



Reporter examines rising farmer suicide rates.



Seniors lose moments due to school year cut short.

**Editors' note:** This is a special edition of the Falcon that has been mailed to all SHS households as we try to support a small Bay Area business, our printer Folger Graphics in Hayward. The Falcon is largely working online during shelter-in-place. We hope our work will help you feel connected to our community in these trying times.

— Manasi Garg, Allison Hartley, Rohan Kumar, Kaitlyn Tsai



# THE saratoga falcon

AN INDEPENDENT HIGH SCHOOL PUBLICATION

Friday, May 29, 2020

Saratoga High School | Saratoga, CA

SPECIAL EDITION Vol. 60, No. 9

## Choir director accused of sexual assault

BY Manasi Garg, Allison Hartley & Kaitlyn Tsai

Choir director Andrew Ford was arrested on May 15 and charged with sexually assaulting a minor between 2004 and 2006, according to a published report in the East Bay Times. The 33-year-old teacher was charged with one count each of sexual penetration by force or duress, oral copulation by force or duress and oral copulation with a minor under 18.

The district is currently investigating whether any inappropriate behavior occurred during Ford's time at Saratoga High. Ford has been placed on a leave of absence by the district since mid-April and is currently being held at Elmwood men's jail in Milpitas, where he is being held on \$250,000 bail, the East Bay Times reported.

Before Ford left, he told his students he had to attend to a family emergency and would return as soon as possible, said junior Francesca Fernandes, who is in choir. In the interim, band director Jason Shiuan has taken over the class and helped organize a virtual choir piece, for which a video editor strung together individual recordings from each choir member.

Ford has worked as the choral director

>> CHOIR DIRECTOR on pg. 6

## District faces budget cuts

BY Manasi Garg & Kaitlyn Tsai

The Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District has projected that spending needs to be cut by up to \$1.6 million annually for the next three years to offset a deficit of \$4.1 million due to losses in funding from the state and expected drops in local property tax revenue. This number is subject to change as the pandemic progresses.

Rosemarie Pottage, the district's chief business officer, said that leaders will try to avoid layoffs and maintain classes and programs. The specifics of spending cuts have not been spelled out.

The combined yearly budget for the two-

Drama and English teacher Sarah Thermond will teach drama full time at Palo Alto High.

Spanish teacher Bret Yeilding will retire after 20 years at SHS.

Librarian Kevin Heyman will retire after 12 years at SHS.

English teacher Susanna Ryan will move to Alabama.

>> TEACHERS on pgs. 4 & 5

## Seniors to pick up diplomas in drive-through graduation

BY Nitya Marimuthu

After receiving a green light from the county, the diploma presentation ceremony for the Class of 2020 will take place on June 1 on the top of the stairs at the McAfee Center.

According to principal Greg Louie, graduates will come to the center at a scheduled time with any immediate family members in one car and will commence in an orderly manner that maintains social distancing while efficiently streamlining graduates.

The procession — consisting of graduates in their cars — will start near the parking lot by the stadium and will proceed toward the McAfee Center. Graduates' families will pull into a designated spot one by one.

Upon stopping, the student will exit the car and go up the ramp to the McAfee, and after having their name announced will pick up the diploma cover. They will then exit the stage, return any borrowed gowns, go back to their car and exit through the lot by the stadium.

The administration hopes to live-stream the ceremony in a virtual graduation on June 4 for those who cannot be there in person. As of right now, the senior

class office does not have more information about the virtual graduation.

Senior class representative Emma Hsu said that senior class officers and administration have been considering many options, including holding a traditional graduation in August, but eventually settled upon this model. She said that this was not the ideal situation, but that she is optimistic that the virtual graduation will still be meaningful.

"Personally, I am quite bummed that we are having a drive-through diploma pick up and a virtual graduation this year, because I have been looking forward to all senior activities since my freshman year, and the effects of the COVID-19 precautions changed so many plans in an instant," Hsu said.

Senior Armina Mayya called the modified graduation "pretty depressing," but she understands that administration and the senior class officers are trying to accommodate as much as possible and that the situation is unlucky.

"[The modified graduation is] a very anticlimactic end to high school, but I understand that it's the best we can do [due to] COVID-19," Mayya said. "I am just super grateful for the administration and class officers for organizing all of this for us." ♦



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ALL GRAPHICS BY NITYA MARIMUTHU AND ALEKHYA VADLAKONDA



## newsbriefs

**Two juniors recognized at NHD state competition**

The statewide National History Day Competition (NHDCA) held a virtual awards ceremony on Wednesday, May 13 that announced qualifications for nationals along with other merits. Among the seven groups of student finalists from SHS, two students received awards.

Junior Riya Jain won the Japanese American History Award for her documentary, "Fighting on Two Fronts: The Fight against Japanese Internment," while junior Francesca Fernandes received an Honorable Mention for her performance "Elizabeth Hamilton: How One Woman Revolutionized the Role of Women in American Society and Its Politics."

Although Jain and Fernandes won these awards, they did not move forward to nationals. Five other groups of students also did not advance but were finalists for the state competition. These juniors included Neeti Badve, Tabitha Hulme, Nitya Marimuthu, Nikhil Nair, Hermione Bossolina, Ankita Chatterjee, Katie Chen, Urmila Vudali, Michelle Wu, Aliza Zaman, Amanda Zhu, Rohan Kumar, Anthony Qin, Aaron Wong and Karen Lei.

After receiving the news that she had qualified as a finalist, Jain said that she was ecstatic.

"Obviously, I was really happy," Jain said. "It's a good feeling to be recognized for something that you really put a lot of effort into."

— Ethan Lin and Allen Luo

**Keys recognized as District Teacher of the Year**

English teacher Amy Keys, who restarted the Creative Writing class and led the school's WASC effort this year, said she was deeply grateful and a bit embarrassed to discover that she had been named District Teacher of the Year.

"To be recognized by these giants among teachers is one of the great honors of my life," Keys said. "I have learned an immeasurable amount from my colleagues, and I am continually pushed to be a better teacher by my academically hungry, intellectually curious students and my thoughtful, discerning, generous and caring colleagues."

The District Teacher of the Year award alternates between teachers from Los Gatos High and Saratoga High. The vote for Teacher of the Year was done by Keys's fellow teachers, who, along with several administrators, announced the honor to her via Zoom-bombing one of her classes earlier this month. A dozen staff members also did a drive-by salute in front of Keys's house in Santa Cruz and brought her lemons to signify her ability to turn lemons into lemonade.

Keys said she believes the commendation extends to her close colleagues and students, whom she constantly learns from. She strives to create an engaging learning environment to enable students to develop active learning skills.

Many of her English 11 Honors students, including junior Isaac Sun, were excited to hear that Keys won the award. "She's an amazing teacher — very caring and always wants the best for her students," Sun said. "Just from how meticulously she plans every class, whether that was in person or online, you can really see that she wants you to succeed. She gives you nuggets of information to digest and lets you think and ponder about everything that you're doing."

— Preston Fu

**Noteworthy Updates**

- Finals week now only two days; school finishes June 2
- Yearbook distribution canceled; yearbook staff finished publication remotely so books will be mailed to students' doors
- 9th, 10th and 11th grade students to return textbooks and other belongings between June 2 and June 4
- Saratoga's Got Talent to be held virtually on May 29
- The seniors of the Falcon staff will publish the 2019-2020 senior magazine via a website launching in early June.
- The Falcon now sends weekly newsletters; to subscribe, visit this website: <http://eepurl.com/gYSX55>

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FALCON // ANGELINA CHEN

**Graduate goodbyes | Principal Greg Louie hands senior Jackson Gress a lawn sign in the drive-through cap and gown pickup on Thursday, May 21. Staff members traded seniors their textbooks for the class photo, a lawn sign, a t-shirt and their cap and gown.**

**Senior prom put on hold**

by Andy Chen  
& Kaasha Minocha

As all events for the current school year have been canceled, ASB director Matt Torrens and the senior class office are looking into different avenues to hold prom for the graduating Class of 2020 in December.

"Seniors have been pulled away from each other at a critical moment of their school career; at the climax," Torrens said. "This is a chance to bring everybody back together, have some laughs and enjoy each other's company."

The details of the event are currently unknown, but the idea is that after students come home from college for winter break, the current senior class office and Torrens could organize an event on campus.

Torrens said that holding the event in August is unlikely due to shelter-in-place regulations, so their next step is to look later on. If December is not possible, they will consider moving prom to springtime or early summer of 2021.

Torrens said the prom will ideally be limited to seniors in order to ensure senior class funds are not used for a multi-grade event. Extra details are still being worked out, such as if a senior could invite a junior or somebody else. Torrens added that they would need to have some control on who's going into the on-campus prom.

Even if prom is held months later or a year later, the senior class officers and Torrens are determined to hold the event. Torrens said that although the seniors are at the end of high school and soon they will start a new stage of their life, the prom aims to bring the class back together to "celebrate the challenges they've gone through together."

"Not only is it a substitute for prom, but it's also an effort for everyone, even when they are in college, to come back together and be able to reunite again," Torrens said. "These seniors have that unique opportunity to have an event like COVID-19 that has united them in a way we've never seen another class unite, and ironically, the uniting factor has been being separated from one another." ♦

Torrens said that holding the event in August is unlikely due to shelter-in-place regulations, so their next step is to look later on. If December is not possible, they will consider moving prom to springtime or early summer of 2021.

Torrens said the prom will

turn to the classroom and will no longer be instructional coaches. Fewer sections of classes will be offered next year, probably driving average class sizes into the 30s. The district is modeling its response on cuts made during the Great Recession of

2007-2009. However, the situation looks worse because of the high levels of unemployment spreading across the country. "These aren't the Great Recession numbers," Pottage said at a board meeting on May 19. "These are Great Depression numbers." ♦

**BUDGET**

continued from pg. 1

temporary employees, including teachers, may also not return next year while two teachers on special assignment will likely re-

**Community organizations help locals under shelter-in-place**

by Marisa Kingsley

Before the COVID-19 crisis, elderly residents could find a range of activities and groups for senior citizens at the Saratoga Area Senior Center, including memoir-writing, Chinese Chamber music, line dancing and Tai-Chi.

Now, the only local classes offered to seniors are online as 20-minute YouTube videos. These are part of the ongoing effort by Saratoga Area Coordinating Council, which runs the center, to stay connected with its members during the state's shelter-in-place order.

"Our remaining staff is working from home and trying our best to adapt to this situation while staying positive and accessible to our seniors," said Taylor Taylor, the executive director of SASCC.

Also closed now are many of the establishments where Saratogans spend much of their free time, including the Saratoga Library, Saratoga Federated Church and Sacred Heart Parish. Saratoga City Hall is to remain closed at least through May 3, according to the city's website. While their doors may be closed to the public, many of these institutions are doing their part to help out during this public health crisis.

The Saratoga Federated Church held a blood drive on April 15, which was operated by the American Red Cross, as blood donations remain imperative to community health and the need is constant, according to American Red Cross. Besides the increased disinfection of the equipment used for donations, participants had to adhere to social-distancing guidelines and were subjected to mini-physicals to ensure they were healthy before donating.

The shelter-in-place order has also intensified the need for non-

profit community organizations to help low-income families as unemployment rates skyrocketed. According to Mercury News, 3.4 million Californians have filed for unemployment due to economic fallout amid COVID-19.

As a result, many local organizations are urgently asking the public for monetary donations in order to buy food and other supplies for low-income families, as well as asking for volunteers.

One such organization is West Valley Community Services, which provides financial assistance and food to families living in Cupertino, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Saratoga and West San Jose. Cathy Thermond, mother of drama teacher Sarah Thermond, is an active volunteer of WVCS through the Saratoga Rotary Club as well as the Saratoga Foothill Club, both clubs dedicated to community service. Thermond is now working with both organizations remotely to help fundraise for the WVCS food pantries.

The transition from in-person care to remote assistance has not been easy for the organization. Taylor said that since their major operations are closed and they no longer have revenue coming in, SASCC must raise money through fundraising, grant-writing and aid from their government partners. These funds have not been enough and the SASCC had to lay off a large portion of its staff, not only leaving many unemployed but also fewer resources to help seniors.

"Our members are isolated now more than ever, and our traditional methods of providing social services have been interrupted indefinitely," Taylor said.

Even when SASCC will be able to reopen once the shelter-in-place order is lifted, Taylor expects that they will not be able to go immediately back to serving the elderly community since they will likely be in quarantine longer than younger people.

"Once most people start going back to work, seniors will have less help available to them from family, friends, and neighbors so we will need to be creative in how to provide support during the transition back to normal life," Taylor said. ♦



Courtesy of SASCC

Renée Kazemipour Paquier, SASCC Board Member and WVCS Dean of Professional Studies, and WVCS member Haoxue Che deliver meals for the Live Oak Nutrition Center.

**District redesigns education goals**

by Aaria Thomas

Junior Danielle Moon, class representative, walked into a meeting on Jan. 22 in Saratoga High School's library and sat down at a table with Los Gatos and Saratoga faculty, student representatives, parents, business representatives and members from the district.

They were there to begin discussing what a student in the district should know and be able to do at the end of their education, the beginning of a process that will result in a Graduate Profile.

Each of the participants understood the rapid pace at which society was changing with technology and with it the expectations for people living in the society. They also understood that students' education must be adjusted to better prepare them for it.

To achieve this goal, the district created a committee known as the Design Team with around 50 members, consisting of teachers, administrators and students from both schools as well as business professionals from the community, board members and college

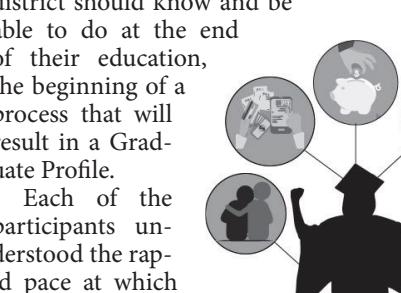
representatives.

So far the Design Team has held two of four meetings, the first on Jan. 22 and the second on Feb. 26. Due to the shelter-in-place order and school closure, the team has halted their meetings for now and plans to resume its meetings online, holding the last two on April 29 and May 27. They still plan to finish and begin using the graduate profile for the 2020-2021 school year.

In addition to Moon and Mohniike, juniors Manasi Garg and Nora Sherman and English teacher Suzanne Herzman have attended meetings.

Although the project is in its early stages, many of the members have an opinion or an idea of what they want to see in the Graduate Profile. While Mohniike thinks technical skills in subjects like math and English are important, she said she believes the district should also focus on expanding students' soft skills.

"I think the power of collaborative work and the essential skills of working on a team are important," Mohniike said. "The other thing that is becoming very apparent is the value of the arts — creating and appreciating visual and performing arts makes the rest of what we do meaningful." ♦



GRAPHIC BY NITYA MARIMUTHU

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# English teacher Susanna Ryan says goodbye to SHS

BY MarisaKingsley

At first glance, Room 003 may seem like the characteristic English classroom — grammar posters and student projects decorating the walls, stray copies of "Cyrano de Bergerac" lying on desks — but current and former students know that English and World Geography teacher Susanna Ryan's classroom is a warm, welcoming space for all who enter.

But come next school year, Room 003 will be occupied by a different teacher. After teaching at SHS for six years, Ryan will move to Huntsville, Ala., for her husband's job as an operations manager in the defense industry.

While the decision to move was difficult, Ryan said that the more affordable living costs and proximity to her children's grandparents and her brother's family in Georgia will be worth it.

Despite these benefits, Ryan said saying farewell to SHS will not be easy.

"If it weren't for our family being so far away, I would gladly stay at SHS my entire career," Ryan said.

Ryan started her teaching career at the

undergraduate program at the College of William and Mary in Virginia.

