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Ellis appointed as interim assistant principal

By Apurva Chakravarthy & Anouk Yeh

Following former assistant principal Brian Safine's departure to his new role as head of human resources at the district office, P.E. and U.S. history teacher Rick Ellis has been appointed as an interim assistant principal to replace him for second semester. In the spring, the district will evaluate whether to open the position to other candidates for a permanent position.

In his new role, Ellis will not be able to teach; instead, Lucas Alonzo is currently acting as a substitute for the four P.E. classes that Ellis was in charge of.

When the job opened up in December, Ellis said he wasn't even sure that he wanted to apply. In June 2018, he completed his masters in education with an administrative credential, but only planned on going into administration later



Ellis

into his career. Once he learned that there would be an open spot on the administration team, he was encouraged by colleagues to apply for the role.

"The more I talked to them, the more I was like maybe I could offer the school something," Ellis said.

Ellis also said that his 19 years of teaching here give him an advantage because he knows the school's

culture and personalities. He started as a World Geography and U.S. History teacher and later transitioned into being both a history and a P.E. teacher.

Even so, the switch to administration is one he is adjusting to daily.

Ellis said that his new position, which he began Jan. 21, has required him to learn how to categorize different issues quickly

>> ELLIS on pg. 2

KNOWING NO

SPEAK UP FOR CHANGE WEEK URGES SELF-AWARENESS

By Apurva Chakravarthy & Esther Luan

From Jan. 21-24, the school held its annual Speak Up For Change week, this year themed "Know No." The event was scaled down but impactful for some students.

"You're hearing and seeing people that you normally interact with share their stories, and it just helps to reinforce that idea that everybody has things they're going through," senior Riya Kalra said. "We're all more alike than you'd think."

Activities included an all-school assembly on Tuesday, activities in the quad on Wednesday, a consent panel hosted by GirlUp on Thursday and a sandwich packaging drive, an alumni panel and peaceful painting on Friday.

>> SUFC on pg. 3

MAP teacher Alex Hemmerich (top left) and seniors Ryan Le (bottom left) and Ritika Kuppam (middle), share personal experiences during the annual Speak Up for Change event on Jan. 21.

TALISMAN // SELINA YANG AND WILSON FUNG

New classes for next year

CREATIVE WRITING 2 AND EFFECTIVE SPEECH AND COMMUNICATIONS WIDEN SCHOOL'S COURSES

By Jackson Green

Two new classes have been proposed for next year: Creative Writing 2, a second-year component to the one-year Creative Writing class taught by English teacher Amy Keys and Effective Speech and Communication, taught by English and drama teacher Sarah Thermond.

"I think that we have a large group of students at Saratoga who enjoy the humanities but don't have a lot of opportunities outside of their busy schedules and would like to have an opportunity to write," Keys said.

Keys proposed Creative Writing 2 to give students interested in creative writing another year

of it. It also gives the class a better chance at getting enough signups to run. Single-class electives generally need 25 signups in order to be offered.

"I want to make sure that the class is always running," Keys said. "If they want to develop further, then they can."

Creative Writing 2 will be taught in the same class period as Creative Writing 1, with Creative Writing 2 students receiving more advanced assignments and more opportunities to publish.

The other class proposed for next year is Effective Speech and Communication, a class centered around rhetorical tactics and public speaking.

"A lot of research that the

school district has read says that a major skill students seem to be missing at the high school and college level is the ability to clearly communicate their ideas," Thermond said.

Former assistant principal Brian Safine approached her about the idea of teaching such a class. The class will help students learn how to express their ideas in a concise manner and improve speaking in front of large groups.

"[Effective communication is] a set of skills that comes up so much in life that having a class focusing on the teaching of those qualities could be a real catalyst for a student to discover a new amount of confidence and clarity," Thermond said. ♦

Worries grow as virus expands beyond China

By Harshini Velchamy & Anouk Yeh

On Jan. 11, China announced the first death of the coronavirus, the first of now more than 100 deaths and widespread panic and disruption. There have been over 4,500 confirmed cases as of Jan. 28.

Worse, the virus has spread to the U.S. and recent reports have pinpointed it appearing in California, though not yet in the Bay Area.

If the virus continues to spread more widely in the state, principal Greg Louie has said that the school is prepared to follow the guidelines put out by national and county health officials, adding that these precautions will be taken once they get a notice from either

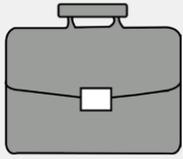
the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the county.

"In the grand scheme, there might be a situation where we end up with a crate full of Clorox wipes and everybody has to wipe down their desks and doorknobs every day until the risk is abated," Louie said.

According to the SF Gate, the coronavirus is a class of viral respiratory diseases that can evolve from the common cold to serious illnesses such as SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) and MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome).

The symptoms of coronavirus include fever, coughing, wheezing and pneumonia.

>> CORONA on pg. 5



newsbriefs

Quiz Bowl team qualifies for national competition

The school's Quiz Bowl team took home a win in their second regular season tournament at Saint Francis High School on Jan. 18. They scored first place in the competitive division against teams from 14 other schools.

With this win, the team has qualified for the 2020 PACE National Scholastic Championship, one of two national-level competitions for Quiz Bowl.

"I'm happy that we as a team were able to win this tournament," senior Jason Hong said. "We hope to replicate our results at our next tournament."

In Quiz Bowl, teams of four compete to answer tossup questions in diverse subjects ranging from French opera to physics. After, teams work on three-part collaborative bonus questions. The team won the Jan. 18 contest despite one of their regular members, senior Brandon Wang, being gone.

"I think we played really well as a team given that we were short a team member," Hong said. "Sathvik [Kaliyur] was filling in for Brandon, and he had a number of really clutch buzzes that helped us pull off a few close victories."

In the end, the team of Hong, seniors Jeffrey Ma and Kaliyur and junior Rohan Kumar beat out Mission San Jose to take first place. ♦

—Allen Chen

Science Bowl team to compete in regionals

This Feb. 8 at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, the Science Bowl team will be competing at regionals in hopes of gaining a ticket to the national competition.

The students representing Saratoga are: senior Jeffrey Xu; juniors Rohan Kumar, Enoch Luk, Isaac Chang, Samuel Wong and Akshar Sarvesh; sophomores Jeffrey Hu and Ethan Zuo and freshmen Nilay Mishra, Anthony Wang and Adam Xu.

To qualify to compete in Science Bowl, a fast-paced "Jeopardy!"-esque science buzzer competition, participants went through an extensive tryout process, taking a general test and also excelling in a buzzer simulation with topics ranging from biology, chemistry, math, physics, earth science, astronomy to energy.

For the Falcons, the greatest challenge this year will be facing Lynbrook, who they are predicted to face in the afternoon elimination rounds of the competition. ♦

—Oliver Ye

picturethis



FALCON // ANGELINA CHEN

ELECTIVES NIGHT | Guidance counselors Eileen Allen and Monique Young explains to a parent about the possible elective paths that students will be able to pursue during their underclassmen years.

ELLIS

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and prioritize different projects. He said that the most challenging learning curve he has faced is learning how to administer different types of standardized tests.

"[Testing] a big thing because I've been here so long, so I am well aware of the high academic standards of this school. People are preparing for these tests and they want to do well, so the expectation is these tests run smoothly," he said.

Despite the differences in positions, Ellis said the relationship that he developed with many students on campus is an invaluable

asset that has proven useful.

"If I am working with students in a disciplinary role, I feel like I have a good rapport with students," he said. "I know a lot of kids and parents on campus, so that definitely helps."

In addition to his connection with the student body, Ellis said that his administration transition has also been made smoother by the guidance and administration team who have "helped a ton" in helping him settle into his new role.

Guidance secretary Kathy Sheridan said that Ellis has been quickly and successfully transitioning into his new role.

"Mr. Ellis has been doing great," Sheridan said. "He's eager to learn [and has been] reading materials

and testing manuals on the weekend. He's here early and staying late."

"If I am working in a disciplinary role, I feel like I have a good rapport with students."

ASST. PRINCIPAL Rick Ellis

Ellis said that his main priorities are to learn more about how to administer standardized testing, continue promoting the school's extracurricular activities and help support the school's vision. ♦

60 years of The Falcon

From the archives: For its 60th year The Falcon is presenting a series of stories reflecting on some of the most interesting moments of the school's history. This issue's story is about Soundings publishing work by a jailed alumnus:

In 2008, Soundings published an essay by 1998 alumnus Matthew Hahn on the necessity of optimism to fix a flawed society.

After graduating from the school, Hahn fell into a cycle of alcoholism and drug abuse and burglary to support his habits. Although he rehabbed, he relapsed after the suicide of his best friend.

In 2005, during a break-in, Hahn discovered digital images of child molestation in the owner's safe. He anonymously sent the memory card to the Los Gatos Police Department. The child abuser was arrested and jailed, but Hahn was also handed a life sentence with parole for multiple charges of first-degree burglary.

Hahn has been off parole since 2013. In 2017, he created a blog to retell his story. Currently, he openly shares his experiences on forums and social media and gave a talk at SHS last February.

This account is a summary of an article that appeared in the June 5, 2008 print edition of the Falcon. The story was written by Andy Tsao. The original story can be found at saratogafalcon.org.

—Brandon Wang and Jessica Wang

Safine leaves assistant principal post to be district's HR director

By Kaitlyn Tsai

After working at the school for 17 years as an assistant principal, Brian Safine has been picked to be the district's director of human resources, a promotion that will allow him to serve the needs of both Saratoga and Los Gatos High. He is replacing Annette Grasty, who left the district recently to take another position.

The school is in the process of hiring a permanent assistant principal to replace him. For second semester, social studies and P.E. teacher Rick Ellis, who received his administration credential in 2018, will serve as interim assistant principal. Safine will also continue to aid the administration through this transitory process.

"I'm working very hard — morning, noon and night," Safine said. "It takes a lot of energy to embrace a new job while still wrapping up the previous job the right way." Having also worked as a core teacher at Redwood Middle School for eight years prior to starting at Saratoga, Safine said he "couldn't refuse" the opportunity to serve students, teachers and parents district-wide.

As HR director, Safine's role will shift from interacting with students, parents and staff to hiring and supporting teachers, administrators and other staff members.

"I'll miss the student energy and the fact that our staff and students are caring people."

HR DIRECTOR Brian Safine

"I think there's a couple of things that will be very exciting in the new job, one of them being hiring the best possible people at Saratoga and Los Gatos to be in front of our students on a daily basis," Safine said. "I've had the good fortune of either hiring or supervising over half of the current Saratoga staff, so I'm very excited to continue hiring and mentoring folks district-wide." Aside from these duties, Safine will also serve as a director on the District Cabinet, participating in weekly meetings that discuss issues such

as school policies and teaching. With his experience as an assistant principal, Safine said, he can offer valuable perspective on these issues and help chart a course for the school district. Assistant principal Kerry Mohnike described his departure as "bittersweet."

"We're really happy to have someone who knows how schools run — our school in particular — and can support us at the district level," Mohnike said. "But of course, I'll miss the camaraderie; he's a hard worker, he's thoughtful, he's intelligent, and I'll miss being able to go to him immediately."

Although Safine said he will visit Saratoga and student events often, he said he will miss the intimacy of working so closely with staff and students here. Still, he said he looks forward to continuing to support the school at a broader level.

"I've developed a ton of close relationships in a community that I love," Safine said. "I'll miss the student energy and the fact that our staff and students are caring people who are committed to each other's wellness. But I'm really excited to help chart a course for our school district." ♦

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Two students qualify for county poetry competition



FALCON // ANGELINA CHEN

Junior Eva Ji passionately presents her poem in front of her classmates in English teacher Amy Keys classroom on Jan. 24. She was chosen as a representative for regionals.

BY BrandonWang
& OliverYe

A room of students and teachers erupted into applause, stunned by the emotional and powerful performance of Mirza Abdullah Khan Ghalib's poem "No, I wasn't meant to love and be loved," performed by junior Eva Ji, who participated in the annual Poetry Out Loud competition, hosted in English teacher Amy Keys' room last Friday.

To compete in Poetry Out Loud, students had to select two out of thousands of potential poems and recite them in front of a panel of judges. Eight participants performed.

Each high school is allowed to send two competitors to the county regional, as well as one alternate — Saratoga will send Ji and sophomore Anouk Yeh as competitors, with junior Isaiah Chung as an alternate.

Since each participant was allowed to freely choose their poems, there were a diverse range of pieces, ranging from humorous to emotional.

Yeh said that she chose spoken-word poems rather than written poems because they were "more alive and more expressive."

The competition proceeded in rounds, with each student performing their favorite poem first, followed by their second choice poem.

The judges, teachers Natasha Ritchie, Joel

Tarbox, Suzanne Herzman and Keys, deliberated and delivered scores mainly based on expressiveness and emotion, rather than accuracy. At the county level, accuracy and memorization will also be a key factor in scoring and decisions.

"We talked about which participants had the most potential to deliver the most inspiring version of their poem," Ritchie said. "So it was more about emotion and gesturing and bringing it alive, not necessarily how much they memorized."

Keys said that the deliberation was made especially difficult because of the various strengths and weaknesses of the contestants.

The event also had spectators, among them Poetry Club co-president Michael Tang.

Tang said that he was impressed by the participants' enthusiasm.

"A lot of them had a good understanding of what they're reciting," Tang said. "You could hear it through their intonation, a good number of them have an appreciation of what they're saying."

Keys said she was pleased with the turnout, especially among students she did not realize were interested in poetry.

"Last year I had pretty much seen all the people ahead of time in Poetry Club," Keys said. "I'm excited to think that the appeal of poetry and poetry performance is expanding." ♦

English teacher returns to school after maternity leave

SUSANNA RYAN EXCITED TO WORK WITH STUDENTS AGAIN AFTER SEMESTER LONG BREAK WITH NEWBORN SON

BY OliverYe
& AnoukYeh

Entering the classroom after a semester of maternity leave, English 9 and 10 teacher Susanna Ryan felt a wave of excitement.

Although she is in her 16th year as a teacher and coming back from maternity leave with her third child, she said that she always gets excited to transition back to work.

"I feel really welcomed and excited to work with the kids. I'm excited to teach literature again," Ryan said. "[Saratoga] is a great place to be, and I feel happy when I come in."

Her transition back to work has been similar to her previous two.

"I've done it before, so I know what to expect, but I know it's a transition for students," Ryan said.

"I'm trying to empathize with everybody who's kind of experienced that absence, and just kind of recognizing what it was like for them."

Ryan spent the majority of the first week back adjusting her students to her classroom expectations.

Long-term substitute Ellen McCormick

taught her classes in most of first semester.

According to freshman Kate Hsiung, who is in Ryan's English 9 class, the transition has been pretty smooth so far — although there was a clear difference in expectations between the two teachers.

Hsiung said that McCormick had been looser with her homework policy.

"The teacher before Mrs. Ryan didn't give a lot of work, and now the classroom environment is very different behavior-wise — everyone gets a lot more quiet, no one really talks anymore," Hsiung said.

Using a Google Form, Ryan let students express how they felt about the change.

So far, Ryan said the hardest part of the transition to school is spending less time with her son each day.

"I keep leaving later than I should because I just keep holding [Franklin], and then I run home [after school] and just hold him the rest of the night," she said.

During her transition back, Ryan has

been grateful the support of her husband, who has taken a four-week paternity leave in order to take care of the "total chaos and a hundred things to do" in the house.

"I've done it before, so I know what to expect, but I know it's a transition for students."

Ryan has also been attempting to incorporate her love for literature in the classroom to her own children's lives.

According to Ryan, Josie, her oldest child, who currently attends Argonaut as a first grader, has recently been engrossed with reading literature and poetry.

"We haven't been as good at making time for Franklin to be read to yet, but I bet Josie is going read a bunch to him too, because she loves it," Ryan said. "It's just cute to see how books can become so central to kids' lives." ♦



Ryan

SUFC

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Among the speakers at the assembly was senior Ritika Kuppam, who spoke about the obstacles she faced while searching for her true passion.

"You don't have to know what you want to do with your life in high school, you've got so much of your life ahead of you," Kuppam told the assembled students. "Say no to the hate and discouragement, and learn to be nicer to yourself."

Outreach commission head Sally Kim said that when brainstorming possible topics, consent and sexual assault seemed a timely, important choice.

ASB vice president Jolyn Tran described herself as a strong proponent of the theme. She has closely followed the case of Chanel Miller, a Stanford student who was sexually assaulted in 2015 by a fellow student named Brock Turner. She recently published a book about the trauma she experienced. "It just made me think about what it means to say 'no,'" said Tran. "Because she was intoxicated and unconscious, the rapist interpreted it as a 'yes, I consent to having sex with you' and that really baffled me."

Tran also led a panel discussion on consent, held by the GirlUp club, and said that everyone was open-minded and respectful. "Our goal was to spread the message of boundaries and consent and I think a lot of people are now more educated than they

were before, so I'm pretty happy with how it went," Tran said.

Other SUFC activities included the Leo Club packaging drive. During the drive, the club and other student volunteers put together approximately 200 sandwich care packages, which were donated to local non-profit Loaves and Fishes.

Speakers at the assembly were chosen among volunteers. The three student speakers were Kuppam, senior Ryan Le, who spoke about the challenges of his painful medical condition, and Arya Mididaddi, who recounted the struggles she experienced growing up deaf.

The teacher speakers, Spanish teacher Bret Yeilding, Digital Arts and MAP teacher Alex Hemmerich and AP U.S. Government teacher Hana Chen spoke about their experiences in high school, college and graduate school, encouraging students to find their own path.

This year, the commission decided to remove the Cultural Fair that had occurred in recent years as they wanted to focus on activities that were centered around the theme.

One of the biggest challenges that the outreach commission faced while organizing the event was that three of the commissioners, junior Shawn Hulme and sophomores Cheryl Wu and Karina Bik, are new, and needed to learn what was required to organize the week's activities. One of last year's major event planners, Surbhi Bhat, was out of town, making it challenging to



FALCON // ANGELINA CHEN

Assistant principal Matthew Torrens (left) talks with sophomores Rima Christie (middle) and Macey Hartmann (right) during the alumni panel discussion hosted by the GirlUp club.

coordinate everything.

To work through this issue, each commissioner was delegated specific tasks, and the commission got help from assistant principal and Leadership teacher Matt Torrens and the Leadership class.

Another challenge the outreach commission faced was finding speakers for such a sensitive topic, commissioner Cheryl Wu said. The theme was a lot more personal than last year's theme, so it was harder to find speakers. In fact, one of the students who had already agreed to speak at the event dropped out just a week before the

event began.

Kim said that one aspect of the assembly that could have been improved was the icebreaker survey at the beginning, as the commissioners were relatively unprepared for the chaos of an entire school in one enclosed space. Overall, though, Kim said that the event went smoothly.

"If anything, we want students to know that they need to know how to say no, and to understand when someone is saying no," Kim said. "It's what we wanted to achieve with the week, and that's the most important thing." ♦

Campus vandalism and graffiti a little-known but harmful problem, says maintenance staff

BY Esther Luan
& Anouk Yeh

On Dec. 16, the maintenance team found that someone had thrown a tree into the school's pool. The tree was uprooted from Hyde Park near the upper field.

"There were also broomsticks, traffic cones — just somebody was walking around throwing whatever they could find into the swimming pool," custodian Luis Sanchez said.

Several other objects were thrown over the gate into the pool area. Along with the hassle of removing all of these objects, the custodial staff also had to sweep up the soil in the pool area and filter it out of pool water.

Sanchez said the tree will be replaced and hours of labor went into fixing the damage. There are no suspects in the vandalism.

Earlier in first semester, someone siphoned the fuel out of one of the school's vans in the back parking lot by cutting the hose under the body of the vehicle, resulting in \$800 worth of damage.

"This mindset of doing so much damage to get maybe \$80 worth of gas, it's not OK and it's really hurting us," Sanchez said.

School officials said these acts of vandalism and theft may seem like jokes or pranks to the perpetrators, but if they continue, the administration will have to think twice about some of the improvements it is making around campus.

For example, the administration has recently spent \$10,000 on

new signs and murals across campus.

"Ten thousand dollars can go into a lot of things, but we're choosing to upgrade the exterior of our hallways," assistant principal and leadership adviser Matt Torrens said. "If kids are going to deface [the refurbishments], it's going to take away from its value."

"\$10,000 can go into a lot, but we're choosing to upgrade the exterior of our hallways."

ASST. PRIN. Matt Torrens

Although the district pays tens of thousands each year to maintain school grounds, Sanchez said the effects of vandalism extends far beyond a simple financial burden. School defacement also has a negative impact on the school's social environment.

Maintenance supervisor Paul Weir said many locations, like the boys bathrooms, are periodically defaced with inappropriate words or slurs, causing students to feel uncomfortable at school. Torrens said such defacement normalizes campus-destructive behaviors.

"If a young freshman walks in and sees graffiti in the bathroom ceiling, then all of a sudden, he thinks it's OK," Torrens said. "That's the biggest potential for destruction — that young kids might

see it and think that behavior is OK — and it's not."

Sanchez said he and other maintenance workers try to clean up the graffiti as soon as possible, because he "[doesn't] want any validation or gratification of [the perpetrators] coming back with their friends the next day."

Although they are usually successful in removing graffiti quickly, the constant back and forth is both a tiring and demoralizing process for administration and custodial crew. In fact, the school estimates that on average, acts of vandalism occur at least once a week. This causes administration to always be on the lookout for new graffiti.

"We have our custodial crew, our assistant principals and our principals all pop their heads into the bathrooms since then, just to make sure everyone's behaving correctly," Torrens said.

One danger of vandalism, Torrens said, is that it can cross the line into being a hate crime if it targets specific individuals or groups. He recalled a 2003 incident where someone had written on a classroom window that a teacher was gay — graffiti that could be charged as a hate crime.

For Torrens, he said the battle against vandalism and graffiti is something more students need to be aware of and take seriously.

"Kids think it's a joke, but they don't realize how much cost is going into it," Torrens said. "There's a physical cost, there's a social cost and there's an emotional cost." ♦



FALCON // ANGELINA CHEN

An uprooted tree from the vandalism incident on Dec. 16 lies near Hyde Park. Administration will consider cutbacks on aesthetics projects around campus, including murals, if defacement persists.

