

# THE saratogafalcon



Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA

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## Search complete: District announces new principal

BY Shama Gupta & Allison Hartley

On the morning of April 23, Greg Louie stood around a table with about 20 teachers who had come to the staff lounge to meet with the newly selected principal before beginning their first-period classes. Later that day, Louie walked around campus, talking with staff and students in the quad during tutorial and touring campus facilities like the McAfee Center, music building and MAP annex.

"My experience with students has been

awesome," Louie said. "Honestly, my cheeks hurt because I've been smiling so much. I've never experienced that before, where I feel like I'm getting a cheek cramp."

The district board approved Louie's selection at their regular meeting on April 23 and he will officially begin his job on July 1.

The application process included an essay, three days of interviews, four panel interviews, a performance task, a visual presentation and a team that shadowed him in his

current position as principal of Santa Teresa High School.

Louie, who grew up in San Jose, attended Silver Creek High School and went on to earn a bachelor's degree at the University of California, Davis. He has worked at Santa Teresa High School for 15 years.

Although Louie looks forward to his new position, he said he did not expect this sudden change after 15 years of service at Santa Teresa.

"My family is very excited and supportive," Louie said. "We thought our

daughter, who's currently in the seventh grade, would graduate from Santa Teresa, but now she's flirting with the idea of coming here for high school."

As an undergraduate, Louie began as an animal science major and wanted to be a veterinarian but his interests changed while he was there, and he decided to major in English with an emphasis on creative writing.

Louie said that he never expected to become a teacher, thinking he wanted to enter



Louie  
 Incoming principal

>> **PRINCIPAL** on pg. 3

## MSET MAKES HISTORY

### ROBOTICS BATTLES WORLD'S BEST IN HOUSTON STADIUM

BY Jackson Green & Rohan Kumar

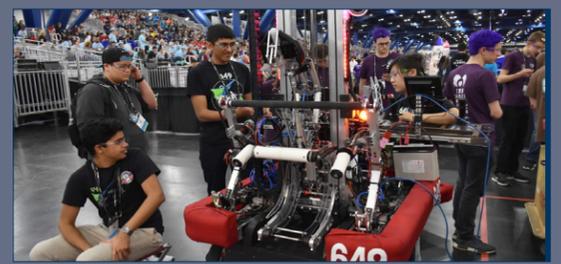
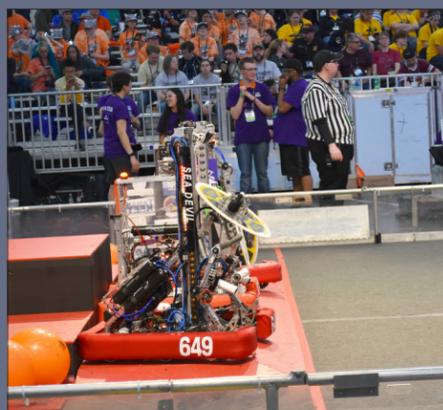
It was a moment of high drama for one of the school's robotics teams on April 20 at the Minute Maid Stadium, holding fields full of robots rather than its usual Major League baseball players. The opposing alliance had already won one game in the best of three series. This was the last chance that the FIRST Robotics Challenge (FRC) team, the MSET Fish, had to stay in the World Championships at Houston.

The match started out slowly, with the scores climbing, neither

alliance pulling ahead by more than 10 points. Even though the Fish were playing against one of the best teams in the world, the Cheezy Poofs from Bellarmine, they had a chance to win. Team members sat on the edge of their seats, hoping for a miraculous upset.

But it was not to be. DeepVision's robot, one of the Fish's teammates in its alliance, became disabled and started spinning out of control. The Bellarmine-led alliance began to pull ahead, and soon the game was over. The

>> **ROBOTICS** on pg. 4



(Top) The fifth place FRC team poses with their robot. (Left) The FRC robot prepares to begin the autonomous phase of the qualifiers. (Right) The team troubleshoots their robot during a break.

## Longtime English teacher set to retire

BY Marisa Kingsley

After teaching for 30 years at the school, English teacher Cathy Head has announced that she will retire at the end of this school year.

During her time here, Head has taught a wide variety of grade levels: the freshmen through English 9 MAP, English 9 and English 9 Balance (which seeks to emphasize the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between academic demands and life by minimizing homework). In addition, she has also taught other grade level courses: English, AP Lit and REPoRT, an elective based on research and writing and presenting.



Head  
 Started at SHS in 1989

Head began her teaching career fresh out of college in 1977 in the small town of Mountain Lakes, N.J., which she described as "much like Saratoga." When she moved to California in the '80s, she taught at James Logan High School in Union City for two years before coming to Saratoga High.

Prior to coming to Saratoga, Head taught a variety of courses: journalism, American Studies, a grammar elective and a "sad little course" called College Prep Vocabulary.

When Head started in the fall of 1989, the campus and student body were much smaller, and she said there were

>> **RETIRING** on pg. 5

## Science classes plan curriculum revamp

BY Andrew Li & Oliver Ye

Starting next year, the science department will be implementing the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), issued by the National Science Teachers Association, but the details of how to do this are still being worked out. NGSS is a set of standards that focuses more on the application of concepts rather than the memorization of equations and formulas.

Since NGSS involves different standards and concepts than what is currently taught today, the science department has been looking to "completely revamp the curriculum," AP Physics teacher Kirk Davis said.

"Instead of punching in numbers on your calculator for physics

tests, you are more likely to get writer's cramp from an essay response," Davis said.

Students will take the CAST (California Science Test), a 1.5 hour test during the May of their senior year, in order to check their proficiency in the NGSS standards.

Since the CAST test includes topics from earth science, a class not generally taken by all students in high school, teachers are debating between teaching earth science topics in other courses or making all freshmen take the earth science course.

According to Davis, the science department is already attempting to put earth science topics in other science courses.

"We are modifying what we

>> **STANDARDS** on pg. 2

### >> what's inside

#### ■ DRAMA

##### Spring Musical

Drama student production takes on "The Sound of Music" in five shows in April and May. **pg. 3**

#### ■ IN DEPTH

##### Colorism

Students explore cultures that value lighter skin, discuss importance of dialogue in society. **pg. 16**

#### ■ SPORTS

##### Boys' tennis

The team finishes second in the league with a 10-2 record and gears up for CCS. **pg. 18**

news >> briefs

Students receive recognition at Synopsys fair

Three SHS students won awards for their research presented at the 2019 Synopsys Championship Fair...

Ramachandran's project "Saferetro: A Secure for 8080 apps" received the Intel IEC Certificate of Achievement...

"Given that I was under a lot of time pressure and given the result, I was really satisfied," Zuo said.

— Jeffrey Ma

Falcons excel at History Bowl nationals

The Varsity History Bowl A Team, consisting of juniors Grant Chen, Jason Hong and Jeffrey Ma...

The B Team, consisting of juniors Sean Chen, Vincent Cheng, Mathew Luo and Shivam Mani...

The JV team, consisting of freshman Derek Hsu, Henrik Zhang, Bora Alaybeyi, Dhruv Singh and Joshua Feng...

The A team, which went undefeated 5-0 in both their morning and afternoon brackets...

However, the Falcons lost in playoff round one to the Poolesville High School team from Maryland...

"Overall, we finished around what our initial rank was, so I was satisfied by our performance...

— Jeffrey Xu

>> correction

In the April 5 issue, the Falcon published an article on pg. 9 titled "Saratoga lacks late-night studying locations"...

The Falcon strives for accuracy. Please contact elaine.toh@saratogafalcon.org and andrew.lee@saratogafalcon.org to report any inaccuracies in this issue.

>> falcononline



Top Story Seniors continue to pursue artistic passions in college

Top Story Lack of transparency causes confusion in admissions process

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

>> picturthis



FALCON // ALAN ZU

Opening Day >> Parents, staff and students enjoy the opening of the new Student Center with bundt cakes, crackers and grapes on April 26. The center fully opened to students on Wednesday, May 1.

Teachers, students prepare for upcoming AP exams

BY ChristineZhang

Next week and the week after, hundreds of students will be excused from classes to take AP exams in subjects ranging from Biology to Chinese to U.S. History.

Students who have either self-studied or taken classes have been preparing for these exams. Meanwhile, AP course teachers have recently finished teaching the curricula for their classes and have begun to prepare their students for the AP exams.

According to guidance secretary Sarah Christeson, 582 students are taking at least one AP test this year.

This number is similar to the ones from the past two years: 562 in 2018 and 599 in 2017. This year, the school is offering 17 different AP tests.

In 2016, the national average for AP enrollment per school, including schools who had students test at other locations, was about 120 students, according to statistics from The College Board.

AP Physics teacher Kirk Davis said that his classes finished the curriculum for AP Physics 1 and AP Physics 2 a week or two prior to the exams.

Davis said that he does not administer any separate practice

tests for the AP; rather, every unit test throughout the school year has been modeled after the real AP test.

"There shouldn't be any shock on the day of the AP," he said. "You just spend three hours doing what you spend 90 minutes doing on every one of my unit tests."

582 students are taking at least one AP test this year, similar to the 562 students in 2018.

Sophomore Aileen Liao is taking AP tests in Computer Science, European History and Psychology this year.

Liao decided to self-study for psychology because she wanted to be able to connect more with people that have mental illnesses.

"I volunteer at hospitals, and I see many patients with mental illnesses who I want to understand better," she said.

Liao said that he does not administer any separate practice

STANDARDS

continued from pg. 1

do to make sure that we cover everything," said Davis. "We know that not everybody takes earth science here so the last time that you get earth science would be Redwood [Middle School]."

For example, Davis tries to connect the idea of energy transfer to tectonic plates. In Biology, teacher Kellyann Nicholson relates the idea of tectonic drift and convergent boundaries to evolution and genetic drift.

The alternative to inserting earth science requirements in other courses is requiring all freshmen to take earth science. Science

teacher Kellyann Nicholson said that the department may require all freshmen to take earth science because of the new requirements from the NGSS.

However, Nicholson sees a large problem with the transition to the NGSS.

In order to teach earth science, a specific credential is needed. Only Earth Science and Chemistry teacher Jill McCrystal and Earth Science and Biology teacher Lisa Cochrum have that credential currently, Nicholson said.

According to Davis, another problem brought up with adding a required earth science course is that fewer students would end up taking some form of physics in high school.

Since physics is an important course for aspiring STEM

about psychology." Liao is also interested in biology, a subject she closely relates to psychology.

Liao is aiming for high scores on all her AP tests, but she said she would forgive herself if she doesn't receive her ideal score.

"Of course I want to do well," she said. "But if I don't, I know I tried my best and have a lot of stuff to juggle. I can always take it again next year."

Although Davis wishes the best for his students taking the AP test, he encourages them to simply enjoy the class and consider skipping the exam under certain circumstances.

"For juniors, I get why you take it, but for seniors, you don't need it," Davis said. "Anyone who's going to be an engineer is going to take physics again in college, and I think they should even if they aren't required to."

He said that there are approximately 90 students across all his AP Physics classes, but only about half of them are taking the actual AP test.

"Sometimes, I don't think the AP test is the best measure in terms of what you know," Davis said. "I hope they do well on the test, but it doesn't really matter in the long run."

major, the curriculum shift could be quite problematic for some.

Ultimately, next year will be the first in which the new NGSS standards will be tested and applied since the science department is still deciding on structural changes.

Since '19-'20 will be the first year that seniors will be required to take the CAST test, the department does not know what to expect in terms of questions and impact on the students — or whether seniors will be able to recall information they may last learned in seventh grade.

All public schools in the nation are undergoing these changes. The federal government creates the standards and each state adopts the changes, sending out specific standards to each school and district.

PRINCIPAL

continued from pg. 1

a career in journalism or another profession involving writing.

However, after teaching classes at UC Davis for a couple of years, he fell in love with it and contacted the former activities director at Silver Creek, who offered him a job as an English teacher.

There, he also coached football, and later moved to Santa Teresa High School, where

he started.

At Santa Teresa, Louie served as the administrator in charge of discipline, then switched over to assistant principal in charge of education. In 2012, Louie was appointed principal.

He said his experience has allowed him to work in varied situations — doing the inspiring work of teaching and opening minds in classrooms but also providing discipline and guidance to kids who have broken rules such as abusing substances.

Louie said he will be visiting campus occasionally until the end of the year to ensure

a smooth transition into next year. He said his goal is to develop relationships with staff and students within his first 90 days at the school.

"You have a phenomenal school, so my job is to support you to where you want to go and support the teachers in what they do," he said.

Later, one of his priorities will be to "ensure that the instructional practices for students is relevant" in order to help reduce student stress.

So far, Louie sees many parallels between Saratoga and Santa Teresa, such as CASSY,

which is called the Student Family Center at Santa Teresa, and the Media Arts Program, which he said is "on steroids" compared to Santa Teresa's multimedia program.

The major difference he has noticed is that Saratoga's facilities and programs are more developed.

Louie, who first met Robinson five years ago, said that he is honored to follow a "mentor, resource, and overall a great guy."

Spring Musical opening attracts hundreds

BY MarisaKingsley & JessicaWang

Audiences applauded for the drama department's production of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein's "The Sound of Music," which opened on April 26, with two additional shows over the weekend on April 27 and 28 and two shows on May 3 and 4.

Over 850 audience members came to opening weekend, many commending junior Marly Feigin as the lead Maria Rainer and the overall performance of the cast.

"The production was very well cast," said junior Ashvin Maheshwar, who attended opening night. "There were areas of improvement like the acting and possibly the dancing, but the singing was on point."

The musical, based on the true story told in the book "The Story of the Trapp Family Singers" by Maria von Trapp, follows Maria Rainer, a free-spirited postulant in Nonnberg Abbey, as she leaves the abbey and is hired as a governess to the seven children of ex-naval Captain Georg von Trapp.

lives and the children rekindle their close-knit relationship with their father.

Feigin said that Maria's understanding and compassionate nature has been rewarding as well.

"Her personality inspires me to make myself better and look at life from a different perspective," Feigin said.

Themes of love and family were portrayed alongside the darker historical references of the Nazi takeover of Austria in 1938, seen in the conflicting sentiments from Georg von Trapp and his staff and neighbors.

Senior Shasta Ganti, in his role as Georg von Trapp, portrayed the captain's opposition to Nazism, later emphasized by his solo performance of "Edelweiss" in the second act for a final farewell and an expression of loyalty towards his homeland.

While the hard work and dedication of the cast paid off in a great opening weekend, Feigin believes that there are still some aspects of the show to make smoother such as set changes and more awareness from the cast during costume changes backstage.



TALISMAN // USMAN KHAN

Junior Marly Feigin, as the lead Maria, plays the guitar and sings to the von Trapp kids.

Director Sarah Thermond credits the technical team for troubleshooting timing and microphone problems during the show. "In live theater, that's the best you can do," Thermond said.

Despite this, the actors combatted technical issues by projecting their voices to

make the transitions as seamless as possible. Maheshwar complimented the incorporation of ensemble members within the audience, providing a feeling of "the sound of music being all around us," he said.

Tonight and tomorrow's performances will be at 7:30 p.m. at the McAfee Center.

ADVERTISEMENT

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

AS SEEN ON: ABC NEWS CBS 48 FOX NEWS 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.

"The venue matched the vibe of prom really well and the class office did a really good job of decorating it," sophomore Celine Chien said.

"The bathrooms were really nice since there had stuff like breath mints, Gucci perfume and toothbrushes."

JUNIOR Tyler Ouchida



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.

"I actually had more fun than I expected to," she said. "I think the venue was a really big part of that. It was fun to have it off campus and there was more than one room that we could go into, which was really cool."

The ticket cost for the event was \$170 with ASB and \$180 without, a small uptick in price from last year's \$175. The total cost of the prom was \$32,000, yielding a \$5,000 to \$7,000 profit for the Class of 2020, 2020 class adviser Kristen Hamilton said.

Despite this seemingly hefty price, the class booked the venue at a discounted price because of junior Mia Gunderson's family's membership at La Rinconada Country Club, according to Hamilton. Much of the event was funded through donations, with parents providing decorations like centerpieces, flower arrangements, the photo booth and step and repeat backdrops.

Even the bathrooms were something students said made the experience memorable

"The bathrooms were really nice since they had stuff like breath mints, Gucci perfume and toothbrushes," junior Tyler Ouchida said.

