

Piles of tailings, or chemical residues from mining, caused physical and mental deformities in the children of women who lived nearby. The chemicals damaged the health of pregnant women as well because of the lack of regulations on the mines.

"The last thing we want to do is impact the kids, particularly on a global level," Cochrum said.

Cochrum has also become more aware of other disasters, recalling a recent dam break in Brazil that drowned 300 people nearly

instantly. The copper tailings in the reservoir left a significant chemical residue, which will prevent inhabitants from returning to their homes for decades.

According to Cochrum, seeing disasters happen in person makes them seem more tangible than reading about it. As a result, Cochrum incorporates her own experiences into her curriculum to give her students a more personal view of environmental issues. Being aware and engaged in such problems allows students to be more educated when making decisions.

Cochrum's travels have influenced her significantly as a person and as a teacher.

"It stirred me up to do a better job of educating," she said. "If we're going to raise the next generation of leaders in Saratoga, and they're going to go and participate in major corporations around the world, they need to understand the effect of their actions."

Juniors seek recruitment for collegiate sports

BY JunLee & KayleneMorrison

While many juniors scramble for summer internships at coveted programs during the spring semester, a few are looking further into the future: They are immersed in the process of securing a spot as a recruited college athlete.

For many of these athletes, getting recruited provides an opportunity to be accepted into schools that may have been difficult to get into based on academics alone.

"A lot of people work really hard in school to do all these AP classes and get a really high GPA," said junior golfer Kevin Sze, a top player in the school. "For me, the standards are a little bit lower. I still need to get a good GPA and work hard but nothing like what a lot of these kids are doing these days."

After committing to a school, student athletes may need to sign a contract that they will be required to play for the college for certain amount of time.

For senior golfer Janelle Jin, recruitment was a complex and lengthy recruitment process. Eventually Jin was offered a spot on the Amherst team last August.

After meeting the coach and visiting the campus, Jin accepted, but she has no requirement for the number of years she must play.

While she isn't sure what her exact schedule will be on the team, she predicts having practices or matches the entire week save for one day of rest. On most weekends, she will be traveling to play in tournaments with her team.

Coaches began contacting Sze this past September, and he has been exchanging emails with several of them since then. Sze also sent out emails to coaches of Division

I teams, in which he provided information, including his ranking in golf and his GPA and SAT scores. He then visited several schools to introduce himself to coaches he had been in contact with.

However, because the details of recruitment must be kept confidential, Sze said he is unable to disclose the names of the schools he has been looking into.

"It's a pretty behind closed doors process," Sze said. "I think part of it is you can't really reveal the entire process if there's not a one hundred percent guarantee you're getting in and usually coaches don't give you all the players they're looking at."

Junior Ananya Krishnan has also begun the recruiting process for soccer. So far, she has been playing in showcases with her club team in hopes of being noticed by college coaches and has created profiles on college recruiting websites.

"I am planning to contact coaches in April or May in preparation for some of the more important summer tournaments like Manchester City Cup or Surf Cup," she said. "I have made a highlight video that I will send out when I contact those coaches."

Like Sze, Krishnan is hoping to be recruited by schools she thinks would be challenging to get into academically, such as NYU, Carnegie Mellon and Wellesley. Though she believes she has a better chance of being considered by Division III teams, she will still contact Division I and Division II teams as well.

Krishnan did not decide to play soccer in college until December when she realized her skills in soccer had improved significantly.

"I had one of the best seasons of my life during this past high school season," she said. "It helped me remember why I started playing in the first place."



Juniors Kevin Sze (top), George Bian (bottom left) and Ananya Krishnan (bottom right) are planning to play for college in their respective sports.

Junior football player George Bian, a star wide receiver and top student, did not make the decision to attempt to get recruited until recently as well. Initially, he played solely because he found football to be enjoyable.

"I created my profile around sophomore year, but I wasn't seriously involved in the process until after my successful junior season, when I realized how much I loved the game and that playing competitively at the next level was a plausible step for me," he said.

In addition to creating an NCSA profile,

Bian has been emailing coaches to introduce himself and share videos of his games. Bian is aiming for all division levels, but is primarily hoping to play at the I-AA and Division III levels at MIT and the Ivy League schools.

Sze said he has had his sights set on playing golf in college since he was 7 years old, when he started playing.

"It's always been something I've wanted to do," he said. "And it's just kind of a step along the way to go to college, and golf is just something that can help me get in." ♦

March Madness maintains vision despite changes

BY MathewLuo

Twenty-six teams played in this year's March Madness. One-hundred and six participants battled for the trophy for four consecutive weeks of lunchtime four-on-four, half-court games, with Kawhi Me a River placing first after a hard-fought finals on April 2 against The 4 Year Varsity.

