

OPINION 7

Staff Editorial:
Reject private
counselors for
school resources

ENTERTAINMENT 14

Low-drama
ceremony caps
exciting and
historic Oscars

SCHOOL SCOPE 17

Into ASSIST,
supporting
students outside
the classroom

THE saratogafalcon



AN INDEPENDENT HIGH SCHOOL PUBLICATION

Friday, April 7, 2023

Saratoga High School Saratoga, CA

Vol. 63, No. 8

PROM 2023

BY AvaniKongetira

For the first time in years, prom will be held at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk's Cocoanut Grove as part of a combined effort by the junior and senior class offices. The event, inspired by the Disney animated film "Tangled," will take place on May 20 at 7 p.m. Tickets will go on sale on April 17.

While ticket prices have not yet been finalized, senior class president Allison Tan is confident that they will be much cheaper than in

previous years thanks to the affordability of the venue.

"We were fortunate to have a cheaper venue, so we can focus more money on things like the DJ and really invest in the add-ons," she said.

Each ticket includes a sit-down dinner, transportation to and from the venue, exclusive access to three amusement rides (the Big Dipper, bumper cars and the Haunted Castle), two photo booths and multiple food options.

>> PROM on pg. 4

Upperclassmen to get 'Tangled' at iconic seaside attraction



For the first time in two decades, students can enjoy dinner, dancing and rides at the Santa Cruz boardwalk.

Photo by AVANI KONGETIRA

25 years later: No. 16 Falcons' epic CCS upset

BY NikhilMathihalli
& HowardShu

Police cars rolled up to Seaside High on Feb. 26, 1998, as the final buzzer sounded for the Saratoga vs. Seaside CCS boys' basketball game. The scoreboard read 62-58 and the Falcons sprang into celebration with the 10 friends and 15 parents who had come along to cheer for them. Looking at the scoreboard, the Seaside fans who packed the rest of the gym stood stunned. There was no crime, except for that the undersized Falcons had just robbed the heavily favored Seaside Spartans of a game almost everyone was sure they would win.

"By the end of the game, it was close to bedlam," history teacher and 1998 basketball coach Mike Davey said. "The police took us to the locker room and escorted us to the bus because there were threats against us for beating Seaside."

The No. 1-seeded Spartans were the favorites to win the CCS championship and

came into the game with a 21-5 record in a higher league than the No. 16-seeded Falcons, who had gone 16-10.

Davey said CCS officials had to change the next round's location after the game because they had already planned for the Spartans to play their next round at Monterey High.

"The police escorted us because there were threats for beating Seaside."



COACH Mike Davey

Beating all odds, the No. 16 seeded Falcons knocked off the No. 1 seed, just like

Fairleigh Dickinson upsetting Purdue in this year's March Madness.

The scrappy, sharp-shooting Falcons went back and forth with the Spartans throughout the game and separated in the second half to a 62-58 win. Though the Falcons fell short in the next round, losing the quarterfinals 68-49 against No. 8-seeded Capuchino, their Seaside win is still possibly the greatest underdog story in CCS history.

"This game will always be the biggest upset in CCS history," Davey said. "I don't think it will ever be duplicated."

The Falcons started that season 5-0 before their star player, small forward Mike Black, the 1998 athlete of the year, sprained his ankle and the team's expectations shifted from winning the El Camino League to just making CCS.

In getting to that first playoff round, the Falcons first had to beat Los Gatos in a CCS play-in game. Since they beat the Wildcats 60-40 in an away game earlier that year, the

Falcons boasted home court advantage and won 49-48 in a packed gym and electric win-or-go-home atmosphere.

"I was kidding with the Los Gatos coach at the time: We were saying, whoever loses owes the winner a dinner because we'd have to go get our tail blasted by Seaside," Davey said.

The Seaside team featured a Division I-committed senior, 6' 6" Shawn Patterson, who averaged 16 points, 14 rebounds and 6 blocks a game, and two players who went on to play at the junior college level.

Saratoga had no college prospects whatsoever. Seaside had multiple 6-foot plus players who could dunk; the undersized Falcons made their points from the 3-point line, and not above the rim as the Spartans did.

The Falcons were outmatched in every way: speed, size, strength and athleticism.

>> UPSET on pg. 22

District to reconvene alignment work groups

BY AvaniKongetira
& ShaanSridhar

The school board gave approval for the district to move forward with the alignment of graduation requirements at a special meeting on Feb. 13, following in steps of the recommendation from a previous work group in November 2021 and in anticipation of AB 101, which requires students in the Class of '30 and onwards to take an eth-

nic studies course before graduation.

The district hopes to convene work groups composed of all stakeholder groups between March and November 2023 to discuss aligning graduation requirements across Saratoga High and Los Gatos High as well as how to implement the ethnic studies requirement at both school sites.

>> ALIGNMENT on pg. 6

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
HAWAII CD
PERMIT #3335

SARATOGA CA 95070
20300 HERMAN AVE
LOS GATOS-SARATOGA UNION JOINT HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT



newsbriefs

Organizers hope to boost Grad Night attendance

Every year, senior parents and staff organize Grad Night, a party to celebrate the graduating senior class. While 194 out of 308 seniors have bought Grad Night tickets, organizers hope that at least 90% of the class will choose to attend the all-night post-graduation celebration.

This year, Grad Night will be held at the school on June 8, from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. The check-in time will be from 10 to 10:30 p.m. at the main entrance of the quad.

Historically, there has been music, senior photo compilations, zip lining, inflatables, henna and photo booths at Grad Night, with plenty of food and drinks.

To attend, students must first fill out a liability form, which can be found at shsgradnight.weebly.com. Tickets cost \$285 through PayPal and \$275 through Zelle or by check, which can be turned in at the box labeled "2023 Grad Night" on the admin counter. The ticket covers the price of food, drinks, activities and the Grad Night T-shirt, which students must be wearing to enter Grad Night.

To ensure security, there will be parent volunteers supervising the event and no backpacks are allowed. The organizers also recommend bringing warm clothes and a blanket.

"High school is kind of like the foundation of the seniors' journeys," Reddy said. "For us parents, it's going to be very nostalgic. For some of us, it's the last child leaving the house, so it will be sad and exciting." ♦

— Zach Zinman

School plans SAT during spring break

Hoping to help students who are hard pressed to find a nearby local testing center, the school is again hosting its own SAT on April 12 during Spring Break.

The school has been hosting these at-school tests for the past three years to help with the lack of available testing sites.

"I am glad they are hosting an SAT," junior Shrey Jain said. "Last time I had to go all the way to Santa Cruz and it was difficult because I had to wake up really early to get there on time."

The school divided up registration into different portals depending on grade. Juniors were given priority while sophomores and freshmen were placed on a waitlist.

Students will need to be ready at the school at 7:30 a.m. and the test is scheduled to end at noon. The event will be run with the help of parent volunteers who do not have children actively taking the test that day.

"I'm ready to do my best in a few weeks," Jain said. "I have studied a lot and I think it will run really smoothly." ♦

— Neal Malhotra

Class officers announced for 2023-2024

Class officer elections for 2023-24 have come to an end with close elections and landslide victories — more candidates running than in recent years.

The incoming freshmen held their class officer elections in late February at Redwood Middle School. They elected Sina Mahtaj-Kharassani as president, Katie Yang as vice president, Seabert Ma as treasurer and Isabell Jadali as the class representative.

The Class of '26 elected Jena Lew as president, Anthony Tran as vice president, Samvrith Bandi as treasurer and Bryan Zhao as the class representative.

The Class of '25 had an unusually large number of candidates for both the treasurer and class representative races. Langdon Huynh was elected president, Amy Pan was elected vice president and Caitlin Lee was elected class representative. In the treasurer race, two of four candidates tied, so the school hosted a rare runoff between sophomores Tanuj Siriapuram and Justin Choi, with Choi coming out on top.

The Class of '24 elected Paul Hulme as president, Margaret Laver as vice president, Ananya Raman as treasurer and Sahar Noor as class representative. ♦

— William Norwood



Subscribe to The Falcon's weekly newsletter at eepurl.com/gYSX55



Photo by ATREY DESAI

Career Counseling | A group of juniors listen attentively as a parent volunteer describes the process of going through dental school during the Career Fair held in the large gym on March 22 during tutorial.

Students explore various career options during school-hosted Career Fair

by AnamikaAnand

As college applications end for seniors and loom ahead for juniors, the pressure on upperclassmen to decide on a major and ultimately a career increases.

To help with the process, the school recently held a career fair directed mainly at juniors and seniors, but open to all students, College and Career counselor Brad Ward said.

There have been other careers fairs at the school hosted in past years that involved the whole school, with presentations held in all classrooms in a single day.

This year's event was a scaled down version: It took place on March 22 during tutorial in the gym, and was attended by roughly 80 students with around 25 invited volunteer speakers.

The event replicated career fairs that happen in colleges, which can have hundreds of businesses pitching themselves, but was reduced to a high school scale.

Parents who are professionals in their field volunteered to present information and answer questions about their careers for students.

These parent volunteers presented various career paths, including law, accounting, STEM, information technology, sales, professional sports, UX design, cyber security, software engineering, dental studies, medicine, nursing, psychology.

Additionally, Silicon Valley Tech Education and representatives from the Marines also appeared at the event.

Ward strongly encouraged students to attend the fair, especially because she said it could make their future choices easier.

She encouraged students to ask questions like what the presenters'



Ward

typical day in their career looks like, advice on course choices or what skills they should work on.

Coming out of the event, students gained information on various career choices after speaking to the volunteers.

Ta asked questions such as what the professionals do in their day-to-day jobs.

There were multiple people at the sales booth, each with their respective specialties in the business field.

This variety was something Ta found useful in regard to helping her pick a specific major in the future.

"Even though there were two or three people at one table, their jobs were so different, and that was really helpful because business is such a broad field," she said. "I didn't realize how much diversity there could be in some day-to-day jobs."

Though the goal for students was to investigate a major for college, Ward pointed out that they still have a lot of time to pick a career.

She herself did not get into college counseling until her 30s, leading her to emphasize that students should maintain an open mind to the broad variety of available careers.

"I always wanted to go into biology, but this gave me more of a concrete plan and more options for what I can do later," Ahuja said. "There's actually so much you can do as a bio major."

After the career fair, Ahuja said she sees various possibilities of what her career could be: nursing, clinical research or even psychiatry.

Junior Emily Ta also had a similar experience. She went into the fair with a focus on careers that were either business or mathematics related, and she said she spent the most time at the accounting and sales tables hearing from the representatives.

At the accounting table, she

"I didn't realize how much diversity there could be in day-to-day jobs."

JUNIOR Emily Ta

"There's a different timeline for everybody," Ward said. "I think there's a lot of pressure to figure out what your career is going to be, and I'm trying to kind of reduce that pressure and say you have a lot of time to figure it out." ♦

AIME — compared to around 30 to 40 in the last few years.

AIME

Like past years, dozens of students participated in STEM contests hosted by the school's clubs, with some qualifying for prestigious Olympiad rounds.

The school's math club hosted the American Mathematics Competitions (AMC 10/12) in mid-November; qualifiers then took the American Invitational Mathematics Exam (AIME) on Feb. 7. Science club also hosted the preliminary USA Biology Olympiad (USABO) online open exam on Feb. 2 and the F=ma physics exam on Feb. 9.

Results for many of these competitions were released in early March. Of the 50 students who qualified for AIME from the AMC 10/12, 11 were invited to take the USA Junior Mathematics Olympiad (USAJMO) or USA Mathematics Olympiad (USAMO) near the end of March. Six students qualified for the USA Physics Olympiad (USAPhO) from F=ma, and seven qualified for USABO semifinals.

Registration for the U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad (USNCO) local round is ongoing; as of March 6, there are six signups out of 32 available spots. The test was originally scheduled to be held March 28, but then temporarily canceled after problems were leaked. It has since been rescheduled, to be held four days later on April 1 from 1 to 3 p.m. in chemistry teacher Janny Cahatal's room.

Cutoffs for the next round, the USA(J)MO, were released on March 9. Of the 50 students who took AIME, six students — Redwood Middle eighth-graders Andy Lu and Vivian Zhong, freshman Lawson Wang and sophomores Ishani Agarwal, Alan Lu and Skyler Mao — qualified through the AMC 10 to take the USA(J)MO. In addition, five upperclassmen — juniors Avadhanam, Victoria Hu and Nikhil Mathihalli and seniors Nilay Mishra and Anthony Wang — were invited to take the USAMO, out of around 500 students total nationwide.

The exam is a proof contest and was administered March 21 to 22, consisting of six problems to be solved across two days. Students who perform exceptionally well have the opportunity to attend the nation's summer training camp, which then selects and trains a team to represent the U.S. in the International Biology Olympiad in July.

Another 33 students signed up to take F=ma, a 75-minute multiple choice exam focusing on algebra-based mechanics held and proctored by physics teacher Matthew Welander in his room.

The top 400 students across the country were then invited to take USAPhO, a 3-hour free response test that will be hosted on April 4, covering all introductory physics topics such as electricity and magnetism in addition to mechanics.



A-team members senior Adam Xu, senior Nilay Mishra, junior Advaith Avadhanam and senior Anthony Wang listen attentively as the round's questions are being read by the proctor.

With its younger members, the B-team struggled with traditional gameplay concepts in their first in-person Science Bowl.

The pandemic eliminated the opportunity to play against other teams and have buzzer-races to answer questions — teams had a fair chance to answer every question without the opportunity to interrupt.

In fact, this was the first time the tournament was held in person since February 2020.

Although next year's team will suffer the loss of three seniors to graduation, Nakamatsu hopes that the possibility of attracting new potential Science Bowl players along with the talented younger members already on the B-team will bring future success.

"We've got good momentum going," Nakamatsu said. "It would be great if this continues next year." ♦

Students achieve success in science and math contests, qualifying to invitationals

International Mathematics Olympiad.

High achievers shine in science exams

For the science exams, registration has remained consistent with past years, according to senior science club vice president Isha Goswami. Nineteen students signed up for the USABO Online Open Exam, which was proctored by biology teacher Cheryl Lenz on Feb. 2 in her room. Students logged into the Art of Problem Solving (AoPS) site to access the fast paced 50 minute multiple choice exam.

"It's nice to see how well Saratoga does," he said. "AIME only takes around 5,000 kids annually, so our one high school gets 1% of representation."

Scores for the AMC and AIME contests came out earlier than usual due to this year's new online portal, which allowed local con-

test managers — assistant principal Matt Torrens for AMC and guidance department chair Brian Safine for AIME — to scan students' Scantrons and automatically grade their answers online. In past years, Scantrons were mailed in.

While Avadhanam noted that it was somewhat of a logistical hassle to help set up the system and chase down individual students for online registration and payments, he feels that the instant grading is a net positive.

"This was a completely new system that's a lot more localized and requires area coordinators to take more individual responsibility," he said. "It was a little bit more logically complicated to implement and there was definitely a learning curve to figure it out. But we got the job done."

Cutoffs for the next round, the USA(J)MO, were released on March 9. Of the 50 students who took AIME, six students — Redwood Middle eighth-graders Andy Lu and Vivian Zhong, freshman Lawson Wang and sophomores Ishani Agarwal, Alan Lu and Skyler Mao — qualified through the AMC 10 to take the USA(J)MO. In addition, five upperclassmen — juniors Avadhanam, Victoria Hu and Nikhil Mathihalli and seniors Nilay Mishra and Anthony Wang — were invited to take the USAMO, out of around 500 students total nationwide.

After taking this 2-hour exam, if they place within the top 20 finalists across the entire country, they will have the chance to attend the biology summer training program and compete for one of four spots representing the U.S. at the International Biology Olympiad in July.

Another 33 students signed up to take F=ma, a 75-minute multiple choice exam focusing on algebra-based mechanics held and proctored by physics teacher Matthew Welander in his room.

The top 400 students across the country were then invited to take USAPhO, a 3-hour free response test that will be hosted on April 4, covering all introductory physics topics such as electricity and magnetism in addition to mechanics.