She transitioned fresh out of college to teaching English 10 Honors, English 11, Creative Writing and AP English Literature at Falls Church High School in West Falls Church, Va., for nine years, and she taught a composition course at Northern Virginia Community College for one year afterwards. In 2014, Ryan moved to San Jose for her husband's career and began teaching at SHS.

After the move, Ryan plans on taking a year off to be at home with her infant son and help her two daughters, both early elementary age, get adjusted to their new schools.

Ryan has already started scouting out high school teaching positions in Alabama but acknowledged that it will be challenging to adjust to a new school.

"I never thought I could love another school more [than Falls Church], and then I came to Saratoga," Ryan said. "I'm now convinced that high schools are all pretty incredible in their own right, and I just hope



Ryan

I find one I love half as much as this school."

Despite the distance, Ryan is grateful for the time she spent with her students face-to-face, noting how vivacious class discussions and group projects are a constant source of entertainment. She described teaching high school students as an "honor" and "source of neverending laughs."

Ryan also cherishes the connections she made with her colleagues and cites their enthusiasm, collaboration and dedication as continued sources of inspiration.

Ryan's colleagues share the same sentiment.

Assistant principal Kerry Mohnike, who worked closely with Ryan on the Social Emotional Learning team on events such as Breaking Down The Walls, described Ryan as an ardent advocate for fostering meaningful connections among staff, students and their cohorts alike.

Mohnike also said she admires how Ryan brought her love of language to her students every day.

"Certainly I will miss her utter commitment to doing right by her students in

all ways," Mohnike said. "That doesn't just mean teaching them English language skills, but in sharing her belief and compassion for the equality of all."

Ryan's empathy is not the only thing that students and teachers knew her for. For her students, Ryan will be remembered as a passionate teacher who valued personal connections, even if it was just saying hello to them in the hallway or inviting them to her classroom during tutorial to catch up.

"Even though I did not have Mrs. Ryan in my sophomore or junior year, I still stopped by her classroom about once every two weeks to talk with her," said junior Jason Chin, who had Ryan for English 9. "She always has things to say about her children, and she always shows us photos of them."

Ryan looks forward to coming back to visit after the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that she will remember the SHS community fondly.

"I've had so many models here of the kind of person I want to be, not just as a teacher but more generally as a human," Ryan said. "I am forever changed by the compassion, work ethic and community embodied here at SHS." ♦



TALISMAN // KIRAN CHANDRASEKHER

## Yeilding retires after 20 years of teaching Spanish

BY AnoukYeh

so much."

Aside from being involved in the realm of academics, Yeilding also plays an active role in the school's sports program.

For 10 years, Yeilding was the head coach of the girls' varsity basketball team, leading the team to numerous wins and league championships. In 2013, he became the football team's defensive coordinator.

Yeilding said that engaging in the athletic sphere of SHS has helped him see a valuable and rare side of students that most teachers wouldn't be able to see.

"A few years ago, we played Palo Alto in the playoff game. We won a really close game and it was really exciting," Yeilding said. "At the end, the Saratoga students just rushed the field. I've never been around anything like that."

His love for research and reading motivated him to earn a master's degree in Library and Information Science and a Library Media teaching credential from San Jose State University in 1998.

Yeilding continued teaching at Mt. Pleasant High School and subsequently enrolled in evening classes.

He was later hired as the librarian at Independence High School in 2000. When the East Side Union High School

District decided to cut librarians in 2008, Heyman applied and became the librarian at SHS.

Beyond his duties as a librarian, Heyman has long advocated for the integration of technology in schools and runs the library media program.

Yeilding said that being a coach helped him develop stronger relationships with students.

Murphy said he is going to miss Yeilding a lot.

"I will miss his enthusiasm and comedic relief in class and on the football field," Murphy said. "I will also miss having him around because he always wanted to make the people around him feel better and be better."

When asked if he had any parting words for the Saratoga community, Yeilding had an immediate answer full of his typical humor.

"I can't believe that Mr. Ellis and Mr. Torrens won the Teacher of the Year and I never did," he joked. ♦



COURTESY OF FREDRICK KIM

## Longtime librarian retires after 12 rewarding years

BY NicoleLu

man was in teaching research methods himself.

Through his presentations given to students, Heyman has been extremely beneficial when carrying out research projects with her students.

Heyman worked extensively over his years as a librarian with teachers and provided resources for classes such as MAP 10 with English teacher Suzanne Herzman and AP Literature, English 12, English 11 and Creative Writing with Keys.

Heyman led research in the History Bowl and Science Bowl events by ensuring that students had access to science database subscriptions and an outstanding collection of books by prominent scientists.

In addition he also attended the competitions with assistant principal Matthew Torrens.

After his long career, Heyman and his wife both made the decision to retire this year to spend more time with their family. His wife taught for 32 years at Independence High School.

"We are both ready for a new adventure in life," Heyman said. "We have always enjoyed visiting national parks, camping and hiking; my wife and I plan on visiting as many parks as we can."

They are moving to Sandy, Utah, to be close to Heyman's family.

During these meetings throughout his tenure, arguing for more investment in technology-based materials.

Besides database and library management, Heyman has helped history teachers and students with the annual National History Day competition.

"Mr. Heyman is an active and accessible teacher, leading classes and supporting students to conduct original research in ways that not only help them learn more about their world now, but also prepare them to hit the ground running in college," English teacher Amy Keys said.

Keys noted how knowledgeable Hey-

# Thermond to teach at Palo Alto after eight years at SHS

BY ShamaGupta  
& ChristineZhang

factor in her decision to switch schools. Next year there will be only one drama class, and the fate of the productions is uncertain because of COVID-19.

Thermond is a class of 2007 Saratoga alum. While attending high school, she was a dedicated drama student and religiously participated in fall plays and spring musicals.

Thermond graduated from the University of Southern California School of Dramatic Arts in 2011, and her first job out of USC was as an English and drama teacher at Saratoga.

Throughout her teaching career, Thermond has also taken up acting and directing gigs for productions around the Bay Area such as the musical "Annie," "Educating Rita" and an all-female cast of "Hamlet."

Even though she thinks she will have an easier time being a full-time theater director at Palo Alto, Thermond said she will miss Saratoga High's culture of students placing trust in their teachers, who empower them to take initiative and achieve great things.

She appreciates her former teachers for accepting and respecting her as a colleague right when she started teaching; she has tried

to take on the same welcoming attitude toward her students.

"I've tried to give students a platform to run events that they want to try and to hold really important leadership positions with their peers," she said. "I feel like this is a community that is committed to doing good work and that tries to empower people to go after what they want to do."

Junior Francesca Fernandes, who is not currently in the drama class at SHS but has participated in the school's plays since her freshman year, said that Thermond is not only dedicated to her work but also very kind towards her students.

"She really puts her all into every single show she's directed and uses every cast member thoughtfully," Fernandes said. "Even if you're not a lead, she still finds ways to really feature you and your strengths so that the show is as great as possible and you're a valuable member of the show, no matter what your role is."

Senior Natalie Tjahjadi's favorite memories from drama are also from the shows, particularly "Mary Poppins" and "The Sound of Music."

She has been in Thermond's drama class all four years of high



Courtesy of TALISMAN

school, and she has also participated in all of the main stage plays and musicals that Thermond has directed.

In fact, Tjahjadi said that Thermond was the one who initially inspired her to try acting and that she has loved working with Thermond for the past four years.

"Her class was really fun and chill and was a great way to escape the pressures and stress of high school," she said. "Ms. Thermond created an environment for everyone that was super welcoming and friendly, which helped form a really strong bond between theater kids in all different grade levels."

## On the frontlines, students' parents tackle COVID-19

BY AnjaliNuggehalli

&amp;

AnoukYeh

As the entire world battles the COVID-19 pandemic, health-care workers stand on the front lines.

Whether it's waking up at the crack of dawn or working throughout the night — or both — doctors and nurses are making enormous sacrifices to put a halt to this global frenzy.

Sophomore Isabel Lee's mother, Dr. Sarah Lee, is one of the millions of health-care workers putting her health at risk for the sake of others.

Lee works as a maternal fetal medicine specialist at the Good Samaritan Hospital as a medical director in obstetrics.

As a radiologist, her father primarily reviews medical imaging to diagnose injuries and diseases.

Still, Qureshi is grateful to her father for working on the frontlines to save lives.

"I'm really proud of him for not getting broken down by the death tolls," she said. "I'm also proud of the amount of effort he's putting into his work and how he's managed to go to work with the same attitude as usual."

Despite the pride for their parents' work, the students said it is easy to become discouraged when others disregard the state-mandated lockdown and social distancing procedures.

For her part, Isabel said her family dynamic has not changed significantly during the crisis, but she admits that having a family member in the heat of the pandemic is frightening.

"We are concerned for my mom, but I feel so blessed to have a family member who is a leader to others," Isabel said. "I hope patients will be cooperative with her and protocols will be followed within the hospital so she can stay healthy."

Meanwhile, senior Katie Lam has noticed a shift in her family dynamic at home. With her mother working as an internal medicine doctor and her father as a vascular surgeon at Kaiser, her family has become more distant as both her parents now work for extended periods during the day and even throughout the night.

"It messed up a lot of summer planning," Wong said. "But at this point, I'm happy knowing the trip will happen next year." ♦

In the brief moments when her parents are home, Lam's family practices proce-



GRAPHIC BY CICI XU

Isaiah Chung originally planned on taking the SAT Molecular Biology subject test, the SAT II U.S. History subject test and the SAT in June; those exams are now canceled, scaled down AP testing will occur in May.

"Honestly, I don't know what to think," Chung said. "I studied hard for all the tests, so it's pretty interesting to see them get canceled."

With the cancellation of all of these standardized tests, many colleges and universities, including Boston University and all the UCs, have revoked mandatory test scores for 2021 college applications.

Chung believes that the altered application requirements will turn admissions decisions into "even more of a random lottery."

Even as they process these disappointments, students are trying to find consolation in knowing that life will one day return to normal.

"It messed up a lot of summer planning," Wong said. "But at this point, I'm happy knowing the trip will happen next year." ♦

Freshman Magdalena Mendoza has seen the postponement of a Fresno Dance

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since 2014, and also helps lead the school's orchestras and band. Ford's students reacted largely with a sense of disbelief at the allegations. Senior Ritika Kuppam, who is in choir, said she was shocked.

"I've known Mr. Ford since I was in sixth grade as he would sub for my choir teacher when she couldn't make it," Kuppam said. "I remember loving his charisma and passion for music, and that's continued through high school as I've worked with him on musicals. It's really hard for me to connect these allegations with Mr. Ford as a person because it's all so surreal."

Many students recalled Ford as someone they could rely on for guidance in their academic and personal lives.

"He really does care about each and every one of his students," Fernandes said. "He's always there to talk or to help you if you need anything."

Junior Isaac Sun, one of the drum majors for marching band, described Ford as "the person students would always go to when they feel down or sad."

Sun said he worked with Ford this past marching band season and became close to him as Ford helped Sun improve his drum major skills.

"I just feel a bit overwhelmed," Sun said. "I'm guessing most people in the music department are taking it the same way I am."

Ford majored in music education at San Jose State University and periodically works as a vocal director for Children's Musical Theater in San Jose. He began as a choir and orchestra teacher at Saratoga High after being recommended to music director Michael Boitz through a mutual connection.

Ford has no criminal history, and these allegations are unrelated to any person at SHS. The investigation began in December. He turned himself in to the San Jose police on May 14 when he learned the agency had issued an arrest warrant for him. ♦

## Online AP tests have pros and cons

by Cici Xu

As he began to upload his responses with five minutes left in his AP Computer Science A exam, which started at 1 a.m. on May 15, junior Omkar Kulkarni watched as his Chrome browser froze. Frantically, he abandoned his first choice of submission — copy and paste — and hastily screenshotted his response typed on a Google Doc, hoping the picture would upload successfully.

With only minute left, his screen unfroze, and he was able to upload his responses. As the word "Congratulations" appeared on the screen, he sighed in relief.

Kulkarni is one among 3 million students who took part in the newly created AP system this year as all the College Board switched AP testing online due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

Students were emailed an E-ticket to log on to their exams, where they submitted handwritten or typed responses to one or two free-response questions. Each test lasted 50 minutes.

**All students interviewed said they feel that this year's AP exams did not accurately reflect the difficulty of the actual curriculum.**

Technological issues seemed to be the biggest obstacle. Some students found image submission particularly problematic, while others dealt with inconsistent home Wi-Fi or an outdated Chrome Browser.

Kulkarni's Chrome browser crashed when he was submitting his last AP US History question's response. He requested a retake immediately after the incident by filling out a makeup form sent to his email.

Despite such problems, the College Board said more than 99 percent of the students successfully submitted their responses. Even so, students could request a retake if they encountered technological difficulties during the tests. Students with valid reasons will be allowed to take the makeup exams scheduled between June 1 and June 5.

Students outside of the United States felt

that the schedule on AP testing puts them at a major disadvantage. The College Board scheduled all the exams to happen at the exact same time around the world, so some students living overseas have to take them early in the morning or late at night.

The College Board also created a YouTube channel called Advanced Placement, which reviews the major concepts and units and provides two mock tests for every AP course.

"When I made the decision to go to Taiwan, I already knew that I had to take my AP tests at 2 a.m. and that was just a compromise I had to make, but hearing that my friends in international schools also had to wake up at 2 a.m. kind of pissed me off," Tang said. "The College Board is pretty inflexible and inconsiderate toward their international students."

To cope with the schedule, Tang changed her sleeping and eating routine to

match with the Pacific Time, but it brought "an obvious" impact to her health since she was eating too few meals every day.

"They should've just let us take it according to time zones. I know it's supposed to 'prevent cheating' but there were different sets of tests anyways," Tang said.

Despite these issues, some students say that the changes to AP testing this year provided many unexpected advantages. Sophomore Joshua Fang, who took the AP Computer Science A exam, felt that the questions were easier than previous years. In addition, students typically wrote code

"Every bit of information, emails and videos the College Board published for preparing students for the APs shows their thoughtfulness," said Fang. "They even linked a survey on the last page. After all, this year's online exams are worth remembering." ♦

## Former SHS interim principal passes away from COVID-19

by Nitya Marimuthu

Former SHS interim principal Harry Bettencourt passed away on April 1 at the age of 72 due to complications from COVID-19.

Bettencourt grew up in Belmont and graduated from Carlomont High School in 1965. He received his teaching credential from San Jose State University and further degrees from Stanford and Santa Clara universities before entering the field of education.

Bettencourt lived in Cupertino and served as a teacher and administrator at the Fremont Union High School District before retiring in 2002.

Afterward, he returned to education in countless leadership roles and joined many organizations, such as California Association of Directors of Activities (CADA) and National Student Council, that aimed to develop student leadership.

Bettencourt served as an interim principal in 2005 following the surprise summer departure of former principal Kevin Skelly to the San Diego area for an associate superintendent role. As principal, Bettencourt oversaw the transition into a new rolling block schedule, said district director of human resources Brian Safine (before then, each day had seven periods). Assistant principal Kerry Mohnike also said that Bettencourt placed much of his emphasis on reducing student stress.

"Harry Bettencourt was a kind-hearted yet effective school administrator," Safine said. "His ever-present smile was the most recognizable indicator that he loved the work of running a school."

Bettencourt is fondly remembered by many veteran teachers. Mohnike described him as a calm, pleasant, happy and welcoming presence on campus, and "almost everyone, if not everyone" liked him.

According to Mohnike, Bettencourt's experience in education allowed him to make



Courtesy of CADA LEADERS

Former SHS interim principal Harry Bettencourt, pictured with his wife Paula, passed away at age 72 on April 1.

confident and honest decisions.