But the excitement, competitiveness and sportsmanship of March Madness hasn't always been a school tradition. Only 15 years ago, a group of students solicited then assistant principal Karen Hyde to start the tournament.

Despite changes to the original rules and to who organizes the tournament, March Madness has largely remained the same since its inception, ASB adviser Matthew Torrens said.

According to Torrens, two major rule changes that were implemented throughout

the years were the removal of the obligation to have one or more girls on a team to play and the limit of one SHS basketball team starter to a team.

"This year, organizing March Madness, we had a big Leadership class discussion about the rule changes we wanted to see," ASB president Roshan Verma said. "There was some pushback about what constitutes a starter because more than half of the basketball team 'starts' a game due to injuries."

Another controversy that affected the tournament this year was whether or not staff members could play.

"Every couple years the teachers are allowed to play," Torrens said. "But they always end up beating the kids, so we pulled them out this year."

The organization of the tournament has also changed over the years. For the first time, basketball players in ASB — seniors Hanlin Sun and Kyle Yu — started organiz-

ing March Madness this year, whereas general members of ASB held the responsibility for the past three years.

Despite changes, March Madness has largely remained the same since its inception.

2018 alumnus Roland Shen was the one to take the initiative in organizing March Madness a couple years ago, Verma said. Shen moved the responsibility for organization to Leadership, where it has stayed ever since.

Even with these changes, everybody — Torrens, ASB and basketball players — still has a part to play in making the tournament

run smoothly each year.

Torrens provided basketballs and referees for the players. Verma made the brackets, scheduled and rescheduled games, and sent reminders to players. The basketball players in ASB helped to decide the rules and to organize the tournament.

Looking forward, Torrens wants to extend these tournaments into other sports like ultimate frisbee and soccer.

All the changes made to March Madness have not changed the heart of the tradition, Torrens said.

With the growing interest in basketball among the student population, the March Madness tournament is growing as well.

"NBA is kind of taking over in popularity in terms of youth culture," Verma said. "And basketball is just a great sport. I think we've gotten more participation, more enthusiasm and more people watching the March Madness games now." ♦

togatalks

What do you enjoy most about March Madness?

"It's really fun. It's cool to play with and against my friends who weren't on the team."



senior Sehij Dhindsa

"I get to play against my friends and enjoy a sport that I don't play on a daily basis."



senior Nevin Prasad

"You can do this stress free and I like how the competitiveness brings people together."



sophomore Tyler Chu

Dance team develops bonds with teammates

BY AnnaNovoselov & EmilieZhou

Filled with excitement and anticipation, the dance team sat in a circle in a large auditorium at the Anaheim Convention Center, holding hands and anxiously waiting to hear which teams placed at the USA Dance Nationals. Every time their team was called out, the girls screamed with excitement.

From March 15 -19, the 19 girls on dance team and their coach Kaitlyn Landeza were accompanied by supervisors Julia Peck and Monique Young to Anaheim to compete at the USA Dance Nationals. The team placed second in medium lyrical, third in large pom, fourth in large hip hop, and fourth in medium jazz.

Nineteen girls are on the dance team, but due to injuries throughout the year, many sat out from competitions during the season and only 18 girls could perform at nationals. Nationals was the team's last competition with their six seniors, Francesca Chu, Lidya Demissie, Alexandra Li, Chloe Peng, Mira Spendlove and Amy Tang.

"Although we scored really well and took home four trophies, the best part of nationals was being together as a team, doing what we love and watching all of our hard work pay off," junior captain Kaitlyn Thompson said. "We don't dance to win, we dance to share our passion and love for dance with others, and most importantly, have fun."

For most of the competition season, the team participates in regionals against teams from Northern California. Nationals, however, allow the team to compete against teams from all over the U.S.

"You're against so many more people, so many more teams and the judges expect more out of you at nationals. Your regional competitions matter, but in a sense they are practice runs for nationals," Thompson said.

To prepare for nationals, the team attended several regional competitions starting in January while also maintaining their rigorous practice schedule after school.

"It is difficult work but the only way to get through it is knowing that [the hard work is] going to pay off in the end," Thompson said. "It's really intense. We keep going to build up our stamina; we run things over and over again; we clean [routines]."

During the five-day trip, the team grew closer and celebrated the culmination of their season and their year of hard work. Thompson said that being at nationals created a "new energy" that united the team.

"The dance team has grown so much over the past four years and Coach Kaitlyn has been very important to that."