Since juniors are often quite busy during this time of year, Hamilton said she and the class officers enlisted a group of parents to provide major help in planning, including Candice Gunderson, who headed a donations committee for the event.

For students who love film/you tube/movies/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.

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 math 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.

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.

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

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

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ROBOTICS

continued from pg. 1

Fish's alliance lost 117-104.

They were out of the championships once and for all.

The Fish placed in the semifinals of their division during the event that occurred from April 17-20.

The school's other robotics team, the FIRST Tech Challenge Cuttlefish (FTC), did not make it past qualifiers, but were finalists for the Control Award.

Approximately 40 FRC team members and 10 mentors were sent to Houston.

Fourteen of the 15 Cuttlefish team members also traveled to the championships along with 6 chaperones and 2 mentors.

FRC matches are played between two "alliances" composed of three randomly chosen teams, each with their own robot.

The alliance that completes tasks to score the most points wins the match.

After the qualifying matches, the Fish, or team 649, placed seventh in the Turing division, one of the six divisions into which the competition was split.

Alliance selection took place next, where the top teams select other teams to join their alliance and compete on the same team in the Finals.

Ultimately, the Fish placed in the fifth seed alliance with team 4165, the Ninjaneers, from Springfield, Ill., and team 7308, DeepVision, from Mountain View High School.

The club's president, senior Basil Shama, said the team started off slowly during the first two days of the competition.

Even though the team won the majority of their matches, the robot did not individually score particularly well, significantly underperforming relative to its peak efficiency.

However, the team did eventually perform closer to what they wanted.

"By the last day of eliminations, I think we ended on a good note," Shama said.

Shama said their placement in the division was expected, but could have been better if the divisions had been constructed differently.

"I do think we were fairly unlucky with divisions as it was clear to us and everyone else at the tournament that our division not only had some of the best teams in the world but also had an incredible depth of competition," Shama said.

Compared to previous years, the team's performance was stellar.

The team's hardware lead, senior Ankur Garg, said that this was the third time that MSET had made it to the world competition.

Their qualification in 2018 "was basically based off of luck," and when they qualified in 2015 the team was part of an eight-seed alliance that did not make it past quarterfinals.

"This time we made semifinals in the fifth alliance so that was a pretty good spot for us, and then we lost against basically

**"We lost against basically two of the best teams in the world. I'm pretty happy with that."**

SENIOR Ankur Garg

two of the best teams in the world," Garg said. "I'm pretty happy with that."

Shama attributes the team's strong performance to the fact that the club retained a majority of its members from previous years.

As a result, the team had many seniors

that were able to contribute to the robot.

However, Shama said he is left unsatisfied, partly because he feels that the team could have made it to past the division stage.

"We came really close to competing with the best teams in the world, so to come up short was a bit disappointing especially knowing how close we were," Shama said.

Californian teams 1323 (MadTown Robotics), 973 (Greybots) and 5026 (Iron Panthers) won the championships.

Another robotics team, the Cuttlefish,

**"I think they have a really good chance of making it to Worlds again, and I wouldn't be surprised if they place high."**

SENIOR Mark Masulis

also attended the World Championships as the first FTC team from SHS to ever go to Houston.

Things got off to a bit of a bumpy start, as their robot mistakenly got sent to a different airport.

This prevented them from being able to work on it until they finally received it later that night.

During the tournament, the team got off to a slow start, losing multiple matches on the first day due to technical difficulties.

On the second and third days, however, the team began winning matches.

"I think we could have done a lot better if the robot just worked," explained senior Mark Masulis. "Given the circumstances, I think we did really well."

The team became a finalist in contention for the Control Award, which is given to teams that effectively use sensors and pre-programmed instructions to automate important functions of their robot.

To be considered for the award, the team

must complete an application explaining what is so special about their code.

"Even if you have a good auto, if you don't write a legible Control Award Application, the judges won't understand what you're doing," sophomore Oliver Sun said. "You need to make sure what you write is clear and understandable, and really explains how things work. It's good to include diagrams and code snippets."

The robotics team is already planning for next year, in hopes of making it even further into the competition.

"I'm a senior, so I'm not going to be here for robotics next year," Masulis said. "But given the people who are staying, though, I think they have a really good chance of making it to Worlds again, and I wouldn't be surprised if they place much higher next year."

All in all, the team is proud that they made it to the World Championship.

"Since I joined the team, we always joked, 'Oh, we're gonna go to Worlds!' Masulis reflected. "At some point, the joke sort of became serious, and we started saying, 'Hey, I think we can get to Worlds.' And now we actually did it. It's pretty amazing." ♦

>> **the bigidea**

**FIRST World Championships**

**What are they?**  
The World Championships for Robotics Competitions hosted by FIRST, a non-profit group dedicated to spreading STEM education and programs to everyone.

**Where and when were they?**  
They were in Houston on April 17-20.

**Who went to the Tournament?**  
About 54 Students and 18 Adult Mentors.

**How did Saratoga High School do?**  
The M-SET Fish placed in their division semifinals, losing to the team that would go on to win the entire tournament. The M-SET Cuttlefish were a finalist for the Control Award.



Shama  
Club President



FALCON // JIUN LEE

As English teacher Cathy Head rounds out the year, she looks back on her time at Saratoga, saying, "The most meaningful things to me are very small. When somebody stops by to say hello, or when a student makes a turnaround, those are some of my fondest memories."

taught English, she and Head collaborated on many things, including creating the integrated English 11/11 Honors MAP class and the Novel unit in English 9, hiring new staff and teaching classes on rubric development to colleagues in other departments.

Mohnike notes that Head's caring personality and strong sense of ethics has served her well, and that Head has greatly influenced and supported her.

"For years she worked exceptionally hard to make sure students are able to go to the next level whether it be English 10 or college," Mohnike said. "I will miss her camaraderie, her thoughtfulness and the acorns she brings me that remind me that students are the most wonderful seeds of possibility and every one deserves our attention and care."

After she retires, Head plans to volunteer at the local animal shelter or tutor at the library near her house in San Jose.

She said that she will miss the people here the most after she retires.

"I'll hear something on the radio and think: 'I'll want to talk to my students about that because it's going on right now,' and I will miss that," Head said.

Despite this, Head said that she doesn't want to linger around and wants to build a community outside of Saratoga High.

"It's impossible to replace such a stellar teacher," Mohnike said. "Our only hope is that her influence will come through in curriculum and her dedication to the craft of teaching that she has modeled here during her tenure." ♦

HEAD

continued from pg. 1

'extra rooms everywhere.' "It was really close to coming down. The roof leaked, and it smelled like moldy feet," Head said. "The room on the end was just empty except for our total discography of books."

Over the years, Head has seen many physical changes at the school, including ones to the 800 wing, which was once the library before it changed to its current location 20 years ago. She also seen a large shift in ethnic diversity in the student body, saying there were initially "a lot of blondes."

When it came to teaching the students here, compared to other schools she had taught at, Head felt as though she could really find a balance between teaching students life skills and the subject matter.

"I have taught at other schools like Logan where you're dealing with so many social ills that the ability to teach subject matter was seriously reduced," Head said. "Here, we can teach kids life skills and teach the subject matter at the same time, which is rare."

Head said that there has been a huge change in the way she approaches teaching due the evolution of technology and social media's integration into life, and has put more visual learning into her classroom.

"Literacy with the internet became an absolute necessity; the ability to read a visual then see it," Head said. "I had already started that, but that would be a major change [looking back on it now]."

Head also believes that the concept of research has changed a lot, saying that it used to be based in finding the information and documenting the information, but with the

internet, it evolved into teaching students about distinguishing between credible and non-credible websites and information.

Head said that aside from teaching the students, she has cherished relationships with the staff, administration and students.

"There's a strong sense of collaboration that has developed over 30 years," Head said. "This is where my friends and family are."

The Saratoga community has found this to be true. Sophomore Grace Stuart, who had Head for English 9 MAP, said that Head always wanted the best for her students.

"She was always in her room during tutorial to help with writing skills and give positive criticism on projects and papers," Stuart said. "I will always remember how happy she was to see her students do well, even if they were struggling with grades."

Additionally, fellow English teacher Meg Battey, who has known Head for 18 years, said that Head brings out the best in people.

"I think she has magical fairy dust; she brings out the best in her students," Battey said. "Even when students might have lost their way, she is able to work with them in a gentle but firm manner to make expectations clear. And all of us in the English department have collaborated well with her."

Head also was Battey's mentor when she first started after working at Mission Hill Middle School in Santa Cruz as a long-term substitute and helped guide her through the curriculum and course expectations.

Battey said that one of her favorite things to do is to sit down with Head and nominate freshman projects for SMASHN, the annual MAP Oscars where all MAP students get the opportunity to share their projects and vote on which ones they think are the best.

When assistant principal Kerry Mohnike

AV technician retires after 26 years at school

By ElaineToh

Audio visual technician Gordon Blancett has long been a jack of all trades in the library and technology department.

He is often the first person a teacher contacts for a fix and also does a variety of jobs in the library.

Blancett began working here at age 38. After 26 years, he thinks it is time to retire.

"I feel like it's time to do something different," Blancett said.

After finishing a 20-year career in the Air Force in 1992 and working for a year in the private sector, Blancett applied for a job opening as the school's AV technician and got the job in 1993.

He has seen huge changes during his time at the school in terms of technology and the school's approach to using it.

Despite equipment changing all the time, Blancett said he can still help fix and work through any problems that arise.

"I always said, 'If it has a cord attached to it, I'll work on it,'" Blancett said.

Additionally, Blancett helps textbook technician Nada Macesic and sets up textbook distributions in August.

Still, Blancett said the biggest change was the improvement of school facilities, specifically the modernization of rooms.

Now, as he prepares for his retirement, Blancett wants to travel to Europe for the first time, and perhaps to China, Vietnam and Cambodia.

However, Blancett said that he will miss messing with his co-workers and students.

"It's always been fun to stop people in the tracks of thinking, and watch their expressions because suddenly they have to regroup," he said. "It's just one of the things I've always done since I've been here."

While Blancett is excited for his retirement, he admits he will miss being here.

"This era of my life is coming to an end," Blancett said. "I can come back here and visit, but once you leave home, you can go back to visit, but you're never really home." ♦



Blancett  
AV Technician

Students excel at prestigious contests

By ChristineZhang

Five students out of the 34 who took the annual F=ma physics contest in January qualified for the semifinal round of the United States of America Physics Olympiad (USAPhO).

The test was administered by AP Physics teacher Kirk Davis on April 2.

Sophomore Rohan Kumar, juniors Nevin Liang and Jeffrey Xu and seniors Joey Li and Michael Zhang were five of the approximately 400 high school students across the nation to be invited to take the exam.

The USAPhO consisted of six challenging problems, the majority of which involve deriving certain expressions in topics such as electricity and relativity. Last year, around 10 students qualified for the USAPhO.

Li, who took the USAPhO in his sophomore, junior and senior years, was not happy with his performance on this year's test.

Nonetheless, he said that it was similar in style to previous years' tests.

"Every year, there's a mechanics problem and it's the simplest problem in the entire competition," Li said. "I screwed up the mechanics problem this year, but the test was the same difficulty."

Numerous math competitions have also been taking place on campus.

Students qualified from the AMC 10 and 12 tests on Feb. 7 and Feb. 13 to take the American Invitational Mathematics Exam (AIME) on March 13.

Through AIME, six students qualified for the USA Junior Mathematical Olympiad (USAJMO) for students who took the AMC 10 and USA Mathematical

Olympiad (USAMO) for the AMC 12.

On April 17 and 18, Kumar took the USAJMO while juniors Howard Tang and Brandon Wang as well as seniors Catherine Wu and Zhang took the USAMO.

Liang qualified for the USAMO but opted out of taking the test.

Approximately 250 high school students in the U.S. were invited to take each of the two tests.

The test consisted of six proof-based problems taken over nine hours in topics such as combinatorics and number theory.

Wang, a national-level math competitor who has qualified for either the USAJMO or USAMO since eighth grade, said that this year's test was much easier than last year's.

For Wang, the USAMO was two of the Team Selection Tests (TSTs) for the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO).

The Mathematical Association of America chooses members to be on the IMO team based on the candidates' performances on their TSTs.

Despite candidates putting in effort to prepare for the TSTs, Wang said that their results still depend on "a bit of random chance."

"Subject distribution matters a lot on a six-problem test," he said. "I know many people who are good and who sometimes get screwed by distribution."

Wang said that he was relatively lucky for subject distribution on the TSTs this year.

He said that his chances of being selected as an IMO member have improved since December.

"I got pretty lucky, and I'm relieved my work has paid off," Wang said. ♦



Wang  
USAMO Participant



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College visits hold little value before acceptance

BY Alex Wang

Over spring break, many students flew across the country to visit colleges...

For juniors and underclassmen, college visits are largely unnecessary...

Most importantly, the costs of visiting colleges are high. Although visiting with family is probably the cheapest option...

around \$2,000 per student for a trip to the Northeast.

The majority of colleges that students visit, especially the Ivy League schools, have extremely low acceptance rates...

While visiting reach schools may help students narrow down their list of schools to apply to, this process can also be done by using online resources...

Moreover, college tours tend to be similar to each other. For most tours, a student or an admissions officer explains the benefits of attending that college...

After multiple tours, this speech becomes routine and boring. The genericness of these tours only serves to further confuse rather than clarify.

Some may argue that visiting a college is the ultimate demonstration of interest. However, for most colleges, demonstrating interest is not considered at all or at least, not as important anymore...

Others may choose to visit colleges because they believe it would help them write their "Why [specific college]?" essay.

While a college visit may help in this regard, there are numerous online resources that provide information in writing these essays...

For a student who wants to see the buildings on campus, he or she can take a virtual tour which many colleges offer nowadays on their website.

While it is a waste of money for juniors and underclassmen to visit colleges, seniors who have already been admitted to a school have a lot to gain from visits.

Unlike juniors and underclassmen, who are essentially taking shots in the dark, seniors are visiting with one main question in mind: "Do I want to spend the next four years of my life here?"

In the meantime, juniors and underclassmen should stay home and work on their chances of actually attending instead of merely visiting.

More incentives needed for juniors to maximize effort on SBAC tests

Students aiming to attend top-notch colleges have to take standardized tests throughout high school such as the SAT or ACT and subject SATs if they choose to.

This year, the test was held during the week of March 25. The test includes an English and math section consisting of multiple choice, short answer and synthesis questions.

Although the test is optional, students should take and aim to do well on the SBAC because it not only affects the school's ranking but it is also important for students.

Showing proficiency in the English and math sections of the test is important for students who might want to attend a California State University. Even though scores from the SBAC are not sent to colleges, a student's performance on the SBAC affects his or her placement in their math and English courses once accepted at a CSU.

performance of students on the SBAC affects the academic performance index (API) score of each school, which is one of the only ways colleges can differentiate GPAs from school to school.

Likewise, the score serves as a testament to the school's academic rigor; this means receiving a lower grade from a school with a higher API is more likely to be pardoned by admissions officers than a poor grade from a school with a lower API.

This year, the school decided to administer the test over one full day, instead of the previous two half days, a change that was helpful for the students.

Even so, administrators and teachers should provide even more incentives to encourage students to put in their best effort on the SBAC.



JACKSON GREEN

work load was the test.

Other possible incentives include making sure that every student is aware of the importance of the SBAC and allotting time for more breaks during the test to keep them engaged.

ready have to take so many over the course of their high school careers, the SBAC does not require any studying and is administered during a school day.

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editors-in-chief: Connie Liang, Anishi Patel, Ananya Vadlakonda, Jeffrey Xu. Opinion Editors: Shreya Kulkarni, Mathew Luo, Jeffrey Ma, Kevin Sze. Reporters: Shreya Kulkarni.

The Falcon staff voted 23-3 in support of this article.

Art projects are not always smart

BY Christine Zhang

Whenever any of my teachers announce an assignment with an artistic component, the first things I hear are groans from my classmates.

These groans reflect student attitude toward art projects in nearly all classes. In all academic classes, the use of arts in the curriculum, from projects that require artistic talent to small drawings of literary symbols, often fails to effectively enhance students' understanding of the course material.

