



Couples share origin stories of their relationships.



ACE Club teaches English to rural Chinese.



Basketball goes on win streak led by hot shooting.

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Scanners streamline tutorial sign-ins

BY Harshini Velchamy & Jeanette Zhou

During first semester, paper tutorial sign-sheets were left neglected or covered in unintelligible scribbles as students complained how outdated and dumb this system was.

In an attempt to fix these issues, the school introduced a system that uses an app called TeachMore on Feb. 4. It allows students to scan their student IDs instead of signing in on paper.

TeachMore also allows students and teachers to make appointments during tutorial.

In a staff update on the same day, Principal Greg Louie announced that 930 of the 1,299 students present scanned in to tutorial with the new system, a solid 72 percent.

Despite the positive turnout, many teachers say they dislike having to spend their tutorial worrying about signing students in instead of focusing on students who need help.

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Prime time for Indian culture



Senior Rishi Jain leads the bhangra dance during rehearsal on Feb. 11 for Bombay in the Bay. The dance incorporates wooden sticks in some parts and includes a mix of all grades.

FALCON // CONNIE LIANG

ICAC TO PERFORM SHOWS TONIGHT AND TOMORROW

BY Selena Liu, Kaasha Minocha & Viraj Reddi

The Indian Cultural Awareness Club's officers and choreographers have been planning tonight and tomorrow night's Bombay in the Bay (BNB) performance for months.

BNB, ICAC's annual Bollywood dance show, features multiple dances that participants audition for as well as ones they don't. Dancers can be beginners, experts or anywhere in between.

The acts include a classical dance, freshman dance, singing performance, sophomore dance, bhangra dance, tamasha dance, junior dance, senior dance, all-girls dance, and all-boys dance.

The entire performance will take about one hour and all acts will have unique costume designs.

Both shows will include all the acts. Despite this, the performance's first night will be \$15 per ticket, and the second night will be \$20, because of the addition of food trucks.

This year, all BNB profits will be donated to a non-profit organization in India called Vikalp Sansthan, which is dedicated to ending child marriage by empowering girls and educating boys and men about women's rights.

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New quarantine policy enforced for coronavirus

BY Vicky Bai & Cici Xu

Acting on increasing fears over the coronavirus, the administration began pulling students who have traveled to China since Jan. 1 out of school and asked them to stay away long enough to establish that they don't have the disease — roughly two weeks since they came back to the U.S. Many of the students had gone home for Lunar New Year and family visits.

As of Monday, there were two students,

senior Selena Liu and Jayne Zhou, who were kept out of school by this policy, while several other students have already finished their quarantines.

"We're going to try to be as proactive as possible to support our students because this virus isn't their fault," principal Greg Louie said. "Even though the students may not even be carriers, they still have to stay home."

The novel coronavirus is a new strain of the lethal coronavirus family, a body of viruses that cause mild to severe respiratory

infections such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), which circulated widely in 2003. The new Wuhan coronavirus leads symptoms such as fever, dry cough, difficulties breathing and more.

According to CNN, more than 43,101 people are infected worldwide and 1,031 people have died from the disease as of Tuesday.

The incubation period for the coronavirus appears to be approximately 14 to 21 days, meaning the symptoms may stay hidden within a carrier for this period of time

after infection. During this time, the virus can spread discreetly. By the time people realize that the virus is spreading, it may be too late to contain it in an area. Some students have decided to wear masks to protect themselves, but despite popular beliefs, "a cloth mask provides little protection," in terms of warding off the disease, according to experts.

Some students and parents criticized local officials' response to the disease. Some

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Career Day returns to introduce professional paths

BY Sofia Jones & Alekhya Vadlakonda

Junior Irith Katiyar is interested in a career in either Computer Science, Biology or both. As such, he chose Analytics/Artificial Intelligence, Biology Life Science and Research and Software Engineer as his preferred options for the first Career Day held at the school in five years.

Career Day takes place during an extended tutorial on March 2 and March 3.

The five most popular career choices this year are Analytics/Artificial Intelligence

(Arnab Chakraborty), Biology Life Science & Research (Yvonne Linney), Software Engineer (Arush Shankar and Steve Garcia), CEO (High Tech) Entrepreneur (Haresh Patel, Dave Zinman and Nutan Malhotra) and FBI agent (Michael Gimbel).

Students took a survey regarding career interests that was open from Jan. 8-10. It allowed them to select two careers for each day, and student responses were used to assign students to specific career presentations for each day. Attending Career



Sheridan

Day sessions will be mandatory, and teachers will receive a list of the students who will be in their classroom on each day, according to guidance secretary Kathryn Sheridan.

The careers will be from various fields, including medicine, engineering, law, business, architecture, the arts, communication and more. There will be no limit on the number of students per speaker session, and the more popular career choices will be held in larger spaces on campus such as the MAP Annex.

Student interest from the last Career Day in 2015 influenced the available career options this year.

Although the career options are similar to those from 2015, the speakers will be different. Teachers, parents and staff suggested names for speakers, which were then selected by availability to speak on March 2 and March 3.

Before 2015, Career Day used to be held every other year. After 2015, there was a transition in the administrative personnel in

>> **CAREER DAY** on pg. 3



newsbriefs

High engagement results in successful Jazz Cabaret

More than 600 people attended last Saturday as the high school and the middle school bands teamed up for Jazz Cabaret in the music building.

Redwood's jazz band and choir performed alongside Saratoga's Jazz 1, the Advanced Jazz Band, a student rock band called Akshar and the Firecrackers, both concert and chamber choir and several solo singers.

Unlike many other events the music program holds throughout the year, Jazz Cabaret is not an event for fundraising.

This year, Jazz Cabaret offered various choir performances and student-run performances. Mah said that the audience interacted with the performances much more this year — taking photos and dancing to the music.

"In some ways, it went better than last year," Mah said. "There was a lot more engagement through a number of tunes, and it was good to see several traditions being continued, like the conga line and the jazz combos."

— Jonathan Li

New bell schedule evaluation underway

Parents, teachers and students have been giving feedback recently on possible new bell schedules for next year — all of which have a starting time of 8:30.

A new bell schedule is needed in order to comply with a state law that mandates all high schools to start no earlier than 8:30 by 2022. Additionally, the district is looking for a way to revise the schedule to ensure that it meets the required 64,800 instructional minutes per year while still keeping tutorial time.

Four potential bell schedules have made it to this stage. Periods may be 85 or 90 minutes long, passing may be five or 10 minutes long, tutorial may occur daily or every other day with varying lengths and the school day may end at different times but all before 4 p.m.

District stakeholders are currently giving feedback on the proposed plans, and meetings were held on Feb. 6 at both Saratoga High and Los Gatos High. A bell schedule committee, comprised of administrators, teachers, parents, students, board members and superintendent Mike Grove is set to review this feedback, and ultimately recommend a bell schedule to the school board to be approved in April. This schedule will be publicized in May.

— Alex Wang

picturethis



FALCON // JUN LEE

More trash, more work | Custodian Ruben Dearo cleans up the student center after school. He and the rest of the maintenance team now work more shifts due to the amount of trash left there by students.

Is the grass truly greener on the other side of the school district?

by LihShoshani & Jeanette Zhou

From APUSH to AP Physics and AP Calculus BC, many Saratoga High students complain that they feel caught up in an academic rat race to build the perfect college application that gets them into an elite college.

Only 15 minutes away, Los Gatos High is looked at with envy by many SHS students. Common perceptions about Los Gatos are that campus life is more relaxed, teachers give less homework, fewer students take honors and AP classes, athletics are prized above all else, and school spirit is at the heart of the school experience with academics as a distant second.

He immediately observed the glaring difference in the emphasis on athletics and students' different views on academics.

Reasons for transfers

But are these ideas accurate? Are students going there in droves to escape the Saratoga High pressure cooker?

Not so, says school registrar Robert Wise. This year, 23 students have transferred from Saratoga to Los Gatos while 60 students came here from Los Gatos — the opposite of the trend many would expect.

In fact, for the past five years, he said, Saratoga High has gotten more transfers from Los Gatos than vice versa. Los Gatos has a school population of roughly 2,150, while Saratoga High has 1,350. The reasons for transferring between the schools vary widely. For example, many of the students who transfer to Saratoga High have special education needs that are better accommodated on the Saratoga campus.

The grounds and parking lots are easily accessible by ramps, classroom space is more available and there are specialized teachers and aides.

Many students who transfer from Saratoga High to Los Gatos, on the other hand, do so for reasons usually having to do with sports or academics or both.

Sophomore Tyler Hamilton said he transferred to Los Gatos because of the school's exceptional lacrosse program and the academic stress he felt during his freshman year here.

"(At Los Gatos) people aren't as overwhelmed about grades and don't stress as much as students at Saratoga," Hamilton said. "I like how people aren't as stressed about academics because it seems to create a more happy and positive environment."

Differences in student stress

Math teacher Mike Navrides has seen what life is like at both campuses. In 2008, he transferred to Los Gatos High after teaching AP Calculus at Saratoga High for 11 years.

The obvious differences in student stress stood out to him, and he began to enjoy teaching at Los Gatos, especially since he wasn't surrounded by students who are anxious about their grades.

"I believe the most successful individuals are the ones who have good balance in their lives," Navrides said. "In my last several years at Saratoga, I noticed many students opting not to participate in athletics to concentrate on their academics."

While getting good grades is important, I saw the emphasis so heavily on grades that it came at the expense of students participating in other extracurricular activities."

Los Gatos junior Kayra Cetin, who rows at Los Gatos Rowing club (LGRC), agrees that both schools are competitive; however, she also believes that Los Gatos is a better environment for student athletes.

"It's constantly a competition between students at both schools to see how many APs you can take and what college you can get into," Cetin said. "Los Gatos takes into consideration the academic portion, but also puts a lot of funding into their sports. We have very good teams, so we're definitely a school for student athletes."

Although there are major differences between the two schools, it seems as if the majority of students are happy with their respective schools.

"Saratoga High is a great school with a teaching staff that is second to none," Navrides said. "Sometimes I miss teaching at Saratoga and not seeing people who I hold in the highest regard."

According to US News, Los Gatos graduation rates are 97 percent, and 98 percent at Saratoga. According to College Simply, Los Gatos is ranked 155th among high schools in California while

Saratoga is ranked as fifth based on the average number of students above proficient in math and reading state standardized tests.

Rally commissioner senior Risa Carter said she has noticed differences in school spirit and admits to some envy.

"I wish Saratoga had a little more school spirit because we go to an awesome school and students should be proud of that," Carter said. "High school really is what you make of it, and my experience at Saratoga has been great because I've participated in activities that boost school spirit."

Differing athletic environments

Though the envy of the perceived relaxed environment at Los Gatos may be exaggerated, there is one area where the Wildcats clearly dominate: athletics.

For instance, this past year, according to MaxPreps, Los Gatos' football team ranked 97th in the state, while Saratoga's football team ranked 530th [and fell to the Wildcats 52 - 38, the latest loss in a lopsided rivalry, with the Falcons winning only one contest in about 40 years (That win came in 2010)].

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"There are so many people coming in and out, and it's making my job as a teacher way harder because I am spending so much time trying to fix glitches," chemistry teacher Kathryn Nakamatsu said. "It is easier than dealing with the papers, but I wish they would have tested out the phone situation before they rolled it out."

Nakamatsu said that although she has used TeachMore to make appointments, she still verbally tells each student that she has made an appointment with them.

"It's hard to say how well TeachMore works because I'm not sure that, if I didn't say anything, they would know about the appointment," Nakamatsu said.

Other teachers think that the system is a huge improvement over the paper sign-ins.

Spanish teacher Bret Yeilding has noticed less traffic out of his classroom after class.

"There used to be lines of people trying to check out of tutorial, and this way is just much easier," Yeilding said.

Spanish teacher Gina Rodriguez believes that the new system makes it much easier for students to sign in during tutorial.

"It's been working great for me so far," Rodriguez said. "It's better than the paper system because they can track the students and it's faster."

While Louie acknowledges the inevitable glitches, he has a larger goal in mind.

"I understand that there were a few conflicts and challenges," Louie said in an email. "But this is why I wanted to use and practice this program this semester so that August is smooth as silk."

Sophomore Jaime Fernandez Da Pointe said that, although he has noticed the same number of people wandering around during tutorial with the implementation of the new tutorial policy as before, he still believes that it is an improvement on the paper sign-in system.

"It's better than the paper system because they can track students and it's faster."

TEACHER Gina Rodriguez

"I think the scanning will force more people to actually be involved," Fernandez Da Pointe said. "Because the school managed to reduce the amount of time spent signing in, it is more likely to be successfully implemented."

Junior Lauren Tan considers the new system not as preferable as last year's system but understands that its implementation is necessary.

BNB

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While BNB profits are usually targeted toward education, this year's charity is focused on a unique social issue that ICAC hasn't worked with before, according to senior officer Krishna Minocha.

One of Vikalp's founders, Usha Choudhary, has been working to stop child marriage in Rajasthan, India, a region with over 68 million people, for more than 17 years.

When Choudhary was 14, she visited her grandparents' house. There, she met some guests, whom she believed had just come to visit her family. Soon, she realized her relatives were wedding her to a man 10 years her senior.

"I was treated like a doll. They brought ornaments, fruits, decorations and completed the ceremony within 10 minutes. I was shocked at what was happening to me," Choudhary said. After several

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different options for their future. "It is important that we provide ways to introduce the wide array of career possibilities to students to get them thinking and realizing that there are more career paths than perhaps the one or two they know about," Mohnike said.

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>> bigidea

Career Day

When is Career Day and what is it for?
Career Day is happening on March 2 and 3 during an extended tutorial. The event's goal is to introduce students to different professional career paths.

Who organized Career Day?
Career Day was last held in 2015. This year, administrative assistant Kathryn Sheridan played a major role in organizing Career Day.

What careers will be presented?
There will be various fields, including medicine, engineering, law, business, architecture, the arts, communication and more.

charge of Career Day; there were some changes this year with previous administrative assistant Sarah Christensen moving away and Sheridan taking the position, making it difficult to organize a Career Day.

"Without that coordination, a Career Day that involves over 70 volunteer speakers, a choice for 1,350 students and facility coordination would be impossible to pull off," assistant principal Kerry Mohnike said. Some students intend to use Career Day to learn about future fields, and others, about careers they would like to learn more about as a possible hobby.

Katiyar wants to explore a more realistic view for his future.

"I hope to understand a career in a STEM field, what that looks like and what you can do in the future," he said.

Regardless of how the students plan to use Career Day, Mohnike feels that it is important for students to be exposed to many



FALCON // JUN LEE

Juniors Tyler Chu and Philbert Fan scan each other's ID cards to sign into science teacher Kirk Davis' classroom during tutorial on Feb. 10.

ficer team has decided to replace their traditional post-performance dinner with food trucks like Chaat Palace Truck and Momo Truck.

"In past years, there was always dinner included, but not many people ate the food, so this year we're trying to de-emphasize the food aspect by giving less food with food trucks," Jain said.

"We know whatever we give them will be used for something extremely meaningful."

SENIOR Krishna Minocha

Beyond adjusting their performances from previous years, the officers have been working hard to overcome their various obstacles.

Along with social studies teacher Hana Chen, campus supervisor Helen Jarrett has been added as an adviser; their splitting of duties

has posed a challenge for the officers, according to Jain.

Lodha also spoke about the challenges of organizing the dances, noting that availability was a major issue.

"People just can't come to practices on time or they have prior commitments, and you have to teach them the same dance separately over and over again," she said.

In addition, dances from different grade levels conflict. Senior officer Vishnu Seshadri noted that grade levels often clash when dances want to use the same songs or costume colors, but upperclassmen ultimately have priority. Despite the conflicts and challenges, Jain looks forward to a successful BNB performance and hopes for good attendance at the event.

"The whole show comes together to combine the efforts of all of our performers and is definitely a team-dependent event," Jain said. "We hope that this year's BNB performance will be the best one yet." ◆

QUARANTINE

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of the quarantined students attended school for days before they received notes saying they had to stay home.

"It is frightening that the policy is so recent," sophomore Cheryl Wu said. "This does not shine a positive light on those in charge, since people could have already gotten sick during school-wide events like the Speak Up for Change assembly."

Louie said the school strictly follows directions from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), California Department of Health of the Santa Clara County, Public Department of Health, the Santa Clara County Office of Education and the Los Gatos Saratoga Unified School District.

Other schools like Los Gatos High have a similar policy to prevent the spread.

Administrators have asked teachers of the quarantined students to record lectures

and post the recordings online. Another option is using an application called Swirl, where teachers can wear a device that tracks the lessons taught in the classroom and transfers it to an app, where students can access the material.

For students in Hubei Province, winter break has been extended and the exact start date for schools remains undetermined and depends on the virus.

Schools in China are also having students take online classes to make up for classes in class work. ◆



GRAPHIC BY ELAINE TOH

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 an alumni who appeared on College Jeopardy and finished second place.

2008 alumnus Ryan Stoffers appeared on ABC's College "Jeopardy!" from Feb. 1-5, 2010, placing second and taking home \$50,000.

Then a mathematics and economics major at UCLA, Stoffers's interest in "Jeopardy!" began in high school; he avidly watched the 7 p.m. show during dinner. History teacher Jerry Sheehy, who held trivia games every Friday during class, noted his aptitude for "Jeopardy!"-style trivia. He was also one of the editors of the 2008 Talisman yearbook.

Though he had posted qualifying scores on an online "Jeopardy!" test twice before, he was never invited onto the show until that year. Once he received the call, Stoffers said he spent hours preparing for the tournament, making flashcards and memorizing world capitals, works of literature and works of opera.

After two weeks of competing and winning on College Jeopardy, Stoffers reached the tournament final and was trailing Nick Yozamp of Washington University in St. Louis by \$5,200. He answered correctly on the topic of Biblical Kings while Yozamp answered incorrectly, but Stoffers's \$1,000 wager was too low to cover the difference.

Stoffers later graduated from UCLA and earned a masters degree in public affairs from Princeton University. He now works as a program examiner at the Office of Management and Budget in Washington, D.C.

This account is a summary of two articles that appeared in the Feb. 5, 2010, and Feb. 26, 2010, print editions of The Falcon. The original story was written by Robin Liu and Kevin Mu, while the follow-up was written by Brandon Yang.

Annual student productions offer chance to hone acting skills

by Edwin Chen
& Anjali Nugggehali

In the window between the closing of the fall play each fall and the start of the spring musical, drama students have the chance to work independently on works of their choosing.

This year, two student productions were held in the Thermond Drama Center. The first, "Crimes of the Heart," ran on Jan. 24, 25 and 26 and the other, "You Have the Right to Remain Dead," played on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1.

Participants in the productions were responsible for set design, stage managing and stage building — with each under the direction of two seniors in Sarah Thermond's advanced drama class.

Sophomore Taylor Zhou played the character of Doc Porter in "Crimes of the Heart." The play revolves around three Southern sisters with widely differing personalities, each searching for their own identity while dealing with individual struggles such as alcoholism, abuse and dissatisfaction with life. Zhou played the ex-lover of Meg, one of the three sisters.