ASST. PRINCIPAL Kerry Mohnike

However, after nationals, the team was notified that Landeza would not be returning next year as the dance coach. According to assistant principal Kerry Mohnike, the district has already put out an ad for a new coach and will soon start conducting interviews for the position.

"The dance team has grown so much over the past four years and Coach Kaitlyn has been very important to that growth," Mohnike said. "I think they're in a good space now to move on ... and we'll bring in a new coach and kind of a new approach and feel to the team. I think it's going to be a positive for everyone."

Because the team culture may have to "shift and adapt" with the replacement, the

school hopes to find a new coach within the next three to four weeks to avoid disturbing tryouts and summer camp.

Besides dealing with the news of their coach's departure after nationals, the team is getting a short break before the new season starts again, with auditions typically held in late April and the first practice in May. During this time, one challenge the team faces is finding a new sense of unity among members.

"In summer, the first few practices are always kind of awkward because it's the old people who are close from all the experiences we've shared and the new people we just don't know very well," Thompson said.

According to Thompson, the team usually starts to "fall into a group" after they attend an annual week-long dance camp organized by the United Spirits Association. At the camp, the team stays in dorms and attends practices each day to improve their technique and learn new routines that can be used at rallies and football games. Although the team begins with a wide range of skill levels, the girls improve and begin to dance as a unit by the end of the season.

"Over the summer is when people make the most growth technically, so in April you might be one dancer, but come competition season you could be doing tricks you never thought you could," Thompson said. "It's really fun to see the team grow."

Team huddles before performances are among her most treasured memories.

"We all support each other and practices are usually really fun because you become so close to your team members and it [feels] like hanging out with your friends while dancing," senior captain Chloe Peng said.

During the school year, the team practices on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. and on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to noon. After warmups, the

team does across-the-floors if time permits, which allow the girls to practice techniques such as battements, turns, chaines and piques.

Then they clean their group dances — hip hop and pom. Pom is an upbeat style of dance that involves pom poms and a lot of kicks, jumps and turns.

Afterwards, the 13 people in the small jazz dance and the 11 in the lyrical/contemporary practice their routines.

Thompson said that jazz is energetic and technique-based while lyrical and contemporary dances have more fluid movements.

"My favorite is lyrical because it's easier to connect with your emotions and relate emotions to the dancing," she said.

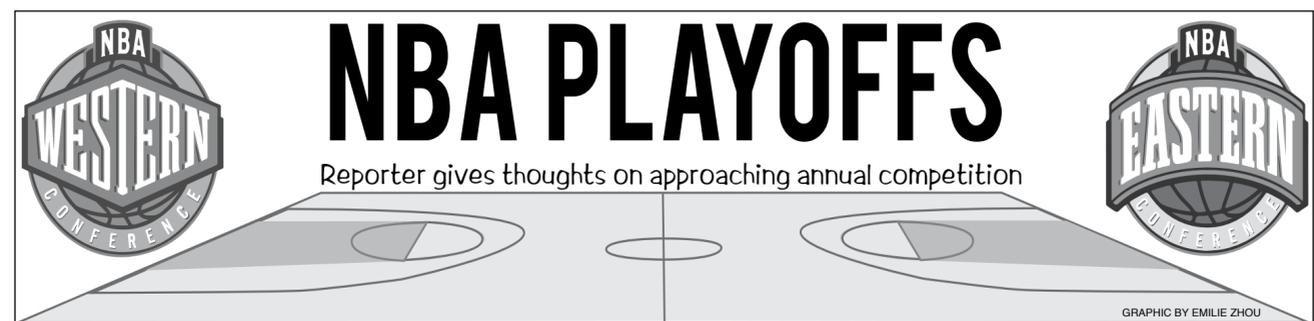
For smaller dances, the team hires a choreographer who conducts a master class, in which the girls learn a short routine and then have an informal audition. Later, the coach and choreographer discuss and decide who will be in each dance. Team captains also have the options of having solos, but are not required to have one.

While the competition dances are usually choreographed by a professional, the rally and football game routines are choreographed by the dance team members themselves. Sometimes the team performs dances learned at camps.

Thompson said at competitions, she is a mixture of adrenaline and nerves because the team never knows how the judges will perceive their dances.

However, numerous successes throughout the season, including placing first in pom and second in lyrical at regional competitions, have helped the team grow in confidence.

"The most rewarding part of dance is that feeling when you walk off the stage, knowing that your hard work paid off and that the dances looked good," Peng said. ♦



Reporter gives thoughts on approaching annual competition

BY KevinSze

I'm sorry if I sound like a broken record at this point, but the Golden State Warriors are winning it all. Again.