"He was not afraid of being fired, so he could say and do things that his years of experience and wisdom had taught him would be good for students without the fear of political fallout," Mohnike said. "Loud voices didn't sway him; his ethics and knowledge about doing the right thing were his moral compass."

Mohnike remembers Bettencourt walking through the hallways and the joy he had interacting with staff and students. Safine and Mohnike both said that although his time was short, he greatly impacted the school.

"Those of the staff that were here and worked with Harry thought very fondly and highly of him," Mohnike said. "His loss is a loss to the world of education, but he left an indelible mark on SHS." ♦

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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.

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## Pandemic provides students with a necessary reprieve from school



ROHAN KUMAR

various optional assignments for students to explore poetry in their free time. Similar assignments involving trying new hobbies could help encourage students to take up something new.

Students can do projects with their friends, or keep each other accountable for their goals. Keep daily logs of workouts, chores, or skills learned with your friends to stay motivated. Most important of all, tell your friends what you've been doing. Maybe they will be interested as well, or maybe they'll expose you to something new that you enjoy.

Although many have regrettably become accustomed to a keep-swimming-or-drown environment, we have a rare chance to take a breather. The seas of life have finally calmed down. We should take the opportunity to dive and delve further into the treasures hidden below the stormy surface. ♦

### Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

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The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 30-0 in support of this article.

## Quarantining requires a positive outlook

YES, YOU CAN SURVIVE. START WITH FOCUSING ON HOW YOU CAN IMPROVE YOURSELF

BY Justin Guo

So this is what school is going to be like the rest of the year . . . not great, and not very fun either.

Instead of complaining about the duration of the quarantine and how your vision is slowly deteriorating from excessive screen time, it's better to focus on what you can do to improve yourself.

Already, a lot of students have been feeling an overwhelming sense of boredom due to the lack of physical school as well as extracurricular activities in quarantine. Social media, television and video games are getting boring, and most students are finding that they're not sure what to do with all this excess time.

Understandably, there is also a lot of anxiety, fear, uncertainty and stress going around in these unprecedented circumstances. For some, it feels like it's only a matter of time before they become deranged from social distancing.

I'm here to tell you that you're not going to go insane; you're going to be fine. While it's

easy to complain about the situation, the fact is that you're already getting used to — or have already gotten used to — this new and bizarre norm.

Instead of complaining about the duration of the quarantine and how your vision is slowly deteriorating from excessive screen time, it's better to focus on what you can do to improve yourself.

# Junior learning more in online environment

By Edwin Chen

As COVID-19 ravaged the country, Santa Clara County shut down all schools and mandated a shelter-in-place in mid-March. The state soon followed with its own shelter in place mandate.

With the school closure came a new challenge: how to give students the best education possible under the circumstances. Like most other schools and universities, SHS chose an online education model.

For me, online learning has been teachers sending out emails of the daily agenda and the homework. The daily agenda typically consists of a slide show or a video lesson by the teacher. The homework would either have to be turned in as a Google Doc or a PDF, and it is typically the same amount of work we would get during regular school.

Few of my classes actually arranged meetings before the implementation of a new schedule on April 20. This schedule requires all classes to meet for at least 15 minutes twice a week, prompting all teachers to hold more meetings.

During the first week in late March, online learning was a complete mess for me. With the daily barrage of emails from all of my teachers, organizing my school work became harder since I had to carefully read through each email and figure out what I had to do for the day. Sometimes, I would miss school work and turn in my assignments late because I misread one of my teacher's long emails.

However, as I grew more accustomed to online school, I realized that it's better than normal school. The schedule appears to be getting more relaxed as the weeks go by. As part of the school's Phase 2 of online learning, the schedule has been modified to Monday and Thursday being odd-period Red Days, Tuesday and Friday being even-period Blue Days, with no school on Wednesdays. Each class period is one hour and occurs at the same times on the same days, greatly simplifying everyone's lives.

Since it ensures that we actually have class meetings, this change is more organized than the chaotic alternating Red Day, Blue Day schedule during the normal school year, and it gives us a needed break in the middle of the week. ♦

# Online AP exams do not reduce overall difficulty

By Andrew Li

On April 2, the College Board changed how the 2020 AP exams will be held in response to the coronavirus pandemic. The usual tests are lengthy 2-3 hour affairs; this year's AP exams will be 45 minute open-response exams that are to be taken online at home.

Attempting to accommodate for any difficulties online learning may pose, the College Board cut out units that they felt schools would be unable to cover before the shut down of schools.

At first glance, the AP tests may seem easier than previous years, with an average of only two free-response problems for each test. But don't be fooled.

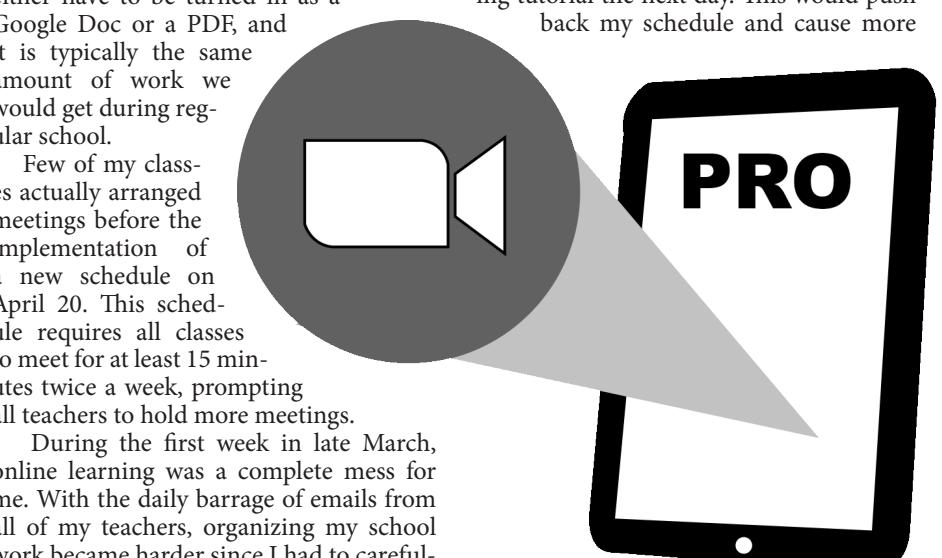
The current test presents two scenarios: Either it will be so hard that most students encounter problems much more difficult than the problems they

have worked on the entire year, or it will be so easy with notes that a small error will have massive consequences on students' scores because of a brutal curve.

Since before the coronavirus outbreak, students have been working on past AP problems, which are formatted differently: many past problems are multiple-choice questions or just require regurgitating facts.

**Many of the traditional problem types have gone out of the window.**

As a result of this year's tests becoming open-note, many of the traditional problem types students have been practicing for have gone out of the window.



stress since I couldn't complete the homework.

If a question really cannot be answered by using internet resources, the teacher is still available during office hours. Online learning allows each individual to truly learn at their own pace while giving them enough structure so that they don't slack off.

Online school has not only helped me learn better, it has also taught me to be more organized. I started using more to-do lists to keep track of work, due dates and synchronous online classes. I have been more on top of my work during this quarantine than any other moment in the school year. Even though I hope this quarantine ends soon to maintain my sanity, online school actually isn't all that bad. I honestly prefer it to normal school because it is a much freer environment compared to the strictly structured environment of school. ♦

ten call on students to demonstrate and explain problems on the board, which gives others a chance to learn from a student's mistakes and successes — a process that is vastly harder in an online setting. Without in-person communication, it's much harder to achieve the same enthusiasm contained in a regular classroom, inhibiting students' attentiveness and willingness to learn. Moreover, the lack of a structured classroom environment leads to a general lack of motivation among students, resulting in a loss of learning and increase in procrastination.

To help alleviate this, teachers could implement regular tutorial-esque video calls in which students ask them for help, and they could use features like Zoom's breakout room tool to split students into groups to discuss and collaborate on problems.

However, while these methods mimic

the face-to-face interaction that normal schooling thrives on, many teachers are actually unable to hold these meetings because they need to care for their children or handle personal responsibilities that have become more demanding in face of the Covid-19 pandemic; thus, online education hinders both students and teachers.

The adoption of online schooling also diminishes the academic integrity of the school's learning environment — which is already a major problem due to the school's competitive nature. In order to mitigate this problem, teachers can either monitor students' screens using a secure lockdown browser or assign them major projects that check for understanding, essentially replacing tests. For example, instead of administering tests, chemistry teacher Kathryn Nakamatsu requires students to record and upload a video of themselves completing a performance assessment. Since students must submit their own video and record their own data, this assessment will accurately reflect students' own work.

Of course, teachers can — and should — implement these policies to diminish the problems with online schooling. However, even with these changes, online schooling will still fail to live up to normal school-

ing's efficiency and reliability. After all, these solutions bring with them their own plethora of problems: online video calls carry many flaws, including instructors' lack of ability to monitor their students, and students will undoubtedly still find ways to cheat on most assessments.

Other problems don't have any conceivable solutions. For example, online schooling provides no substitute for hands-on education. Students no longer have the opportunity to participate in science labs, P.E. workout routines and in-class projects — all of which are vital to students' learning experiences.

Ultimately, students and teachers don't have much control over the current online learning situation, but when the school year does return to normal, students should be excited that their education will continue in an environment that will allow an overall better quality of education. ♦

Because the test is open-notes, the College Board will want to prevent a score distribution where everyone scores very well. They will probably either grade harder or just select the hardest problems from their original planned exams for this year.

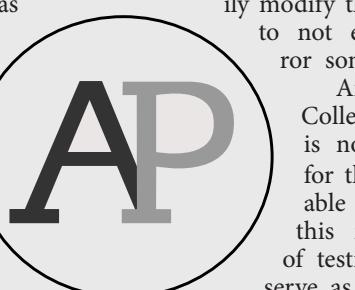
The length of the test is another barrier to the success of students.

There are many units for each AP course, and cramming all of them into one or two problems seems close to impossible.

What are the chances of being caught with this method? Slim to none.

Because of their likely inability to monitor chat services, the College Board will have trouble detecting cheating, especially for tests which generally only have one correct solution for each problem.

College Board officials said that they have plagiarism detec-



tion software and send students' solutions to their own AP teachers to see if students answered differently from normal. These security protocols won't work since test-takers could easily modify their answers to not exactly mirror someone else's.

And while the College Board is not to blame for this unavoidable situation, this new format of testing will not serve as an effective way to differentiate how

well students mastered the material, especially given that there are only a few questions for each exam.

The main problem is that there is no better alternative.

Let's just hope the results mirror — rather than distort — what the results of the actual tests would have been. ♦

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# Stimulus plan has right idea but wrong execution

BY NITYA MARIMUTHU

On March 27, an unprecedented \$2 trillion COVID-19 relief bill was signed by President Trump. The bill was aimed to address the economic concerns of four major groups: daily-wage workers, the health-care industry, small business and big businesses.

Ironically, while the federal government has refused to set up country-wide shelter-in-place orders and has weakly enforced recommended CDC action against COVID-19, the bill aimed to provide blanket economic help to a nation that varies extremely from one state to another in terms of policy.

Although the bill contained some forward-thinking ideas, it failed to set up the necessary infrastructure and allocate money for those with more immediate needs; instead, it gave billions of dollars to businesses and real estate investors in the top 1 percent.

The first major portion of this act was to give \$1,200 stimulus checks to Americans who are unemployed or have a salary that qualifies.

According to an article written by Forbes, if the head of the household receives this check, their salary has to be less than \$112,500. However, this number does not take into account the wide range of salaries across the country that accompany the swinging costs of living. For example, in the Bay Area, a salary of less than \$117,000 is considered low-income according to an article by SFGate. This means that families who are equally in need of this check may not receive it.

On top of this, the stimulus check is based on tax filings from recent years, rather than the person's current employment situation. This means that an employee who had a salary higher than \$112,500 in the past year but then lost their job still cannot receive their stimulus check until they file new taxes. If a person filed their taxes for this year already, they might be completely ineligible for the check, regardless of their new job situation.

The stimulus check also does not take into account college students. Those who are over the age of 17 and are claimed as dependents on their parents are not eligible for getting a check, meaning that they will not receive the \$1,200, and their parents will not receive an extra \$500 on their check (as they would if the dependent was younger than 17).

The stimulus promised to hospitals and health-care providers comes with its own problems. Much of the money allocated

for the health-care industry is being used to navigate a complex network of private providers — of the \$100 billion devoted, \$26 billion is going to administrative oversight rather than to medical workers in dire need of personal protective equipment and life-saving equipment, according to Time magazine.

Few small businesses have received the money promised to them — a survey conducted April 6 by the National Federation of Independent Businesses concluded that only 4 percent of small businesses had their loan application approved, 1 percent denied and the rest got no response at all, said the Washington Post.

There has also not been enough money approved for the Small Business loan program. According to Politico, Senator Ben Cardin said the loan program could only provide \$15,000 at most to businesses that applied, although most requested for \$200,000. On April 16, the Small Business administration ran out of the allocated loan money of \$349 billion according to CNBC. In a following bill, \$321 billion was allocated, which small business owners could apply to starting April 27.

Other parties have unnecessarily gained tax breaks and loans. Most saliently, the bill involved tax breaks for real estate investors, which will benefit many wealthy investors in the top 1 percent, including President Trump and his son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner.

This provision lifts the restriction on the amount of money investors can claim in losses from real estate, allowing them to pay lower taxes on their profits from investments and other businesses. This rule applies retroactively to the last five years, and could result in \$170 billion of tax breaks for big-time real estate investors, according to Vanity Fair.

According to a New York Times article,

funds are granted to any small business who has fewer than 500 employees. This does not take into account the size of the franchise requesting these loans, only of each individual business.

In this case, it means hotels like Marriott and Hilton would not qualify as corporations but would as individual hotels; this also then includes other small businesses, such as Trump and Kushner's hotels.

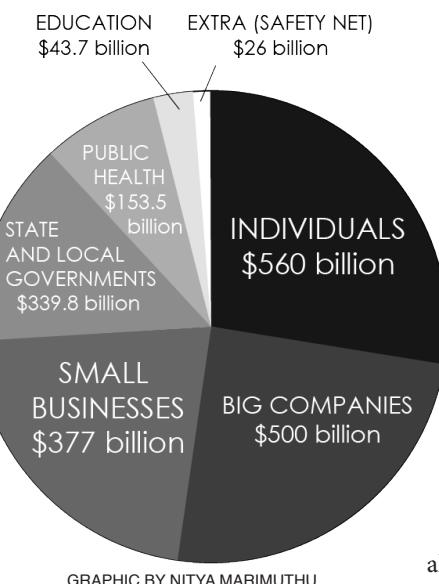
Furthermore, Kushner is able to apply to get these funds for Trump's business. While Democrats aimed to limit this

by banning "the spouse, child, son-in-law or daughter-in-law" of officials from applying for funds, this provision only holds true if the family-member owns 20 percent or more of the business. Since Kushner owns less than 20 percent of Trump's businesses, their business could fly under the radar and allow them to gain extra, additional federal funds.

Billions of dollars in the bill were unnecessarily spent and benefited people who were not in immediate danger. For example, a New York Times article said that \$25 million had been endowed to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington and \$75 million each for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. This was evidently bribery money meant to win over those people who supported these groups.

In addition, big corporations should not have received the largest amount of bailout money. Five hundred billion dollars went to airlines, cruises and other large corporations, with the only federal oversight being from the recently fired inspector general — meaning company executives could easily have a field day with this sudden cash inflow and leave their employees in the dust.