"Crimes of the Heart" is unique because unlike typical theater, it's only set in one place," Zhou said. "It follows the old principles of theater which are a concrete idea of setting and time period."

"Crimes of the Heart" was directed by



Freshman Olivia Smith performs with sophomore Samantha Wiesner during rehearsal for "You Have the Right to Remain Dead" on Jan. 28. The play was held on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1.

Elodie Torres, who is the captain of the ComedySportz team and is also on the media and marketing board for the drama program.

Directing student productions is an honors project for Drama 4 students, and Torres applied at the end of her junior year, earning

the opportunity to direct due to her continued participation in the program.

While Torres doesn't have any plans to pursue directing as a career, she learned valuable skills during the process, such as leadership, creativity and dedication.

"Directing is a huge undertaking, but I'm

really glad I did it because the final product is something I'm super proud of," she said.

Junior Stephen Ludwig was a cast member of "You Have the Right to Remain Dead," directed by Surbhi Bhat.

This play took a more comedic approach than "Crimes of the Heart," which has a much darker tone. It also involved improv and audience participation, and characters were free to ad-lib during the performance. The play revolved around a murder mystery involving a Southern family full of secrets.

Both casts had around two months to perfect their shows, unlike the several months of preparation allotted for the fall play and upcoming spring musical, "Freaky Friday."

The two casts practiced each school day, either in the Thermond Drama Center or in the cafeteria.

Because both shows had the same practice schedule, the directors had to work out rehearsal spaces. However, having around nine students per cast made organizing rehearsals much less complicated.

Zhou believes that the small cast sizes also provide opportunities for students to shine in their roles.

"Student productions are a much more intimate experience, and it's easier to get a more significant role than if you were in a bigger production," Zhou said. "Especially if you're an aspiring actor, trying something that's smaller-scaled can be really helpful." ♦

Alumni artists incorporate STEM influences into their work

by Nicole Lu
& Jeanette Zhou

2019 alumna Hannah Chang remembers standing on a sidewalk in the science wing in December of 2018 and looking at the wall in front of her.

After months of grueling work and many buckets of paint, she had finished the mural before her, one depicting Earth and outer space, decorated with various organisms and vivid colors.

Chang completed the mural as a part of a 20 Time Project in her Anatomy and Physiology class taught by Kris Orre. The 20 Time Project is an assignment in which students use 20 percent of their class time to work on an independent project that has some relation to the class.

According to US News's 2019 Top 100 STEM schools, Saratoga High ranks 18th top STEM school in the U.S., but a substantial number of students have little or no interest in these subjects and seek different paths at the school.

Chang, who currently studies at the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), knew that she wanted to focus on art since middle school.

Because of this mindset, she wasn't deterred by outside pressures to conform to the STEM stereotype. "I did feel pressured to do well academically like my friends and classmates," Chang said. "But it wasn't too much of a bother since I knew I was going to follow an art route."

Laura Chaland, a 2018 alumna who currently studies Graphic Design at the California Institute of the Arts, a private

university in Santa Clarita, grew up surrounded by artists, with her grandfather as a painter, her uncle as a tattoo artist and her mom studying art therapy.

Chaland felt inspired, rather than pressured, by Bay Area STEM standards.

"I'd say the STEM side of the Bay Area influences my art style, and not in any negative way," Chaland said. "I was more inspired to combine technology and art together, hence why I chose graphic design. I'm currently focusing on motion graphics and VR Design, which is a lot more technical than the fine arts."

Along with creating pieces for class, Chaland also does freelance work on Fiverr, an online market for freelance services, mostly creating album covers for independent

SoundCloud artists and friends as well as short animation loops.

While many seem to believe that majoring in art is easy, that is far from the truth.

In fact, according to Chang, the everyday schedule of art school is rigorous and packed with time-consuming, puzzling assignments. Art students regularly stay up late to finish multimedia graphics or canvas paintings. Chang often finds herself pulling all-nighters to finish arduous projects; she mostly works with paper cutting, gouache or watercolor, but sometimes does projects with wood or conte, a hard grease-free crayon.

"Even though we don't need to study for exams, we still have critiques for every project we do, and each project is very time-consuming and labor-intensive," Chang said. "I feel like the effort we put in equals the amount of effort put into STEM majors."

Class of 2019 alumnus Usman Khan, who is majoring in Arts and Entertainment Technologies at the University of Texas, said he has a busy schedule and work-packed weekends before a major project is due.

As another student who is currently focusing on digital art, Khan focuses on creating pieces that can be viewed online for companies or groups, like logos focusing on a brand's aesthetic.

"Digital art is a really pure form of problem-solving because there's never a set way to create something."

ALUMNUS Usman Khan

Khan became interested in the fields of graphic design and digital art when he switched into the school's Media Arts Program halfway through his sophomore year.

"For me, what I do is a way to stamp my personality onto my work, which I'm not sure is the case for other professions," Khan said. "Digital art is a really pure form of problem-solving because there's never a set way or set method to create something, and even that 'something' can always be changing."

Art also attracts practitioners because of the creative freedom it provides.

"The two biggest barriers to people striving to be artists are money and outside perception," Khan said. "With outside perception, nothing anyone says can affect how well you as an individual perform. Living in Saratoga, we are blessed with a really high foundational educational building block that sets us up for success regardless of if we choose STEM or art."

Khan said that his supportive parents



An drawing shared on Instagram by alumna Laura Chaland depicts a jester monkey.

played a big role in his decision to major in art. According to Khan, humanities fields and STEM fields may be more interconnected than most people think.

Despite the stereotypes and misconceptions related to two seemingly different career paths, he believes that success is not set in stone and one can find it regardless of whatever profession they choose to pursue.

"If I tell someone that I do art and they say something like 'have fun being nothing in life,' they can't actually affect the outcome of anything I do," Khan said. "I guess that ties back into STEM vs. arts. They're just two different paths in life that different people take for their own reasons and that makes no one better or worse for it." ♦

togataks

Would you consider art as a major of interest in college?

"Yes, I've always been inspired by others' creativity and enjoyed art classes."



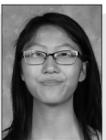
senior Lucy Liang

"I've always been a filmmaker, so I applied to media programs within STEM schools."



senior Nakul Nagaraj

"I really enjoy drawing and taking pictures and am considering to minor in art."



junior Angelina Chen

National tournaments bring excitement and stress

by Serena Li
& Joann Zhang

As spring approaches, so does the prime time for speech and debaters.

The early months of the year focus on qualifying and preparing for the biggest nationwide tournaments, including the National Speech and Debate Association National Tournament (NSDA), the National Catholic Forensic League (NCFCL) Grand Nationals and the Tournament of Champions (TOC).

Coast Forensics League (CFL) 3, one of the largest local league tournaments in recent years, took place on Jan. 23 at Milpitas High. Sophomore Nandini Desai placed first in the Humorous Interpretation speech category.

"I didn't expect to win at all," Desai said. "It was stressful because the competitors were amazing, but I'm glad I did well."

Sophomore Anouk Yeh placed third in Program Oral Interpreta-

tion (POI), senior Sammy Suliman placed fourth in International Extemporaneous (IX) and sophomore Selina Chen placed fifth in Expository.

At the Golden Desert Debate Tournament at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas on Feb. 1-3, senior Ujjwal Krishnamurthi placed first, and senior Adhit Sankaran and junior Siva Sambasivam made the finals, winning first and 10th speaker, respectively. Senior Ronak Pai and sophomore Ayaan Haque reached the quarterfinals.

Additionally, Yeh, along with Sankaran, Pai, Sambasivam and junior Neil Shah, qualified for NCFCL Grand Nationals Tournament in Chicago after the Sacramento qualifying tournament on Jan. 22.

The CFL state qualifiers will be on March 1 at Leland High, and the top seven competitors will advance to the state competition. As for the national qualifiers, depending on the level of the district and the number of event entries, one to

four competitors in each event will be sent to the NSDA Nationals, the most prestigious speech and debate competition of the year.

Sankaran and Pai automatically qualified for the National Tournament due to their high ranking in the 2019 tournament. They finished 13th, and additionally automatically qualified for the 2020 Tournament of Champions.

The other team members share the same excitement. Selina Chen recently placed second at the Stanford National Invitational and won the James Logan MLK Invitational. She plans to continue competing in Expository at the Cal Berkeley Invitational from Feb. 15 to Feb. 17, and the National Individual Events Tournament of Champions (NIETOC) from May 8-10.

"I'm really excited since my speech is about a traditional Chinese instrument and my immigrant story," Chen said. "I'm eager to travel to places like Houston for NIETOC to give my speech and spread my culture." ♦



Waiting to see if she advances to quarterfinals, sophomore Maanvi Chawla practices her oratory at the Stanford Invitational on Feb. 8.

Fewer stores donating clothes to Benefit Fashion Show

by Rohan Kumar
& Christine Zhang

Head Benefit Fashion Show commissioners Natalie Tarbox and Jeffrey Xu have spent hours on their phones this year on an increasingly difficult task: finding fashion store owners and managers to lend outfits to the event.

Of the 20 stores they contacted, only eight expressed interest in donating outfits to the annual fundraising event. Most said previous participation had not increased their business.

With the show coming up on Feb. 29 in the Large Gym, Tarbox and Xu, along with their club adviser, Spanish teacher Stefany Marks, and their fellow commissioners — seniors Ava Bender and Katie Lam and juniors Katie Chen and Isabelle Lee — are racing to get outfits for the event.

More than 200 student models are expected to display outfits from various fashion stores, in the process earning revenue for a selected charity. This year, the show will be raising money for A Wish to Give Foundation, a nonprofit organization

that supports underprivileged children by providing educational resources such as tutoring, computers, books and exposure to outside opportunities.

"It's a really awesome community event for the whole school," Tarbox said. "It's just fun for the whole community to come out and raise money for a good cause."

Last year, the commission donated to Color a Classroom with Love following the Paradise fires in November 2018, but this year they switched to A Wish to Give Foundation, since it was a more local charity that was suggested by a Saratoga alum's parent, Debbie Bus.

Ticket prices start at \$10 for students with ASB, \$20 for students without ASB and \$25 for adults, with premium tickets priced at \$40. Premium attendees will receive a goodie bag and are reserved better seats. There will also be a silent auction at the event with gift certificates, clothes, coupons and other items donated by fashion stores. Tarbox said the show generally makes from \$10,000 to \$15,000 in profits.

Tarbox said the commissioners have been meeting weekly since the start of the

school year, coordinating logistics such as lighting, staging and scheduling.

Among the 20 stores they have reached out to are Banana Republic, Redemption and Palapa Lounge.

Outfits will be assigned on a first-come-first serve basis due to the difficulty of finding stores to donate.

"It's just a constant thing," Tarbox said. "You always have to be reaching out to stores and expecting the unexpected."

First Date and Prom are two themes that have not gone as well as planned. Camille La Vie, the company that provided First Date dresses last year, and francesca's, which provided Prom dresses, are two companies that dropped out of the event.

Although Marks was able to find another store, thredUP, to provide eight dresses for First Date, the commission was

unable to find a store to provide for Prom, meaning that the models will have to wear their own dresses for the event. The Saratoga Library will also donate three men's outfits for the First Date theme.

"We'll definitely have enough outfits for First Date, but we might not have enough for the entire event," Xu said. "We have a low volume of outfits, but I think it'll work out."

Other themes include Girls Night Out, Boho, "Fun in the Sun, Rock and Roll, Bromance, Country Club, California Winter," Cultural, Outdoors, Athletic Wear and Design Your Own. The Cultural theme this year will incorporate cultural outfits donated from students in order to expand diversity.

Xu said outfits will be assigned on a first-come-first-serve basis due to the difficulty of finding stores to donate outfits. Models who aren't assigned an outfit will have to bring their own or borrow one from their peers.

"Right now it feels like everything's a mess, but we just need to keep working hard and it will come together," Xu said. ♦

Increasing student litter a significant campus issue

by Cici Xu
& Samantha Yee

As the lunch bell has sounded in recent months, a discouraging sight has greeted administrators and maintenance staff on the tables inside the student center, in restrooms and in the student parking lot: an increasing amount of litter.

Littering has occurred more frequently at the end of lunch time than at any other time throughout the day, and is becoming particularly noticeable in the student center, assistant principal Matt Torrens said.

Torrens said that if the trash problem in the student center is not resolved, the building may be closed during lunch the way the Upper Field has been.

The upper field closed recently during lunch after too many students were leaving litter there.

"Kids are leaving behind garbage where all they have to do is literally reach over three feet and drop it in the garbage, but they just forget," Torrens said. "So we are trying to get kids in the habit here at school."

Tables in the quad are typically more trash-free than the inside of the student center, which Torrens believes is because students are more used to the environment

of their usual meeting place where they've already developed good habits.

Maintenance head Paul Weir thinks that if pressed time is the reason students often leave trash behind, a five-minute warning from an alarm or student leader at the end of each lunch period in the student center could help curb the trash problem.

Students leaving their trash behind has also increased the burden of cleaning up campus for the maintenance department. Maintenance has added one more cleaning shift during lunch time to combat trash overflowing, Weir said.

Restrooms also need to be cleaned more frequently than before. Since there have been complaints about them being dirty throughout the day, maintenance added an extra hour of cleaning the restrooms.

"I'm hoping that the students notice our efforts," Weir said.

The parking lot is also littered with trash when students come back from weekends and lunch. Pizza boxes and fast-food wrappings are often on the side of the roads, posing obstacles for cars driving through.

It's not only students who litter, but the community as a whole, school officials said. The maintenance department has noticed excessive trash in the parking lots after

adults attend community events on weekends.

"Some people have a higher conscious level and it's easy for them to throw things away," Weir said. "Some people are used to having someone clean up after them, and they leave the stuff there."

Despite trash being a significant issue

around campus, Weir does not see major reasons for alarm.

"I have a lot of respect for the student body," Weir said. "They treat the school very well, and I appreciate that. There is room for us to improve and clean up a little bit, but we really appreciate their support and respect they show the campus and the staff." ♦

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FOURTH PERIOD

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The Saratoga Falcon is published 12 times per year by the Advanced Journalism classes of Saratoga High School, 20300 Herriman Ave., Saratoga, CA 95070. Views expressed in The Saratoga Falcon are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the administration, faculty or school district.

MISSION STATEMENT

The staff of The Saratoga Falcon is committed to objectively and accurately representing the diverse talents, cultures and viewpoints of the Saratoga High School community.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Saratoga Falcon welcomes all signed letters of opinion, which are subject to editing for length, accuracy and grammar. Please send them to mathew.luo@saratogafalcon.org. For ad information, phone (408) 867-3411, ext. 222.

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Fast-moving diseases like coronavirus need swift, decisive official responses

As the novel coronavirus has spread in the past month, it has become clear that local health officials need to do a better job preparing for such a situation in the future. The recent actions taken by officials in the Santa Clara County Public Health Department have seemed both reactionary and slow.

So far we have been lucky to avoid an outbreak. The next time we may not be.

On Feb. 3, the Santa Clara County Office of Education and the Santa Clara County Public Health Department issued a statement to all schools in the county, including Saratoga High, calling for any staff or student who had been in the Wuhan-containing Hubei province of China within the past 14 days to not attend school for the next 14 days. While this was a mandatory quarantine, they also called for a voluntary quarantine by those who had visited any other part of China within the past 14 days.

However, these quarantines were implemented weeks too late, considering all the students who were quarantined had already attended school for a number of days. Given that a preeminent danger behind the virus is the 14-day incubation period — during which the infected are already highly contagious despite a lack of symptoms — action against the virus should have been immediate.

With a virus as contagious and fatal as the novel coronavirus, timely and immediate action is crucial in assisting the prevention of the virus. But timeliness is exactly what the county's actions lacked.

But beyond being just late, the current mandatory quarantine failed to actually accomplish its intended goal of protecting the school. The quarantine only accounts for a minority of potential carriers: The number of students who have visited China recently is dwarfed by the number of students whose immediate family members have recently visited China.



This latter group, all of whom could have potentially been exposed to the virus by a family member, is accounted for in the statement by the Santa Clara County Public Health Department. The department called for the quarantining of any student with family members who had visited China in 2020, and barring them from coming to school.

This is the part of the quarantine that is especially difficult to actively enforce. As difficult as it is to keep track of students who may have visited the Hubei province in China, it is much more difficult to monitor students with family members who have visited the Hubei province and could likely be contagious carriers of the virus. Despite the difficulties, health workers should go into communities and track down potential carriers.

Many countries have taken swift action to stop the virus. Singapore has prepared to cancel any mass gatherings, as well as to suspend school. Japan has barred entry for anyone who has visited the Hubei province. Along

with these important actions, many airlines have suspended all flights to China.

With the gravity of the epidemic, it is the responsibility of the local county and public health department to follow the lead of the global community and help prevent the virus from spreading. This includes not only screening and quarantining any potential student or staff member who might have the virus, but even more drastic actions necessary to prevent any further spread.

If the safe thing to do is to prevent students and teachers who have been in contact with someone with coronavirus from coming to school, that should be done. If it gets to the point where

school needs to be canceled for days or weeks, that should happen, too. The safety of students, teachers and administrators should undoubtedly be the utmost priority.

Since 2009, there have been five Global Health Emergencies ranging from Ebola to polio. Now, coronavirus joins the list, as it is rapidly spreading, highly contagious and extremely dangerous.

While the virus has already impacted the entire world, every effort to put a halt to the proliferation of the virus is crucial. This won't be the last time such protocols will be needed as pandemics become more common. It is important that the actions of health officials are swift and effective. ♦

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The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 19-8 in support of this article.

Tutorial scanners provide many improvements

By Matthew Luo

The new tutorial scan-in system and its corresponding application, the TeachMore FlexTime App, were released Feb. 4. The app not only streamlines the tutorial sign-in process by changing from a physical sign-in sheet to a student ID barcode scanner, but it also provides an online platform for teachers and students to book tutorial appointments together.

This new tutorial scan-in system is, for all practical purposes, an upgrade from the previous one. Now, tutorial sign-in queues around the school will move more quickly, and the school will now be able to accurately track where students go during tutorial.

The school's switch to the new tutorial sign-in system is commendable. Though many students

would prefer having no sign-ins at all, the school cannot revert to that model because tutorial would risk no longer counting as instructional minutes for the state department of education. With the school's hands tied by California law, the redundancies in the scan-in system and the TeachMore app should be overlooked.

Though the scanners cannot consistently identify pictures of IDs on students' phones, they work as intended on physical IDs. That alone is enough to make tutorial sign-ins much less of a hassle. Tracking students' tutorial usage, in addition to satisfying state auditors, can also help the district make a more informed decision about future bell schedules.

The newfound ability for students and teachers to schedule tutorial appointments is somewhat

beneficial as well. It is now easier to keep track of tutorial appointments, although this capability does not extend to after school or lunch appointments.

In time, perhaps these scanners will be viewed as an asset rather than a burden.