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Cast list out for spring musical 'Freaky Friday'

BY Marisa Kingsley
& Jessica Wang

This year the drama department's spring musical will be "Freaky Friday" by Tom Kitt, Brian Yorkey and Bridget Carpenter, first produced in 2016.

The musical, based on the 1972 book by Mary Rodgers and the 1976 and 2003 film adaptations, follows the dysfunctional Blake family as the mother Katherine and her daughter Ellie magically switch bodies and must maneuver the complexities of each other's day-to-day lives.

Director Sarah Thermond said that she and music director Andrew Ford chose a more contemporary storyline with pop-inspired songs after receiving student input.

"Last year I got a lot of input for wanting it to be obviously female-heavy because more so than in other years we have more ladies than gentlemen," Thermond said. "And, after doing two shows that were based on films from the 1960s with very old, famous songs that everybody knows, there seemed to be a desire to do a show more rooted in contemporary and pop music." The past two spring musicals have been "The Sound of Music" in 2019 and "Mary Poppins" in 2018.

Along with having contemporary music, the production will feature more modern styles of dance such as jazz and hip hop, choreographed by 2012 alumna Valerie Peterson.

Thermond notes that the show is "tastefully" PG-13, as it deals with issues such as recreational drug use and the death of a parent. With the story centered around the lives of high schoolers, she said that student actors are enthusiastic to do a show where they can more easily relate to the characters.

However, Thermond is always wary of

productions that write exaggerated versions of modern teenagers.

"I usually avoid casting actual high school students as high school students because representations of them in musicals can be very corny and overly stereotyped," she said. "But this one has a lot of truth in it, so that made me very excited to go over it with the students."

After auditions in mid-January, seniors Marly Feigin and Natalie Tjahjadi were picked to play Katherine Blake and daughter Ellie, the female leads that switch bodies within the story. Senior Abhay Manchala will play Katherine's fiancé Mike, and seventh-grader Nolan Thompson will play Ellie's younger brother, Fletcher.

Tjahjadi foresees the challenges of playing two characters with unique personalities and demeanors.

"Playing Ellie is going to be different than previous roles I've had in the past because for most of the show I am technically acting as Katherine, the mother," she said. "So I will have to embody two different characters in the same show."

Tjahjadi also said that "Freaky Friday" will be vocally demanding for the whole cast. Thermond attributes its potential difficulty to the shift from more traditional to modern belting and singing.

"There's not a coloratura or a soprano note to be found in this play and our last two years' callbacks were listening to high notes," Thermond said. "This year that's not what's happening. So that style is different."

Yet, Thermond often finds that students are actually more comfortable with a modern style, because "it imitates what students are inundated with in real life."

"Freaky Friday" will open in the McAfee Center on April 24 and close May 2. ♦

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Eshoo awards senior for app competition

BY Brandon Wang

Senior Sidney Hough recently won the California 18th District's 2019 Congressional App Challenge (CAC) for creating Uproot, an app that helps farmers identify and track weeds in their fields. Congresswoman Anna Eshoo came to Hough's first-period class on Jan. 6 to bestow the award upon her.

Uproot uses computer vision to differentiate invasive weeds, which present a serious problem for farmers, from the native plants that are necessary for a healthy ecosystem and that can superficially appear similar to harmful weeds, Sidney said. After identification, Uproot then tracks the weed's growth and spread to aid with its containment.

Hough was inspired to create Uproot in part because of her father's complaints about oxalis, a yellow flower that can appear in yards in the rainy season.

Another inspiration was an internship she had last spring at an agricultural technology company called Kissan, where she worked on UX/UI design.

"They also use machine learning to empower underserved farmers, but they're in

India," Hough said. "I wanted to take that concept and apply it to California's agricultural problems."

Moving forward, Hough said that she is continuing to train Uproot's machine learning-based vision mechanism, which currently has an accuracy rate of 97.5 percent. She is also working with the nonprofit California Invasive Plant Council to improve the mapping features of the app.

Hough hopes to pursue computer science, particularly distributed systems, and entrepreneurship in college, with a long-term goal of ultimately heading a tech start-up.

As part of her award, Hough won \$250 in credits for Amazon Web Services and will be invited to the mid-April House of Code event on Capitol Hill. Senior Mitra Mokhlesi said that she "really excited" to hear that Hough was recognized for her achievement.

"I'm really happy for her because she went above and beyond to get her app introduced to California farmers and has been developing the app for months," Mokhlesi said. "Sidney winning the challenge was so well deserved." ♦



Courtesy of ANNA ESHOO

Congresswoman Anna Eshoo presents an award to senior Sidney Hough on Jan. 6. Hough developed a winning app for the Congressional App Challenge. The app allows farmers to identify invasive weeds with computer vision, tracking the spreading of the weed's growth.

CORONA

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A majority of the cases have been in China, but there have been others confirmed in countries such as Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan.

Media Arts teacher Joel Tarbox said that although many SHS students have recently traveled to China, he's not taking any special sanitary precautions in his classes.

"As a teacher, one thing that I do in particular this time of year is a lot sanitizing and handwashing, but I'm not doing anything different because of [the virus]," he said.

The first confirmed case of the virus was a 61-year-old man. He was hospitalized and died of heart failure on Jan. 9.

The coronavirus has also shed a light on some flaws of the Chinese government and its response to the outbreak. Critics have pointed to the slow initial response as one reason the outbreak gained traction.

In North America, there have been six reported cases as of Jan. 27: two in Southern California, one in Canada, one in Chicago, one in Washington and one in Arizona. The two cases in Southern California have occurred in Orange County and Los Angeles County.

However, officials aren't worried yet about the illness spreading to the Bay Area. Alameda County Public Health Department spokesperson Neetu Balram said that the only risk for Bay Area residents would be if they have traveled to Wuhan in the last 14 days or have come into contact with someone who has traveled there.



Zhang

SHS students are now also being extra cautious after hearing about the cases in California.

Over the weekend, sophomore Selina Chen competed at a speech and debate tournament in Fremont, while donning a face mask. She is hardly the only one wearing a mask.

"The people at the tournament were from places with suspected cases of the coronavirus, so I just felt like it's better to be cautious

about it and wear a mask," Chen said.

In order to prevent the spread of this disease in the U.S., the CDC is screening passengers in China in major airports of five cities: San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago and Atlanta.

Some individuals with family in China have begun stockpiling on masks to send to their Chinese relatives.

The CDC advises U.S. travelers to avoid non-essential travel to China.

Specific facemasks have been designed for the purpose of shielding the Coronavirus.

The N-95, according to the Washington Post, filters out 95 percent of pollutants and is "highly effective" in preventing the transmission of the virus.

The flaw with these masks, however, is that they must be specifically fitted and often aren't worn out of the medical context.

The masks themselves are in a severe shortage, and prices have increased fivefold.

Individuals with family in China have begun stockpiling on masks in order to send to their Chinese relatives.

Senior Kai Zhang said that his mom recently bought six or seven boxes of facemasks to send back to relatives in China.

"Although my relatives don't live in the areas where people are being quarantined, it's still out there, so I think they just want to take precautions," Zhang said.

Chen's family is taking the same precautions, also ordering facemasks online to send to relatives in China.

"My mom saw a message on this WeChat group that the virus-prevention face mask sold out in China," Chen said. "So we're now buying masks on Amazon and mailing them back to China."

While most of the deaths of the virus are so far centered in China, the impacts and fears are spreading.

"I thought it was just a distant thing in China but I'm worried about my relatives," Chen said. "They're living in the second largest city (Zhejiang Province) of outbreaks." ♦

Seniors engineer device to fight sexual assault

BY Andrew Li
& Kaasha Minocha

In discussing possible capstone project for their final-year engineering class last semester, seniors Anika Prasad, Krisha Minocha and Sanjana Ravi realized they are all feminists, prompting Prasad to ask the others if they could tackle the issue of sexual assault, specifically regarding college women.

The seniors are taking the Engineering Design and Development (EDD) course, the fourth course part of Project Lead the Way, the engineering program.

In the course, taught by Audrey War-muth, groups of three to four students come together to identify and research a problem they are passionate about to work toward developing a solution.

"We wanted to focus on this issue (of sexual assault) because as we have grown up in a world where these kinds of things happen every day," Ravi said. "They happen to people we know, people we care about. Part of choosing this project was feeling a responsibility to at least try to do something that could help in whatever small way possible."

The group decided to name the project Althea, a personal safety device in the form of a ring for college girls to alert a police officer when someone is being sexually assaulted. The name Althea is derived from Greek, meaning "to heal."

After writing a statement of purpose, groups research prior patents of products trying to solve the issue and design what they want to focus on and what constraints they have for their project. They make a project proposal which is the fundamental design for the project they want to work on all of the second semester to solve the issue.

"Part of choosing this project was a responsibility to at least try to do something."



SENIOR Sanjana Ravi

All of this planning is done in the second half of first semester, starting at the beginning of November until December.

In the first half of the semester, students work on projects that allow them to get familiar with tools in the engineering lab and also work with two to three different modeling softwares. The idea is to use fun and creative projects to become familiar with some of the important tools of the room.

With Minocha, Ravi and Prasad's proj-

ect, before deciding that they wanted to solve this issue, they researched how big the issue was.

"One in five women of the general public in the United States will be sexually assaulted just over their lifetime, and we also found out that college women are three times more likely to be assaulted than the general females so that's essentially three out of five," Minocha said. "Especially for us, as girls going to college in less than six months, we wouldn't feel safe going, and we've heard stories from others about assaults happening."

After figuring out the issue they wanted to work on, the group explored past solutions and decided what were the pros and cons of each. Some examples of solutions that they saw are phone cases with a button to press to alert someone, keychains, bracelets or necklaces.

"The thing with all the other options is that they are not easily accessible," Minocha said. "For example, with a phone case, if you're being sexually assaulted, the first thing the attacker would do is take your phone away."

Prasad added that jewelry is common for women in particular to wear, and that's what will make their device more discreet.

However, Minocha explained that a necklace is not as good of an option as it seems; many times people's hands would be

pinned down when being assaulted, so they would not be able to reach up and touch their necklace.

The group decided to name the project Althea, a personal safety device in the form of a ring for college girls.

Similarly with bracelets, it is difficult to reach one's wrist. As a result of their weighing of the benefits and drawbacks of each design, they decided that a ring was the most optimal design, where victims can easily hit a button without needing to use both hands.

Minocha explained that one of the gems set in the ring would be a button, and in order to prevent people from accidentally hitting it in their sleep, users would have to hit it a certain number of times in order to actually alert emergency services.

"The end goal of this project is to have a presentable prototype that fully functions," Prasad said. "Theoretically, we would love to have it be the actual size of a ring, but our current focus is to have the prototype at a reasonably small size that works, and then build it up from there." ♦

FIFTH PERIOD
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Although flawed, student evaluations of teachers provide important insights

Throughout our educational careers, most of us have had that one teacher who we desperately wished had chosen another career — and if you haven't, you've probably heard of such teachers from older siblings or friends: maybe the one who yells students into submission, the one who takes points off your homework for not dotting your i's and crossing your t's or the one who just seems to hate teaching or kids.

From elementary school to high school, I've encountered not one, but several who fit the description of "that one teacher." I'm sure I will continue to meet them in college as well.

So when the school provides us with the opportunity to fill out a form evaluating a new teacher, I appreciate it — and no, it's not because I want to fill out 1's for every category on the form. Rather, it's because these evaluations provide students with opportunities to have a say in their education.

Yet for years, educators have debated the legitimacy of student evaluations of teaching, or SET scores, in gauging eligibility for tenure or promotion. Opponents of SETs, including City University of New York psychology professor John Lawrence, argue that factors like grade expectations and race and gender bias play a role in a students' evaluations.

While these arguments may be valid to a certain extent, SETs hold a degree of weight because almost no other measure can gauge teaching performance as directly or accurately as student evaluations can. Although quantitative scores may not holistically measure a teacher's performance, they still provide

valuable insights into an instructor's improvement from year to year. For example, according to an extensive study of the efficacy of SETs by Elizabeth Barre, former associate director of Rice University's Center for Teaching Excellence, if an instructor's ratings jump from a 2.5 average to a 4.5 average, "we can be fairly confident that there was real and significant growth in their teaching performance."

Even if some treat the evaluations as a joke and fill in 1's for every category, most students take the surveys at least semi-seriously. Few students at this school have the drive to actively try to ruin a teacher's career with their single rating.

Just because a select few students may try to skew a teacher's evaluation does not mean that the school should place little weight on student input. Since students are the ones sitting in class and interacting with teachers on a daily basis, they deserve to have a voice in evaluating the givers of their education. Providing students with the chance to express how they feel about their experiences with a class also demonstrates a degree of respect and care for the students.

To address the concerns about bias and students not taking surveys seriously, administrators can place greater weight on the open-ended feedback at the end of the surveys, which allows students to explain their ratings or any specific comments and concerns that they have. Meanwhile, rather than treating the numerical ratings as a definitive measure of teaching ability, they can analyze the numbers for general trends or patterns of growth, fil-

TEACHER EVALUATIONS

My teacher makes sure I understand content	1	2	3	4	5
The environment is conducive to learning	1	2	3	4	5
Lessons are fresh & engaging	1	2	3	4	5
My teacher gives me helpful feedback	1	2	3	4	5
My teacher grades fairly	1	2	3	4	5
Class activities and homework are interesting and meaningful	1	2	3	4	5
My teacher listens to me	1	2	3	4	5

MANASI GARG

tering out the obviously extreme responses of all 1's.

And of course, using SETs alongside other methods, like directly measuring student learning through standardized test scores or conducting regular classroom observations, will maximize the accuracy of these evaluations.

While student feedback, like

other measures, may have flaws, it remains one of the best options for measuring teaching ability. The more the administration and teachers understand about how students experience a course and interact with their instructors, the better they can adjust their teaching styles or curriculum to ensure students can make the most out of their education. ♦

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SUFC shouldn't force speakers to conform to set theme

ARBITRARY SLOGANS WEAKEN SPEAKERS' EXPERIENCES RATHER THAN UNIFYING THEM

BY Esther Luan
& Siva Sambasivam

Throughout previous years, Speak Up for Change has been considered a necessary event to foster a positive social-emotional environment for the school.

While it's undeniable that providing a platform for students to open up about their emotional experiences is a valuable experience, the process the school takes to implement it is far from perfect.

Most notably, the school always emphasizes a specific theme for the weeklong SUFC event, with this year's being "Know No."

Previous years' themes have included "Breaking Barriers" and "Escaping the Mask We Live In."

These catchy, buzzword-filled slogans are meant to prompt a certain quintessential backstory.

While each phrase is independently a crucial emotional concept, the usage of these phrases as encompassing themes for the event is problematic.

The entire point of Speak Up for Change is to allow for students to share their own stories and their personal experiences.

Wouldn't it be best that these

are shared in their own light, with their own moral and without the need to conform to an arbitrary theme set by the Outreach Commission?

Specifically, this approach may incentivize speakers to change their stories in order to make their personal experiences more consistent with the theme.

This is supercharged by the fact that students effectively "compete" to speak at the assembly.

Speakers are selected out of a pool of speeches sent in to the Outreach Commission.

This means that students aren't truly telling their stories, from their viewpoints.

Instead, the audience hears instead a modified version of the speaker's experiences to best fit the theme, undermining the fundamental purpose of the event.

The value of a mental-health oriented assembly is rooted in the uniqueness of each story.

This inherent value is handicapped by the addition of these arbitrary themes.

What further proves that these annual themes are superfluous is that speakers often miss the true takeaways of their own experi-

ences while presenting them; not every story this year was meant to have "Know No" as its moral, just as not every speech from last year truly had to do with "Escaping the Mask We Live In."

To assume that all the stories being presented at the assembly can be deformed to fit a predefined phrase effectively undermines each experience.

At the very least, students should be encouraged to come to their own conclusions about the stories.

Before the assembly, students always go in with the mindset that they'll hear stories with a certain similar ending.

This is very troublesome, considering the event is a platform dedicated as a whole to combating a variety of mental health issues.

We should be celebrating our differences and sharing the different ways we've overcome them, not focusing on packaging our stories to fit one lesson, one mindset.

Overall, the school's approach to this activity creates an environment where students are unable to illustrate their own unique experiences in their entirety.

This is problematic because it

generalizes issues regarding mental health and hinders listeners from taking away the true lessons of each story.

If there was no overarching theme of the event, each speaker's story would be equally compelling, if not more, as they would be able to stick more to the ideas they truly want to convey.

This mean that students aren't truly telling their stories, from their viewpoints.

On the other hand, none of the other events throughout the week would be significantly affected. Such a disconnect from the weeks other activities only highlights the incoherence of a theme

Students should go into the SUFC assembly with the mindset of hearing unique, meaningful experiences, not one general lesson told over and over again by different speakers.

It's about time the school learned that lesson as well. ♦

Government and individual efforts needed to ensure data privacy

BY Harshini Velchamy
& Alan Zu

Facebook, the world's most popular social media platform, is constantly in the news for its lack of respect for violating users' privacy. Yet, most of us continue to use it without a second thought.

For years, we've been signing away our rights to privacy, and either we don't notice it or we just don't care enough to try and stop it. The reason is that most of us seem to have too much trust in the companies that hold so much information about us.

Given the poor record of companies like Facebook and people's inability to detach from social media, it's time for more regulation. The federal government needs to ensure companies follow their own data privacy policies, and users must have more individual awareness about protecting their digital footprints.

When using online platforms, users of-

ten unintentionally leak their private data: They reveal their interests from Facebook posts; they reveal certain behaviors from daily search patterns such as what school they attend or what they have for breakfast; or they reveal the information of other people, some who may not have given consent.

When a user goes on certain websites, his or her computer connects with the website on another server, sharing the user's IP address with that website. Because each electronic device has a unique IP address, third parties can easily match people to websites they have searched, even if the user "deletes" his or her internet history in an attempt to "erase" their digital footprint.

Many corporations using personal data have made it difficult for users to keep their data completely private. Social media platforms such as Instagram or Chinese-owned TikTok depend mainly on photo and video posts, enabling easier identification using facial features by third-party mem-

bers. With recent progress in artificial intelligence, computers are able to recognize people much faster with facial recognition and combine private data much more efficiently to provide a more detailed profile of any single individual.

This is not to say that there are no benefits to providing private data to companies. GPS systems like Google Maps work better with more users. They can provide support and services if there are any difficulties on the road.

The issue isn't inherent to the sharing of data; it's that private data is often sold to third parties, including governments. For example, after completing an online course, several emails about similar alternate courses often pop up, indicating the sharing of information with a third party.

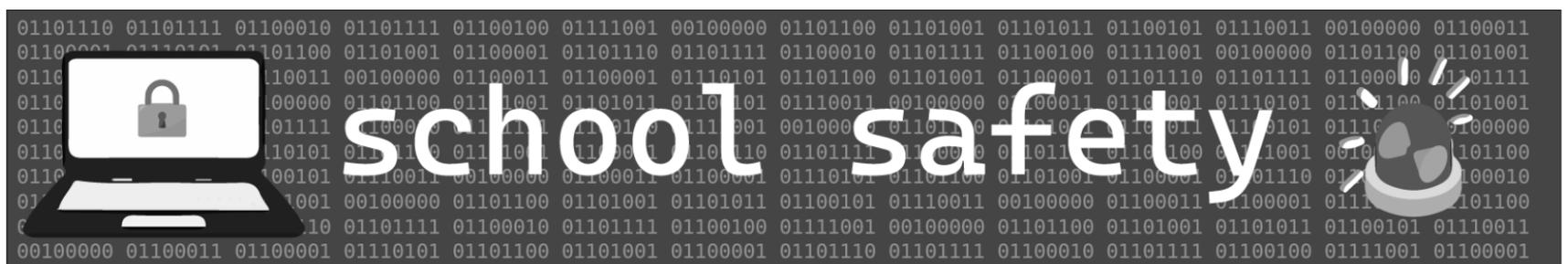
This particular example may appear harmless enough, but often it isn't as benign. Many find that the personal information that they provided companies with have

been shared with other groups.

Companies such as Facebook and Google argue that they provide the option for users to opt out of data collection by simply selecting the choice from the app settings. However, the FTC's director of the Bureau of Consumer Protection, Jessica Rich, testified that companies often do not follow through on their claims.

Internet usage is something we can't escape, from helping students study for exams to searching open jobs to filling out college applications, but people should not blindly rely upon corporate privacy policies and assume that their data is completely safe.

Individuals will also need to take their part in protecting their data by being more aware about what they post and search online. Until systems are better and governments hold companies more accountable, it makes sense to post fewer family photos and make other efforts to reduce our digital fingerprint. ♦



GRAPHIC BY MEGAN CHEN



ANDY CHEN

Single points of entry not as effective as they sound

BY AllenLuo

With school shootings becoming more common throughout the nation, many schools are opting to increase security by forcing students, staff and visitors to enter through one point. This allows the school to check everyone's belongings, sometimes even with metal detectors.

At first glance this may seem like an effective plan, but the cons of such a system ultimately outweigh the potential benefits.

A single entrance may help a school catch potential shooters before they can enter the school; however, it also leaves students and staff with little to no escape routes in the case that someone does get in.

This also applies to events such as fires or other such occurrences. If a fire blocks that one entry way, then again, it leaves the students and staff with few options to get away. In these scenarios, the scramble to escape the premises would injure a lot more people than if the school had multiple entry points.

Another downside: Having only a single entry point for all students can cause massive crowds when school starts

or ends. With hundreds or thousands of students trying to get home as fast as possible, the end result will inevitably be a mob of people pushing to get out.

Having a single entry point has also shown to be ineffective in a recent school shooting. Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida already had only one point of entry before the shooting, but it seems that the shooter had exploited the system to get in.

Rather than spending school funding on a system that would be ineffective and costly, schools should focus more on ways to prepare students in the case of a school shooter.

Having more drills for students to familiarize themselves with certain procedures and protocols that need to be taken during a situation like that would greatly help to decrease student mortality rates in the event of a shooter.