"I think it's really cool that Saratoga offers these tests. It motivates people to learn more about subjects."

SENIOR Isha Goswami

"I'm really proud and thankful that I qualified for USAPhO," Ravi said. "I was pleasantly surprised, given that the cutoff [of 18/25] was relatively high this year."

Ravi began learning the concepts and topics needed for F=ma during winter break, and sat down to seriously prepare around two weeks before the exam date. She said she feels extremely grateful for her father, who spent a minimum of 3 hours daily

after work to help pick out problems from scores of textbooks and work with her through difficult topics. She re-

calls how she studied for 6 hours straight two days before the test, only stopping for a quick coffee run with her dad.

Now, she is studying for USAPhO in the remaining month before the test. She hopes to understand what topics are behind the problems in USAPhO and looks forward to seeing what areas of physics the test writers can merge in the questions.

"Looking back, [preparing for F=ma] was a really fun experience, even though I doubted myself every step of the way," Ravi said. "I'm looking forward to taking USAPhO and my goal is to just have fun with the questions." ♦

"Of course, we will continue practicing, we will continue studying and we will hopefully win."

SENIOR Advaith Avadhanam

This year's B-team consisted of juniors Nikhil Mathihalli and Levana Lai as well as freshmen Arjun Krish, Quinn Gifford and Nolan Woo. They placed fourth in their division, ending with a record of 3-3 while losing to Lynbrook, Harker and Gunn.

With its younger members, the B-team struggled with traditional gameplay concepts in their first in-person Science Bowl.

The pandemic eliminated the opportunity to play against other teams and have buzzer-races to answer questions — teams had a fair chance to answer every question without the opportunity to interrupt.

In fact, this was the first time the tournament was held in person since February 2020.

Although next year's team will suffer the loss of three seniors to graduation, Nakamatsu hopes that the possibility of attracting new potential Science Bowl players along with the talented younger members already on the B-team will bring future success.

"We've got good momentum going," Nakamatsu said. "It would be great if this continues next year." ♦

PROM

continued from pg. 1

Choosing a venue was one of the most difficult aspects of the planning process due to cost, capacity and location constraints. The class officers examined several venues before landing on the Boardwalk.

"Our venue is really beautiful," Tan said. "It's somewhat made of glass and overlooks the water and the beach. And it fits the theme well too."

Because the venue is so close to the beach, activities director Kristen Cunningham expressed some concern with student safety. She hopes students will abide by restrictions about not leaving the Boardwalk area and venturing to the beach or other nearby locations.

Aside from this potential challenge, Cunningham is optimistic about prom. So far, the organization has been smooth, with minimal communication issues and big improvements from last year.

Choosing a venue was one of the most difficult aspects of the planning process due to cost.

Attendee superlatives are a new addition to the event. Students will be able to vote for two of their peers in each category: Best Dressed, Best Duo, Best Hair, Best Moves and Best Asking.

"Our school doesn't do prom king and queen, so we thought this would be a fun addition," Tan said.

Another deviation from previous years is the elimination of the Prom Dress Page, where students would show off their dresses. Administrators were opposed to creating a school-affiliated page because they were concerned that it promotes toxicity among girls.

The class officers split up the preparation among themselves, with each handling a certain aspect, such as communication with the venue, booking the DJ and coordinating with a decorator.

Working with the junior class office has been a pleasant experience for Tan. She feels that organizing the prom has helped create a stronger bond between the upperclassmen.

"They're super fun to work with," she said. "And they're really good at providing insight without being over-powering," she said.

After fundraising for four years with the ultimate goal of planning senior prom, Tan feels pressured but excited to pull off an unforgettable night.

"We really want to make this prom memorable, especially since we're with the Class of '24," she said. "But I'll be happy as long as I know people are having fun." ♦



Junior violinist Tejas Tirthapura and senior violinist Shannon Ma, both pictured here with their instruments, were selected to tour with the prestigious National Youth Orchestra for the United States during the 2023 summer. Both students went through an intense application process with a less than 10% acceptance rate to be a part of this 800 member youth orchestra.

Courtesy of TEJAS TIRTHAPURA and SHANNON MA

Junior and senior selected to tour with National Youth Orchestra

BY AnikaKapasi & DivyaVadlakonda

College and span over the course of two weeks, involving sectionals, full orchestra rehearsals and several workshops.

The orchestra will play four pieces: Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique," a new work by Valeria Coleman commissioned for NYO-USA's 10th anniversary, Barber's violin concerto with Gil Shaham and Tchaikovsky's violin concerto with Hillary Hahn.

That's why when junior violinist Tejas Tirthapura found out he had been accepted in early February, he was filled with disbelief.

"When results came out, I found out I had gotten in when [one of my friends] posted about [their acceptance] on Instagram," Tirthapura said.

I didn't even see [the acceptance] in my email until then and I immediately told my parents."

The tour will close out with the orchestra playing at the Rady Shell at Jacobs Park in San Diego on July 28.

"NYO will [give me the opportunity] to get to know the top orchestral professional musicians," Tirthapura said.

"I think [the program] is a great step to doing something [similar to] this in the future, like playing in a professional orchestra."

Organized by Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute, NYO-USA is a program that brings together the "brightest young players from across the country" to "embark on a tour to some of the great music capitals of the world."

After his family, the first people Tirthapura told were music teacher Michael Boitz and senior violinist Shannon Ma.

Ma had helped Tirthapura with the application, as she was accepted into the orchestra last summer and this year as well.

The youth orchestra will be touring North America this summer with two celebrated orchestral violinists: Hillary Hahn and Gil Shaham.

"We're playing with the best conductors that anyone could ever play with," Tirthapura said.

For the video essay, Tirthapura wrote how he wanted to travel to New Orleans and try the beignets at Cafe Du Monde.

"I love food, so in the video, I talked about how I used to bake and cook when I was younger," Tirthapura said.

"I don't think they are looking for somebody who is the best writer or has the most interesting story, [rather NYO] wants

someone who they believe will be a good, well-rounded person."

Ma used a different video essay prompt and talked about what she enjoyed doing outside of music, including clips of her dancing and discussing how she loved to write.

For the written essay, she wrote about her passion for orchestral playing, and utilized her past experience touring with them the previous summer.

"The thing I love most about music is how even though playing solos are great, playing in an orchestra is where you find your community and become a better person as well as a musician because of the energy that an orchestra brings to you," Ma said.

However, touring with NYO over the 2022 summer did not influence Ma's acceptance in the following year.

The members are chosen through a "blind audition" process, ensuring an ideal group of musicians for their tours without taking into account previous experience.

"When I heard that [this year] was a North American tour, I originally thought it would not be as exciting as the [2022 summer Europe tour]," Ma said.

"But after they told us the venues that we're going to perform, I know that it won't disappoint."

Although Ma acknowledged that the acceptance looks appealing on college applications, she gained a significantly different perspective after attending the program last year, stating that the wealth of knowledge and relationships that she gained through the experience was invaluable.

"I had to say the one thing that makes the experience really worthwhile, it would be the people," Ma said. "It's not just getting to play in an [nationally-recognized] orchestra, it's meeting people from all over the country who are just as good at their instrument that you're going to be endlessly inspired." ♦

Dance team takes home back-to-back trophy without coach

BY MinsuiTang

The dance team recently placed 3rd in Large Pom and 6th in Large Jazz division in the open category during the annual Nationals competition in Anaheim.

The team of 15 girls flew to Anaheim on March 16, competed in small lyrical competitions the next day and competed in the rest of the dances, including large pom, large jazz and medium and small hip hop on March 18.

Similar to last year, the team took on this competition without a coach. Two months prior to Nationals, Namaad Jackson, dance

team's newly hired coach starting April 2022, stepped down and was never replaced. In response, the captains had to increase the rigor of their practice schedules, including having more frequent Saturday practices, typically from 8 a.m. to noon, to run through and clean up competition dances.

Senior captain Risha Desai thanked her fellow captains — seniors Avani Gupta and Kiana Compeau — and their "strong leadership" that had helped keep the dance team together in their coach's absence.

After wrapping up their final competitions, the dance team enjoyed an entire day in Disneyland and concluded their day with the entire team going on the "Guardians of the Galaxy: Mission Breakout" ride.

Although their competition season has officially ended, dance team will continue to

perform until the end of the school year for the upcoming rallies on April 7 and May 18. On their own, Compeau, Desai and Gupta have already choreographed for both days.

Despite going into the competition season without a coach, the dance team still had little issue developing and strengthening their friendship with one another.

Due to the constant change in leadership throughout the years, our team has never felt a sense of stability," she said. "But we still overcame our adversities by working together to become the best team we can despite the circumstances. And I have full faith we will continue to thrive in the future." ♦

Green Committee encourages recycling by running drive for used SHS merchandise

BY DivyaVadlakonda

The Green Committee, an initiative separate from the club known as Green Team, announced a merchandise drive on Jan. 4 via Instagram to collect gently used school merchandise to wash and resell at school events. Currently, the committee set up a white bin outside the Activities Office to collect apparel such as sweats, hoodies, shorts, T-shirts and hats, aiming to raise money for new trash cans and sorting bins around campus.

"By recycling and reusing apparel, we are shining a light on the issue of fast fashion while keeping items out of the landfill," par-

ent and Green Committee adviser Ilaria Keogh said. "If you go to local thrift stores such as Goodwill and Savers, you will find many [Saratoga High] items, most of which will, unfortunately, end up unsold and discarded."

After seeing similar programs re-selling merchandise at her kids' old schools, Keogh suggested the idea to implement the same program at the school.

The committee's goal is to integrate the drive into the school's culture by making it an ongoing initiative. Thus, when students want to get rid of a

team hoodie they only used for a year, they can drop it off at school instead of at Goodwill or trashing the item. They plan to spread the word through Friday Newsletters, announcements, digital displays and social media.

Though the committee was not able to contact alumni who were home for the holidays during winter break, they are planning to reach out with the help of ASB on Instagram during the next few breaks.

So far, the drive has collected roughly 30 pieces of merchandise. They started selling during Electives Night on

er and decided how we can bring students back."

"Connecting with my leadership class is one of my favorite memories."

TEACHER Kristen Cunningham

She said her favorite project she saw through was her very first event at the school, the Falcon Food Truck Fest in 2021.

She remembered how special it was to see the Homecoming reveal come together

Jan. 30. Keogh thinks that turnout has been substantial, saying that she expects to have a "small but steady trickle in" as more students hear about the initiative.

In the future, the committee plans to hold more drives geared at thrifting, such as clothing and book drives, in order to minimize the school's contribution to fast fashion and waste. They also plan to have an e-waste collection and yard sale.

"By initiating these projects, like pushing for the passing of green policies such as reusability, we can further promote our message," said senior Carolyn Pyun, the group's chairwoman. ♦

Activities director to leave current position for administrative role at new district next year

BY AllisonTan

Prior to her hiring at Saratoga High in 2021, Cunningham worked at Student Support Services at Valley Christian High School.

Joining the staff amid a pandemic was a unique experience that brought her closer to her colleagues and students, Cunningham said.

She had taken on activities director when the position opened after Matthew Torren's transition from leadership teacher to assistant principal.

Cunningham said she is excited to return to a middle school campus, as most of her educational career has been with middle schoolers.

Keys granted leave of absence for next year

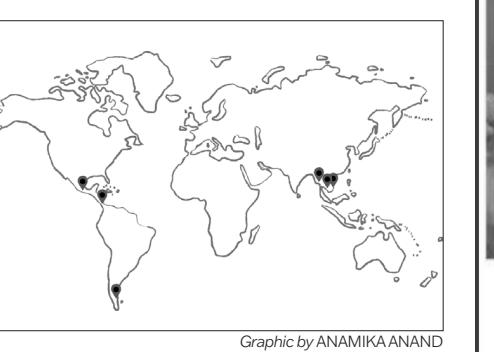
BY KavyaPatel

Because English teacher Amy Keys' husband, sociology professor Steve McKay, is taking a long-delayed sabbatical from his teaching duties at UC Santa Cruz, she is taking a leave for the '23-'24 school year and plans on returning the following year.

"[College professors] are allowed to take a sabbatical every 7 years to conduct research, and then write it up in public," Keys said. "He's never taken a sabbatical because our kids have always been around, so now that we both can, we thought it was the perfect time to take a small break."

"I'm excited for this new adventure and to learn more about so many different cultures."

ENGLISH TEACHER Amy Keys



Graphic by ANAMIKANANAND

The countries that Amy Keys plans to travel to.

ready have a teaching credential for German and English, and I know Indonesian because I lived in Indonesia for a while."

For the first semester, McKay and Keys will be staying in South America, but when second semester starts, they will be visiting several Southeast Asian countries: Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam.

"We're going to be staying in Vietnam for the longest, because I am a fan of many Vietnamese and Vietnamese American literature and writers," she said.

To learn more about the stories behind her favorite writers, like Viet Thanh Nguyen, Keys wants to visit the places she's read about in novels, as well as significant sites from the Vietnam War. At the same time, her husband will be conducting more research about masculinity, labor and identity, with a university connection in Thailand.

"I'm excited for this new adventure and to learn more about so many different cultures," she said.

Next year, another English teacher will have to teach the English 11 Honors classes Keys has taught since 2012, but Creative Writing will not be offered because of a lack of signups. ♦

College Application Essay Assistance

- Harvard Graduate & PhD
- Former College Teacher
- 25+ Years' Experience
- Dozens of Five-Star Reviews
- Local to Silicon Valley
- Convenient Online Meetings
- Weekend/Eve Times Available
- Friendly, Caring, Confidential
- 精通華語

For FREE Informational PDF, Email: danielkberman@alumni.harvard.edu with Saratoga Falcon in Subject Line

Drama leaps into preparing for 'Mamma Mia!'

by AnamikaAnand, LenaAribi
& DivyaVadlakonda

As the lights dim and the stage lights up, the drama program will fall into the story of "Mamma Mia!", a heartfelt tale about a mother and daughter duo, Donna and Sophie, whose relationship is tested when Sophie invites three men who she thinks could be her father to her wedding.

Last summer, junior Ashly Henry suggested "Mamma Mia!" as a possible spring musical, which struck up many positive responses and was later approved by a drama board of upperclassmen and drama manager Benjamin Brotzman.

The show will have the two casts switching roles every show; performances will take place on April 28 and May 5 at 7 p.m. and April 30 and May 6 at 2 p.m.

One cast consists of senior Joanna Bejar as Donna, sophomore Diya Iyer as Sophie, senior Allison Tan as Tanya, senior Amrita Gopal as Rosie, senior Dustin Peng as Sam, senior Irene Fraizer as Harry, freshman Nila Venkataraman as Bill and freshman Beni Mercurio as Sky.

"Everybody's pushing themselves really hard to be the best they can."

SENIOR Joanna Bejar

A second cast consists of sophomore Niraali Garg as Donna, senior Anastasia Ramirez as Sophie, junior Ashly Henry as

Tanya, senior Ananya Gupta as Rosie, senior Uma Phalke as Sam, freshman Ben Davies as Harry, sophomore Kat Aldrete as Bill and senior Olivia Smith as Sky.

Throughout all the shows, the cast members will be alternating between playing their parts and being in the ensemble. In other words, cast members have to learn the show twice — the ensemble part and their own lines as major parts, Bejar said.

"Everybody's pushing themselves really hard to be the best they can," Bejar said. "It's a lot of hard work, but it's also fun and it definitely pays off."

There are 27 songs total in the musical and as the lead role of Donna, Bejar will be singing a large handful of them, including solos, duets, trios and ensemble songs. Bejar mostly runs her songs at home, listening to recordings and practicing them over to

perfect notes that are difficult to hit, so that she can be comfortable singing on stage. Due to most of the soundtrack consisting of ABBA songs, Bejar has found it easier to memorize the songs as she has heard them before. The musical accompaniment has not been finalized, however, Brotzman is currently looking for enough members to form a pit orchestra. As for lines, Bejar described the environment of group practices as energetic and fun, overall motivating everyone to keep getting better.