These two functions of scanners are not only an improvement to tutorial, but also a big step forward in improving the school's use of technology. The school could use the same scanners at events such as dances or Career Day. The TeachMore app could soon join

the ranks of Canvas and the SHS website in its usage.

All that being said, the switch to a better sign-in system does not fundamentally change what sign-ins are: an invention to satisfy California's educational law. Many of TeachMore's new functions are superfluous. The school cannot actually enforce "tutorial truancy," and tracking down students in case of emergency is probably better done over the PA system. Tutorial appointments have traditionally been made face-to-face, and there are no real faults in that system.

Nonetheless, the school is trying its best to make tutorial as hassle-free as possible, and the well-executed rollout of the scanners is testament to that. Growing pains will pass, and in time, perhaps these scanners will be viewed as an asset rather than a burden. ♦



The time for new solar panels is now

WHILE OTHER HIGH SCHOOLS WENT SOLAR YEARS AGO, SARATOGA HIGH REMAINS WITHOUT THIS TECHNOLOGY

By Cici Xu

More than six years of effort to implement solar panels in our campus parking lot have gone by in vain. According to Inside Climate News, over 5,500 U.S. schools are currently using solar power, and about 1,000 of those schools are in the Bay Area. It's time the school joined their ranks.

The panels would have to be installed as atop carports or canopies in the parking lot because the buildings here are not structurally strong enough to hold them. Many high schools and universities in the area have installed solar panels in the same fashion.

Research published in the Environmental Research Letters showed that a school's solar panels could meet up to 75 percent of its electricity needs and reduce its carbon footprint by 28 percent. Installing the panels would also set an admirable example of sustainability for future Saratoga residents to follow.

Feasibility and cost of the panel are manageable concerns. Alumnus Kiran Rachamalla, who was leading the solar panels project until he graduated in 2019, estimates the solar panels would pay for themselves in 15 years. In addition, despite contractors' reluctance to give hard dates and prices for the installation of the panels, many schools within 10 miles of Saratoga have successfully installed their panels with reasonable costs and within reasonable time frames.

Los Altos High School finished installing 34,000 square feet of solar panels in time for the start of school in 2011. Similarly, Mountain View High School completed 57,000 square feet of solar panels in the past year.

The principal of Los Altos High has stated that constructing Los Altos's solar panels took longer than their summer break but did not exceed one school year. Nevertheless, Los Altos sectioned off the installation process so that there was still a sufficient amount of parking lot space available for

students to park in and be dropped off at. The same could be done at Saratoga High.

The main opponents of the plan do not cite cost or feasibility when criticizing the panels. Rather, the plan has been held off each year by superficial and unreasonable concerns from nearby residents who are afraid that the solar panels would obscure views of the mountains behind the campus.

Good things always come with sacrifices, and in this case, the benefits of improving sustainability on campus clearly outweigh the cost of obscuring neighbors' views. To be clear, neighbors are part of the community, but they don't own the school and should not dictate policy here.

Still, their firm opposition has so far meant that Saratoga High is in only the first step of the process. At the moment, the school still needs to present the plan to Sun Power, the company that would oversee the installation, conduct another feasibility assessment and present the plan to adminis-

trators and the school board before the project can begin.

All these steps should happen without delay. Climate change, stemming from the massive emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, is one of the biggest present-day issues that will only grow in the near future.

According to the European Union's EC-MWF Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service, we are currently dealing with a record of 370 million emitted tons of carbon dioxide from bushfires in Australia. It poses a more urgent threat to us than it did 10 years ago.

Implementing solar panels in the parking lots is a small but significant step in the right direction. It would not only better protect the environment but set a better example for students to follow. In short, reducing the school's carbon footprint matters more than protecting nearby residents' views. The time for solar power at SHS is now. ♦

Removing GPA distribution table was the right choice

By Michael Wong & Jeffrey Xu

As the start of early college applications began last fall, the administration unveiled an unexpected GPA distribution table in the school profile, which goes to colleges. A push from the parent community resulted in a change that further refined the table, providing even finer GPA categories for each bracket and the exact number of students in each group.

This was a surprising reversal of recent policies geared toward reducing stress and improving the academic environment because the chart could effectively show class rankings of seniors.

A second outcry from the community forced the school to backpedal on the change, and the whole fiasco was over within a week after it started, ultimately resulting in the original less detailed version of the GPA distribution table being sent to colleges.

Though the administration's quick response to the concerns of the community is commendable, the initial decision to include a detailed chart was unexpected and impactful. Upholding the finely tuned GPA scale would have promoted the toxic academics that the school has tried to cur-

tail for years.

The concern over the chart was mainly with its implementation. Having a GPA distribution table is normal; in fact, most schools around the Bay Area have some sort of infographic, but the proposed table was so finely separated that it effectively spelled out class rank.

While most schools generally separate student data by half point increments and unweighted GPAs, the proposal combined quarter point increments with weighted GPAs, with an even narrower 4.5 to 4.67 increment on the very top.

Viewers, namely colleges, can then infer an understanding of the comparable ability of each student from the exact number of students displayed within each of the small ranges, second only to a rank number in student transcripts.

The obvious problem with including something so similar to actual class ranking results from the increasing competitiveness of admissions. Factors such as acceptance rates are considered in national rankings, which has led colleges to buy student information from CollegeBoard to artificially increase application numbers, while maintaining the number of freshmen accepted (see Tulane University).

For class rank, top universities some-

times tout their class compositions as the top percentile of their students' respective high schools, a factor in most national rankings.

Extending such competitiveness to academics will only make the school's learning environment more toxic.

The question then becomes whether the school should actively distinguish the 13 students in the class of 2020 who have acquired above a 4.5 GPA using detailed categories, or instead group the top 50 percent of students who have above a weighted 4.0 GPA into a single broad category. The latter would benefit above-average students as it still groups them into the premier category, whereas the former would solely benefit top students.

If the reasons for previous changes such as discarding the use of pluses and minuses in the grading system in 2016 in order to establish a uniform grading

system and decrease academic stress still holds, then such specific segmentation of GPAs should similarly be discarded.

While comparative rankings can foster healthy rivalries and drive students to work hard, these are already inherent in the multitude of competitions and activities students participate in.

Extending such competitiveness to school academics will only cause the school's learning environment to be more toxic.

Rather than inward competition between their own ranks, students should compete against the best in other schools and foster a supportive environment within the school.

This is what allows the school to thrive against the best, while heeding concern to students' mental health.

Changing student metrics in the school profile is consequential and warrants a thorough discussion before any implementation, especially when it comes at the request of few.

Because the inclusion of a more detailed GPA table brings greater peer pressure and stress without causing significant detriment in its absence, the withdrawal of the proposal was a timely and appropriate solution. ♦

Standardized tests have no good alternative

By Preston Fu

The University of California System (UC) was sued last December by the predominantly Hispanic and black Compton School District for requiring applicants to take the SAT or ACT. The lawsuit claimed that the UC standardized testing requirement measures race and family income over academic achievement despite UC's legal obligation to provide equal access to all students.

College Board's 2019 SAT Score Report stated that 55 percent of Asian students and 45 percent of white students scored at least a 1200, compared to just 9 percent of African American students and 12 percent of Hispanic students.

The average score among students whose parents did not pursue a college degree was 983, in comparison to the average of 1171 among students who had at least one parent with a college degree.

It's hardly a surprise that most teens in places like Saratoga and Los Gatos attend intensive SAT preparation classes and perform better on those tests partly as a result of this, better schools and the educational level of their parents. What the lawsuit fails to recognize is that standardized testing is still the most objective way of comparing two applicants and identifying one as better suited to a university than another.

While privileged students will naturally have educational advantages in the form of test prep and additional tutoring, there remains a need for a metric by

which universities can measure all students.

Whether the schools compare students by performance in school and extracurriculars or by test scores, the wealth issue persists. Taking test scores out of the picture will not do anything to relieve the issue, because economic privilege permeates almost every aspect of a student's educational performance.

There remains a need for a metric by which universities can measure all students.

Some critics claim that using grades would serve as a better measure. However, the existence of phenomena such as grade inflation and varying course difficulties and grading scales from school to school show that GPA is a number with no units. It means little without context.

SAT and ACT scores remain the single best way to judge applicants by a standardized grading scale. There is nothing at the moment that can easily take their place.

It's easy to see why minority students who sued the UCs have an underlying goal of attending America's best public universities. And they are at a huge disadvantage compared to wealthy students.

Having said that, though, I would challenge the students in Compton to suggest a better solution than standardized tests. ♦



GRAPHIC BY AMANDA ZHU

Ditch commercialized gifts

VALENTINE'S DAY SHOULD BE AN OCCASION, NOT A CHORE

By Sofia Jones & Sandhya Sundaram

Valentine's Day is the one day of the year that's supposed to be filled with nothing but love and appreciation for one's significant other. However, over time, the holiday has gotten a poor reputation for being over-commercialized to the point of losing all original meaning.

People scramble to buy flowers, chocolate or something equally superficial because they feel obligated to prove their love, but these actions lack genuine affection. Hallmark caters to consumerism, creating this idea that Valentine's Day is about buying presents and overpriced cards. This turns the holiday into a chore and defeats its purpose of being a wholesome celebration of love.

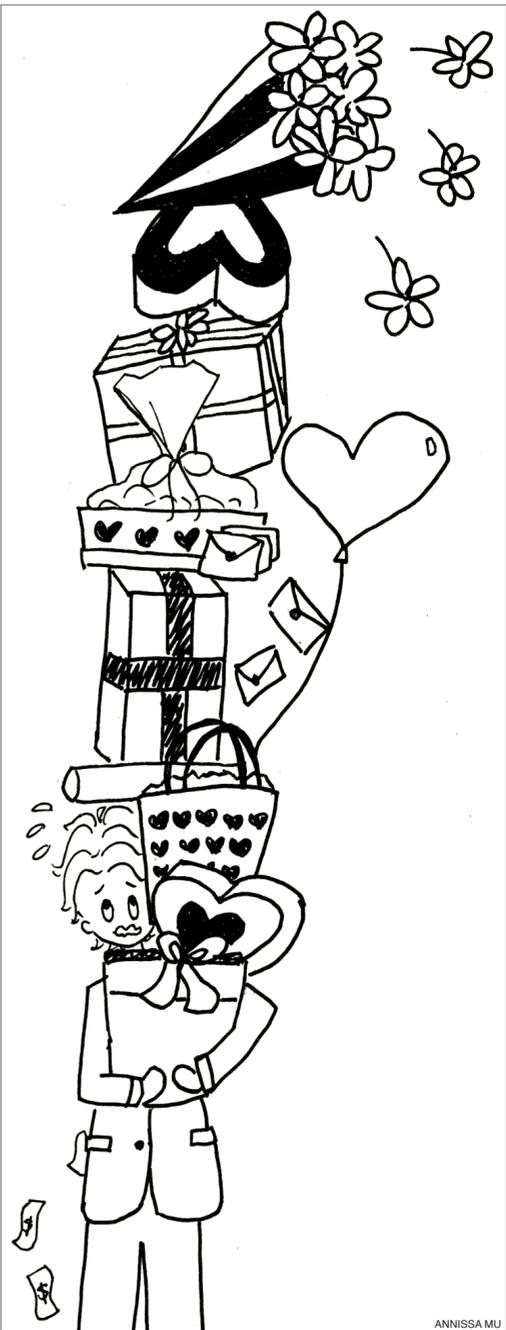
Regardless of how materialistic Valentine's Day feels, one shouldn't feel like it's impossible or unusual to do something thoughtful.

People need to change their mindset and realize that Feb. 14 is an opportunity, not an obligation.

Valentine's Day isn't something to groan and complain about while defaulting to uncreative gifts. Rather, it is an opportunity to try something new. It is the one day to embrace being insanely cheesy. This doesn't have to mean dropping money on a gift and moving on.

People should view Valentine's Day as a time to think outside the box to express their love or appreciation. A fun and meaningful experience will create a memory that lasts far longer than an unnecessarily-expensive box of chocolates. From going on a day trip to just watching a movie on a roof while the sun sets, there are infinite possibilities for having fun. Even for those who don't have a lot of money or time, Valentine's Day should at least bring out a heartfelt card.

We need to ditch the surface-level shows of affection, and in doing so, Valentine's Day will become much more appealing and meaningful. The mindset must shift, from being a chore to being a memorable occasion. Only by doing this will we be able to go back to celebrating Valentine's Day for the love and emotions it's truly meant to represent. ♦



ANNISSA MU

Flawed attendance system enables tardiness

By Serena Li

Many of us have experienced the panicked feeling of racing toward class knowing it's 8:14 a.m. and the bell could ring at any moment.

But not everyone.

As we sprint to first or second period, they stroll casually into their classes even after the bell rings. After all, why hurry to class if a tardy is a tardy no matter how late the student enters class?

Students who saunter into class late disrupt the class. The loud creaking of the door and the rustling of the backpack being set down divert the attention of their peers, causing them to lose valu-

able instructional time.

Despite the administration's efforts, the school's tardy policy fails to deter tardiness.

The policy states that multiple tardies will be punished with detention, Saturday school, and even possible in-house suspension. The school also requires that students arriving late sign in with the office first before going to class, but those who are only two or three minutes late rarely ever do so.

It takes more time for students to walk to the office and return a pink slip to their teacher, which subtracts more time from the student's instruction than to simply walk to their classroom.

A similar system to the school's

experimental electronic tutorial sign-ins — which began Feb. 4 — could also be used for attendance. For example, the school could implement tardy tracking apps and scanners that allow students to view their attendance history and notify the office about their attendance. This method eliminates the time to walk to the office and allows more time for the student in the class.

Another issue is the use of punishments rather than encouragement to coerce students to get to class on time. According to Sage Journals, praise is "recognized as perhaps the easiest modification teachers can make to address students' problem behaviors."

The research states that there is a lack of empirical evidence that proves punishments are effective for decreasing the number of tardies. To put it simply, students will not stop oversleeping because of fears of being sent to Saturday school.

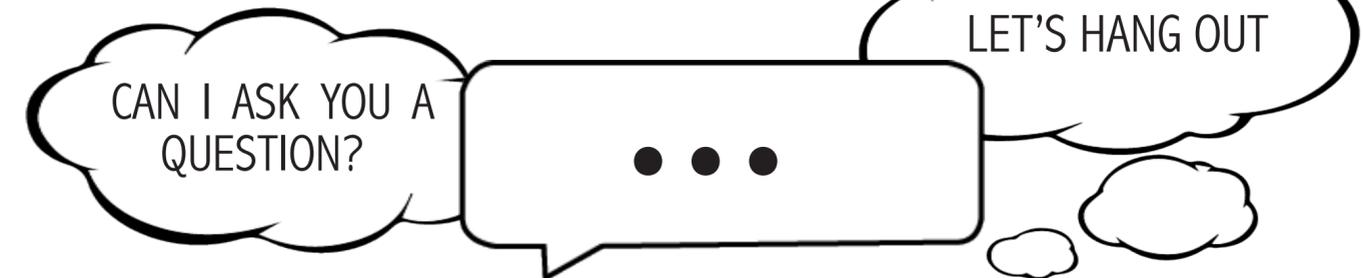
Instead of punishing students for being late, the school should try positive reinforcement.

Instead of only punishing students for being late, the school

should also try positive reinforcement methods such as giving out slips for students who arrive on time consistently and allowing them to enter raffles for prizes or being excused from homework assignments and earning extra credit. These inducements would work better for many consistently truant students and would reward those who have already learned to be on time.

With the combination of meaningful tracking mechanisms and appropriate motivators, the school can create an adequate system to reduce the amount of tardiness. And who knows, perhaps some of those 8:14 laggards might even start sprinting to class. ♦

INTROVERTS— We need to TALK



Until I was 10, I'd had a total of four friends in my life, all across different schools and only one one I was still in contact with. For long stretches of time, I didn't consider anyone besides family remotely close, and that was perfectly fine with me.

Some people, including my parents, may have felt worried. Nevertheless, I was completely at ease, and I didn't see any problems with being buried in books and staying out of other people's business.

But although I was happy alone, my preferred existence wasn't compatible with the rest of the world. It was always awkward blatantly refusing an invitation to hang out. When I declined a stranger's attempts to talk, I could feel their perplexity at someone not following a social norm.

The world demands a certain level of social competency. For extroverts, that comes naturally; for introverts, not so much. Still, that does not change the fact of the matter. To have to communicate is just the way the world works. There is no hiding from it. All introverts can do is adapt and force themselves into attaining these social traits.

For me, that realization came when I was

10. I was attending a summer camp where the conditions made it nearly impossible to remain alone.

The first lunch, I tried to stay out of sight and avoid interactions. But inevitably, a newly formed group of friends found me and crowded around like a pack of wolves, warmly asking me to join them. Instead of simply declining their offer, I babbled a series of unintelligible words, culminating in me literally running away.

Somehow, word spread quickly in our small group about the weird kid who ran away from a simple offer while spurring nonsense. I got what I wanted — being alone — but at the cost of respect and rapport from my classmates.

If there's one thing I took away from the camp, it was that I utterly lacked social skills. If I wanted to be part of civilization, I needed to immediately change. My solution, however, wasn't exactly well-thought-out or intelligent. I simply decided to be an extrovert.

You can guess how well that brief first attempt went. I walked up to people, stuttered into offhanded and mistimed jokes and watched them find an excuse to get away. I would insert random Dad Jokes into 49ers discussions, or maybe talk about the new iPhone in a discussion on Pokémon. It was an awkward, cringeworthy phase I'd rather never go back to.

Despite my obvious failures, I was attempting to approach people, which at least

showed me the path to growth. Looking back, I realize most people go through this phase as children. I was late, but it was better late than never.

Clearly, something needed to change. Instead of strong-arming my way through, I got down to the heart of the problem. I knew what to say, just not how. All I needed to do was to translate my thoughts into coherent sentences.

To have to communicate is just the way the world works. There is no hiding from it.

To do so, I planned out how to approach exchanges with all different types of people. While passing people on the street, I imagined starting an impromptu conversation. For each type of person, such as a classmate vs. a teacher, I had an exact fill-in-the-blank method of approaching and initiating an interaction.

The first exchanges were exactly as robotic as they sound. If someone responded to my greeting with, "What have you been up to?" I would be utterly lost. In the beginning, I'd pretend like I hadn't heard them and kept to my script, eliciting raised eyebrows or strange glances. If they persisted in getting an answer, I'd stubbornly refuse until

they were exasperated enough to move on.

Despite those setbacks, my interactions progressed as I began requiring less of the pre-scripted response. Instead of completely ignoring their questions, I'd offer a quick one-word response. Slowly but surely, I began getting more comfortable deviating from the script until finally, I could hold full conversations directly from my thoughts.

Being socially comfortable has landed me in situations I never would have expected. I learned from people I never anticipated talking to. When I stopped covering behind my restrictive self-made barrier, others started offering me both personal and academic opportunities.

I never would have anticipated voluntarily going to formal with friends. That's the very definition of everything I was once terrified of, and it never would have been a remote possibility if I'd remained antisocial. More than anything, formal was a marker that I'd successfully achieved my goal of sociality.