The costs of implementing and maintaining only one point of entry for schools are just not worth the benefits, and should not be considered a viable strategy to protect students. Above all, though, students shouldn't have to feel like they are in prison when they are at school. ♦

Update drills for better safety

BY NityaMarimuthu

"Run, hide, defend"

At SHS, those three words are supposed to spur classrooms into action locking, barricading and hiding. Despite having drills on lockdown since elementary school days, students refresh their memories at least once per year on how best to block the door from a possible shooter, hide out of sight and stay quiet to avoid drawing attention.

These drills, however, fall short of teaching students how to react in real-life situations, nor do they employ the methods that have in recent years been proven to be safer.

As mass shootings become increasingly prevalent, with 418 mass shootings in 2019 alone according to the Gun Violence Archive, schools have to take measures to train their students for emergency situations. Most schools have adapted the lockdown procedure that advises students to protect themselves in classrooms to avoid being in the direct line of danger.

But as organizations begin to study patterns in shootings, better safety plans have emerged, with many of them simplifying the dictum to run, with hide and defend being employed only in the circumstance that there is no other choice.

In an article written by ABC News, active shooter prevention expert Chris Grollnek said that in the more than 13 active shootings he studied, more than 90 percent of fatalities were as a result of victims trying to hide. Hiding in an enclosed space eases traps those in the room and makes it easier to target them.

"Hiding under your desk is hands-down the wrong thing to do," Greg Shaffer, a former FBI special agent, member of the bureau's elite Hostage Rescue Team and founder of Shaffer Security Group, said to ABC News. "There needs to be a new shift to stress the importance of getting out of the school building."

As gun technology increases and the number of shootings grows more common, the duration of shootings decrease. In an FBI study of 160 shooting incidents between 2000 and 2013, 44 out of 63 incidents whose duration could be ascertained ended in five minutes or less. Twenty-three of the 44 ended in two minutes or less. This leads to a lack of time for barricading and an increased chance of victims needing to engage in fighting or fleeing the scene.

The FBI study also stated that civilians in shooting situations often had to make life and death decisions even if law enforcement

responded in time. This encourages an increase in education on how to respond.

In order to prepare students best for how to deal with situations and stay the most safe, the school should switch to "run and defend" with hiding as the least favorable option. To better equip students for potential shooting situations, classroom should show videos or run through a scenario and discuss how students should handle it. This would also avoid the exposure of the school's safety plan that comes with drills.

Drills for hiding might end up notifying school shooters of the action plan. It is widely publicized that students will take cover in classrooms, meaning a shooter can account for this. In the situation that a shooter comes from within the student body, those who are hiding in classrooms will face an immediate threat.

For the most part, there is not enough time after an intruder is announced for students to barricade and hide. Barricading often takes a longer time than the shooting itself. While it is meant to move students out of the scene, it literally backs them into a corner and makes them easier targets. Students should be taught to flee the scene first.

Although running is safer, it does not seem feasible to have fleeing as the main plan at SHS. If the whole student body of 1,350 students ran away at once, this may cause more problems due to bottlenecks and mobbing. Due to this, the school should shift to recommending those in classrooms near the edge of the campus to escape from the school site, while those in the center of campus should barricade.

On top of being taught what to do in the situation, students should also learn what the best plan of action is after running. An article by the Washington Post details a four part plan for fleeing the scene, advising people to carefully choose unconventional routes, drop down from large heights and be stealthy.

In a situation where students cannot flee or hide, we should be taught how best to handle fighting situations. Although this would be the last option out of the three, it is still important to know.

In general, we should handle shootings as we would any other danger — with a strong dose of common sense.

"If someone told you there was a bomb in your building, would you get under your desk or would you leave the building?" Grollnek asked. "You would get out. An active shooter is the same thing as a ticking bomb in your building." ♦

Saratoga bubble perpetuates ignorance

BY Nitya Marimuthu

As the world rages, Saratoga remains inside a pristine bubble.

This bubble is no doubt safe — it protects the affluent city with its well-educated, successful citizens. Occasionally, an outsider tries to wander in but is chased away by the high house prices and substantial cost of living. The result of this mindset is that students here live with little to no understanding of strifes that afflict much of the nation, much less the world.

When the President elects to have a drone assassinate an Iranian general, the bubble tells them it doesn't matter and to focus on academics and eventual admission into a top-ranked college.

Shhhh, the bubble says. Politics don't belong inside here. Why focus on the affairs that affect the rest of the country when AP Physics looms?

The bubble covers the eyes and ears of the students — it's an ignorance that rears its ugly head as the political situation between Iran and the U.S. becomes increasingly tense. This blindness toward the rest of the world is no longer beneficial to teens. At a younger age, this naivety might have preserved their innocence, but it is time for us to wake up and see the world around us. We can no longer stand to be barely politically adequate with only a few years before we are sent into real life.

As much as it is commendable to avoid political conflict in class, the school needs to find a way to deliver information about the international and domestic affairs that occur. For students who already have limited knowledge on the political landscape of the world, navigating the contradicting information from leaders and news outlets as diverse as CNN and Fox can be difficult.

As online sources increase, an abundance of false information barrages readers. To be able to understand the credibility of each source, a viewer has to have prior knowledge of the organization writing it and its biases. Finding minimally biased information that properly delivers facts has increased in difficulty as the number of fake news sources and methods have increased.

The confusion over outlets that provide fair information causes students to turn toward unreliable social media sources to deliver quick information about complex current events. It is common to see students share posts in order to prove their engagement in current affairs. These posts fail to provide the whole picture and cause teens to feel like further research is unnecessary — they think that they already know the full situation. Our political inadequacy could easily be fixed by an inclusion of basic affairs incorporated into history classes. The information would not have to go into detail; however, it would serve as a brief to keep students aware of the situation around them.

AP Economics and Government classes already spend time at the beginning of class to discuss political issues and current events. A similar approach could be taken by all of the history teachers to provide a continuous update of world events starting freshman year, allowing students to build up knowledge over the years. The bubble can only protect teens for so long. At some point, we have to venture outside into a world where it will be helpful and perhaps even essential to have a real understanding of larger and important issues. ♦

Impeachment: A sign of justice upheld

BY Anouk Yeh

In the past month, I've been wondering what components make an event worthy of being immortalized in history.

On Dec. 18, 2019, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi announced the House of Representatives's formal impeachment of president Donald Trump.

Trump was charged for Abuse of Power and Obstruction of Congress after he threatened to withhold military aid to Ukraine as leverage in an attempt to find compromising information about his political rival, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden.

Back in September, when Pelosi announced the initiation of the impeachment inquiry, she and other Democrats were quickly put under fire by Republicans and Democrats alike.

Impeachment opponents are mainly split into two categories: those who believed that the grounds for impeachment were invalid and those who feared impeachment would only aid Trump's campaign for re-election.

This piece isn't to sway those who question the validity of the impeachment charges; rather, it's for the people in the latter group.

The main argument is that a failed conviction — a likely scenario since the trial votes will most likely be on party lines — would lead to a near guarantee of Trump's re-election in 2020.

While electoral considerations should be part of most political decisions, to what

extent should they be prioritized? Simply put, it is wrong to turn a blind eye to overwhelming injustice such as Trump's shakedown of Ukraine in the name of winning any single election.

Although it's scary to imagine the re-election of a man who has no concern for human rights (e.g., the border, banning asylum) and a history of

Although it's more than likely that the impeachment trial won't result in a conviction and removal in the Senate, the process has already made monumental impact.

Trump is one of three presidents who have ever been impeached in American history, and just the number itself speaks great volumes.

Impeachment is so significant because of what it symbolizes. This impeachment is not only a denouncement of the president's actions in Ukraine, but an accumulative condemnation of his immoral presidency to date.

It is symbolic of the nation's leaders finally acknowledging this his history of lawlessness, human rights violations, racism, nepotism, daily, almost hourly lies (some 16,000 to date according to the Washington Post) and overall lack of morality.

The action being condemned by impeachment is only a small pinpoint of the large fabric of injustice in the current administration.

When I think of the defining moments in history, they are always shaped by people who dare to disrupt oppressive and unjust narratives, people who dare to fight for justice even when the truth is uncomfortable and inconvenient.

In the future, when we look back on the third presidential impeachment in United States history, we won't remember the arguments for keeping our head down in the face of wrongdoing. Instead, we will remember the actions of courageous Democratic leaders like Pelosi who chose to stand firm against Trump's wave of injustice. ♦



Courtesy of NEW YORK POST and WASHINGTON TIMES

noncompliance with presidential policies (violation of the emoluments clause, nepotism), it's scarier to live in a world where politicians ignore such blatant wrongdoing and abuse of power.

Regardless of whatever the cost may be, justice and fairness under the law should never be sacrificed for political agendas.

In addition, the idea of fighting for a more just tomorrow by complying with today's injustices is quite an oxymoronic theory. A move for a more equitable future is not possible if the roots of the movement stem from ignoring wrongdoings.

In this essence, going forward with the impeachment process and openly condemning the president's wrongdoings was the only correct course of action.

Presidential war powers should have restrictions

BY Anna Novoselov

On Jan. 4, President Donald Trump ordered a drone strike that killed General Qassem Soleimani, one of Iran's most powerful military commanders and head of the foreign operations branch of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Trump first defended his action by asserting that Soleimani was organizing forthcoming attacks on U.S. personnel in the Middle East before shifting justification to solely deterrence.

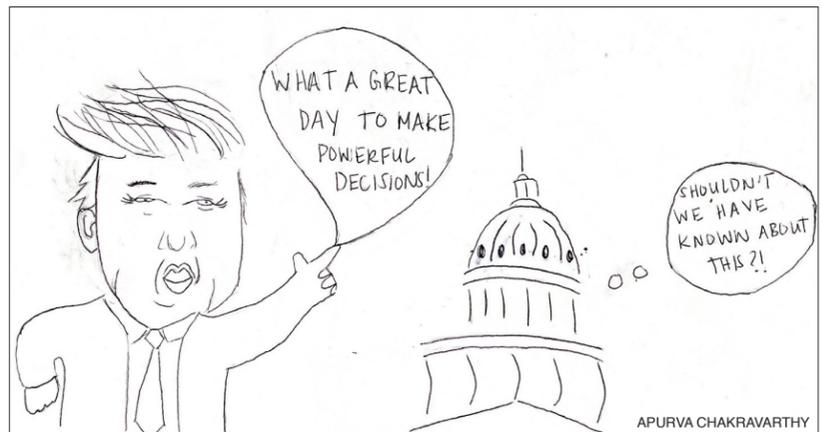
To this point, Trump's ill-advised decision has so far only worsened already strained tensions between the U.S. and Iran, which largely stem from Trump's backing out of a nuclear deal negotiated during the Obama administration. Furthermore, the strike was rash and ordered without congressional authorization.

His action raises important questions over how much military power the president actually has — or should have — on his own.

The problem rests in people's tendencies to abuse power when it is given to them with minimal restrictions.

Even though Trump consulted White House lawyers and State Department employees — officials appointed by the White House — when he ordered the attack on Soleimani, he did not seek consent from lawmakers elected by the American people or formally inform them. Ultimately, while the president does have the authority to order immediate defense measures to protect the country's security interests, there was no solid evidence that the U.S. embassies were threatened, according to Defense Secretary Mark Esper.

While it can be argued that Trump acted under his role as commander-in-chief and did not overstep his authority, the 1973 War Powers Resolution states that



the president must inform Congress before ordering overseas military action. But there are two exceptions: the president can commit troops for 48 hours before informing Congress and continue military action without Congress's official approval for up to 90 days.

These two loopholes give the president the ability to sidestep the constitutional split of war powers between the executive and legislative branches; in other words, they allow the president to order extreme military actions that could lead to war without the approval of Congress.

Of course, Trump wasn't the only president to test his war powers. Former President Barack Obama also failed to consult Congress when he ordered an attack on Libya in 2011.

Obama ordered airstrikes on Libyan armed forces to support NATO allies and Arab Spring protesters campaigning for democratic government, whose free speech was being violently suppressed by authoritarian regimes.

Although he officially informed Congress two days later, these airstrikes were not in the interest of protecting the United States's immediate security and thus, should have been first evaluated by Congress, just like Trump's order should have been more thoroughly reviewed.

Article I of the Constitution explicitly

reserves the power to declare war to Congress. Clearly, military action should not be a unilateral decision due the scope and immensity of its consequences.

But The War Powers Resolution's loopholes allow for one person to initiate and continue combat that could escalate warfare and potentially cost countless lives.

Inherently, the problem rests in people's tendencies to abuse immense power when it is given to them with minimal restrictions.

Besides that, presidents often do not have the military experience needed to accurately predict the repercussions of such actions.

Like all people, they may act rashly, unaware of all the facts necessary to decide on the best course of action. They may forget to truly consider the bloodshed that may result — since they won't be the ones actually risking their lives.

Optimally, presidential military action should be restricted only to immediate decisions that can not be decided by Congress in a reasonable amount of time, specifically defensive measures against unexpected attacks.

Closing the War Power Resolution's loopholes would help prevent uninformed and reckless judgments that unnecessarily threaten the safety of people — American or not. ♦



MOVIES THROUGH THE DECADE

- Toy Story 3**

Pixar's third installment of "Toy Story" seriously takes the cake. The beloved characters journey to the worst place imaginable: daycare. And, yet, by the end of the film, it is easy to catch the "feels." So long, partner (well, until 2019).

2010
- Harry Potter**

The end of an era. For Hogwarts-loving wizard fanatics, the last film adapted from the Harry Potter series marked the end of the almost childlike wonder of the world of magic, spells and, of course, the fan-favorite Quidditch.

2011
- The Avengers**

The Marvel cinematic universe joined fan favorite superheroes — Iron Man, Captain America, Thor, the Hulk and Black Widow — into one film, and chaos ensued. This was the start to many more.

2012
- 12 Years a Slave**

An emotional retelling of Solomon Northup's biography as a former enslaved man, "12 Years a Slave" illustrates the horrors of slavery in its rawest form. With scenes that make you want to look away from the screen in pain, the movie remains incredibly powerful.

2013
- Imitation Game**

A historical retelling of British cryptanalyst Alan Turing's work during World War II in which he decrypted German intelligence messages, "Imitation Game" put to screen the genius of Turing's efforts for the war.

2014
- Spotlight**

Now, some credit for the journalists. "Spotlight" follows The Boston Globe's "Spotlight" team in their investigation of child sexual abuse by Roman Catholic priests. The film displays the power of journalism as the team puts together the case to reveal this major scandal.

2015
- Moonlight**

Well-known for its numerous accolades, "Moonlight" became the first all-black cast and the first LGBTQ-related film to win an Academy Award for Best Picture. The movie's protagonist explores stages of life, while, at the same time, trying to discover himself.

2016
- Wonder Woman**

With a film that finally features the heroine, "Wonder Woman" follows the story of Diana Prince. As the first superhero film that focuses on a female lead, it affirmed that women could be heroes too.

2017
- Black Panther**

"Black Panther" was an addition into the Marvel universe, bringing to life the mystical nation of Wakanda. Garnering praise for its screenplay, "Black Panther" commented on the traumatic historical events endured by Africa with colonialism and post-colonialism.

2018
- Parasite**

Probably one of the most praised films this year, "Parasite," a South Korean film, is a dark comedy horror film. However, despite its more comedic and thriller moments, the film pinpoints the problems with the economic structure of the society.

2019

— Elaine Toh

How TV has radically shifted as the result of streaming services

BY Marisa Kingsley

The days of going to Blockbuster stores to pick up box sets of our favorite TV shows with our parents have long been forgotten. We've now entered the new decade with a wealth of TV shows at our fingertips through streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, HBO, Hulu and dozens more.

In 2019, according to FX, there were an estimated 532 scripted television shows in the U.S., a record high. That is a 153 percent increase from 2009, when there were only 210 shows.

The rise in streaming services has radically changed the media landscape and how we consume media as a whole. Although many shows are still on cable networks, the availability and convenience of online streaming has made them an imperative force in the media industry — the biggest players being Netflix with 137 million subscribers and Amazon with an estimated 26 million, according to The Motley Fool.

This dramatic shift in viewership has seen also caused a drop in cable subscriptions, which has compelled many cable TV companies to create their own streaming services in order to compete with streaming giants. The most recent announcements including NBCUniversal's Peacock service and WarnerMedia's HBO Max to launch in the spring.

Despite many of these streaming services offering cable TV shows, much of the attraction of these services has been original content, according to a Harvard research study.

Subsequently, the monetary incentive to create compelling, addictive TV shows and movies grew exponentially as the decade continued. Netflix allocated \$15 billion into original content in 2019 alone, according to The New York Times.

Critics write in Vulture: "The tail wags the dog now, to such an extent that cable channels and networks alike have essentially become branded production houses supplying shows to streaming platforms that increasingly seem to be the only place people are interested in watching TV anymore."

Along with the monetary benefits, content produced by these companies has become a place for experimentation, altering the conventional format of 60- or 30-minute runtimes, as well as offering new possibilities in ways of structuring, characterization and plot.

While this has led to many popular and acclaimed series like Netflix's "Stranger Things" and or HBO's "Game of Thrones," many critics note how these media corporations have changed the meaning of the word "television" to being classified as "content."

For example, the Showtime series "Twin Peaks: The Return" was released in 18 hour-long episodes and sparked much debate as to what can be considered a TV show or simply a long movie released into parts.

Additionally, because many services are releasing their original content by seasons at once — versus the traditional one episode per week — it's now normal for viewers to spend hours binge-watching whole seasons of their favorite shows. It's become routine to meet up with friends to binge-watch the latest Netflix show or classics such as "The Office" or "Friends."

As we enter the new decade, it's difficult to predict what will remain in 2030: Will Netflix continue to skyrocket? Will Disney, Hulu or another company knock Netflix off its perch?

Will shows offered on streaming services dominate or cable TV manage to survive in a rapidly digitized world? Stay tuned. ♦

DECADE RECAP: FASHION

HAIR: The 2010s featured some of the best haircuts of any era. Original Disney stars like Miley Cyrus and Selena Gomez sported long, curly hair, and they rocked side and blunt bangs for the first few years of the decade. But these innocent haircuts soon turned into bob cuts, pixie cuts and undercuts; the long strand of fake feathers they once wore in their hair turned into bleached, dyed and ombre hair.

Hair during the decade was also defined by Kylie Jenner, who sported many different hair colors. Crowd favorites were the pink, silver and green hair. The journey through all the phases of hairdos, wigs and hair colors was well worth it, because with the late 2010s came an important trend — hair slicked back into a tight ponytail. New, chic and unique, this style embodies the fierce, confident energy women will continue to exude in the 2020s.

ACCESSORIES: The 2010s also marked the decade of extreme accessorizing. The decade's first notable trend was the knuckle ring, which took up more than half a finger and was highly inefficient to wear. Part way through the decade, the trend of tiny, chic sunglasses was shaped by Rihanna, Gigi and Bella Hadid and Priyanka Chopra.

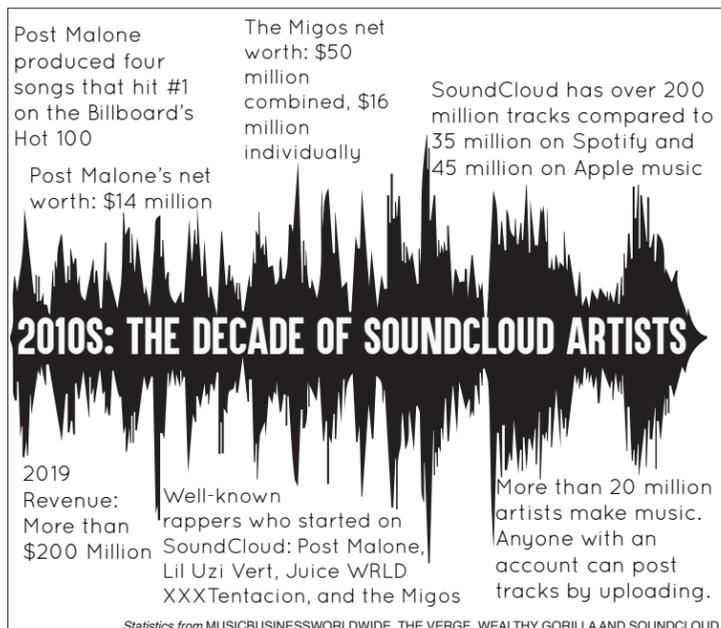
This is when the age of the fanny pack hit (one of the most obnoxious trends of the decade), probably as a result of a lack of accessories for men. Supreme fanny packs, mostly worn across the body with the pouch sitting somewhere on the torso, were used religiously as an extra pocket on a men's outfit that already had at least four. For better or worse, the sunglasses and fanny pack trends were not short lived, and remain in the new decade with us.

SHOES: Shoes in the 2010s included ballet flats (early versions of which were worn even in the 1800s), ankle boots and expensive sneakers. Kanye West came out with the Yeezy 350s in September 2016 — the shoe that continues to fly off shelves today at prices that can be \$300 or more.

Around that same time, white shoes started trending in the form of Balenciaga and Fila's super chunky, "dad" sneakers. Considering they were originally dubbed the "dad sneakers" because of their resemblance to the big Nike sneakers dads wore 25 years ago, these were despised when first introduced.

Another nostalgic shoe trend came in the form of Crocs. Crocs, which 2000s babies wore regularly 15 years ago, came back as a nostalgic fashion decision among teenagers in the late 2010s. Many teenage athletes — namely swimmers and soccer players — are trying and succeeding in their quest to bring back Crocs. Although the trend is highly controversial among fashionistas, the plethora of decade-old memories that Crocs hold make them the best trend to end the decade with. ♦

— Shama Gupta



ALL GRAPHICS BY NITYA MARIMUTHU AND JAYNE ZHOU

Methods for TikTok fame are questionable

BY Kaitlyn Tsai

When senior Vivienne Nguyen posted a video about her ex-boyfriend on the popular social media app TikTok on Nov. 28, she had fewer than 50 followers, all of them friends, and expected only around 20 views. A day later, Nguyen's video had gone viral, garnering 2.4 million views and increasing her number of followers to over 16,500.

"I made the video as a joke to show my friends, so I was really confused at first when it blew up," Nguyen said. "Afterwards, I thought it was kinda cool but kinda weird at the same time."