Sure, the Warriors have lost 24 games.

Sure, the Warriors also got blown out by 35 at home against one of the worst teams in the NBA, the Dallas Mavericks.

But at the same time, who cares? It's the regular season, and as long as they stay healthy, the Warriors' path to a three-peat and four titles in five years shouldn't be too trying.

With that being said, I've traveled into the future and come back with every result from every NBA playoff matchup. Here's what I found.

As of April 1, 2019, the Golden State Warriors, Denver Nuggets, Houston Rockets, Portland Trail Blazers, Utah Jazz, Los Angeles Clippers, San Antonio Spurs and Oklahoma City Thunder have clinched playoff spots in the Western Conference. The Milwaukee Bucks, Toronto Raptors, Philadelphia 76ers, Boston Celtics and Indiana Pacers have clinched playoff spots in the Eastern Conference.

Rounding out the playoff picture in the West, I have the Utah Jazz, Oklahoma City Thunder and San Antonio Spurs, while I have the Brooklyn Nets, Detroit Pistons and Miami Heat rounding out the East.

The race for a playoff spot in the East is a lot tighter, and here's why I got Miami making it. It's Dwyane Wade's last season in the NBA, Chris Bosh had an emotional jersey retirement and the Heat have Hassan Whiteside, Bam Adebayo, Dion Waiters and the high-flying Derrick Jones Jr.

Once the playoffs get set, I can only see another Warriors-Rockets Western Conference Finals rematch. I see the seeding staying the way as it is now, which would end with the Warriors as the No. 1 seed and Rockets as the No. 4 seed, allowing them to

ultimately meet in the Western Conference Finals.

Sure the Trailblazers have Damian Lillard and CJ McCollum to create an extremely strong backcourt duo, but they just don't have the star power to get to the Western Conference finals.

The Nuggets possess a talented big man, Nikola Jokic, a.k.a., "The Joker." Jokic has been splendid on both ends of the floor and with the help of Jamal Murray and Paul Millsap, has created a strong starting five. Still, I don't see them getting past the Warriors or the Rockets.

The Warriors will take the Western Conference Finals in six games. The Rockets are hungry and James Harden, Chris Paul and Clint Capela will be a tough matchup for the Warriors. But then you have to realize that those players are matched with Klay Thompson, Stephen Curry and Demarcus Cousins on the Warriors. Not to mention there's a seven foot small forward who can dribble and shoot like a point guard in Kevin Durant.

Then there's the East. Milwaukee is looking pretty juicy with Giannis Antetokounmpo. But Malcolm Brogdon being injured undoubtedly hurts the Bucks' chance. The Bucks will not make the Eastern Conference Finals since pretty much the entire team lacks playoff experience. The Boston Celtics were intriguing to begin the year, but they aren't really that relevant in the grand scheme of things. Kyrie Irving has become detached, Gordon Hayward has been inconsistent and there's a reason why they're the fifth seed as of now.

The Raptors and 76ers will find themselves pitted against each other in an Eastern Conference Battle. The Raptors will overcome previous playoff mishaps with Kawhi Leonard leading the charge, and the 76ers will lean on Joel Embiid and Ben Simmons (although not Simmons' jumper because it's broken). Pascal Siakam is my pick to have a



Top: Nuggets point guard Jamal Murray defends Warriors point guard Stephen Curry during a game on Jan. 15. Bottom: 76ers center Joel Embiid tries to dribble through Raptors small forward Kawhi Leonard at a matchup on Dec. 18, 2018.

great playoff run.

The only Pascal I knew before this man was the triangle, but he's been making waves through the NBA regular season, and I expect him to only do the same in the playoffs. In the end, the Raptors will pull through in a tough seven game series because of Leon-

ard's previous experience as a San Antonio Spur, and because Embiid will struggle to carry the offense in a lengthy seven game series.

And that brings us to the NBA Finals. Warriors versus Raptors. My pick: The Warriors will win in five. ♦

VOLLEYBALL

Boys settle in during four-game win streak

By Justin Guo & Oliver Ye

Although the Falcons began their volleyball season slowly, they have rallied back and are on a four-game winning streak as of April 1.

The boys initially suffered losses against teams such as Los Gatos, Homestead, Harker and Monta Vista, but won 3-2 on March 27 and 3-0 on March 22 against Mountain View.

Junior setter Mohan Duvvuri has attributed early difficulties to adjusting to the graduation of nearly their entire previous starting lineup. With key hitters such as alumni

Evan O'Brien and Collin Hovey gone, the team's offensive power has taken a large hit.