Art projects are not only biased in favor of students who have natural artistic talent, but they usually do not help students digest information or apply prior knowledge.

For instance, color-coding a model of an animal cell does not help students further understand the function of the mitochondria, creating a World War I propaganda poster does not convey the themes of "All Quiet on the Western Front" and including

symbolic illustrations on a history timeline only wastes space on the paper.

Of course, crude diagrams are often necessary in order to visualize certain situations.

For example, if a math problem asks for the angle of the sun in the sky given a pole and its shadow, then a quick sketch of a triangle would help students to figure out which trigonometric function to use.

However, these simple diagrams do not require any artistic ability, and it is unfair for teachers to expect their students to have this ability when they assign arts-based projects.

While all students are capable of doing more standard assignments such as worksheets, only a select few can create high-quality artwork. In classes like English and chemistry, the distribution

of these skilled artists is random, creating an unfair bias for those few students when an art project is assigned.

And while teachers often assure their students that project grades are based on content and symbolism rather than artistic ability, this only defeats the purpose of giving art assignments altogether.

Furthermore, artistic creativity has little or no merit in most non-art classes. A student's ability to color has no impact on whether they can find derivatives or understand themes in "Of Mice and Men." If artistic skills and creativity are not required for the class, then there is no reason for teachers to include mandatory art assignments as part of their curriculum.

It is understandable that teach-

ers want to give their artistically-inclined students a chance to show off their talents, but they should also consider other students who cannot create artwork of the same quality.

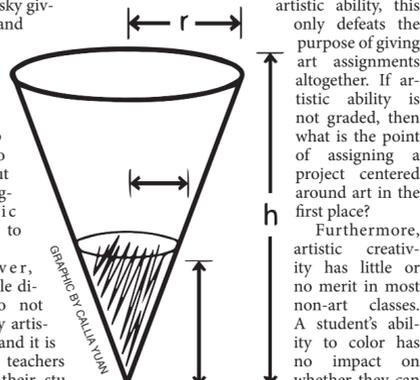
Artistic skill can be learned or improved, but this skill is irrelevant to all academic classes. It would be similar to an English teacher grading on their students' physical fitness.

Worksheets for STEM classes and analysis paragraphs for humanities classes work far better as assignments to supplement learning.

Worksheets force students to think critically about the concepts they have learned, while analysis paragraphs ensure that students truly understand the symbolism in literary works.

In my view, teachers should remove arts from their curriculum entirely if they teach a non-art class, freeing up more time for students to properly express their creativity.

Without art projects, students who do not enjoy arts would not be forced to waste their time, while students who are interested in art can instead concentrate on creating work that they would be proud of.



GRAPHIC BY CALVIN YUW

SCHOOL WIFI: DIFFICULT ACCESS

Back when I was a freshman, I decided not to make a Wi-Fi account because the password to "shs-build" had still been "bobthe-

However, once the school got rid of the "shs-build" Wi-Fi, I was too lazy to go to the library and create a individual account. I decided instead to bother my friends and have them login to the Wi-Fi using their accounts on my devices.

When this school year started, I made an effort to create a Wi-Fi account

online, but after numerous attempts, I was unable to because I didn't previously have an account and ended up using someone else's account again.

Recently, the school reset the Wi-Fi again and I've been forced to use all my data at school and now I'm out of data for the month.

So please, stop changing the Wi-Fi and let me use my data for other things besides playing Brawl Stars.

— Callia Yuan



GRAPHIC BY ASHLEY FENG

COLLEGE MERCH: UNBELIEVABLY EXPENSIVE

Now as a second-semester senior, I have naturally begun to browse college merchandise. But one recurring theme I've noticed is that official merchandise is usually overpriced and way too expensive for my soon-to-be-broke college-self.

For just a university logo printed on an article of clothing, students may have to spend \$35 on T-shirts and \$75 on hoodies.

Some prospective students have considered making their own unofficial gear through custom T-shirt printing sites; however, colleges have also cracked down on these unauthorized versions of college merchandise, effectively barring us from wearing more affordable alternatives.

With all the money universities receive from tuition- it seems they afford to make merchandise cheaper.

Even if schools sell their merch through third-party stores, they could still provide annual subsidies to lower their prices and make hoodies cheaper than \$75.

Or, they could at least allow us students to make our own versions of clothing if we don't want to pay the premium price for a hoodie or T-shirt.

College gear should not cost so much, especially when families already have to fork out tens of thousands of dollars in tuition.

— Michael Zhang

NETFLIX ORIGINALS: NEED MORE

Netflix Originals are a blessing for Netflix's 137 million users; unfortunately, they also come with some glaring downsides too.

There's no doubt that shows such as "Stranger Things," "Black Mirror" and "Sex Education" captivate audiences for weekend-long binges, but that's also the problem — there's an emphasis on "week-end-long."

Most Netflix Originals have fewer than a dozen episodes released per season, and when Netflix releases them, they drop the entire season at once.

So, it's only natural for binge-oriented people like me to finish watching the whole season in a weekend, and then it's a lengthy wait before the next season is released.

To fix this problem, Netflix should either release episodes weekly or release the next season sooner to keep bingers like myself engaged; this way, the Originals will be a true blessing, and not just a binger's curse in disguise.

— Muthu Palaniappan

CLOSED CAMPUS: INCONVENIENT

I am not a perfect student. Some days I will leave my homework at home, some days I will leave my homework in my car and on some Blue Days days I might not carry my Spanish textbook to class.

If I could go home or to my car freely during tutorial, I would be able to become that perfect student and get my materials for class.

Unfortunately, the policy of having campus closed during tutorial prevents me from doing so.

Having a closed campus during tutorial is especially irritating for upperclassmen, who before 2016 could use their cars as a de facto locker.

After all, the car is where we store a lot of our materials that we bring to school.

While I understand the school needs teaching minutes during tutorial, often students don't even use this time, instead sitting idly in the quad, doing nothing and waiting for the next bell to ring.

And even if the school won't allow us seniors to drive home during tutorial, "closed campus" should at least be what it is called — closed to outside campus but open to land inside the campus, including the parking lot.

— Elaine Sun

POCKETS: TOO SMALL

I can't say how many times I've tried to stick my phone into the front pocket of my jeans, only to have the pocket be, literally, two or three inches deep — nowhere near big enough to fit my phone.

There's no point to having a pocket that small. The only thing I can use it for is to stash spare coins, which isn't even a pocket's proper use. And don't get me started on fake pockets.

The only pockets that function decently on girls' pants are the back ones, and although they usually work, I find them highly uncomfortable.

When I put my phone or wallet in my back pocket, I can't sit down properly, and often, it isn't even large enough to hold my phone anyway.

But even if I put my phone or wallet there, I run the risk of it falling out or being stolen without me ever knowing it even disappeared.

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

— Christine Zhang

NEWSTAFF

STAFFPOLICY

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# Why teachers should use technology during class

BY LeoCao

Technology is entwined into every aspect of our lives. It significantly impacts today's culture, affecting the way we work, play and, most importantly, learn. It only makes sense to incorporate a greater use of technology into classrooms.

Depending on the school and specific classes, there are various levels of technology use in classrooms. Many classes here have a strong electronic presence in their curriculum. It is important to maintain the status quo in these classes and implement additional forms of technology for those classes that are lacking.

From applications to online textbooks, there are numerous different options for incorporating more technology into the classroom. The instructor can choose whether to make a more dramatic change by implementing many different technologies or simply add a single tool for a specific project.

Either way, there is no shortage of tools to transform the classroom. More laptops, online assignments and online textbooks will give students more to interact with the teacher, collaborate on projects, and access to updated information and course materials.

First of all, technology can foster active learning by allowing more interactions between the instructor and the students. For example, the teacher can ask quiz questions and instantly receive results, helping them measure how well the students are understanding a certain concept.

Tools such as online quiz questions and other polling systems capture the attention of all students, including those who rarely raise their hand. Overall, more engagement between the teachers and students helps both sides build credibility with each other.

Additionally, there is a lot of value in keeping textbooks and course materials up to date. With tech platforms such as Google Docs, students can work together on projects, share information, and receive input from the instructor, creating a more collaborative learning environment.

orative learning environment.

Finally, being well versed in technology is becoming an extremely important life skill. Creating presentations, distinguishing between reliable and unreliable online sources and maintaining appropriate etiquette online are vital in achieving success in today's world. These vital skills can all be learned in the classroom.

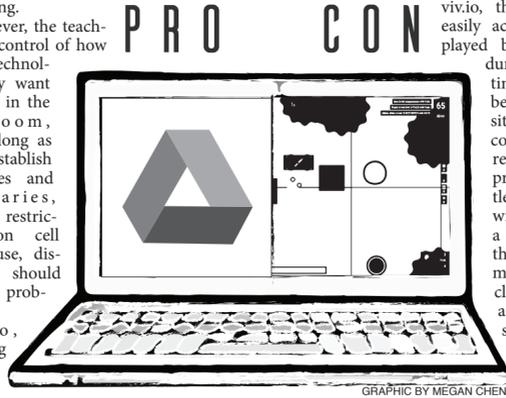
One prominent argument against the use of technology in the classroom is the concern that it can be distracting.

However, the teacher is in control of how much technology they want to allow in the classroom, and as long as they establish guidelines and boundaries, such as restrictions on cell phone use, distraction should not be a problem.

Also, allowing students to use technology teaches them responsibility by taking ownership of what is often an expensive device.

Many educators are also worried that the cost of technology is simply too high to successfully implement the tools they want. Fortunately, there are many cost-effective solutions, such as Chromebooks, that can help schools get the technology that they deserve into classrooms.

A responsible use of technology will enhance education and help create an collaborative and innovative classroom. Although it may be expensive, technology opens doors to new experiences, new discoveries and new ways of learning. ♦



GRAPHIC BY MEGAN CHEN

# Don't count on tech to cure education problems

BY MichaelZhang

Technology becoming more and more common in classrooms as teachers employ iPads, laptops, document cameras and many more in their lessons., but this should be done with caution.

Too often such technology can serve as a distraction, create opportunities for technical difficulties and is expensive.

For instance, there are many online games, such as survivalio, that can be easily accessed and played by students during class time. While better website blockers could help remedy this problem a little, students will likely find a way around them. These methods include using alternative sites, like survivo2.io or unblocked sites in which the game is embedded. The existence of YouTube, Reddit and social media as well means that students will have no problem finding something other than classwork to do unless a teacher is standing immediately over their shoulder.

Furthermore, technology can detract from students' learning by providing shortcuts through the internet. By allowing easy access to technology during school time, students will have more chances to access sites like Slader and SparkNotes that give answers directly instead of actually investing time to learn the course material.

Introducing technology also increases the odds of having technical difficulties occur during class. While these problems may be rare, they can destroy whole lesson plans.

Adding to the difficulties with a tech-focused curriculum is that up-to-date technology is expensive. Instead of buying every student a personal iPad, for example, schools could use the money for new textbooks, workbooks, or other useful materials. In lower-income school districts, savings from not purchasing technology is especially beneficial, as the extra money could be put toward basic necessities, such as pencils, erasers and paper, that some students might not be able to afford.

Furthermore, this cost is only exacerbated by the rapid development of technology. Many computers from five years ago are considered slow by today's standard, and modern software requires newer hardware as well.

All of this is not to say that the use technology in the classroom is bad or should end. In classes that actually require technology, such as AP Computer Science, the use of school laptops or computers is completely justified because they are a fundamental part of the course. But aside from these exceptions, cutting-edge technology may not be as necessary as most educators seem to think.

All in all, while there are ways for technology to enhance students' education, technology in school is more detrimental than beneficial. Even as technology becomes more widespread in the rest of society, schools should reconsider before hopping on the bandwagon. ♦

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All in all, while there are ways for technology to enhance students' education, technology in school is more detrimental than beneficial. Even as technology becomes more widespread in the rest of society, schools should reconsider before hopping on the bandwagon. ♦

# CASSY's new center won't discourage students from use

BY MarisaKingsley

When CASSY moves into its new home at the center of campus soon, the therapists there hope to increase their ability to help more students dealing with mental health issues.

Yet with this goal also comes new potential challenge: Some say its more visible location will discourage students from going, as opposed to its current more discreet location in a portable in the side parking lot. Although the stigma is a very real issue, my guess is that the student body will greatly benefit from the move to the center of campus, despite the doubts that some have expressed.

Regardless of the effect of this move, the need for mental health services for teens has never been greater. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness among teenagers, affecting 32 percent.

Unfortunately, for many students with mental illnesses, it is difficult to get the help they need at their school. School counselors are trained to help students with social and emotional issues that come in the way of their academic success but are not trained to provide long-term therapy.

Through services such as CASSY implemented at SHS, trained therapists are on site every school day to help students regardless of the student's ability to pay for the service. The stigma around mental health is incredibly prevalent, mostly due to people who have been misinformed about mental health conditions and often about the individuals diagnosed. People are told that simple things such as "being positive" or "growing up" can cure mental illness when often serious professional help is needed.

But that does not mean there is no hope. With the move, CASSY will actually be another step closer to normalizing therapy for students by being in a central location. It will give them a larger platform to spread their message that it's all right to get help or take a break when you're feeling overwhelmed instead of white-knuckling it.

As more students become open to therapy, the stigma against it will continue to fade. This will encourage other students who are in need of counseling but are afraid to be judged by their peers to try using CASSY services.

There is greater demand than ever for a place like CASSY where students' voices are able to be heard. With mental health issues growing for teens here and everywhere, the relocation of CASSY to the student center is a good first step to normalizing getting mental health counseling. ♦

## With the move, CASSY will actually be another step closer to normalizing therapy for students.

# Teaching cursive is outdated and unnecessary

BY LeoCao

Despite having been taught for decades, cursive is dying. A very small proportion of the adult population uses cursive in their day-to-day writing. Nevertheless, some yearn for the "good old days" when elementary schools taught "the basics," which often included cursive.

The truth is, we have moved into the 21st century. Most of our writing and communication is electronic. Insisting on teaching using cursive is comparable to asking the textile industry to return to the "Spinning Jenny," or forcing people with washing machines to wash their clothes by hand.

No one would even consider these ideas, so why would people push for a focus on teaching cursive in schools?

There are obviously foundational skills about our language that students should learn. In order to communicate more effectively, we need to understand the conventions of grammar and spelling. More importantly, we need some form of penmanship, but there is simply no need to teach both print and cursive.

Most students learn cursive in elementary school, after they have some mastery of print. This means that when "learning" cursive, they are simply copying letters and patterns over and over again, which does not seem like an effective use of academic time.

Criticisms of student handwriting center on an alleged lack of ability to write neatly in test situations as well as everyday life. Teachers often require students to write exams in pen, and then lament some of the students' illegible handwriting. Since students can write faster — and probably better — using a keyboard, why not allow students to use laptops for their tests?

In today's society, beautiful handwriting is unnecessary. Rather, typing is the key to a multitude of jobs. From banks to travel agents to retailers, most companies require proficiency in technology for even the lowest skilled workers. An adept typist can communicate information quickly, and companies are searching for these people to maintain their online presence.

Additionally, typing is less error-prone than handwriting. When a student makes a mistake, they can easily delete or undo. Students in the 21st century should be given opportunities to write, to create narratives using their pens, pencils and keyboards. This will enable them to become more fluent in both formats. What they do not need is endless, mindless cursive practice. Writing with pen and paper is still important, but it is unnecessary to devote precious class time to such an archaic device. ♦



GRAPHIC BY EMILIE ZHOU

# KonMari method: a grueling mental challenge

the hart-throb

Allison Hartley



Looking at the massive heap of shirts on my bed, I realized that I had committed to another two hours of sorting and folding. It was 10:30 p.m. — I had been going through my clothes for three hours — and my face glowed with sweat.

It was the second day of my tidying renegade inspired by organization expert Marie Kondo's KonMari method that earned her a Netflix original series that follows Kondo as she helps people tidy their homes. The method, which Kondo describes in her No. 1 New York Times bestselling book "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up," urges the tidier to ask themselves one essential question about their stuff: "Does this spark joy?" In turn, this question has been immortalized as a meme.

KonMari has six basic guidelines: commit yourself to tidying up, imagine your ideal lifestyle, finish discarding before storing items, tidy by category rather than location, follow the right order (clothes, books, papers, miscellaneous and sentimental items) and ask yourself if it sparks joy.