The video includes photos of Nguyen and her ex-boyfriend, a student at another local high school, captioned "cheated on me and left me for another girl," followed by photos of Nguyen and her current boyfriend, 2019 SHS grad Nick Burry. The video features the song "All You Wanna Do" from the musical "Six," with Nguyen lip synching to the lines, "Yeah, that didn't work out, so I decided to have a break from boys, and you'll never guess who I met," after showing the photos of her ex-boyfriend.

Although most of her friends told her they were happy that her video unexpectedly went viral, Nguyen faced some backlash and drama as conflicting and twisted versions of the story behind the video arose.

Some accused her of lying while others defended her. Nguyen said her ex-boyfriend's cousin messaged her accusing her of posting the video just to gain followers

and likes. Others commented that Nguyen shouldn't have posted the video without getting her ex-boyfriend's consent.

However, Nguyen said she had no intention of gaining popularity with this video and even showed it to her ex-boyfriend — with whom she remains on friendly terms. She said he found the video funny and admitted that it was "karma for his actions."

Although Nguyen said she didn't set out to expose her personal life to such a broad audience, her case raises questions about where teenagers should draw the line in terms of privacy on social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram.

Many TikTok users cross boundaries with the intent of gaining popularity by exposing aspects of their or others' personal lives.

For example, in August 2019, TikTok user Bella Dorlado posted a video of herself dancing to a teary, apologetic voicemail from an ex-boyfriend who cheated on her.

Ariq Chowdhury shared a series of videos supposedly exposing a friend's mom who sent him explicit photos and continually invited him to her house. Another TikTok



Courtesy of VIVIENNE NGUYEN

user, Nik Mannino, posted a video captioned "ayo abusive family check" in which viewers can hear a man verbally abusing his girlfriend in the background; all three users garnered over 400,000 likes with their posts, with Chowdhury's receiving millions.

The popularity of these videos reflects a growing trend in some teenagers' attitudes toward social media. Rather than simply using TikTok for entertainment, these users focus on the fame they can achieve on the app, and with this mindset, they view exposing their or others' personal lives

as ways to gain popularity. For some, this raises concerns about how teenagers use these platforms and how they interact with the world around them.

So far, no TikTok videos have sparked any libel lawsuits. The app's community guidelines prohibit users from posting offensive or violent content or other people's personal information. If a video violates these guidelines, TikTok can delete the video.

Because Nguyen shared her video among a close circle of friends, she said she does not think she crossed a line in posting it. Still, she cautioned against getting too obsessed with TikTok, adding that sometimes people fake "exposing" others just for views.

"People get very caught up in TikTok because it's a very addicting app," Nguyen said. "But don't fall for everything, especially for what people say online."

Generally, TikTok users here said teenagers can address concerns about violating others' privacy by thinking before posting.

Sophomore Paula Nguyen (no relation to Vivienne) mostly watches videos on the app. She said it is important for users to "think about what they wouldn't want to be shown about themselves."

Freshman Elsa Blom, who browses TikTok and makes her own videos to share with friends, added that teenagers can post what they want as long as they don't interfere with others' personal lives.

"I think TikTok is fun at a certain point, but you shouldn't go out of your way to get famous for something," Blom said. "Dancing or something fun like comedy videos are OK. But if it's putting people in danger or sharing things without their consent, then it shouldn't be done." ♦

Senior recollects pitch perfect singing stage

BY KAASHA MINOCHA

Senior Mita Kongetira, wearing a floor-length sleeveless dress, puffy jacket and boots strolled down the streets of New York City on a cold night, as she made her way to Carnegie Hall. Kongetira had flown into New York last December after finding out she won the Broadway category of the highly competitive American Protege competition for musical talent. As she walked, Kongetira ran through the song she would be singing to a large audience of other winners' parents — "Don't Rain on my Parade" by Barbra Streisand.

Her accomplishment was the culmination of years of work. She started singing at 8. Over the years, singing morphed into an outlet and as a means to alleviate stress, she said. The American Protege competition is the largest and most popular music competition at Carnegie Hall. The competition, which requires people to submit three videos of them singing in June, has attracted the largest number of competitive applicants on record than from all previous years, who come from every corner of the world including various parts of the U.S. and 57 other countries. Kongetira learned about the competition about a week before the application deadline, and she prepared three Broadway songs for the audition: "Don't Know Why" by Norah Jones, "Send in the Clowns" by Judy Collins and "Don't Rain on my Parade."

"It was 100 degrees on the audition day, and I was extremely dehydrated, so the recordings weren't very good, and I wasn't expecting to win," Kongetira said. "The results came out the next week with the list of winners, and I was surprised, but very excited to have won second place in the competition."

Kongetira, who has been a part of the school choir for the past four years, was inspired to start singing after listening to

contemporary music, namely songs from Adele — her all time favorite artist — and soundtracks of from "Mamma Mia" and "Lemonade Mouth."

"I loved the soundtracks and would sing along with the songs all the time when I was younger, which is when I really started to develop a passion for singing," Kongetira said.

Early on, Kongetira's parents exposed her to numerous genres including rock, pop, jazz, blues and R&B — all of which majorly contributed to her singing career.

Over the years, Kongetira has sung a variety of genres. When first learning, Kongetira took classes in Hindustani music (Indian classical) and later transitioned to learning how to sing musical theater and Western classical music in middle school. In sixth grade, Kongetira joined the Redwood Middle School choir and thoroughly enjoyed the experience, which led her to join Concert Choir freshman year and Chamber Choir, an audition-based choir, in her sophomore year.

"The sound we create is much more rich and complex than the sound of one person singing," Kongetira explained. "I really like [choir director Andrew Ford's] selection of music because it usually has a theme but still has a great amount of variety."

Over the years, singing has had numerous positive impacts and has shaped her identity. Individual singing and performing has built Kongetira's self-confidence, and has helped her overcome stage fright. Most of all, however, Kongetira values choir and the community it builds.

"I love singing in a choir because it taught me how to blend and harmonize with other people and work with them to create beautiful music," Kongetira said. ♦



Courtesy of MITA KONGETIRA

Mita Kongetira sings to an audience of winner's parents at Carnegie Hall.

"OK Boomer": Insult or just a lighthearted joke?

BY Benjamin Li & Allen Luo

As 25-year-old Chlöe Swarbrick delivered her speech to the New Zealand parliament on Nov. 5, the voice of an older lawmaker heckling her arose from the audience. Her snappy response, "OK, Boomer" quickly went viral on the internet as millions of Millennials tuned in to watch one of their generations shut down what they considered to be a problem: the older generation and their unwillingness to change.

The latest catch-phrase, "OK, Boomer," has grown largely in popularity among Generation Z (born in 1996 to 2010), and is now being widely used as a clap back against those they deem to be out of touch or old fashioned, primarily Boomers (born in 1946 to 1964) or anyone older than the current younger generation. Although to some the phrase may seem offensive, its defenders say it should be regarded as more of a joke than an actual insult.

The phrase was originally popularized when it was used in a comment in a video on the popular social networking site, TikTok. The video, made by an older man, accuses both Millennials (born in 1981 to 1996) and Gen Z of having the "Peter Pan syndrome," a condition associated with victims never being able to mature mentally and engage in adult behavior. The viewer's response encapsulates the generation differences between Baby Boomers and Millennials and Gen Z and has since been adopted by many as a way to dismiss the Boomer generation, criticizing the stubborn and close minded mentality of the older generation.

It seems that the younger generation has gotten so tired of the constant judging and belittlement directed at them from their elders that they have started to fight back.

The controversial phrase has garnered many supporters in both generations. While some may say it is harmless and merely a joke, there are some, such as Lonsberry, who sees the phrase as offensive and disrespectful. His tweet promptly backfired when shared around social media; some viewers simply fired back with "OK, Boomer," generating hundreds of likes, while others called his statement an overreaction. It has received so much backlash that Lonsberry has since deleted his tweet.

Those offended by the phrase need to see it for what it is: a harmless prank on the elder made by the younger generations. Ever since its rise, videos and memes have been popping up everywhere, typically showing a person of the Boomer generation becoming "triggered" or upset after a Millennial casually tosses the phrase at them.

According to Adam Cooper, associate professor of linguistics at Northeastern, the term's original intended use may be the same as any other sarcastic phrase.

"It's purposely flippant and meant to draw ire," Cooper told News@Northeastern, "but it's so pervasive that it might soon become a victim of its own success."

And a victim it has become. The phrase has become so widespread and popular that it has become more of a joke, directed to anyone older than the person speaking. Instead of being used to criticize someone's mindset, it is now more commonly used as a general "comeback" or insult in any petty argument.

The bottom line is: "OK, Boomer" was never intended to be offensive, but its rise in popularity gives insight on how the younger generation feels. The fact that the phrase has even appeared should be startling to people. It shows a big divide between generations, which can only be fixed by a better understanding of each other. ♦



GRAPHIC BY NITYA MARIMUTHU

Popular 'no makeup' makeup look focuses on celebrating people's natural beauty

shreyonce



Shreya Katkere

In 2019, the natural makeup trend, also known as the "no makeup" makeup look began gaining popularity. Celebrities, such as Alicia Keys, publicized this look by attending the 2019 Grammys with minimal makeup. Fans believed that it was better than a heavy makeup look often used by many other celebrities because it accentuated their beauty instead of altering it.

This look, which started becoming pop-

ular during the late 2010s, greatly contrasts with the bright blush and heavy eyeliner popular during the early 2000s. The shift to simpler makeup over the past 10 years has led people to abandon excessive makeup routines including eyeliner, red lipstick and eyeshadow.

Glossier, a makeup and skincare brand, has become more popular recently because the brand caters to people who follow the simple makeup trend through creating products that create a natural glow and an effortless look.

Additionally, this "no makeup" makeup look is much easier to do on a daily basis compared to a more complicated makeup routine.

This simple look usually involves only a

slight amount of concealer to cover dark under eye circles and blemishes. It may also include mascara, eyebrow gel, lip gloss and blush, but usually focuses more on evening the tone of the whole face.

The look is also perfect for those who prefer not to stand out much when going about their day. Even people who are not artistically gifted can master easier routines and won't feel pressured to try winged eyeliner or other harder techniques.

However, one of the downsides of the rising popularity of this makeup trend is that some girls who spend time on more difficult



make-up look have been judged for "trying too hard." Many of these girls just enjoy putting more time and effort into their makeup. The bottom line: Instead of putting down girls who prefer a complete makeup look in order to support a simpler makeup look, both styles should be accepted. ♦

Finding customers at Homestead RareTea is a rarity

oh xu-t, holy cao



Leo Cao and Jeffrey Xu

Far into the often unexplored side of Prospect Road lies a set of bootleg Main Street and Cupertino Village plazas — home to many subpar Asian eats and disappointingly watered down boba.

RareTea, which opened last October on East Homestead, was no exception.

As soon as we pulled into the parking lot, which was much less decorated than the brand new parking garages at Cupertino Main Street and Cupertino Village, and spotted the McDonald's and closed Tea Era,

we knew something was up. The small shack of a plaza was lined with obscure Asian restaurants such as Taste Good Beijing Cuisine and Taiwan Porridge Kingdom as well as bar and bowling alley Homestead Bowl.

We finished about half of each drink before realizing the taste simply wasn't worth the calorie intake.

Given the lack of people and more abandoned setting, it came as little surprise that there was no line when we finally found the location. During our 30-minute stay, no other customers entered the store.

Sitting there, we hypothesized that RareTea is named after how rare it is for the store to have customers.

After taking our sweet time at the front of the nonexistent line, we ordered a Passion Fruit Yakult, Black Milk Tea with boba and Jasmine Milk Tea with boba. The Passion Fruit Yakult was \$4.25, and the Black Milk and Jasmine Milk Teas were both \$4.50. These bobas were definitely more on the pricey side in comparison to places like QQQTea, which sell boba for under \$3.

We hoped that the higher price would indicate a better quality drink, but we were very disappointed.

While the passion fruit seeds in the Yakult added a nice crunchy texture, the drink itself had no hint of its namesake delicious popular Asian yogurt drink. Rather, it just tasted like heavily watered down fruit

juice.

The boba in the milk tea was lukewarm, ruining the vibe of the ice-cold refreshing drink that we were looking forward to.

We finished about half of each drink before realizing the taste simply wasn't worth the calorie intake.

However, two redeeming aspects of our RareTea experience included the friendly employees and the location. Perhaps it was because we were the only customers there, but the employees were welcoming nonetheless.

Additionally, with Homestead Bowl just a few steps away, you could have knock back tea and pins with your friends.

While the taste was clearly not there, the friendly charisma of the employees and the favorable location near bowling lanes makes RareTea a generous 3 out of 5 Falcons. ♦

TWO HOURS IN SARATOGA'S FARMERS' MARKET

chakra-party



Apurva Chakravarthy

Taking a page from The New York Times "36 hours" series, I decided to explore the farmer's market at West Valley College, where I figured out how to best spend two hours at one of Saratoga's hidden treasures.

Every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., the farmer's market at West Valley College offers a variety of bread, fruit, honey and other goodies to eager buyers. Although I'm not a usual farmers market customer, I'm definitely not going to say no to spending the morning buying food, and as an added bonus, get some pretty VSCO pictures along the way.

To get the full experience, I divided the journey into three different categories: food to eat, cute items to buy and eventful experiences to take in.

Food to Eat:

If you want one place where you could find practically any cuisine for any time of the day, then the Saratoga Farmers Market is the place for you.

Among other items, the market offers crepes, Mexican food, Nepalese food, coffee, lemonade and kettle popcorn (I know, my mouth started watering as well). The food has good value and there are many vegan and vegetarian options.

For example, a vegan crepe is \$6 and a vegetarian crepe is \$11.

I finally decided on a vegetarian burrito. It maybe wasn't the best decision considering it was 10:30 a.m., but really, who's judging? Coming out to be \$12, it was a tad expensive, but since it was very tasty — the perfect combination of rice, beans, vegetables, sour cream and guacamole — I would highly recommend it.

Things to Buy:

I started the morning by buying organic honey, which comes in either cute bear-shaped jars or Mason jars. The prices range from \$4.95 for an 8oz jar to \$19.75 for a 47oz jar. Apart from honey in jars, the booth also sells honey sticks and beeswax. A little tip: Even if you aren't looking to buy honey, a few free samples will never hurt.

I then decided to wander around the aisles, looking at what the market had to offer. There were booths with every type of food imaginable, including beef, fish, fruits, vegetables, olive oil and hummus.

My funniest experience happened while I was at a grape and pomegranate stand. The sellers were in fact dressed in grape costumes, which surely drew customers to the booth. The grapes and pomegranates are grown by the sellers themselves, who come to the market only from July to November.

Eventful Experiences:

Above all, the most memorable experience happened at the Soaps of 7 Flowers stand. While talking to the owner, I



FALCON // APURVA CHAKRAVARTHY

Vendors display a variety of goods, including flowers, soaps and other produce items.

was pleasantly surprised to find that her name was Yeun Byun, and she was a 2009 alumni of Saratoga High and was a photographer for the yearbook.

We talked about journalism at Saratoga and how she was also taught by Mr. Tyler. After graduating, she studied film and television and worked as a photographer on the side. She then started working on advertising in New York, but felt that she wasn't connecting with her work.

It was inspiring listening to someone who truly believed she had her life figured out, and then realized she wanted something completely different.

Byun decided to move back home and work as a floral designer. She decided to work for a farm in Morgan Hill and use

those flowers to start her soap business from her home in Santa Cruz.

I loved hearing about their brand and how it promoted individuality and self-confidence. The company sold six soaps, each being \$7 and a half soap being \$3.50. Byun also sells plates for \$20, with the deal being \$25 for a bar of soap and a plate together.

Potential for such interactions with vendors and other visitors abound at the farmers market. Although some items are pricey, listening to the messages behind the brands and stories of the owners gave me more than enough reason to buy the products they take so much pride in. Five out of five Falcons from me for the farmers market experience! ♦

SKECHERS

... forever the true patrician footwear

b-allen-ced



Allen Chen

Remember nighttime as an elementary schooler? We would play in the backyard, not worried about grades or social lives, feet glowing on the lawn. Skechers used to be the only shoes we were willing to wear. If you didn't produce a strobe light every time you stomped your feet, you weren't one of the cool kids.

What happened?



Nowadays, Skechers are maligned and avoided at all costs. The Skechers store in the mall lies barren, populated sparsely with parents and third graders. No longer do our feet light up with every step.

Maybe it's the tacky colors or the gimmicky lights, but Skechers fails

to appeal to America's teenagers. I am also guilty of this. I remember when I first switched out my velcro shoes for shoelaces. I felt something almost like relief, as if I had just destroyed the evidence of a crime.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Imagine a campus of high schoolers wearing Skechers and a sea of oversaturated colors whenever you looked down. Imagine not having to take three seconds every day to tie your shoelaces. We can make this a reality. Change starts with us.

I personally began the healing process as part of a journalism assignment. I dreaded the day that I would have to dip my feet back into the world of Skechers. I imagined the shame, the embarrassment, of endorsing one of the most memed brands in the world.

However, the instant that I saw their sneakers on Google Images, I knew I had found the shoes I was always meant to wear.

Since embracing my inner chaos and spending \$40 on a pair of Skechers Luminators: Deflecktord — Luma Goo shoes, I have discovered inner peace. I now live entirely in the moment, anchored to re-

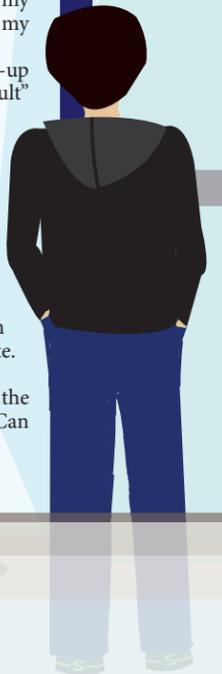
ality by the feet. My shoes help distract me from the horrifying truths of our society.

I wear my Deflecktord — Luma Goo shoes in the shower. I wear my Deflecktord — Luma Goo shoes to bed. Of course, I take them off to wash my feet occasionally. I have to keep the insides of my Skechers clean.

If you are too self-conscious to wear light-up shoes, Skechers actually offers less flashy, "adult" shoes as well. However, if you wear these, your culture level will be capped at only 2 out of 10. This is enough to put you just above a non-Skecher wearer, but nowhere near the perfect 10 of every true Skecher patrician.

So go ahead. Ignore your friends and family and perhaps even your better judgment and buy those velcro, brightly colored Skechers. Even though you'll be socially ostracized and mocked as "childish," you can take pride in the fact that you are a member of the true elite. Let them make fun of you.

If you ever go into a dark room, just tap the ground with your shoes, and boom. Light. Can their Nikes do that? ♦



Childhood

Elementary school favorites bring

Justice



... no longer the epitome

anna-i oop



Anna Novoselov

Walk into any Justice store and you're immediately bombarded with neon colors, sparkles and rainbows everywhere — almost as if a unicorn had barfed glitter over all the clothes and then dumped pink paint everywhere.

Your eyes start to hurt simply from the overwhelming brightness. Your sense of smell is destroyed from the mysterious fruit scents wafting from every direction. And don't even get me started on the cute cartoon animals with gigantic googly eyes and the cringey, motivational slogans plastered on the shirts.

Justice shirts have featured sayings such as "Sorry I can't I'm busy making slime," "All my friends are so cheesy" and "Today is going to be awesome!"

But somehow, just like most elementary school girls, I used to love Justice, a popular clothing brand that caters to girls from ages 6 to 12. Wearing Justice shirts and accessories was seen as the epitome of coolness — the more ostentatious and glaring, the better. The store even sells cheap jewelry, makeup and toys like slime kits.

It's basically paradise for little girls. The brand has more than 800 stores throughout the U.S. and also operates in Canada, Mexico, Asia and the Middle East. Prices are average for youth clothing: \$15-\$20 for T-shirts, \$20-\$30 for hoodies, \$15-\$20 for T-shirts, \$20-\$30 for pants but the store has promotions Justice has (e.g. Buy one, get one free or 60 percent off markdowns) to make it cheap.

Although Justice recently began offering more monotone, dimmer colored clothing, simpler clothes (perhaps to appeal to a wider audience and age range), the brand's image remains ingrained in the memories of many teenage girls. We remember the sparkly heaven of color and animation.

While I didn't own a lot of Justice, I treasured the few I did. My favorite Justice (which went through many changes) was like walking into a new world of happiness.

Unsurprisingly, at the end of my elementary school, my perception of "high fashion" changed. I began to wear blues, blacks, greys and neutrals with occasional splashes of red, green and yellow.

Now, my closet mostly consists of simple, neutral-colored items that don't attract much attention. I think I own a single article of clothing that has neon or glitter.

A similar trend can be seen across the country. While younger girls favor colorful, attention-grabbing clothes that attract attention, teenagers

OLD NAVY

... tacky outfits and mortifying patterns

kaash app
me



Kaasha Minocha

During my early years of elementary school, modeling my cheetah print patterned leggings with a pink shirt on top or walking with my friends in my “sleigh all day” graphic tee from Old Navy was a distinct memory that I will, unfortunately, never forget.

Old Navy, a store that mainly sells basic clothing essentials, had some products that I now wish I hadn’t bought in the first place.

Looking back, I cringe every time I see a photo of myself wearing Old Navy shirts with embarrassing phrases such as “sleepover VIP” and wonder how I ever thought wearing these clothes was cool.

Fortunately, I’m not alone. For many high school girls, remembering their wardrobes

from elementary and early middle school years is a mortifying experience.

Though Old Navy’s products have great prices, their majorly out-of-style clothing, including patterned leggings, cliched written tees and brightly colored pajamas, evoke nothing but regret.

“In fifth grade, I bought a two-piece swimsuit, and it was neon green with plant prints on it,” sophomore Elaine Liu said. “I thought it was super cute, but now that I look back at the pictures I took in it, I think I was overconfident in my fashion sense.”

Sophomore Kavya Narayan also relied on Old Navy clothing until she was 10.

“I always thought I looked so cool in my fresh fits,” Narayan said. “Once, I bought this white hoodie with neon flowers on it, and it was an eyesore to look at.”

Though several are opposed to shopping at Old Navy, for children growing up, the store is still a popular “go-to” as the quality and variety is excellent. Many still consider several of their looks “cool,” but certain styles they wear now,

might have a negative impact when they look back in the years to come.