## The \$2 trillion CARES act



GRAPHIC BY NITYA MARIMUTHU

# Businesses need to stay closed to protect the public

BY AARIA THOMAS

On March 19, California governor Gavin Newsom issued a shelter-in-place order due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The shelter-in-place order mandates that people stay at home and go out only for essential needs such as groceries and supplies. As a result, many businesses deemed non-essential like dine-in restaurants, gyms and salons have closed. Their employees have no means to make a living, and the cost of living in the Bay Area has not significantly decreased either. Tens of thousands of employees have been laid off.

Worries about the decline of the economy, however, should be secondary to fears about the pandemic. The virus can be easily transmitted through direct contact or even through the air, and opening the economy increases the risk of spreading it further as more people will be out in public.

On April 28, Newsom outlined a plan to start re-opening the state, beginning with retail jobs and construction work.

This second phase that Newsom proposed encourages people to go out more, which could increase the number of cases the state sees per day and steepen the curve, undoing all the progress done so far in stopping the spread of the virus.

A second shelter-in-place would also cause people to lose jobs again and hurt the economy.

The system already in place, which has stores open for essential needs and restaurants focusing on take-out and delivery, is the best way to keep the public safe. People are able to get the supplies and food they need, while limiting their interactions and possibility for a further spread of the virus.

Instead of reopening the state and allowing people to go out normally, the government should focus on helping businesses adapt to the new situation. They could help them set up websites and ways for people to order merchandise remotely and either have it delivered or pick it up like they would with take out food. ♦



GRAPHIC BY MANASI GARG

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# HOW I SPEND MY TIME

REPORTERS DESCRIBE WHAT ACTIVITIES HELP THEM FIGHT BOREDOM WHILE STILL REMAINING AT HOME



## Leathercraft: boredom leads to creating sellable wallets from scratch

bill of rights



Bill Yuan

Coming home from school on a Friday, I was excited to see if my package had finally arrived. I was greeted at the front door by the small, about a half-square foot, navy blue roll of leather that cost me nearly \$15 and would soon turn into a sexy bifold wallet.

During my time in quarantine, I threw myself into a new passion: leathercraft, the art of turning pieces of leather into something interesting or usable.

My inspiration? YouTube. Prior to any news of the pandemic and shelter-in-place protocol, I watched a video from the channel Corner Leather, which shows how a \$5,000 Hermes bag was recreated using materials that only cost \$75.

As recommended by members of the subreddit r/leathercraft, I convinced my mom to drive me to a local leather supplier, Tandy Leather, and I bought a single shoulder of natural veg tan leather.

My first wallet was an attempt at several techniques, so I was able to learn a lot; however, the end product was lacking: The edges were smooth, but had poorly applied paint. The pockets were thinned out, but the cuts were wavy. The pockets are also a touch too small, which made sliding cards in and out difficult. I was eager to improve on these aspects in my next wallet.

At first, I didn't know if I wanted anyone to know about this hobby because I thought it might seem strange. However, when my mom posted my work on WeChat and someone wanted to buy one of my handmade wallets, I knew that I couldn't keep it to myself.

My friends turned out to be very supportive (thanks Andy) and currently, I've sold two bi-fold wallets for \$75 each.

Making a wallet is simpler than most might think. Each wallet only takes around four to five hours of labor, and the raw materials are worth

around \$30.

I started from the YouTube video itself for resources. Included in the video description was a template for the wallet so that viewers could replicate the wallet themselves.

I printed it out, but I wasn't satisfied with the design. I really liked the pockets of the Louis Vuitton Multipl wallet, which has chevron style pockets on one side. As an ambitious beginner, I attempted to do my best to replicate this design and draw my own pattern.

For the color scheme of my wallet, I thought about it day after day until I settled on a navy blue back and white stitching and edge paint. The day all my supplies came, I got to work. I first printed and cut the pattern on cardstock, then traced it on leather and cut them out.

Because I bought the leather at a local store, they didn't have the exact thickness I wanted and I had to settle for something a little thicker.

This thicker leather would make a wallet too thick, so I decided to try my hand at another skill, skiving.

Skiving is the act of thinning the material at the edges to reduce bulk in the final product. This is traditionally done with a skiving knife, but I did not have one at the time.

The closest thing I had was a normal utility knife, which was much harder to skive with.

I sanded the edges continuously, until they were silky smooth.

After applying water to the edge, I burnished the edge until it was glassy smooth, which took a period of time that seemed like forever.

However, after all of this, it is super satisfying to be able to open up your newly made wallet, reach inside the pockets, and put your own cards and cash inside.

What have I learned through all this? Leathercraft is a hobby that requires lots of time and money.

People have told me that I can start a brand to sell leather goods under, but I don't think it's worth the energy to invest in it.

I probably won't go to great lengths with this hobby because in the end, I just really enjoy gratifying others with my work. ♦



a tool with a few diamond-shaped prongs in a line that allows stitching lines to be punched with a consistent distance between stitches in a perfectly straight line. Using one thread and a needle at each end, I sewed a pattern called a "straddle stitch."

Then, after stitching it together, it came time to finish the edges.

A well-finished edge can make even a simple piece look professional. Finishing an edge consists of leveling the edge, rounding the sharp corners and applying an agent to flatten down the fibers to achieve a smooth and shiny edge.

This last step is especially tedious, because the wallet is basically done, but you have to do this detailed work in order to fully complete it.

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## Baking bread: a hard and crumbly process

kingsley-yeast



Marisa Kingsley

As I massaged my fingers through a sticky sourdough mixture of three different flours, water and homemade yeast recently, I pondered many things: Is my mixture too wet? Is this even a dough? Is my family silently judging me as I audibly swear? But most importantly, how did I even get to this point?

The shelter-in-place has left millions with too much time on their hands. So as a country, we're turning to baking.

Although I am not known for great coping mechanisms, one that has almost always succeeded is baking.

During a month in quarantine, I baked a total of six different types of bread, including bagels, focaccia, naan and sourdough, only a few of which I can consider successful.

My first attempt was making New York-style bagels since my older sister, who was coming home from college due to COVID-19, had recently expressed a love for everything bagels. They turned out surprisingly well for a first attempt and were not too difficult to make.

Riding the wave of initial success, I tried my hand at baking focaccia, an Italian flat-bread similar to pizza dough, which, in theory, was much easier than bagels since it mostly just requires lots of waiting to let the yeast rise.

And yet, I thwarted the hard work of the yeast — likely by my aggressive divet-making when the dough was spread onto a baking sheet — and the bread came

out of the oven like a stale, pathetic cracker.

Still, my bruised pride had no idea what struggles were to come in making sourdough bread.

To make sourdough, you must have a sourdough starter, a combination of water and flours that, when fermented, creates yeast.

It can virtually last forever, as long as you "feed" it regularly, which consists of emptying the jar of most of the mature starter (the one that's been fermenting) and adding more flour and water.

The sourdough tutorial video I watched claimed that feeding would only take five minutes per day.

For me, it somehow turned into a 20-minute ordeal of emptying the jar of most of the previous day's starter, adding the flours, tempering the water and cleaning up the mess.

Maintaining a starter also brought up the ethical dilemma of flour usage, since one typically feeds their starter daily to keep it healthy.

However, there is hardly any flour at grocery stores to be found.

I compromised by reducing the feeding schedule to once a week, and now kept the starter in my refrigerator for the rest of the week.

When it came time to make the bread, I cut the recipe in half, already feeling guilty about my flour usage. Apparently, that's not how baking works.

As a result of reducing the amount of flour it needed, when combining sourdough starter with my dough mixture, my (washed) hands were covered in a layer of sticky dough that in no way resembled the one in the YouTube tutorial.

The video also instructed that as the dough rises for about four to five hours, one should take it out incrementally to make the bread rise again. I followed these steps, but the bread still did not rise enough.



the boxy fit of the hoodie and the muted colors.

Tuesday: Rhude Vintage Hoodie with mnml.la olive cargos. The main aspect of this outfit was the oversized vintage hoodie with the synthetic faded black wash, which extended to the middle of my thigh, adding a different dimension to the outfit. The olive cargos paired with the outfit well with the outfit, keeping the Earth tone trend going.

Wednesday: Canada Goose jacket with the Uniqlo ankle pants. The subdued look with only black and grey tones lead to a very classy look, defying all stereotypes that Canada Goose is only for the rich with no sense in fashion. However, this quickly turned out to be a terrible idea because it was the majority of my money on clothes.

Thursday: Vintage Black "Wish You Were Here" Travis Scott tour hoodie with the mnml.la M4 Vintage Denim. Even though this Travis Scott hoodie looks plain and just black from the front, the back depicts an astronomical explosion, featuring all of his tour dates. Thank goodness I got this hoodie back once my ex-girlfriend and I broke up. The vintage wash denim paired very well with the hoodie because both pieces offered a washed look.

Weirdly enough, not only did these outfits make me feel less bored at home, they motivated me to study and do work rather than just sleep.

Trust me: If you've never tried sleeping in streetwear outfits, it's extremely uncomfortable.

Here are the outfits that I have worn in the last week.

Monday: Grey Fear of God 6th Collection hoodie with mnml.la M4 Denim. The grey hoodie with the black branding in the middle was a subtle flex, making it my favorite outfit of the week because of

tally to fold it to strengthen the gluten strands.

I, believing that I had somehow attained bread-making wisdom from my North Dakotan ancestors, forgot to do this step until the last hour.

This was probably another reason my dough seemed to resemble a pancake rather than a beautiful dough ball when trying to shape it.

When baking it the next morning, I was expecting divine intervention. Maybe the oven would miraculously rise my misshapen dough-oval-pancake into a golden, round loaf.

Alas, it didn't happen, but the dough, once baked, did indeed resemble bread, so I considered it a partial win.

Learning from my previous failures, the rest of my breads — which were not sourdough — turned out considerably more edible.

While bread-making can be stressful and sometimes ego-crushing, it's worth trying out if you have the resources to do so (but please do not hoard flour).

Bread also is a terrific food to share with family and can be repurposed for other dishes, such as croutons, bread-crumbs or French toast.

If not, perhaps consider giving your loaf to an essential worker to show your appreciation. ♦

So far dressing up during the quarantine has helped me find some normalcy. Not only did I enjoy picking out new and fresh outfits every day, but I also found myself more productive because it simulated a school setting.

At the same time, I discovered that I spend way too much money on hoodies that look exactly the same. Unfortunate. ♦



## togatalks

What are some hobbies or things you like to do during quarantine?



junior Jessie Zhou

"I have been trying to learn Korean, but I didn't have that much time because of AP testing."



sophomore Lily Yang

"I want to learn to cook, so I have tried different ways to make instant ramen taste better."



junior Charlotte Shewchuk

"I started a vegetable garden with an unnecessarily large amount of tomato plants."

All GRAPHICS BY TIFFANY WANG AND SAMANTHA YEE

## Amidst crisis, Krasinski brings 'Some Good News'

BY Apurva Chakravarthy  
& Jeanette Zhou

"Good evening, everybody, even though it is very clearly the afternoon, and welcome to SGN," actor John Krasinski said. "For years now I have been wondering: Why isn't there a new show dedicated entirely to good news?"

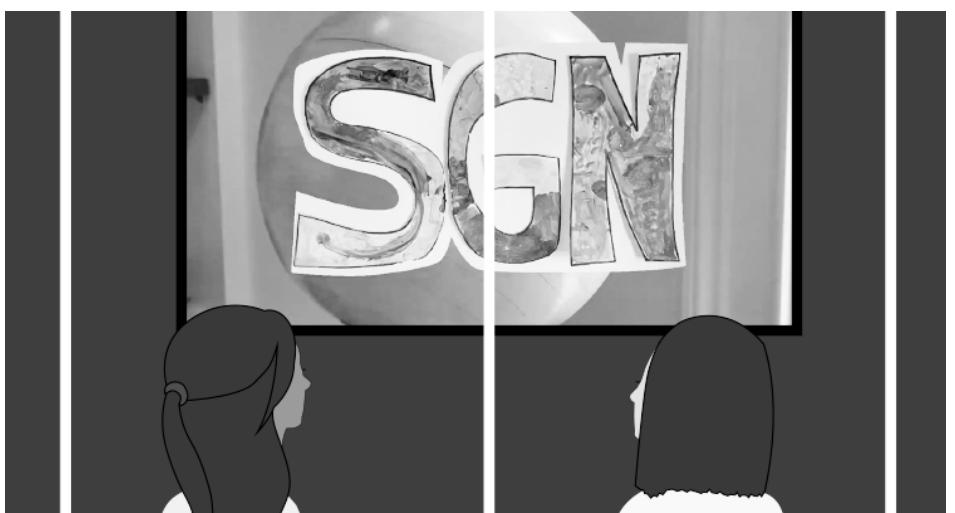
Krasinski, an actor well-known for playing Jim in "The Office" and for directing and starring in the critically acclaimed film "The Quiet Place," aired the first episode of "Some Good News" on March 29.

Interested in the unique premise of the show, we watched through the four episodes. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves because it focused entirely on finding and bringing to light optimistic news in a time when all we hear about is the deadly pandemic.

It was an instant success, with over 15 million views in the first episode and currently about more than 14,000 posts on Instagram under the hashtag #somegoodnews.

The show's popularity can be attributed to its down-to-earth tone, according to The Verge. Krasinski speaks with no microphone and films with low-grade camera equipment. The background of the show even features a logo drawn by Krasinski's daughters.

"We are all going through an incredibly trying time, but, through all the anxiety, through all the confusion, all the isolation,



GRAPHIC BY JEANETTE ZHOU

and all the Tiger King, somehow the human spirit found a way to break through and blow us all away," Krasinski said.

In his first episode, Krasinski shared reports of people around the world thanking health-care workers for their hard work during the pandemic. In one instance, police officers in Spain stood outside of a hospital and shined their lights as their way of thanking workers. At sea, NATO sailors and staff applauded health-care workers. Krasinski also shared heart-warming videos of an elderly man singing to his wife through a window in a nursing home, and homeowners leaving necessary goods for delivery workers.

We were also excited to see a guest appearance by Steve Carell, who co-starred with Krasinski as Michael Scott in "The Office," as they commemorated the 15th anniversary of the popular show.

The first episode was a great starter to the show because it got straight to important information regarding the recent crisis and showed heart-warming stories of people around the globe.

We also liked that it moved away from the coronavirus and featured Carell. The show allowed us to mentally separate ourselves from the current situation.

As Krasinski says at the end of each episode, "I'm John Krasinski; this is SGN asking you to remember that no matter how dark it gets, there is always good in the world." ♦

The second episode in particular garnered a lot of attention when Krasinski

got the entire original cast of "Hamilton" to perform "My Shot" to a 9-year-old girl named Aubrey, who missed out on watching the hit musical in person because of COVID-19. This episode was particularly special to watch because we saw how much this meant to her.

Our favorite part of the entire show happened on April 17, when Krasinski held an online prom for seniors around the country whose proms had been canceled. In the prom, Krasinski was joined by celebrities Chance the Rapper, Billie Eilish, and the Jonas Brothers. It was special to see how celebrities came together to celebrate the graduating class, even if they couldn't physically have their proms.

The show was extremely comforting to watch for us, as it helped us regain faith in our communities and humanity as a whole in a time where news is more often than not morbid and tragic.

It is heartwarming to see ordinary people do their part in helping others and thanking those working tirelessly to fight this pandemic.

With this show, viewers can take 15 minutes of their lives to listen to good news and escape from constant reminders of the terrible current situation.

As Krasinski says at the end of each episode, "I'm John Krasinski; this is SGN asking you to remember that no matter how dark it gets, there is always good in the world." ♦

elite, and it's the reason I remain on this app (an app that may or may not be stealing my data and handing it over to the Chinese government, according to concerned lawmakers).