In order to adjust for this loss, veteran players have had to step into new positions; senior Derek Chiou now plays as outside hitter instead of as a libero, and senior Usman Khan plays as a middle blocker instead of as an outside hitter.

Faced with positions that they were not used to playing, the Falcons struggled at first with communicating effectively and running quick plays.

Duvvuri Setter

In terms of technical skill, setter Mohan Duvvuri said that the team's major weaknesses was their blocking ability as well as their lack of ag-

gressiveness.

"It's hard to block because we're not that tall of a team," Duvvuri said. "But we also need to be more aggressive while hitting. A lot of the time we shy away from the ball when we should be swinging instead."

With key hitters lost to graduation, the team's offensive power has taken a large hit.

However, the team has also had to adjust to a new and young coach, Brendan Wang,

who previously played on the varsity team at Homestead in 2017.

Duvvuri said that Wang's inexperience was something the players had to find a way to adjust to.

Older players, seniors Derek Chiou, Joshua Lee and Usman Khan, have all stepped up to help the new coach lead the younger members of the team.

"There was a learning curve that the coach and players needed to overcome," said Lee.

Riding this winning streak, the team is optimistic about their chances of making CCS and advancing. ♦

Due to printing deadlines, *The Falcon* was unable to cover the game against Cupertino.

Leaderboards recognize outstanding athletes

COACHES DOCUMENT HISTORIC MILESTONES AND INDIVIDUAL RECORDS IN LARGE GYM TROPHY CASES, WALLS

By Edwin Chen & Michael Wong

Greeting visitors and fans who enter the Large Gym are lines of shelves containing trophies, banners and retired jerseys. On the wall, tables with names that date back to the 1970s fill leaderboards that proudly show athletic accomplishments at the school.

Among them are most career points scored ('79 grad Randy Arrillaga 1,954 for boys and '13 grad Hannah Johnson 1,105 for girls), most rebounds ('05 grad Danny Wallace 1,017 for boys and Hannah Johnson 897 for girls) and countless other categories for

both individual athletes and teams.

"It's a nice thing for our program to take a look at its history and sets goals for people for new people to go up on the board," said former girls' basketball and current softball coach Mike Davey.

For senior shooting guard Kyle Yu, a captain of the varsity basketball team, the leaderboards serve as a form of motivation. "I've always strived to get better and be on the leaderboard," Yu said. "It makes me want to score more. Trying to score double digits every single game was my goal."

Yu will graduate accomplishing exactly that; a top player on the team, he has man-

aged to break top 12 in Falcon career points.

The basketball leaderboard was created four years ago, and other leaderboards followed, such as softball and track.

In order for Davey to put together the leaderboards, months of research was conducted using past yearbooks and school records. Despite the complexity of the project, Davey said that he was able to complete the task due to ample help along the way.

"It's really hard to get all the information, and was a lot of luck," Davey said. "Part of the good fortune I had was being in the basketball program for 25 years."

A few years ago, Davey said, 2016 alumna

Eleni Spirakis made the rebound board as a junior. Since she was also on pace to making the shooting record, Davey encouraged her to shoot more and not just rebound.

Football coach Tim Lugo said he is planning to do a leaderboard for football this year as well. Because he is in the process of compiling all the records of past teams, he hopes that the board can be finished by the start of next season.

"Just having a little bit of history in your program," said Lugo of his goals. "Recognizing what people have done in the past, and having a little pride in what you have done too." ♦

TRACK AND FIELD

Stellar freshman leads pack with 4:38 mile time

By Neeti Badve & Nitya Marimuthu

As the starter's gun went off, freshman Harrison Dance pushed into the leading pack of runners. It was a bright, sunny Saturday and Dance was running the 1600 meter varsity race at an invitational race on March 16 at Saint Francis High School.

As the second lap finished, Dance pushed into the front of the pack of 12 other runners, slowly taking the lead. Dance continued to lead through the third lap and ended up second in a competitive race. He was the only freshman to compete in the varsity-level race.

"He's a kid who loves running and you don't get that often," junior captain Kole Tippets said of his teammate.

Despite this being his first year in track, Dance has already achieved a 4:38:96 mile time — a feat completed during the meet against Monta Vista High School on March 21 — and a 10:26:58 2-mile time during the

meet against Cupertino High on March 28.

After the April 2 meet at Homestead, the team had competed in all of its League meets (The Falcon could not cover this meet due to printing deadlines). The record for varsity boys in their first five meets was 2-3, while the record for varsity girls was 1-4.