By just getting to know others and building connections, I've been offered opportunities I've never would've known existed, from joining a hackathon team to being approached by friends to start a medical club.

One doesn't have to drastically change to fit the world and avoid being a loner. All introverts must do is force themselves to begin developing necessary social traits, and before they know it, society and all its opportunities will open up. ♦

Racism: it's still offensive if it's your own race

By Selena Liu

"It's not racist if it's your own race." People generally say this after they've taken a jab against their own ethnicity by upholding a common stereotype. They see it as a harmless joke and perhaps even justify it as a way of gaining power over ideas they know they can't control.

From Asians who call themselves bad drivers to Indians who jokingly claim that all Indians smell bad, people who engage this internalized racism are subtly encouraging the idea of Caucasian superiority.

By labeling minorities' features or habits as unusual, they reinforce generalized stereotypes about their own race that may not even be true.

If all Asians are bad drivers, who are the good drivers? Who smells good if all Indians smell bad? Stereotypes emphasize comparison, and in the U.S., comparison

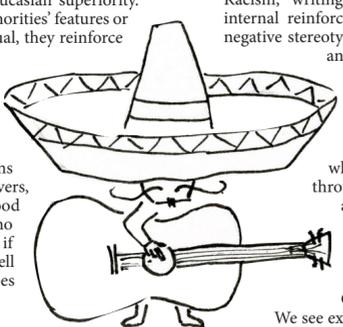
among races has proven to be nothing but harmful.

Psychologist Robin Nicole Johnson summarizes why the acceptance of negative stereotypes contributes to an idea of Caucasian superiority in "The Psychology of Racism," writing that the internal reinforcement of negative stereotypes causes "conscious and unconscious acceptance of a racial hierarchy in which whites are consistently ranked above people of color."

This means that people who degrade their own race through negative stereotypes are, perhaps unknowingly, labeling themselves as imperfect minorities and even comparing themselves to a "perfect" Caucasian ideal.

We see examples of this comparison in multiple instances. One example is when Asians claim that "Asians have small

eyes." This stereotype is not only generalized in a negative light, but it also holds a hidden comparison to Caucasians and the fact that they tend to have larger eyes. It reinforces the western standard of beauty that larger facial features are supposedly the "ideal." Another, perhaps



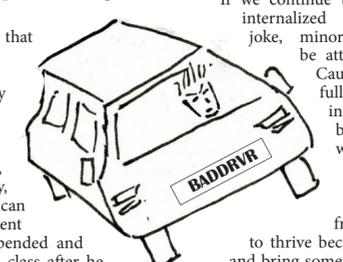
"normal" male hair: a style worn mostly by Caucasians. This comparative mindset is highly toxic in both of these contexts and only serves to strengthen the Caucasian hierarchy.

If victims of stereotyping support those very stereotypes, they will inevitably contribute to false ideas and a societal culture of overgeneralized classification. Even if they denounce external racism, people who reinforce stereotypes about their own race are still validating arguments against their own race.

If we continue this habit of masking internalized racism as a mere joke, minorities will repeatedly be attempting to fit into a Caucasian mold and never fully embrace their unique individualities. At its best, America doesn't wash away differences and make everyone the same, but instead encourages people from many backgrounds

to thrive because they are different and bring something worth valuing to the greater whole.

This diversity only benefits citizens if each individual appreciates their unique background and does not actively reinforce negative stereotypes about their race. ♦



CARTOONS BY HOWARD TANG



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Longtime couples recount how they met



Clockwise from upper left: Chua and Chou's wedding invitation; Chua and Chou walk down the aisle at their wedding; Chua and Chou pose with friends and family.



Photos courtesy of RUSS LEVI PHOTOGRAPHY

AFTER 15 YEARS AS A COUPLE, 2006 SHS ALUMNI SWEETHEARTS FINALLY TIED THE KNOT LAST FALL

by Lih Shoshani

When Jason Chou laid his eyes on Dora Chua at the Chinese language placement test his freshman year, he didn't realize they would one day become husband and wife. They at long last exchanged vows this past September at Saratoga Springs.

The two met in 2004 when Chua transferred to Saratoga High from Los Gatos High. They became a couple on Valentine's Day of their senior year when he asked her to be his girlfriend.

Jason, then ASB president, and Dora, then one of the editors of the 2006 yearbook, continued dating when they went to colleges that were only 45 miles apart: Dora attended Princeton and Jason the University of Pennsylvania.

"We both wanted to make sure we had the chance to live freely as college students and young adults," Dora said. "But over time, it became clear that we were both very committed to one another."

During five more years of long-distance dating, they stayed in touch through calling cards, Skype and "embarrassingly sappy emails."

Following college and a couple of years working, Dora decided to become a doctor and began to attend medical school at the University of Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, Jason pursued a career design and education. In 2015, they finally returned to the Bay Area, with Dora, now as Dr. Chua, doing her residency in anesthesiology for

three years at Stanford.

"To some, a long relationship might seem static and stifling, but to us, we've just fallen in love with different versions of each other again and again," Dora said. "Through time we've seen each other grow and allowed each other to change, while developing faith in the core parts of each other that will always remain the same."

Jason asked Dora to senior prom in the middle of the quad by taping himself inside a large TV box. When he proposed to her years later, he recreated the proposal by taking Dora back to the school and taping himself into a large refrigerator box in the middle of the quad with a sign saying, "Let's get married?" They also incorporated their prom theme into the wedding invitations they sent to friends last year.

Jason and Dora note how lucky they are in how they approached their relationship by keeping it simple and "being true to ourselves and true to one other."

"We have many shared friends and old memories. It's nice to be with somebody who has a great sense of where you came from and how you came to be — someone who can appreciate your childhood accomplishments but also keep you grounded in all of your embarrassing and less-than-cool moments," Dora said.

Now the couple plans to stay in the Bay Area in hopes of starting a family as they continue to enjoy each other's sense of humor, ambition, big-heartedness and dedication to friends and family. ♦



Photos courtesy of LISA GINESTET-ARAKI



Clockwise from upper left: Lisa Ginestet-Araki smiles and stands alongside her bridesmaids; the couple smile and pose on a path soon after getting married; the couple walk down the aisle at their wedding.

WHILE BEING A BRIDESMAID AT A FRIEND'S WEDDING, SHS MATH TEACHER MET HER FUTURE HUSBAND

by Anjali Nugehalli & Jeanette Zhou

At a wedding seven years ago in Lake Tahoe, first-year math teacher Lisa Ginestet-Araki, then known as Lisa Ruddy, was getting ready to be a bridesmaid for her friend Jenna Anderson. The two had been friends since their time as students at Saratoga High.

While she was at Anderson's wedding party, Lisa Ruddy met Laurent Ginestet-Araki, a groomsman.

They were introduced by Jenna and Frank, Jenna's groom.

"Jenna and Frank wanted me to meet two of their groomsmen, Laurent and their other friend Chris," Lisa Ginestet-Araki said. "They actually thought I would be more interested in Chris, but I surprised them when I said I was actually interested in Laurent"

To get to know one another, Laurent and Lisa went to Double D's in Los Gatos where they played pool while talking together.

One and a half years after attending their friends' wedding, Lisa and Laurent started dating.

Five years later, in April 2019, they tied the knot at Hakone Gardens in Saratoga.

As a thank you to their friends for helping to set them up, Frank and Jenna were in

the wedding party. Laurent had gone to Los Gatos High, and while Lisa says that she and Laurent could have possibly met a few times, neither Laurent nor Lisa stayed in touch after high school.

"We probably met in high school, but I went to Michigan and he went to Berkeley, so we never had a chance to see each other during college," Mrs. Ginestet-Araki said. "After we both moved back to the area after we graduated, we were able to meet again at the wedding."

Laurent a marketing product manager for a biotech company called Cytek, said besides their wedding, they have many memorable moments as a couple including a hike up Mount Rainier in Washington.

"The views at Mount Rainier were so amazing, and it was one of our longer hikes that gave us a sense of accomplishment once we were done," he said.

However, while the couple have gone on other amazing trips, such as going to Miami and Japan, the couple's favorite memories come from "normal" activities.

"Laurent was the one who got me interested in ultimate frisbee, which we do every weekend," Lisa said. "It's really the day-to-day things we do together that are really memorable." ♦

LOS TRES AMIGOS TAKE ON FEBRUARY BREAK



Andrew Lee, Alex Wang and Kevin Sze

Solidly six weeks into second semester, we plan to take advantage of a much-needed February break. Although the break is informally known as Ski Week, we won't be heading to the slopes.

No, we plan to go to the beach. Although it may be 50 degrees outside, what most people don't know is that this is the best time to go to the beach because there will be nobody there. We will head to North Baker Beach, which is the clothing optional area of the Beach. We will have the entire beach to ourselves to walk around naked.

After going to the beach, we will don clothes and go to San Francisco. There we will go to the Museum of Modern Art, look at weird paintings and contemplate life. Not

only that, taking a picture in front of a Frida Kahlo painting will count as Spanish cultural credit.

Sticking to our roots, we will then go to Chinatown and eat at Panda Express. Our likely picks: authentic chow mein and orange chicken.

To finish off our adventure, we will ride Bird scooters to Union Square where we can shop at stores that sell products we cannot afford.

Ski Week would not be complete without being productive by trying a bunch of new things.

First, we will follow a trend that is common on the Facebook page Subtle Asian Traits by blind taste testing boba from

multiple stores. We plan to buy boba from Quickly, Tea Top, Teaspoon, Happy Lemon, QQ, Gong Cha, Ume Tea, Ten Ren, Tea Era, Fantasia, Boba Guys, Sharetea, 85 degrees C Bakery, Pekoe, Cafe Lattea and T4. With 16 stores, we will have a bracket and determine the winner.

The next dumb challenge we will do is perm our hair. This isn't really a challenge, but Kevin is growing out his hair and doesn't really know what to do with it. Since all attractive Asian males have curly hair now, it's time that we hop on that trend as well.

Finally, we will try knitting at the suggestion of Falcon Lifestyles section editor senior Sofia Jones. To be honest, we are very unexcited about this idea, and will not be

surprised when we inevitably give up after about 30 seconds.

Although we do expect the majority of our February break to be fun, we are not so certain about trying the world's most boring hobby. Why would someone ever spend four hours knitting an ugly pair of gloves? It seems like a colossal waste of time, but as second semester seniors, time is not something we lack.

We have planned an exciting break that will hopefully excite us bored students. However, we will probably procrastinate on all of these activities like we do in general anyway. Perhaps the best Ski Week advice is this: Avoid Baker Beach in San Francisco unless you want to see us naked. ♦

valentine's day 101: a guide for the single highschooler



Coming to terms with being single

As a disclaimer, throughout all four years of my high school career I've been 100 percent single, so my viewpoint is absolutely biased. I'm also a little salty because nobody wants to be with me. Whatever. That being said, here are the top reasons.

You're probably going to break up.

Reality is harsh, but I'm not here to sugarcoat things. As much as you might think you love your significant other, it takes maturity to have a successful long-term relationship. If your relationship lasts through senior year, when you almost inevitably part ways to go to college, you'll probably break up. I'm not saying it's a guarantee, but statistically speaking, it's really likely the relationship is doomed to die.

Straighten out your priorities.

Academics are hard, especially at a school like this. To succeed, you have to maintain a high GPA, get a good SAT/ACT score and do hours of volunteering. You have to make a choice: either date somebody or focus on your academics and extracurriculars. A significant other lasts a year or two if you're lucky, but where you go to college and your career success are forever. As philosopher and street poet Drizzy Drake once said, "I know that first love is the sweetest, but that first cut is the deepest." Arguments and breakups can consume your mind, and when you start "simping," you're going to be distracted from your APUSH readings. Then you'll get a B in the class. Is it really worth being a disappointment to your family to be in a relationship? No. Exactly.

Do you want a relationship or a cuddle buddy?

Those long nights reading "Grapes of Wrath" can be a pain in the butt, and the book would be so much more enjoyable if you could just cuddle up with somebody and read together. But a successful relationship isn't just cuddling. It's about working as a team. So ask yourself, are you ready for that kind of commitment, or do you just want a cuddle buddy? If it's the latter, then go buy a big teddy bear. Teddy bears will cuddle with you even if you don't shower.

You're going to save money.

This one is especially true for all my fellas out there. You want to try

your best to impress the girl of your dreams, so you take her out on a nice date. Next thing you know, you've spent all of your money, and now the only lunch you can afford is Taco Bell. In addition, you'll probably have to buy your significant other some nice Valentine's Day gifts. And Christmas gifts. And birthday gifts. It's all about return on investment, and I don't know about you, but I'd rather invest in gifts for myself.

You get to spend your time how you want.

Sometimes, you want some alone time to chill in your PJ's and watch Netflix while eating a tub of ice cream. In fact, that's probably all the time. But if bae wants to go get dinner, then you have to go shower, put on some nice deodorant and dress nice.

If you're in a relationship, you'll also spend most of your free time with your significant other. If you're single, you'll spend time with your friends. And now that I'm a second semester senior and have nothing to do all day, I've been making more friends. I've met so many amazing people who have given me new perspectives on life.

You're going to see your ex in the halls

Face it: Our high school is tiny. It's inevitable that you're going to see your ex in the halls. Undoubtedly, you'll be faced with the awkward dilemma of saying hi or completely ignoring them. Whichever one you choose, it'll be cringy. The easiest way to avoid the awkwardness of seeing your ex in the halls is to never date anybody in the first place. Nevertheless, if you're in a happy relationship, I wish you all the best. I truly hope it does work out and that your love does last forever or at least until a time when it makes sense to break up on good terms. Seeing happy couples does inspire some degree of hope among diehard singles like me.

To all my fellow singles:

Hmu if you need a cuddle buddy. ♦

How to buy love

You might not be able to buy happiness with money, but you sure can buy gifts for that special someone and make them fall in love with you. Finding that perfect gift is hard, so the best idea is to use your gift to convey a message to them. Here are some recommendations that'll help you cuff up this season:

Oxygen Bars

John F. Kennedy famously said, "We all breathe the same air." Unfortunately, the quality of this air is decreasing. Seen any pictures of China recently?

Relationships should be quality and exclusive, and so should the air that you and your significant other(s) breathe.

Allow me to introduce you to oxygen bars. Not too dissimilar from wine and coffee bars, oxygen bars sell purified oxygen and proponents claim that they increase mood, energy levels and concentration, among other things.

Have these claims been scientifically proven? Nope. Can the effects be linked to placebo? Probably.

And sure, your body doesn't really need more than the 21% oxygen that's in natural air, and oxygen bars technically violate FDA regulations, but how could you ever pass up the opportunity to inhale pina colada or tangerine cream flavored air?

Baseball gloves

If you're thinking about asking that special someone out on a

date, or if they want to commit to a relationship, give them a baseball glove; the opportunities for puns are endless and serve as a foolproof backup plan if, for some reason, they throw out your proposal.

Initiate with this pitch: Tell them that they're a catch and that you glove them. You'll probably find yourself hitting it off pretty well.

If they don't reciprocate, then it's time to swing for the fences. Take them out to an actual ball game, get bored after four innings and then drive home in complete silence and cry yourself to sleep.

Actually, strike that last idea. Just apologize that your proposition came out of left field.

Cupid's arrows, or just regular arrows

Everyone's always raving about symbolism and foreshadowing and all that during English class, so gifting arrows for Valentine's Day provides an opportunity for you to apply that extensive knowledge.

Arrows signify forward movement, power and, of course, love. They also send a clear foreshadowing message to your lover: you're going to get shot soon. By Cupid (hopefully). Surely he exists and the guy you hired off Craigslist wasn't a contracted assassin named Cupid whose weapon of specialty happens to be a bow and arrow.

There's no guarantee that it'll work, of course, but you know what they say: shooters shoot. ♦



Justin Guo

Pretend you're not single

Ever wonder what it would feel like to be cuffed during Valentine's Day or how it would feel to receive gifts from someone? Well, don't worry because we're here to give you ideas on what to get yourself if you're spending Valentine's Day alone!

Try hugging a weighted blanket. You may not have anyone to cuddle with, but at least your weighted blanket can give you the wholesome fuzzy hug you want. With the added weight, you'll be able to quickly fall asleep, and you won't have to think too long about how single you are.

If you can't afford the expenses of heavy cotton, try watching "The Notebook" and pretend your boyfriend looks like Ryan Gosling. Or that your girlfriend looks like Rachel McAdams. Or that you have a boyfriend. Or a girlfriend. Anything works.

But if the pain of watching Ryan Gosling find love is too much,

take a leaf out of his book and work out. Maybe if you had some abs you would have a partner. Just kidding. Maybe.

Along the same lines, spray cologne to better your hygiene. In the iconic words of Tessa Brooks from the antiquated Jake Paul classic "It's Everyday Bro," "Yeah I smell good — is that your man's cologne?" Cologne is subtly romantic. If you close your eyes and sniff a bar of 99 cent Old Spice, you'll feel like you have a classic highschool man.

We're not speaking from experience, but if you want the easy way out, you could always try buying a significant other. If you can't find a man and our other ideas just aren't cutting it, go to the black market and buy someone. A bribed significant other is better than no significant other!

If all else fails, work toward accepting the fact that you will be a cat lady. Eat some expired Halloween candy and pretend it's a box of Ghirardelli's in a heart-shaped box. Better luck next year! ♦



Amanda Zhu & Joann Zhang



Kevin Sze

2020 Academy Awards feature diverse, controversial nominees

JOJO RABBIT GAINS MIXED REACTIONS FOR DEPICTING WWII WITH HUMOR

BY CiciXu

The 2020 Academy Awards, broadcast last Sunday, marked many historical moments, from the first female conductor of the background orchestra to the Korean film “Parasite” winning four awards, including Best Picture, despite being in a foreign language. It was the first time a foreign language film had won the top category.

The diversity of the Oscars lineup was a notable aspect of this awards season. Movies like “1917,” a one-shot WWI movie, and “Parasite” highlighted the wide range of topics embraced in the nominations.

However, one movie on the list of Oscars nominations stood out as the most controversial and unexpected, which made this year’s nominations even more exciting: “Jojo Rabbit,” directed by Taika Waititi, the first indigenous director to win an Adapted Screenplay Award.

A sentimental screenplay

Along with many other popular movies, such as “Ford vs. Ferrari,” “Little Women” and “The Irish Man,” “Jojo Rabbit” was nominated for Best Picture. The story, set at the end of WWII, is the journey of a German boy, Jojo, and a Jewish girl secretly hidden in his attic.

Jojo is devoted to Hitler’s beliefs in the beginning of the film, but as war truly starts to harm his life, he realizes the truths of war and peace. The realism of the characters’ personalities, the depiction of war’s darkness and the profound message of love and peace in “Jojo Rabbit” made the film a hit with audiences.

A unique Hitler performance

On the other hand, director Waititi’s humorous, satirical portrayal of the historically sensitive figure Adolf Hitler attracted severe criticism. Viewers found Hitler’s depiction as a kind of lovable clown inappropriate. The Jojo dramatic “healing Hitler” scene in the beginning of the movie, and the movie’s portrayal of a Hitler Youth Camp as a fun summer camp drew the most ire.