I started off by tidying my desk, drawers and shelves, not realizing that I had broken the fifth rule of KonMari — follow the right order. The process took me almost five hours, resulting in three boxes of discarded items.

Certain items were easy to eliminate, so I quickly filled a box with useless accumulated items like random trinkets, old pens and old chapsticks. Once I weeded these out from the pile of items stripped from my storage, I had to confront what Kondo calls "sentimental items."

I was appalled at the number of pieces that I had mindlessly accumulated for years.

# Vince Offer's products live up to infomercials

eye -sac le

Isaac Le



In the middle of TV shows, sports games, movies, there are always commercials advertising new innovative and life-changing products. Among the most famous infomercials are those made by Vince Offer, who is known for his skill in marketing and his appearance in many memes. But do these products even work? I took this as an opportunity to try the Slap Chop and the Shamwow.

The Slap Chop, a cooking utensil made to revolutionize the efficiency of chopping up foods, came within two days, with free shipping, thanks to Amazon Prime. The product was \$19.99, which I thought was reasonable considering its abilities. I was more than excited to open it up and use it for the first time. It was very easy to use: I simply pushed down on a button, and the chopped foods would appear at the bottom of the accessory. I decided that in order to run an appropriate test, I would chop three items with varying textures; so I chose a hard-boiled egg, a potato and almonds. The Slap Chop easily went through the egg, breaking it into many smaller pieces, but who would want to eat chopped eggs, anyway?

The problem began with the potatoes. After hitting the button, the potatoes pieces got stuck in between the blades. I attempted to take the pieces of potato out with a fork, but I wedged a gap between two of the blades, breaking the Slap Chop. So there was no almond test, unfortunately. Next up was the Shamwow, an orange towel that is able to soak up water under any circumstances. It came at a price of \$10 for one towel. I first saw this product being used live at a car convention, I hoped that it would live up to its demonstration. But realistically, how is it possible for a towel to hold 12 times its weight, and absorb fluids easily while drenched?

As the clear surface area of my desk and floor increased, my mental capacity to make decisions dwindled. The constant decision-making of the previous hours left me mentally drained, but I was committed to staying on track to finish these items and leave the next day for my clothes. Of course, my mom chose this time of mental crisis to pick over my discarded items, holding each thing up and asking me if I was sure I wanted to discard it.

Finally, I reached my sock drawer, which would always burst with pairs of bunched up socks — my weakness and article of clothing that I buy impulsively and recklessly. I considered skipping the sock category since I was tired and didn't expect to discard many socks, anyway, but from deep in my soul, I felt Marie Kondo's reproachful disapproval for my chaotic army of socks.

At the end of the day, discarding items of clothing was less mentally grueling than other mementos in my room, albeit tossing my obnoxious striped socks wrenched my heart.

The KonMari folding method has proven to be a sustainable arrangement that has kept my clothes tidy and visually pleasing. Following through with KonMari felt productive, and the experience engendered newfound respect for Marie Kondo, who must pack more mental toughness in her 4-foot 7-inch body than I ever could have. ♦

I tried on scores of pants, shirts and outerwear, mindlessly listening to an '80s rock playlist (Kondo suggests to tidy in silence, but I chose to break that rule to keep myself going).

For years, my clothes had been organized in stacks, which would easily become overturned in desperate times of flipping through outfits in a time crunch. Needless to say, I was blown away by her simple and elegant logic of folding clothes to stand upright to be viewed easily and simultaneously.

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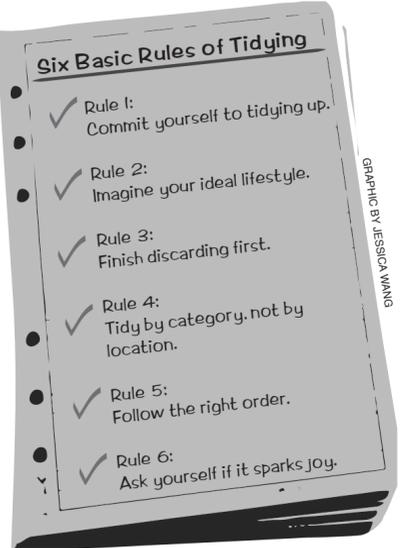
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## Reporter tests out Marie Kondo's organization tips



GRAPHIC BY JESSICA WANG



GRAPHIC BY JESSICA WANG

May 3, 2019

## Affordable locations capture San Francisco experience

shreyonce



Shreya Katkere

After working hard in school, many students need a break, and a day trip is the perfect way to forget about your worries and have a fun time. San Francisco, a popular tourist destination and only around an hour away from here, is a great choice.

Even if you are on a budget, there are still many affordable places to shop or visit, and if you spend your money wisely, you can experience the city for the mere price of \$15.

To get to the city, the easiest option would be driving yourself or getting a ride from a friend or parent. My parents dropped me off when I went to San Francisco last summer since I did not have my license at the time.

If you don't have your license and your parents aren't willing to drive

you, you can always take CalTrain, about an hour and a half ride costing \$5.25 for youth and \$10.50 for adults.

Heading to the city's most prominent attraction, I first visited the Golden Gate Bridge. You can either drive over the bridge for a \$6 toll or walk. If you opt out of driving across and simply want to take pictures, Baker Beach or Fort Point are perfect locations for a full view of the bridge.

**Many students need a break, and a day trip is the perfect way to forget about your worries.**

After the lengthy drive, you may be hungry for a snack, as I was. I recommend trying the custard tarts at the Golden Gate cafe, which is only a 3-minute drive from the bridge. The delicious tarts melt in your mouth and are only \$2.50 each.

Next, visit the Cable Car Museum, which is a 17 minute drive from the Golden Gate Cafe. Even if you are not normally a museum person, it is an important part of the city's history and experience. If you are interested in learning about cars and technology, this is a great opportunity to learn how the cable car system works. The best part is that visiting the museum is completely free. You also only need to spend 20 to 30 minutes at this museum because it is fairly small.

After watching YouTuber Emma Chamberlain's review on shops in San Francisco, I really wanted to visit Home Cafe coffee shop because they have birthday cake lattes for \$5. While this coffee is on the expensive side, it lived up to the hype because of the beautiful latte art and sweetness level.

Visiting these four locations makes for an enjoyable day and it only costs \$13.50. You will get perfect pictures for Instagram, enjoy tasty snacks and drinks at cafes and learn about the history of one of the oldest cities in the Bay. ♦

# Day Trippin' around the Bay

## Aesthetic streets and quaint nature of Capitola appeals to all

cow goes mu



Annissa Mu

I had just finished my tennis tournament at Seascapes and it was still early morning. Driving home, my dad and I were getting hungry, so we decided to pull off the highway to find lunch.

As we proceeded down the road, we discovered a quaint downtown, lined with tiny clothing stores and sweets shops. When we arrived at the city's beach, I spotted a line of bright, pastel little houses along the coastline which led my eye to a pier jutting out into the ocean. This was Capitola. Capitola is a one-hour drive from Saratoga, and it's my favorite day vacation site.

One reason is its aesthetic architecture and coastline. Downtown Capitola champions a vintage yet bright look, featuring vibrantly colored houses

with charming designs, the most notable of these being the pastel colored Capitola Venetian Hotel located right along the Capitola Beach. Walking down this visually pleasing center evokes a sense of adventure and excitement as there's always some new exotic building or structure to look at. And since the streets and beaches are never too crowded, it provides copious photo shoot and Instagram opportunities.

I also appreciate Capitola's style of shopping, for they seem to only integrate small, independent businesses, many of which are family run. This provides for an opportunity to experience a new kind of shopping we're unable to experience in our local urban centers and malls.

I've bought my sister's wedding gift, a petite turtle necklace, from one of the several knick-knack stores and a bag of toffee from a secluded candy shop. The only chain business that I've seen in Capitola is a tiny Pizza my Heart, squeezed between a bustling line of restaurants by the coast.

However, I never went to Pizza my

Heart for food in Capitola. Not just because the lines are always long, but because I, as a tradition, always go the restaurant, Margaritaville, only a few steps away. Margaritaville serves refreshing Mexican American fusion seafood, such as fish tacos, enchiladas and oyster platters, at both reasonable prices and serving sizes. They also have tables available outside on their dock, allowing you to enjoy lunch or dinner while viewing the ocean. I personally recommend trying their Fried Avocado Tacos along with a virgin Pina Colada to drink.

There is still so much more you can do in Capitola. For example, you can bring your dog to play on its uncrowded beaches or eat crepes and cotton candy at its cloistered cafes and shopping malls.

Because of its charming look, great food and plethora of unique nooks-and-crannies to explore, I highly recommend Capitola as a both relaxing and fun day trip location. Once there, it'll be hard to run out of things to find and to do. ♦

## A stress-raising Santa Cruz day trip on a tight budget

jay-z and megan



Megan Chen & Jayne Zhou

As broke and busy high school juniors, we have trouble finding time to relax, let alone plan trips. In the midst of tests, essays and projects, we decided that it would be reasonable to take four hours out of our weekend to hang out in Santa Cruz, with a limit of \$30 each.

With the music and air conditioning on full blast, we left the high school with high hopes and thin wallets. Not even 15 minutes after entering the highway, we realized that we had left with barely enough gas to make it to Santa Cruz. For a second, the stress from our ACT and AP tests melted away, replaced by the panic of not having enough money to even return home.

Luckily, the closest gas station was just off the next exit, and one of us had remembered to bring a credit card. Even by using the cheapest gas, we spent over \$70 to fill up the tank, surpassing our planned budget by \$10 even before reaching Santa Cruz. Despite the detour, the surprisingly light traffic made our drive about 50 min-

utes long. Although we had already passed our budget, we decided that it was fair to limit ourselves to \$15 each because of the unforeseen circumstances.

Arriving at around 2 p.m., we chose to spend the day at the Boardwalk, because we knew the area well and could limit ourselves to the activities we knew were worth spending our money on.

After going to the Boardwalk three or four times previously, we knew that the Giant Dipper was the only ride worth spending what little money we had left on. The ride was \$7 each, costing us almost half of our new budget.

As the most popular ride on the Boardwalk, the Giant Dipper had by far the longest line, and we waited outside the building for a good half an hour. Between breaks in our conversations, we admired the scenic view of the beach, filled with families and groups of students despite the cool weather.

The line inside the building took another 15 minutes, but we entertained ourselves with the latest gossip and our plans for prom.

The ride, although inferior to those at theme parks like Great America, was the highlight of our trip. After spending \$84 and 45 minutes in line to get to this ride, its dips and windy turns were extremely refreshing, and

it captured a hilariously unflattering picture of the two of us.

After strolling a little further down the Boardwalk, we pondered over whether we should spend the rest of our money on indoor mini golf, attempt to win giant stuffed animals from the rigged games or save the money for food. We weren't that hungry; in fact, we still had food babies from lunch, but we wanted to save our money for potato twists.

While waiting for our food babies to subside, we headed to the beach, but the cold weather kept us from staying long.

After less than an hour, we were ready to leave, so we grabbed a tater twist for \$7.50 each and shared a \$3 drink, going \$2 over our budget. Overall, the Boardwalk itself was a nice, relaxing, albeit, short break from school, and we both enjoyed the afternoon.

If we had more time and money, we agreed that it would have been more enjoyable to play mini golf in the arcade, and go to Davenport Beach instead of the overly crowded Boardwalk beach. However, the trip was a successful, mostly budget-friendly break, and we were ultimately happy with how we divided our time and money. For those looking to plan a trip to Santa Cruz, we recommend the places we went but would warn to plan ahead and check for a full tank. ♦

## Top five things to do in Monterey

sel-liu-lar data



Selena Liu

Living in the Bay Area, we often say we're lucky to be located near the ocean, but in reality, Saratoga is still about an hour away from the water.

For my money, if you truly want to enjoy the ocean, Monterey is the best place to go. With multiple scenic attractions paired with restaurants and shopping centers, Monterey trumps all other oceanside cities because it's not too crowded, allowing visitors to enjoy the scenic view of the ocean, but it's also well developed, allowing them to enjoy other attractions during their visit.

Here are the top five things to do during a day trip to this beautiful seaside city:

**1. Check out the Monterey Bay Aquarium.**

Located right next to the beach, the Monterey Bay Aquarium is home to hundreds of fascinating marine organisms. From reptiles to jellyfish to penguins, the aquarium houses 45 interactive exhibits, and its auditorium, shows documentaries about marine life. During certain times in your visit, you can also watch the staff feed animals. To top it all off, students receive a admission ticket discount and pay

\$39.95 instead of the adult price of \$49.95. With new organisms coming into exhibits nearly every day, you can be certain that every time you visit the aquarium, you'll find something new.

**2. Enjoy scenic views on the 17-Mile Drive.**

The 17-Mile Drive isn't just an ordinary road. Anybody who coasts along the path will see the breathtaking scenery of the Pacific Ocean, the beach and the Del Monte forest. The 21 marked points of interest along the path will not only show you the greatest landmarks along the trail, like the Lone Cypress or a view of the Pebble Beach Resorts, but these points are also great locations for pictures. Typically, people only choose a few select landmarks to visit during the drive, but if you want to enjoy all of the scenery, the entire drive, including stopping to see the landmarks, will take around two hours to complete.

**3. Shop your heart out at Cannery Row.**

This famous shopping district that John Steinbeck based his 1945 novel "Cannery Row" on is a tourist hotspot that is home to many high-end boutiques. In addition, the district also features the Cannery Row Antique Mall, one of the most historical shopping centers in the world — the mall sells 1900s-era themed souvenirs such as unique furniture, utensils, and carpets.

**4. Enjoy high-quality seafood at Old Fisherman's Wharf.**

If you're looking for a place with good seafood and high-quality restaurants, Old Fisherman's Wharf is the place to go. Located right next to Cannery Row and Monterey Bay Aquarium, the wharf is a street full of restaurants and shops right next to the sea, also holding activities like whale-watching and kayaking. Some of the best restaurants at the wharf include Old Fisherman's Grotto and Crab House. While these restaurants are moderately pricey, ranging from \$20 to \$40 per meal, they do have great selections of seafood, oysters, and steaks.

**5. Play a round of golf at Pebble Beach Golf Links** — if you've made a reservation in advance and have a fat wallet. While reservations to play on this gorgeously scenic golf resort must be made nearly a year in advance, nothing will stop visitors from enjoying the breathtaking views of the grass, sand and ocean. Since the golf link is closer to the southern side of Monterey, you'll also be able to see the beaches of Carmel as you enjoy the view.

Moreover, if you play golf and manage to snag a reservation on this resort, one of the most popular golf links in the world, you're in for an amazing experience. While prices to play on the link are \$600, which is much higher than average, the opportunity to play on Pebble Beach itself is a rarity, and if you ever decide to book a round, be prepared for the high cost but one that is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. ♦

# 'The Perfectionists' surprises die-hard 'PLL' fans

BY AvaHooman  
& EshaLakhotia

After season seven of the TV show "Pretty Little Liars" ended, we were devastated. Our Tuesday nights, once dedicated to the show, felt empty and we missed the insane plot twists director I. Marlene King threw at us.

So when the same director announced a spinoff called "Perfectionists" with two of the original lead characters, Allison DiLaurentis, played by Sasha Pieterse, and Mona Vanderwaal, played by Janel Parrish, we were hesitant but still excited.

Our main concern was that the franchise would get ruined by an average spinoff, but at the same time, we missed the characters and knew we had to watch the show to find out ourselves.

The spinoff aired on March 20 and was well received by fans, earning 88 percent on Rotten Tomatoes.

Unlike "Pretty Little Liars," the show is set in a college called Beacon Heights University in Portland, Ore.

The show starts off much darker than "Pretty Little Liars," as more mature conflicts, like murder, arise in the first few episodes. As well as the lead characters being in college and older, as opposed to "Pretty Little Liars," where the characters were all in high school.

Along with Alison and Mona, the main characters are Ava Jalali, played by Sofia Carson; Sydney Park, played by Caitlin Park; and Dylan Walker, played by Eli Brown. All are students at the university. The plot re-



Courtesy of TUNBFIND

volves around their friend's murder, which they are getting framed for.

At first, we were surprised by "Perfectionists" because we had low expectations since most spinoffs prove to be significantly worse than the actual show. To our delight, the plot was interesting and kept us hooked.