A decade ago, wearing patterned leggings with a skirt on top from Old Navy was a major trend for elementary school girls, but that style soon went out of fashion.

However, Narayan believes that wearing a skirt with leggings can still look stylish if paired right.

“For example, if you pair tights with a denim skirt, it could definitely work,” Narayan said. “But the way I wore it back then, with my floral print leggings and matching skirts, was extremely cringey and not a good look at all.”

Over the years, outfits will constantly go through the process of being trendy and then outdated. Even though I wish I could go back to fix some of the outfits I wore as they did not mesh well together at all, it’s important to realize that the current styles may only end up becoming some of the tackiest outfits in the future. ♦



Trends

ing up nostalgia and regret

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tend to gravitate toward monotone shades.

Often, children aren’t afraid to attract attention because they are not yet used to social norms that become more prevalent as people mature. They’re not afraid of standing out from the crowd or appearing “weird.”

But as people grow older, they tend to succumb more easily to societal standards and become more aware of how others perceive them. Perhaps, from this heightened reservedness, people seek colors that allow them to better blend into their surroundings.

Similar hues make it easier to “match” our clothes and appear cool and collected — to make it seem like our lives are as coordinated as our wardrobes. Cosmopolitan even has an article detailing how to style outfits solely out of one color to create a chic look.

While adults are prompted to wear dim colors, for instance, by formal dress codes in work environments and informal expectations of street outfits, manufacturers themselves perpetuate the inclination toward Justice-like clothes in young girls. Unrelentless advertising and ads may create the idea that young girls must wear girly, sparkly clothes to express their personalities and appeal to their peers. They may seek to imitate the princesses, Barbies and fairies pictured in the media marketed to them.

And the parents, afraid that their child will be the odd one out, mindlessly follow the trends. ♦

2010s Favorites

“These were pretty much the currency.”
sophomore Lance Wong

“Rubber band weaving bracelets.”
junior Arash Amiri

“Good Pokémon cards were like gold.”
freshman Stanley Yang

ALL GRAPHICS BY JESSICA WANG AND EMILIE ZHOU

Social media: A key player in clubs' success

BY Andy Chen & Tiffany Wang

Upon opening Facebook and Instagram, students notice their news feeds bombarded with flashy graphics from clubs and organizations promoting their upcoming events and meetings.

From 2012 to 2018, teenage social media usage has doubled, according to Common Sense Media. As a result, clubs and student-run organizations have shifted from physical to social media advertisements in hopes of capitalizing on this trend. For most groups, however, simply creating an account is not enough; few clubs and organizations have managed to create platforms that they can effectively use.

One club that does accomplish this is the school's Interact chapter, which focuses on organizing volunteering opportunities in which members can help causes they care about. In an effort to spread awareness and gain volunteers for opportunities like running booths at local film festivals, the club's leadership turned to popular social media platforms - Facebook and Instagram.

"Social media is quite common among our generation, so by using social media, we want people to be able to see our notifications and posts a lot more," senior co-president Vivian Lin said.

In order to effectively organize information, the Interact club uses each social media platform for a different purpose. On Instagram, students are given surface level information regarding the time, date and location of an event, while on Facebook, students can see more details about the event.

Similarly, other student-run groups, like ASB and the various other class offices, use different social media platforms to promote their own events, including Homecoming and fundraisers.

Student-run businesses have also joined in on the trend: DeltaX, a nonprofit tutoring company dedicated to teaching students topics in STEM, started to use Instagram and Facebook to spread awareness throughout the community.

DeltaX currently advertises on Instagram and WeChat according to the com-

pany's head management and communications lead, senior Callia Yuan. By using these two platforms, the organization manages to reach out to two different groups - students through Instagram and parents through WeChat.

"Because of social media, DeltaX is able to get more student engagement and ultimately expand to provide our services to more students," Yuan said.

Both DeltaX and Interact have attributed their "success" on social media to heavy graphics prioritization, as having a distinct look catches people's attention, Yuan said. For Yuan, the graphics she designs for DeltaX emphasize a "modern, sleek and clean" look, while the Interact club focuses on creating "pretty" graphics that stand out.

In addition to advertising, social media can effectively serve as a medium for team bonding. The girls' varsity soccer team, for example, has an Instagram page where they post information and highlights regarding noteworthy events, such as meetings, games and their senior night. Posting has also helped them bond, said senior Ananya Krishnan, a member of the team who actively posts on the page.

"It's nice being able to work with them outside of sports because it's just a different mindset," Krishnan said.

According to Krishnan, the page has influenced eighth graders transitioning into high school in their decision to play for the team. Their many posts about sports night, in which middle schoolers come to the high school to explore potential sport interests, usually garners more interest for the team.

Outside of these groups, more students are turning to social media to gather attention for activities and causes that they care about, ranging from sports to charity pages.

Although adults often view social media as a disruptive, time-wasting vacuum, when used to its full potential, it can serve as a powerful tool for raising awareness for issues and events they care about.

"Social media is an instrumental tool in helping organizations increase signups through communicating with students and parents," said Yuan. "It's definitely something organizations should invest in." ♦

TIPS FOR HELPING A FRIEND WITH THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

How to talk to a friend you are concerned about



1. Choose a location where they feel safe



2. Open with "I've noticed..." and share concerns. Stay non-confrontational.



3. Ask them if everything is OK and if they need any help.



ARE YOU OK?

4. If you believe they might harm themselves or others, go to CASSY.



HELP LINES

- Mental Health Call Center (800) 704-0900
- Suicide & Crisis Line (24 hours) (855) 278-4204
- Rape Crisis (YWCA Valley Rape Center) (408) 287-3000
- 24-7 Teen Line 1-888-247-7717
- Contact Cares (408) 279-8228

Set boundaries. If a friend is relying on you too much for help, refer them to CASSY.



If you feel your friend is a danger to themselves or others, report them even if they ask you not to.



If your friend has an eating disorder, subtly encourage good eating habits and positive body image.



All Sizes Fit

If you aren't with your friend but are worried that they may be dangerous to themselves or others, call 911. In the meanwhile, call your friend and stay on the phone with them for as long as you can.



911

CASSY takes anonymous references. They will pull your friend out of class and won't tell the friend who referred them.



Offer actionable help. Say, "Do you need me to get you food?" rather than open-ended questions like, "Do you need help?"



VS.

Signs of mental illness:

- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged feelings of anger/annoyance
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Changes in sleeping habits or low energy
- Problems concentrating and learning
- Changes in eating habits
- Difficulty perceiving reality
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality
- Abuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress
- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance

All information from Guidance Counselor Monique Young, CASSY Counselor Alex Espinoza, Women's Health and NAMH

Organizers cast a wide net for Career Day speakers

BY Emilie Zhou

During Career Day on March 2 and 3, students will have the opportunity to learn more about the diverse workforce, listen to speaker presentations and engage with professionals from a variety of fields, including engineering, marketing, design and other health occupations.

"I would hope that students will understand that there is a plethora of career opportunities out there, even though they themselves may have only heard of a few different options that sound interesting to them," assistant principal Kerry Mohnike said. "Within any field, there's many jobs connected to that field so this experience will kind of remind them to keep their options open."

This year, the event will take place over two days during tutorial. Students will go to their designated room assignments, which will be determined by the interest survey they completed in early January.

The speakers will describe their professions and how they got into their jobs. Although the speakers will have some pointers and general guidelines to follow, they will also have the freedom to elaborate on various aspects of their life and career.

According to parent volunteer Beth Kingsley, this event could help students in planning their future career paths.

"Speaking as a parent, I feel this is one way to help expose students to different ca-



Parent volunteer Beth Kingsley in her home office plans for Career Day on March 2 and 3.

reers and ultimately help them decide their college major," Kingsley said. "Students are often so focused on their studies and the college application process that they don't have the time or the opportunity to look at possible career options or college majors."

Sophomore Cheryl Wu hopes Career Day will help her understand more about jobs that she may be interested in. Although she's still uncertain about what she wants to pursue in the future, she has a variety of different interests and chose lawyer, environmental scientist, economist and financial analyst in hopes of trying to discover what she might want to do.

"I think [the event] is cool, but I wish I

could explore more of those careers and that we could talk to more of the [professionals]," Wu said.

A small committee has been helping plan and organize the event. Parent volunteers Parul Samdarshi and Kingsley have been finding different speakers while guidance secretary Kathy Sheridan will sort students into different sessions based on their requests.

Kingsley and Samdarshi have found the speakers through several ways, including reaching out to all the past speakers from the last Career Day in 2015. They have also sent out notices in Principal Greg Louie's weekly emails and asked teachers to recom-

mend alums, friends or family in the area. Additionally, they contacted former Saratoga High administrator Karen Hyde for alumni referrals, since she works with a lot of SHS students in her college counseling business.

Parent and community involvement has been a huge help with finding speakers, but support from the community will also play an integral part in helping the event run smoothly in March, Kingsley said.

"This event will require a lot of volunteer help," Kingsley said. "We will need parents to help guide people with parking and where to check in, check in speakers, serve them continental breakfast and take them to the classrooms they will be speaking in."

According to Mohnike, the school originally planned to have the event every other year so that every student would have access to it at least twice. However, because the former guidance secretary left at the start of the planning process last year, the school wasn't able to plan the event.

Despite past challenges with planning, Mohnike hopes that Career Day will be back on schedule after this year.

"We hope that for some students, a speaker at Career Day may really spark their interest in a field they might pursue," Kingsley said. "It is one thing to read about a field or job online, but it can be very inspiring to hear firsthand how someone chose their field of study, the career path they pursued and what their actual job entails." ♦

FALCON-INSPIRED CHANGES



1996

Seniors don "AP Baby" shirts to demonstrate Asian pride after stories about segregation.



2004

Administration establishes "open access" for Honors and AP classes.



2013

Falcon corrects information the San Jose Mercury News published about Audrie Pott's suicide.



2016

School implements full rolling block schedule.

GRAPHIC BY KAITLYN TSAI

2000

2010

2020

60 years of The Falcon inspire notable changes

BY Apurva Chakravarthy

For the past 60 years, The Saratoga Falcon has been publishing in hopes of educating students about the people and issues at the school as well as local and global events.

While it's easy to think of big-circulation news outlets such as The New York Times, the Washington Post and the San Francisco Chronicle as being the only influential papers, The Falcon has also exercised influence in the school's community, leading directly or indirectly to lasting changes.

Physical changes

As just one example, The Falcon has written editorials that have pushed for new buildings and changes in the restrooms such as seat covers for toilets in student bathrooms and urinal dividers for boys bathrooms. Other articles pushed for lights for the football field and classes such as Introduction To Business.

In recent years, the newspaper also brought awareness to how printing in the library should be free. In the past, students had all seven of their classes on Mondays, leading to a lot of weekend homework and stress. The Falcon editorialized in favor of the current full block schedule.

Another major change is "open access" for students to take Honors and AP classes. Prior to open access being the school's dominant policy roughly two decades ago, qualified students sometimes couldn't get into advanced classes because of grade barriers.

The Falcon's editorials haven't always succeeded in leading to changes. Notable examples of causes that have yet to come to fruition are solar panels in the parking lot and offering either AP Language and AP Literature at the junior level.

The process of implementing a change starts with the administration examining whether it would be reasonable, assistant principal Kerry Mohnike said. If implementing the change costs money, they then check if they have adequate funding. If so, they would likely implement the change.

Mohnike, a former English teacher who served as The Falcon adviser from 1991-1996, said the administration is likely to agree with the students because "we're humans, and we want what you want."

Shifts in culture

Although the school has established several physical changes in response to Falcon pieces, the paper has had an even greater impact on Saratoga's culture over the years.

Looking at the school's demographics, it's hard to imagine segregated groups at Saratoga. According to Mohnike, in the 1990s, there was an unspoken rule about where students would park based on their race. The divide was mainly between the East Asian and white populations.

Students started to realize these problems after the Rodney King riots, a series of protests that occurred in Los Angeles in 1992 after King, a motorist, was beaten by police in a video captured and replayed countless times. The officers were later acquitted, leading to widespread unrest. The newspaper wrote extensively about how divided the school was, from articles on diversity workshops hosted to opinion stories about Asian American heritage at the school.

These articles provoked discussions among students about why the school was so segregated. Asian Americans started to feel more confident in their culture.

As an example of the gradual shift in culture, several members of the class of 1996

took their senior photos wearing shirts with "AP BABY" on them, meaning "Asian pride, baby." Although the letters were airbrushed out, the effort speaks to how The Falcon was part of a change in culture in Saratoga.

Some of The Falcon's most impactful articles came out in the spring of 2013 after sophomore Audrie Pott's suicide in September 2012. Three Falcon reporters set out to correct information in an article written by the San Jose Mercury News, which said that nude photos of her taken at drunken party without her consent had gone viral at the school. Through talking to anonymous sources, reporters concluded that around 10 students saw the photos through texts. The photos were never posted on social media, as alleged in the Mercury News story.

The three Falcon reporters later received subpoenas from attorneys for the Pott family. They wanted to force the student reporters to divulge their anonymous sources in order to find who had actually seen and spread the photos. Ultimately, lawyers working pro bono for the Student Press Law Center helped the paper fight the subpoena and reinforce that so-called shield laws should protect both professional and student journalists, said Falcon adviser Mike Tyler.

"After the situation, the school did some in-depth interviews with students that were dealing with depression and anxiety, so the whole mental health piece started to come up," Mohnike said. "The newspaper was a big factor in talking about things like whether CASSY is helpful."

Whether it be about diversity, mental health or toilet seat covers in the bathroom, The Falcon has been informing for the past 60 years. It hopes that readers will become increasingly knowledgeable about the communities they live in, one article at a time. ♦



Sept. 29, 1995 issue



May 10, 2013 issue

MAP bridges gap between school and community

BY Anna Novoselov

Ever since the Media Arts Program began in 2007, it has heavily relied on community involvement. In fact, the initial funding that helped create it, the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant, was given in 2006 under the requirement that the MAP teachers to work with an advisory panel of industry experts, such as professionals from film and tech firms, to ensure innovation and relevance in the coursework.

"From its inception, MAP has benefitted from community and professional involvement, which has ensured the curriculum is fresh and relevant," said the program's coordinator, English teacher Suzanne Herzman.

Through incorporating technology and project-based learning into a media arts class as well as English and History classes, the program allows students to develop communication, film and design skills — all in a cross discipline way. Approximately 25 percent of the student body participates in MAP.

In May, MAP hosts SMASH'n — an end-of-year awards ceremony and showcase for films. Student coordinators also arrange for three Speaker Series events in the MAP Annex each year that allow students, their families and members of the community to gain insights on various careers from pro-

fessionals in various industries.

Recent Speaker Series have had alumni in Hollywood and women in media themes, and an upcoming one in February focuses on business start-ups. Other past speakers have included an Olympic photographer, a journalist, a TV anchor and Rhodes Scholars.

"The Speaker Series is about sharing insightful experiences and showing how storytelling can help us all succeed," said senior Krithi Sankar, a Speaker Series committee head. "MAP is all about communication and collaboration, and through the process of organizing the events and interviewing the speakers in a panel format, these two core tenets of MAP are used to uplift our school and our community."

The Speaker Series committee — MAP president senior Ritika Kupppam, Speaker Series co-head junior Dylan Westman and MAP Speaker Series parent adviser Arati Najaraj — works alongside the MAP Boosters Board and Herzman to develop event themes and reach out to potential speakers. When three speakers agree to come, the committee creates questions to ask during the event and begins advertising around campus and to the community.

Sankar said that since many of the speak-

ers are alumni, they share a background with current students and can focus on showing them possible paths after high school.

"Our hope is that students both within and outside of MAP will find inspiration as well as possible applications for what they are learning in school," Herzman said.

During the presentations, speakers also describe their day-to-day job responsibilities, their accomplishments and the positive and negative attributes of their fields.

For instance, at the October Women in Media panel, Asuka Lin, a studio technician for the YouTube channel Fine Brothers Entertainment, discussed how her Asian-American identity shapes the content she creates. She also discussed the difficulties women face in establishing a career in male-dominated spheres and how workplaces with more female employees provide women with the confidence to share ideas and feel more involved.

Sankar said that the panel increased her understanding of gender-based discrimination and microaggressions that women may face in their jobs. Other panels have exposed her to the myriad of possible employment fields available and the specialized jobs that are found in various companies.

"These events help bridge the divide between the school and the community," Sankar said. "Speaker Series offers engaging and beneficial experiences for the whole community to learn about various career pathways."

Like the Speaker Series, SMASH'n also provides opportunities for students to meet professionals in the community while showcasing their work. The top prize, the Industry Prize, is awarded by people from the community who have experience in film and design.

Past SMASH'n judges have included employees at DreamWorks Animation, documentary filmmakers and even Redwood Middle School media arts teacher Manny Steffen.

"It's a really unique opportunity for students to receive feedback from those experienced in the artistic field," Kupppam said.

Ultimately, while Speaker Series and SMASH'n are hosted by MAP, they involve the entire school and various members of the community.

"I care so deeply about creating these events," Sankar said. "I make sure that I put as much time as needed so that at the end of the day, the audience and the speakers benefit from taking time out of their busy schedules to come and hear other people's perspectives." ♦



Sankar



STEREOTYPE STATS

JUST HOW TRUE ARE COMMON STEREOTYPES ABOUT AMERICANS?

"Addicted to fast food"



36%

Percentage of Americans who consume fast food on any given day

"Gun-crazy"

43%



Percentage of Americans who own a gun or live in a gun household

"Dumb and uneducated"



90%

Percentage of Americans with a high school degree

"Obsessed with football"

64%



Percentage of Americans who watch NFL

Statistics from US CENSUS BUREAU, PEW RESEARCH CENTER AND GALLUP POLLS

BY AndyChen & BenjaminLi

When senior Chris Feng moved to the U.S. from China in 2013 as a 12-year-old, he thought of Americans as "mac-and-cheese and fried chicken-eating savages." Similarly, sophomore Jason Lin, who moved to the U.S. from China in 2018 as a 14-year-old, initially viewed all American communities as "part of the hood," and filled with violence and drugs.

Every year, over 1 million immigrants arrive in the U.S., and they now account for nearly 14 percent of the nation's population, according to Pew Research Center.

In the Bay Area, the percentage of immigrants is even higher: One third of all residents were born in another country. However, immigrants don't just bring themselves to the U.S. — like Lin and Feng, they also bring preconceptions of how Americans act and think and what life in the U.S. is like.

Students and parents who moved here often have differing stereotypes regarding Americans, some positive and some negative, and they have had to learn about their new country and adjust their views as they've lived here.

Lin, whose family moved to California for educational and financial reasons, had several misconceptions regarding American society because of the way Americans were portrayed in Chinese media, most notably in movies. He thought that Americans were generally "just dumb and uneducated," "xenophobic" and "boisterous" and due to these stereotypes, he was wary of whom he spoke to for his first months in America.

"I always thought about who I was with and that maybe I shouldn't hang out with this group or that group," he said.

Lin soon realized that many misconceptions he initially had were unfair. He saw that most Americans bore little resemblance to the images he had internalized. Eventually, Lin overcame these misconceptions.

"I was obviously really sad when I left China because my friends were essentially my young life and I was probably saying bye to them," he said, "but moving here for a while, I realized that, hey, a lot of you guys are pretty cool too."

Feng had a different response as a Chinese immigrant: Instead of avoiding people who he deemed to fit into negative stereotypes, like "nerds" or "jocks," he decided to embrace many traditional American activities in order to fit in with his peers.

For example, he started to watch football because he "felt that would make life and making friends a lot easier." He found the

experience to be so enjoyable that he still watches football today.

Although Feng admits he initially held negative stereotypes about Americans, he quickly realized that these stereotypes were unwarranted and overcame previous notions through extroversion.

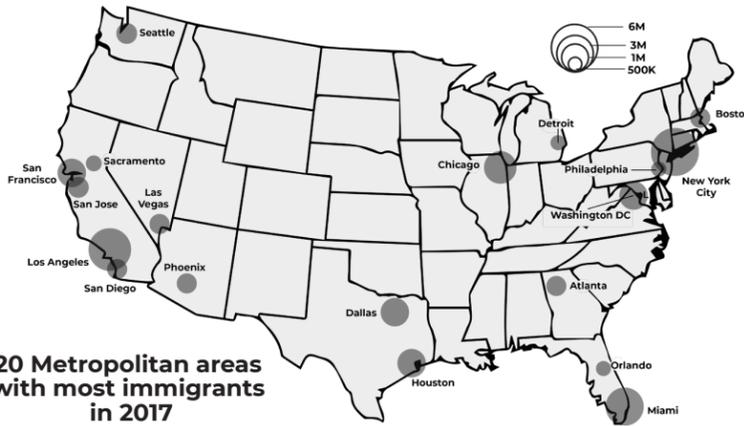
scholar teaching mechanical engineering or making friends, due to the abundance of immigrants with similar experiences as he had. This, as well as the "maturity and ease" of the adult workspace, allowed him to bond easily with native-born Americans.

Yuan said that he believes adults moving to America often have an easier time adjusting to their new environments compared to teenagers who are still evolving in terms of their personalities. The process of becoming an American citizen takes a grueling 14 months on average, and getting a green card can take anywhere from 7 to 33 months, according to VisaGuide.world.

After receiving permission to move from both the U.S. government as well as the country that they're leaving, immigrants must pack up all their necessary belongings

and say goodbye to their previous lives, which is often a mentally taxing experience. Finally, they must quickly adjust to a strange, unfamiliar lifestyle and familiarize themselves with American customs and traditions, all the while trying to speak English instead of their native language. Almost two years after his family immigrated, Lin acknowledged how much his life has changed.

"At first, I was kind of sad," said Lin, "but after I sort of adjusted, I realized that I'd be willing to call America home." ♦



20 Metropolitan areas with most immigrants in 2017

Statistics from PEW RESEARCH CENTER

"When I first moved, I forced myself to go out and make friends," Feng said. "I joined debate and band, and it was kind of weird dealing with people who still felt like foreigners, but I got used to it after a while."

For both boys, overcoming their preconceived ideas was a necessary part of fitting in with their peers, although they took different approaches in doing so.