Reflecting on the success of other high schools in the Bay Area like Prospect High after performing "Mamma Mia!", Henry said she anticipates that the SHS shows will be sold out as well.

"All these people are learning these new skills and putting in effort to do new things they've never done before," Bejar said. ♦

Robotics team seeds ninth and outreach lead wins

by BeverlyXu

MSET Robotics team was eliminated in the third round of playoffs by just one point at the San Francisco Regional held from March 16-19, falling short of qualifying for their goal of the world competition. They were seeded 9th heading into competitive rounds.

Junior outreach lead Cameron Nguyen was also nominated as Dean's List Finalist, an award for leadership in both community outreach and technical subsystems.

Forty-two teams competed in the tournament, and only five advanced to worlds, three through robot games and two through outreach initiatives.

Since January, the 60-member team has been working on their robot in preparation for this first competition. Within the allotted 10 weeks, the team designed, prototyped, manufactured, programmed, wired and tested their robot. However, the team was met with a tough schedule: An abnormally high number of adult mentors were unavailable, leading to a backlogging of the robot parts that needed to be manufactured and pushing back the robot assembly,

electronics wiring and software testing.

"We did the basic wiring over about a week, but because everything was on a time crunch due to delayed manufacturing and a lot of pressure from software to finish, we were limited on working hours," sophomore electronics member Sameera Kapur said.

Nevertheless, the electronics team was able to finish and hand the robot off to the software team which rushed to test autonomous actions, driving and other essential robot functionalities.

In competition, the team encountered their fair share of problems, primarily on Friday, the day of their practice matches. The robot aims to pick up cube and cone pieces to place on heightened platforms on the field. However, starting with an unusually slow drivebase and unexpected difficulty picking up scoring elements, the team had to clamber to make all the necessary code changes. In-match, the claw, the mechanism used to pick up game pieces, was damaged — but in a dramatic improvement from last year's season, the hardware and electronics subsystems remained relatively robust.

This is a disappointment in comparison to last year, where

"This year, we focused on optimizing each part for strength while keeping it low weight, such as our long arm tubes, which were partially-pocked [a process in which metal is removed to form a depression] to keep strength whilst cutting weight in the process, and prioritized mechanisms that would not need to extend outside the bumpers," hardware lead junior Naved Kasnavi said.

In addition, the hardware team designed their mechanisms to be easily replaceable to make fixes simpler. Each mechanism can be taken off the robot simply by removing a few well-placed, easily-accessible screws.

In the end, despite the team's efforts, they were eliminated in the third round of playoffs and failed to win any other awards that would have also qualified them for the World Championships. Nguyen, on the other hand, was individually recognized and will be entered as Dean's List Finalist against other regional finalists at the Silicon Valley Regional in San Jose from April 5-8, the team will be improving their robot in all subsystems.

Electronics will be working at replacing WAGO connectors and two LED controllers, hardware



Courtesy of SHEEBA GARG

Throughout the match, the team's robot collected and deposited game pieces from across the field. At the end, it balanced on the charge station.

M-SET qualified for the World's Championship via an outreach award, and former member senior Druthi Palle won Dean's List recipient.

Before their next competition, the Silicon Valley Regional in San Jose from April 5-8, the team will be improving their robot in all subsystems.

"A ground intake and other optimizations will add up and significantly reduce our cycle times," Kasnavi said. "I'm confident that we will rank high at SVR despite the much harder competition." ♦

Electronics will be working at

will be adding an intake that picks up from the ground and raising bumpers and software will improving their autonomous actions, programming the new ground intake and fixing errors in LED display.

"A ground intake and other optimizations will add up and significantly reduce our cycle times," Kasnavi said. "I'm confident that we will rank high at SVR despite the much harder competition." ♦

ALIGNMENT

continued from pg. 1

The groups will present a recommendation to the board from December 2023 to January 2024, with the goal of implementing any new policies by August 2025, in time for the 2025-26 school year.

The new timeline follows the work of the Curriculum Pathways Alignment Work Group, which was convened in late 2021 by former superintendent Michael Grove in order to examine the differences in curriculum pathways between the district's two school sites. When the group presented to the board in November 2021, three members of the former school board voted in favor of graduation requirements alignment, while two members voted for full alignment of all core course pathways. The meeting was contentious, drawing strong opposition from dozens of teachers and parents, and the district ultimately tabled the topic to revisit it at a later date.

With new superintendent Bill Sanderson in charge and the board reshaped in the November election, the district brought back the topic in light of AB 101 and the board's current strategic goals, which include finishing discussions of curriculum alignment. The board expressed some skepticism toward the topic at first during the meeting, a significant departure from the previous board; guidance was clear that any continuing efforts would concern only graduation requirements alignment and not course pathways alignment, in keeping with the

DIFFERENCES IN GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS BETWEEN SHS AND LGHS

	LGHs	SHS
FRESHMAN HISTORY REQUIREMENT	None	One semester of World Geography or Ethnic Studies
FRESHMAN ELECTIVES	Two extra electives	World Geography requirement and Health/Driver's Ed
THE ETHNIC STUDIES COURSE FULFILLS...	No graduation requirement	World Geography requirement

Graphic by SHREYA RALLABANDI

original work group's recommendation. Multiple members asked why the issue was still relevant and why the district should spend its resources working through the issue. While Sanderson said misalignment of graduation requirements is not actually affecting the education value of students at either school site, he attributed the importance of the issue to AB 101 and legal liabilities (a parent could theoretically sue a school site for noncompliance if the district policies are not properly updated, he said).

The board also spent a significant amount of time discussing the future implementation of the state ethnic studies requirement in the district. Assistant superintendent

of curriculum and instruction Deepika Mukherjee explained how the requirement affects the graduation requirements discussion as well: At Saratoga High, the ethnic studies elective satisfies the World Geography graduation requirement, while at Los Gatos High, the ethnic studies class is not required because there is no freshman history requirement.

The graduation requirements at SHS and LGHS are almost identical with the minor exception of freshman history. At SHS, freshmen must take a semester of either World Geography or Ethnic Studies and a semester of Health and Drivers' Education to fulfill their freshman history and health

graduation requirements, while freshmen at LGHS have no such requirements. Because of this, LGHS students are required to take two semesters more worth of electives than SHS students.

Mukherjee stated that the current one-semester ethnic studies class at both schools is not the only way the district can satisfy the state's requirement.

Other options she noted included incorporating ethnic studies content into English curriculums and creating a year-long class — the only restriction is that the ethnic studies content must be the "primary" content of the course for at least a semester, according to state rules.

The board directed the district to consult staff and the community in the upcoming work groups to discern the best option for the community.

Mukherjee emphasized that the district wants to involve staff and community stakeholders as much as possible throughout the graduation requirements alignment and ethnic studies process in order to make sure they are following the best options. She added it is vital staff are excited about the changes and that neither ethnic studies nor graduation requirements alignment becomes a burden on staff.

"I want our teachers to be excited about this opportunity, and not just look at it as 'how is this going to disrupt what we already have,'" she said. "I think we have the beginnings and potential for more exciting work forward in many ways, if we can get folks excited." ♦

FOURTH PERIOD

STAFF POLICY

The Saratoga Falcon is published 9 times every school year by the Advanced Journalism classes of Saratoga High School, 20300 Herriman Ave., Saratoga, CA 95070. The views expressed in The Saratoga Falcon are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the administration, faculty or school district.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Saratoga Falcon welcomes all signed letters of opinion, which are subject to editing for length, accuracy and grammar. Please send them to avani.kongetira@saratogafalcon.org and nilay.mishra@saratogafalcon.org. For ad information, email @anika.kapasi@saratogafalcon.org.

Editors-in-Chief
Nidhi Mathihalli
Shaan Sridhar

Associate Editor
Stephanie Sun

News Editor
Atrey Desai

Opinion Editors
Avani Kongetira
Nilay Mishra

Sports Editors
Nikhil Mathihalli
Howard Shu

Lifestyles Editors
Annie Liu
Minsu Tang

Entertainment Editors
Kavya Patel
Jonathan Si

In-Depth Editors
Tara Natarajan
Sarah Thomas

School Scope Editors
Victoria Hu
Sarah Zhou

Backpage Editor
Zach Zinman

Head Copy Editors
Mitchell Chen
Anthony Wang
Beverly Xu

Social Managers
Lena Aribi
Shreya Rallabandi

Web Manager
Vinay Gollamudi

Photography Managers
William Norwood
Allison Tan

Business Manager
Anika Kapasi

Graphics Manager
Anamika Anand

Reporters/Artists
George Hu
Derek Liang
Neal Malhotra
Skyler Mao
Divya Vadlakonda
Kevin Yang
Andy Zhu

Adviser
Mike Tyler

Printed by Folger Graphics
in Hayward, Calif.

The community's collective

Swap private counselors for CCC services

This year, the walls of the school's former community room were plastered with posters of several colleges, following the area's rebrand to the College and Career Center (CCC). The CCC started as a new initiative to help seniors through the increasingly challenging college application process and to introduce high schoolers to new potential careers.

However, just like its location, this program is still underrated and underutilized. And despite the constant barrage of emails, many students have never attended a single college-related session, usually because they view it as simply yet another school initiative, rather than a useful opportunity they should seize.

Simply put, the CCC is the most cost-effective way to perform well in the admissions process, as opposed to paying thousands of dollars to overpriced private counselors. The CCC creates a welcoming environment that humanizes what is, for many, a convoluted process.

Of course, like lemmings going over the cliff, many students will continue to hire private admissions counselors, hoping that such guidance will give them an edge in the college admissions process. Often, the role of such counselors is to help students finalize a college list, finish their essays and supplements on time and provide guidance for picking a final college. The CCC covers each of these bases, rendering a private counselor redundant for students who take advantage of its offerings.

Furthermore, the CCC actively provides students with an environment that is not only engaging and productive, but also humanizing and genuine.

Often, in "pay per hour" or "pay per session" schemes, or during trial runs, counselors give advice that is compromised by conflicts of interest. If the counselors are able to convince students that they are inadequate or won't be able to handle the admissions process alone, then they could potentially convince the student to sign up for more hours or sessions. In contrast, because the CCC is free to use, it can open students' minds to appropriate schools that are not so highly ranked, and even destigmatize community college — something that private counselors struggle in due to fear of losing their reputation.

In addition, the CCC has resources extending beyond college admissions, giving students insights into nontraditional paths after high school. While most students here elect to pursue a 4-year college, the CCC works with those thinking about nontraditional paths such as entering the workforce early or joining the military. As many students have not yet been exposed to options like these or are struggling to find competent resources to help them, the CCC is a great place to start.

Ultimately, regardless of what the CCC is used for, students should give the new initiative at least one try before diving straight into costly private services. While this was its first year of full-fledged operation, it is students themselves who must take full advantage of the CCC's range of vital services. ♦

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editors-in-Chief
Nidhi Mathihalli
Shaan Sridhar
Opinion Editors
Avani Kongetira
Nilay Mishra
Writer
Nilay Mishra

The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 17-15 in favor of this article.

criticisms of the previous board — "this school board doesn't care about its stakeholders," read the previous editorial — were addressed by the voters, and quite pointedly fixed.

We're also looking at a completely new district administration. Almost every level of leadership at the district level brings fresh eyes and a wealth of experience to their positions.

But this time, I predict it's not going to be so fiery. When the Curriculum Alignment Work Group was convened and ended in November 2021, the community was asked to explore a topic that seemed both unnecessary and insensitive given the lingering effects of COVID-19 and the crisis students and staff were still in. But now, there is a reason for aligning graduation requirements and the board and district are right to revive the conversation.

In fact, they should push it a step further.

The previous work group was a blatant disaster, one of many within a short period of time — so much so that the Falcon published a vote of no confidence in the school board. But things have changed; most notably, the board is not the same at all: Two former teachers and a current parent joined two sitting members and replaced two former parents.

In truth, the differences in graduation requirements and ethnic studies, and multiple board members made it clear they didn't want the district reopening the pandora's box of curriculum pathways alignment or, even more controversially, alignment of course pathways and frameworks. I think it's fair to trust the district leaders at their word.

Affirmative action fundamentally misunderstood

by Anthony Wang

In 2018, court documents filed in the case Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) v. Harvard alleged that Harvard University officials lowered their internal personality scores for Asian American applicants in an effort to reduce Asian American enrollment in its undergraduate class.

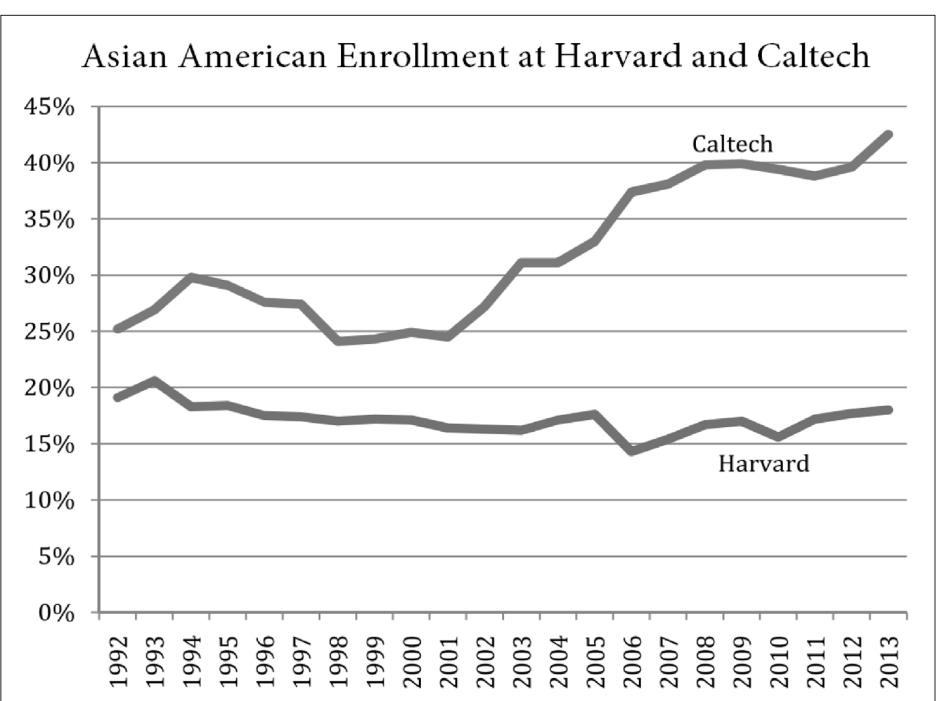
The court case, filed in an attempt to combat race-based affirmative action, will be decided by the Supreme Court later this year, perhaps reversing decades of precedent.

Canonical opposition of affirmative action points to unfair practices like those of Harvard aiming to show the so-called "positive discrimination" actually leads to unnecessary inequity against qualified applicants. Other arguments claim that the problems affirmative action tackles can be solved more effectively by boosting socioeconomically disadvantaged students instead.

But this stance misses the true goal of affirmative action for elite schools like Harvard: Not to form a truly holistic and ultimately meritocratic system where the most deserving gain admission, but rather to produce a carefully calibrated student body to uphold their public image and money-making business.

For example, the original complaint by SFFA points to differences in Asian American enrollment between Harvard, which takes race into account in admissions, and the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), which does not.

Harvard's percentage of Asian American enrollment stayed flat, while Caltech's



dramatically increased between 2000 and 2010, purportedly proving that Harvard's use of race-based affirmative action causes it to deviate from the (implied) "ideal" in which students are selected based on academic merit alone. Regardless of whether these differences positively or negatively reflect on Harvard's admissions process, they demonstrate that Harvard takes extreme care to have a precise racial makeup for its class, in contrast to Caltech.

In a similar way, Harvard has come under fire for its practice of legacy admissions, in which the relatives of alumni, especially well-heeled donors, are more likely to be accepted. Maybe.

But ultimately it does not matter because Harvard believes that delicately balancing its undergraduate class and advertising itself as a bastion of "diversity and inclusion" help secure its place as an elite Ivy League institution.