Dance

A key contributor to the boys' success has been Dance, but surprisingly, his main sport growing up was soccer. He discovered a love for running long distance during middle school and has been great since. He was a top runner on the cross country team during the fall and is now running the 1600 and the 3200 meter events in track.

After discovered his talent for running, Dance decided to quit playing soccer and focus on running full-time. "I enjoy the sport because whatever you put in, you get out of it in races and I like that component," Dance said.

Like most runners, Dance can find himself pushing himself too far. During CCS last fall, Dance was out sick and during Leagues

as he was burned out due to the extra miles he always seems to run, Tippets said.

Training for track in the spring consists of six practices per week, each lasting around two hours. Out of those days, one day is usually a meet, two are strictly training days and the rest are recovery days.

Over the weekend and during breaks, the athletes run miles on their own to maintain and improve their performances. This is especially vital in the breaks in between cross country and track season.

After he discovered his talent for running, Dance decided to quit playing soccer and focus on running full-time.

Tippets said that much of Dance's improvement comes from his motivation to run on his own. Since Dance finds so much joy from running, he constantly runs on his own and pushes himself.

BOYS' GOLF

Falcons look to continue winning streak

By Kevin Sze & Howard Tang

Sophomore Michael Burry rolled the ball with his putter on the closing hole. The ball hung on the edge before tipping into the hole, leading to an emphatic fist pump. The putt proved to be crucial. The Falcons beat Cupertino away in a narrow 186-185 victory, putting Saratoga in an ideal situation to win the league with a perfect 5-0 record.

"We felt really confident," sophomore Albert Jing said. "We all felt like we were playing at a high level and ready to take the league."

Even so, the boys' undefeated bid came to end a little less than a week later at home on March 25 against Cupertino High School.

The rainy and wet conditions proved too much for the team, leading to a crushing 189-187 loss to Cupertino High School on

March 25. The Falcons were led by junior Kevin Sze after firing an even par 34, and Burry with a two over par 36.

"That loss hurt," Burry said. "We felt that we had worked really hard coming into the match."

We were aware of Cupertino's talent and put in a lot of time on the course. It sucks that it didn't pay off. The Falcons faced faced rivals Los Gatos High School a day later, making quick work of the Wildcats and winning with a score of 200-189.

Although the team struggled on the aerated greens of La Rinconada Country Club, Burry led the team and medaled in the match shooting a 35 1-over par. The round included an impressive four birdies.

Other players found putting on the in-

consistent aerated greens difficult due to the unpredictable bumps and bounces. Golf courses aerate greens to help grass grow better in the future.

Senior William Liu compared putting on aerated greens to a math test.

"Putting on aerated greens is like the golf version of taking a math test without a calculator," Liu said. "Possible, but miserable."

The team concluded the week with a match against Monta Vista High School on March 27.

The match was particularly important for the league title. After falling to the Cupertino High School, the Falcons will have to win out to clinch the league title.

Monta Vista's talent and depth put the Falcons in an 11-shot deficit after Saratoga's first four players finished their match.



Liu

"Their team's always been pretty solid," said Liu. "All six of their players can shoot under par which is pretty rare to see, but we feel like we can match that."

Senior Daniel Kraft and Sze pulled through in the last group, shooting a 3 under 34 and 4 under 33 respectively. The combined score of 7 under is the lowest of any previous twosome in Saratoga High history.

"I'm pretty surprised we broke the record," Kraft said. "We both played pretty solid, but to be honest we probably could've gone even lower. This is just validation that this team is special."

Ultimately the Falcons pulled through with a 191-185 victory.

The Falcons will look to continue their hot streak on April 1 against Los Gatos High School at home, in a game that looks to have high stakes. ♦

BADMINTON

Team shuttles into season

By Sherrie Shen & Michael Wong

On March 28, the Falcons fell 16-14 in an away game at Milpitas, a relatively new school to the upper league.

The Falcons trailed the Trojans throughout most of the matches. The only games left to conclude were No. 1 and 2 boys' singles, boys' doubles and mixed doubles. Of the six games, five came down to three-set games, with No. 1 boys' doubles winning in two games. While other No. 1 games were still playing, the Falcons ended up losing all three No. 2 games by a close margin, giving the Trojans the overall victory.

No. 1 boys' singles Adrian Mar, a freshman who is nationally ranked, and the No. 1 mixed doubles team of sophomore Ryan Hsiao and freshman Victoria Tso still persevered to win their matches. After Mar's match concluded, the entire gym gathered to watch Hsiao and Tso square off against their opponents.