These negative associations about Americans may be somewhat generational — more common among the young than those who came here a generation ago.

Bin Yuan, father of senior Callia Yuan and sophomore Bill Yuan, said that he held positive stereotypes of Americans prior to moving to Baltimore, Md., from China

in 1993 in search of better job opportunities and a financially stable life. Describing himself as a "brave young man at the time," he said that he was never worried about Americans threatening his safety, and was pretty comfortable and excited for the moving process.

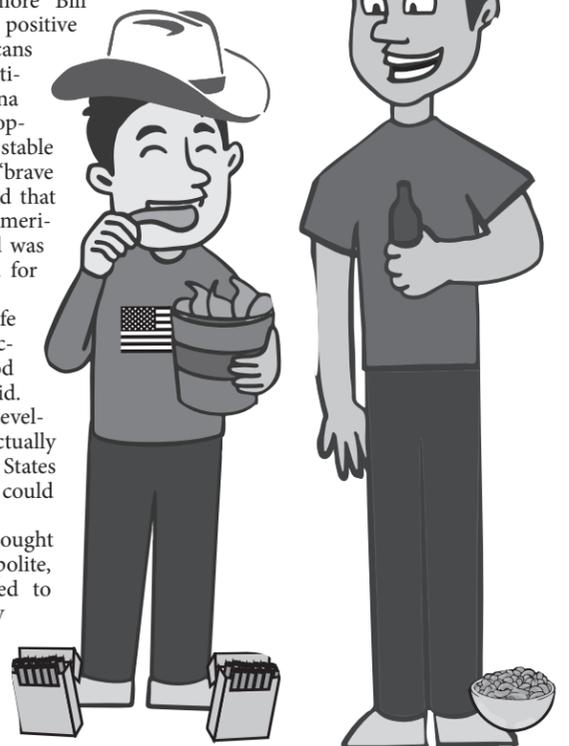
"At that time, before [my wife and I] moved to America, I actually knew a lot of really good things about the U.S.," Yuan said. "The country was really well developed. A lot of people were actually dreaming to come to the United States because it was the best place you could go."

Before he immigrated, he thought of Americans as "incredibly polite, wealthier on average compared to people in China, and generally just pleasant people to interact with."

When he arrived, he said he didn't have trouble adjusting to his job as a visiting



Lin



togatalks

Which common stereotypes about Americans seem true?

"Americans are very bonded to their nation. They feel a uniquely powerful connection to their flag."

soph. Jaime Fernandez de Ponte lived in Spain



"There's much more emphasis on sports in America which is kind of reflected in pay for athletes."

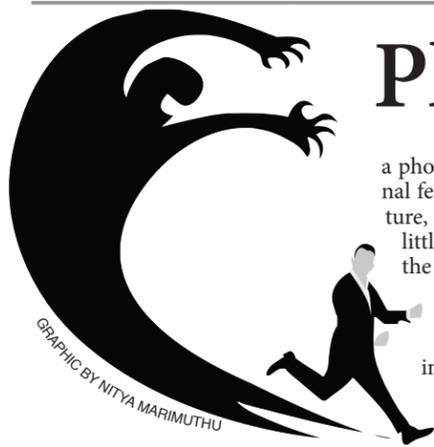
sophomore Lily Yang lived in China



"Americans eat a lot of fast food and seem to have less of a healthy balance in their diets than other places."

junior Audrey Tang lived in China





GRAPHIC BY NITYA MARIMUTHU

Phobias haunt, annoy and unnerve

a phobia — an irrational or rational fear of a situation, living creature, place or object that poses little to no danger, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. As reported by Medical News Today, phobias typically develop in young children around the ages of 4 to 8. About 19 million people have phobias in the U.S.

More complex phobias, known to affect daily life, such as agoraphobia (fear of places or situations) or social phobia (the fear of social interactions), are classified as anxiety disorders that are thought to have resulted from genetic makeup or traumatic experiences.

“As you get more used to your fears, you often realize how irrational some of them are.”

SOPHOMORE **Nikhil Kapasi**

Simpler, more specific phobias (like arachnophobia or claustrophobia) are not considered to be anxiety disorders but rather on-

going fears that are believed to be caused primarily by a negative experience, much like the one Kapasi faced.

While Kapasi said that he knows that his fears seem exaggerated, he cannot get over them.

“If someone left me in a room with a bunch of spiders or coral reefs, I’d be very uncomfortable and wouldn’t be able to sit still,” Kapasi said. “It would give me a lot of anxiety.”

Although his fears have given him stress, Kapasi said that they have lessened over the years. For example, he said that when he was younger, he used to “run and scream and throw things at spiders,” but now he does not get nervous and finds it easier to cope with smaller spiders. However, he still refuses to wear shorts, instead choosing pants that cover all of his legs because he was wearing shorts during his horrifying experience from third grade.

As for his fear of small holes, he says he does not know the root cause.

Oftentimes, people can have irrational fears that are not related to an underlying event.

Though he originally thought

tryphobia was common, he realized after talking to his peers in middle school how rare it is.

Oftentimes, Kapasi said he regrets telling people about his fear because they search up pictures of little holes on their phone and show it to him, trying to stir a reaction.

Like most people with a phobia, he experiences feelings of panic and intense anxiety when exposed to his fears. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, common physical effects of being exposed to a phobia include sweating, an accelerated heartbeat, trembling and nausea.

“I think that as you get more used to your fears, you often realize how irrational some of them are,” Kapasi said.

Another student who fights a phobia is senior Ronak Pai, who has the common phobia of acrophobia (fear of heights).

“My fear started when I was young,” Pai said. “I remember going on a hike to half-dome when I was eight years old, and I literally couldn’t go up because I got scared

every time I looked down.”

Pai said his phobia does not really affect him every day, but it does affect him when climbing up hills or a building. When he is at a height, he usually feels a sinking feeling in my chest, his heart starts beating rapidly, and he feels as if he can’t move.

For her part, sophomore Pooja Manapat has melissophobia, a fear of bees and other flying bugs. Manapat’s phobia developed when she saw her friend experience an allergic reaction that occurred after getting stung in elementary school.

Now she fears that she will have the same reaction — hives and swelling of her throat.

“On a scale of one to 10, with one being the lowest and 10 being the highest, my fear is around a three,” Manapat said. “It’s a fairly common fear and doesn’t affect me too extremely in my daily life.”

As for seeking treatment for phobias, Manapat said it might be appropriate in some cases.

“Phobias affect people’s lives more than specific fears as they can create ongoing distress for an individual,” Manapat said. “People should receive treatment if they feel it is necessary.” ♦

GRAPHICS BY ANNA NOVOSLEOV

Why Golden State’s education leaves so many behind

BY Ethan **Lin**
& Tiffany **Wang**

From its high-flying tech companies to the opulence of prestigious colleges like Stanford, California seems to be the pinnacle of education in the U.S.; in fact, many families who move to California, especially to the Silicon Valley, say that they came for the education.

“My dad’s company told him to move [from Shanghai] to the U.S. many times,” said sophomore Jason Lin. “He rejected most of the offers, since the locations were on the East Coast. But when they asked him to move to Silicon Valley, he said yes, because the education here is good.”

But that is not true in all parts of the state. According to the Mercury News, California’s education rating is a C-, which places its overall ranking at 41st out of the 50 states. This may seem at odds with the intense academic environment students at high-ranking Bay Area schools are so familiar with.

According to KPBS, California’s education system was ranked fifth out of the 50 states in 1965, but fell to 22nd overall a year after the passing of Proposition 13 in 1978.

Prop 13 was intended to allow homeowners to keep their property taxes low so that they could afford to stay in their homes as they aged, but the result was that the state lost tens of millions that would have gone to schools. Since school districts rely on property taxes for their funding to a great extent,

Prop 13 resulted in a sharp reduction of spending: In 1978 alone, schools lost one-third of their \$9 billion annual budget.

Education spending has increased since the 1970s, but it might not be enough in some areas. Many districts serve student populations with high rates of poverty, unemployment and non-native English speakers. These factors depress test scores as well as the ambition of what is taught. According to Spanish 2 and 3 teacher Bret Yeilding, he is familiar with in areas near Sacramento where many children grow up in families that are worried about meeting food, shelter and basic human needs that most Bay Area residents take for granted.

“If you’re hungry, it’s hard to concentrate,” Yeilding said. “If you’ve been kicked out of your apartment, it’s hard to go ‘well I’m gonna go home and do my homework.’”

Contrasting with these areas are school districts that are heralded as some of the best in the nation, which doesn’t line up with the assumptions many people have about education in California. If certain schools in the Bay Area, like those of the Los Gatos-Saratoga and Palo Alto Union School Districts, are ranked 19th and 23rd in the nation respectively, according to Niche, why is there such a divide in achievement?

One factor is funding. Since over 30 percent of a school’s money comes from property taxes, schools that are in an area of higher living costs often receive more money, which directly correlates with increased resources in schools like music and sports pro-

grams and higher educational achievement.

Schools with more funding are usually able to pay teachers better, often meaning they are able to recruit the best teachers.

Spanish 2 and 4H teacher Stephany Marks, who has taught in Santa Cruz and Watsonville where many students were going to be the first generation to get into college, said that schools need to implement programs like AVID, a nonprofit organization that provides educators ways to improve college readiness for their students because their parents cannot provide the necessary advice.

“There seems to be more assistance in districts in Santa Cruz than here in Saratoga because we see that being provided at home, while in other districts, there are parents that haven’t even graduated high school,” she said.

As a result, California’s lower educational rating is more indicative of the economic status of the state and less about the high achieving students from the small bubble of schools in the Bay Area.

In other smaller states, however, where the money is more evenly distributed among schools, the academic ratings tend to be higher. New York, for example, is ranked 22 according to USNews, slightly above the nation’s average.

Sophomore Arian Gupta, who attended Herricks Middle School in New York until eighth grade, prefers Saratoga over the schools in New York, because of the higher standardized test scores and the academic opportunities that the school has.

Vignav Ramesh, a sophomore who just moved from Interlake High School in Seattle said that he felt the Bay Area and his old school provide similar educational experiences.

Washington ranks fourth in education and is one of the top-rated states for higher education. With a relatively high economic status across the whole state, schools are better funded and teachers are better paid than in most of California.

Ramesh said that the only difference between his old school and Saratoga High is the community and not academics, showing just how much of an outlier Saratoga is

within the California education system.

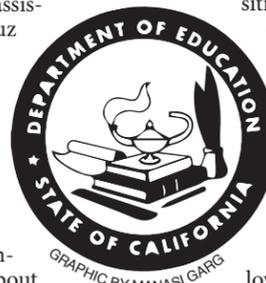
Education reformers point to changing Proposition 13 as a quick improvement. Recently, a group including some of California’s public employee unions such as the California Federation of Teachers unveiled a replacement version of Prop 13. The proposed legislation would allow homeowners and small businesses to receive the current low tax rate benefits of Prop 13 while commercial and industry property owners would be required to pay more.

According to the Los Angeles Times, if citizens approve the amended proposition, most of the new tax revenue would go to fund public schools. The new revenue, estimated to be at least \$7 billion, would be in addition to current state funding, which is around \$103.4 billion.

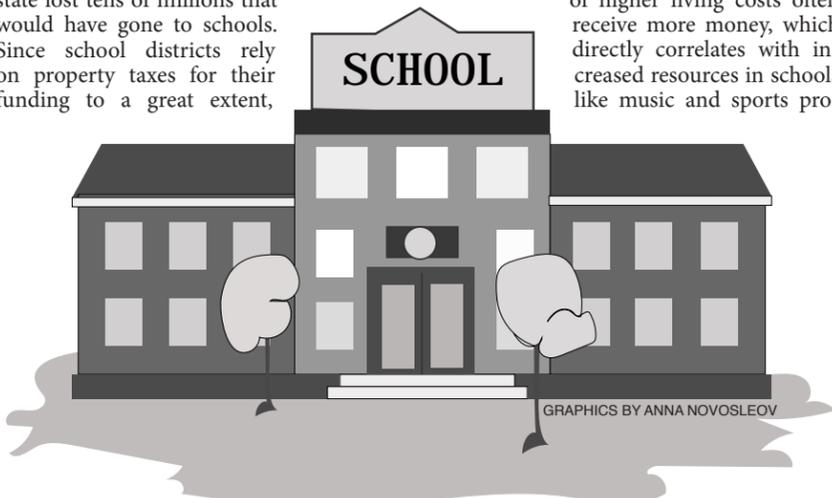
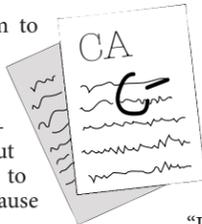
This would allow many schools to raise the salaries for their staff, lift the burden on their living situations and allow them to focus more on teaching students. For instance, the state could also use the extra money to provide more housing for teachers.

“I know when I’m less stressed, I seem to perform better,” Marks said.

“But I think the school is working on that, and the school knows that’s something we need to improve on.” ♦



GRAPHIC BY MANASI GARG



GRAPHICS BY ANNA NOVOSLEOV

>> **thebigidea**

California's education

What is CA's K-12 education rating?

Although California was ranked 5th out of 50 states in 1965, it is currently ranked 41st.

What is Prop 13 and what is its impact?

It kept property taxes low for homeowners, but school districts rely on property taxes for money. After it was passed, schools lost one-third of their funding.

What's the problem?

Districts like Los Gatos Saratoga have good funding due to wealthy neighborhoods while poorer districts in other parts of California struggle. States with a higher education ranking have more evenly distributed funding.

Rigid schedules and technology consume childhoods

anna-thing & everything



Anna Novoselov

As a child, I remember dressing up Barbies, building Lego houses and acting out make-believe situations with stuffed animals. I would run around outside playing tag with friends and hot-lava monster on the playground, laughing and screaming—being a kid in the real world.

But now, I often see little kids, some as young as 3, staring intently at screens, tapping and swiping rather than exploring their imaginations by reading books, drawing and interacting with others.

An adult cousin of mine, for instance, often struggles to pry away the iPad from her toddler son. Besides that, on Instagram, I sometimes receive follow requests from middle schoolers from Redwood, some as young as in sixth grade. But 11-year-olds shouldn't be worrying about how many followers they have — they should be outside playing four-square or kicking a ball.

This early introduction to technology fuels online addictions and decreases interpersonal communication, as kids become used to constantly being on their digital devices. It doesn't give kids a chance to explore their imaginations by coming up with make-believe scenarios and games.

A report by Action for Children (a UK charity group) and YouGov (a British market research firm) describes a poll that found that 60 percent of parents and 62 percent of grandparents believe that childhoods are steadily getting worse, partly because of the pressures from social media.

Now, kids are born into the digital age,

while my slightly older generation seems to be the last one to grow up playing with actual physical toys.

That isn't to say I grew up free from the influence of technology. But while I loved watching movies like "Finding Nemo" and playing online computer games, they didn't consume my life. In contrast, my younger sister, who only four years younger than me, received a smartphone at the end of elementary school and spends a significant chunk of her days staring at the giant screen. Even her homework is almost all online while mine was mostly on paper.

This is just one way childhoods have changed radically in the past few decades, but not necessarily for the better.

When my parents were young, they would run outside to play with their friends for hours after school. Now kids spend those hours playing video games or being dragged to extracurriculars chosen by their parents for their child's enrichment and intellectual development.

Before, kids were in charge of their own entertainment and didn't follow rigid schedules; they experienced genuine companionship filled with laughter and childhood fun. Everyday tasks (like contacting people) were more difficult and information wasn't a Google search away, but life was simpler; childhoods didn't follow so many rules and expectations. Adults didn't expect children to take Calculus and prove the theory of relativity at the age of 6.

Many parents nowadays want to protect their children from the harms of the world and do whatever it takes to ensure their children reach their full potential. This sometimes results in helicopter parenting where kids cannot make decisions for themselves and as a result, lose their self-reliance.

But kids are kids. Their greatest development comes not

from sitting in desks on Saturdays and monotonously copying notes, but from exploring with other children their age, learn independence, courage and the ability to resolve their own challenges and arguments.

Eventually, they will enter the adult world of responsibilities. Although classes and organized activities can certainly build their character and work ethic, they shouldn't overtake their childhoods.

While children now generally have a better education and more material possessions, their health is suffering due to radical changes in how children are raised.

"The Decline of Play and the Rise of Psychopathology in Children and Adolescents," a paper by Dr. Peter Gray attributes the increased prevalence of mental conditions such as anxiety, depression, narcissism and helplessness in children to the decline of free play. He reports that unstructured activities help children develop decision-making skills, learn to communicate with their peers, interact positively with others, and explore their interests.

A University of Michigan study describes similar conclusions. The researchers found that 85 percent of poll respondents believed that children growing up today had a greater risk of developing mental health issues. The university's Mott Poll Report attributes this increase to the rise in stress levels and decreased interpersonal communication.

My own childhood was a mixture of fun and academics. I remember experiencing adventures, exploring and imagining make-believe worlds, coming up with characters and elaborate story plots. I would spend entire sum-

mers running around my grandmother's summer home near the Black Sea in Russia, putting on shows for my family and building castles out of blocks.

My older cousin and I would also often play computer games, striving to reach higher levels quicker than the other. But that was just a part of our friendship; we also interacted with each other in person.

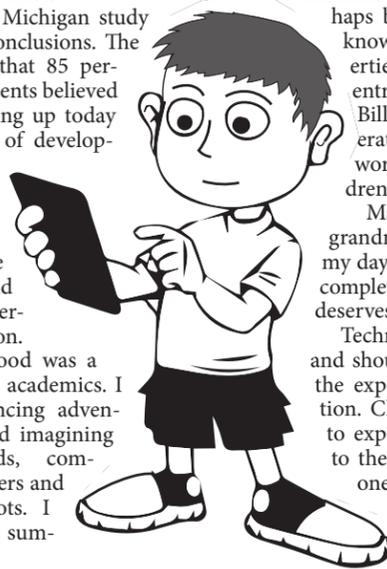
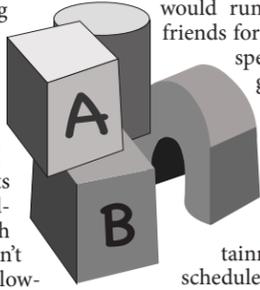
Kids nowadays don't get as much personal face-to-face interactions. Social media was created to bring individuals together and strengthen connections, but ironically, many studies have shown that extensive use is correlated with increased rates of depression and loneliness.

While most research studies, like a 2018 one conducted at the University of Pennsylvania, specifically focus on young adults, these effects can be generalized to any age group and especially young kids who have grown up with technology.

Some employees, even major executives, Silicon Valley tech giants have limited their children's time with technology, perhaps because they have firsthand knowledge of the addictive properties of electronic devices. Even entrepreneurs Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, who arguably accelerated the transition to a digital world, tried to raise their children without digital devices.

Maybe I sound like an old grandmother with my "back in my day" lectures, but this early and complete adoption of technology deserves concern.

Technology is extremely valuable and should be embraced, but not at the expense of actual communication. Children now should be able to experience a similar childhood to the one I was able to enjoy — one with a balance between digital devices, freedom and games. ♦



GRAPHICS BY ANNA NOVOSELOV

Lessons learned: staff share insights with students

Academics

Find balance. You guys are great students and work your tails off, sacrifice sleep for extra activities and studying. Finding balance and prioritizing sleep is big.



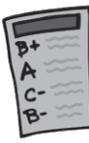
- Mr. Louie

[High school] too shall pass. It might feel really big when you're going through it, but when you're an adult, you won't remember how close you were to the A- or the B+ or whatever. It will be okay

-Ms. Satake

Your grades will never define who you are as a person, and the fact that you don't go to Harvard does not mean that you are going to be a failure.

-Mr. Yeilding



Friendships/Family



Always give everyone the benefit of the doubt. Cherish the people in your life because you never know when they won't be there.

-Mr. Louie

Even if your parents frustrate you, they do that out of love. cultivating relationships face to face — not just on Snapchat, but in real life, is very important.

-Ms. Satake



Nobody gets to the end of their life and says, "I wish I spent less time with my family and friends," so work a little less, spend time with family and friends a little more.

-Mr. Yeilding

Dating

It's super important to feel loved and express love but you are still learning who you are. My advice is don't be in a serious relationship until later in life, but spend time with people and find out the qualities you really appreciate.

-Mr. Louie

Dating in high school is hard, because when you're a kid, your first love is your first love and there's nothing quite like that. Be really thoughtful of what you're putting into that relationship.

-Ms. Satake

If you lie to people, you can't be surprised when they are mad. You need to tell people the truth if you want them to tell you the truth.

-Mr. Yeilding



Popularity

Don't worry about how other people perceive you. Be concerned about the person you see in the mirror and whether or not that person is proud of you.



-Mr. Louie



All you really need is one person who will be your person. I would rather cultivate depth in a relationship, with a person who will always have your back.

-Ms. Satake

Popularity is out of your control, so just be nice to everybody. My advice would be just to live by the golden rule: Treat others like you want them to treat you.