This sentiment comes after

Rihanna's support for the effort against COVID-19.

Her nonprofit, Clara Lionel Foundation, which

she founded in 2012, has

donated millions of dollars to support those most affected by the

disease and the stay-

## Rihanna's feature leaves fans hanging, but I'm just happy to hear her amazing voice

BY Alex Wang

Despite Rihanna's feature on "BELIEVE IT" being short and repetitive, I'm all for her new music. Staying at home during the shelter-in-place has been tough, and if she wants to drop any music at all, I'll gladly listen.

I can understand fans getting angry at her for delaying the album, but it's not anything new. Playboi Carti still has not dropped his third album since his most recent album "Die Lit" came out in 2018 and Kanye West has been delaying albums for the longest time (even though he did end up releasing "Jesus is King" in 2019).

"R9," the supposed successor to Rihanna's 2016 album "Anti," was rumored to drop in 2019, but the year came and went without any music from Rihanna. She even teased fans with a tweet that said, "update:

me listening to R9 by myself and refusing to release it."

Recently, Rihanna responded to fans who kept asking her about the release of her album on an Instagram Live video saying, "If one of y'all motherf----- ask me about the album one more time when I'm trying to save the world, unlike y'all president."

This sentiment comes after

Rihanna's support for the effort against COVID-19.

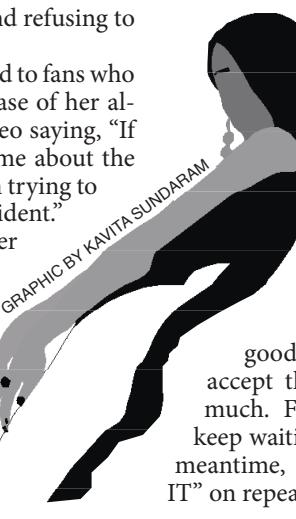
Her nonprofit, Clara Lionel Foundation, which

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donated millions of dollars to support those

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at-home order, including \$4.2 million in a partnership with Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey and \$2 million in a partnership with Jay-Z's Shawn Carter Foundation.

To her credit, Rihanna is more focused on bigger issues than releasing albums.

She wants to do something good with her time and fans should accept that and stop pestering her so much. For now, we will just have to keep waiting for "R9" to drop, and in the meantime, I'll be listening to "BELIEVE IT" on repeat. ♦

## TikTok content is subpar, but I still watch it

BY Anishi Patel

The summer of 2019, a three-month period of peak comedy and original content, has long been hailed as the golden era of TikTok, according to the jaded, forlorn creators whose throwback videos occasionally make their way across my For You Page.

Unfortunately, I downloaded the app last fall.

The TikTok I know consists of girls using the bling effect on uncoordinated dance videos or teenage boys making thirst traps that have the middle schoolers commenting things they do not want their parents seeing.

And that's just the tip of the unoriginal, cringeworthy iceberg that has become TikTok.

Where's the comedy?

What happened to actual dancers?

Why do I have to keep scrolling past videos of 12-year-olds throwing it back so hard they're going to give themselves severe scoliosis?

Granted, the algorithm might be showing me different videos if I stopped watching subpar content ... but if subpar content is all that comes across my FYP, what am I supposed to do?

elite, and it's the reason I remain on this app (an app that may or may not be stealing my data and handing it over to the Chinese government, according to concerned lawmakers).

There are definitely small creators who go viral for the right reasons and POVs from people who are amazing actors. Along with a hand full of talented dancers (hello Conrad Rocha and Sophia Connolly) and creators like Charli who never fail to give credit where credit is due.

There are doctors on TikTok who are finding creative ways to communicate coronavirus information to preteens who might not be informed otherwise.

As well as accounts dedicated to people's unique hobbies, like marine biology, upcycling clothing or even finding and sharing discount codes.

Also, TikTok has managed to figure out that I am an Indian American, and I'm starting to see a lot of really relatable Subtle Curvy Traits-type videos.

Somehow, we are being fed the right amount of quality content to keep us from deleting the app, and that, more than anything else, is what keeps TikTok's popularity soaring. ♦

## Streaming services end era of theater, cable

BY Megan Chen

TV releases and instead be nominated for the Emmys.

Directors like Spielberg are worried that the industry will suffer similar consequences as video stores, and the theatrical experience will become extinct.

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

Streaming services were originally platforms that made movies and shows accessible after being dropped from theaters and cable networks, much like old-school video rental services like Blockbuster. Streaming services have since expanded to create their own films, making them a major threat to the traditional movie industry.

Similarly, cable television has suffered from the rise of streaming services; in the U.S., over 33 million people cut off cable subscriptions in 2018, and over 22 million people in 2017.

With the lack of commercials and wait between episodes of a show, streaming services seem to be more compelling than their counterparts. The price of streaming services is also significantly less than cable; \$8 a month vs. costs that can run into the hundreds for theater releases.

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

Streaming services like Netflix have risen to popularity for their convenience and variety. Video. The growth of streaming services are leading to the downfall of video rental stores and cable TV, and if the film industry continues to ignore the rise of streaming services, it will be next. ♦

# Riot Games broaden their e-sports horizon

BY Bill Yuan

Riot Games, developer of the well-known League of Legends, has begun to roll out closed beta for their all-new tactical-shooter game, Valorant, allowing a restricted group of individuals to test out the game.

Riot is yet to announce an exact release date.

The exact date is said to depend on the feedback received from the closed beta, but the current situation with the pandemic will likely push it back.

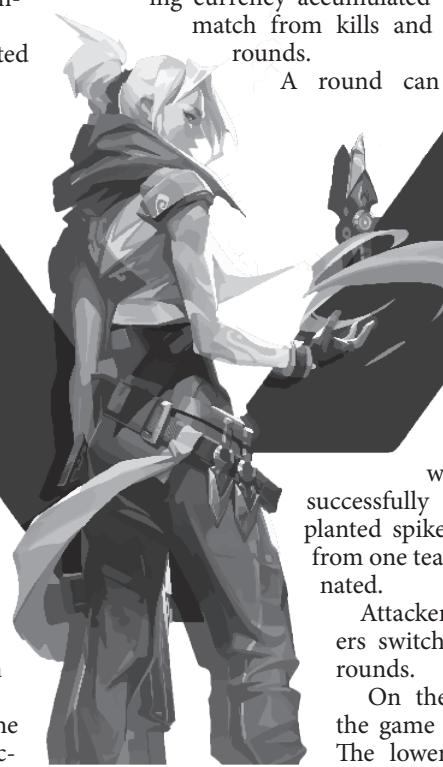
For now, the release is projected to happen this summer.

Since Riot Games showcased the new shooter back in October, sources have speculated that the game would be a combination of two well-established first-person shooter games, Overwatch and Counter-Strike: Global Offensive.

Having played quite a bit of Overwatch and a more limited amount of Counter-Strike, I found the concept of this game to be very interesting, and I really wanted to try it out.

Riot rolled out the closed beta via drops through Twitch streams.

Anyone hoping to join the closed beta linked their Riot account to their Twitch account, tuned in to a stream with drops enabled and prayed to be lucky enough to receive one.



GRAPHIC BY HARSHINI VELCHAMY

A round can end in three ways: Attacker can win a round by successfully planting and detonating the spike (the game's term for a bomb), defenders can win a round by successfully defusing the planted spike, or all players from one team can be eliminated.

Attackers and defenders switch sides after 12 rounds.

On the positive side, the game runs smoothly. The lower end graphics allow most computers, mine included, to run the game at a high frame-rate, and the 128 tick servers make movement twice as smooth

as the traditional 64 tick server that most games use.

Upon experiencing actual gameplay, I noticed that the game plays much more similarly to Counter-Strike than it does to Overwatch.

One key difference, however, is that the maps are much more compact in Valorant, making long-range weapons less powerful.

The developers evidently explored different elements in their map designs.

Currently, Valorant only has three maps, but one has three bomb sites (compared to the standard two that all Counter-Strike maps have) and another has a teleporter.

These elements vary gameplay quite a bit, by changing up attacking and defending strategies, and, in my opinion, make it different enough from Counter-Strike to strike players as a unique and fun game.

In contrast to Counter-Strike, characters in Valorant have abilities, just like in Overwatch.

Utilities such as smokes, grenades, and flashbangs in Counter-Strike are now available as different agents' abilities in Valorant.

Because of the Twitch drop beta system, the game has already gained immense viewership and popularity.

When it was released, Apex Legends was subject to this sort of decline. The game had millions of players at launch. However, developers did not touch the game for several months, and now the game hardly has any players at all.

I don't expect Riot Games to make this mistake. After all, it has been able to keep League of Legends popular for over a decade.

Valorant's branding as a more kid-friendly game is contributing to its growing popularity. Instead of the terrorists, bombs, AK-47s and M4A1s of Counter-Strike, Valorant features alternatives like spikes and weapons like Vandals, Ghosts, and Phantoms, in order to avoid affiliation with gun violence or other violence.

With experienced Riot developers, I have no doubt in my mind that this game will be successful and it is more than likely that I will continue playing the game.♦

endorse the game and further expand its fanbase.

Fortnite was also a game that implemented this strategy, featuring real-world weapons like M4A1s, P90s and AK-47s, but calling them different names less associated with violence such as "Assault Rifle," or "Compact SMG."

Fortnite also discouraged players referring to guns with their real-life name, as they do not want these weapons names to be associated with a game for children.

This branding approach has allowed the game creators to seal brand deals that have grown their player-base drastically.

It seems that Valorant is heading down the same path.

Despite Valorant's growing potential, it's up to the developers to maintain a robust game. Many games in the past have seen similar successful launches just to roll downhill because of the less-than-timely updates and a poor developer team.

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# Calvin and Hobbes: Where imagination flourishes

BY AnjaliNuggehalli

Pre-lockdown, the only reading I managed was cramming four chapters of "All Quiet on the Western Front" into my brain the night before the test.

It's not that I don't like reading. In fact, before the stress of high school kicked in, reading was my favorite pastime. But as my days became consumed with homework, tutoring and sports, my time for recreational reading slowly dissipated.

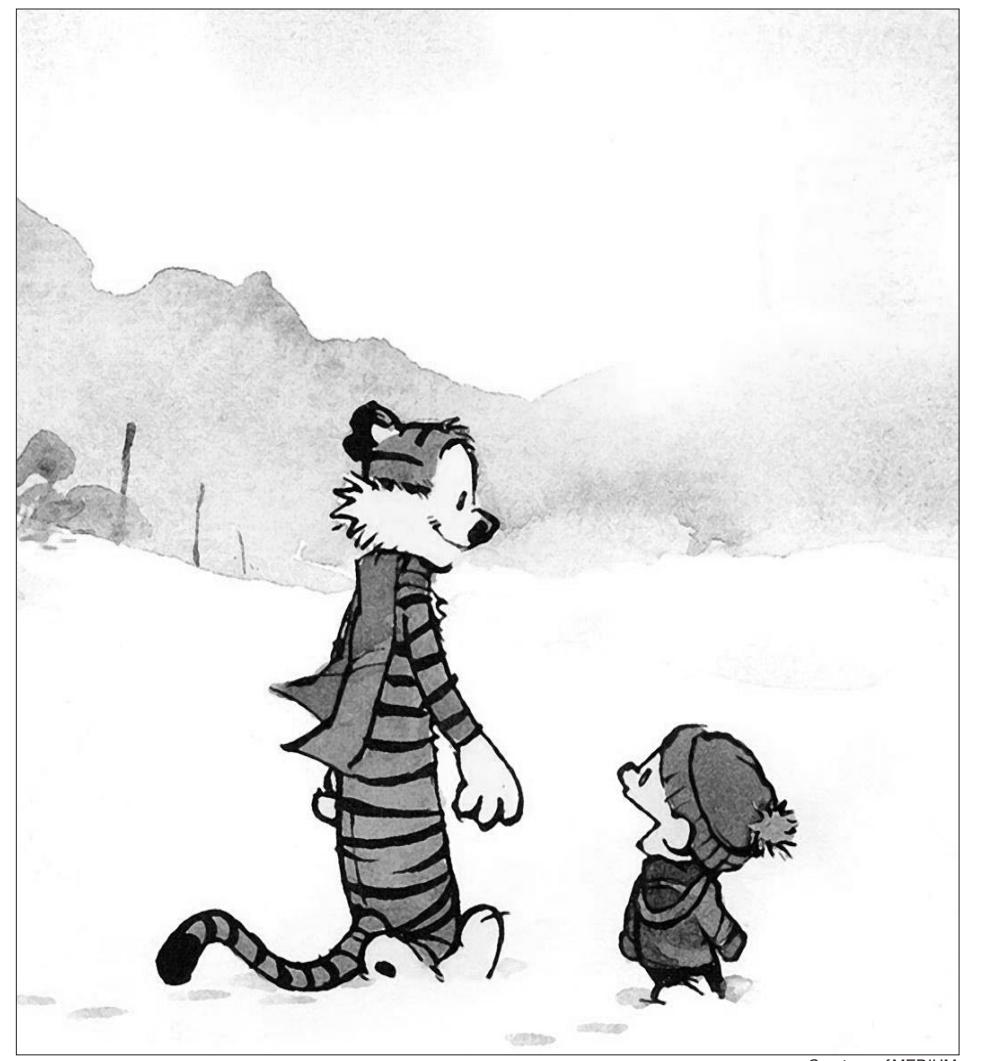
Now that I have endless time, I've found myself picking up countless books in my house, from "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" by Jeff Kinney to Steven Hawking's "Theory of Everything."

Recently, I came across a comic book the size of three books put together titled "Calvin and Hobbes: The Days are Just Packed."

Flipping it open, I saw the first page had a note addressed to my dad from his childhood family friend. The loopy handwriting was practically illegible, but I deduced that it was a birthday present to my dad for his 8th birthday.

I was excited to be holding a book that my dad enjoyed in his childhood and wanted a look into what his life was like when he was younger. Eagerly, I began reading in hope that I would find it interesting as well, even in my teenage years.

Once I got into the book, I quickly figured out that it depicted the stories of a young boy named Calvin and his imaginary tiger friend, Hobbes. The pair go on crazy adventures, fueled by Calvin's imagination and mischievous tendencies.



Courtesy of MEDIUM

## togatalks

What shows have you watched during shelter in place?

"I just started this new show called Never Have I Ever. I also started rewatching Gilmore Girls."



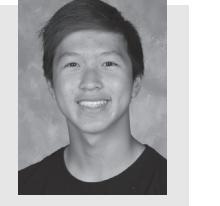
freshman Stuti Agrawal

"I'm rewatching my favorite shows like Brooklyn 99, Shark Tank, and How I Met Your Mother."



sophomore Nandini Desai

"I've been watching Crash Landing on You. I 100000/10 would recommend it. It's amazing."



junior Wilson Fung

# The final chapter: Senior year closes unfinished

BY AnjaliNuggehalli

Fortnite was also a game that implemented this strategy, featuring real-world weapons like M4A1s, P90s and AK-47s, but calling them different names less associated with violence such as "Assault Rifle," or "Compact SMG."

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Parr attributed the significance of these events to being the last chances for the seniors to unite together as a class.

MATP 12 students are also missing their senior capstone field trip to Asilomar as well as the annual SMASH'n event in May.

Belenje, a member of the Media Arts Program, is most disappointed about missing out on these events.

"I was really looking forward to seeing our MAP senior class show off all our final projects," Belenje said. "We've worked so hard on them all year, but we can't even finish them anymore."

**"Prom was going to be one of the final times the seniors came together."**

SENIOR Ella Parr

three sports, but softball season is my favorite, which makes it so much harder," Parr said. "I was really looking forward to senior night because that's such an accomplishing moment."