“The industry has lost its mind,” commented New Yorker writer Richard Brody.

Some viewers may not know that the Hitler character in “Jojo Rabbit” is purely from 10-year-old Jojo’s imagination and is thus more whimsical than real-life Hitler.

“I had no interest at all in portraying [Hitler] authentically,” Waititi explained in a USA Today interview. “I didn’t want him to have the satisfaction of knowing that someone studied him, studied every

But it’s a very pure story, and it’s very hopeful. It ends with a lot of hope, and I think that is very impactful too.”

The merciful side of WWII

The majority of the film’s audiences found the establishment of the characters rather successful, as each, despite some ignorant beliefs, show a humane side. Throughout the movie, not all Nazis are portrayed evilly. There are moments of deep respect, the glory of being a soldier, selfless sacrifice, unconditional love, joy and freedom in a time that war between nations had dominated people’s lives.

When the Gestapo agents come searching Jojo’s house, they are amazed by the sense of humor in one of his comic books and one even decides to stop searching, saying that “it has made my day.”

Even Hitler is portrayed as a somewhat joyful character who cares about his “friend” Jojo. These seemingly insignificant details add on to the richness of the film.

New Hollywood faces

The movie consists not only of famous actresses like Johansson and Australian actress Rebel Wilson, but also two extremely young and talented actors. Despite it being their first time starring as main characters, actors Roman Griffin Davis and Thomasin McKenzie managed to bring out the complexity of their characters.

Davis, who played Jojo, is only 12 years old, and McKenzie is 19 years old. Their innocent perspectives on the gruesome reality of war and ethnic discrimination naturally shifts the movie’s focus from the chaotic life around them to the real messages that the movie wanted to embrace: acceptance and love.

Even though “Jojo Rabbit” only won the Academy Award of Adapted Screenplay this year, the humorous yet heavy movie carries one of the most profound messages among films in this year’s Oscars nominations. It wasn’t worth of being the Best Picture, but it’s worth your time. ♦

nuance of his physicality ... (including) how he speaks. I don’t think he deserves someone making that much effort.”

Actress Scarlett Johansson, who played Jojo’s mother, also defended the film.

“It’s the perspective of the boy and the innocence with which he looks at the world,” Johansson said. “That’s why it can be handled with a sort of whimsy in a way. And maybe that’s disturbing to some people – that’s also OK, to have that reaction.



JOJO RABBIT

Celebrities overshare on social media for publicity

BY LihShoshani

As I was scrolling through my Instagram feed, a picture popped up from 2016 of model Blac Chyna doing the mannequin challenge (a viral Internet video trend where people are filmed while frozen in action) during childbirth. I immediately lost my appetite and closed out of the app. I was done with social media for the day.

These days, it seems almost imperative for celebrities to inform the world about their personal lives in order to stay significant. Celebrities who actively engage with their fans keep themselves prominent. Fans feel more invested in celebrity lives, as if they personally know the person. However, there should be a limit as to what should be shared with the public.

Not only should celebrities not share weird personal events with their fans, but it’s important to be careful with how much information is shared with the outside world. Last year, model Chrissy Teigen accidentally tweeted her email address, and then got bombarded with messages from strangers. She was so scared that she had disabled her Facetime and changed her email only one hour after the mistake.

Oversharing, however, commonly works to celebrities’ advantage. The Kardashians are a prime example. They got their fame from spreading their personal information with revealing videos and their reality TV show “Keeping Up With the Kardashians” (KUWTK).

In January, when Kim Kardashian drunkenly told the press that she and her husband were expecting baby number four, KUWTK’s ratings soared. Oversharing has led to the Kardashians’ success, and kept fans invested in their drama-filled lives.

Another memorable moment occurred when model and YouTuber Alissa Violet posted tweets directed toward her cheating ex-boyfriend, FaZe Banks. Their public Twitter argument generated massive rounds of retweets and likes. Airing their relationship problems to the world became public entertainment for her millions of followers. Violet had exposed him over Twitter perhaps to embarrass him, but it also served to boost her relevance.

Still, in an ideal world, celebrities would know the balance between oversharing the right amount of information and making their fans uncomfortable. No one needs to see a closeup of a blister on your toe, Sarah Silverman.

Kayley Cuoco posted a picture of her multitasking while on the toilet and Lena Dunham posted herself on the examination chair with her hospital gown on as she waited for her gynecologist. All they managed to do was put their fans in a very awkward position.

All of us share our personal lives on social media, mostly to gain more attention. For celebrities, all publicity is good publicity, and oversharing is what keeps them prominent in a universe full of stars. ♦



ALL GRAPHICS BY SANDHYA SUNDARAM AND SAMANTHA YEE

That 70’s Music

REPORTER CHALLENGES HER MUSICAL TASTE BY DISCOVERING CLASSIC FUNKY AND DISCO SOUNDS

BY AnjaliNuggehalli

As a challenge to myself, I said goodbye to my curated playlist of 428 songs from the past decade.

For exactly seven days, I did not listen to Post Malone, Harry Styles, Ariana Grande or any other modern-day artists I normally listen to incessantly.

Instead, I shuffled Spotify’s “All Out 70s” playlist whenever I felt like listening to music.

Throughout the week, I immersed myself in a unique variety of songs I never would have listened to otherwise.

Like any Spotify era playlist, there are catchy songs that you find yourself singing along to, and there are songs that you automatically skip.

As I listened to ‘70s songs, I realized that I was forming opinions on my own of what I liked hearing in this specific genre of disco funk music.

For example, I found myself being drawn to songs with a stronger emphasis on vocals instead of background instruments.

Artists such as Van Morrison, Fleet-

wood Mac and Elton John perfectly encapsulated this style, as their music tends to be focused on the lyrics with simple guitar or piano chords accompanying them.

Although it was hard to narrow it down from the seemingly endless playlist, some of my favorite songs from the ‘70s were “Rich Girl” by Daryl Hall and John Oates, “Bennie and the Jets” by Elton John, “Landslide” by Fleetwood Mac and “How Deep Is Your Love” by the Bee Gees.

Immersing myself in ‘70s music for a week proved not to be nearly as difficult as I thought it’d be.

Soon enough I found myself adding these songs to my regular playlists.

Because of the type of modern songs I enjoy, I was sure that listening to ‘70s artists with vibrant instrumentals would not be “my type” of music.

After my one-week experiment, I realized that “good music” isn’t simply what’s trending on the top charts.

It’s the plethora of unique, funky-sounds that can be discovered in any time period. ♦

2010s Pop

THE 2010S GAVE RISE TO VARIOUS NEW ARTISTS

BY EdwinChen & JunLee

During the 2010s, we have seen the rise of new artists and genres nearly every year.

In the beginning of the 2010 decade, “Call Me Maybe” was a new breed of viral song with a wholesome vibe. A flirty piece of pop euphoria, “Call Me Maybe” has since become a mainstream karaoke song and car ride staple.

In the mid years of the decade, “Shake It Off” by Taylor Swift had a huge impact on American pop, with 2.8 billion views on YouTube.

Billie Ellish’s 2019 song “Bad Guy” is a sinister, strange type of pop that opened up a new possibility in the path of music trends.

Artists in hip hop were also able to gain attention later in the decade as the internet’s influence expanded.

Mumble rap, emo rap and trap, a form of hip hop centered on the topic of living in poor neighborhoods, became new popular forms of rap.

The music streaming platform Sound-

Cloud allowed previously unknown artists such as Smokepurpp, Lil Pump, XXXTENTACION, Juice WRLD, Rich the Kid, Travis Scott and countless others to rise to the top of the charts.

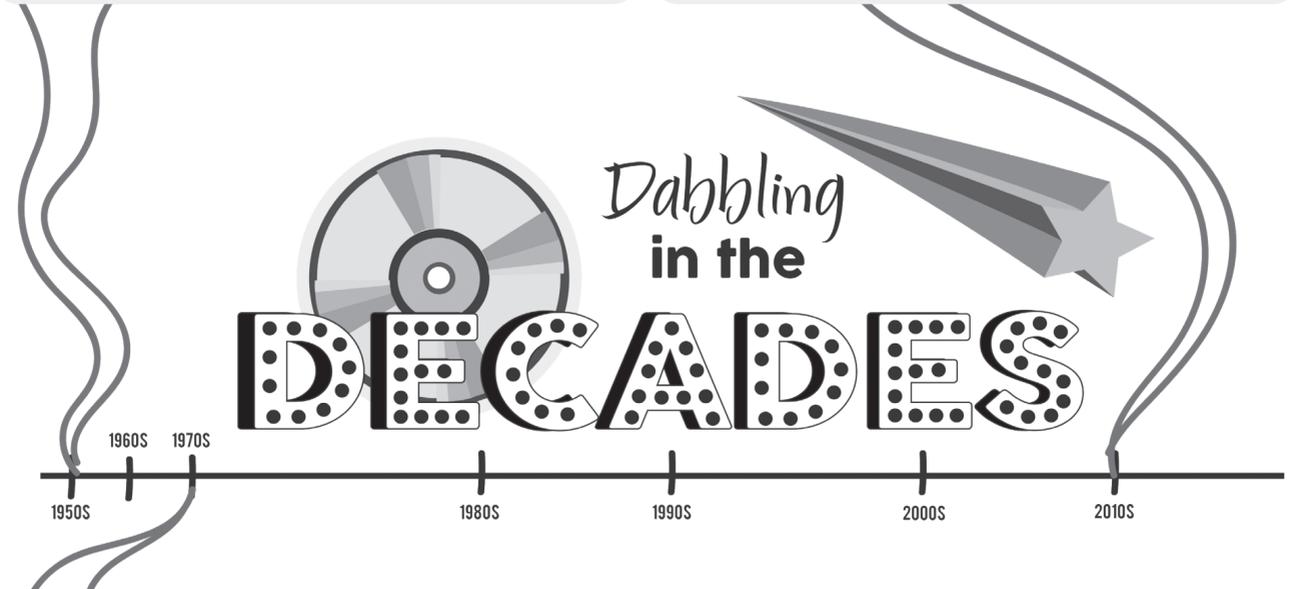
New artists are constantly rising to fame after being first noticed on that platform.

However, the 2010s music world was not without its tragedies. Lil Peep, Mac Miller and Juice WRLD all lost their lives to drug abuse, while XXXTENTACION lost his life during a robbery.

Numerous rappers were also arrested. Tay K was sentenced for murder, while Bobby Schmurda was arrested for attempted murder and drug and gun possession.

Meek Mill was arrested for a probation violation and started a prison reform movement after his release as a result of his experiences.

We both greatly enjoyed this decade of music. Whenever we felt saddened or stressed out, the artists that rose this decade helped us get through these tough times. We can’t wait to see what the new decade has in store for us. ♦



Foreign artists’ concerts bring a piece of home to immigrants in America

BY SerenaLi

“G.E.M. is touring here.”

When I saw this text from my sister, I darted to my computer and searched for “G.E.M. San Francisco tickets, March 22, 2019.”

After getting my parents’ approval (which took quite a while), I ordered the tickets immediately. G.E.M. is a Mandarin artist who debuted in Hong Kong and rose to fame in the early 2010s.

I started listening to her music after I heard a clip of her cover of the famous Cantonese song “I Like You” on a music show called “I’m a singer,” and she’s been one of my favorite artists ever since.

However, for the past few years, I could only live the experience of her tours vicariously through pictures and videos from social media. Asian artists typically need a far-reaching fan base to expand their tours to North America, so I could previously only dream that she would one day visit the Bay Area.

During the two weeks leading up to the

day of the concert, my excitement overrode everything around me.

As I was lining up to enter the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium for the concert, I was surrounded by people who spoke my native language and likely had similar cultural backgrounds.

I was surrounded by people who spoke my native language and likely had similar cultural backgrounds.

The experience reminded me of the time that I spent in China. I moved to the U.S. six years ago from China.

As an immigrant, I missed hearing the different dialects that I used to hear on the streets of China (although I don’t understand it). I missed being surrounded by people who share the same background.

Before the concert even began, I already felt a heartwarming sense of solidarity.

I looked around the auditorium, and saw that almost all of the seats were filled.

The other concert attendees and I had gathered together in a foreign country for a musician from a home country that we all have deep, intimate connections to.

The majority of the people who went to the G.E.M. concert, like me, had moved to the U.S. from a foreign country. However, we had congregated there for the same purpose — to celebrate an artist from home whom we adore.

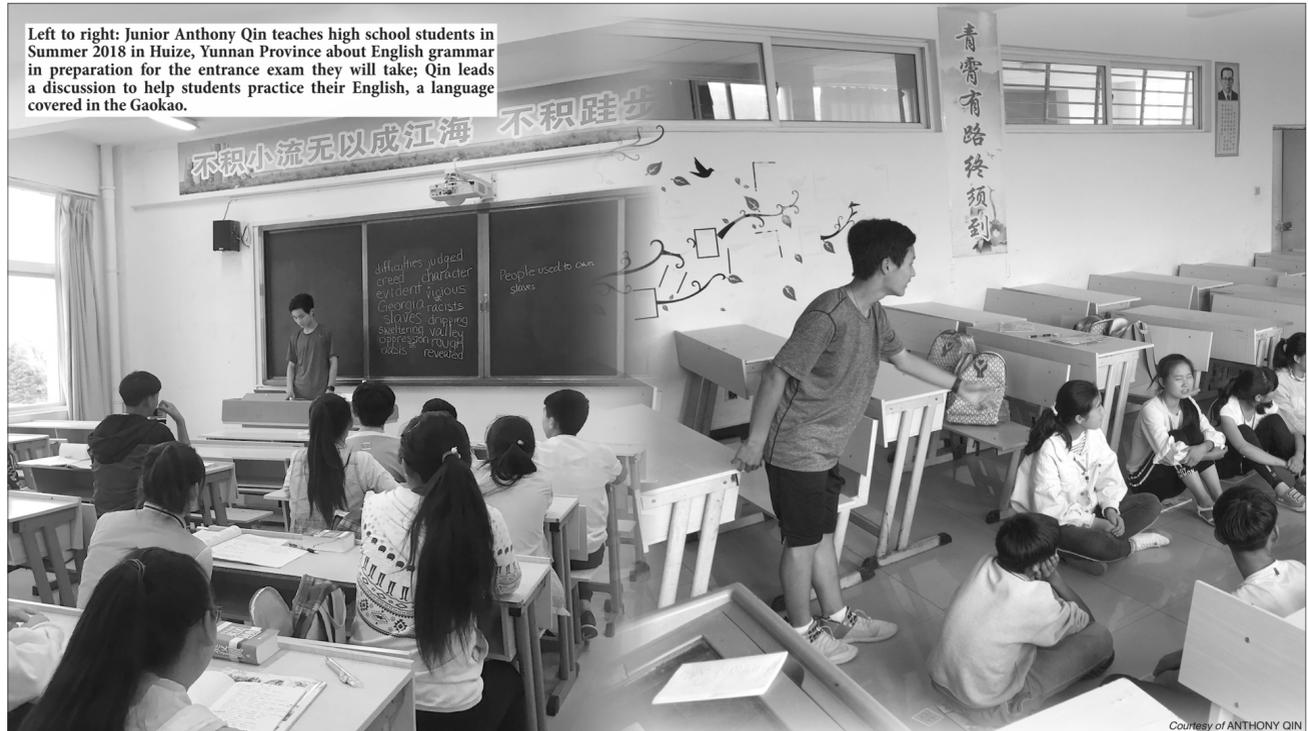
Since then, going to concerts of Asian artists has been a chance for me to reconnect with my roots.

Besides the G.E.M. concert, I’ve been to concerts by Eason Chan, a Cantonese artist who gained popularity in the 2000s, and Joker Xue, a Chinese artist who attracted attention for his heartbreaking love songs.

It is one thing to meet the artists that I love and listen to.

It’s another to experience a part of the culture that I deeply missed. ♦

ALL GRAPHICS BY SANDHYA SUNDARAM AND SAMANTHA YEE



Left to right: Junior Anthony Qin teaches high school students in Summer 2018 in Huize, Yunnan Province about English grammar in preparation for the entrance exam they will take; Qin leads a discussion to help students practice their English, a language covered in the Gaokao.

Courtesy of ANTHONY QIN

ACE teaches English for Gaokao through WeChat

JUNIOR ANTHONY QIN ESTABLISHES CLUB TO PREPARE RURAL CHINESE STUDENTS FOR ANNUAL EXAMINATIONS

By Jonathan Li & Nicole Lu

Seven thousand, three hundred miles away, Tammy Li, a sophomore attending classes at Mojiang Secondary School in the Yunnan province in China, listened intently as SHS sophomore Joshua Fang spoke to her in English.

As a student of the rising Aspiring to Create English (ACE) club created under the leadership of junior Anthony Qin, Chinese students like Li can communicate and learn from Saratoga High students like Fang at the click of a button.

Besides the usual duties of doing homework and studying for tests this year, Qin has been leading a club whose mission is to provide underprivileged teens living in Yunnan the opportunity to learn English. ACE club members use the popular social media platform WeChat to communicate with their overseas peers.

Qin's inspiration for ACE was a summer camp he has been attending in rural China where they teach kids English.

"When I came back I felt like we should stay connected with them because they don't have the same resources as other students across China," he said.

There are around 15 active members in ACE, of whom about 10 are fluent in Mandarin. Some have had to learn English as their second language and can identify with their counterpart's struggles.

In most areas of Yunnan, a good education is a rare privilege held in high regard, and children are often forced to work in order to help their parents sustain their family.

Sometimes, families end up spending more than they earn, and many earn only a few thousand dollars or less every year.

As such, living conditions are a struggle, and children are usually unable to receive a proper education until late pre-adolescence, if at all.

In the English departments of most schools there, students rarely ever receive a proper education.

"Anybody at school here has way better English pronunciation and knowledge than the teachers there," Qin said.

Li said she finds participating in conversation with members of ACE to be beneficial.

"I have learned some difficult lessons in English, how to communicate with others and how education systems in America function," Li said.

During his summer camp, Qin and his friends passed out flyers to the students they were teaching. When summer ended, he made a huge WeChat group so potential students could subscribe and get notifications from their tutors.

ACE, which is sponsored by the Qin Foundation, a nonprofit organization founded by Qin's parents that primarily focuses on providing money for underprivileged areas in China, was started in early 2019.

It has around 30 members, including officers Qin, juniors Amy Zhang, Veronica Chen, Jenning Xuan and sophomore Cici Xu.

Both Xu and Zhang immigrated from China to the U.S. in recent years.

At first, setting up a schedule for video calls proved to be an unexpected hurdle. Due to not only the time difference, but also the Chinese students' schedules, finding common times can be tough.

"We call for half an hour a week or biweekly, usually on weekends," Qin said. "They also text us throughout the week and send pictures of their problems so that we can work with them."

Li also noted the time difference, which is about 16 hours, as a challenge, but brought up the benefits of having a tutor so far away.