When elements of "Pretty Little Liars" were mentioned, we reminisced about the

show. "Perfectionists" was just as unrealistic as "Pretty Little Liars," and we found ourselves making jokes about the plot and the characters' actions just like we did with the original show.

We missed the original characters, but the spinoff gave the audience closure since it mentioned how these characters ended up.

The show's ratings have been positive

thus far and their fan base is strong as the majority of people watching the show were fans of "Pretty Little Liars."

The original show went through seven seasons with fans continuously supporting the show.

So if you're missing Alison and Mona's scheming, "Perfectionists" is the perfect show to watch. ♦



## Remake 'Good Trouble' captures true essence of original show 'The Fosters'

BY EileenBui

After the abrupt discontinuation of their TV show "The Fosters," television channel Freeform kept their angry and discontent audience's attachment to the Adams-Foster family alive with the spinoff "Good Trouble."

"The Fosters" is a five season long television series following the Adams-Fosters family. This unconventional family consists of mothers Stef and Lena, Brandon — who is Stef's biological son from her previous marriage and adopted twins Mariana and Jesus.

The show begins when 16-year-old Callie Jacobs, just released from juvenile detention, is set up to be fostered by the Adams-Fosters. Shortly after, we discover that Callie was sent to jail as a result of smashing her previous foster parent's car to distract him from abusing her gay younger brother Jude. Eventually, both Jude and Callie are adopted by the Adams-Fosters.

Throughout the seasons, Freeform captivates fans by focusing on the complexities of a "non-traditional" family as well as current events, differing opinions about gay marriage, relationships between adopted children and their biological parents and reform of foster care. After "The Fosters" season finale show, "Good Trouble" picks up with sisters Callie and Mariana moving to Los Angeles together.

Even though "Good Trouble" is a spi-

noff, in its first few episodes the show gives enough background information on the characters to be able to watch it without having to binge 104 episodes of "The Fosters." Additionally, for the fans watching the series because of their love of the Adams-Fosters, there are occasional cameos from former characters.

Throughout the first season, the show follows Callie and Mariana through their journey of learning to become adults.

Callie, fresh out of law school, scores a clerkship with an extremely right-wing judge. Mariana learns how it feels to be a little fish again after going from the valedictorian of her class at MIT to

the very bottom at a virtually all-male tech startup. Similar to "The Fosters," "Good Trouble" addresses important topics in the media. "Good Trouble" keeps some of the same lovable characters from "The Fosters" with a tendency to cover current, controversial issues plus a handful of new, interesting side stories.

Paired with lighthearted boy drama and the struggles of being a broke adult, "Good Trouble" makes for an intriguing watch whether you have watched "The Fosters" or not. ♦

## 'Young Sheldon' brings back old fans with nostalgic feels

BY AlanZu

Sheldon, Raj and Howard, sit on the couch, eyeing each other furiously. The friends are competing to have an authentic ring from "Lord of the Rings" in an eBay auction. After the three struggle to hold onto the artifact, they fall asleep on the couch. Sheldon, waking up and realizing that only he still holds the ring, shouts in delight, to which the audience bursts out laughing.

"The Big Bang Theory" revolves around a group of "nerds" doing research at Caltech, situated in Pasadena. The group mainly enjoys having comic discussions, playing Halo, or fighting over movie artifacts, such as an original Spock figurine.

In many ways, "Young Sheldon," a show revolving around "The Big Bang Theory's" main geek's childhood, is a major success because it brings back many old fans and is currently ranked second, according to Deadline, in most watched TV series, behind the Big Bang series.

Young Sheldon takes place in a fictional Texas town called Medford. The main character Sheldon, a 9-year-old genius, who stars in "The Big Bang Theory" as an adult, attends the local high school along with his brother George, who is five years older.

Sheldon's fraternal twin, Missy, studies at the local elementary school.

Iain Armitage, young Sheldon's actor, successfully copies Jim Parsons, the older Sheldon's actor. Both portray an innocent, autistic man and make his character lovable to the audience.

Young Sheldon immediately shows his arrogant and bratty nature in the show. Not only does he take every chance to flex his knowledge in almost any subject.

"Young Sheldon" also successfully made many old fans crack up: Sheldon constantly bickers with his pastor over religion. While the pastor would quote the Bible for the creation of the universe, while Sheldon would repeatedly state that science is the true religion.

"Young Sheldon" portrays a new Sheldon who finds relatively simple but creative solutions to problems.

In "The Big Bang Theory," Sheldon maintains a protocol for everything, ranging from zombie apocalypses to having a bathroom schedule.

The major difference is that "Young Sheldon" doesn't portray the Big Bang squad; without dwarf Howard, lactose-intolerant Leonard, speech-impaired Raj, and failing actress Penny, the new show doesn't have the same comedy to it.

Despite the differences, the show has a nostalgic ring to it, which explains why so many old fans are attracted to the new series. Not only is much of Sheldon's past revealed, but viewers also can enjoy a new form of the same innocent man, always unable to differentiate sarcasm and constantly flexing his knowledge. ♦

# Popular YouTuber and high-profile parents get entangled in new college admissions scandal

BY SelenaLiu

A college scandal took the country by storm in March, when government authorities found hundreds of college students and their parents guilty of bribing college admission officers and coaches to grant admission. Among the students caught up in the scandal is Olivia Jade, daughter of "Fuller House" star Lori Loughlin.

Jade, a 19-year-old YouTube star known for her beauty tutorials and makeup products, has morphed into the face of the scandal. With Loughlin and famous fashion designer Mossimo Giannulli as parents, Jade epitomizes the wealthy elite children involved in the scandal.

Jade's YouTube career first started when she was in high school. Over the years, Jade amassed over 2 million subscribers on YouTube and 1.4 million followers on Instagram. On her channel, Jade does makeup tutorials while casually talking to her viewers about her social life, her family and other aspects of her life.

However, Jade's career has crumbled with the entire world now aware of her connection to the scandal. Jade's parents reportedly paid over \$500,000 in bribes to sports coaches at the University of Southern California to designate Jade and her sister, Isabella Giannulli, as rowing recruits to the university.

As a result of the scandal, Jade's beauty line trademarks, including her cosmetics lines Olivia Jade and Olivia Jade Beauty, are being scuttled. Makeup company Sephora has already terminated its contract with Jade and dropped her products from their store aisles, according to Teen Vogue.

So what is Jade doing now? According to sources that have spoken to Elle magazine, Jade has temporarily cut off communication with her parents because of the scandal and is currently living at her boyfriend's house in Malibu.

"Olivia hasn't been out with friends. She's completely in hiding right now," the source told Elle. "A lot of Olivia's friends have been telling her not to be mad at her parents since they were just trying to do the best they could for her, but she doesn't listen. Olivia feels she is the victim."

People magazine also reports that Jade knew about her parents' bribes and "would never gone along with it" if she thought it would harm her. Angry toward her parents,

Jade is now allegedly looking for ways to rebuild her brand and her social media presence, although she still has not made any public statements yet.

Meanwhile, Jade's parents have been caught squarely in the legal crosshairs. Loughlin's maximum potential sentence could require her to stay in prison for up to five years under the charge of conspiracy to commit money laundering.

The scandal has also taken a huge effect on Loughlin's career as an actress. Loughlin has lost major roles on a show and a television movie series, and these productions have said that they will stop development of shows featuring her like "Fuller House," according to The New York Times.

With the media exposing the scandal to the general public, more and more members of the online community who are acquainted with Jade and Loughlin have spoken out about their impressions of the family.

For example, YouTuber Harlow Brooks released a viral video discussing her experience going to the same high school as Olivia



Courtesy of BBC

## Why is 'Thotiana' considered a 'bad' song?

BY ChelseaLeung  
& ElaineSun

Move over, babynames.com. We have a newly minted name to add to the already long list of possible first names in the English language: "Thotiana," popularized by rapper Blueface's hit song "Thotiana."

Blueface, real name Johnathan Michael Porter, showcases his signature off-beat style in "Thotiana," which was released on Jan. 29. In February, the song reached the top 10 on Billboard's Hot Rap Songs Chart, eventually climbing to No. 9 on the Billboard Hot 100 in March.

But beyond memes humoring Blueface's unconventional dancing, flow and signature phrases, including "Yea aight" and the titular lyric "Bust down Thotiana," critics of the song pointed out the song's shallowness — and especially opposed its possibly misogynistic lyrics and objectification of women.

"Thotiana," says the Horrible Music and Songs Wiki, is considered a "horrible song" because it has no depth beyond its sexual lyrics. Additionally, the Wiki says, "Thotiana" objectifies women both through its explicit lyrics and multiple music videos, all of which show female dancers moving suggestively around Blueface. Even the song's title is based on a demeaning term directed toward women: "thot," which stands for "that ho over there."

Blueface told music website Genius that

his love for "thots, sluts, whores" inspired the song, which he wanted to be "a club hit, strip club hit." While we don't personally know Blueface and what exactly he meant by his "love for thots, sluts and whores," his commentary isn't the most empowering and actually seems quite demeaning toward women.

calls "thots, sluts, whores," the audience's reading of "Thotiana" doesn't necessarily need to match with the artist's. Music, like other forms of art, doesn't have to be defined by the intentions of the creator.

In an era where many women are fighting to take back ownership over their own sexuality, popular songs like "Thotiana"

and re-defining the "Thotiana" name on her own terms.

Cardi continues to refer to her own sexual abilities throughout "Thotiana," rapping that she makes her unnamed partner "go insane." This sex-positive attitude shows throughout her other music; she tells British magazine Dazed that "when you're around your homegirls, you talk about sex, about men, about this and that. I see the world as my friend and I'm gonna talk to them about what I talk about." Isn't this unapologetic self-pride empowering?

In her article "Why You Should Embrace Your Sexuality," writer Christina Lewis points out that stigma about sex in general creates an unfortunate culture that "isn't willing to accept not only female sexuality but sexuality in general. Obviously songs focusing only on the sexual worth of women shouldn't be the only popular songs, but by shaming "Thotiana" for being about sex or shaming Cardi B for willingly participating in a song about sex, we contribute to that culture of stigma and erase a part of us that should be celebrated as something special.

"Thotiana" objectifies women, but don't almost all songs about sex objectify the person of interest? Is it inherently bad to celebrate your or your partner's sexual prowess? Even so, the song's viral popularity brings up a timely issue: How can we normalize and celebrate sexuality without demeaning the people of interest? ♦



Courtesy of GENIUS

But do we need to connect the art to the artist? Can lyrics be isolated from the misogyny of the songwriter?

Whether the song is sexist truly depends on the listener and on his or her own interpretation. Even if Blueface's original intention was to declare his love for women he

## Rise of streaming services ends era of theater and cable

BY MeganChen

"Want to go see 'Endgame' this weekend?"

"I'm just going to wait until it's on Netflix."

As streaming services become more and more popular, situations like this occur more often. With their convenience and variety of movies and shows, streaming services have begun to dominate the film industry.

Streaming services were originally platforms that made movies and shows accessible after being dropped from theaters and cable networks, much like old-school video rental services like Blockbuster. Streaming

services have since expanded to create their own films, making them a major threat to the traditional movie industry.

A recent complaint from Steven Spielberg stating that Netflix films shouldn't be allowed to win Oscars sparked debates about the consequences of streaming services. The award-winning director thought it was unfair for Netflix films to be nominated for the Oscars because of their very limited theater releases.

Currently, movies are eligible for the Oscars only if they are in theaters for at least one week, so Netflix releases its movies both online and in a couple small theaters to qualify. Because of the limited theater

releases of the Netflix movies, Spielberg believes that Netflix films should be treated as TV releases and instead be nominated for the Emmys.

Directors like Spielberg are worried that the industry will suffer similar consequences as video stores.

However, access to Netflix movies is only available to those who have the privilege of spending about \$8 a month per streaming service, and if the demand for theaters decreases due to the increase of Netflix movies, watching movies will become a luxury.

Cable television has suffered from the rise of streaming services; in the U.S., over 33 million people cut off cable subscriptions

in 2018, and over 22 million people in 2017. With the lack of commercials and wait between episodes of a show, streaming services seem to be more compelling than their counterparts. The price of streaming services is also significantly less than cable.

While cable offers more exposure to news and live sports, streaming services are also combined in packages with other platforms to make them more appealing to many consumers.

The growth of streaming services are leading to the downfall of video rental stores and cable TV, and if the film industry continues to ignore the rise of streaming services, it will be next. ♦

# Curricula design crucial to successful classes

BY Andrew Li & Alan Zu

After junior Brian Zhu started a petition for the school to offer the Intro to Business class and received well over 100 signatures, AP Physics teacher Kirk Davis agreed to teach the class. Despite the course being heavily based on student interest, Davis will need to go over lessons he feels are important through a purely self-made syllabus.

The Intro to Business class is not the only class that has required the teacher to craft their own curriculum. Many teachers use different lesson planning methods: some opt for a lecture-based format and a test every few weeks, while others incorporate more projects and other types of group work. This approach is often seen in English classes, especially those taught at the Honors and AP level.

## Intro to Business offered again

Twelve years ago, the administration decided to stop offering the Intro to Business course because not enough students were signing up.

The elective does not have any state standards unlike required and AP classes.

While constructing the curriculum,

Davis, a former executive in industry before becoming a physics teacher, believes the class should cover everything a person needs within a business: marketing sales, finance, management and operations.

## After taking Intro to Business, students should be able to fully understand how a business operates.

Davis plans on covering aspects regarding finance because he feels that it is knowledge students cannot get anywhere else.

"There's no class even in business school or anywhere else on personal finance, so there are some principles that I feel are important," Davis said. "I'll go over them as well."

In an effort to help juniors and sophomores attending the class to be able to understand future concepts easier, Davis plans to review the basic concepts of business.

Although freshmen are allowed to take the class, Davis prefers only upperclassmen because "juniors and seniors read at a

higher level and have better discussion than sophomores and certainly freshmen." Davis, describing the difficulty of the readings, also said that adults would struggle with some of the them too.

After taking the class, students should be able to fully understand how a business operates and be able to set up a mock business as a final project, he said.

Davis foresees students working for several weeks on creating whatever type of mock business they want. Past students have come up with various product ideas, ranging from Native American-themed Vegas Casinos to controlled cans of spray-paint and durable notebooks.

"Someone came up with an idea with putting together a little kit [for painting house numbers on the curb] and selling them at Home Depot, and it was really interesting," said Davis. "They almost got Home Depot to put it together for them."

## AP English and MAP present enrichment

English teacher Jason Friend has a similar approach in constructing his AP English Language and MAP classes. Friend first includes what is required to teach; then he includes anything he feels is interesting and good for students to know.

Friend feels that the AP English Language and MAP courses lend themselves to creative activities.

"I have a great deal of freedom in deciding what readings and lessons to use to teach required skills," said Friend. "I do a ton of curriculum planning for all of my courses, which I find to be a very interesting and fulfilling part of my job."

Friend has also decided to have a creative project as the final at the end of the year. However, Friend is more traditional in his fall semester finals.

In the fall, students answer traditional multiple-choice questions, followed by a essay section.

One creative project Friend assigns is a discussion board emulating the New York Times Magazine's Ethicist column, where readers seek help with moral dilemmas. In the project, students answer each other's ethical dilemmas in Canvas discussions.

Another project focuses on effective advertising; Friend's MAP students design banner ads to apply principles they learn in class.

"Mr. Friend is a good friend to have," senior Eric Huang said. "Overall, Mr. Friend's class is very fun because of how loose the class is." ♦



GRAPHIC BY MEGAN CHEN

# Students balance their cultural connections

BY Shama Gupta & Kaitlyn Tsai

Dressed in a traditional Chinese qipao, freshman Selina Chen swayed to freshman Elaine Liu's singing and closed her eyes as her fingers deftly strummed the guzheng, or Chinese harp, during their Saratoga Idol performance on Nov. 27. To the judges, Chen and Liu's duet was both compelling, and artistic, and they gave the pair top honors.

But to Chen, her playing mainly aimed to share with the audience one of her largest connections to Chinese culture.

Chen immigrated from China with her family in the sixth grade for better education and air quality. Although she already knew some English and had classmates who spoke Mandarin, she described the change as "a pretty big transition." It took her a while to behave like an American student rather than a Chinese one.