In a similar way, Harvard has come under fire for its practice of legacy admissions, in which the relatives of alumni, especially well-heeled donors, are more likely to be accepted. ◆

The original complaint by SFFA alleges that Harvard uses a special admissions list called the "Z-list," from which around 20 to 50 students are selected each year, to admit overwhelmingly white, legacy, wealthy and academically worse applicants.

However, regardless of whether Harvard actually cares to help those who are less fortunate by giving them financial need-based admissions boosts, rewarding the alumni who donate to Harvard actively encourages other wealthy individuals to give money as well.

As a result, Harvard's actions say that the school is willing to admit a few dozen less deserving individuals if it means that they will continue to receive large donations. In other words, Harvard puts its success as a business above other factors.

Thus, arguments, like those in the Supreme Court case, that treat affirmative action as a purely ethical issue on the best way to combat the past abuses of discrimination ignore the root cause of the issue: The fact that schools like Harvard are incentivized to make a profit. Actually "fixing" affirmative action, then, requires a dramatic shift in how private colleges are viewed, away from selling a certain education (and its corresponding degree) for a price and toward preparing all people for the world.

But this is a cultural rather than a legal shift — perspectives must change before laws can. Before then, attempts to fix the consequences rather than the causes of affirmative action, even those handed down by the Supreme Court, will be much ado about nothing. ◆

College Board cracks under the pressure of GOP-led attacks

by William Norwood
& Sarah Thomas

In the recently released new course framework of AP African American Studies, topics about the queer Black experience and radical Black activists were removed largely because of right-wing political pressure.

Removing aspects of history to appeal to the political interests of others is a form of historical revisionism, which is sadly becoming more common within College Board and in American society in general.

College Board currently offers four history courses: AP United States History, AP European History, AP Art History and AP World History, with the recent proposed addition of AP African American Studies.

Not surprisingly, the course caused major controversy in Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis' Florida, and as a result, Florida's Department of Education rejected the course, citing a lack of educational and historical value. The course was then altered to fit standards set by its opponents.

College Board's goal is to make money rather than focus on the betterment of truthful, equitable education.

Why is a "not-for-profit organization" involved in political agendas to the extent that it is willing to revise and censor its own courses? And why are students' educations, supposedly handled by a neutral third-party organization, beginning to reflect biases from the G.O.P. radicals like DeSantis?

The reason for this sellout is quite simple: money.

College Board's goal is to make money rather than focus on the betterment of truthful, equitable education. Although the organization is registered as a 501c non-profit with the IRS, the organization's CEO made \$2.1 million in 2020. In 2019, the entire organization had a revenue of \$1.1 billion while still continuing to claim to be a "not-for-profit organization."

College Board also holds a monopoly



over most standard testing within the U.S. and has continued to alter its courses to be accepted by conservative audiences and other right-leaning detractors. Through its actions, it has become complicit in fitting the narrative that conservative policymakers hope to broadcast for political points, rather than broadcasting the truth behind history.

These detractors have listed various reasons for disapproving of progressive history courses. For instance, Florida asserted that AP African American Studies was "a vehicle for a political agenda" and said it would block schools from adopting the course unless "problematic" topics like Black queer studies, intersectionality and radical Black activists were removed.

State officials also took specific issues with the possibility of the course covering Black Lives Matter, the reparations movement and Critical Race Theory (CRT), which have since been removed from the course.

The history of Black Americans is vital and is under-taught in high schools nationwide. The College Board engaging in conflicts of interest with lawmakers only exacerbates this problem. The decision to change the course content is deplorable, and raises questions of whether College Board censored its own material just for simple monetary gain.

The history of Black Americans is vital and is under-taught in high schools nationwide.

This issue isn't exclusive to this singular course. As ethnic studies courses and others centered around the history of marginalized groups begin to be incorporated into high schools throughout the nation, it's important to prioritize truth over profit. Education should never be about making the most money, especially if a person is forced to sacrifice integrity in the process — and College Board should be held accountable. ◆

Wellesley college should listen to students and staff and change their outdated gender policy

by Beverly Xu

On March 14, more than a third of Wellesley College students, traditionally all-female school, voted on the Gender Inclusivity Ballot Question. It asked whether students supported decreasing the school's use of gendered language and opening admissions up to transgender men.

Ninety percent of students voted in favor, but the results were nothing more than a symbolic show of support for the change. The final decision rests with school officials, who seem to be leaning in the direction of ignoring the will of the student body.

Wellesley should choose to listen to their students' demands and be more inclusive.

In an email response to the initial ballot question, university president Paula Johnson reaffirmed the administration's stance on keeping Wellesley as a women's college, thereby excluding male transgender men and non-binary students in the process. This needs to change.

Wellesley's current gender policy states that applicants must "live as a woman and consistently identify as a woman" to be eligible for acceptance. While this policy does not apply to students who initially identified

as female but later transitioned during their time at Wellesley, the constant use of gendered language at the school disregards this gender-diverse population.

First and foremost, Wellesley needs to listen to its students, alumni and professors to not only ensure that their university is safe and inclusive for all, but also an institution that exists to, as Johnson said herself, "challenge the norms and power structures that too often leave women, and others of marginalized identities, behind."

Cutting down on use of gendered language in university policy and websites, providing gender-neutral bathrooms and recognizing transgender and non-binary alumni will bring Wellesley closer to this goal, as will slowly opening up admission to transgender men and other minority gender applicants who do not consistently identify as women.

As of 2021, more than 1% of Wellesley's student population does not identify as female, and following Johnson's email, some of those students reported increased transphobia, misgendering and alienation. In an interview with The Wellesley News, senior Melina Rowin expressed their reaction to the email.

"After this email I felt betrayed because I wasn't being seen or respected as a trans student who's very active on this campus," Rowin said.

Even before the vote on the ballot question, students, professors and staff alike showed their support for the measure by promoting numerous sit-ins around cam-



pus on March 7. At these protests, students put forth a list of demands, which focused on reducing bias toward transgender and non-binary students, presenting the college in a way that better reflects its student body and overall creating a safer space for students of any gender.

And as a referendum signed by nearly 700 alumni asserts, the best way for Wellesley to move forward in the present political climate — when transgender rights are being threatened by anti-trans bills active in 46 states — is to "fully embrace the trans and non-binary students who have always existed as integral members of the College community."

As an institution that, at its inception, was designed to provide an education and platform to students marginalized and disenfranchised because of their gender, Wellesley should choose to listen to their students' demands and be more inclusive of their transgender, non-binary and LGBTQ+ students. It's time for Wellesley to honor its history and gender diversity, and modernize its once-groundbreaking gender policy. ♦

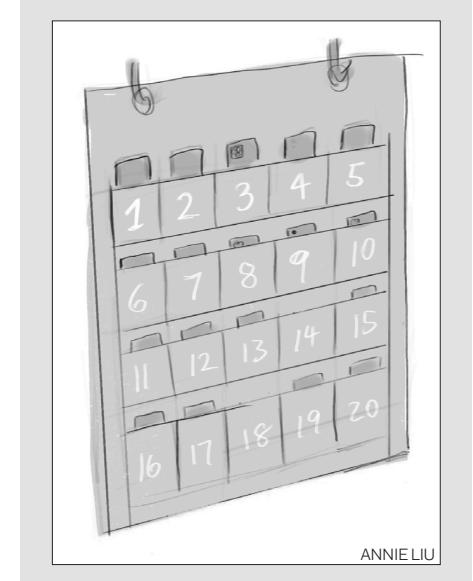
100-word rant: phone policies are pointless

by Divya Vadlakonda

When I step into a classroom, my eyes often land on a dark blue calculator caddy with pockets that fit our cellphones perfectly — I become overwhelmed with a sense of dread.

Though phones can make some students less productive, students should be allowed to take more responsibility for their own learning.

For a school that places so much emphasis on students taking initiative for their own learning and mimicking the rigorous college environment, the restrictions placed on cell phones refute such a notion and have a very middle school vibe. If teachers want to build such an environment, why don't they give students the independence associated with one as well? ◆



At one point, Facebook was so confident their Metaverse would become the next big thing that they changed their name to Meta. Since then, the stock has seen a revolutionary drop from about \$350 per share to \$200 per share. Across the past 1.5 years of work, Meta's Reality Labs has seen great financial losses, as they wasted \$4.28 billion in the last quarter while seeing virtually no progress in terms of development. In total, they've dumped \$36 billion into the project. The Metaverse only made up 2.3% of their earnings despite eating up their profit margin by around 40%.

The Metaverse uses the powers of virtual reality (VR) to display a simulated world for its users. Its goal is to create a VR universe where people can hold meetings, visualize 3-D structures, teach classes and perform aspects of life from the comfort of their home.

Recently Meta launched a flamboyant new advertising series Are We There Yet? in efforts to promote their new product — the Metaverse.

However, customers have come to a general consensus that Meta is far from delivering on their promises. Even now, most of the preset avatars are cartoonish, low resolution and have no working legs. In other words, the Metaverse is a buggy mess.

Furthermore, Meta has still yet to deal with the plethora of problems that await them in the VR world, from cybersecurity issues to phishing and child grooming. By any measure, their product is objectively terrible.

With Facebook's bad reputation for solving security issues, it's hard to see the company putting effort into ensuring online safety in the Metaverse.

In a virtual world, in which predators and other malicious individuals can hide behind an online avatar, the risks for children and other vulnerable groups increase drastically.

Despite having less than 1% of Meta's funding, VRChat has much cleaner movements, graphics and fluidity among its avatars, and is working on improving finger tracking to benefit the sign language community who play their game.

Meta's Metaverse is currently a financial flop

by Aiden Ye

School should enhance its storm response in preparation for future climate-related issues

By Skyler Mao

This winter, California has experienced weeks of heavy rain and high winds. Students carried umbrellas around school, and those who didn't walk into class sopping wet. In fact, the storm on March 29 marks the 13th atmospheric river of the season, a record high number. Trees collapsed across Saratoga and road conditions worsened in these storms. Over 65,000 residents experienced power outages in the Bay Area, and although it did not directly impact classes, the school lost power on March 21.

March is not the first time this has happened — California experienced one of its largest storms in years in January as well, with many areas experiencing days of continued rainfall. The earlier storm caused severe issues across the state, including prevalent power outages that have affected around 120,000 residents. The school also lost power on Jan. 10, and many students and teachers have been impacted by the power outages as well.

Changes in climate and more sporadic weather events forecast more extreme storms to come for California in coming years. As climate change continues to impact the extremity and frequency of storms, reconsidering policies has the potential to yield considerable benefits.

The school's efforts to mitigate the effects of the storm were commendable, with minimal hassles and issues. Despite this, the school should closely consider the possibility of more future storms and try to adapt their response accordingly through increasing student safety and other quality of life improvements.

It is clear that student safety should be the first priority. There have been dozens of deaths and many more injuries across California as a result of the rain. Fortunately, none have occurred nearby, but caution is advised. Having students come to school during power outages and hazardous road conditions can create risks to their safety



Courtesy of GREG LOUIE

A tree fell in the middle of the school's front parking lot on March 14 due to the high winds.

and additional liability for the school.

Thus, in addition to the school cancellation due to power outages, the school should also base such a decision on the severity of the storm conditions outside. If the storm is too intense and road conditions become dangerous (e.g., collapsing trees and mudslides), school should be canceled in order to ensure student and staff safety.

However, some argue that it is safer for students to be at school when there is power rather than be at home without power.

This may apply to some students, but if the school wishes to open during hazardous conditions, over a thousand students or their parents must drive here under dangerous conditions — something that may cause more problems than it prevents.

For example, teachers and students who

live in Santa Cruz County can have a tough time reaching school, as CA-17 becomes very dangerous during storms with mudslides and severe accidents common.

Although there haven't been any student injuries during the recent storms, there have definitely been elevated risks. In the future, this policy reconsideration can greatly benefit student safety.

What should the school do if storms drastically increase when school is in session? Despite severe storms and high winds creating dangers for students, the school appears to have no "lockdown" procedure for weather emergencies.

The school has procedures for earthquakes and fires, so creating a similar procedure for heavy rain and high winds will almost certainly be helpful due to the in-

creasing frequency of storms.

In addition to these procedures, another point to be addressed is student awareness. Many students are not completely sure of plans the school has in place during storms. Although emails containing instructions for these situations are usually sent right before school, students often feel a lack of awareness of what will happen, especially during severe storms.

The school has sent out emails and coordinated efforts, but making the situation more clear would benefit more students. A clear guide on school cancellation policies posted in an accessible web page or emailed to students would be a good first step in addressing this issue.

The school should also improve other minor issues with regard to rain to improve student quality of life. For example, traffic is often an exacerbated issue during rain days.

With honking cars, clogged roads and difficult conditions, students often arrive at school late.

The traffic personnel at school do the best they can to handle this situation, but the dropoff and pickup lines are still chaotic. Thus, putting more people on the duty and devoting more resources to help with traffic would allow for a smoother school day. In addition, some have voiced that the school should be more lenient with tardies to compensate for the tough traffic situation.

Furthermore, the cafeteria is often packed during rainy days. Increased administrative monitoring to limit the chaos would also benefit the student environment. While minor, these improvements to the school could greatly improve the functionality of the school during rain days.

School officials have done a decent job dealing with the rain — they have opened the Student Center, sent out guiding emails and helped deal with chaos.

However, an enhancement of this effort along with a reconsideration of policies would be critical in helping the school deal with possible future storms. ♦

Whoever puts 27' instead of '27 should be rescinded

By Allison Tan

If you commit to a university, surely you would be intelligent enough to know that the apostrophe when addressing a year comes before the year, not after — right? Wrong.

As senior class president (they made me put this), I have been burdened with the agony that comes alongside scrolling past one of my peer's Instagram profiles and seeing yet another [insert college] Class of 27' post. No, you are most definitely not enrolled at Harvard as the graduating class of 27/20.

Call to action: If you see someone's Instagram bio with 27' in reference to their graduating class, please take all necessary measures to screenshot it as evidence of tomfoolery and email the admissions office of their school demanding they be rescinded (Disclaimer: Don't actually do this). ♦

APRIL 1, 2023
1234 APPLE DRIVE
USA
Dear XXX,
We are writing to inform you that the job offer we extended to you on MARCH 20 for your position as a teacher in XYZ SCHOOL.
The decision was made in whole part due to your resume being filled with XYZ'S! We are deeply disappointed in this rookie grammatical mistake, and as a nationally recognized university, we cannot accept students who do not demonstrate basic grammar knowledge.
We wish you the best in your college application process.
Sincerely,
XYZ UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS OFFICE

Graphic by MINSUITANG

To maintain teacher quality, board should ask voters to renew and raise parcel taxes

By William Norwood

Teaching is one of the most important of all professions, providing key developmental factors to society and underpinning the future of future generations.

The career path, especially in a high cost-of-living place like the Bay Area, is falling behind current economic standards and living requirements.

The average starting teacher salary in the U.S. is \$42,397, almost \$8,000 below the average liveable wage — which takes into account basic needs such as food, childcare, healthcare, housing and more — of \$50,249. In the Bay Area, the median income for teachers is much higher at \$79,500, but it's still low in relative comparison to the Bay Area's extreme cost of living.

Average teacher pay in LGSUHSD is higher than the Bay Area average at just over \$100,000.

Justifying the district's current salary because it is high relative to the state and national average is not valid given the higher local costs of the Bay Area. It makes more sense to compare the district to neighboring comparison districts. That means comparing LGSUHSD to districts like Mountain View-Los Altos, Santa Clara and Palo Alto.

The district provides a starting base fix to this issue. Not only would it ease the growing burden of rising housing costs, but it would also ensure that teachers feel supported and stay for the long term — something that is vital to the growth and development of students.

Both the state and district have a responsibility and imperative to support teachers in every way possible — and keep them here for the long term. ♦

University, high teacher retention rates increase student engagement and enthusiasm for learning. Because long-term teachers serve as role models and mentors, consistent teacher turnovers can be discouraging for students and undermine a school's mission.