"There are pros and cons," Li said. "I'm in China, so I don't know much about some festivals in the United States, but I can learn about them through the teacher's introduction. However, because we're in different

GAOKAO

National College Entrance Examination

It includes sections of Chinese literature, math and a foreign language (in most cases English).

The gaokao tutoring market has become a more than \$52 billion market, as of 2018.

Students typically spend 12 years preparing for this exam.

This test is a prerequisite for entrance into almost all undergraduate institutions in China.

countries, the time difference is pretty difficult to overcome."

As a boarder, someone who lives on campus, Li is not allowed to use her phone in school. Coupled with a tight school schedule, she said she "rarely has time to learn from a teacher in the United States; I can study on Sunday, but sometimes we may have to make up lessons because the teacher is too busy."

The students in Yunnan are generally sophomores and juniors who are preparing for the Gaokao, a cumulative final for Chinese high school students that determines which college a student will attend and essentially their life.

Students spend hundreds of hours preparing for the exam; it is the most important test of their lives. In no small sense, it will determine what college and what field of study they will pursue for the rest of their lives.

And unlike the SAT, it is the lone criteria for college admissions in China, making it so much more important for students to score well.

Some of the topics covered by the Gaokao are English, math, Chinese, and a subject depending on whether a student chooses to pursue liberal arts or the sciences. Many of ACE Club's students are from cities in Yunnan where there are not a lot of teachers

who have a sufficient understanding of English. By establishing weekly tutoring calls, Qin hopes to better prepare these students for the final exam.

Students in cities like Shanghai and Beijing have much more knowledge and much better resources to study for the Gaokao compared to those in rural areas such as Yunnan. Qin hopes to somewhat level the playing field such that these students stand a chance against their competitors in the cities.

Qin originally hoped to start his club second semester last school year, but because it was too late, the club was officially established this year.

Since the students and tutors are similar in age, both parties are able to learn about their different living conditions and languages.

By bringing this club to school, Qin hopes to educate others on the reality of the students' circumstances for a good cause.

"You just notice how privileged you are to live here in Saratoga, all the things you have that you take for granted like school," Qin said. "Even though their parents need them for farming, they insist that the students go to school because that way they can get themselves out of that impoverished condition. For them, education is really valuable."

Sophomore explores professional photography

By Lih Shoshani

Last November, sophomore Ethan Chang climbed the last story of a San Francisco skyscraper, his breath caught in his throat. Standing on the roof of the 47-story building, he looked out at the city at sunset with a feeling of surrealism and wonder.

After getting his desired shot with his Canon 7D, Chang returned home to spend six hours editing with Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop.

Since realizing his interest in photography freshman year when he went out to shoot with 2019 alumnus Nick Burry, who is now shooting for the popular YouTube channel, ZHC, Chang has continued to pursue his passion by joining Bay Shooters, a community that hosts photography meets around San Francisco to showcase up-and-coming shooters.

Although he isn't directly employed by them, the group boosts his platform and he manages to get most of his individual gigs from other photographers there.

"Once my friends invited me to shoot with them, I found that I really liked the people and environment so I just stuck with them," Chang said.

Although he started photography as a hobby, he quickly spread his name by interacting with different creators from Bay Shooters and

forming connections, beginning to earn a steady income.

Chang makes most of his money from shooting products for different brands, including the skateboard company, Boosted Boards, and from photographing different dances like Lynbrook's winter prom.

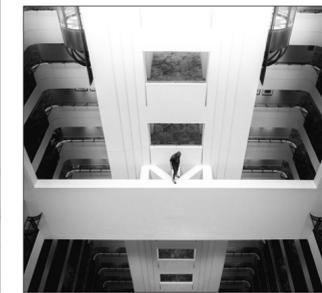
"I found that I really liked the people and environment so I just stuck with them."

SOPHOMORE Ethan Chang

He gets some of his photography gigs from Saint Francis sophomore and fellow Bay Shooter Alex Hadig, as well as people who reach out to him through his Instagram photography account @selmshots.

Chang has continued to grow his photography and pursues it because it lets him view the world as a different place.

"I'm equally proud of every shot, but once I get my perfect picture and finish editing it, flipping between the before and after picture makes me feel complete," Chang said. "The trip and experience make spending so



Courtesy of ETHAN CHANG

Sophomore Ethan Chang has posted 106 of his photos on his Instagram account, @selmshots. As a part of Bay Shooters, he earns money by doing shots for brands and photographing events like Lynbrook's winter prom.

much time on photography worth it.

He finds his job of working on individual gigs more enjoyable than any other due to the freedom it gives him to express himself through creative photos and edits.

Because of his passion for his Bay Shooters job, Chang finds it hard to manage time between school and shoots; he gets distracted when doing school work, and switches between editing past

photos and his homework. Therefore, he keeps a schedule to keep himself on track.

"It gets irritating sometimes to have to balance photography and school work, but photography gives me something to look forward to and motivates me to finish the week," Chang said.

However, he says that getting up at 3 a.m. to drive up to San Francisco almost every weekend, and the large time commitment

are worth it because of the results he gets, the new people he's met and the ability to travel more and explore outside Saratoga.

"He wants to learn photography to the best of his ability," Burry said. "He's the type of guy that will learn something as soon as he finds out he doesn't know how to do it. As a result, his growth is really uncapped as his motivation and passion is so strong. The sky's the limit for him." ♦

SSS VIBE CHECK

Checking in on our second semester seniors

TO-DO LIST FOR SENIORS

- Learn how to serenade your friends
- Learn how to cook (No, microwaving ramen doesn't count)
- Get top 100 in League of Legends; unfortunately, you won't be able to put it on college apps
- Buy some dumbbells so you can tell your friends you "work out" at home

Jennifer Mantle

"While academics are important, it's also important to be a kid. There's a whole huge life in front of you. There's a lot of different ways to live a really, really fruitful life."

Jingyu Kang

"For me, the second senior semester is a time that allows me to be free from stress or any problems and just enjoy life."

Cameron Chow

"I think second semester senior is a little overrated. As a senior, I realized how little I know about the world: I didn't know how to do laundry or cook until this semester, so it's kind of a process of learning to be an adult."

Elizabeth Ding

"It's really fun having more time to hang out, but just don't expect that you won't have to do any work."

GRAPHIC BY ROHAN KUMAR, JUN LEE AND LIHI SOSHANI

A hidden reality: Living in an unsafe home

CASSY COUNSELOR ENCOURAGES VICTIMS OF CHILD ABUSE TO STEP FORWARD AND SEEK HELP

by JonathanLi & ViraajReddi

Editor's note: Finn and Roxanne are pseudonyms to protect the sources' identity.

The glass bottle clinks softly against a stained countertop.

Quietly, Finn rises from his chair and finds his two younger siblings, gently guiding them away from their father. They have less than an hour before the alcohol takes effect.

He leads them to his room, their footsteps painfully loud in the dimly lit hallway. Behind them, a chair clatters against the floorboards.

Finn swallows, and manages to lock his door in time. The tension deflates as the soft click resonates in the quiet, and Finn sags against the door. He cannot count how many times he has felt it, how many times that click has allowed the fear to wash from his body.

His siblings' wide eyes meet his, and for a second, Finn freezes. Sometimes, it's easy to forget how young they are — how young he was when the drinking and the beating began. Neither of his siblings are older than 10, and while Finn does his best to shield them, it's not always enough.

He's frightened, he's frustrated and he's not alone.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), over 3.5 million children were abused in the U.S. in 2017, up 10 percent from 2013. About 30.8 percent of those abused have caregivers with alcoholic tendencies.

HHS also found that in 2017, California alone had nearly 400,000 cases of reported child abuse. With an average of 54.6 cases per 1,000 people, it was the highest rate since 1999. These numbers are likely only the tip of the iceberg, as most cases go unreported.

In Finn's case, the mental and physical abuse is chronic, an accepted staple of visiting his father, who has the right to see Finn every other week.

While Finn does his best to shield his siblings, it's not always enough. He's frightened, he's frustrated and he's not alone.

Finn's past is marred by his parents' divorce, the root of his problems with abuse. Though the maternal side of his family is caring, he said his paternal side despises him, blaming Finn for the divorce. Finn said his grandparents, who live with his father, often beat Finn and deprive him of food. His father, who began constantly drinking after the divorce, frequently argues with and beats both Finn and his siblings.

Victims like Finn are likely to face a plethora of problems throughout their life, including susceptibility to abusing their children, being

abused by others and experiencing various health issues.

Many victims show trauma-related symptoms, such as anxiety or PTSD. Triggers can prompt them to flash back to the abusive situation, sometimes causing them to subconsciously check for exits and make sure escape routes are always available.

"Sometimes, I hear a certain sound that can set me off," Finn said. "Usually, I wake up screaming and just think about what's happened."

Victims like Finn may reach for any way to temporarily escape the traumatic memories, including turning to drugs and alcohol. Sometimes, they may contemplate more drastic, permanent options.

son quickly turn into anger directed at the easiest person to blame: him.

"My parents and grandparents make it seem like I'm the fault for all their problems," Finn said. "But if they hit me, they apologize right after."

CASSY, the school's counseling service, actively tries to help victims of abuse and a wide range of other issues.

However, CASSY's job isn't to investigate the circumstances — the counselors' job is to help the victims come to terms with their situation and, if needed, report to a higher organization.

But victims often consider counseling services like CASSY an intrusion into their lives. Finn is one among many students who

and threatened to kill me," Roxanne said. "He took all my electronics."

At the time, Roxanne wasn't aware of what school employees were required to report, and she opened up completely to the CASSY counselors. They forwarded a notification to CPS.

"I felt kind of bad back then," Roxanne said. "But looking back, I realized it was a good thing that CPS was contacted."

Following these incidents, Roxanne refused to come home and chose to stay with her aunt instead. CPS agreed to her decision, contacting her and her parents separately. Her parents were given one strike. On the second strike, she and her sister would be placed into foster care.

"They were really nice. They were really concerned about what happened," Roxanne said. "They were open to both sides of the story and even pulled out my sister to see her point of view."

Years have passed since the incident, and she sees her decision to reach out to CASSY as a good one.

"There's no more violence, but my parents and I have become a lot more distant since then," Roxanne said. "Don't feel afraid to reach out — I know the therapists are strangers, but your safety and your siblings' should come first."

CASSY counselors stress that the required call symbolizes a tangible route to solving a problem, encouraging victims of abuse to take steps forward.

"Sometimes, I'll have victims call Child Protective Services with me," CASSY therapist Sarah Lauterbach said. "That empowers them because they know what it's like to call that agency, and it takes some of the scariness away from it."

Revealing their abuse to a third party such as CPS can incite a fear that the victim will be ripped away from their family, a solution the victim often wants to avoid. But more often than not, Lauterbach said, those fears are unfounded.

"It's only in extreme cases, Lauterbach said, such as a child's life being in imminent danger, that CPS will take a child out of the home.

In most cases, a social worker will meet with the involved parties and offer resources such as alcohol recovery services or anger management classes.

Adults may retaliate against their child, angry at the unspoken pact of silence being broken.

"I really want the child to tell me if they're being retaliated by the parents because that's not okay," Lauterbach said.

CASSY counselors have found that family and blood ties will often be stronger than the sense that there's a desperate need for change. As the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence notes, there's also the fear of standing out as the victim.

It's far easier for victims to try to assimilate and be another face in the crowd. But nothing will change if they do not reach out for help.

"CASSY is a safe space for someone who's going through abuse to get help," Lauterbach said. "The biggest intervention is done by them coming and speaking about it." ♦

BY THE NUMBERS A CLOSER LOOK AT CHILD ABUSE



• A REPORT OF CHILD ABUSE IS MADE EVERY 10 SECONDS IN THE U.S.



• 80% OF 21-YEAR-OLDS WHO REPORTED CHILDHOOD ABUSE MET THE CRITERIA FOR AT LEAST ONE PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDER

• IN 2014, MORE THAN 70% OF THE CHILDREN WHO DIED AS A RESULT OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT WERE 2 YEARS OLD OR YOUNGER.

• 14% OF ALL MEN AND 36% OF ALL WOMEN IN PRISON WERE ABUSED AS CHILDREN

Statistics from DOSOMETHING.ORG

"It f***ing sucks," Finn said. "I wish I could end it all."

Healthychildren.org, an organization powered by pediatricians, notes that in many cases, abuse tends to cycle from generation to generation. Especially when drugs or alcohol play a part, a switch is flipped, instantly turning the parents from caring to abusive.

"My father is only bad when he drinks," Finn said. "But he can be chill when he doesn't drink."

Finn said that beneath the pain and the drinking, there is an easygoing father who cares. At the same time, Finn's grandparents, who are also physically abusive, still apologize for their behavior. In their eyes, Finn's father, the child who they once doted upon and loved, is slowly rotting away.

Finn has seen how his grandparents' pain and sadness for their

say they don't want CASSY's interference.

"I try to keep it on the low, so it's not out there," he admitted.

While CASSY therapists keep much of what students confidential, in cases of physical or sexual abuse, they are mandated to report the abusers to authorities. The same is true for any public employee such as a teacher, administrator, coach or any classified staff member.

Roxanne is a victim of domestic violence who has used CASSY's services. She was physically abused and threatened after her father grew angry that she got a B in a math class. After Roxanne showed signs of anger during school, a teacher referred her to CASSY. In turn, CASSY counselors had to report her situation to Child Protection Services (CPS).

"My father threw things at me, choked me, threw me into my room,

Coming to terms with my mental health issues

COLUMNIST LEARNS THAT ACKNOWLEDGING A PROBLEM WITH ANXIETY IS A HARDSHIP ON ITS OWN

Editor's Note: The author of this column wishes to remain anonymous to protect her identity in light of the deeply personal issues she discusses in this story.

A year back, I would cower when I was dragged to whichever "mental health for teens and how we can fix it" documentary my parents had seen an ad for and decided we had to watch.

It was mortifying to even think about standard stress and anxiety-related problems and even more so to admit to anyone that they applied to me.

Whenever someone my age would tearfully comment about how anxiety had stunted their growth or held them back some way in life, I immediately shut down any rational part of my brain telling me to get help and shrugged through the rest of the documentary.

On some level, I thought that the epiphanies some people have about how they needed to accept their personal issues would never happen to me. I believed that even if I did realize that I needed help with anxiety, I would just be fruitlessly trying to find a way to feel sorry for myself.

I kept up this way of thinking for years. Whenever a trait that was related to anxiety applied to me that was not in accordance with whatever ridiculously high mental toughness standards I'd put on myself, I would just suck it up, with no end in sight.

Like many others, anxiety often gave me the feeling that I was one out of place. I would often feel guilty or self-resenting

out of nowhere or have the immense urge to isolate myself from the public. It was separate from the widespread, well-known social pressures to do well academically at school, so I couldn't even put a reason to why I felt this way. It would have been easier to express myself if academic pressure was the reason for my anxiety, but I did not have a concrete explanation to give people.

Putting things into perspective, I realized I had essentially been living in a hole I dug myself into.

However, while I thought that refusing to tell others about my mental health was "saving" people from the trouble of my anxieties, nothing was getting better for my mindset. The seemingly harmless withholding of the truth was not a solution. It was hiding.

I've had problems like these for years, but it only really occurred to me that it was an issue that needed addressing at a small get-together with old friends. I had been excited for it since I had not seen them in years, but I felt myself getting more and more nauseous as I neared the house it was set at and greeted the friends.

The time gap in which I had not seen them was jarring to me, and I was unreasonably intimidated by the prospect of spending time with people who were

much older than when I had last seen them, even though I was also an older version of myself. I ended up sitting in the guest bathroom waiting for the nausea to subside.

Eventually, I had no choice but to let myself admit that I did need to get some help. I was finding spending time with people more and more distressing because of pent-up emotions. This anxiety in turn led to sleep problems, which worsened my moods and mental health.

By bringing my anxiety issues more in conversations with friends and family, I found it easier to address my problems and find more potential solutions.

Once I started being more open with myself and others, I felt like I had instantly made myself a lot more vulnerable and susceptible to breakdowns. However, loosening the tight grip I'd had around my mental image of myself let me more easily relate to other people and the teen documentaries I'd hated to watch so much, and it was comforting to feel less alone in terms of my struggles.

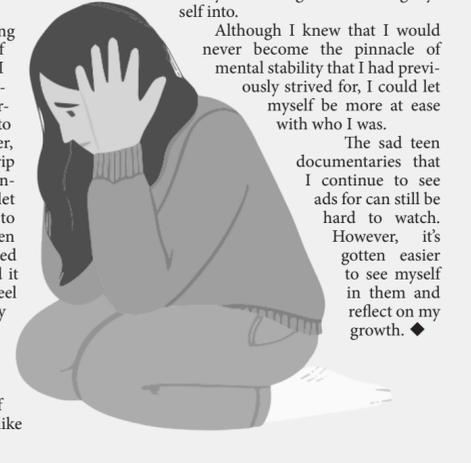
I tried to give myself as much mental control as possible. I had made a lot of things in my life feel like

they were spinning out of my reach, and I wanted one thing to be mine to translate into words. To convey myself, I didn't describe my mindset with loose definitions of anxiety. I talked about personal experiences since I knew people with similar experiences could understand them without subconsciously putting me into a general category of "anxiety" that a simple definition does.

I put cracks in the "suck it up" attitude I had adopted over time by assessing my situations outside of the anxiety-lens that I tended to put over everything. Putting things into perspective, I realized I had essentially been living in a hole I dug myself into.

Although I knew that I would never become the pinnacle of mental stability that I had previously strived for, I could let myself be more at ease with who I was.

The sad teen documentaries that I continue to see ads for can still be hard to watch. However, it's gotten easier to see myself in them and reflect on my growth. ♦



Life360, other tracking apps are double-edged swords

by RohanKumar & KavitaSundaram

Junior Anya Jobalia had been enjoying the Halloween Haunt at Great America with her friends one night in late October when they saw panicked people running toward strong-arm robbery caused hundreds to flee the park for fear that a mass-shooting event was occurring as it had during the Gilroy Garlic Festival in late July.

Jobalia and her friends ran and hid. An hour later, her parents were able to pick them up, in part by using a location-tracking app called Life360.

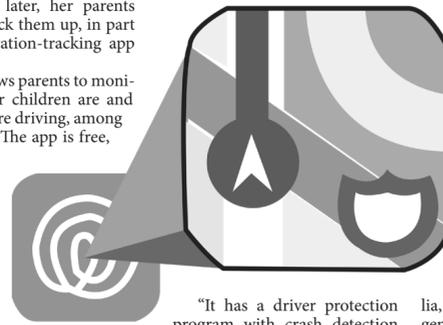
Life360 allows parents to monitor where their children are and how fast they are driving, among other features. The app is free, but has extra features that users can pay for. The Plus version of the app costs \$2.99 a month and includes crime reports, and the Driver Protect version costs \$7.99 a month with additional features such as crash detection, roadside assistance, emergency response, and a driver report.