Despite missing out on several school events, she was anticipating and not being able to hang out with her friends, both Belenje and Parr have made the most of the difficult situation by staying in active touch with friends and family.

Belenje has movie and game nights with her family almost every night and enjoys painting with her mom. She also FaceTimes her friends every day to watch movies or play online games together.

While being in lockdown has disappointed most seniors in terms of second-semester expectations, both Belenje and Parr do not consider quarantine to have taken away from their overall high school experience.

Throughout their four years in high school the class of 2020 had already enjoyed countless amazing events together, from Homecoming to their last winter formal.

"We are a really tight-knit class and have already formed great memories with each other," Belenje said. "It's sad that we already had our last day of school without realizing it, but I've had an amazing four years with the best friends possible."

Regardless of what it means for the Class of 2020, seniors acknowledge that currently, the most important priority is getting the public health situation under control by ensuring that their everyone, especially loved ones, remain healthy.

"This whole experience is so

hard, but I know that it's the right thing to do," Parr said. "I just have to remember that so many people have it much worse."♦

Courtesy of AASHNA BELENJE  
Although unable to participate in traditional senior events, senior Aashna Belenje hikes with her family to watch the sunset on May 8.

# Humanities teachers work to restructure classes

BY AlekhyaVadlakonda &amp; AmandaZhu

Pacing back and forth and reading their lines aloud to themselves in the quiet of their rooms earlier this month, Sarah Thermond's Drama 1 students practiced their Shakespearean monologues to perform in front of their class. But rather than the usual in-person performance, this was a presentation done via FlipGrid, a virtual discussion platform that allows students to upload videos to a class assignment.

In the wake of the school closure brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, students are adapting to a vastly different learning environment compared to in-person school. Teachers like Thermond are working to keep students' learning experiences rich and fresh.

For discussion- and performance-heavy classes such as drama, English and history, the shift has been challenging.

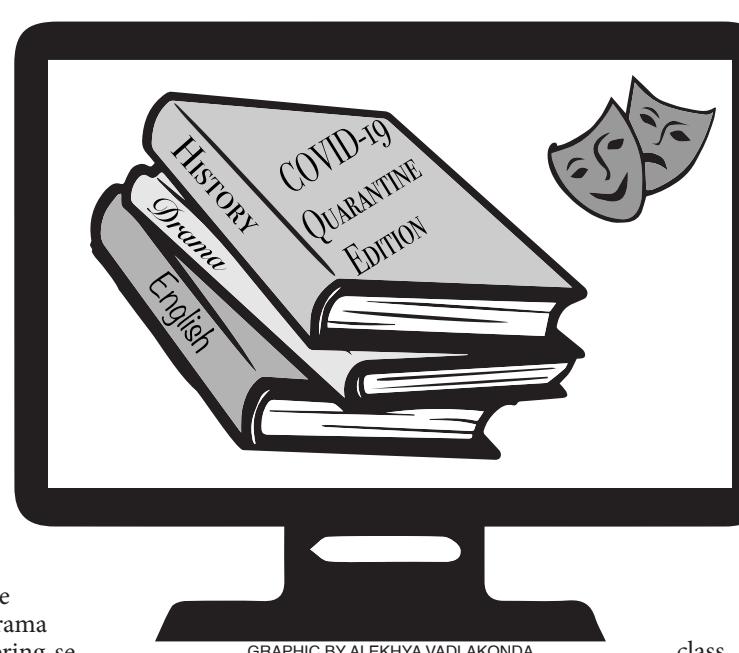
For instance, the shelter-in-place order has drastically changed Thermond's usual methods.

"All levels of drama are normally very collaborative classes," Thermond said. "My drama classes usually culminate in spring semester by putting on productions in the Drama Center, in which all students have an acting role and a tech job."

Now she has changed all of the spring productions from a traditional in-theater performance to a virtual, prerecorded one. Students will perform scenes and songs in a recorded Zoom meeting and Thermond will edit the clips into a video to share with the

community.

Even though her students cannot complete their regular in-person performances and discussions, Thermond is trying to be positive and emphasize the new skill sets they are building. As such, drama students have gotten the opportunity to undertake new assignments that are more individual or technology-based; the Advanced Drama class learned how to create voiceover reels that could be used to audition for productions outside of school.



GRAPHIC BY ALEKHYA VADLAKONDA

"Because students are submitting things separately on the internet," Thermond said, "I am able to standardize how much feedback I can give to each student, which doesn't always happen in class as the student performing right before the bell sometimes does not get quite as much feedback."

History teacher Jerry Sheehey has been following a similar teaching method. For the first three weeks, he conducted all his classes asynchronously and only assigned work on Canvas rather than holding class video calls.

This gave his students freedom and flexibility on when they complete their work; however, after learning that remote learning will continue until the end of the year, he has begun holding Zoom meetings so that students can ask him questions.

"Remote teaching and remote learning are challenging," Sheehey said. "I am learning to do something that is completely new. Generally, everything takes longer, from my planning and conveying instructions to students completing assigned work."

For his AP European History class, Sheehey is focusing on preparing students for the May 13 AP exam. Because of the recent changes in the exam structure, Sheehey spent much of spring break trying to familiarize himself and his students with the new format.

"We usually watch documentaries and do video guides and we still do that," said sophomore Catherine Kan. "Mr. Sheehey now does video notes, so it's like class but

shorter so I can finish history faster."

Similarly, English teacher Susanna Ryan is using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous teaching, keeping in mind that freshman and sophomore classes may struggle with WiFi and other issues that they can't control.

In addition to holding regular class calls, she has made assignments simpler, only keeping the necessary and straightforward questions in worksheets and posting videos of herself walking through instructional slideshows to minimize any confusion that may occur.

In substitution for in-class discussions and group discussions like Socratic seminars, many teachers are also using the breakout rooms feature in Zoom because it allows students to work with their groups rather than with the entire class at once.

Even with a college-level learning management like Canvas and video conferencing tools like Zoom and Google Meet, the new learning environment has led to necessary concessions on the part of teachers.

"It's just too hard for students to follow along with all the nuanced work," Ryan said. "We have had to really streamline the materials to be both digitally meaningful and properly organized for a student to navigate with only so much direct instruction from me."

In the midst of the stress and worry brought on by these uncertain times, Ryan said she wants to make sure that her students understand that mental health and personal well-being should be their first priority.

"I want to remember that we aren't just 'distance learning' or 'remote learning' — we are 'crisis learning,' meaning we are all in the midst of a crisis and must put our social and emotional wellness first," she said.♦

# Remote learning compels teachers to adapt

BY Ethan Lin  
& Cici Xu

*Editor's note: this story was written during the first phase of remote learning and appeared on the Saratoga Falcon website on April 30.*

It is 8:15 a.m. Few cars navigate Herriman Avenue, where cars would be lined up in ordinary times. But around the neighborhood, and even as far as Santa Cruz, students and teachers are up and preparing for a new day of school.

Some students anxiously refresh last night's homework submission page and pull out their binders while their teachers make last-minute changes on their calendars; others put on their headphones and log onto Zoom as they wait for their online lessons to start. Students and teachers are gradually adapting to the mode of online learning.

Because the school will remain closed through early June due to the COVID-19 crisis, teachers continuously plan their courses to provide the best learning platform possible for their students.

Teachers choose between asynchronous learning (a menu of tasks to do) or synchronous learning (an in-person teaching session), but with a new simplified schedule that began April 20, all teachers will be required to meet for at least 15 minutes per class period. In asynchronous learning, most teachers leave videos and notes on Canvas for students to complete in their own time. With synchronous learning, teachers use live video calls for lectures or discussions.

Science teacher Cheryl Lenz is one of

many teachers who adopted the typical asynchronous style of online courses.

She uses Canvas to upload videos and worksheets and Flipgrid, a platform that allows teachers to facilitate asynchronous video discussions with students and carry out interactive projects.

In the second week of online learning, Lenz assigned a project for her chemistry students to record themselves doing a chore while explaining the chemistry in it.

"It's a very valuable experience because we get to do some research on the topic we are passionate about and also because we don't need to sit in front of a computer," said sophomore Katherine Chen, one of Lenz's Chemistry Honors students. "I really want her to give us more assignments like these."

Aside from trying out new projects with her students, Lenz is finding a way to replicate her usual class structure with Canvas.

Rather than giving out a long test at the end of each unit, she creates weekly "mini assessments" to assess how well her students are digesting the concepts. The mini assessments are shorter than her usual quizzes, which usually consists of five to six fill-in-the-blank questions.

Since Lenz cannot control how her students are taking the assessments, she said she assumes that they are open-note and open-computer.

"It is a little difficult to try to find something that adequately assesses the student," she said.

Lenz started to prepare her students for online classes a week before the school closure as she predicted the likelihood of going online, but creating online courses is still overwhelming as many teachers feel like they are spending valuable time figuring out how to implement the curriculum.

"For me, I feel like I'm spending a lot more time prepping for school with the online classes, learning software and just trying to make sure

I have the same materials as when I was teaching live," Lenz said.

Discussion boards on Canvas for students to ask questions on homework and worksheets. She also schedules two optional Google Meet tutorials for students to ask her questions one-on-one. Even though students generally feel that online classes are less stressful than usual school days, scheduling

individual appointments with teachers challenges students to overcome the fear of reaching out and be more proactive.

Knowing that communicating with his students through Canvas announcements would be difficult, English teacher Matt

"Any time I'm not doing synchronous teaching, I'm being a parent," Granoff said. "I honestly love it; I would totally be a stay-at-home-dad if I didn't



Granoff chose to use synchronous learning.

"I stuck with synchronous classes because it's the closest replication of the valuable aspects of live classroom learning," Granoff said. "I've used [student discussion groups], so students have the chance to try out ideas, learn from each other and collectively build to a deeper or more complete understanding."

Granoff uses Discord — a gaming software — for group discussions and daily updates. He usually starts his classes with a 15-minute Zoom meeting, where he greets everyone and explains the discussion topics. Then he divides his students into a four-person discussion in Discord, where they use the "voice channel" to talk to each other. He closes the last 15 minutes of class in Zoom to explain the homework. Grading essays became a challenge for Granoff as his wife works full-time at Stanford Hospital, and he has a 3-year-old daughter to care for.

Synchronous classes allow him to have a more structured schedule for his days, but he has no choice but to delay grading.

actually enjoy teaching so much, but it is exhausting."

The real-time, interactive meetings that synchronous learning provides and the freedom that asynchronous learning gives both cater to different curricula and students, which give the previous experience of classes and school.

**"I stuck with synchronous classes because it's the closest replication of the valuable aspects of live classes,"**

TEACHER Matt Granoff

"All teachers teach differently, and these tough times have hit us all in unimaginable ways," Granoff said. "The best we can hope is for all of this to end soon, and return back to the normal classroom setting — something that I miss very much." ♦

## SYNCHRONOUS

- Happens in real time, with students and the instructor present
- Promotes active discussions and immediate feedback
- Allows for questions leading to a deeper exploration of topics

"It keeps me on a schedule and I will not procrastinate"

JUNIOR Shauna Zahabi

## ASYNCHRONOUS

- Instructor provides the materials and assignments, and students complete them on their own time
- Students have flexibility with their busy schedules
- Allows students to learn the curriculum at their own pace

"I feel more productive when I'm given a list of things to do."

SOPHomore Sanjana Somayajula

# SCHOOL SCOPE

Clubs severely impacted by school shutdown

BY Serena Li

cult placement test for college. Qin said he continuously contacts club members to check in on tutoring progress.

"Since the teaching is mostly paced according to the student tutors' schedule, the quarantine actually helped ACE by making more time for our members to tutor their students in Yunnan," Qin said. "We now have more time to develop the club and attract new members."

While some clubs are able to continue club activity, others have put a hold on their meetings and canceled pre-planned events.

The Red Cross service club on campus, has put a pause on their weekly meetings, but they plan to hold one to two virtual meetings to wrap up unfinished discussions and goals for the next school year.

The club had events planned for the spring semester, such as the Stanford Blood Drive, assembling

of first aid kits and a guest speaker presentation about disaster awareness, but they are now unable to carry these out.

**Service clubs continue to contribute to community**

In order to contribute to the fight against COVID-19, the Tri-M club has donated 150 face masks since March 16 to the Sunnyview Retirement Community in Cupertino. On April 4, they held a virtual concert for the same retirement home by having the club members send in recordings of the musical pieces and compiling them into a 40-minute YouTube video.

The club is planning another virtual concert for the same retirement home, set to take place on April 26. Instead of a recorded version, the club will play live music through a Zoom call.

The Aspiring to Create English Club, or ACE, still occasionally holds officer meetings over WeChat, a Chinese social media app.

The club is made up of Saratoga High students such as president junior Anthony Qin and vice president junior Amy Zhang. Students from Saratoga High tutor Chinese students from Yunnan in English, providing free help that enables them to prepare for the Gaokao, China's notoriously difficult exam.

"Our meetings usually consist

of supplemental lesson plans.

Most of the work is done outside

of the meetings," Zhang said.

The speech and debate club also stopped its weekly practices. Tournaments such as Tournament of Champions (TOC) and the National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA) Nationals were moved online and will continue in the form of Zoom meetings. Other tournaments, such as National Catholic Forensics League (NCFL) Grand Nationals and State Quals were canceled.

Although practices are temporarily paused and the format of tournaments is affected, some students continue prepping and competing in tournaments individually. On the weekend of April 17, six students competed in the TOC. Sophomore Selina Chen took first place in Informative Speaking; seniors Adhit Sankaran and Ronak Pai broke octafinals in Public Forum Gold.

"We all join a Zoom room and have our debate over video," Sankaran said. "The process worked quite well at the TOC last weekend."

**Educational clubs shift online**

The Women in STEM club, which aimed to close the gender gap in STEM, has also decided to cancel meetings for the rest of the year. The club also planned on hosting a hands-on STEM day for middle school girls on March 21, but was forced to cancel the event.

To accommodate the sudden change, WiSTEM club officers created an Instagram page on April 23, @shwistem, to share STEM activities for younger students to try at home.

Senior club president Kiran Chandrasekher also noted that the sudden change has a long-term impact on the club. Current officers had planned to use the last few months of school as a transition period to train incoming officers.

"Without a transition period, it might be harder for the incoming officers at the beginning of next school year," said Chandrasekher. "But I'm sure they'll catch on quickly." ♦



Courtesy of MARCUS KUO



Courtesy of ANTHONY QIN



Courtesy of ADHIT SANKARAN

**Top:** Tri-M club members junior Josephine and freshman Caleb Chou play "A Thousand Years" by Christina Perri, arranged by the Piano Guys, for a virtual concert for Sunnyview Retirement Community on April 4.

**Middle:** Sophomore Cici Xu, an ACE club member, tutors a student in English over the social media app WeChat to prepare her for the Gaokao.

**Bottom:** Senior Adhit Sankaran, a Speech and Debate member, debates with students in Nevada over Zoom to promote Delta Debate Academy.

# Coronavirus restructures academic tournaments

BY Andrew Li  
& Alan Zu

preparation for the competition went to waste this year.

"Learning and enjoying math is something that is my passion, regardless of whether a tournament occurs or doesn't, or whether or not I meet my expectations," Mishra said. "The single most important thing to me before a competition is knowing that I have put in the required effort and preparation, and things out of my control, while still a bummer, do not make my time spent cultivating my passion a waste."

Other major competitions, such as the USA Biology Olympiad (USABO) Semifinals, the USA Physics Olympiad (USAP) Semifinals and the competitions that followed them, were also canceled.

The Mathematical Association of America indefinitely postponed four of the tests, specifically the American Invitational Mathematics Examination II (AIME), the USA Junior Mathematical Olympiad (USAJMO), the USA Mathematical Olympiad (USAMO) and the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO).