"In China, students are supposed to stand up straight whenever the teacher calls on them," she said. "So for a long time, I had the habit of standing up to answer questions. My tablemates had to constantly pull me back to my seat."

Despite her gradual assimilation into American life, Chen maintained a connection to her culture through the Chinese harp. Although she stopped playing it after leaving China, a conversation with a middle school classmate reignited her passion for Chinese music.

The classmate asked Chen if she played "any actual instruments," a question that, although innocent, showed Chen how ignorant some people are about traditional Chinese culture. As part of her efforts to raise cultural awareness, Chen organizes recitals at school, Hakone Gardens and California Theatre and even plans to perform at Carnegie Hall next winter.

"I've been trying really hard to spread Chinese music because I know it's a rare thing around Saratoga," she said. "I want to prove that guzheng is an 'actual instrument' and that Chinese culture is just as cool as other cultures."

On the other hand, like some American-born students, like sophomore Aaron Wong are more distant from their cultures. Wong

did not have to reject their culture to achieve their goals in America. Gaining inspiration from these people, she learned that her culture wasn't something to evade, an understanding reflected in the way Kalra began to enjoy dressing in Indian clothing and attending family parties in her later childhood years.

## "Having two cultures feels like there's two sides to you, like two different worlds."

JUNIOR Connor Oaklander

Now, because of difficulty communicating with older family members who are not fluent in English, he wishes he took those classes more seriously as he revisits the language through his current Chinese 2 course at school.

"It's not as much of an issue with a lack of cultural connection, more of one with not having to take a language class," he said. "But there are also times when we are visiting family that I wish I could communicate with them better; it's mostly an issue when communicating with older members of my family."

## Learning to respect heritage

But many students like junior Riya Kalra maintain rougher, more complicated connections to their cultures. Growing up in American culture, Kalra shied from embracing her Indian heritage, feeling "embarrassed of [her] family and their customs."

She disliked Indian clothing, and although she learned classical Indian dance at the age of 5, she said she felt that it was "weird" and quit in the sixth grade after she lost interest.

Eventually, family members and peers like Chen, who embraced and celebrated their culture, taught Kalra to accept Indian traditions because she saw that

they did not have to reject their culture to achieve their goals in America. Gaining inspiration from these people, she learned that her culture wasn't something to evade, an understanding reflected in the way Kalra began to enjoy dressing in Indian clothing and attending family parties in her later childhood years.

"I started to take my culture and make it my own," she said. "I could use as much or as little as I wanted in my identity; I could dress up in Indian clothes sometimes, or listen to Bollywood."

Though confident and inspiring elders have played a significant role in Kalra's accepting her culture, she noticed both her parents and her friends' parents tend to befriend people of the same culture. While common backgrounds bring people together, she hopes that this unwillingness to open up can change through having parents consider why they shy away from people of other cultures.

"I feel like it's just a comfort zone issue," Kalra said. "They grow up in a certain environment with their parents telling them certain things, and it's hard to change those mindsets and beliefs."

But Kalra emphasizes that appreciating the Indian part of her cultural identity does not correlate to patriotism to India and that there are parts of her culture that she dislikes.

What bothers her most about her culture is the toxic masculinity and sexism, some of the things Kalra has read and learned about, along with other injustices such as the commonality of rape in India.

"It's literally a meme that Indian men are creepy and gross, and the whole arranged marriage deal is pretty terrible," she said. "It's happened in my family. People who aren't even related to you by blood might put an ad in the newspaper about you, and I find that super



TALISMAN // DANIEL NING

Freshman Selina Chen plays traditional Chinese music on her guzheng while her partner, freshman Elaine Liu, sings for Saratoga Idol on Nov. 27.

weird and inappropriate." Kalra admitted many Asian cultures tend to hold similar misogynist beliefs.

"It's common to bank on the guy making more money or having a better future, therefore giving the son more food at dinner or putting his needs first while ignoring the girl's abilities or even denying her education," she said. "My family members have not only been sexist towards me and denied me opportunities but they have refused to admit they were doing anything wrong."

Through finding a balance between accepting the questionable parts of her culture and embracing the beautiful parts of it, Kalra believes that the best approach to being culturally sensitive relies on education, which teaches compassion and understanding.

## Mixed ancestral roots

Finding a balance between two cultures is difficult enough, but junior Connor Oaklander, who has parents of two different cultures, juggles three: American, Korean and Swiss.

His mother moved to the United States in 2004 after living in Korea for her whole life, while his father is mostly American with strong Swiss roots, the side that Oaklander feels more connected to.

"I lived in Switzerland for a year, so I'd say I'm connected more with the local culture there, [which is] my father's side of the family," Oaklander said. "I speak more French than I do Korean."

While living in Switzerland, Oaklander celebrated several local holidays, such as L'Escalade,

which is local to Geneva. Celebrated every December, the festival commemorates the Genevans' defeating an invasion by the Duke of Savoy in 1602. Traditions include parades, large chocolate marmites, pots of hot vegetable soup and road running.

Still, Oaklander tries to stay connected to his Korean roots. He hopes to take a semester of schooling at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea, and used to go to Korean school when he was in elementary school.

"Korean school got me immersed into the culture and we would celebrate holidays like Chuseok as a family back then," he said. Chuseok is a harvest festival celebrated in North and South Korea by visiting extended family and feasting.

As he got older, Oaklander even started to immerse himself in American culture, as they do a Thanksgiving dinner with turkey.

Although it may seem like a lot balance, Oaklander actually enjoys having different identities ingrained into him. "Having multiple cultures feels like there's different sides to you, like two different worlds," he said. "But I like being multicultural. I feel like I can fit into a number of different groups and don't feel restricted by my identity."

Culture plays a large role in his life, and Oaklander sees the importance in finding a connection to his family's roots.

"It's part of finding your own identity and knowing who you are, and that's something that is very important for us all," Oaklander said. ♦

GRAPHIC BY CHRISTINE ZHANG

# Pursuing humanities allows room for creativity

## SENIORS REFLECT ON CREATING ART PORTFOLIOS TO PURSUE FINE ARTS IN COLLEGE

BY Marisa Kingsley

During a trip to Europe in middle school, senior Isabella Taylor gazed at the grandiose ceilings and sweeping arches of the cathedrals and museums. When her family wanted to leave, Taylor wanted to stay just a bit longer to admire the intricate details of each building.

Back then, Taylor, who will attend the University of Southern California for architecture in the fall, didn't think that there was a career where she could design buildings like those she had admired in Europe.

In high school, she took engineering since she believed that she would go into a STEM-related field, but found that she didn't love that as much as she thought she would.

"I liked 3D modeling and CAD (computer-aided design), but I didn't like coding or circuits," Taylor said. "I was like, 'OK, maybe there is something I can do here.'"

However, when she took art in her sophomore year, she found that she really liked it and continued to take further classes; Taylor is currently in Art 4 Honors.

When it came time to apply to colleges, Taylor already knew that she wanted to major in architecture and what kind of school she was she was looking for. She only applied to one art school, while the rest were small to medium private schools.

She ultimately decided on USC because it'll provide her with all the factors she wanted including: job opportunities, a diverse population, location in a major city and good resources for students.

Despite the fact that Taylor is going into architecture, her experience was not much

different to students applying for art.

Senior Casey Holt, who plans to major in art and creative writing, said she rediscovered her love for art in her sophomore year.

When Holt was in elementary school, she often drew and painted. When her school's yearbook included her illustration of a tree, Holt's dad enrolled her in art classes for the five years, which focused on realism.

"The kind of art I did in those classes are not the kind of art I do now," Holt said. "But they helped my eye for shading and drawing the right shapes."

Now, Holt said she much prefers more a more abstract style and, though she working on developing more realistic pieces as well.

Holt also attributes her love for writing to growing up a voracious reader who eventually started writing herself.

She took Drama I her freshman year and signed up again her sophomore year, but realized that it wasn't what she wanted to do. Since the art classes were full, Holt took Digital Photography, which she said helped introduce her to different mediums. She took Art 1 her junior year.

Art teacher Diana Vanry saw Holt's technical skill and creativity, and suggested that she take AP Art in her senior year to build up her portfolio.

"I could see the passion and commitment in her," Vanry said.

Yet, Holt didn't really know that she wanted to pursue art in college until she looked at the different majors offered at schools.

"The only major that sounded vaguely interesting to me was art and creative writing because those are things I actually care about," Holt said.

With the help of a college adviser, she applied to liberal arts schools with good art and creative writing programs. Holt declined to say what school she has committed to for privacy reasons.

For students like Taylor and Holt who were applying for art-based majors, applications looked different for them.

When students apply for art schools or art programs, a critical aspect of their application is their portfolios.

They showcase pieces that exemplify not

only their creativity and technical ability but also a willingness to experiment with different mediums.

"You basically use what you have and make more," Taylor said. "Even if you do an animation degree or architecture, they want to see that you do photography or oil paintings."

Taylor had to make four or five additional pieces for her portfolio during the school year, accompanying pieces she made at an architecture program during the summer. On the other hand, Holt was required to make a portfolio for the AP Art exam, so she used that for applying to colleges as well.

Taylor also credits Vanry for broadening her horizons when it came to art as a whole.

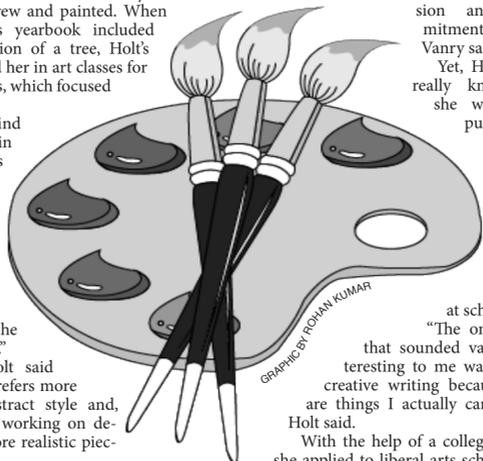
"Ms. Vanry wants you to explore different mediums," Taylor said. "She teaches you the basic skills and so you have the creative freedom to do what you will with those skills."

Aside from creative freedom, Vanry also emphasizes personal voice, a key for prospective art students creating a good portfolio.

"The overlying message that I'm seeing [from schools] is that they want that personal voice," Vanry said. "They don't want them to produce something because somebody told them, 'Draw this and you'll get into RISD.'"

Reflecting upon her applications, Taylor also recommends aspiring art or design students to stay true to themselves and what they do.

"I would advise people to do the art they genuinely like, because college administrators can tell when you are being genuine and when you are not," Taylor said. ♦



GRAPHIC BY ROHAN KUMAR

## togatalks

Why are you pursuing art in college?

"I want to discover new illustration skills and apply them towards a career I will love."



senior Hannah Chang

"It's the skill I have the most confidence in, and I feel I will never lose interest in it."



senior Colleen Feng

"I believe the creative and innovative nature of art can change people's lives."



senior Angie Yang

# Colorism prejudice more than skin deep

BLEACHING FOR WHITNESS COMMON AMONG ASIANS AND OTHER MINORITIES

BY AllisonHartley & OliverYe

In middle school, senior Mani Sripadam remembers bleaching his skin using Fair and Lovely products, a topical Indian cosmetic company that claims to make skin appear "visibly fairer in nature's gentle way."

"It's actually uncommon for guys to skin bleach, but I did it a couple of times I until I realized "This is stupid," Sripadam said. "I was in a lot of pain. It was a horrific [emotional] scar."

Although skin bleaching often causes a burning sensation and inflammation, Fair and Lovely products are commonly used in South Asian households and the company boasts 38 million users worldwide. Other products that promise to whiten skin, such as Shiseido



GRAPHIC BY ROHAN KUMAR

and Porcelana, are also popular in East Asian cultures. These brands' popularity reveals the many health risks people are willing to take to obtain a coveted skin tone.

This phenomenon is known as colorism, a phrase coined by American novelist and activist Alice Walker, and defined as "prejudicial or preferential treatment of same-race people based solely on their color," with the term "same-race" distinguishing colorism from racism. Colorism is pervasive among many minority communities such as East Asian,

South Asian, Latino and African cultures. In general, the thinking is that the lighter the skin is, the better.

Sripadam describes his complexion as dark and said his past insecurities stemmed from the normalization of lightening products in a culture that devalued dark skin complexions.

"This prevailing sense that our culture is against us, the notion of being lesser, is really very discriminatory," Sripadam said. "It was not good for my self-esteem."

## Roots of colorism in Asia

Junior Shivam Mani, who moved to the U.S. from India in 2013, said that the notion that whiter skin is more beautiful than darker skin is ingrained in Indian culture. This is especially evident in Bollywood, where most actors have lighter skin

on-screen, and in advertisements that "don't hold back on showing how someone can become more beautiful by making their skin lighter," Mani said.

The lack of representation of his skin color in Bollywood or Hollywood often have large influences on society's perceptions of beauty, as many people do not see themselves reflected in the industry's image.

The origins of colorism in Asian countries are said to have resulted from the fact that the ruling elite typically had lighter complexions than their working-class counterparts, who would spend all day under the sun. Thus, dark skin became associated with the lower class and was looked down upon by society, and centuries later, these beauty standards are still

deeply grounded in Asian culture.

European colonialism in places like India also exacerbated colorist values. Under British occupation, officials often favored light-skinned Indians over dark-skinned Indians, a practice that disseminated throughout the rest of society and cultivated color ideas that continue to affect people today.

## The lack of representation of skin color often has large influences on society's perceptions of beauty.

While the issue of colorism has gained pushback from the younger generations in India, Mani said this has not yet translated to the perception of white and dark skin as equally beautiful.

The traditional values endorsing lighter skin are still prevalent in the culture, and bleaching children's skin remains a common practice among parents, despite known adverse effects as serious as skin cancer, osteoporosis and severe birth defects.

Korean media also routinely "whitewashes" K-pop idols. While these adjustments may seem subtle, the effects on fans who associate digitally brightened skin with "beautiful" contribute to colorism's effects.

## Colorism in America

American colorism, perhaps most predominant among the African-American community, has its roots in slavery. Mixed-race slaves who bore lighter skin were afforded certain socioeconomic advantages over those with darker skin. Despite the abolition of slav-

ery, ideas of colorism persisted.

For example, in the early 20th century, the "Brown Paper Bag Test" was used by the African American community to determine whether an individual could have certain privileges, such as admission to certain clubs, churches or universities if their skin was lighter than the paper bag.

Although this test is no longer officially employed by institutions, evidence of colorism is still pervasive in the media.

Actress Lupita Nyong'o once "dreamed" and prayed for lighter skin; however, when Grazia magazine white-washed her appearance by smoothing her hair, she concluded in an Instagram post "there is still a very long way to go to combat the unconscious prejudice against black women's complexion, hair style and texture," tagging #dtmh — don't touch my hair.

## Pushback in media and community

While colorism remains a deep-rooted issue in cultures across the world, there are movements resisting colorism and celebrities such as Lupita Nyong'o who are actively campaigning against it.

#UnfairAndLovely is a social media campaign that celebrates dark skin and aims to increase the representation of dark-skinned people. Since the original 2015 photo series of women with dark complexions, the hashtag has garnered thousands of images of people celebrating their dark skin.

Senior Ria Jobalia said that while some of the traditional ideas of colorism have been carried over

to America from immigrant families, the ideas of colorism are rapidly petering out.

"The younger people do feel the effects of colorism, but they definitely don't have the same opinion as parents or grandparents," Jobalia said.

At Saratoga High, Sripadam is working to increase dialogue about colorism in the school community, which he believes will weaken colorism's roots.

"Along with advocating through Social Justice Club, I've been talking with the social studies department about how they teach history and avoiding the European pseudo-history mentality," Sripadam said. "Indian history is riddled with biases that can help feed into the colorist narrative."

Sripadam explained that he believes that the "European pseudo-history" narrative of "the conquerors and the conquered," which he has found common in history classes and is often inaccurately generalized.

He believes this approach to teaching Indian history emphasizing colorism and conquests rather than India's rich culture, resulting in the association of lighter skin as superior to darker skin.