With over 18 million monthly users by the end of 2018, according to Business Insider, the app has become a prevalent part of many teens' lives, leading to controversy about its usage. Some find the app to be a daily necessity, letting them stay connected with their parents, while others see it as a tool for parents to have Big Brother-like control of their lives.

In an email to Business Insider, Life360 CEO Chris Hull defended the tracking app, writing, "Yes, there are some from frustrated teens, but you will overwhelmingly see reviews from parents and teens on how they use the app for everyday coordination and safety."

Benefits of location tracking

Junior Matthew Luo is among the teens who does not find the loss of privacy from his parents a major problem.



"It has a driver protection program with crash detection and a monthly distracted driving report," he said. "My mom also likes knowing where I am, which I don't really have a problem with."

Sophomore Linnea Bradley said the app is useful for streamlining her life. She likes being able to track her parents so that she can see when they need to leave the house to pick her up from school or crew practice. Rather than seeing the app as an invasion of privacy, she sees it as a convenient way to keep up with her family.

"It's really simple, efficient and organized, and it does what you need," Bradley said.

In addition to everyday convenience, some users have found that the app helps in emergency situations, as it did for Jobalia. A blog on Life360's website chronicles such instances. For example, an article titled "How Life360 Helped Beth find her Daughter" explained how a mother found her 16-year-old daughter drinking at a high-school party past midnight, allowing her to bring her daughter home safely.

Jobalia's Great America experience also left her with a good impression of the app.

"It was cool that Life360 could show exactly where we were," Jobalia said. "I also checked Life360 later to see how far we went because we didn't really know where we were running."

Her parents noted how helpful the app was as well.

"We were able to track Anya and were relieved to know her location during the Great America incident," Jobalia's mother, Manali Jobalia, said. "Life360 is a useful app in general, since it is convenient for staying connected."

Lack of trust

Although there are several benefits to using location tracking apps, there have been reports of some family members abusing the tracking feature.

According to a Daily Mail article, parents' abuse of tracking apps can foster unhealthy parent-child relationships, instilling unnecessary fear in kids and degrading mutual trust.

Senior Ryan Le said his mom does not use Life360 often, but her insistence that he keep the app on

his phone activated at all times has reduced the trust between them.

"I think the app is harmful because you're withdrawing your trust in your own child," Le said. "If I have my car and I have my license, my mom should trust me enough because she provided me with the car."

Although Le thinks having location tracking can be beneficial, he feels like Life360 provides too much information to parents.

Junior Juan Vintimilla also said the app has given his parents an excessive view into his life.

"If you're traveling with somebody, then it makes sense," Vintimilla said. "But if you're just going around school and your house, knowing every part in between is a little much."

Data security

In the background of this debate is perhaps the thornier questions of why teens and their parents would willingly give their data — their locations — to Life360 and at what cost. Many apps store information and can be liable to breaches that can expose users' personal data.

According to Life360's support page, the app does share the location information of their users with third parties to help with advertising, research, analytics and other purposes. They also use tools like Google Analytics to help them better understand the demographic of their customers.

But for the 73.5 percent of Americans concerned with anyone having access to their personal data, according to a survey conducted by USC Annenberg, this might not be ideal.

For all the benefits he sees with Life360, Luo thinks the loss of data privacy is a major flaw.

"I would rather not use Life360 because there is definitely a sense of uncertainty about how secure the app is," Luo said. "I feel like a tracking app that gets so much attention and publicity like Life360 has to have been attempted to be hacked, kind of like Facebook."

In late September 2018, an attack on Facebook exposed the personal information of nearly 50 million users. Earlier, Cambridge Analytica, a British analytics firm that worked with the Trump campaign during the 2016 elections, got access to 87 million Facebook users.

The fact that Life360 stores so much private information about its users is a concern for Jobalia as well.

"I feel like Life360 is a pretty safe app," Jobalia said. "But if someone did hack it, they would know where we live, which is kind of scary."

Advocates of the app point to its many benefits such as the ability to reunite families like Jobalia's in an emergency. Time will tell if its benefits will outweigh the costs to the privacy and independence so many teens crave. ♦

ALL GRAPHICS BY NEETI BADVE AND CHRISTINE ZHANG

2.9 million cases of child abuse are reported every year in the United States.



ALL GRAPHICS BY NEETI BADVE

Staying grounded: The fight against panic attacks

1 She felt paralyzed. It was two years ago when sophomore Kate DiNucci fought with her mom and started feeling as though the walls in her bedroom was swallowing her whole. DiNucci could barely breathe and spent the next 20 minutes curled up in a ball on the floor.

Although she had never experienced a panic attack before, DiNucci knew that what had happened was more than just feeling upset or overwhelmed. She is hardly alone in having suffered one of these attacks. Experts have identified the causes of the problem and recommended a range of approaches for handling them and moving beyond them. ♦



2 WHAT IS A PANIC ATTACK?

According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, panic attacks involve a feeling of dizziness, fearfulness, shortness of breath, shaking and sense of unreality. While the Mayo Clinic states that most people have around two panic attacks in their lifetime, if someone experiences several unexpected attacks and are in constant fear of another episode approaching, they might have a more extreme condition called panic disorder.

DiNucci is one of about 13.2 percent of people who experience them, according to a World Mental Health Survey. Often, panic attacks first occur in adolescence and can be identified by a variety of symptoms.



3 WHAT DO THEY REALLY FEEL LIKE?

According to an article by Dina Cagliostro, a licensed psychologist specializing in child and adolescent psychology, in order for a panic attack to be formally diagnosed, the patient needs to have unexpected attacks. They must also display a variety of symptoms such as sweating, trembling and shortness of breath. "It feels like the room is shrinking and you're becoming very small," DiNucci said. "Your heart is racing and your head is pounding."



4 WHAT SHOULD I DO IF A SUDDEN EPISODE OCCURS?

Along with therapy, HealthLine.com states that immediate strategies such as deep breathing and muscle relaxation techniques can also be extremely effective. "When I have panic attacks and feel like I'm spinning out of reality, I practice a method called 'grounding,'" DiNucci said. "I remind myself of things I can feel, see and smell because it pulls me back to wherever I am." According to VeryWellMind, grounding is a coping strategy that immediately connects you with the present. By using the five senses, grounding also acts as a distraction from upsetting thoughts and feelings.



5 HOW CAN I BE SURE THAT THIS IS NOT AN ANXIETY ATTACK?

While people often view panic attacks synonymously with anxiety attacks, according to HealthLine.com, panic attacks often occur much more abruptly. CASSY therapist Aneesa Vaez-Iravani said that while both anxiety and panic attacks are common among teenagers, there are distinguishing factors between them. Vaez-Iravani said that panic attacks have a more intensive onset and most often occur out of the blue, whereas anxiety is typically more gradual and triggered by a perceived stressor or threat; panic attacks usually last a short duration when compared to anxiety, which tends to persist over longer periods of time.



6 WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBLE TRIGGERS?

According to Cagliostro, panic attacks are more prevalent among people who are more prone to experiencing negative emotions that can be caused by past trauma or many "interpersonal stressors," like arguments. "When I got panic attacks, it just felt like a lot of things were going wrong in my life," DiNucci said. "I was having trouble with one of my best friends and I was having family troubles, so whenever I would get into a larger fight, like with my mom, then sometimes they would happen." Claire McCarthy, a primary care pediatrician at Boston Children's Hospital and an official spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics, attributes the rise in anxiety disorders among teens to increasingly high expectations, a more threatening world with a rise in school shootings and the prevalence of social media in her article titled "Anxiety in Teens is Rising: What's Going On?"



7 WHAT ARE SOME LONG-TERM TREATMENTS FOR PANIC ATTACKS?

In addition to medication, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been shown in many studies to be the most effective treatment for panic attacks and panic disorder. According to The American Psychological Association, CBT is a type of therapy that tries to teach patients how to be their own therapist by developing coping skills to change their thinking and problematic behavior in reaction to stimuli. While DiNucci has not had CBT, she has been to counseling. She first saw a therapist in elementary school over the course of her parents' divorce, and continued to go to sessions sporadically throughout middle school. "While I was actively in therapy, I didn't really notice any progress," DiNucci said. "But now that I look back, therapy definitely helped me with the way I approach the world, which makes handling problems a lot easier." However, Vaez-Iravani states that, while going to therapy for panic and anxiety disorders is beneficial, it can be difficult for many people to ask for help. "Due to some residual stigma surrounding mental health issues, it may be embarrassing for someone to disclose that he or she suffers from panic attacks," Vaez-Iravani said. "As a result, not everyone who experiences panic attacks seeks the help needed." DiNucci has not had a panic attack in almost a year. She credits this to being in a better place in her life. However, she knows that shifting to a more positive mindset isn't easy. "Talking about panic attacks isn't something to be afraid of, despite it being hard to explain to others," DiNucci said. "I always remind myself that if I survived something that bad, I can do it again because I now know how strong I am."

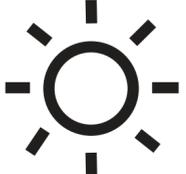


HOW TO LIMIT PANIC ATTACKS

1 
MINDFULNESS

2 
MEDICATION

3 
LIGHT EXERCISE

4 
PICTURE YOUR HAPPY PLACE

Team struggles to build fundamentals for future seasons

BY Andrew Lee & JunLee

The team went into the season with an optimistic outlook in the lower El Camino league, but have struggled throughout the season, currently holding a 0-8 league record as they near the end of their season. The Falcons failed to win a game last year, and the trend hasn't reversed itself this year. However, coaches Chris Stott and Alex Booth and senior captains midfielder Joe Bruun-Jensen and Brian Wu believe that this year's rough season will serve as a good foundation for future seasons.

"The team is looking really promising for the upcoming season, and I expect great things from these guys," Wu said. Sophomore Etienne Casanova leads the team in scoring, with 11 total goals this season. The team, with only three seniors and nine juniors, aims to improve its physicality. The other 10 players are sophomores. Having a majority of non-seniors on the squad brought a few problems to the team as the season progressed. "It's a very inexperienced team," Bruun-Jensen said. "We have many young players,

but they don't know the varsity rules, which are to respect the upperclassmen."

The team has struggled with chemistry on the field, and they haven't been able to execute team plays well or to encourage each other, contributing heavily to losses. "It's good to have fun, but we've got to take it seriously at some point, and we haven't really done that," Bruun-Jensen said. The Falcons learned an important lesson about effort when they narrowly lost to league-leading Wilcox 2-1 on Jan. 27: they can play well if they put in the effort. Without 100 percent focus, they lost 4-1 to Monta Vista, another struggling team.

The team hoped to finish their senior night game against Milpitas High School on Feb. 12 strong. Bruun-Jensen and Wu hope to see the rest of the team grow physically and mentally so they can bring out their full potential as a team and have fun together. "High school soccer works like this: we have off-seasons and on-seasons based on the players on the team and the type of team chemistry we have," Wu said. "This year is just one of the off-seasons we have, so I'm really looking forward to seeing how much



JUNIOR Nolan Chen dribbles the ball through the defense and passes to junior forward Fabian Alvarado during a match against Lynbrook High School on Jan. 31. The Falcons lost 2-0.

these young players will do after I graduate. I'm excited to come back and see these guys play on the field."

Due to printing deadlines, The Falcon was unable to cover the Feb. 12 game against Milpitas. ♦

BOYS' SOCCER

Injuries force team to rearrange their defensive formations



BY Anjali Nuggehalli & Kavita Sundaram

JUNIOR Jasmine Reddy, with her teammates watching her back, dribbled the soccer ball down the field left wing in a home game against Palo Alto High on Feb. 5. The Falcons lost 1-0.

The girls' soccer team has been hit hard with bad injuries to their key players since the beginning of the season, and as a result, they have been unable to pick up their momentum. Through eight league games, the team holds a league record of 1-7, with their most recent game as a 1-0 loss to Palo Alto. Their only win came against Los Altos on Jan. 13.

The team lost junior center forward Leila Chaudry and sophomore outside back Emma Foley to ACL tears, and junior Cynthia Zhang to recurring concussions. Despite these key injuries, junior forward Charlotte Shewchuk hopes the team can keep up their good energy to finish on a positive note.

"I think the last few games are very winnable because all of us get along really well and have learned each other's playing styles," Shewchuk said. Still on the schedule were away against Homestead on Feb 12, at home vs Mountain View on Feb 14 for their senior night, and away at Los Altos on Feb 19.

As the girls finish the remainder of the season, they are also striving to make their team chemistry as strong as possible, especially for new players on the team. Midfield-

er Gabbie Golko, the only freshman on the team, says that the team has been helpful to her.

"It's difficult being younger because everyone is bigger and stronger, and it takes a lot of work to keep up," Golko said. "But the team has been super encouraging and kind, and I've been able to talk to a lot of new people."

To keep team morale high, the injured players still sit with the team during games and cheer them on.

Along with the support of injured players and the chemistry the girls share, the team has altered their tactical approach. Because the team has struggled to score goals, head coach Ben Maxwell has moved five players to the defensive line in order to prioritize defensive play instead.

As the season ends, the team remains optimistic about the concluding games of the season.

With their newfound abilities to accommodate missing players and to work together, the team hopes to conquer their last few games. "Our hope for the end of the season is to keep our energy high and win our last few games," Shewchuk said.

Due to printing deadlines we were not able to cover the Feb. 12 game against Homestead. ♦

WRESTLING

Frazier gains confidence, strength through tough sport

BY Nicole Lu & Cici Xu

Freshman Irene Frazier stood under the spotlight as the referee held up her arm. She was breathless as she stared at the crowd in front of her, hearing her teammates chanting her name from the bleachers. This match with Monta Vista High School on Jan. 16 was her first one, and as she stood there, Frazier realized that she had never been so winded from a sport before.

"It was so breathtaking, which was really weird and I've played a lot of sports," Frazier said. "But it was so great. And I just remember thinking: I can do this. I can win." "They were doing things like leap frogs and getting in each other's faces," Frazier said. "As a girl, it was really hard for me to walk in the room and be like, Oh, this is what we're doing. This is kind of weird. But

then as I got used to it, it became fun and wasn't weird at all."

Frazier slowly but surely gained confidence in herself throughout the wrestling season. She had found acceptance in football and was able to discover the same thing through wrestling.

There, in the gym, Frazier did not feel as pressured and intimidated as she did in traditionally female sports.

She gains confidence and guidance from two other female wrestlers, juniors Nina Hawley and Nora Sherman, Hawley, who switched to wrestling this season after quitting cheer, similarly found the environment competitive and was impressed by Frazier's personality in such an atmosphere. Sherman described Frazier as a "firecracker," and was impressed by her determination.

"She is definitely her own person. She knows what she wants to do and will do it

no matter what," Sherman said.

Despite the self-doubt that clouded her mind, Frazier saw wrestling as a way to work hard for her goals.

She knew the boys in wrestling were a lot stronger, but instead of discouraging her, this gave an incentive to work hard and be humble about her own wrestling abilities. She started to care less about winning, but rather devoted herself more in purely enjoying her passions on sports.

"Wrestling was a great season," she said. "I grew up in a lot of ways, as I physically gained from 108 to 134 pounds so far, but besides that, wrestling mentally made me stronger."

She added, "You get pounded, you get beaten, you get thrown everywhere. As a woman, it made me comfortable because I know this sport doesn't relate to gender."

Despite wrestling not being a popular sport at SHS, she strongly recommended

people, especially the ones that have a hard time fitting in, to join, because the warm atmosphere always makes her feel welcomed.

"I'm not number one, but I will get there," said Frazier. "I felt welcome more than I've ever felt in any sport."

The SHS wrestling team lost to Homestead on Feb. 4 and won on Feb. 6 against Los Altos.

The team is currently preparing for the upcoming League tournament, which will be held from Feb. 15 to 16.

Some of the top wrestlers, seniors Kole Tippetts, Robbie Bilic, Nico Sabato and Nima Aminzadeh, expect to make it to CCS. Also bidding to make it to the playoffs are juniors Sean Yeung and Trevor Green and Frazier.

"Our senior night against Homestead was emotional for the seniors because it was the last time they would wrestle at Toga," said Bilic. ♦

BOYS' GOLF TEAM HOPES TO REPEAT LAST YEAR'S HISTORIC SUCCESS

Head Coach: Dave Gragnola
Last year's record: 10-2
Recap: The boys made it to NorCals and States for the first time in school history and placed fourth at States.
Key Additions: freshman Howard Shu
Key Matchups: Monta Vista, Palo Alto
Star Players: senior Kevin Sze, juniors Michael Burry, Albert Jing and Geoffrey Jing
Key losses to graduation: Daniel Kraft, William Liu
League: De Anza
Prognosis: After a 10-2 record in league play last year, the Falcons finished third in the first and second rounds of CCS to

make it to NorCals for the first time in school history.

At NorCals, they beat rivals Bellarmine and Stevens and went on to finish fourth in the State tournament at Poppy Hills Golf Club in Monterey.

"It's hard to have five out of six players perform at a high level when you get to CCS and beyond," head coach Dave Gragnola said. "I think we have tough-minded players that don't give up on a round when they have a few bad holes."

The Falcons will try to replicate their impressive season from last year. All of the top four players — senior Kevin Sze, junior Michael Burry, junior twin brothers Albert and Geoffrey Jing — will return, and the Falcons will add freshman Howard Shu.

A key match this season will be against Cupertino; the Falcons lost by two shots to Cupertino on their home course last year. "We're still a little salty about losing last year to Cupertino," Albert Jing said. "They ended our undefeated run, and we felt like

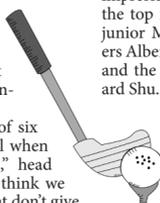
we should have won if we had played to our abilities."

The boys are confident that they can repeat their historic success.

The players have tasted what it feels like to be the most dominant team in the league, and they understand the pressures that come with playing in CCS, NorCals and States.

"If we can avoid injury and play smart, then we should win our league and prove we have one of the best teams in California," Gragnola said. ♦

— Kevin Sze and Alex Wang



BADMINTON TEAM STARTS MORE RIGOROUS TRAINING

Head Coach: John Li
Last year's record: 3-11
Recap: After moving into the upper De Anza League after the 2017-2018 season, the team struggled against tougher opponents but managed to remain in the upper league.
Key additions: senior Cameron Chow
Key matchups: Wilcox, Gunn
Star players: senior Cameron Chow, juniors Katie Chen and Ryan Hsiao, sophomore Adrian Mar
Key losses to graduation: Nathan Luk, Nicholas Zhang
League: De Anza League
Prognosis: After defeating Palo Alto twice and Gunn once last season, the Falcons secured the seventh seed in the more com-

petitive De Anza league. According to junior captain Katie Chen, the team's goal for this season is to remain in the upper division. The Falcons have set their sights on sending sophomore Adrian Mar and junior Ryan Hsiao to CCS as individuals.

Head coach John Li, who was new to the team last season, will be returning this year, alongside newcomer assistant coach Danny Mok. The coaches plan to focus on improving players' stamina through conditioning, a contrast to previous years' focus on footwork and drills. They began team conditioning on Feb. 3, running two to three miles and running up and down the bleachers on the football field.