Freshman Nilay Mishra, who had qualified for the USAMO, a competition for students who passed AIME and AMC 12, said, "I'm sure that everyone who qualified to that level of competition has put in countless hours of effort. We all feel slightly disgruntled."

Individual regional coordinators were responsible for nominating 15 students to take the digital national exam, which took place

on April 26. Due to difficulties proctoring and administering a local exam, the Silicon Valley section, consisting of 34 schools, asked teachers to nominate students relying on prior knowledge of students' abilities.

One student was taken from each of the 15 schools that historically performed the best on the olympiad. History Bowl Nationals, though canceled for April, have been rescheduled for December. Quiz Bowl has been holding tournaments on Discord, an

**"COVID-19 has decimated an entire year's worth of work."**



JUNIOR Isaac Sun

group with juniors Rohan Kumar and Aaron Wong through their performance project titled "How Jazz Broke Down Racial Barriers."

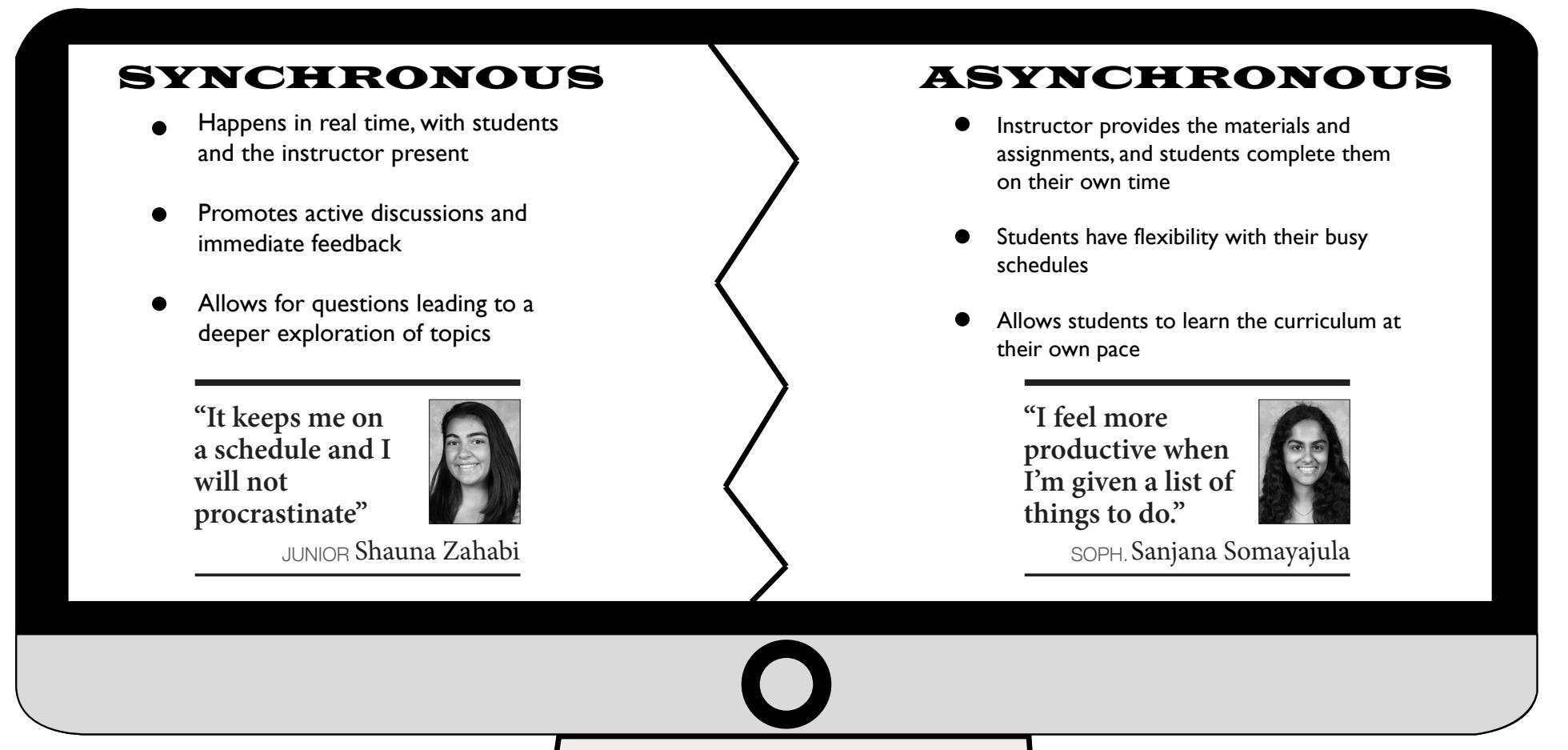
To allow participants to modify their performance without having to meet in person to record themselves, judges will be grading performances purely off of their scripts and research.

For some, the change presents an opportunity to develop their script, but for others takes away the opportunity for creativity with visuals and sounds.

"I don't mind states being changed, but I hope nationals is live if we make it past states," Qin said. "Live music is a big part of our performance and it adds a lot to the quality and message of our presentation. I don't think our performance project is being judged at its best if they are simply judging us off our script."

Not all competitions are well suited to being hosted online like the IMO being held over Zoom, as entire countries' reputations are at stake if students cheat. Students are forced to adapt to the new changes in science competitions, which were made to prioritize the safety of the competitors.

"I think that if there was a competition we would really be running the risk of spreading COVID-19 which, especially since we are participating in a science competition, we should be aware of," Sun said. ♦



## Xenophobic acts increase as COVID-19 fears escalate



GRAPHIC BY SINA SALEHI

### COVID-19 RACISM STATISTICS

**1500**  
incident reports as of April

**6.3%**  
percent of cases involving children

**NY&CA**  
states with the highest number of reports

### REPORT INCIDENTS AT

Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council

Information from A3PCON'S STOP AAPI HATE REPORTING CENTER

GRAPHIC BY ANOUK YEH

### togatalks

What are your thoughts on the influx of COVID-19 xenophobia?

"I find it pretty disgusting that Asian Americans have to go through trying not to be a target."

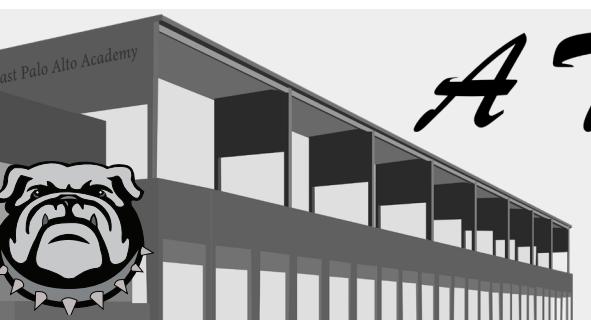
sophomore Ashley Ko

"I feel like people are just scared, so they just need that illusion of control."

sophomore Paula Nguyen

"Asian Americans are also victims of this pandemic and should be given the basic respect."

junior Eva Ji



## A Tale of Two Districts

LACK OF RESOURCES REVEALS HOMEWORK GAP ACROSS COUNTRY



BY Oliver Ye

As of May 1, over 124,000 U.S. public and private schools have been closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting at least 55.1 million students, according to an article published by Education Week. Over 17 states have ordered a school shutdown until the end of the school year, an unprecedented move aimed at slowing the spread of the virus.

While health experts believe that closing schools is a necessary move to curb the spread of the virus, the transition from in-person to online lessons has been difficult, especially for low-income districts.

Coronavirus fears have also led to discriminatory acts against Asian family businesses in places including San Diego and San Francisco. An Asian American business was vandalized with xenophobic graffiti in New Mexico and restaurants such as New York City's Jing Fong lost \$1.5 million as people became hesitant to interact with Asian franchises before the government issued the closing of nonessential businesses.

and bungled handling of the pandemic. Fang thinks the president's words will have a lasting effect.

"[The media and the president] have taught people for two months that the virus is China's fault, so I don't think anything can erase that from people's minds now," he said. "Some will instinctively look for someone to blame in this troubled time, and in this case, it's China and the Asian people."

Early in the crisis, few were as clear seeing as sophomore Joshua Fang. In late January, he began campaigning for awareness about coronavirus on social media. Though he said he has not experienced severe coronavirus-induced racism or microaggressions, his early warnings — and wearing of a face mask at that point — drew skepticism from several classmates. "I have experienced people looking at me strangely or asking me why I was wearing a mask," Fang said. "Sometimes, I would feel slight hints of mocking in their words, like they think that I am stupid or overreacting. Other times, people would also intentionally fake cough next to me and look for a reaction." Fang said he did not think much of those acts, saying, "Time would tell who is right." But the crisis has gotten so bad that Fang's family, who immigrated six years ago from Beijing, is considering temporarily moving back to China. They think they might be safer there because China has the virus more under control and they would be more protected from potential riots or aggression.

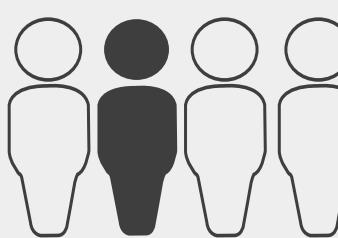
Perhaps because Asian Americans make up the largest populations in Santa Clara and Alameda County (38.3 and 31.8 percent, respectively) the Bay Area has witnessed few extreme acts of hate during the time of coronavirus. In general, the prejudice they see on display is more subtle — eyes filled with hatred and fear, comments muttered under their breath, feelings of paranoia and exclusion. Liao, whose family is Taiwanese-Chinese American, noted how a variety of ethnicities have been lumped under one generalization in part of the U.S.

"I know people have experienced much worse nowadays with Asian parents being shunned out of predominantly white supermarkets in our area," Liao said. "This racism was growing long before coronavirus came to the U.S. In many instances, all Asians are generalized as Chinese. The virus was a last trigger for people as irrationality rose with fear."

Some people's fears stem from transmission concerns, but others take it to the point where they attack Asian Americans for unfounded reasons. Such instances include a stranger calling a Filipino nurse a racial slur and people telling Asians neighbors to "go back to China" in San Francisco. President Trump tweeted on March



## THE DIGITAL DIVIDE ACROSS THE U.S.



25% of Black households and 23% of Hispanic households with school-age children do not have access to high speed internet



The digital 'homework gap' affects 8.5 to 12 million K-12 students



Based on a 2019 survey, 13% of students in grades 6-12 sometimes cannot complete homework due lack of internet access outside of school

Statistics from SPEAKUP.ORG &amp; NEATODAY.ORG

since most children living in East Palo Alto do not have extracurriculars or at-home activities, there was little to no learning going on for the first three weeks of shelter in place as the district was still distributing devices.

In contrast, the Los Gatos Saratoga Union High School District was able to transition smoothly to online learning; the district used only one week for teachers and students to get used to digital technology and to hand out digital devices to those who needed it. Then school began again on March 23.

According to Traci Bonde, director of instructional technology in LGSUHSD, since the district already had pre-existing carts of Chromebooks, it wasn't difficult to hand Chromebooks out to students who needed them at

Over half of our students do not have access to the internet at home, beyond their parents' phone," Pronovost said. "So in a family of four or five, they only have access to one device, and it's really difficult [to learn]."

District responses differ Schools in Ravenswood were shut down for the first three weeks of shelter in place, as the district scrambled to patch together digital learning resources. The district-wide school shutdown started March 21, but Ravenswood was only able to officially start teaching again on April 13. The school will continue remote learning until June 10.

According to Pronovost,

So far, the district has distributed 75 Chromebooks and 10 hotspots to students and staff who lack the appropriate digital resources to continue online learning. District personnel are continuing to lend devices on a weekly basis.

"Our biggest challenge remains meeting the needs of students that are up in the Santa Cruz mountains and have no reliable Internet option," Bonde said. "Though we have partnered with a variety of internet services, we still have families that are not in range of any kind of reasonable internet."

### Existing disparities exacerbated

While LGSUHSD already had access to many devices to distribute to students that needed them, Ravenswood had few available before the pandemic struck.

To combat the lack of resources, the Ravenswood Education Foundation has purchased 400 iPads and STEM home learning kits for its transitional

kinder garden and first graders, as well as other Chromebooks and digital devices for older students. To fund the \$200,000 purchase, the foundation launched an emergency fund, a move that protected them from pulling money from the 2020-2021 school year budget.

Had the district pulled from next year's budget, they would have lost funding for summer

"I think the main ways to solve this education gap between different districts are volunteering our time and volunteering our money," Wang said. "While it may be difficult to physically help underprivileged students, we can offer to tutor struggling students and help them navigate new technology."

If you would like to support the Ravenswood school district, please donate at the Ravenswood Education Foundation.

GRAPHICS BY JEANETTE ZHOU AND MARISA KINGSLY

school or the cost of professional development for teachers, according to Pronovost. "I think the underlying issue amongst all this is, certainly, all of these problems existed before COVID-19, and what this really does is highlight the disparity between the experiences of our families living here and the rest of the country," Pronovost said.

The homework gap, exemplified by Ravenswood, disproportionately affects racial minorities. Ravenswood is 83 percent Hispanic.

Internet access has now been made a necessity for students across the world, but for many students in Ravenswood, the lack of internet access was a significant setback in completing homework. The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, a nonprofit funded by Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan, has stepped in to provide 500 hotspots to families in need throughout the district.

Ultimately, the coronavirus situation has highlighted the discrepancies in technology between districts of different economic status.

Some SHS students have tried to be positive contributors to bridge these gaps. Among them is senior Alex Wang, who has been teaching for the past two years at the nonprofit organization Silicon Valley Youth in order to raise money to support underfunded districts like East Palo Alto and South San Jose.

Although the [Ravenswood] district advised students and teachers to transition to online platforms like Google Classroom and Seesaw to continue educational activities, this approach was impractical for the many students who lacked access to Wi-Fi or electronic devices.

Silicon Valley Youth, which was founded in 2015, is led by a group of Bay Area students and has donated its proceeds from student-taught classes to fund educational projects in low-income districts, such as the purchasing of a kiln, violins, and iPads for the Ravenswood arts, music and educational programs.

"I think Silicon Valley Youth's organizational structure is really great because my impact is twofold, both on the students I teach and on the students who receive the money raised," Wang said. "What brings me back year after year is being able to share my knowledge with my students and knowing that I can make a difference in underprivileged districts."

Wang recognizes that for many students living in privileged districts, there may be a disconnect in the understanding of others' educational struggles since they don't see them in their own classrooms. But that doesn't mean students should exempt themselves from the issues.

"I think the main ways to solve this education gap between different districts are volunteering our time and volunteering our money," Wang said. "While it may be difficult to physically help underprivileged students, we can offer to tutor struggling students and help them navigate new technology."

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GRAPHICS BY JEANETTE ZHOU AND MARISA KINGSLY



# Staying fit in quarantine



GRAPHIC BY VIRAAJ REDDI

## Finding new ways to stay fit

BY JustinGuo

As students have begun to settle in with this new and oftentimes monotonous quarantine lifestyle, the state of exercise has come into question. For both athletes and non-athletes alike, this unprecedented stretch has provided the unique chance to reinvent and sometimes recharge their exercise routines.

An increasing number of students are finding that it's tiring and mind-numbing to sit and stare at screens all day. So many

**"Working out is very important because you want to keep your body strong."**



SOPHOMORE Michelle Jiang

letes sticking to a strict workout regimen or diet. On March 30, the coaches for the varsity boys' basketball team issued a weekly workout competition between the incoming seniors, juniors and sophomores, with varying monetary prizes awarded to the winning grade level. A requirement of at least 120 pushups, 15 minutes of ball handling and a total calorie intake is all included in a daily report to the team's group chat.