However, it is impossible for any school district to increase pay without funding. So how can the district afford to pay their teachers a salary that would compete with other top local districts?

The district receives a parcel tax — a tax on each property parcel within the district — of \$49 per parcel within the boundaries of the district. The parcel and other similar taxes are the only way districts like ours can remain competitive in pay and benefits.

This current tax expires in 2025. In order to support and raise teacher pay, it is critical for voters to be able to renew and raise it to at least \$99 per parcel.

This isn't a radical proposal in any way, especially in comparison to the Los Gatos Union School District (LGUSD), which has a tax of \$290 per parcel, and the Palo Alto Unified School District, which has a tax of \$836 per parcel with 2% annual adjustments.

While many veteran teachers in the district entered the housing market when housing costs were lower, allowing them to save for and purchase a home, it is now difficult for young teachers to do the same because Bay Area house prices are too high; many young teachers see a future too.

Both the state and district have a responsibility and imperative to support teachers in every way possible — and keep them here for the long term. ♦



Graphic by WILLIAM NORWOOD

UNUSUAL PETS

The incredible story of two rescued rabbits

TWO WILD RABBITS BUILD AN UNFORGETTABLE BOND WITH EACH OTHER AND CONNECT WITH THEIR RESCUERS

By Andy Zhu

In August 2019, due to the extreme summer heat, my family left our backyard door open, and a small creature — a lean, dark taupe-colored bunny that appeared to be no older than 2 months old — took the opportunity to take shelter in our home.

Before our sparks of hope could grow into a blaze, however, our dad poured us a bucket of cold water.

"This is just a baby rabbit," he warned. "We're not even sure it may survive. We need to make sure it can live first."

ous object inside appeared to be moving. My dad explained everything that happened; needless to say, we were thrilled to have our first "real" pet — one that wasn't a non-responsive fish.

My dad noticed this friendly intruder and gently led the bunny outside on the lawn, only to be left confused that it didn't move a single inch. Looking out for the animal, he picked it up and placed it in a bush for cover, hoping it would find its way back home soon.

Later that day, my dad went to check if the rabbit had moved. To his surprise, the little fellow remained. It seemed that fear had paralyzed the bunny's ability to move around, and my dad started getting worried that it wouldn't be able to survive on its own.

After some pondering, he brought the bunny inside and kept it inside a storage box with towels for warmth and bedding. When my sister and I arrived home that day from school, the strange box caught our eyes immediately.

Initially, I was hit with confusion. Why is there a transparent box on the floor? Wait, is something in there?

We named the little guy Puffy. I remember the first time we witnessed it eating carrots. I approached the box, and the mysteri-

ous object inside appeared to be moving. My dad explained everything that happened; needless to say, we were thrilled to have our first "real" pet — one that wasn't a non-responsive fish.

Before our sparks of hope could grow into a blaze, however, our dad poured us a bucket of cold water.

"This is just a baby rabbit," he warned. "We're not even sure it may survive. We need to make sure it can live first."

Later that day, my dad went to check if the rabbit had moved. To his surprise, the little fellow remained. It seemed that fear had paralyzed the bunny's ability to move around, and my dad started getting worried that it wouldn't be able to survive on its own.

After some pondering, he brought the bunny inside and kept it inside a storage box with towels for warmth and bedding. When my sister and I arrived home that day from school, the strange box caught our eyes immediately.

Initially, I was hit with confusion. Why is there a transparent box on the floor? Wait, is something in there?

We named the little guy Puffy. I remember the first time we witnessed it eating carrots. I approached the box, and the mysteri-



Photo by ANDY ZHU

Puffy and Fluffy growing up in a different environment than the wild after being rescued.

We raised Fluffy until he got bigger, and then we introduced him to Puffy.

The two first acted like they didn't see each other and cautiously stayed very far apart. But as time went on, they became comfortable and soon became good friends.

As they kept growing bigger, we realized they needed more space. It was a tough and debated decision, but we decided to let them free. However, this did not mean the end of our time together.

We continued to see Fluffy and Puffy in the areas around our house, and occasionally fed them treats that we used to give them.

Although we see them around less often now, we are still able to tell whenever they do visit us. Puffy has a darker spot on one of his feet, and Fluffy's right ear has been slightly nipped since we got him.

This was my first experience having a real pet. The connections I made with these wild rescued rabbits will forever be one of the most special moments of my life.

Lucky for him, he never had to stay in a small rescue cage, thanks to Puffy's old equipments.



Photo by ANDY ZHU

Fluffy and Puffy became friendly and grew accustomed to their new home and family.

My unexpected partner in crime: remembering his legacy

THE REAL LIFE DON QUIXOTE — BUT INSTEAD OF FIGHTING WINDMILLS IT'S FIGHTING ANTS IN MY BATHROOM

By Jonathan Si

I hate bugs. As the self-designated bug killer at home, it's my job to confront and slay every insect I see — sometimes I wish I got paid. But one fateful afternoon changed my entire outlook on bugs — or at least some of them.

Imagine: summer vacation, you come back home after an exhausting trip to the library to work on college application essays. You go to wash your hands, and... ants. All over. The trail leads all the way to the bathroom and into a small, obscure hole in the wall.

My first instinct was to crush and tape it up with the other aggravating insects, but the compassionate side of me said otherwise. We had a common goal, and besides, it was just one, cute little spider in the corner!

Tip for anyone fighting ants: use tape — specifically paper tape because of how easy it is to tear. It's like a paper towel, but there's

no chance of any stubborn survivors wriggling their way out, and it's carcass free! It also serves as an easy way to block out any small crevices in the wall.

So there I am, armed with my trusty roll of tape exterminating individual ants all over the bathroom, and as I pan around the room, a pile of ant carcasses catches my eye.

A spider, the lonesome soldier fighting on his own against the advancing colony, sits on his web in the corner of the room, littering my bathroom floor with his neatly wrapped, bodies of joy.

Rather than calling my parents or alerting anyone of this infestation, I was determined to win this battle myself.

After she ran out exclaiming she found a couple of ants in the bathroom, I tried to assure her the situation was under control.

She, of course, like the many times she impulsively made decisions for me, didn't believe me.

Not only did she begin doing my job killing the ants (which she could be any more shameless, stealing from an unemployed young adult?), she paraded the room with no sense of mercy.

So when I realized the little spider was

still left there unattended, I knew it was over. A feeling of impending dread washed over as I saw my mother approach the mass of carcasses in the corner.

"What is all this!" she exclaimed.

And before I could even open my mouth to explain the situation, she crushes the little guy with a wad of toilet paper. Oh the humanity!

Never before have I been so devastated at the loss of a mere arthropod; I even thought of replacing my friend with a random spider outside, but deep down, I knew it was irreplaceable.

It wasn't just some random creature I used to kill bugs — it was a friend.

I still hate bugs. If I ever see an ant on the ground, or god forbid in my house, I will kill it. But spiders will always hold a special place in my heart. I still might kill them though, just a little less maliciously. ♦

"ONLY 10 MINUTES TO GET A 'FREAKISHLY ACCURATE' DESCRIPTION OF WHO YOU ARE AND WHY YOU DO THINGS THE WAY YOU DO."

MEDIATOR VICTORIA Hu INTP-T

- 16 PERSONALITIES

MBTI
(MYERS-BRIGGS PERSONALITY TEST)

UNIQUE SPECTRUM

Can this well-known test capture your entire personality?

FALCON STAFF MBTI STATS

Category	Percentage
INTROVERTED	52%
INTUITIVE	58%
FEELING	54%
PERCEIVING	62%
TURBULENCE	73%

THOUGHTS FROM OUR EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

"Since our deadline nights are so chaotic, I'm not surprised our staff is turbulent."
- Shaan Sridhar (ENFJ-A)

"This is untrue. I think we are more extroverted than we are introverted. I'm the exact opposite of this."
- Nidhi Mathihalli (ESTJ-A)

THE 16 PERSONALITIES

Analysts
Intuitive (N) and Thinking (T) personality types, known for their rationality, impartiality, and intellectual excellence.

Diplomats
Intuitive (N) and Feeling (F) personality types, known for their empathy, diplomatic skills, and passionate idealism.

Sentinels
Observant (S) and Judging (J) personality types, known for their practicality and focus on order, security, and stability.

Explorers
Observant (S) and Prospecting (P) personality types, known for their spontaneity, ingenuity, and flexibility.

Analysts
Architect (INTJ), Logician (INTP), Commander (ENTJ), Debater (ENTP)

Diplomats
Advocate (INFJ), Mediator (INFP), Protagonist (ENFJ), Campaigner (ENFP)

Sentinels
Logistian (ISTJ), Defender (ISFJ), Executive (ESTJ), Consul (ESFJ)

Explorers
Virtuoso (ISTP), Adventurer (ISFP), Entrepreneur (ESTP), Entertainer (ESFP)

Courtesy of 16PERSONALITIES

LOGICIAN Tara Natarajan INTP-T

On the other hand, being intuitive is a vert means shying away from interactions with others, being introverted doesn't necessarily mean being antisocial, but rather being more fulfilled by solitary activities than social activities.

I feel perfectly satisfied reading a book or watching a movie on a Friday night alone instead of going out with friends. I also enjoy golf, which is more of a solitary sport rather than a team one, although it's fun to play with friends. I also enjoy meaningful connections with the small group of friends I have. These are all examples of introversion that fit my personality well.

On the other hand, being intuitive is a vert means shying away from interactions with others, being introverted doesn't necessarily mean being antisocial, but rather being more fulfilled by solitary activities than social activities.

For example, working as an accountant would probably provide great stability, but I dread the idea of working a job that isn't intellectually stimulating — I would prefer not having a boring and repetitive job. That's why I am more inclined to work in fields such as research or journalism. This is where the trait of preferring novelty might fit me. However,

I wouldn't drop out of college even if I really wanted to try a different path, because I still value stability and rigor and fear things I can't predict or control.

Although "Thinking" makes me sound robotic, I think this is 75% accurate. I often let emotions take over in certain social situations or episodes of distress, but I find it normally leads to disaster. When I'm able, I prefer strategizing logical solutions. This can be efficient, but it isn't always a good thing. For example, if I'm in a group project, I often feel the urge to finish everyone's work if I think they're falling behind, even though that might not be the wisest solution. ♦

togatalks

How accurately does the MBTI test reflect your personality?

"The individual letters in MBTI seem generally accurate, but the test is too vague."
senior Shannon Wang (ENTP)

"It's an ego boost but very vague and can be applied to anyone."
senior Anjini Mani (ENFP)

"The MBTI shouldn't be treated as if it were significant. I had fun but it doesn't define me."
junior Tejas Tirthapura (ESFJ)

A Hollywood ending: Low-drama ceremony closes exciting and historic Oscar season

By Shaan Sridhar

ally proclaimed "the American Dream."

Quan first acting as a child in "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" opposite Harrison Ford, but soon lost his guild health insurance and was put out of work in a Hollywood that didn't support many Asian actors, only to triumphantly return at the Oscars — and give Ford a huge hug on stage.

Marred in recent years by slap scandals and poor production — an awards plague that also ransacked sister shows like the Golden Globes — this year looked different, with a lot of positive outlooks on deck. And, luckily, it delivered a true Hollywood ending.

Hosted by late-night comedian Jimmy Kimmel and produced by television veterans Ricky Kirshner and Glenn Weiss, the show was a return to form and proper prestige.

Critically acclaimed (and actually popular) movies took home the top prizes, while four actors with emotional stories rocked the Dolby Theater stage. And the production, though still long, moved at a better pace than ever before, incorporating every award plus some new pieces with great future potential.

Oscar award winners prove worthy

Yes, there are those who will undoubtedly complain about this year's show for whatever multitude of reasons they can create, but the reality is that this telecast was the best of any Academy Awards in recent history.

It's supported by data too: 18.8 million people tuned into the Oscars, a 13% increase from last year and the highest rating for the show in three years.

In my preview, I declared that "Everything Everywhere All At Once" was the by far and away best movie of last year and the most deserving of Best Picture.

The Academy agreed: The film took home seven Academy Awards, including the prestigious top prize of Best Picture, with its directors (Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, known as The Daniels) also winning Best Director and Best Original Screenplay.

The performance of "Naatu Naatu" was underwhelming because of the lack of Tamil and Indian talent on stage.

"Everything Everywhere All At Once" also made history as the most awarded movie in history, according to an analysis by IGN.

And I couldn't be happier for the film. When it first came out in March 2022 — it was actually released before last year's Oscars, but fell into this year's nomination window — most disregarded its chances at awards a full year later.

But, much like the theme of the movie and the cast and crew involved, "Everything Everywhere All At Once" overcame the odds.

The movie is weird, quirky and arguably insane, but it's also mainstream enough to cross appeal. This isn't a typical film, and it's worth seeing just to see it.

The Daniels weren't the only to benefit from the Best Picture bump. Even the film's editor, Paul Rogers, won Best Editing for his chaotic work, which he completed using basic Adobe Premiere Pro software on an old iMac.

Michelle Yeoh ("Everything Everywhere All At Once") bested Cate Blanchett ("Tar") to win Best Actress.

She made history by becoming the first Asian woman and second person of color after Halle Berry to ever win the award — not to mention her career-defining performance in the film and superstar body of work.

Ke Huy Quan ("Everything Everywhere All At Once") took the award for Best Supporting Actor, completing what he emotion-

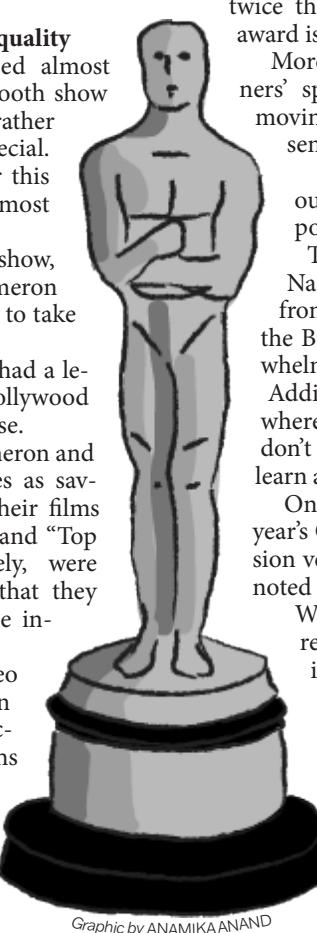


Courtesy of ABC



Graphic by MINSUI TANG

Top: Ke Huy Quan won an Oscar for his role in "Everything Everywhere All At Once." **Bottom:** "Everything Everywhere All At Once" was nominated for 11 awards, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actress, Best Original Screenplay and Best Film Editing.



Graphic by ANAMIKAAANAND

The Oscars are simply no longer a major event, and they need something to entice people to watch them.

It's not an exaggeration when I say I was the only person among my friends and family excited to watch.

The show delivered on all its expectations plus a little more.

Furthermore, in an attempt to boost viewership, the Oscars began including advertisements from major movie studios directly into the show.

You can only have a Hollywood ending if people see the movie in the first place. ♦

'Where are we going, Dad' is horrible 10 years later

By Minsui Tang & Sarah Zhou

recounts about how fast their children are growing up while the children scream incomprehensibly — all of this accompanied by the occasional "boing" sound effect, a 2013 equivalent to the Vine boom sound.

At the beginning of each episode, each family is shown riding in their fancy cars with a personal driver — the dads wearing matching sunglasses with their kids to add to the swag — and drones zoom out to show cars speeding on a rural highway with the speed-up and slow-mo combo of action movies.

However, while brainstorming shows that define our childhood, the first thing that comes to mind is "Where Are We Going, Dad?": a Chinese reality TV show based on the original South Korean reality show "Dad!"

In the show, five male celebrities take their children to different spots in China to complete tasks in order to strengthen their familial bonds.

Here's a brief rundown of how each season goes: First, interviews are conducted with most of the participants.

The adults repeat the usual sentimental

Females for Finance plans specialty magazine

BY Shaan Sridhar
& Sarah Zhou

The Females for Finance (F4F) Club and Design Club announced a partnership to create a school finance magazine to show off students' financial literacy, with a tentative plan to publish the magazine online by the end of the school year.