Senior captain Nathan Luk saw a positive side to the loss. "While this close loss was very hard for our team, it proved that we could compete in the upper division," he said. "Now that we've reached the midpoint of the season, we have a better sense of how to compete and win games."

Two days earlier, on March 26, the Falcons faced Lynbrook at home. Due to Mar's

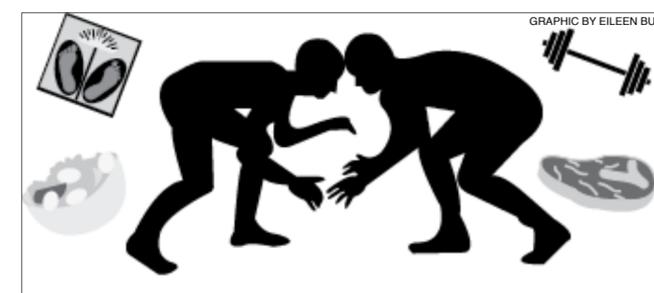
absence, captain junior Alvin Ren was forced to play No. 1 boys' singles instead of No. 2. Additionally, two makeshift girls' doubles pairs — No. 2 and No. 3 — were announced minutes before the lineup was submitted. It was also the first time No. 1 boys' and girls' doubles played together in competition. Despite many close, three-set games, the Falcons ultimately lost 18-12.

Right after their first win against Gunn at home on March 14, the Falcons defeated Palo Alto 20-10 in an away game on March 19. Despite missing No. 1 boys' doubles player Nicholas Zhang, the Falcons swept all three boys' doubles games by swapping in all three of their top singles players.

As such, Mar, who traditionally plays boys' singles, substituted for Zhang in No. 1 boys' doubles. Varsity also swept all of girls' doubles and won No. 3 boys' singles, No. 2 girls' singles and No. 1 and 3 mixed doubles.

Junior varsity won 12-1, with both the Falcons and Vikings defaulting junior varsity No. 2 and 3 girls' doubles due to a lack of players. The Vikings also had to default varsity No. 3 girls' singles and several other junior varsity games since they did not have enough girls on the team.

"Our main focus during the rest of the season is beating the schools that we were close to but lost to and of course beating the schools we beat the first half," Ren said. "We're also going to work hard and see if we can try to beat the top schools." ♦



GRAPHIC BY EILEEN BUI

CUTTING WEIGHT: WRESTLING

Cutting weight healthily can lead to an advantage during wrestling tournaments. "Against people who haven't cut, you're gonna feel strongest and you have more muscles than they do," said wrestler Victor Chen, who cuts weight. "If my normal weight is 140s and I cut to 130s, I have an advantage because I am heavier."

Cutting weight incorrectly, on the other hand, can lead to performance deficiencies. "If you don't know how to cut, you can't perform as well. You can't perform well when you're starving," said Chen.

According to Children's Hospital Colorado, an estimated 25% to 67% of wrestlers use techniques such as over exercise, calorie restriction, fasting, and different dehydration methods to lose weight. Wrestlers believe that these methods will benefit them, but in reality this usually only makes things worse. Most wrestlers who choose not to cut weight either don't know how to cut properly or want to build more muscle throughout



Chen

the season.

-Eileen Bui and Edwin Chen



Insight Education College Counseling & Test Prep

SAT Summer Classes

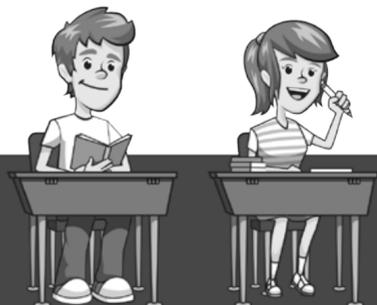
SAT Summer Session 1: June 14 - July 10 (11 day)	
Mon / Wed/ Fri	Times Vary
SAT Summer Boot Camp: June 15 - Aug 17 (10 day)	
Every Saturday	9:00am - 6:15pm
SAT August Boot Camp: Aug 5 - Aug 16 (10 day)	
Monday - Friday	9:00am - 6:15pm

ACT Summer Classes

ACT Summer Session 1: June 18 - July 25 (11 day)	
Tuesday / Thursday	9:00am - 6:00pm
ACT Summer Boot Camp: July 6 - Sept 7 (10 day)	
Every Saturday	9:00am - 6:00pm
ACT Fall Epress Boot Camp: Aug 10 - Sept 7 (5 day)	
Every Saturday	9:00am - 6:00pm

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Highlights

“anemoia”

the vague longing invoked by lo-fi music for something you can't exactly identify. (pg. 16)

8,000

hours poured into the book that will preserve high school memories for decades. (pg. 20)