"In the end, we just need to move toward a society in which the color of your skin does not make people assume what kind of person you are," Mani said. "That doesn't mean that we eliminate race and culture completely, either; there are differences in people and cultures, but we must try and eliminate any preconceptions about a certain type of person." ♦



GRAPHIC BY CHRISTINE ZHANG

# Two seniors commit to playing DIII college golf

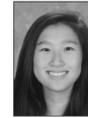
BY AlexWang

After sinking the putt on the last hole on March 27, senior Daniel Kraft, along with junior Kevin Sze, crafted an improbable comeback and made school history against Monta Vista. Kraft and Sze combined for a total score of 7 under for nine holes, the lowest score for a pairing ever at the school.

Not surprisingly, such performances show Kraft's ability to compete at the next level, and he recently committed to play DIII golf at Wesleyan University. Likewise, senior Janelle Jin picked Amherst College for its DIII team. For both, the recruitment process was long but emotional and rewarding in the end.

"When I was offered the spot on the Amherst women's golf team, I was so shocked that I actually didn't say anything to my coach," Jin said. "I couldn't believe it. I think I muttered a few words, but I believe my parents had to express my excitement to her. Later, after recovering from my shock, I thanked her with my actual words."

## "That summer, I was at golf course almost everyday for three hours."



SENIOR Janelle Jin

For Kraft, the recruitment process began in his junior year when he played well in one of his tournaments. Then, in the fall of his senior year, he played his two best tournaments that became pivotal to his applications.

At the San Francisco Junior Open on Sept. 15-16, Kraft came from behind to post

a third-place finish and had another strong 2 over finish at the Major Championship at TPC Harding Park on Sept. 29-30.

Initially, Kraft was unsure if he wanted to play golf in college because he said he did not want to pursue athletics to the point where it compromised his ability to maximize his academic success. He likes DIII athletics, calling it the "perfect mix of athletics and academics."

For his early action applications, he applied to a few high reaches, relying on just his grades and extracurriculars. Although these efforts didn't pan out, Kraft said he is not bothered because he ultimately decided that he wanted to continue his golf career.

"Thankfully I didn't get into those schools, because now I'm so excited to continue athletics into college and I couldn't imagine having it another way," Kraft said.

Wesleyan ultimately appealed to him because of its small size (3,200), which will allow him to connect with a greater percentage of students and feel a stronger sense of community.

On top of that, Kraft said he wants to double major in economics and physics or neuroscience, so "Wesleyan's liberal arts approach to learning was perfect."

"It's a high bar to reach for, but I think if I can find joy in those fields of study, I'll be really happy with where I'm at four years from now," Kraft said.

Similarly, Jin committed to Amherst because she said she loved the "happy and refreshing" atmosphere of the school. She was also attracted to Amherst's highly regarded academics, which would allow her to receive a "spectacular education" while playing on their golf team. Jin is planning on studying economics or computer science.

Jin started playing golf in third grade when her dad would take her to play at the golf course or hit balls at the driving range. She then started to play competitively during the summer before her freshman year.



TALISMAN // MARK GUIDRY

Senior Janelle Jin swings her club at Saratoga Country Club against Gunn on Sept. 17, 2018.

"That summer, I was at the golf course almost every day for three hours," Jin said. "I think that's when I started to really love golf and have self-motivation to get myself to practice."

Now, Jin said she typically practices for two hours a day. On her tournament days, she is on the course for much longer, usually six hours a day.

Similarly, Kraft also started playing golf competitively during the summer before freshman year.

He had previously played soccer at the national level, even winning a national championship, but he said he switched to golf because he felt that soccer was not fun

anymore.

Besides Wesleyan, Kraft was also in contact with coaches at Tufts, Middlebury and Chapman.

In the end, he said, "those schools didn't work out due to a combination of coaches being less interested and me being more interested in Wesleyan."

For both Jin and Kraft, an end to the college recruitment process was both relieving and fulfilling.

"When I got accepted into Amherst, I was so relieved because that meant I was finally done with everything," Jin said. "I hope the coming years in college will be full of new experiences with really great people." ♦

# Excessive social media usage impacts mental health

BY KaitlynTsai

Before a majority of households could access the internet because of Tim Berners-Lee's 1990 invention of the World Wide Web, most teenagers spent their free time on sports, reading, watching TV, creating art or doing other forms of leisure activities. When they wanted to socialize, they called their friends or arranged hangouts at each other's houses, the mall or the park.

While adolescents today still partake in such activities, their social lives and means of communication are a stark contrast to those of the years before social media. According to a 2018 study conducted by the Pew Research Center, 72 percent of U.S. teenagers use Instagram, 69 percent use Snapchat and 51 percent use Facebook.

Though such platforms allow adolescents to communicate more easily and frequently, various studies have exposed the darker aspects of extensive social media use. These drawbacks include an increase in toxic behaviors, such as cyberbullying, as well as a lack of in-person interaction, which by extension, harms certain aspects of their social intelligence.

Communicating primarily online causes adolescents to miss out on the personal and sometimes intimidating aspects of face-to-face communication, according to Rachel Ehmke, senior editor of the Child Mind Institute. Consequently, many teenagers have reduced in-person communication skills and lower social intelligence, and are less able to read others and handle confrontations away from a screen.

That dynamic also shows up on campus. "Since you're seeing so many people's profiles and friends of friends, there's more opportunity to correspond with people, but what needs to follow that is in-person interaction," CASSY therapist Kaitlin Eastland said. "The level of depth of the connections of the conversations on social media aren't as deep as face-to-face connections."

Eastland added that although the effects of social media on self-esteem varies from person to person, seeing the highlights of others' lives online can make it easy for students to compare themselves to others. This can create a "skewed perspective" of a student's life compared to his or her peers.

Several students, especially those who use social media more frequently, admit to feeling such social pressures. Senior Kay Jewler admits she often checks her social media apps simply out of curiosity about other people's lives, averaging three to four hours daily of social media usage.

Because of exposure to posts of others' seemingly picture-perfect lives and bodies, she often catches herself comparing herself

to them.

"It's hard to remember that everybody only posts the best pictures of themselves," Jewler said. "Even when I'm sitting at home and just taking random snaps, they're always from angles that hide my insecurities."

Junior Connor Oaklander, who once used social media excessively, cut his daily usage to less than an hour after realizing that looking at others' filtered lives on social media contributed more harm than good to his life. It especially hurt his self-esteem, making him feel like he was someone "of a lower class than others."

Even though social media worsened Oaklander's mental health, he still found himself spending seemingly endless hours scrolling aimlessly through his feeds. While Oaklander is still unsure as to why he spent so much time on social media, he attributes this addiction to how easy it is for someone to lose themselves in a sea of posts.

According to a 2017 study by International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, few people are genuinely addicted to social media; however, since many people habitually use social media, it

can easily affect aspects of people's everyday lives. These effects can range from minor ones, like checking phones during meals with others, or more dangerous ones, like checking social media while driving.

Experts say instant gratification from receiving likes and comments can release feel-good chemicals from the brain. However, those feelings are fleeting, leaving students craving more when they really need deeper senses of connection, Eastland said.

Oaklander admitted that social media helps students stay more connected, especially over long distances. Direct messages, as well as relatable posts and memes, create a sense of community, but this virtual connection comes at the expense of maintaining relationships in real life.

"I'm thankful that I haven't really had time to focus on social media," Oaklander said. "Now, I am trying to make an effort to physically meet up with people when I'm bored. I realize I've been socially disconnected for a while so that's a change I'm trying to make."

Regardless of how often they check their Instagram feeds, tag each other in memes and communicate with friends, most students agree that adolescents should use social media in moderation to avoid the social pressures and mental health impacts that arise with excessive usage.

"Social media has its benefits like being connected with people, but we should ask ourselves, 'Am I happy doing this?' because the most important thing is to be happy using it and not to get stuck on it while being bored," Oaklander said. ♦



GRAPHIC BY MANASI GARG

keep team members in the right locations even before becoming a captain. After becoming a captain, Pickard said she had to change the way she addressed her fellow teammates to motivate them and keep them on track.

"I made sure to be encouraging and to try and acknowledge everyone's successes and efforts on the field, but I also had to learn how to constructively give advice and get everyone to be serious when we needed

more from me," Yu said.

For Pickard, learning to find the balance between having fun and staying focused was the hardest part, but she knew that team members were relying on her example, which drove her to change her mentality.

"I love having a fun time, but this year I had to learn how to find a balance between having fun and working hard, so that the girls would still have fun playing but also improve their game by focusing and work-

represented myself when I became a captain, as I still tried to be friendly and laid back with my teammates," Tan said. "But at the same time, I also was more authoritative in doing things like making announcements and leading core workouts."

Nevertheless, these additional jobs paid dividends. Yu said that his most memorable moment as captain occurred when the team beat Los Gatos for the second time at home against the common expectation.

Yu said that many had doubted the team's talent, and the game was away, adding to the pressure on the team.

Yu said that he learned to first ensure the team was operating well before concentrating on his own game.

Being a captain requires the will to put others' well-being first.

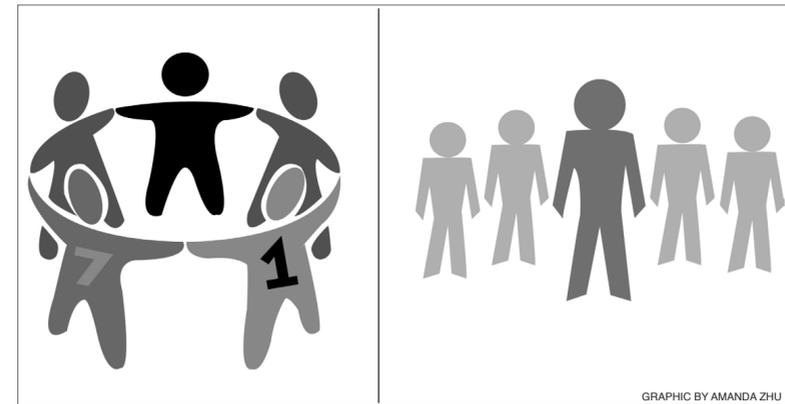
"As a player, I was more worried about my own performance than the team as a whole," Yu said. "When I became captain, I needed to sacrifice my own success and focus more on everybody playing well and more together."

once a week, while in track she only had three throughout the whole season.

"I think it's more on the team members, like people make more of an effort to get to know each other and to hang out more because you spend so much time together," Hoffman said.

Compared to individual sports, team sports generally have the upper-hand when it comes to team chemistry, by nature and necessity.

Regardless, even though competition and clashing personalities can take away from team chemistry, the constant close proximity between teammates leads to a subconscious bonding that is difficult to match. ♦



GRAPHIC BY AMANDA ZHU

to be," Pickard said.

Following their rise to captain-status, the athletes learn the weight of their actions. With the entire team looking up to them as role models, they have to learn to be cautious of their behaviour in order to positively influence their teammates.

The captains learn they have to change their focus to encompass the entire team rather than just their own performance.

"As a captain, I looked more to help others and mentor them so they would learn

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL

# Falcons optimize lineup hoping to qualify for CCS

BY AlexWang & KarenChow

Yelling across the court, junior setter Mohan Duvvuri maneuvered through his teammates as he tried to set up a play during a tough match against Monta Vista on April 24. He dove for the ball and back-set perfectly to senior outside Derek Chiou, who smashed the ball down for a point.

Though the Falcons had trouble passing in the first game, the boys were able to pick it up in the second game, winning 25-22. Despite junior setter Mohan Duvvuri's quick sets and Khan's strong blocks, the Falcons lost the overall match 3-1.

Before the game, the Falcons honored their four seniors: opposite Joshua Lee, outside Derek Chiou and Usman Khan and middle Dhruv Chakraborty.

"Although we lost, I'm really glad we were able to get one set one them," Chiou said. "On top of that, the team made the game great with their touching speeches and the fun theme of Taco Bell."

Most recently, the Falcons beat Los Altos 3-1 on April 26. The win was expected as Los Altos currently sits last in the De Anza League with a league record of 2-12. The Falcons won the first set 25-17, lost the second 25-16, and then held the Eagles off for two more sets, 25-15 and 27-25.

Leading into their senior night, the team faced Harker on April 19. The Falcons played without Chiou, the team captain, who was at the robotics World Championship in Houston. Without their usual firepower, they lost 3-0.

On April 17, the team beat Los Gatos 3-1. The Falcons quickly gained momentum in the first set winning 25-17. The team lost the second set 25-17 due to miscommunication between offense and defense. The boys quickly regained their rhythm with Chiou's leadership and junior Cameron Chow's consistent passes winning the next two sets 25-18 and 25-22.

On April 3, the Falcons faced Cupertino and won 3-1. The game was led by junior middle Aditya Reddy with his consistent serving, above 40 percent hitting average, and strong blocks.

On March 29, the team beat Homestead 3-0. The win was keyed by Lee's strong kills and great coverage on the back court. "This game really showed how much our team's chemistry has improved throughout this season," Lee said. "Last time, we lost 3-2, but this time we won 3-0 which really shows our improvement."

As for the outlook for the rest of the season, Chiou said that the team is still looking to qualify for CCS, which begins on May 7. To qualify, they need to win their last two



Courtesy of FRANK CHU

Sophomores Tyler Chu and Dylan Li block against Harker on April 19. The Falcons lost the game 3-0.

games.

To prepare for leagues and CCS, the team is trying out two lineups to see which is better as their primary lineup. One of the lineups is stronger in offense while the other favors defense, Chiou said. He said the team is in position to place third in the De Anza League.

"Surprisingly though, we're winning fewer games than we did last year, but we're still in third," Chiou said. "For CCS we're not quite sure how the competition is looking because it always seems to be a crapshoot."

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon could not cover the away game against Mountain View on May 1 in this print edition. ♦

BOYS' TENNIS

# Team closes out season with 10-game win streak

BY AndrewLee & AlanZu

Stefan Meier, the No. 2 singles player, jogged back onto the courts at Fremont High School on April 23, loosening up for a second set under the blistering sun. Though he had lost the first set 6-2, Meier felt relaxed and less pressured to win the next set; the No. 1 doubles pair freshman Benjamin Bray and senior David Berkowitz had just exited the court with the fourth Saratoga win to round out the Falcon victory.

This final matchup against Fremont marked the last league match for the boys' tennis team, ending the Falcon's 10-game

win streak after two disappointing losses against Monta Vista and Gunn High at the beginning of the season. The boys' tennis team ended with a 10-2 record, placing second in the league behind Monta Vista.

The Falcons managed to avenge earlier defeats, beating Gunn 4-3 on April 4 and Monta Vista 4-3 on April 18.

"We had some close losses at the beginning of the season," Izrailevsky said, "but we got it together and went undefeated after that, which is pretty cool."

In order to compensate for the overall tough teams in the league, the team spent more time at practices experimenting with their lineups.

"The most difficult part definitely was those two close losses we had at the beginning of the season," Izrailevsky said. "We knew that it would be a real struggle to secure a good spot in the league so we knew as a team that we all had to perform well."

Learning from their losses, the team made several adjustments to their lineup by experimenting with switching around their doubles teams.

For example, Bray, who initially played No. 2 doubles, was moved up to play No. 1 doubles; accordingly, No. 2 and No. 3 doubles players were swapped around depending on what was required from each match.

"After those early losses I think we all just started taking our matches a lot more seriously," Izrailevsky said. "We saw how those matches were easily winnable, but we just needed to focus."

The team is focused on CCS, with the first round taking place on May 10.

"Though we definitely could have ended with a stronger record than 10-2, it's still pretty amazing how well we performed given the absence of our elite seniors who graduated last year," junior No. 2 singles player Ronit Pattanayak said. "We worked hard and focused even harder, and the team is looking forward to a satisfying CCS performance in a few weeks." ♦

TRACK AND FIELD

# Team races off to SCVALs

BY AllisonHartley & NityaMarimuthu

The track and field team competed in the El Camino League Finals on April 26. Although both the varsity boys and girls teams came in last out of the seven teams, many individuals qualified for their own events and achieved personal records.

In order to qualify for the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League (SCVAL) Finals, athletes had to rank in the top 16 in both the El Camino League as well as the De Anza League, the upper division. Athletes who place in the top six at SCVAL qualifying meet will move on to the Central Coast Section (CCS) finals.