-Mr. Yeilding

GRAPHIC AND REPORTING BY TIFFANY WANG AND ANOUK YEH

SPANISH TEACHER
BRET
YIELDING



GUIDANCE COUNSELOR
ALINNA
SATAKE



PRINCIPAL
GREG
LOUIE

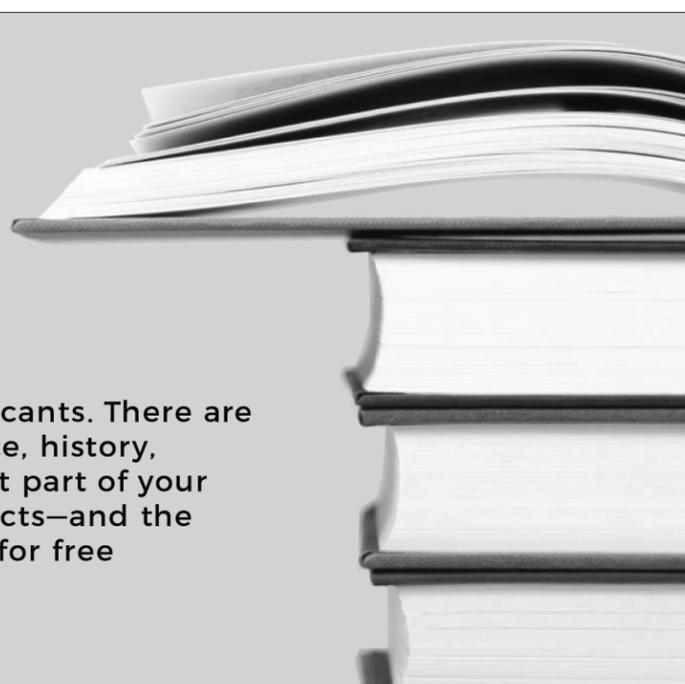


GRAPHIC BY MEGAN CHEN



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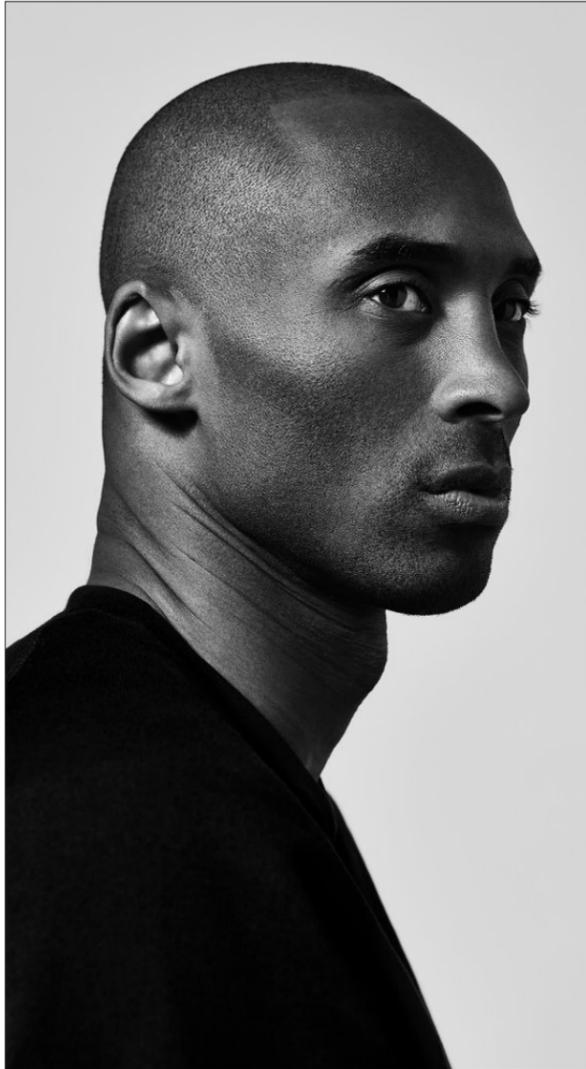
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Golfer recounts impact of Bryant



Courtesy of Neil Bedford—Camera Press/Redux

BY Kevin Sze

It's Jan. 26, and my phone vibrates as I receive a notification from the New York Times.

I take a brief glance, and then my heart stops. The headline reads "N.B.A. Star Kobe Bryant Dies in California Helicopter Crash."

The accident happened in Calabasas around noon. Bryant and eight others were on their way to Mamba Sports Academy when the helicopter made a rapid dive into a hillside. Bryant's second oldest daughter, 13-year-old Gianna Bryant, was also killed in the accident.

Minutes after the heart-wrenching news broke, hundreds of fans stood outside of the Staples Center to pay tribute to the five-time NBA champion, 2008 MVP and 18-time All Star.

Bryant inspired millions through his love for competition and his unrelenting intensity during his 20-year run with the Los Angeles Lakers.

Personally, Bryant's life has inspired and motivated me as a student athlete who has juggled the workload at Saratoga High and the rigorous schedule of competitive golf.

As a kindergartner, I remember watching Bryant play, with my eyes on the TV as Bryant's full offensive prowess went on display. Fadeaways, crossovers, stepback jumpers and ferocious dunks. At the time, I told myself that I wanted to dominate on the basketball court just like Bryant. That was, of course, before I realized I would only grow to be 5'11" and be limited to a 15" vertical.

When I began to play golf in third grade, I would show up at the golf course and nobody would

want to play with me. I was the only Asian kid, and I was at least three years younger than the other kids at the golf course.

Around that time, I began to listen to interviews from Bryant. I was obsessed with the "Mamba Mentality," a term Bryant coined to describe the level of focus and relentless approach he took both in preparation and competition.

In one of his interviews, Bryant talked about moving to Italy when he was 6 years old. He described a situation that paralleled mine. None of the Italian kids wanted to play with him because he looked different. Instead of resorting to self-pity, Bryant began to develop the Mamba Mentality and promised that he would make every kid pay for their disrespect by practicing every day and improving his basketball skills.

I applied his message to my situation, oftentimes practicing golf by myself until sundown.

As I grew older and schoolwork became more rigorous, I took inspiration from Bryant's daily routine.

During Bryant's historic run with the Lakers, he would often wake up at 3 a.m. to play basketball for 8 hours a day.

"You want to train as much as you can, as often as you can," Bryant said in an interview. "So now you [wake up at 3 a.m. and train eight hours a day], and as the years go on the separation that you have with your competitors and your peers just grows larger and larger and larger and larger."

Motivated by Bryant's work ethic, I began waking up at 5:30 a.m. last year to workout before school. After school, I would go straight to the golf course and

practice until sundown. Once I got home, I quickly ate dinner and locked myself in my room to finish my homework.

I did this during the entire second semester of my junior year. I rarely went out with my friends, I missed winter formal and junior prom and I never attended a high school party.

By the end of the school year, my body and my golf game were in the best shape they had ever been.

At the beginning of my junior year, I was ranked around 800 junior players in the world. By the end of the summer in between my junior and senior years, I had climbed into the top 100. By the end of 2019, I committed to play Division I golf at Harvard University.

My improvement came from hard work, but more importantly, the influence and inspiration Bryant had. If I hadn't heard about his time in Italy, his daily routine during the Lakers' championship run, or any of the other crazy stories of Bryant's work ethic, I would have never made it to where I am today.

Bryant was the reason I didn't quit when things weren't going my way because I always told myself, "if Kobe can do it, so can I."

Like the millions of Kobe fans around the world, I am blessed to have watched him play and hear his life experiences.

As Bryant once said, "The most important thing is to try and inspire people so that they can be great at whatever they want to do."

Bryant inspired me and I'm sure millions of others, to have the Mamba Mentality and be the best versions of ourselves every day.

Heroes come and go, but legends are forever. Thanks, Kobe. ♦

Long walk to equality: Female athletes see distance remains between male, female sports

BY Shama Gupta

Just before the third quarter buzzer sounded in a game last year, senior Ella Parr remembers seeing a crowd of people trickling into the gym and filling the stands as the clock reset for the final eight minutes.

Where there were previously friends and family occupying less than a fourth of the stands, the bleachers were now filling up quickly in anticipation for the upcoming varsity boys game.

Parr understands the increased attendance for the boys game. "It's like a 'Friday night under the lights' kind of game," she said. "But it is kind of deteriorating to our play because we are still a Saratoga team, and it's just family and some friends at our games."

One difference between the two styles of play, Parr said, is that boys often play for a crowd reaction with 3 pointers and other low-percentage plays while girls tend to play more conservatively.

Varsity boys' basketball player Cameron King, too, has noticed differences between the two teams. He pointed out the height, strength and quickness differenc-

es lead to different styles of play. "Our circumstances are different: our opponents are taller and there is more competition to make the boys team," he said.

Aside from crowd differences, however, women's sports and men's sports are simply perceived differently when it comes to quality of play.

Sophomore Emma Foley experienced this when male friends who play on soccer teams that are often a level or two below her try to question her abilities.

"Young girls would see that they are of equal value to men."

SOPHOMORE Emma Foley

While her natural response to any of these challenges is "come play me," Foley sees men's and women's soccer as being inherently different and think they should not be compared.

"They have individual styles of play and they strive in their own

ways on the field," she said.

Foley said a big difference in their playing style is the level of aggression.

In fact, during the 2019 Women's World Cup, U.S. viewership of the final game was 22 percent higher than the men's 2018 final (CNBC) despite the Men's Gold Cup games airing at the same time as the women's games.

This year, the U.S. Women's soccer team made big statements that drew viewership and some support, such as team captain Megan Rapinoe's public decision to not visit the White House upon winning the cup.

Rapinoe, co-captain Alex Morgan and many teammates have a large social media presence, which helped garner public interest in the sport.

For the first time in history, a women's team jersey was the best selling jersey in Nike's sales. The team has raised the bar in women's sports; however, the USWNT is one of the few women's teams that have achieved so much prestige.

In tennis, the female division of tournaments like Wimbledon, the U.S. Open and the Australian Open have near equal viewership

in comparison to the men's bracket. For the first time in 13 years, the women's Wimbledon final had more viewers than the men's (4.6 million vs. 4.5 million).

This interest in women's tennis undoubtedly started since the Williams sisters came on the professional scene in the late 1990s. Serena has won 23 grand slam titles in singles play, 14 in women's doubles, and two in mixed doubles, and has a large influence through a multitude of brand deals and commercials.

In 2004, she signed a five-year, \$40 million brand deal with Nike. She also endorses brands like Wilson, Intel, Aston Martin, Gatorade, and Beats by Dre. However, male athletes famous for their skill often make more. Neymar Jr., for example, a Brazilian soccer star, scored an 11-year deal with Nike, in which he earns about \$10.2 million per year. Other players like Argentinian soccer player Lionel Messi make as much as \$28 million from brand endorsements in one year alone.

Although some women's teams and players are proving the worth and entertaining value of women's sports, most female teams lag be-

hind in this movement.

On a global scale, there are more men's players, men's leagues, and men's games that air on television in each major sport. Top baseball players earn \$20 or \$25 million a year, while most people probably don't know a professional softball league even exists. The National Basketball League similarly dwarfs its female counterpart, the WNBA.

Although King loves to support women's basketball teams, he thinks viewers may not see the subtle skills the players possess. What sets men's professional athletics apart to him is the athleticism and aggressiveness of the games. King said that "men's teams tend to be more impressive because a normal person could not normally perform like a pro men's team."

Although men and women ultimately do not play at the same level, Foley emphasized that it is crucial for more women's teams to get more attention and advertising dollars. "Young girls would see that they are of equal value to men, and that would inspire more girls to enter typically male-dominated areas," she said. ♦

49ers' edge: Lethal running game, defense

BY LeoCao

The 49ers have had the stingiest pass defense in the NFL this year. The Kansas City Chiefs and reigning MVP quarterback Patrick Mahomes have one of the most explosive passing attacks in the league. Super Bowl LIV will be an exhilarating contest that either team can win, as shown by the early betting line which opened with the Chiefs as a 1.5-point favorite.

Despite the Chiefs' fast-paced offense, mainly consisting of wide receivers Tyreek Hill and tight end Travis Kelce, the 49ers have a more complete team.

After dismantling the Green Bay Packers 37-20 in the NFC championship game, the 49ers are looking for their sixth Super Bowl win at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami on Feb. 2. The Chiefs claimed their spot in the big game after a 35-24 win against the Tennessee Titans, scoring 28 unanswered points after falling behind 10-0 early in the game.

How will the 49ers prevail? First of all, they will keep Kansas City's defense off-balance, because

they are able to launch their lethal running game out of so many different formations.

Running back Raheem Mostert exploded for 220 yards and four touchdowns in the NFC Championship game; Mostert will be tough for Kansas, the 25th in the league in yards allowed per rush attempt, to contain. Not only does commitment to running the ball open things up for quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo in the passing game, it keeps the dangerous Chiefs' offense off the field.

Additionally, the 49ers have an elite defensive line, led by Nick Bosa, Arik Armstead and DeForest Buckner, that dominates their opponents at the point of attack; currently, they lead all the postseason teams in allowing the least amount of yards gained per game, and will generate pressure and quickly to make Mahomes

uncomfortable, forcing him to avoid pass plays that take too long to develop.

Mahomes, it is easy for the opposing secondary to play scared because of the quarterback's scrambling and ability to extend plays.

However, when the experience of Sherman, who has played in two Super Bowls previously, combines with defensive coordinator Robert Saleh's different coverages, the secondary will generate turnovers and force Mahomes to make tough decisions.

Last but not least, general manager

John Lynch and head coach Kyle Shanahan's extensive leadership experience will

prove key to a 49ers victory. Since taking over in 2017, Lynch and Shanahan have remained patient while building a true Super Bowl contender from the ground up, picking gems up from the later rounds, notably tight end George Kittle in the fifth in 2017,

defensive lineman D.J. Jones in the sixth in 2017 and linebacker Dre Greenlaw in the fifth in 2019. They will have the team poised to play their best and earn a sixth Super Bowl win for the 49ers, putting them in a tie for the most along with the Steelers and the Patriots.

The Chiefs, although extremely talented and worthy, might simply be outmatched by a 49ers team with an indomitable defense and piercing offense. ♦



The 49ers also have a fearless secondary led by cornerback Richard Sherman. When going up against a quarterback like

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What to look for Sunday:

The 49ers' run game

The Niners have shown no fear in pounding the ball. Will the Chiefs front force them to ditch the ground game or will the Niners run their way to the Lombardi?

The strategy to cover Tyreek Hill

He has been unstoppable, extending defenses and opening up run lanes. Will the Niners dare to go man with Richard Sherman matching up against him, or will they always have help over the top?

Low on fuel: Athletes burn out in face of pressures

BY EstherLuan & KaitlynTsai

At only 2 years old, Ashleigh Abe, now a senior, toddled on a balance beam at a preschool class at California Sports Center while her older brother Kyle Abe, now a sophomore at UC Berkeley, trained in gymnastics with his competitive team. In six years, she would begin participating in various regional and state competitions. Seven years after that, at the age of 15, she quit — a victim of early athletic burnout.

The National Athletic Trainer's Association defines athletic burnout as "a response to chronic stress of continued demands in a sport or activity without the opportunity for physical and mental rest and recovery." While the exact percentage of teenagers who experience athletic burnout is unknown, children who specialize in one sport as opposed to multiple often quit their sport first, said Dr. Charles A. Popkin, pediatric orthopedic surgeon at Columbia University Medical Center.

Intense specialization leads to increased burnout rates largely because extrinsic pressures from parents or coaches frequently create a "pressure-cooker scenario" that leads to burnout, Popkin said.

When Abe first began competing, her coaches constantly compared her to her older brother, remarking how she wasn't as skilled as he was.

Abe aimed to prove them wrong. By the time she reached middle school, she trained for approximately 25 hours a week at Twisters Sports, a training facility in Sunnyvale. Before she quit gymnastics in her sophomore year, she had reached level 9 — the second-highest level of Junior Olympics, which frequently leads gymnasts into collegiate gymnastics.

Despite reaching this level and frequently placing in competitions, Abe still faced mounting pressure to push herself to her limits, even at the expense of her well-being.

"Skipping practices for sickness or school events was looked down upon, and you were often shamed if you skipped for a school dance or something like that, so I didn't really go to any of those," Abe said. "I was so scared of missing practices that I would still go even if I was sick."

Until high school, she still enjoyed gymnastics despite the pressures. But her love for the sport began to diminish as school stresses increased along with the demands

of her competitive team.

"Most days, I went to sleep at 2 or 3 a.m., and going to practice right after school and doing a lot of dangerous skills while sleep-deprived started to take a toll," Abe said. "I was constantly tired, crying all the time and I wasn't getting any sleep. When I showed up to practice, it felt like a chore rather than something I wanted to do."

Various studies, such as a 2015 study by the National Athletic Trainers' Association,

"I was constantly tired, crying all the time, and I wasn't getting any sleep."



SENIOR Ashleigh Abe

have revealed similar symptoms of stress in competitive student athletes. According to the report, many record higher rates of sleep and mood disturbances, loss of appetite, short tempers, decreased interest in training and competition, decreased self-confidence and inability to concentrate compared to non student athletes; these signs are a result of excessively focusing on training and not leaving enough time for rest.

Despite experiencing these effects, Abe said she felt torn over whether to quit since she had dedicated countless hours to the sport. Still, she knew she had to preserve her physical and mental health.

"A lot of people were shocked when I told them because I seemed so dedicated to gymnastics," Abe said. "But at the same time, they thought that quitting was a good choice. I know my parents really approved of my decision."

Badminton Blues

Senior Cameron Chow had a similar experience, in his case with badminton. Chow began his sport because his older brother excelled in it and then faced constant pressure to live up to his brother's reputation.

"The coaches all knew my brother," Chow said. "My brother's nickname was Chowder, so they're like, 'Chowder Junior, you're trash!' And every single time I went to a tournament, all the parents would be like, 'Oh, you're gonna be as good as your brother, right?'"

This perpetual comparison of Chow to his all-star sibling wore him down over time.

"I was annoyed about the comparisons, but also just sad," Chow said. "I wanted to prove them all wrong, but eventually, I had to accept that I wasn't as good as him."

Chow said he began experiencing burnout when he was competing in the Junior National Championships in sixth grade, four years after he started formally training. While his peers continued improving, Chow said he felt that he had stalled and wasn't able to pass 10th place.

At that time, Chow had also switched to training with a stricter coach at Bintang Badminton Academy in Campbell. This coach pushed him to reach his brother's skill level. Practices alternated between matches and intense drills.

For example, while drilling with a set of 80 shuttlecocks Chow would have to do six laps of duck walk around the gym for every shuttlecock he dropped. Sometimes, his coach had Chow wear a weight vest and carry 10-pound weights while duck walking.

Shortly after Junior Nationals, sixth grader Chow switched to California Badminton Academy in Fremont, where he trained until he quit badminton in his junior year. In addition, he played for one year on the school team as a sophomore.

Going to practices after school, sitting through the long commutes and having to start homework at 9 p.m. every weekday took a toll on him.

While Chow lost interest in badminton, mostly because of his lack of progress and the pressures he faced from coaches and parents, he added that dedication to the sport can also become emotionally draining.

This was also true for junior Ryan Hsiao, who quit the sport to give himself a new start after life circumstances had an adverse effect on his emotional well-being.

"My mental health declined a lot throughout middle and high school, and badminton was a really big reason," Hsiao said. "It's a difficult sport, and playing every day started to get exhausting for both my body and my mind."

Hsiao, who began training at Z Badminton Training Center in Union City in 2014, experienced burnout when his father passed away in late 2017. He quit the sport in the fall of 2018.

"I released a lot of bottled up emotions when my father passed away, and everything I did started to feel useless," Hsiao said. "Badminton just happened to be the

thing that I was doing the most at the time. When I quit, I was arguably at the lowest point in my life, and I decided that I just wanted a drastic change."

The Aftermath

Since he dropped the sport, Hsiao has found more time to focus on himself and his mental health.

"Living feels like less of a chore," he said.

All three athletes said they have found quitting their sports liberating. With more time on her hands, Abe joined the school's dance team. Chow turned to volleyball in the spring of 2019, which he played recreationally on the school team.

While Hsiao does not regret his choice to stop playing badminton, he advises others to consider how much they love their sport before quitting.

"Try to muscle through it," Hsiao said. "If you started something because you genuinely enjoyed it and stopped because you lost that enjoyment, instead of giving up, try to find the love you once had for it. Finding something that you can devote hours and hours of time to is extremely rare, and if that already exists in your life, don't drop it."

Abe said that quitting gymnastics allowed her to devote more time to trying new activities and focusing on her own happiness. She advises athletes to prioritize their physical and mental health over being at the top of their sport.

"If you value a sport way more than your health, then that shows that there's something wrong with your mindset," Abe said. "For any activity, your well-being should come first." ♦

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Athletic Burnout

What is it?

Burnout is a response to the chronic stress of continued demands in a sport or activity without the opportunity for physical and mental rest and recovery.

What are symptoms?

Athletes may experience sleep and mood disturbances, loss of appetite, short tempers, decreased interest, decreased self-confidence and inability to concentrate.

What are the risk factors?

Significant pressure, specializing in one sport, sudden and large increases in training, high anxiety levels, and participation in endurance sports are thought to increase risk.

Junior lunges her way into Junior Olympic fencing

By Marisa Kingsley
& Harshini Velchamy

Almost any day of the week you can see junior Aaria Thomas working hard in the challenging classes she takes during the day. She might be poring over "The Great Gatsby" or finishing trigonometry problems. Catch her in the evening, however, and she transforms into a national-level fencer who practices bouts against fellow club members, handily maneuvers her foil and dodges her opponent as they lunge at her.

Thomas, who has been fencing for six years, will compete in this year's Junior Olympics in Columbus, Ohio, which will take place from Feb. 14 to 17, where over 2,000 qualifying athletes in the U.S. at the Junior level (ages 17 and under) and Cadet levels (20 and under) will compete to qualify for the Junior World Championships in the spring.

To qualify, competitors must acquire 110 regional or national points in their respective events in the Junior or Cadet tournament circuit, which starts a year before the Junior Olympics. Or, they can place the top 25 percent of their division's Junior Olympic qualifying competition. At competitions, a fencer compete in matches



Thomas

— or bouts — and earn points depending on how well they place.

Thomas already had 60 points from a tournament last May, but wasn't able to compete for two months last semester due to school obligations and standardized testing preparation.

Although she attempted to make up for this by competing in December, she wasn't confident that she would make the top 25 percent, so when she got the notification that she would be moving to compete in the Junior Olympics,

she was elated. "I was 100 percent sure I didn't qualify," she said. "I was

so disappointed in myself that I didn't do better. Then to find out that I qualified — it was like this weight was lifted from my shoulders."

Thomas, who fences for California

Fencing Academy in Campbell, initially became interested in the sport after hearing about it from a friend who fenced for another club and decided to try it out for herself. She enrolled in a class, and despite disliking the sport at first, she stuck through simply to finish the class and ended up truly enjoying the experience of

weekends prepare for the competition.

With all the stress of the tournament adding on to the taxing workload of junior year, Thomas reflects on how important it is for her to stay organized and focused.