The team will be facing the same tough

schools as last year, but with the loss of several key players to graduation, returning and incoming players will need to take on better opponents individually.

A key player is senior Cameron Chow, who is returning to the badminton team after playing volleyball for his junior year. In his sophomore year, Chow was the No. 1 mixed doubles player for the badminton team.

He said he returned to play badminton because he wanted to spend the season with his friends on the team.

Additionally, Chen added that a recurring issue for the team is their shortage of players for girls' events.

"Last year, we had to forfeit some JV

girls' events, and we might have even fewer girls this year," Chen said. "So with the lack of girls, it means that the girls who are on the team will have to play higher ranking positions."

However, Li said that the team has a good chance of staying in the upper division, despite their relatively small numbers.

"We don't have enough good players, but we do have them," Li said. "We just have to strategize between matches, and

we have a pretty good chance against schools like Milpitas, Gunn and Wilcox."

The team's first conference game will be against Monta Vista on March 10. ♦

— Cici Xu and Christine Zhang



Chow



"It's really great to be able to serve the community while pursuing my passion."

SOPHOMORE Derek Hsu

For the past four years, Hsu has been a baseball umpire for the Triple A Saratoga Little League.

The League holds its games at Congress Springs Park. Hsu, a member of the JV baseball team, wanted to be an umpire for years.

"When I was in Little League, I'd always look up to the older kids that were our umpires," Hsu said. "It's really great to be able to serve the community while pursuing my passion."

Hsu alternates between being a base umpire, who determines whether players are safe or out, and a plate umpire, who calls strikes and balls.

Despite the young age level he umpires, 10- and 11-year-olds, Hsu still feels pressure from the players' parents to make

the correct call.

"Parents try to pressure me into making the call that benefits their kid's team," Hsu said. "I've learned to be confident in my decisions and stick with my initial gut feeling."

Hsu recalls learning this lesson from a memorable game two years ago, when he was umpiring a playoff game with the chief umpire.

The commissioner of the league also happened to be the coach of one of the teams in the game.

After Hsu made an obstruction call, or player interference, the coach came up to him and insisted that he had made the wrong decision.

"I was new to being an umpire, so I listened to him and changed the call," Hsu said. "It was obviously the wrong decision, but because he pressured me to make the change, I felt obligated to listen. Looking back, I realize that I should have trusted myself initially because he was just trying to take advantage of me for his own team's success."

Hsu also feels that his experience as an umpire has led to him having a better understanding of the game.

He can now see the game from more than just one team's point of view.

Because Hsu plays baseball at a high level, he's used to seeing players around him disagree with the umpire's calls and only favor umpire decisions that benefit their own team.

"Umpiring has allowed me to see the game from a broader perspective," Hsu said. "I've learned that the umpire is just doing the best they can to make the fairest calls. In the moment, it may not be the best call, but it's ultimately their decision and out of the players' hands." ♦

Students gain new insight working with their sports

UMPING GIVES HSU NEW PERSPECTIVE OF BASEBALL

BY AnjaliNuggehalli

Sophomore Derek Hsu perches behind home plate as the batter stares back at the pitcher.

As an umpire, Hsu has to have quick reflexes and a strong attention span as he calls balls and strikes and makes other vital determinations.

HUANG FINDS REFFING SKILLS USEFUL AS A PLAYER

BY BillYuan

Sophomore Ryan Huang works as a soccer referee. For the past three years, he has refereed games for NORCAL Soccer and AYSO.

Huang started refereeing after his dad introduced him to the idea.

Huang really enjoyed it, as it was a side of soccer that he had never really experienced before.

"It's also nice receiving appreciation from players and parents for refereeing the game," he said.

Huang, who refs both the center and assistant referee positions, often calls plays as offside, in which the forwards are behind the opponent's defensive line, sometimes preventing a goal-scoring opportunity.

When this happens, the opposing team and crowd tends to get riled up, but Huang has learned to deal with their complaints.

"It's best to ignore them and continue to play the game," Huang said. "When there is a large decision, I just make the call I think is right because the parents can't do anything about it."

Not surprisingly, Huang's own skill as a midfielder on the JV soccer team comes in handy in his role as an official. The benefits he has gotten on the pitch from his experience as a referee was a surprise.

"By knowing the rules and by knowing the small things that not many other players may know, it can give me an advantage when playing," Huang said.

At the same time, Huang now has more compassion for the referees making controversial calls in the games he plays.

Along with giving him a deeper

knowledge of the game, refereeing has taught him crucial lessons in attentiveness, commitment and attentiveness.

"Refereeing is a good experience to have," Huang said. "It develops leadership and communication skills that can be applied to future jobs." ♦



Huang



GRAPHIC BY LIHI SHOSHANI

SPRING SPORTS PREVIEW

OTHER SPRING PREVIEW STORIES ARE ONLINE AT SARATOGAFALCON.ORG

BOYS' TENNIS RESUMES WITH SOLID RETURNING PLAYERS

Head Coach: Florin Marica
Last year's record: 10-2
Recap: The Falcons placed second in the league. The team advanced to CCS quarterfinals CCS, where they fell to Bellarmine 7-0.
Key Additions: none
Key Matchups: Monta Vista
Star Players: senior Ronit Pattanayak, junior Stefan Meier and sophomores Benjamin Bray and Anthony Zheng.
Key losses to graduation: Derek Pinai, David Berkowitz-Sklar and Merrick Wang
League: De Anza division
Prognosis: Following a strong season last year, in which they went 10-2 and made it to the CCS Division I quarterfinals against

Bellarmine, the Falcons are rebuilding after losing star players senior Derek Pinai, Merrick Wang and David Berkowitz-Sklar. Balancing these losses are a strong group of returners, including seniors

Ronit Pattanayak, junior Stefan Meier and sophomores Benjamin Bray and Anthony Zheng.

"I was pretty impressed with the abilities of all of our returning players," said Pattanayak, who is slated to play No. 2 singles. "This will make for an exceptionally strong team foundation, which is welcome because I feel the past several seasons we've lacked a consistent set of core players."

Despite their regular season dominance last year, the boys found themselves

struggling to find match the firepower of one of the state's elite teams in CCS.

"I was impressed with the abilities of all of our returning players."

SENIOR Ronit Pattanayak

For the past two years, the Falcons fell to Bellarmine in the quarterfinals. The team hopes to orient themselves to

better prepare for another potential CCS face-off against Bellarmine throughout the season.

The boys will continue their focus on establishing a reliable doubles lineup in order to maintain consistency throughout the season.

"Our past CCS performances definitely haven't reflected the best of our playing ability, so I'm really hoping that this upcoming season will finally change that," No. 1 doubles player junior Daniel Izrailevsky said. "I'm really liking how the team is looking right now though, and I'm pretty excited to be able to work with all of our players to train and improve." ♦

— Preston Fu and Andrew Lee



TRACK OFF TO AN UNCERTAIN START

Head Coaches: Archie Ljepava and Ian Tippetts
Last year's record: None
Recap: Sophomore jumper Giulio Morini-Bianzino and senior sprinter Alex Taylor advanced to CCS, with Morini-Bianzino coming in 26th for long jump and Taylor coming in 24th and 30th place in the 200m and 100m events respectively. The varsity girls' 4x100 team and alumna distance runner Elizabeth Kardach qualified as well; the relay team placed 23rd overall, while Kardach came in at 16th place.
Key Additions: junior thrower Luke Edwards, freshmen distance runner and thrower Mika Tippetts and distance runner Elsa Blom
Key Matchups: None
Star Players: senior distance runners Shi-

vam Verma and Kole Tippetts; sophomores distance runner Dance and jumper Morini-Bianzino; seniors sprinter Emma Hsu and thrower and jumper Alice Lin, junior sprinters Shama Gupta and Allison Hartley, and sophomore sprinter and jumper Ashna Krishnamurthy.

Key losses to graduation: sprinter Sasha Pickard, distance runner Elizabeth Kardach

League: El Camino Division
Prognosis: Following a successful season last year with relatively young athletes advancing in various events to CCS, coaches Archie Ljepava and Ian Tippetts said that they hope to continue that streak despite a sharp decline in participation among veteran players.

The track team is significantly smaller than it was last year, with many former star participants such as senior distance runners Julia Hoffman, Sanjana Reddy and sprinters Alex Taylor and Tyler Ouchida choosing not to participate this year.

Still, making up for these absences are newcomers like sophomore sprinter Elaine Liu.

"I joined the team this season because I wanted to be in a spirited atmosphere and meet people that have a passion for running," she said.

The coaches said that they are planning to bring back strength training and speed training to help the athletes perform their best.

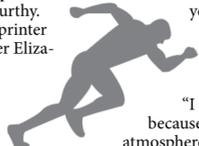
The distance team, which consists of many cross country athletes, has set especially high expectations for themselves this season after the success that the boys' cross country team had experienced in the fall.

Ljepava and Tippetts said they will also be more strict on attendance policies and tardiness in order to motivate athletes to arrive on time and commit themselves to the team.

"The goal of this season is just to improve and get people to love track," Ljepava said. "We're trying to get people to love fitness and be competitive. I want to compete and teach these students to use that competitiveness to their advantage." ♦

— Vicky Bai and Nicole Lu

ALL GRAPHICS BY SERENA LI, NICOLE LU, LIHI SHOSHANI



Three-game win streak led by 3-point shooting

BY Jonathan Li & Viraj Reddi

The boys' basketball team has gone on a three-game winning streak, defeating Gunn in a 74-71 overtime nail-biter on Jan. 30, Santa Clara 58-49 on Feb. 1 and Monta Vista 72-50 on Feb. 5.

The Falcons are looking to win out their last three games of their regular season against league-leading Wilcox on Feb. 12, Lynbrook on their senior night on Feb. 14 and Fremont on Feb. 18. Currently positioned in third place in the El Camino league, with a league record of 5-4 and an overall record of 11-10, the team is hoping to finish the season in second place and they will have an outside shot at first if they win all the rest of their games.

Seniors forward Leo Cao and guard Siva Sambasivam alongside junior guard Cameron King continue to lead the team in scoring; the three shot a combined 40.9, 42.9 and 41.7 percent from 3-point range against Gunn, Santa Clara and Monta Vista, respectively, with scoring totals of 50, 36 and 48 points.

Junior point guard Tyler Chu has played a pivotal role in running plays and controlling the pace of the game. He averages four assists per game.

"We've really come together as a team," said sophomore Som Teymouri, a first-year guard. "Our chemistry has really improved since the beginning of the season."

Several first-year players are also stepping into their roles more.

In addition to Teymouri, sophomore guard Christian Li and freshman center Mason Wang have been new key contributors. The guard-oriented team focuses on quick ball movement and getting out early in transition.

King noted that both Li and Wang have adjusted quickly.

"We thrive on driving and kicking out to the 3-point shot. Christian and Mason really fit into that dynamic because they're athletic and quick," King said. "They bring depth to the team."

One key to the team's recent win streak has been their ability to compensate for their lack of height with hot shooting and diligent defense. In their last three games, hot 3-point shooting has enabled the Falcons' offense to hum.

Against bigger teams, coach Patrick Judge emphasizes quick ball movement on offense and implements a choking technique to limit the impact of other teams' prominent bigs by doubling them in the post and scattering out to shooters on the perimeter. The Falcons successfully held Santa Clara's 6-foot-5 center to just eight points on Feb. 1 by trapping him and denying him the ball.

"When we play bigger guys and we actually follow the game plan, we play well," junior forward Ashwin Sarathy said. "Santa Clara has the biggest guy in the league and we beat them at their place because we knocked down shots and locked their big man down."

Even through their success, the team is looking to patch up their flaws, specifically by staying consistent throughout the game.

"We'll play well for the first three quarters, but then we'll fall apart in the fourth," King said. "It's just those lapses that cause us to lose games."

But despite their early-season troubles, the team is confident they can do well and make a lengthy CCS run.

"We started picking it up, and we became a team," Teymouri said. "Now that we're playing together, we might even win the league."

Due to printing deadlines, The Falcon was unable to cover the games against Wilcox on Feb. 12 and Lynbrook tonight. ♦



JUNIOR CAMERON KING SHOOTS 3-POINTER AGAINST FREMONT ON JAN. 3. THE FALCONS WON 65-60.

TALISMAN // RANNA ZAHABI

snapshots



TALISMAN // WILSON FUNG



FALCON // JUN LEE



TALISMAN // KAI ZHANG



Courtesy of HELEN JARRETT

Senior forward Leo Cao shoots a free throw in a 74-71 victory against Gunn on Jan. 29. Cao finished with 21 points on 8 of 13 shooting.

Senior Alex Mah and junior Bryan Young play during Jazz Cabaret on Feb. 8.

Senior Krisha Minocha surveys her formation as a choreographer for the BNB all girls dance during a rehearsal on Feb. 9.

Senior Alvin Liu moderates the round between the Saratoga A team and Expedition St. Joseph at the regional B-set History Bowl tournament on Feb. 9.

How to soft reject a backup: Someone asked you to be in a relationship with them! What do you do? Here's our template for a direct and concise letter that you can send them.



Justin Guo and Amanda Zhu

Thank you for your respectful efforts to make time for me and become one of my closest friends. Your surprisingly delightful proposal of entering a relationship caught me off guard the other day; after much thought and deliberation, I have decided that I will be promptly rejecting you from my "Never Date This Person" file of poten-

tial love interests.

That is to say, it is my full intention to engage in a romantic relationship with you, with the understanding that it will be solely on a friendly basis.

We could Netflix and chill together. In your freezer, because it's probably still warmer than your heart, which is made of ice. Since you're so smooth and cool, and just like ice, I melt in your warm presence.

Because you're also so hot. Hot-headed, egotistical, irresponsible and fundamentally flawed as a person, that is.

Regardless, I'm looking forward to seeing you again soon, kneeling outside my house, pleading for me to take you back.

To that fancy restaurant because you really liked eating their steak.

Alone, in the corner, as you watched me dine with one of your friends. Who was consoling me about my fears of your unrequited love.

When I'm around you, I can't help but be happy; I'd like to always keep you near me, in that zone.

That is, the friend zone. Which is, of course, an area close to me where we can talk and have fun together.

I don't know how much you think about me, but I've been thinking about you for a long time and about how long I've been waiting to meet up with you.

Because you owe me the 55 cents it cost to buy a stamp for this letter. And, of course, so we can also schedule a date. To meet and finish our group APUSH project.

However, I would also enjoy a one-on-one date with you, as I need help deciding on someone else to love, because you are the perfect embodiment of a person ...

That I wouldn't prefer ...
To be in a strictly friendly relationship with ...

As it would be foolish to disregard our professional relationship as well.

Congratulations!

Apologetically, _____ ♦

The school quarantined me for a week because of the coronavirus

sel-liu-lar
data



Selena Liu

I had no idea what I was in for.

Two weeks into second semester, my parents made the sudden decision to buy plane tickets to China to spend the Lunar New Year with my family. After all, they reasoned, I was a second semester senior and I could afford to miss one week of school to spend some time with my relatives, whom I hadn't seen for over a year.

Little did I know that I was traveling to a nation that had fallen prey to a prolific virus and that I would later be mandatorily quarantined and prohibited from coming to school for a week.

I knew something was going to be different about this trip the moment my mom received a phone call from my relatives, who begged her to buy face masks from an American pharmacy before flying to China. The new Wuhan coronavirus had the entire nation in panic.

Face masks in China were all sold out, and for families who needed some, they were sold online at stunning prices of more than \$100 each. Even in cities like Shenzhen in the Guangzhou province 700 miles south of Wuhan, which was where my aunt lived, I hardly saw anyone outside without a face mask.

Soon, word about the coronavirus

spread around the globe. The World Health Organization labeled it a global health emergency, and the virus made headline after headline as American media tracked more than a dozen outbreaks here.

Concern escalated across the Saratoga community as well. When word spread that I had recently returned from China, within three days the PTA president emailed my parents suggesting that I start wearing a face mask to school. A couple days after that, principal Greg Louie pulled me out of class and handed me a notice from the Santa Clara Health Department.

Originally, I thought that I would be under voluntary self-quarantine. The Santa Clara Health Department notice that Mr. Louie handed me said that students would be given the option to voluntary self-quarantine. However, not even an hour after I sat down to talk with Mr. Louie, the office pulled me out of class and issued me a mandatory quarantine. Apparently the office decided that all students who had returned from China, even from a city other than Wuhan, had to be under self-quarantine until 14 days after the date of return — which meant that I would have to stay at home for an entire week.

Having a week off was refreshing and allowed me to fix my jet lag. My parents even joked that we could take another vacation if we wanted to. Despite this, missing two weeks out of a six-week grading period was tough. During that week of self-quarantine, not only did I need to

study for two math tests — I was supposed to take one of them on the day I was issued the quarantine — but I also could not meet any of my friends at school. In the end, the week was hardly productive — I spent most of it watching romantic comedy movies in my pajamas.

Despite these difficulties, my struggles could not even compare to the difficulties that my relatives and other citizens in China were going through. My father, who spent the Lunar New Year in Shenzhen with me and my family, could not return to his apartment and business in Beijing because domestic airlines and train stations were all closed. My cousins could not go to work in Shenzhen because companies instructed their employees to stay at home. Many Chinese doctors, reluctant to endanger themselves by being exposed to a potentially deadly disease, refuse to travel to Wuhan to help the infected. As a result, thousands of those infected in Wuhan have been left with inadequate health care.

The coronavirus has affected the entire world, but China most of all.

Throughout the entire week of my self-quarantine, I thought about how fortunate I am to be living in an area where people are still employed, schools are still running and grocery stores are still open. Most of all, I thought about how grateful I am to be able to go outside and enjoy the fresh air, without being at risk of inhaling deadly pathogens. I hope, in the months to come, the U.S. can continue to stay that way. ♦

topten

WAYS TO WOO YOUR BOO THIS V-DAY

- 10 **Throw money at them.** Let them know your wallet's as big as your heart.
- 9 **Confess on Toga Confessions.** The page is dead, so we'll be the ones to tell you to shoot your shot!!
- 8 **Be honest,** like Lauren on season 20 of "The Bachelor": "I'm at an unfair advantage because I've stalked you online for the last two months."
- 7 **Are they avoiding you in the halls?** Go viral on TikTok and renegade your way into a relationship!
- 6 **Bring your crush an N95 respirator mask and deliver this line:** "My love for you is as contagious as the coronavirus. Wanna voluntarily quarantine ourselves in my room?"
- 5 **Memorize their ID number and sign into a room at tutorial.** Now you can see their schedule and "accidentally" run into them in the hallways!
- 4 **Do you know what Justin Bieber lyrics, the Wiggles' fruit salad and your crush have in common?** They're all yummy yummy! Let 'em know.
- 3 **Go to BNB and find your Bom-bae in the Bay this Friday and Saturday in the McAfee Center!**
- 2 **Write a letter of continued interest to the crush who already rejected you once.** Decisions come next month!
- 1 **Now forget everything we just said and look into a mirror.** There's a lot there to love.

- Anishi Patel and Sandhya Sundaram