"Adding your own exercises is recommended because at the end of the day, it's a competition between the classes," said junior guard Tyler Chu. "Overall, I think it's a good challenge because it motivates us to work out and exercise more during this quarantine."

On a similar note, most in-season athletes, such as junior distance runner Jessie Zhou, are still trying to stay in shape despite their sports season being canceled.

"Even though I don't have any races to train for at the moment, I still try to get out and run, since it improves my overall mental health," Zhou said. "I don't do speed workouts anymore because I'm not competing anytime soon, so I generally run five to seven miles a day at a moderate pace."

In general, it seems most students are finding some way to move around and avoid falling into a completely sedentary lifestyle, whether it be a short walk or a demanding workout. In times like these, it's probably for the best.

"I don't want to sound trite," Jiang said. "But working out is very important at this time because you want to keep your body strong." ♦

## Exercise tips to stay healthy

**Anjali Nuggehalli**



youself into high-intensity workouts when you're just beginning an exercise routine, I recommend starting slowly and building up toward an end goal.

For instance, when I first started running back in 2019, I did only 1 or 2 miles at a time, and over the course of a few months, I now run up to 5 miles regularly.

Along with staying vigilant with a daily workout routine, maintaining a healthy diet is also important to maintaining a well-rounded lifestyle.

It's hard to find nutritious options when grocery stores are practically cleared out and all that's remaining in your fridge are 10 frozen pizzas. However, many grocery stores contain food items that can last for long periods of time and are easy to store.

For example, as a vegetarian, I always keep cans of beans in my pantry for protein; these are delicious both alone and prepared in a wheat tortilla for more sustenance.

Similarly, I've found that baking my own desserts is not only enjoyable, but also a step-up from store-bought junk food. I made carrot cake cupcakes using ingredients that most people have in their kitchens — flour, cinnamon, sugar and some carrots. I was surprised to see my creation turn out delicious and much healthier than any boxed cupcakes I'd ever eaten before.

Creating a workout routine is also extremely helpful. By writing down specific body areas you want to target every day, the thought of working out suddenly becomes a lot less daunting.

If you're looking for great places to start, one of my favorite resources is a YouTube channel called Fitness Blender. They have hundreds of videos focusing on specific muscle groups, from five-minute quad workouts to 50-minute upper body strength training. Their videos vary in intensity — if you're looking for an ab workout, they have both shorter, modified videos as well as intense six-pack sculpting routines.

While it may be tempting to throw

## Dad, a three-hour marathoner, is my marathon pacer

**Cici Xu**



when he shaved his head and boarded a plane to the desert in Gansu, a province in China, but I came to realize that running brings him joy. Running is the only thing that allows him to escape his anxiety and experience true happiness.

So far, he's run 16 full-length marathons, and for years, I have been watching in admiration. My dad promised me I would also feel the same overwhelming joy. My goal is to be like him and cultivate the same love for running that has propelled him all this time. When I was in the eighth grade, we used

**For my dad and me, time isn't important as long as we persevere and have fun together.**



Courtesy of CICI XU

to run about three miles to downtown and through the neighborhood once every three days. The next year, my dad would wake me up early in the morning before school, and we ran on the Saratoga High track for 40 minutes. As schoolwork began taking up my time, our training moved to the afternoons. My dad will always lecture me if I do not go run with him, and there are days that I want to give up. But he pesters me to an extent that I would no longer bear his complaints, so I get up and run. This is how we have persevered, but it has also allowed me to realize the importance of running. There

is so far only one thing my dad taught me about running: It is fun, so if I am not enjoying it, then I have not trained enough.

I have participated in three local races over the last two years: the Santa Rosa 5K race, which I ran in eighth grade, and two Rock 'n' Roll 10K series in San Jose.

For my dad and me, time is not important as long as we persevere and have fun together. Our happiness begins whenever we are on the road together. ♦

## Recent spring sports cancellations bring bittersweet feelings

BY AngelinaChen

On the day of senior Eng Kwa's league championships last year, he had already changed out of his swimsuit when he was notified by varsity swim coach Christian Bonner about the 400-meter freestyle relay. Kwa rushed back into the Palo Alto High School locker room and ran to the starting blocks without time to warm up. After his part in the relay, Kwa collapsed, panting, on the pool deck as his teammates surrounded him, laughing and cheering for the rest of the race.

"I'll miss the feeling of overcoming the challenges swimming constantly presents," Kwa said. "Swimming has always been something I looked forward to because I was able to do something I was good at with my friends."

Kwa said he will also miss Bonner and the assistant coaches, Yaya Sezginer and Kristen Thomson, as he said they would always help the swimmers achieve their full potential with painful but necessary sets.

While the shelter-in-place order may be disappointing to some, the situation is especially tragic for senior athletes — they have lost their last opportunities to make their season memorable, including final meets and senior nights. Many will also miss the people they have met and the bonds they have formed through their sports.

For example, as a vegetarian, I always keep cans of beans in my pantry for protein; these are delicious both alone and prepared in a wheat tortilla for more sustenance.

Similarly, I've found that baking my own desserts is not only enjoyable, but also a step-up from store-bought junk food. I made carrot cake cupcakes using ingredients that most people have in their kitchens — flour, cinnamon, sugar and some carrots. I was surprised to see my creation turn out delicious and much healthier than any boxed cupcakes I'd ever eaten before.

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While it's hard to adjust to an alternate version of a "healthy lifestyle," it's completely worth it. Not only will you maintain your strength during a time where staying healthy is critical, but you'll walk out of quarantine feeling like the best version of yourself.

In my daily life, I'm by no means a health guru who tries new exercise videos every day and makes homemade food. However, because of the shelter-in-place order, I've been forced out of my comfort zone of finding exercise in sports and nutrition in the lettuce at Chipotle.

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Courtesy of ALICE LIN

Senior Ranna Zahabi, an outfielder, throws the ball back into the field during a softball game. Zahabi is one of many seniors who will miss out on final celebrations with her team due to the pandemic.

all four years to get to where they are," Tarbox said.

The plan is to continue these posts until the end of the school year. Even with the cancellation of spring sports, Kwa is thankful for all the experiences swimming has given him and he looks to the future with a positive view.

"I'm looking forward to going to college, so I can make new friends and experience a new environment," Kwa said. ♦

the recognition they deserve.

They post a photo of each player and explain in the caption a memorable moment they had in their sport.

The seniors will also miss their senior days, the last home meets commemorating the athletes' high school sports careers.

However, the Instagram account @tagaspirit, run by the spirit commission, seniors Natalie Tarbox, Nakul Nagaraj, Kaitlyn Thomson and junior Emily Choi, is seeking to give senior athletes

and get to know new players.

"I particularly enjoy the social aspect of school sports," Ruemmler said. "Because a new team is formed every year, I find it enjoyable to meet new people who have the same interests me."

She found a large difference from club sports as she could play in a more fun environment with players she's never met before.

"It was a good experience for me to play with new players and learn their styles of play," Ruemmler said. "I like to socialize with new people and I definitely enjoy the competitive spirit."

Also, club sports have much different methods than school sports when coaching and pushing players to be the best.

Ruemmler noticed that her club coach, KP Mchombor, prioritizes individual players' techniques and offers mini sessions outside of regular practice while school coaches rarely focus on individual players except to direct them to their positions on the field.

Club sports usually have a much higher level of intensity that's evident during practices. Ruemmler finds that there is much more running in her club practices rather than technicalities with specific drills.

She also feels she individually improved more on her club team than she ever did for school.

"I have been playing with my [club teammates] for longer, so I feel I know how they play better than I do with the people who play school soccer," Ruemmler said. "It's easier for me to connect passes because I feel more confident when playing club."

O'Heir said most of this is because of the difference in the number of players trying out.

"On the club side, the structure of the tiered system allows you to work with players of similar ability levels and you do not have limitations on the player pool as the players can come in from anywhere," O'Heir said. ♦

## School sports emphasize more on team chemistry compared to individual player skills in club sports

BY LihiShoshani

Sophomore Ishaan Bhandari stayed up late April 13 to edit together a video of the sophomore boys on the JV basketball team exercising to background music. His school coaches wanted to bring the players together as well as make sure they were working out during the quarantine.

School sports place a much heavier emphasis on team building compared to club sports, primarily due to the shorter season consisting of fewer games, which allows less time for giving each player individual attention.

During the fall and spring, Bhandari plays basketball on an Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) travel team, Top Flight Elite, but during the winter, he plays JV basketball and connects with his friends more.

He focuses on creating team cohesion in order to allow the team to be competitive as possible during the short school season.

Freshman Eva Ruemmler, who plays on the Saratoga Spurs soccer team, said that when she joined the JV soccer team, she had to quickly adjust to a new team and position

tween school and the practice to relax and do his homework.

In addition, he said, "Being able to focus more attention on swimming has really helped me improve my technique and speed more than before."

While he had stepped away from tennis for now, he doesn't rule out taking it up junior or senior year.

Junior Jason Chin used to participate in a mind-bending number of sports. Before high school, he simultaneously competed in tennis, soccer, swimming and fencing.

</div

**ISSUE** Highlights

"It's horrible because some places aren't accepting or offering service for Asian people. *We're all human*, and we're the same as everyone else."

— Chulalak Jittaveesab on xenophobia (pg. 20)

**3.1** million households with school-age children have *no wired broadband connection* at home. (pg. 21)

"When it came time to *make the bread*, I cut the recipe in half, already feeling guilty about my flour usage. Apparently, that's not how *baking* works."

— reporter Marisa Kingsley on quarantine bread-making (pg. 13)

GRAPHIC BY NITYA MARIMUTHU

## We need to end TikTok's heinous reign once and for all

### Ed will get to it soon



Edwin Chen

Everyone keeps talking about the COVID-19 pandemic that is affecting the whole world and how we need to flatten the curve. But no one has been talking about the pandemic that has been infecting the entire teenage population since the beginning of the school year: TikTok.

Unless you went into quarantine in July of 2019, you probably know that TikTok, formerly known as musical.ly, is a social media platform where people make short videos and share them with each other. People dance, perform skits and lip sync to popular songs, just to name a few of the app's functions.

TikTok has quickly risen to become one of the most popular social media apps of 2020.

This app has taken over many teenage minds, including the ones at our school. When school was in session, people indulged in unfunny TikTok humor, such as skits with dry jokes or TikTok "dances" that don't even require moving their feet.

The other day, I was scrolling through my discovery page on Instagram, and I was bombarded by an obscene number of TikToks. As I kept scrolling down, all I could see were these unfunny TikToks. I have yet to see a TikTok that actually entertains me.

TikTok is not only annoying, but it can also become an addiction.

My classmates have told me how they spend hours on TikTok watching goofy skits instead of doing their homework or hanging out with their friends. I have never seen Snapchat, Instagram or Facebook impact the teenage mind to the point where people

end up spend countless hours on those apps.

I believe that TikTok is addicting because of its less than a minute videos that satisfy teenagers' short attention spans. Many creators find unique ways of packing their content into such a small time limit, making it different from traditional YouTube videos or Instagram content.

This leads to users being able to scroll through mounds of content within a short amount of time, drawing them more and more into the app.

This addiction is not only time consuming but dangerous.

According to Vox, TikTok is under investigation by the U.S. government for its ties to the Chinese government and the national security threat it could potentially pose. According to leaked documents, TikTok has been instructed by the Chinese government to remove content against the Communist party. The app is currently banned by the U.S. Army and Transportation Security Ad-

ministration (TSA) on employee phones.

TikTok has also faced child privacy fines by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), something that could be a threat to many teenagers.

Despite all these obvious red flags, addiction seems to be only worsening as people get increasingly bored throughout quarantine.

The best way to stop the spread of TikTok is to discourage the production of TikToks. Staring at someone while they're making a TikTok makes them uncomfortable and may prevent them from finishing it. This has worked numerous times for me.

Another way of slowing the spread is to replace TikTok with healthier hobbies, such as playing video games with friends, taking walks or reading.

TikTok can be stopped one person at a time. Let's not only flatten the TikTok curve; let's destroy it before our souls and minds rot away. ♦

## Sleep connoisseur rates the best ways to fall asleep on a 1-13 scale

### and...y's asleep



Andy Chen

I've been working as a professional sleeper for the past 16 years, and as a sleep connoisseur, I feel that it's my duty to test different resting positions in search of the ultimate way to sleep. I know — exhausting work — but hey, I'm just doing my part to better your sleeping experience.

My first trial was trying to sleep upright by standing — which I attempted for a few seconds before remembering that I'm not a horse. I eventually managed to fall asleep upright in a chair, but after waking up in about 30 minutes because of the discomfort, I called it a night and went to sleep normally.

The overall experience was uncomfortable and took way too much effort, so unless you're sleeping at school or on an airplane, I wouldn't recommend sleeping vertically: 1/13.

The following night, I switched to sleeping on my side, and I was able to fall

asleep easily. Despite this, my spine felt like a corkscrew when I woke up, which was surprising given how quickly I fell asleep.

Over the course of the following two days, I alternated sleeping on my right and left side to see if my spine aching was just an outlier, but what I found only reaffirmed my experience and back pain — ultimately, I would give sideways sleeping a 7/13.

At that point, I was tired of my spine hurting whenever I got out of bed, so I decided to take a break and sleep on my back.

As someone who normally sleeps on my back, I might be biased when I say that basic is better, especially when it comes to sleeping: 13/13.

For me, the real shock was sleeping on my stomach. It took me awhile to position my face so that I could actually breathe, but when I did manage to overcome this obstacle, I have to say that I was pleasantly surprised.

I slept so soundly that I actually slept through my alarm and woke up at around 1 p.m. — slightly later than my usual waking time: 12/13.

Having established the best resting positions, I moved on to testing various

ways to sleep.

I first tested sleeping with the lights on, which made me pretty groggy in the morning and made falling asleep take longer than usual, but I honestly thought it would be worse; even so, unless you've just watched a horror movie, I wouldn't recommend it: 4/13.

I then tested sleeping with my door open, but as it turns out, closing your door while you sleep is a must. Like every other normal teenager, I need to use my phone for at least an hour before I fall asleep.

When I tried to sleep with my door open, my veil of protection disappeared — my mom wasn't pleased when she found me "sleeping." Don't worry; she can't ground me because the coronavirus already has, but it still wasn't worth it: 1/13.

Lastly, I'm personally not a fan of PJs because I don't enjoy the hassle of changing before sleeping and after waking up, so unless you have really cute PJs, wearing them isn't worth it: 6/13.

Ultimately, the way you sleep is up to you, but if you're not sleeping on your back, with the door closed, lights off and cute PJs on, you should definitely reconsider. ♦

### topten

#### WAYS TO SPEND QUARANTINE

- 10** Work on your dating profile.  
What's going to stop you, a pandemic?
- 9** Learn how to play an instrument.  
Then you can play "Happy Birthday" at your friend's Zoom party.
- 8** Try out cooking or baking.  
Also try getting your parents to eat your Adobe brick muffins.
- 7** Read a book.  
No, not SparkNotes.
- 6** Meditate.  
Meditation benefits active minds... Oh wait, that's not applicable here.
- 5** Take a walk.  
...to the kitchen, and back, that is.
- 4** Learn to speak a new language.  
Ulitumia mtafsiri kusoma hii, sivyo?
- 3** Become a Soundcloud rapper.  
You can finally put your English 11 Honors poetry skills to use.
- 2** Bond with your webcam's FBI agent.  
Why not make friends while staring aimlessly at your computer?
- 1** Spend time with your grandfather.  
Help him pick up 60-dozen jars worth of quartz and 12 black pans worth of valuable onyx jewels.

- Andy Chen and Justin Guo