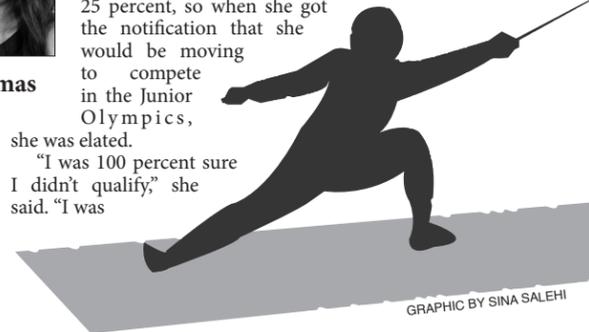
"You have to be on top of everything you do, like at school during tutorial and lunch," she said. "If I have any work to do, I just sit down and do it because I'm not gonna have time at home."

Other than time management, Thomas has dealt with other obstacles that have impeded her ability to fence. Thomas has been suffering from a hip injury and multiple recurring wrist injuries. Most of all, she considers her biggest challenge to stay positive and calm during the competition.

"My biggest problem is not mentally psyching myself up and just staying confident," Thomas said. "I just need to be able to stay calm and just focus on like scoring the next point."

Most importantly, however, Thomas values the experience of being able to attend the Junior Olympics, especially the opportunity to compete against internationally ranked fencers.

"I often lose to [internationally ranked fencers] because they're so good," she said. "But I love fencing them because I know it's going to be more exciting and I just have to try harder." ♦



GRAPHIC BY SINA SALEHI

WHAT IS FENCING?

- FENCERS WIN POINTS BY "TOUCHING" OPPONENT WITH THE WEAPON
- THE THREE DISCIPLINES ARE EPEE, FOIL, & SABRE, ALL OF WHICH ARE IN THE OLYMPICS. FOIL POINTS COUNT ON THE OPPONENTS TORSO; SABER COUNTS ON HEAD, ARMS, AND TORSO ABOVE WAIST; EPEE COUNTS ON ANY PART OF THE BODY.

GIRLS' SOCCER

Injuries still hurting offense

By Esther Luan
& Shama Gupta

After a 2-2-2 preseason, girls soccer coach Ben Maxwell has tried to bolster their defense for the league season. So far, this emphasis hasn't resulted in more wins.

As of Jan. 27, the Falcons are 0-5 in league play and hold a record of 2-7-2.

Their biggest challenge this season has been taking shots on goal, but since the Falcons are strong in keeping possession of the ball, they hope that will help them in their upcoming game at Los Gatos on Feb. 1.

The team's recent loss of a key player was starting center back Emma Foley, a sophomore whose absence has been tough obstacle to overcome. Foley tore her ACL and meniscus during the team's home game against Los Gatos on Dec. 5, where they lost 3-0, most likely taking her out for the rest of the season. Her injury has had a big impact on the team's strategy, which centered around having the center backs attack more, said captain and senior goalie Adrienne Chan.

"Having center backs attack helps the team break the first line of pressure and helps us possess the ball higher on the field,"

Chan said. "It hasn't been quite as effective since Emma's been out."

The Falcons' struggling on offense has become a recurring theme. The team has only scored four goals all season and almost all of their losses have come in games where they failed to reach the back of the net at all.

The reason for this drought in goals is because of the adjustments the team has had to make due to injuries. With junior forward Leila Chaudhry, who has been a critical playmaker on the team, out on a torn ACL and meniscus, the team has had to adjust their build-up style since last season, senior captain and forward Ananya Krishnan said.

"It's been hard for us to score because we're playing more defensively now and two of our attacking players from last year now play center back," Krishnan said. When the team does get the chance to attack, they don't have enough numbers coming up the field with the play as needed, and generally don't take the risk of shooting.

"We are ready to train and work to play the best that we can for these upcoming games," Chan said. ♦

Because of printing deadlines, The Falcon was not able to cover the game against Santa Clara on Jan. 29.

BOYS' SOCCER

Team faces goal drought

By Andrew Li
& Alan Zu

Last Friday's 3-2 loss to Milpitas marked the boys' varsity soccer team's seventh consecutive loss since their sole 3-2 win against Cupertino on Dec. 18.

The team is 0-6 in the Division 2 league and holds a 1-10 overall record. The coaches, Chris Stott and Alex Booth, are hoping to get more commitment and effort from players in the final weeks.

Toward the beginning of the season, the team was proud that they were able to compete with teams such as Leland, Leigh, Harker, Los Gatos and Cupertino in the higher division but have recently suffered a resounding 7-2 loss to Fremont.

Senior left wing Brian Wu blames the loss to the absence of key players like junior strikers Fabian and Fernando Alvarado and sophomore left back Andrew Choi, due to travel and illness.

"We're getting better at working harder on the field and fighting for the ball, but we're still not making enough opportunities to score goals," Wu said. "We aren't connecting as well as we would like and that leads to loss of chances to goals."

Some players feel that showboating has distracted players from the ultimate goal of winning games.

"Our team just doesn't give it their all," Alvarado said. "Some players try to show off during games, which costs the team."

For example, some players try to score on their own, while not passing to other teammates and losing the ball to the opposing team.

Additionally, Alvarado feels that instead of doing the fundamentals such as passing and controlling the pace of the game, players often try executing fancy dribbling techniques and fail to communicate to teammates, resulting in breakdowns during games.

"The team overall has been getting better in each aspect," Wu said. "We still have a lot to improve on in order to secure some wins this season."

The Falcons are running out of chances to get another win, as they only have five conference games left.

The team will play on Jan. 31 against Lynbrook, play at Monta Vista on Feb. 5, host Wilcox on Feb. 12, play at Milpitas on Feb. 14 and end the season by hosting Fremont on Feb. 19. ♦

BOYS' BASKETBALL

2-4 Falcons look for consistency in push for CCS

By Benjamin Li
& Tiffany Wang

Following last Friday's stinging 67-41 defeat to Lynbrook, the Falcon basketball team, currently 2-4 in the league, is looking for more consistent play to finish out games.

Other league losses include a 67-57 defeat to Wilcox on Jan. 22, and a 76-59 loss to Santa Clara on Jan. 10 and a 51-37 loss to Gunn on Jan. 8. Their two victories were 73-65 over Monta Vista on Jan. 15 and 65-60 over Fremont on Jan. 3.

Despite their league record, a strong preseason has allowed the team to already qualify for CCS. Although the league season has so far been disappointing for them, they are hoping that the experience playing tougher teams like Wilcox will help in CCS, where they are likely to face weaker competition.

"A lot of people are improving and getting more confident in games, which makes

me hopeful for the rest of the league and CCS," junior point guard Tyler Chu said. "We had some tough games, but I feel confident that we are going to go on a run and win a lot of future games."

The biggest challenge is to stay consistent. The Falcons often lose their lead with one or two quarters left to play.

"Most of the time we tend to play really well for three quarters," junior shooting guard Cameron King said, "but there is always a period of time in a game, whether it's the first quarter or the beginning of half time, where we have mental lapses and the other team goes on a run."

The Falcons' three leading scorers — Leo Cao, Siva Sambasivam and Cameron King — have each had several games with over 20 points, a scoring balance that is quite rare in the league. However, these games have not overlapped, and the Falcons usually find themselves relying on one or two players ev-

ery game, while other shooters go cold.

This has led to opponents adjusting defensive strategies, often double-teaming on the team's hottest shooter that game. This is why the Falcons often start games strong, but falter toward the end when opponents take away their biggest weapon.

"We have to figure out how to close games out," Chu said. "We usually come out of the gate strong, but towards the end of the game, our defense falters."

Chu added that the Falcons are at their best in the transition game, as evidenced by nearly 50 percent of their points being on transition buckets in their two league wins.

"When we get out and run we are basically unstoppable," Sambasivam said. "One of our biggest struggles is offensive rebounding, but our ability to push it forces teams to send players back, allowing us to get boards and get into our transition offense."

Another challenge that the team faces is

a lack of senior leadership. With only two seniors, Sambasivam and Cao, the team is younger than many opponents.

"I think a lot of people expected this," sophomore guard Christian Li said. "We only have two seniors this year so the team is kind of young and less experienced."

This lack of experience has made it harder for the team to play consistently, as they have constant ups and downs.

"We have a lot of on and off within our team, where we can play well for a few minutes then horrible for the next few," Li said.

Regardless, the team is hopeful that they can snap out of this slump quickly and head into CCS on a winning streak.

"Our goal has always been and will always be making finals of CCS," Sambasivam said. "Our coach [Patrick Judge] has been there before, and we know that we have more than enough talent to get back there, so we just have to keep grinding." ♦

WRESTLING

Wrestling team thrives despite inexperience

BY Andy Chen
& Sina Salehi

Despite facing overwhelming odds with a team consisting of just six returning athletes of 20, head coach Taylor Wilson has managed to mold a competitive squad.

To this point, the Falcons have performed well in tournaments but struggled in dual meets.

According to Wilson, the co-ed team has medaled at every tournament they have attended, despite performing poorly at dual meets.

Senior Kole Tippetts placed second and junior Trevor Green placed third at the Santa Clara tournament on Jan. 14.

Due to the team's strong tournament performances, the team has high hopes of qualifying for CCS through their league matches, which started Jan. 9.

Three girls on the team — freshman Irene Frazier and juniors Nora Sherman and Nina Dertorossian — have already secured a CCS spot by placing top eight in a 32-tournament bracket.

The team is looking to send five boys to CCS, effectively taking all of the CCS league

spots.

Considering that only the top five wrestlers in the league are able to qualify, according to Wilson, this would be a significant achievement for the relatively inexperienced team.

To accomplish this feat, the team has been training for at least two hours each school day during the season, focusing on muscle repetition and "getting the body used to wrestling."

"We're not doing anything new right before leagues," Wilson said. "The biggest thing right now is practicing so that during competition, you can put yourself in positions where you've been there before and you can let your body take over."

The Falcons are 1-2 in dual meets: they have beaten Santa Teresa but lost to Milpitas and Monta Vista.

According to Tippetts, this problem doesn't stem from team members' weak individual performances.

Rather, the team's lack of members in the 145 and 190 lbs weight classes puts them at an automatic disadvantage.

"We don't have enough people, so we have to forfeit 12 to 18 points a meet and



FALCON // ANGELINA CHEN

Senior Kole Tippetts pins his Monta Vista opponent at a home meet on Jan. 16. The Falcons have performed strongly in tournaments and hope to sweep all the CCS qualifying spots.

start out 0-12 or 0-18," Tippetts said.

Despite this, Wilson is happy with the team's performance overall, and

"Considering the fact that I have a young

team, we're having a pretty successful season," Wilson said. "I didn't really know what to expect at first, but as of right now, I'm proud of the kids." ♦

Players, coaches warn against risky weight cutting

BY Brandon Wang
& Tiffany Wang

In 1997, three college wrestlers died in the span of six weeks, all during "strenuous weight-loss workouts," according to The New York Times. They were trying to lose weight, in hopes of dropping into a lower weight class. In the 30 years since, various wrestling bodies have tried to cut down or eliminate extreme weight cutting.

Wrestlers are split into weight classes: the under-106 pound range, 113, 120, 126, 132, 138, 145, 152, 160, 170, 182, 220, and the 220-285 pound range. Pairing wrestlers only with others in the same weight class makes the matches fairer. However, the weight-class system also encourages wrestlers to lose weight and drop to lower weight classes.

"The best advantage you can get is if you drop weight and go to a lower bracket," senior and wrestling captain Robbie Bilic said. "You'll be against lighter people and therefore have an advantage against that weight class."

This makes losing weight an attractive goal for wrestlers, though emotionally and physically unhealthy if done so quickly, a practice known as "weight cutting."

"If you don't know what you're doing it's easy to burn yourself," wrestling coach Taylor Wilson said. "I knew this guy who went from 140 pounds to 119 in less than a week, and by the end of the season he mentally burnt himself out because he was losing too much weight."



Sabato

Since water retention can sometimes be responsible for added weight, wrestlers often try to sweat the water out.

"One of the things we did last year was we piled on layers and layers of hoodies and curled up in little balls in the wrestling room," senior wrestler Nico Sabato said.

"We turned on the heaters so we were all sweating in these little cocoons and losing sweat weight."

Losing so much water can lead to dehydration, where individuals are more prone to higher blood pressure, heart palpitations and can make them weaker during matches.

Sabato said that he felt pressure to lose

the weight he had gained over the summer after not being able to work out due to a wrist injury.

"I felt like I needed to weight cut really hard to get to this weight class and I did it the way we're not supposed to," Sabato said. "I fasted for a week and drank ample amounts of water, and then for the final day cut water as well. I have to note though that my coach told me very, very specifically not to do this for wrestling, so it was entirely my personal choice."

Sabato said that as a result of the weight cutting, he ended up in a lot of physical pain and became physically sick, which has made him vow to forgo such measures.

Weight cutting that aims to cut fat as well as water can lead to an unhealthy low body fat percentage, causing a plethora of both mental problems, such as brain fog — an inability to focus and remember clearly — as well as physical problems, such as poor balance and difficulty recovering from injuries.

Weight cutting can also lead to increased mental pressures, as well as physical stress on the body caused by undereating and weight loss. For female wrestlers, cutting weight can also disrupt their periods, stop-

ping menstruation for months and leading to hormonal imbalance.

Starting in the 2006-7 season, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), which governs high school sports at the national level, implemented new rules to combat weight cutting. Among these reforms was a lower bound on the permitted body fat percentage and a weight management system that restricts weight loss during the season to at most 1.5 pounds per week. For many, the norm is that extreme amounts of weight will be cut right before an upcoming match, but this system of setting a maximum amount of weight loss per week encourages wrestlers to lose weight through exercise and good eating, rather than fasting or dehydration.

Although many wrestlers still do it, Wilson said that weight cutting was not actually necessary to make weight classes or improve, losing weight healthily through diets and exercise is enough.

"I've actually had a kid who went from 152 to 126, no dieting, nothing, just working out hard," Wilson said. "Wrestling is one of those sports where if you put in the work, it's easy to lose the weight." ♦

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Shorthanded Falcons scramble, recover from injuries

BY Anna Novoselov
& Harshini Velchamy

Due to injuries to key players, coach Danny Wallace has lately been working with a seven-player rotation, who have had trouble keeping pace with teams like Lynbrook due to a lack of subs.

Last Friday at home, they played hard for three quarters but fell to the Vikings 46-31, bringing their league record to 2-4 as of Jan. 24 and overall record to 11-7.

Lee said that at the start of the season, Loo would often drive and create open passes, but with her rooting from the bench, other players have to adjust to quickly improve their skills and execute new plays. Some posts like Bailey also had to play guard and team members who would normally be subs have been starters.

"It is great to see the underclassmen step up and the upperclassmen show leadership on and off the court," senior center Ella Parr said.

The team beat Wilcox 48-36 on Jan. 21, lost 35-33 to Palo Alto on Jan. 14, lost to Los Gatos 50-38 on Jan. 10, and beat Mt. Pleas-

ant on Jan 8.

Since the team lacks height compared to other teams, one of its strategies has been to focus on quick movements and shooting from the outside. "We are a heavy shooting team," Parr said. "Almost everyone on the team can shoot the ball, but what we have been trying to make a strength is our inside game: feeding the ball to the posts."

Another struggle the team faces is its inability to simulate the opponents' defenses and offenses during practices due to many injured and sick players. Despite this, players continue to run drills to improve their ability to work together to take advantage of the team's strengths.

From Dec. 27 to 30, the team traveled to Concord to participate in the West Coast Jamboree tournament, where the Falcons played against CCS semi-finalist-level teams, losing the first two games but winning the last one.

In between games, the team bonded by going to the movies, bowling and eating out, which allowed new players on varsity like juniors Athena Mahajani and Anaik Jeanjaquet and sophomore Naomi Mallik



FALCON // ANGELINA CHEN

Junior Iris Lee looks to set up a speedy offensive play against the Wilcox Chargers in a home game on Jan. 21. The Falcons beat the Chargers 46-38.

to become integrated into the team, which consists mainly of returning varsity players.

"Our team works really well together because we have a lot of team chemistry and everyone loves each other on and off the court," Yu said.

The team is now focusing on finishing the league season strong and preparing for CCS,

where they lost in the semifinals against Aptos in the past two consecutive years.

"So far the season has been fluctuating," Parr said, "but my hope is to see the team go far in CCS." ♦

The Falcon was unable to cover the Jan. 28 game against Cupertino due to printing deadlines.

snapshots



TALISMAN // WILSON FUNG



FALCON // ANGELINA CHEN



FALCON // ANGELINA CHEN



FALCON // ANGELINA CHEN

Freshman Jenny Campbell makes sandwiches as part of the Speak Up For Change activities on Jan. 24.

Junior Tyler Chu sizes up his defender, preparing to drive past, in a game against Fremont High School on Jan. 3.

Junior Nolan Chen passes to a teammate in scoring position during a game on Dec. 4 against Leigh High School.

Sophomore Anouk Yeh passionately recites her spoken word poem during Poetry Out Loud on Jan. 24.

GRAPHIC BY MEGAN CHEN AND REPORTING BY APURVA CHAKRAVARTHY AND ANOUK YEH

CAR NAMES

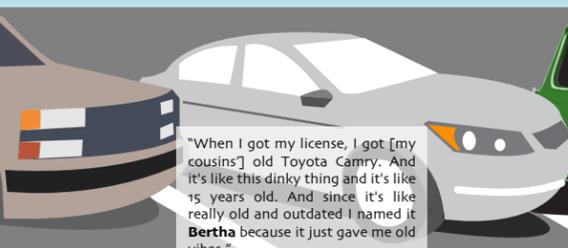
"My car is an orange Jeep that I named **Herbie** after the yellow buggy in "Herbie Goes Bananas," a classic movie series about a sentient yellow car. It has a very aggressive right side blinker, on its passenger side seat belt does not work, its rearview mirror is falling off on multiple counts, its right side speaker does not work, [but] I love my car with all of its flaws and imperfections."
- Anishi Patel

"I didn't name my car, but my dad decided to name my car '**Green Bean**,' [because] it's an old green Mini Cooper. I wouldn't ever really name my cars or any of my vehicles."
- Nakul Desai



"My car, named **The Beast**, is this seven seater with a huge trunk, Chevy suburban. It is a family car we got 21 years ago when my sisters were born. Everyone [in my family] drives the beast when they turn 16, because if you get in a crash, you win.' If anything were to happen in a crash, nothing would happen to me or the car."
- Ella Parr

"When I got my license, I got [my cousins] old Toyota Camry. And it's like this dinky thing and it's like 15 years old. And since it's like really old and outdated I named it **Bertha** because it just gave me old vibes."
- Urmila Vudali



Fresh yolks on the daily menu come with a steep learning curve

i sina chicken

Sina Salehi



One May afternoon, it was just a normal trip through the aisles of Ace Hardware, when I heard volleys of high pitched chirps beside me.

There must've been about 20 colored cotton balls in the small enclosure. Upon realizing I eat eggs every morning, I impulsively bought three small chicks. My journey as a poultryman had begun.

I wish I could say that I only bought three chicks and stopped, but the very next day I bought a fourth chick — this one being a black Ameraucana, whom I would come to hate slightly.

There was a lot of work to be done before my lofty dreams of fresh breakfast eggs could be fulfilled.

I had to train them to exist without absolute pandemonium constantly breaking loose. These chicks were fecal time bombs, and I found myself repeatedly having to clean their brooder, which would soon be replaced by a newly built coop.

Another thing I hadn't considered before buying chicks was the probability that they would not, in fact, be the egg-

laying gender. Not long after I bought them, I found that two of my chickens had developed combs.

I now had roosters in my backyard.

At the same time, their existence was now a crime, for which they'd pay dearly for if caught. If I lived in Saratoga, this wouldn't be a problem, considering that there are no anti-chicken laws exist there. However, as a Los Gatos resident, I'm subject to harsh misandrist rooster laws that require me to either collar the roosters, or turn them into soup.

Even with the collars, these birds were still loud. It wasn't unusual to wake up at 6 a.m. to an over-paranoid rooster crowing to my neighbor's lights.

In the meantime, after weeks of waiting, I gained the first reward for all my labors: a tiny, hued-colored egg from the brown chicken.

The tiny egg overcame extraordinary odds — it was **DOUBLE YOLKED**.

But such profit was not enjoyed for long, as the neighbors soon realized our scheme of owning illegal birds and complained to the city government. Not wanting to make the ultimate sacrifice, we took the roosters to a refuge at a Salinas farm.

With a new vacancy in the coop, I soon found a new pair of hens on Craigslist and brought them home, expecting the other hens to give them a warm reception.

But as they met, a standoff occurred.

They stared into each other's eyes, the small one running away, but the two brown ones remaining.

After facing off for 5 seconds, the new hen went in for the kill and latched on to the old hen's comb. Fighting viciously, blows were exchanged on both sides. The fight ended, but the tension remained, as a kind of segregation formed.

Before they could make amends, tragedy struck. One morning, I heard a loud "BADUK" at 6 a.m. This being a Saturday, I gave no attention to this, thinking that some chicken was just being loud.

I was gravely mistaken.

When I woke up, the backyard was strewn with black feathers. A chicken was missing. It was soon confirmed by our neighbors that they had seen a raccoon drag a chicken across their yard.

The sadness was immeasurably... non-existent. I never really liked this chicken, so it merely a lesson to be more careful.

Ever since then, not much dramatic has happened, as two eggs a day are made.

If others are interested in producing poultry products, be aware that chickens are high maintenance and require lots of time, especially if they're chicks.

Also, be prepared to put up a fight against your local city laws as they exile your favorite rooster. Despite these downsides, it's worth it, especially if you're an avid omelette eater. ♦

topten

TOP 10 YEARS OF THE DECADE

- 10 2010 Baby, baby, baby, ohhhhh yeah
- 9 2011 California: where's my water weather: no Swampy the alligator: yes
- 8 2012 THE WORLD IS ENDING!! oh wait jk
- 7 2013 What does the fox say? ring-din-din-din-dindindinding
- 6 2014 Ice Bucket Challenge: ALS awareness through hypothermia
- 5 2015 Black and blue or white and gold? BLACK AND BLUE OR WHITE AND GOLD? (hint: black and blue)
- 4 2016 #justiceforharambe #RIPharambe #wemissyouharambe
- 3 2017 When the whole world was obsessed with slime
- 2 2019 nobody: Yodeling kid: ooOooOOhH aaaAAaAaa
- 1 2019 The world do be melting doe

- Esther Luan and Tiffany Wang