The magazine will cover topics such as the fintech industry and creating social impact through financial investments. The publication will also feature interviews with local business owners.

The five officers of F4F — seniors Sarah Frederick, Noor Khan, Eva Ruemmler, Elizabeth Stoiber and Samantha Stoiber — will edit all articles in the magazine and hope to receive additional guidance from their F4F mentor, Safia Williams, if possible.

"There isn't much emphasis on the humanities in the Bay Area so it's nice to have an opportunity to get involved."

SENIOR Samika Agarwal

The magazine layouts will be created using Adobe InDesign by five members of the Design Club: freshman Jena Lew, sophomore Hillary Gonzalez, Yana Kappor, Isabella Wang and junior Sarah Thomas.

Ruemmler, the president of F4F, said her goal with the magazine was to give club members an opportunity to showcase their work with their pages, but the club will first

knowledge learned from club meetings. Traditionally, the F4F officers spend the first semester teaching basic financial literacy to their members, as most new club members do not have any background knowledge.

F4F opened up signups for the magazine's articles in February through a link on their Instagram account and an announcement in principal Greg Louie's Friday newsletter. Prospective writers were asked to give a topic idea and briefly explain the contents of their article. The officers have not yet begun editing the articles, but Ruemmler said they would approach the editing in a style similar to the journalism program. She added that they are requiring writers to list all sources so the officers can ensure all the magazine's content is credible.

Ruemmler and the F4F officers were inspired to create a magazine from a previous partnership between Design Club and Astronomy Club, which worked together to create a school astronomy magazine — Nova Spatia — last year. She said that many other high schools and universities around the nation also produced finance magazines, so it seemed like a natural step for the club.

During regular bi-monthly Design Club meetings, members will have opportunities to seek feedback from officers, and each page will also be individually critiqued to ensure continuity in style and theme.

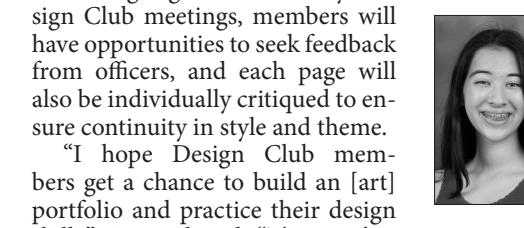
"I hope Design Club members get a chance to build an [art] portfolio and practice their design skills," Agarwal said. "There isn't a big emphasis on arts or the humanities in the Bay Area, so it's nice to have an opportunity to get involved; even if you don't want to pursue [design] as a career."

Apart from working with F4F and As-

tronomy Club, the Design Club has also created posters for the Green Committee and TEDx Club, as well as built a sensory pathway — decorative floor art meant to stimulate children's five senses — for Saratoga Elementary.

Yang hopes the Design Club's end-of-year magazine collaborations will become an annual event. She plans to host a speaker series later this year for students interested in art and digital design to learn more about the field. Similarly, Ruemmler hopes that the F4F magazine can become a yearly tradition as well.

"I hope people find value in [the magazine] and see it as an opportunity to expand their learning with financial literacy and start to find a passion in finance." ♦



Ruemmler

Liu fuses neuroscience with meditation in research

BY Annie Liu
& Howard Shu

languages like Python to tweak various open-source algorithms to mathematically develop CMTF to work on her data. By this time, she met with her mentor once a week via Zoom as the program at UC Santa Barbara had ended. The time she spent working on her project totaled up to 50 to 60 hours per week when she was in the program. Fung described the program as "a huge time crunch," which was especially challenging as it was her first time doing research.

"I was trying to ensure my algorithm works correctly," she said. "I was scared of getting results because it seems so final. You're like 'oh my gosh, I have to make sure I do everything right.' So I had to overcome that fear, and just go for it."

In November, she submitted her results to the 2023 Regeneron Science Talent Search. To her surprise, she placed among the top 300 semifinalists of nearly 2,000 applicants across the U.S. and other countries, earning \$2,000 in prize money for herself and another \$2,000 for SHS.

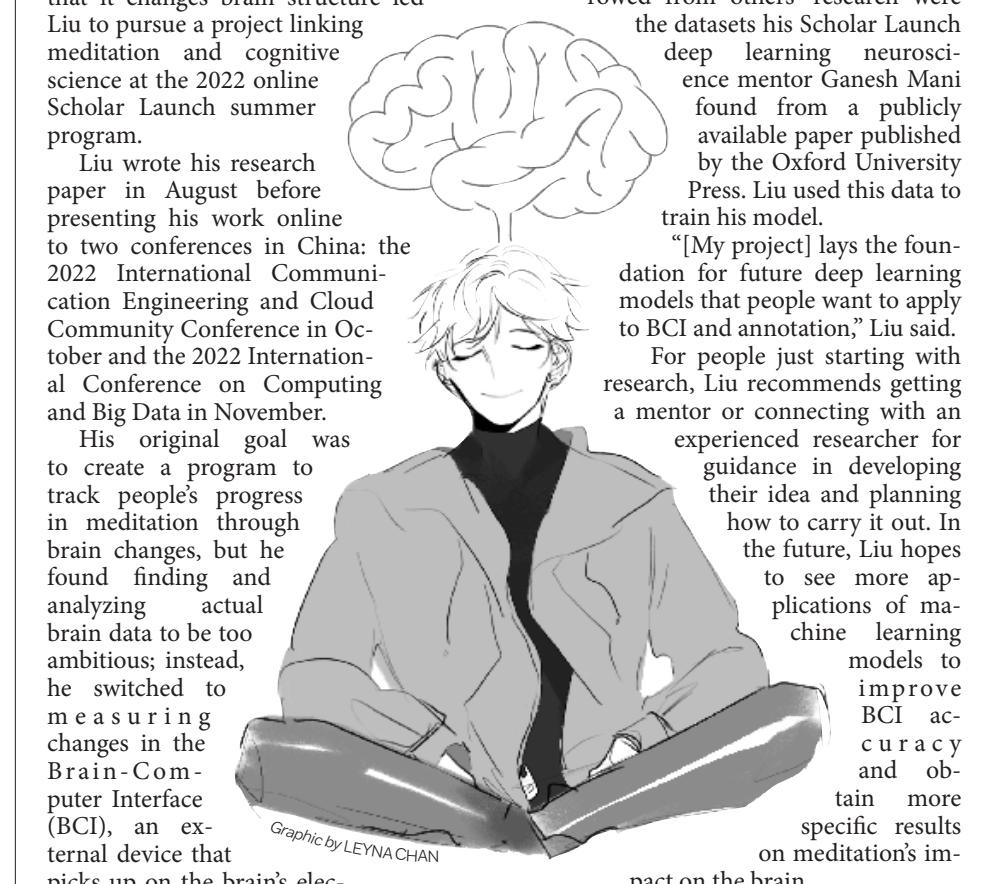
"It's like 'oh my gosh' I have to make sure I do everything right. So I had to overcome that fear and just go for it."

SENIOR Lisa Fung

Having completed the application portion of her research over the summer, Fung also continued working on her CMTF algorithm throughout the school year.

In the fall, while juggling college applications, classes and extracurriculars in addition to her research, Fung felt that she made "less progress than she wanted to."

"There are definitely some tough spots [in research], but once you get over them, they are the most enjoyable moments," Fung said. "It's the feeling of 'I solved it.'" ♦



Graphic by LEYNA CHAN

I'm looking forward to researching in computer science and mind-related areas in the future or something else related to applying tech to cognitive science," Liu said. "This experience taught me to take risks and avoid losing focus when things get challenging." ♦

According to Foundation president Tom Cobourn, the group mainly funds classroom equipment, campus improvements and social-emotional programs using funds raised from parents. Teachers and administrators can submit grant requests using a Google form found on the website; every month, the Foundation's

added that the teachers' care and the resources in the space make it extremely comforting. Alec said he also has trouble staying in a single environment while listening and learning, so moving between the ASSIST classroom and therapist's portable helps him focus. His IEP also allows him access to certain accommodations, including an external therapist and family counselor through the Wraparound program, which provides Alec with additional outside support.

"I've been going to these therapists and it's really helpful to have someone to talk to outside of ASSIST, because it allows us to process trauma or go through different coping mechanisms without having to go right back to the classroom afterwards," he said.

Alec's Individualized Education Program (IEP) allows him access to such features, among many others, of the Achieving Student Success with Intervention Support and Therapy (ASSIST) program. According to ASSIST teacher Kerri Slover, the program works to rehabilitate students who have suffered from mental health issues or trauma. Students may be recommended to ASSIST by a teacher or administrator for difficulty focusing or emotional issues. In general, though, the primary reason is low attendance.

Alec feels that therapy in ASSIST is much more lighthearted than external therapy, because it is geared toward orienting a student so that they are in a state to reenter the classroom and be productive. In situations where students are distressed, need someone to talk to or even need an inpatient service, an onsite therapist can provide support.

Alec also noted that the kindness of teachers and the sense of inclusion offered by his peers in ASSIST is a major difference between ASSIST and general education. In ASSIST, Alec feels, students form bonds and interact with one another regardless of personality; their underlying commonalities trump smaller differences.

"In general education, I was always hesitant to make friends," he said. "I thought they'd think I'm weird or mental. But in ASSIST, there really are no separating factors."

While Alec said he started with Cs in his freshman year, he is now achieving High As in every one of his classes and feels that he is doing "incredible" with his learning.

"With ASSIST, I'm able to do self-paced online classes," Alec said. "I don't have to worry about getting behind in classes or going too fast and not having anything to do when I'm in a manic episode."

Alec's IEP allows him access to online classes on Cyber High. Since all of Alec's current courses are online, he ends up spending all of his class time in the ASSIST room — something he does not mind. He

helps students work through issues that are affecting their ability to make academic progress. The program currently serves 10 kids. ASSIST offers a place for students to check in and out throughout the day as needed for support, a quiet place to work "or just get away from it all," Slover said.

"In general education, I was always hesitant to make friends," he said. "I thought they'd think I'm weird or mental. But in ASSIST, there really are no separating factors."

While Alec said he started with Cs in his freshman year, he is now achieving High As in every one of his classes and feels that he is doing "incredible" with his learning.

"With ASSIST, I'm able to do self-paced online classes," Alec said. "I don't have to worry about getting behind in classes or going too fast and not having anything to do when I'm in a manic episode."

Alec's IEP allows him access to online classes on Cyber High. Since all of Alec's current courses are online, he ends up spending all of his class time in the ASSIST room — something he does not mind. He

helps students work through issues that are affecting their ability to make academic progress. The program currently serves 10 kids. ASSIST offers a place for students to check in and out throughout the day as needed for support, a quiet place to work "or just get away from it all," Slover said.

"In general education, I was always hesitant to make friends," he said. "I thought they'd think I'm weird or mental. But in ASSIST, there really are no separating factors."

While Alec said he started with Cs in his freshman year, he is now achieving High As in every one of his classes and feels that he is doing "incredible" with his learning.

"With ASSIST, I'm able to do self-paced online classes," Alec said. "I don't have to worry about getting behind in classes or going too fast and not having anything to do when I'm in a manic episode."

Alec's IEP allows him access to online classes on Cyber High. Since all of Alec's current courses are online, he ends up spending all of his class time in the ASSIST room — something he does not mind. He

helps students work through issues that are affecting their ability to make academic progress. The program currently serves 10 kids. ASSIST offers a place for students to check in and out throughout the day as needed for support, a quiet place to work "or just get away from it all," Slover said.

"In general education, I was always hesitant to make friends," he said. "I thought they'd think I'm weird or mental. But in ASSIST, there really are no separating factors."

While Alec said he started with Cs in his freshman year, he is now achieving High As in every one of his classes and feels that he is doing "incredible" with his learning.

"With ASSIST, I'm able to do self-paced online classes," Alec said. "I don't have to worry about getting behind in classes or going too fast and not having anything to do when I'm in a manic episode."

Alec's IEP allows him access to online classes on Cyber High. Since all of Alec's current courses are online, he ends up spending all of his class time in the ASSIST room — something he does not mind. He

helps students work through issues that are affecting their ability to make academic progress. The program currently serves 10 kids. ASSIST offers a place for students to check in and out throughout the day as needed for support, a quiet place to work "or just get away from it all," Slover said.

"In general education, I was always hesitant to make friends," he said. "I thought they'd think I'm weird or mental. But in ASSIST, there really are no separating factors."

While Alec said he started with Cs in his freshman year, he is now achieving High As in every one of his classes and feels that he is doing "incredible" with his learning.

"With ASSIST, I'm able to do self-paced online classes," Alec said. "I don't have to worry about getting behind in classes or going too fast and not having anything to do when I'm in a manic episode."

Alec's IEP allows him access to online classes on Cyber High. Since all of Alec's current courses are online, he ends up spending all of his class time in the ASSIST room — something he does not mind. He

helps students work through issues that are affecting their ability to make academic progress. The program currently serves 10 kids. ASSIST offers a place for students to check in and out throughout the day as needed for support, a quiet place to work "or just get away from it all," Slover said.

"In general education, I was always hesitant to make friends," he said. "I thought they'd think I'm weird or mental. But in ASSIST, there really are no separating factors."

While Alec said he started with Cs in his freshman year, he is now achieving High As in every one of his classes and feels that he is doing "incredible" with his learning.

"With ASSIST, I'm able to do self-paced online classes," Alec said. "I don't have to worry about getting behind in classes or going too fast and not having anything to do when I'm in a manic episode."

Alec's IEP allows him access to online classes on Cyber High. Since all of Alec's current courses are online, he ends up spending all of his class time in the ASSIST room — something he does not mind. He

helps students work through issues that are affecting their ability to make academic progress. The program currently serves 10 kids. ASSIST offers a place for students to check in and out throughout the day as needed for support, a quiet place to work "or just get away from it all," Slover said.

"In general education, I was always hesitant to make friends," he said. "I thought they'd think I'm weird or mental. But in ASSIST, there really are no separating factors."

While Alec said he started with Cs in his freshman year, he is now achieving High As in every one of his classes and feels that he is doing "incredible" with his learning.

"With ASSIST, I'm able to do self-paced online classes," Alec said. "I don't have to worry about getting behind in classes or going too fast and not having anything to do when I'm in a manic episode."

Alec's IEP allows him access to online classes on Cyber High. Since all of Alec's current courses are online, he ends up spending all of his class time in the ASSIST room — something he does not mind. He

helps students work through issues that are affecting their ability to make academic progress. The program currently serves 10 kids. ASSIST offers a place for students to check in and out throughout the day as needed for support, a quiet place to work "or just get away from it all," Slover said.

"In general education, I was always hesitant to make friends," he said. "I thought they'd think I'm weird or mental. But in ASSIST, there really are no separating factors."

While Alec said he started with Cs in his freshman year, he is now achieving High As in every one of his classes and feels that he is doing "incredible" with his learning.

"With ASSIST, I'm able to do self-paced online classes," Alec said. "I don't have to worry about getting behind in classes or going too fast and not having anything to do when I'm in a manic episode."

Alec's IEP allows him access to online classes on Cyber High. Since all of Alec's current courses are online, he ends up spending all of his class time in the ASSIST room — something he does not mind. He

helps students work through issues that are affecting their ability to make academic progress. The program currently serves 10 kids. ASSIST offers a place for students to check in and out throughout the day as needed for support, a quiet place to work "or just get away from it all," Slover said.

"In general education, I was always hesitant to make friends," he said. "I thought they'd think I'm weird or mental. But in ASSIST, there really are no separating factors."

While Alec said he started with Cs in his freshman year, he is now achieving High As in every one of his classes and feels that he is doing "incredible" with his learning.

"With ASSIST, I'm able to do self-paced online classes," Alec said. "I don't have to worry about getting behind in classes or going too fast and not having anything to do when I'm in a manic episode."