The athletes who qualified for the SCVAL meet at Los Gatos High School on May 3 are senior distance runner Elizabeth Kardach, juniors long-jumper Alice Lin, throwers Alexandra White and Will Seifert, distance runners Shivam Verma and Kole Tippett, sprinters Jack Kibort and Alex Taylor, sophomores thrower Hermione Bossolina and hurdler Tyler Chaffin and freshmen sprinters Ashna Krishnamurthy and Nicole Lu, distance runner Harrison Dance and long-jumper Giulio Morini Bianzino. Alternates athletes are: juniors sprinter Emma Hsu and distance runner Julia Hoffman and seniors sprinter Raveena Rao and thrower Peter Owens.

JV athletes could not qualify for SCVALs, but there were four Saratoga athletes who came within the top three in their events — freshman Julia Gonzalez placed third in JV girls' high jump, sophomores Shama Gupta placed first in the JV girls' 100-meter and 200-meter, earning the JV girls team a championship, and William Yin placed third in the JV boys 100-meter and junior Armina Mayya placed second in the JV 1600-meter.

Alice Lin, who qualified in long jump for the SCVAL meet, reached a personal record with a jump of 16' 2 at the El Camino League Finals.

"League finals went well," Lin said. "I was mostly focused on long jump because I knew it was my strongest event, and I was very nervous right before jumping, especially since I couldn't quite find my mark."

Taylor, who is also moving on to SCVALs, earned personal records of 11.29 s and 22.98 s in the 100-m and 200-m, respectively, at the El Camino League trials. He will also compete in the 4 by 100-meter and 4 by 400-m relay teams, who placed sixth and seventh respectively at SCVALs.

"I wasn't too shocked or heartbroken by not getting first, but it was a nice experience to just get out there and race," Taylor said. "It's all about racing the other guys, trying to pace with them and catch up with all of them." ♦



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SWIMMING

# 20 Falcons meet time cutoff to advance to CCS

BY Selenaliu

After the end of the regular season, the swim team advanced to league playoffs and competed simultaneously against multiple other local teams rather than the usual one team per regular season meet. The top 16 swimmers in each event advanced to the finals.

Since the team is part of the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League De Anza division, they competed against six other teams in the area: Palo Alto, Gunn, Homestead, Los Gatos, Los Altos and Monta Vista.

Sophomore Michelle Wu believes that the swim team this year is relatively strong. "Every individual that does well scores points and that's what places us in the league, so if everyone does well then we'll be very high up," Wu said. "It's a lot of small things that add up to one large success."

The preliminary competition for boys started on April 24, while the girls started on April 25. Eighteen girls and 31 boys from the school qualified and advanced to league finals on April 26, although some of the qualifiers were alternates for other swimmers in their events.

Based on their results in the finals, 20 of

these swimmers made the time cutoff and advanced to CCS: freshmen Isabel Lee and Sherry Lin; sophomores Brandon Fung, Tommaso Morini Bianzino, Lukas Peng, William Taylor, Taesu Yim, Neeti Badve, Neeyati Devanagondi and Grace Stuart; juniors Oscar Khowong, Eng Kwa and Jinsu Yim; and seniors Daniel Bessonov, Nicholas Bray, Nicholas Burry, Andrew Gao, Sarah Daoudi, Lei Otsuka and Madeline Stuart.

"It's nerve-wracking because you have to swim fast enough to advance to the finals, and in the beginning, nobody knew what to expect," said CCS advancer Khowong, who swam the 200-meter individual medley and the 100-meter breaststroke at leagues.

With 20 swimmers advancing to CCS including himself, Khowong believes that his own hard work and the team's support was the key to his and the other swimmers' success this year.

"Everyone is cheering for you and there's nothing like people cheering for you in a race," Khowong said. "It felt great because not only did I get the cut, but I also accomplished my personal best, and it felt good that my hard work paid off." ♦

GOLF

# Team tops standings in league, anticipates CCS

BY LeoCao & AlexWang

With exceptional play from the entire team on April 15 against Palo Alto, the boys' golf team clinched its first league title in six years and secured a spot in CCS.

"I felt like our team really earned this league title, given the talent on our team and the effort we all put in to get to where we are," senior William Liu said. "I'm especially proud to be a part of this team, as every player respects the game of golf."

On April 22, the team played in the Aptos Invitational golf tournament, placing second behind a highly talented team from Loyola High in Los Angeles. They lost by 20 strokes but beat perennial top local competitors such as Palma, Stevenson, St. Ignatius and Serra — all without No. 1 player Kevin Sze. After the SCVAL League Finals on April 30 (The Falcon was unable to cover this match due to printing deadlines), the team only will have CCS on May 7 to forward look to.

"I don't really care about what our matchups are," Liu said. "I only care about beating whatever is there in front of us and making it as far as we can." ♦

Although the competition in CCS will be tough, over the course of the season, the immense talent of the team has proved itself time and time again.

For example, the Falcons still managed to win by five strokes against Palo Alto. Sophomore Michael Burry led the team with 34, Sze and senior Daniel Kraft each shot 35, Liu shot 37, while Albert and Geoffrey Jing shot 38 and 39 respectively.

**"Heading into the season we knew we were going to be one of the top contending teams for the league title."**

SENIOR William Liu

"Heading into the season we knew we were going to be one of the top contending teams for the league title," Liu said. "We found ourselves pulling ahead of our competitors with ease. Every player on our team had the potential to put out a low score, a claim most other teams can't make." ♦

BASEBALL

# Haake expands skills as only freshman on varsity team

BY IsaacLe & AndrewLi

Stepping up to the plate against Mountain View earlier this year, freshman Kaito Haake was feeling mixed emotions. He was nervous but also excited to get a shot at playing varsity baseball. A couple of pitches went over the plate, but he waited for the best one before taking his first swing. His hit resulted in a ground ball up the middle of the field, a single.

This year, Haake is the only freshman selected on the varsity team. Haake has loved baseball ever since he joined Saratoga Little League at the age of 4. He continued to play

for the Saratoga Little League teams until he turned 11, when he joined the 14U Top Flight Elite travel baseball team.

Last summer, Haake practiced with the Top Flight Elite team, where he trained with specialized coaches over the summer. His competitive baseball experience at Top Flight Elite helped him make the varsity baseball team in his freshman year.

"I did a lot of offseason training with the [school] team before the season started, and I also played my heart out during practices and scrimmages," said Haake.

Sophomore middle infielder and pitcher Philbert Fan explained the benefits Haake, who plays pitcher, third baseman and out-

fielder, brought to the team.

"Haake is a young player who brings a lot of energy to the team," Fan said. "He works hard and impacts the team in a positive way not only with his bat and glove, but also with his good teamwork."

Haake said playing on varsity is an excellent opportunity to improve his skills. Haake continues to feel the pressure to perform at this competitive level, but he credits the upperclassman for easing his transition.

"I've gotten to know a lot of the juniors, seniors and sophomores, and I'm so thankful for how kind they have been to me," Haake said.

Junior outfielder Talon Sisco had other

positive things to say about Haake. "I know it's hard being a freshman on varsity because you have to get used to the tempo, and that is why I needed my years on JV to get used to it. He has some things to work on, but he is a great addition to the team," Sisco said.

With only eight games remaining, the team has an overall record of 5-14 and a conference record of 1-10. They are currently sitting at second to last place in the more competitive De Anza League.

"I feel like we have established a team motto of not caring if we win, but rather improving together as a team. I am excited for next year, and I think we have good things coming," Sisco said. ♦

BADMINTON

# Falcons likely to remain in upper El Camino division

BY ChristineZhang & ManasiGarg

The tension was palpable as girls' doubles No. 2 seniors Mackenzie Lee and Serena Ying fought from behind to cut down Palo Alto's 20-17 lead in the third game of their best-of-three set on April 18 at home. The two teams were tied at 14 points each, and the winner of this crucial match would determine the winning school.

Both Falcon and Viking athletes crowded at the edge of the court and watched with anticipation as Lee and Ying scored five consecutive points, leading to a 22-20 victory and causing the Falcons to explode into cheers. The final match score was 16-14.

As of April 29, the team had a 3-8 league record, with two wins against Palo Alto and one against Gunn. The Falcons have secured a spot above the last-place team with their second win over the Vikings, and the school is set to remain in the more competitive El Camino division next year despite initial concerns that teams in the upper league would prove too strong.

On April 25, the Falcons celebrated their senior day, themed Pokémon, as they faced Monta Vista at home. Only No. 2 boys' doubles seniors Mark Guidry and Neo Chen won their game.

The Falcons lost 28-2, the same score

they had the first time they played Monta Vista this season.

The Falcons fell to Lynbrook in an away game on April 23. Mar was out with a knee injury, and the Falcons suffered a 24-6 loss opposed to their previous 18-12 loss in their first game against Lynbrook.

Because varsity team manager senior Victor Liu had a time conflict on senior day, the captains allowed him to play in the game against Lynbrook with junior Charlie Liu for No. 3 boys' doubles. As a result, several ordinary doubles pairs were switched, and No. 1 and No. 2 boys' doubles lost as well.

Reflecting on the season, captain junior Alvin Ren said that there were several games that let the Falcons stay in the upper league.

"We won some really close games that we could've easily lost," Ren said. "We almost got booted out, but it's all good now."

League finals are taking place on May 2, May 3 and May 4 at Cupertino High School. Thirteen schools across both the El Camino and De Anza divisions will send 17 or 18 players to compete in five double elimination brackets, and the results of league finals will determine who qualifies for CCS.

The Falcons plan to use their wild card in boys' doubles, which allows them to send No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3 for that event. For every other event, they are limited to only their No. 1 and No. 2 players.



FALCON / JUN LEE

Senior Neo Chen serves a birdie on badminton senior night on April 25 as the team watches.

The team will send Mar with Hsiao, Zhang with captain senior Nathan Luk, and Ren with junior Jeffrey Xu for boys' doubles; freshman Enoch Jung and sophomore Max Gendeh for boys' singles; freshman Victoria Tso with sophomore Katie Chen and captain junior Joanna Wang with junior Rachel Yamamoto for girls' doubles; sophomore Christine Zhang and junior Katherine Peng for girls' singles; and Lee with Fung and Shen with senior Neo Chen for mixed doubles. Ren as well as coach John Li said that

the team's main goal is for Mar and Hsiao to qualify for CCS.

Ren said he is satisfied with the Falcons' performance this season.

"I had low expectations going into the season since we're playing in the upper league this year," Ren said. "But we actually did well against some schools and scraped out some wins to stay in the league."

Due to printing deadlines, the Falcon was unable to cover the April 30 game against Gunn or the league finals. ♦

>> snapshots



TALISMAN // USMAN KHAN



FALCON // PHOEBE WANG



Courtesy of RONAK PAI



Courtesy of HELEN JARRETT

Junior Ritika Kuppam performs during a March 26 rehearsal for the spring musical "The Sound of Music."

Sophomore Jun Lee tumbles down an inflatable bouncy house on April 30. The school hosted bouncy houses to combat stress before AP exams.

English teachers Ken Nguyen and Natasha Ritchie dance during the Grammy-themed Junior Prom held at La Rinconada Country Club on April 20.

The debate team poses at the Tournament of Champions, held from April 27-29 at the University of Kentucky.

"The overlying message that I'm seeing [from art schools] is that they want that personal voice."  
 – art teacher Diana Vanry on prospective art students (pg. 14)

ISSUE

Highlights

"It's hard to remember that everybody only posts the best pictures."  
 – junior Kay Jewler on social media (pg. 16)

Scared of being unproductive over break? Follow these tips to start working

HOW TO FINALLY GET YOUR BUTT OFF THAT COUCH AND DO SOMETHING PRODUCTIVE WITH ALL THAT FREE TIME

biggest liu-ser



Selena Liu

Every Friday before a major break I always tell myself: This is finally going to be the week where you're going to get things done. You're going to catch up on all the homework that you didn't do this week out of excitement for break, and you're going to finally start a hobby that you've been keeping off doing forever because you have no time.

Instead, I find myself spending the entire week binge-watching Netflix on my bed, stuffing my face with potato chips and after a week, regretting not doing anything. I can imagine a lot of students go through the same struggle. So here are the top three things that you can do to get off the couch and actually do something meaningful with your life during the next break.

**1. Write a to-do list by hand and stick it in a place where you can see it most often.**

The thought of having a pile of work to finish before the end of break never sounds appealing, and it's even overwhelming at times, but having a written to-do list will really help you organize your schedule and put your tasks in order. It's satisfying to be able to check off things on your list as you do them, and by the end of the

week, you'll feel like you did a lot. Also, by sticking your to-do list in a place where you commonly access, like next to your desk or your laptop, you can remind yourself that you need to work before doing other things.

**2. Just get off the couch and exercise for a while.**

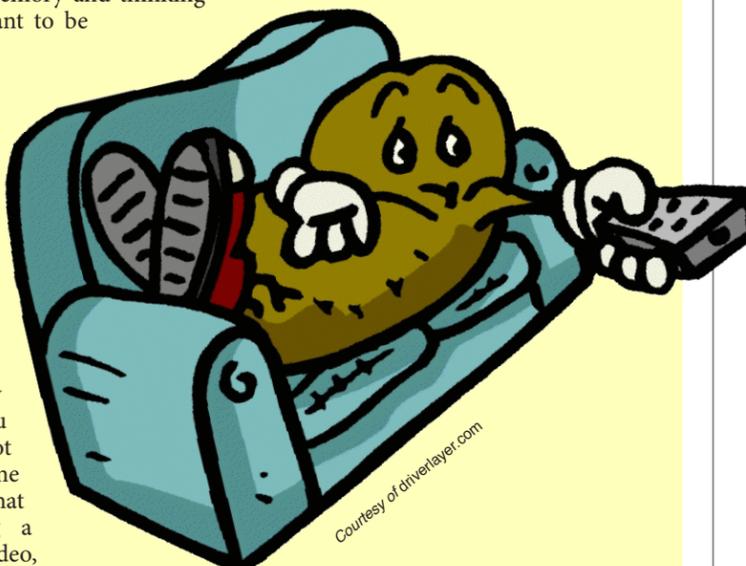
It may seem more time-efficient if you spend all your time doing work, but believe it or not, including an hour of physical activity can actually improve your concentration and efficiency. A study by Harvard Medical School even proves that regular exercise can "change the brain in ways that protect memory and thinking skills." So if you want to be more productive and work smarter in the long run, exercise is the way to go.

**3. Find something that inspires you to improve yourself.**

If you're someone like me, you'll get easily frustrated when you realize that you're not spending your time productively. At that point, try reading a book, watching a video, or listening to a podcast

that inspires you to keep moving forward. There are so many people doing great things in the world that it's hard not to be inspired to do something with your life as well when you learn about it. Sometimes, a little motivation from an outside source is just what it takes to inspire you to do a lot.

Hopefully, these tips will help you get off the couch during your next time off. But, if you're always this productive, don't forget to take a break sometimes too. All things in life need balance, and some days, being a total couch potato isn't that bad either. ♦



Courtesy of drivenlayer.com

topten

WAYS TO CREATE A SELF-SUFFICIENT ECOSYSTEM IN YOUR BACKYARD

- 10** Study APUSH in the garden. Sodium-rich tears of defeat from reading 40 text-heavy pages can help your vegetation flourish.
- 9** Introduce rare YouTube animals. Every ecosystem needs a top-of-the-food-chain (time) consumer.
- 8** Start a compost pile. It's good fertilizer, and you can say, "My compost pile ate my homework."
- 7** Get a herd of zebras, a couple of lions, maybe a cheetah... Oh, what? Your backyard isn't the size of the Serengeti? Whoops.
- 6** Obtain a bathroom pass. By now, those flip-flops must be infested by a great diversity of microorganisms that you can add to your ecosystem.
- 5** Dispose of lead sulfate from your chem lab. Plants love those heavy metals so much they turn yellow.
- 4** Jumpstart your microcosm with your APES bio bottle. The animals definitely survived three weeks of torture in a sealed plastic enclosure.
- 3** Forget your water bottle outside. Who wouldn't want a pristine biome of soon-to-be blood-sucking mosquitoes to brag about?
- 2** Feed your animals a lot of cafeteria food. Preservatives keep food healthy, so they should keep your ecosystem healthy too.
- 1** Plant some tomatoes. Where's a better place to put those you were supposed to eat for lunch?

>> Rohan Kumar