“Onion juice is supposed to cleanse your chakra pathways and help unlock the Avatar State, a long desired dream of mine” — reporter Phoebe Wang on onion and banana juice (pg. 13)

“For those of us with no permits of licenses, this lack of late-night stores in the local area equates to provoking the hibernating bear of a parent to ask for a ride to Cupertino” — reporter Connie Liang on late-night studying (pg. 9)

About 9 trays of 39 cookies are made each morning with two or more before lunch. (pg. 19)

FALCON CROSSWORD

- ANSWERS:
- student
 - raghav malaviya
 - split
 - kwahi me a river
 - beat the lock
 - barbara
 - Kevin
 - Julie Ijthcoit-haim
 - anna
 - onion banana

- ACROSS
- The _____ center is set to open after spring break.
 - Who is ranked 10th in the US for competitive pokemon?
 - The commission organizes rally tailgates.
 - Which team won March Madness?
 - Which escape room is featured in the entertainment section?
 - Who is the author of “How to Raise an Adult”?
 - What flavor was the Avatar-inspired drink reporter Phoebe Wang made?

- DOWN
- The _____ center is set to open after spring break.
 - Who is ranked 10th in the US for competitive pokemon?
 - What is the first name of the cafeteria staff featured on page 19?
 - What is the first name of maintenance head Brian Moran's brother?
 - Which reporter was pranked with tooth-paste oreos?

Senior pioneers unique custom Starbucks order

BARISTAS LEARN ORDER: STRAWBERRY AÇAÍ REFRESHER WITH NO LEMONADE, GREEN TEA SUBSTITUTE AND LESS ICE



As I stare at the words in my AP edition Campbell Biology in Focus (Urry, Cain et al 2014) textbook, I realize that it has been 20 minutes since a single piece of information entered my head.

I need caffeine. I walk up to the cash register, where I see Luis, the first of many Starbucks employees to remember my complicated drink order.

“Just the usual today?” he asks.

I nod, and he begins to input my obnoxious order into the system: one venti strawberry açai refresher, no lemonade, substitute water for green tea and less ice.

I was first introduced to the strawberry açai refresher by my friend senior Ashley Feng, who originally ordered it without any modifications. The original drink (which came with lemonade and water)

was way too sweet for my taste, so I would add water from my own water bottle to dilute it. But to my disappointment, I found that it tasted less than pleasant.

One day, I was feeling particularly adventurous (and tired), so I decided to order the strawberry açai refresher with green tea instead of lemonade and water. In that moment, my life changed.

If made correctly with a 3:1 ratio of tea to refresher, the green tea brings out the taste of the strawberry açai refresher perfectly while also providing part of my daily caffeine fix. To this day, there is only one store that consistently makes my order correctly.

I began frequenting the Argo-Saratoga Starbucks during my junior year, but it was the summer before senior year when the location truly became my go-to study place. The cozy store with its homey wooden tables and abundance of comfy seats has become my



second home, so it's no surprise that my friends and I have dubbed it “the home.”

Recently, I ordered the exact same drink at the San Jose Airport, but it was way too sweet, and there was no ice at all. Lukewarm sweet tea? No thanks.

Since my friend senior Francesca Chu and I began to order the drink, more and more of our friends have started to adopt our unique order, and more and more baristas at “the home” have learned our names.

Sending a huge shoutout to the workers who have memorized my order and learned my name: It means more than you might think. I've probably spent at least \$300 since the start of the school year solely on venti strawberry açai refreshers with less ice, green tea and no water, but the unique taste of the drink itself and the memories shared in “the home” are invaluable. ♦

topten

WAYS TO SPEND SPRING BREAK

- 10 Eat**
Because what else is there to do when you're bored?
- 9 Sleep**
When you're asleep, you're halfway to death.
- 8 Do homework**
Might as well get it over with now. If teachers have updated calendars, do your work for the rest of the year.
- 7 Go on a spontaneous adventure**
You'll probably just end up getting tea but it's worth a shot.
- 6 Go swimming**
Drive down to a beach or nearby lake. If you can't drive, just take a bath or something.
- 5 Play golf**
But only if you're really bored. Because really? Golf?
- 4 Cook food**
Try making a dish from ingredients in your house. Nature Valley Granola bar orange juice egg smoothie?
- 3 Set up a tent in your backyard**
Get a taste of what it's like to live on your own.
- 2 Visit the colleges you got into**
Be sure to make a list of pros and cons.
- 1 Visit the colleges you didn't get into**
Go to the admissions office and let them know what they missed out on.

>> Amy Tang