Alec's IEP allows him access to online classes on Cyber High. Since all of Alec's current courses are online, he ends up spending all of his class time in the ASSIST room — something he does not mind. He

helps students work through issues that are affecting their ability to make academic progress. The program currently serves 10 kids. ASSIST offers a place for students to check in and out throughout the day as needed for support, a quiet place to work "or just get away from it all," Slover said.

"In general education, I was always hesitant to make friends," he said. "I thought they'd think I'm weird or mental. But in ASSIST, there really are no separating factors."

While Alec said he started with Cs in his freshman year, he is now achieving High As in every one of his classes and feels that he is doing "incredible" with his learning.

"With ASSIST, I'm able to do self-paced online classes," Alec said. "I don't have to worry about getting behind in classes or going too fast and not having anything to do when I'm in a manic episode."

Alec's IEP allows him access to online classes on Cyber High. Since all of Alec's current courses are online, he ends up spending all of his class time in the ASSIST room — something he does not mind. He

helps students work through issues that are affecting their ability to make academic progress. The program currently serves 10 kids. ASSIST offers a place for students to check in and out throughout the day as needed for support, a quiet place to work "or just get away from it all," Slover said.

"In general education, I was always hesitant to make friends," he said. "I thought they'd think I'm weird or mental. But in ASSIST, there really are no separating factors."

While Alec said he started with Cs in his freshman year, he is now achieving High As in every one of his classes and feels that he is doing "incredible" with his learning.

"With ASSIST, I'm able to do self-paced online classes," Alec said. "I don't have to worry about getting behind in classes or going too fast and not having anything to do when I'm in a manic episode."

Alec's IEP allows him access to online classes on Cyber High. Since all of Alec's current courses are online, he ends up spending all of his class time in the ASSIST room — something he does not mind. He

helps students work through issues that are affecting their ability to make academic progress. The program currently serves 10 kids. ASSIST offers a place for students to check in and out throughout the day as needed for support, a quiet place to work "or just get away from it all," Slover said.

"In general education, I was always hesitant to make friends," he said. "I thought they'd think I'm weird or mental. But in ASSIST, there really are no separating factors."

While Alec said he started with Cs in his freshman year, he is now achieving High As in every one of his classes and feels that he is doing "incredible" with his learning.

"With ASSIST, I'm able to do self-paced online classes," Alec said. "I don't have to worry about getting behind in classes or going too fast and not having anything to do when I'm in a manic episode."

Alec's IEP allows him access to online classes on Cyber High. Since all of Alec's current courses are online, he ends up spending all of his class time in the ASSIST room — something he does not mind. He

helps students work through issues that are affecting their ability to make academic progress. The program currently serves 10 kids. ASSIST offers a place for students to check in and out throughout the day as needed for support, a quiet place to work "or just get away from it all," Slo

CHOOSE YOUR OWN PATH

by Anika Kapasi
& Beverly Xu

As the symphonic wind ensemble prepared for their 2019 end-of-year concert, the group struggled to master James Barnes' "Symphony No. 3" during rehearsals. Music director Jason Shiuan was nervous whether the piece would be a success in concert.

When the students finally played the piece on stage, Shiuan, a Class of '11 alumna, recalled how, in that moment, everyone "truly felt like they were making music."

Two of his students ran up to him after the concert, exhilarated. They expressed their amazement at managing to execute their piece; Shiuan recalls one of them telling him, "I'm so glad I did this."

Although the two students played in band throughout high school, he was never sure if they truly enjoyed being a part of the music program.

However, after the interaction, he understood the profound effect their musical education had on them.

The interaction embodied the joy he has found in teaching. "There is no pay that would make me happier than hearing something like that," Shiuan said.

Shiuan, like Class of '19 alumna Alex Ruemmler, started as a student at the STEM-focused school and took an unconventional path to enter the public service field to become a teacher.

Alumnus declines Fulbright scholarship and becomes teacher at SHS

Shiuan knew he wanted to be a teacher going into the summer before eighth grade at Redwood Middle. At the time, his older brother, Class of '06 alumnus Kevin Shiuan, was entering his first year of college as a bio-engineering major, which led Shiuan to seriously consider what he wanted to pursue in the future.

When Shiuan realized that music was his passion, he had to grapple with the pros and cons of teaching in comparison to playing professionally. He knew he didn't have the intensity to be a professional performer, but because he enjoyed being around people, teaching seemed like the perfect "logical next step" for him.

"When I was playing piano and [other instruments], technique was always some-

thing that took me a long time to grasp," Shiuan said. "But the musical side of things always came very naturally to me. My musical maturity was always way ahead of what I could do technically."

As a music teacher, he wouldn't necessarily need to know the specifics of the technique required to play each instrument, but being able to understand the musicality behind each piece helped him easily give guidance to students.

Even though the school's competitive culture and like-minded parents tend to push graduates toward jobs at Google or in professions such as medicine, Shiuan stayed committed to his dream of teaching music when he picked his major at Northwestern University.

"I was lucky that the pressures didn't really ever affect me," Shiuan said. "My parents were pretty supportive of what I wanted to do and it definitely helped that this was something I was aiming to do since middle school."

Along the way, Michael Boitz, his high school music teacher and now fellow music director, Shiuan's decision to go into teaching.

In his sophomore year, Shiuan had what he described as an "oh my god musical moment" while playing the transcribed band piece, "Sleep," by Eric Whitacre. The rehearsal still sticks with him today as remembers how special it was to be able to influence a group of musicians and work with them to achieve a delicate and beautiful sound.

In 2013, two years into his undergraduate degree, Shiuan went to volunteer in India helping teach various middle and high school classes in English, History and Economics.

He returned to India in January 2016, right after graduating, and was an artist in residence under the program Arts Ignite, originally known as A-Step, teaching piano, choir and voice lessons to all ages of students as well as elementary school music.

Shiuan recalled how access to "things as simple as water and electricity" offered to him back home was a privilege that many of his students did not hold there.

Seeing how fortunate he was to have music and education be a prominent part of his life, he was thankful for all the seemingly small but influential opportunities he benefited from.

He also found importance in the community as the school Shiuan taught at in India consisted of smaller class sizes and students who grew up alongside each other since childhood.

"After the first time I walked on campus, the teachers and community had immediately brought me into the family," Shiuan said. "There was a very palpable sense of community because the school was really small and I think that creating that sense of family is a really important aspect of what teachers do, especially in the music program."

"Taking the scholarship and being away sounded fun, but being away from teaching and music didn't."

MUSIC DIRECTOR Jason Shiuan

heart with myself and question what I wanted to do," he said. "Taking the scholarship and being away sounded fun, but being away from teaching and music didn't."

He found it took a lot of questioning his own desires and dreams to find that turning down the scholarship was the right move and he never looked back. However, going into public service does raise concerns, one of the most prominent being relatively low wages while living in a high-cost area.

Fortunately for Shiuan, he has been able to live in Saratoga with his parents as he pours dozens of hours into his job each week.

Shiuan notes that many of his colleagues make long commutes from Santa Cruz and Half Moon Bay to their teaching jobs, and are also extremely frugal in order to keep up with the cost of living.

While the district is not the lowest paying school district in Santa Clara County, it is a place as expensive as Silicon Valley, the pay doesn't stack up to the cost of living.

The school district has a salary average of \$105,500, while just a few miles away, the Mountain View-Los Altos school district has an average teacher salary of \$152,500, the highest average teacher salary in all of California. In Silicon Valley, a software engineer in a first-year position averages just under \$130k.

Even with the obstacle of pay, Shiuan has never regretted becoming a teacher as he cherishes the opportunity to watch his students grow from their freshman to senior year.

As an ambitious high school student, he never expected that teaching would allow him to play such an important role in the lives of future generations of students.

Shiuan would have taught mostly English abroad, but he knew he would have been able to work out a way to teach music simultaneously.

Shiuan applied to the prestigious U.S. Fulbright Scholar Program, where accepted participants receive a grant that allows them to pursue graduate study, teach specifically English abroad or conduct research.

In his sophomore year, Shiuan had what he described as an "oh my god musical moment" while playing the transcribed band piece, "Sleep," by Eric Whitacre. The rehearsal still sticks with him today as remembers how special it was to be able to influence a group of musicians and work with them to achieve a delicate and beautiful sound.

Shiuan knew he wanted to be a teacher going into the summer before eighth grade at Redwood Middle. At the time, his older brother, Class of '06 alumnus Kevin Shiuan, was entering his first year of college as a bio-engineering major, which led Shiuan to seriously consider what he wanted to pursue in the future.

When Shiuan realized that music was his passion, he had to grapple with the pros and cons of teaching in comparison to playing professionally. He knew he didn't have the intensity to be a professional performer, but because he enjoyed being around people, teaching seemed like the perfect "logical next step" for him.

"When I was playing piano and [other instruments], technique was always some-

thing that took me a long time to grasp," Shiuan said. "But the musical side of things always came very naturally to me. My musical maturity was always way ahead of what I could do technically."

He also found importance in the community as the school Shiuan taught at in India consisted of smaller class sizes and students who grew up alongside each other since childhood.

"After the first time I walked on campus, the teachers and community had immediately brought me into the family," Shiuan said. "There was a very palpable sense of community because the school was really small and I think that creating that sense of family is a really important aspect of what teachers do, especially in the music program."

"Taking the scholarship and being away sounded fun, but being away from teaching and music didn't."

MUSIC DIRECTOR Jason Shiuan



Graphic by TARA NATARAJAN



Courtesy of SARATOGA MUSIC BOOSTERS



Courtesy of ALEX RUEMMLER

OWN PATH

2 ALUMS FORGO STEM PATHS IN FAVOR OF TEACHING



Graphic by SARAH THOMAS

ciency in STEM classes. But excelling in these classes and being a teaching assistant for his history teacher Faith Daly solidified her goal to become a teacher.

"I really enjoyed being in [Daly's] class and seeing how she very intentionally planned things out to help us learn," Ruemmler said.

She chose to be Daly's teaching assistant because she found her to be a strong example of an effective teacher, from whom she could gain a background in general education before focusing on chemistry.

Despite teaching history requiring vastly different skills than chemistry, Ruemmler learned skills transferable to all aspects of teaching.

Although Daly left the most impactful impression, Ruemmler was also inspired by other staff at SHS who spent their time helping students succeed, including chemistry teachers Kathryn Nakamatsu and Janny Cahatal.

"Teaching students who are about to become a real part of society is an appeal of teaching high schoolers."

ALUMNA Alex Ruemmler

Ruemmler's choice to become a high school college prep chemistry teacher boiled down to two criteria: flexibility in teaching material and impact on her students' lives. Being an Advanced Placement (AP) teacher would have required Ruemmler to stick to a rigid schedule to fulfill College Board requirements, whereas teaching regular chemistry enabled Ruemmler to pace the course herself and tie in real world applications.

She hopes to return to California after receiving her degree to be closer to her family and enjoy the fewer limitations California imposes on teachers. California also has the third-highest average teacher wages of all states.

"Teaching students who are about to become a real part of society is definitely an appeal of teaching high schoolers," Ruemmler said. "It's a big shifting point in their life."

In contrast to many of her high school counterparts who may be pursuing higher education in STEM fields, Ruemmler is entering the job market by the end of this year.

No matter how her path diverts from her peers, she feels continued motivation to pursue teaching and avoid burnout.

"I hope that I can sustainably be in this career for the rest of my life, or until I retire," Ruemmler said. "I'm ready, and I'm excited. I think I've spent my last four years really learning as much as I can about the teaching profession, so I'm ready to jump in and get some of that experience and further my learning there."

>> falconfigures

7.8	% decrease in avg. national teacher salary since 2010
48	% of teachers who were dissatisfied with their jobs
14	Post-pandemic national teacher turnover rate
3.3	Million public school teachers in the United States

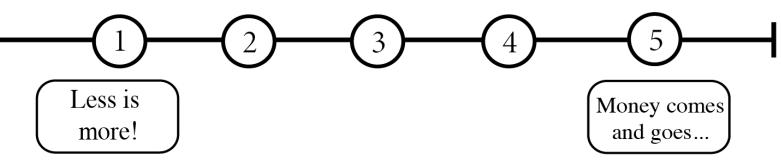
19	% decrease in education majors since 2000-2001
56	Median public school teacher salary in thousands.
54	Median hours worked per week by teachers
44	% of teachers quit within the first 5 years

Data from NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS

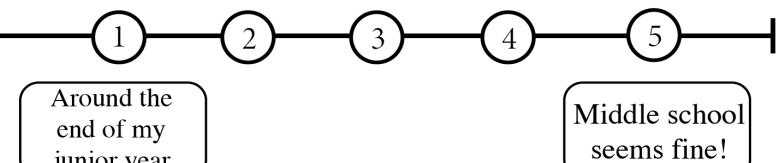
COLLEGE COUNSELOR COMPATIBILITY

Not sure which type of college counseling is right for you? Use this handy quiz to find your perfect match!

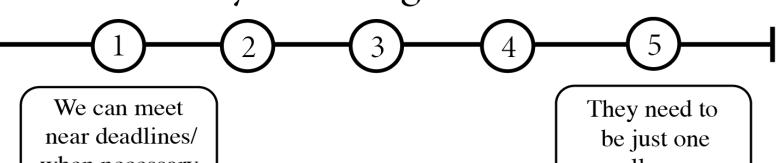
How much are you prepared to spend?



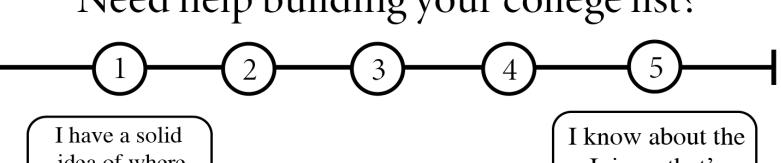
When do you plan to start counselling?



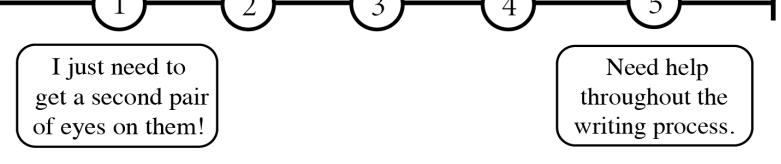
What level of involvement would you expect from your college counselor?



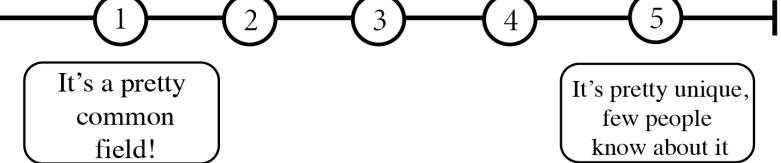
Need help building your college list?



How much essay help would you require?



How specialized is the career you plan on going into?



THE RESULTS

0-12: public

Looks like you should make an appointment with the CCC ASAP!

13-25: private

We think that a private counselor might be best for your college needs.

Infographic by SARAH THOMAS

BASEBALL

Inconsistent execution brings close losses

By AnikaKapasi

When the Falcons were down 2-0 against Milpitas at home on March 27, sophomore southpaw pitcher Aiden Chen knew he wasn't playing to his full potential.

"With everyone watching when I was pitching, I was getting a bit nervous and second guessing myself," Chen said. "I had a harder time throwing strikes than I usually do and felt less in control."

However, Chen and the team settled down as the game progressed and started executing better offensively and defensively. Heading into the seventh inning, they were down 2-1, but Milpitas jumped on a few poorly executed pitches by sophomore relief pitcher Samanyu Ram, resulting in a 5-1 loss for the Falcons.

After four league games — the 5-1 loss to Milpitas, a 5-0 home loss to Cupertino on March 16, a 10-5 win in an away game over Monta Vista on March 23 and a 3-2 win home against Fremont on March 30 — the baseball team, coached by Vinny Auguste, holds a 2-2 record, placing them third in the



Courtesy of SAMANTHA TIMMONS

Sophomore Samanyu Ram pitches at home during a game against Milpitas on March 27.

El Camino League as of March 31.

The team's losses have disappointed a group that expected to win early and often.

extra reps and keeps focus, they will be able to turn their season around.

"I also think once the weather and chaos settle down and we start to get to know our opponents a little bit better, we will be able to perform a lot better," Chen said.

Junior pitcher Shane Timmons said the team's recent losses were against teams that they could have beaten. In each game, he felt the team was making easily avoidable mistakes, including not fielding catchable ground balls, fly balls or not making the right plays.

With an already small 15-man roster, key players are out battling injuries, including periodic shoulder problems, thumb injuries and players recovering from and sustaining labrum injuries. The Falcons are counting on their ace pitcher Lucas Dennis to better improve their performance for their upcoming games and make CCS.

"We have to start hitting better and stop making [individual] errors [to succeed in our games]," Timmons said. "We know what we have to do and I know we can win [and have a successful season]."

SOFTBALL

Falcons soar to 6-2 record

By MinsuiTang

After a resounding 13-1 win against Prospect on March 27, the softball team held a 6-2 record as the month ended.

Before that, the Falcons lost 5-3 against Carlmont on March 25 after a 13-5 win against Kennedy the same day. Currently third in the El Camino League, the Falcons saw their four-win streak snapped with a 4-1 loss against Fremont on March 24.

For senior co-captain Lily Guzman, who plays first base, the most memorable experience this season so far came against Palo Alto on March 22, when sophomore pitch-

er Saira Ramakrishnan pitched a no-hitter in a game the Falcons won 14-0.

One aspect Guzman feels the team of 16 girls could improve is their self-motivation, noticing their attitude depended largely on their current performance. She also noted that the team lacks confidence at times despite their heavy weekly practice schedule.

"In our first game [against Leigh] on March 7, you could really feel the energy just go down," she said.

The team ultimately won 7-6 after the captains — senior catcher Irene Frazier and junior third baseman Vivienne Brooks — en-

couraged the rest of the team to push through.

The Falcons began playing better after the game against Leigh, and they won 13-3 against Monta Vista on March 15. However, Guzman said this victory did not feel "as rewarding as the game against Leigh" — although their opponents weren't "nearly as competitive" as Leigh, Guzman said everyone didn't put their full effort during the game because it seemed that "Monta Vista took [the game] as a joke."

Guzman attributes their success so far to the extra-close bond she felt the teammates have shared this year.



Courtesy of MIRANDA YEE

The team celebrates senior Lily Guzman's game-winning hit against Prospect.

"I've never felt like I was part of a team as much as I did this year," Guzman said. "This year, all of our players are motivated to run rather than simply trying to get through the season, and our coach actually talks to us to motivate us to win. I really felt the difference this year — maybe because it's my last year too."

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL

Four consecutive sweeps raise team's CCS chances

By DerekLiang

As the volleyball plummeted from the heights of the gym, freshman outside hitter Brennan Pak soared up over the net, spiking the ball straight onto the ground in front of Fremont's players. Such plays happened continuously through this game against Fremont on March 17, and the Falcons won 3-0 behind Pak's nearly 15 kills.

As of the end of March, the team, led by coach Lori Gragnola, has a 5-1 record with four consecutive 3-0 wins, their most recent one coming at home against King's Academy on March 30.

In the last few games, Pak played a large role, constantly putting up shots and scoring points.

Pak's excellence in the sport began at age 12 when he started off playing at the City Beach volleyball club, and joined the Redwood Middle volleyball team.

In middle school, sophomore Ryan Backhus and juniors Eric Norris and Duvuri, three current varsity volleyball players at the school, recommended that he train at the volleyball club they attended, Bay to Bay, to improve his skills.

Pak listened, and his Bay to Bay 14s



Pak

team ultimately ranked first in the nation and placed fifth at nationals.

Coming into high school, Pak had to quickly adapt and learn to cooperate with the upperclassmen on the team. With his relatively tall height at 5 ft 11 combined with his speed, high vertical and powerful spiking ability, he was immediately placed onto the varsity team.

The Falcons' sole victory came against Cupertino on March 27, ending with a score of 205-214 behind sophomore Oliver Pott's best round of the season, 2 over 36.

"There aren't particular people that are necessarily lacking, but a couple of players each match who perform below expectations and can flip the results," sophomore Aidan Smith said.

With the team coming off an underperforming, injury-plagued 0-14 season, Pak believes the Falcons should aim for CCS this year after coming on with a much better start. Along with team goals, Pak has the personal goal this year of getting the NorCal freshman of the year award and advancing his ambition of playing Division I volleyball in college.

Despite the competitiveness of the sport, at its core, Pak enjoys how it has taught him to work with people and build relationships.

"I like the lessons that team sports teach you and also being able to set goals for myself," Pak said. "I love the feeling of being under the spotlight while I play."

BOYS' GOLF

Team reaches midpoint of season with just one victory

By SaachiJain

tie at 189-189.

"The team was poised to beat Lynbrook the first time we played them," head coach David Gragnola said. "We had a few players who were looking hopeful to join the travel team and were looking to turn things around from there."

"Almost all of the team is the same as last year, but we still haven't been performing."

SENIOR Cameron Sy

So far, five of their seven matches have been away and Smith feels that some of their bad performances may be due to unfamiliarity with the course. However, he feels that the team lacks overall consistency, rather than a single player's abilities.

"Almost all of the team is the same as last year, but we still haven't been performing," Sy said. "Due to an erratic practice and competing schedule, we haven't yet found our groove in the season and routine. I hope that we only get better from here and can grow all together."

When the Falcons were down 2-0 against Milpitas at home on March 27, sophomore southpaw pitcher Aiden Chen knew he wasn't playing to his full potential.

"With everyone watching when I was pitching, I was getting a bit nervous and second guessing myself," Chen said. "I had a harder time throwing strikes than I usually do and felt less in control."

However, Chen and the team settled down as the game progressed and started executing better offensively and defensively. Heading into the seventh inning, they were down 2-1, but Milpitas jumped on a few poorly executed pitches by sophomore relief pitcher Samanyu Ram, resulting in a 5-1 loss for the Falcons.

After four league games — the 5-1 loss to Milpitas, a 5-0 home loss to Cupertino on March 16, a 10-5 win in an away game over Monta Vista on March 23 and a 3-2 win home against Fremont on March 30 — the baseball team, coached by Vinny Auguste, holds a 2-2 record, placing them third in the

extra reps and keeps focus, they will be able to turn their season around.

"I also think once the weather and chaos settle down and we start to get to know our opponents a little bit better, we will be able to perform a lot better," Chen said.

Junior pitcher Shane Timmons said the team's recent losses were against teams that they could have beaten. In each game, he felt the team was making easily avoidable mistakes, including not fielding catchable ground balls, fly balls or not making the right plays.

With an already small 15-man roster, key players are out battling injuries, including periodic shoulder problems, thumb injuries and players recovering from and sustaining labrum injuries. The Falcons are counting on their ace pitcher Lucas Dennis to better improve their performance for their upcoming games and make CCS.

"We have to start hitting better and stop making [individual] errors [to succeed in our games]," Timmons said. "We know what we have to do and I know we can win [and have a successful season]."

BADMINTON

Freshman talent provides boost

By MitchellChen
& DerekLiang

men talent in hopes of making a strong performance in CCS. Gupta is one such underclassman, and currently plays varsity doubles.

Gupta was first introduced to badminton at age 12 and began playing club badminton at Bintang Badminton, a local training facility. With experience from playing club badminton once a week, Gupta is now one of three freshmen — and the only boy — on varsity. The other two freshmen are Eliza Lin and Kritika Kalani.

On March 23, the team captured an 18-12 win against Monta Vista, one of the stronger teams in the league, bringing their record to 3-2. Already they have more wins than they had last season.

Since the season started, Gupta has mainly been playing doubles with Beljenje, with their chemistry steadily improving as they adjusted to each other's playing styles.

The Falcons were scheduled to face off against Lynbrook on March 21, but due to a power outage the match had to be rescheduled to April 26.

Currently, seniors Jason Liu and Evan Oaklander as well as sisters, junior Sannidhi Bopanna and sophomore Samani Bopanna, are not only just dominating the courts, but also helping coach the newer players.

The Falcons' new coach, Thomas Ching, is focusing on getting familiar with the players and their skill, along with preparing the team for CCS. Upon losing key senior players from last year, especially Adrian Mar, the badminton team has been identifying and cultivating new underclass-

As the season continues, Gupta has the goal to win at least 75% of his games, hoping that next year he can improve to be one of the star players. Among chasing these goals, however, Gupta recognizes that he has made many friends and hopes to make lasting memories with his badminton experience as he continues pushing for CCS success with his team.

"It's really fun to be able to meet new people and bond with them while enjoying the sport," Gupta said. "It's nice to see my previous efforts paying off on the school team."

◆

BOYS' TENNIS

Injury-riddled roster gets back into winning groove

By NealMalhotra
& SkylerMao

against Los Altos, which raised their spirits for the second half of the season.

The Falcons are a younger squad, with the only senior being captain Julian Berkowitz-Sklar. The new freshman additions to the varsity roster, Somai Ogata and Nikhil Srivatsa, play two of the four singles spots and are leading performers on the team.

No. 1 singles player Ogata had a 2-4 record at the end of March. As the top player in the team, he has played against seasoned opponents such as the No. 3 ranked U-16 player in the March 16 match against Cupertino.

On March 21, they grabbed a 4-3 win

against Los Altos, which raised their spirits for the second half of the season.

The Falcons are a younger squad, with the only senior being captain Julian Berkowitz-Sklar. The new freshman additions to the varsity roster, Somai Ogata and Nikhil Srivatsa, play two of the four singles spots and are leading performers on the team.

No. 1 singles player Ogata had a 2-4 record at the end of March. As the top player in the team, he has played against seasoned opponents such as the No. 3 ranked U-16 player in the March 16 match against Cupertino.

On March 21, they grabbed a 4-3 win

SWIMMING

Fitness, filling spots make winning meets challenging

By MitchellChen
& KevinYang

Senior Zeynep Tokuz and freshmen Kelsey Zhang and Emma Geng have already made CCS cut times for the girls in their events, with Zhang even making states in the 200 IM. For the boys, only freshman Taewon Yim has qualified for CCS in the 500 free.

As a whole, this year's team has fewer members than in previous years due to a lack of participation from mainly underclassmen. This not only hurt the boys' team but also led to not fielding a JV girls' team. Even with the smaller number of girls, however, junior Meher Bhatnagar said their significant improvements and hitting personal bests have buoyed spirits.

◆

While the girls team has been stronger, senior Channie Hong is hopeful the boys can earn more points in future meets.

"Everyone is still trying to not just recover from the off-season but to be faster."

SENIOR Channie Hong

"Many of us are out of shape from last season, especially if we didn't join a swim club," Hong said. "Right now, everyone

TRACK

Falcons ramp up training for mid-season invitationals

By AtreyDesai
& GeorgeHu

Courtesy of AMY HAWTHORNE

In the late afternoon of March 24, runners from Saratoga and Wilcox lined up for the 100-meter dash event. As the gun fired, senior Yuvraj Singh leapt off the starting blocks to a strong start, a visible gap forming between him and the competition. Moments later, he handily crossed the finish line in first place, achieving a time of 11.36 seconds.

This dual meet against Wilcox was their most recent one; the varsity boys team won 66-54

while the varsity girls won 87-30.

They hope to continue their success during their upcoming April 6 meet against Santa Clara and Monta Vista.

(Due to print deadlines, The Falcon cannot cover the April 6 meet.)

The team's ranking or top athletes' CCS chances, their difficult competition allows for athletes to set personal records.

Tippettis competed in the highly selective St. Francis Invitational on March 18 and placed 8th in the shot put and 2nd in the discus, setting a personal record of 112 feet, 9.5 inches in the latter.

"We are shifting towards longer distances, more repetitions, and shorter rest times," senior sprinter Isaac Loke said. "At the beginning of the season, we did a lot of 100-meter strides. Now we are upping the distance to 150-meter and 200-meter strides, with more repetitions each practice."

With this more intense training schedule, the team has performed well recently despite occasional setbacks from the weather conditions

TURN BACK THE CLOCK

CCS UPSET

continued from pg. 1

Other than 6' 6" backup center Adam Weiskal, who did not get significant playing time, the tallest Falcons stood around 6' 1."

Adding to the obstacles, Davey lacked scouting tape because none of the teams in their league shared videos of their game play — he only had one video from a college coach he knew who filmed a game to scout out their college-recruited players.

"He sent me a video an hour before the game and I was just fast forwarding through the video, trying to catch anything that would give me a glimmer of hope of what to do," Davey said.

All over his scouting report, he scrawled descriptions such as "ball handler," "scores inside," "big time driver" and "big shooter," but also occasionally noted "out of control at times" and "lose vision of their men."

Noticing Seaside was a bit carefree with the ball, Davey decided to play a two-thirds court 1-2-2 press on defense in hopes of slowing down the pace of the game to neutralize the Spartans' athleticism in transition.

"They were a transition, super athletic, dunking the ball, run and gun type team," Davey said. "We were not that way, and we were able to set the pace of the game that we wanted early. I think they just were in utter disbelief that we would press them," Davey said.

"I wanted [my players] to be more scared of me than they were the other team."

HEAD COACH Mike Davey

However, 90 seconds into the game, the Falcons' play and gameplan execution wasn't working: Seaside built a quick 4-0 lead, dunking on a Saratoga player and forcing two Saratoga turnovers in. At the time, even Davey thought the game could turn into a blowout, especially seeing his players' fear of the large, hostile crowd and the Spartans' intensity.

"I called timeout and screamed at our kids because they were so scared," Davey said. "I wanted them to be more scared of me than they were the other team. My goal at that timeout was not to correct them, but to chew them and say, 'This is who you are, and this is not who you are right now!'"

It worked. Black scored a hook shot off a flex cut quickly after the timeout. The Falcons started executing the game plan, successfully slowing the pace with their press and limiting turnovers on offense with Class of 1998 point guard Ryan Anderson facilitating.

"It was a pretty intelligent group of play-

Where are they now?



ers that we had," Davey said. "They were normally poised and knew how to run the game. I think we had some confidence going in having beaten Los Gatos right before that, so we didn't crumble when we went down early."

The rest of the first half, the Falcons hung around, always keeping the deficit to single digits. Saratoga trailed 35-28 at halftime. According to Davey, the Falcons press was not intended to force many turnovers, but it did anyway because Seaside was "obviously unprepared" for it and threw careless passes such as long lobs intended for dunks that instead flew out of bounds.

The Falcons went on a 19-10 run to begin the third quarter behind three 3-pointers from Class of 1999 shooting guard Geoff LaMotte.

"We knew we could play with them," said LaMotte, who lives in the area and now works at Google. "When we made that third quarter run, we really believed we could win this game. It was, 'Let's do what nobody thinks we can do.'"

"We had to be darn near perfect to win that game. And we did it."

CLASS OF '99 ALUMNUS Geoff LaMotte

The 1997-98 team's ideology and inspiring underdog story created a longstanding shift in Saratoga's basketball culture. The 1998 season was the first year the Falcons played in CCS as a Division III — in 1997, the team placed 6th in their league and did not make CCS. In 1996 and previous years, the team played in the less competitive Division IV.

After success in 1998 from focus and methodical game planning, the Falcons brought back the same mindset for years to come. Two years after, the Falcons won the El Camino league, placed higher seeds in CCS and advanced to the second round again in 1999, further expediting the program's winning culture.

This idea of producing basketball success through intelligent play is still present today. On paper, the Falcons did not necessarily belong in the boys' basketball A-league this year since the school is the smallest school in the league by over 700 students, Davey said. Still, the team still went 6-6 and enjoyed a fairly successful season.

Luke Weger, who now coaches varsity basketball at California High, also still remembers this game fondly. Although the odds were stacked against the team, he felt proud about each player's full commitment to the concepts Davey had preached.

Weger attributes the outcome of the game to the team's coachability. The team was willing to try any game plan that Davey set forth and were confident in it.

Weger also credits the win to the clarity of the team dynamic — no player set out to score 30 points per game or average an outstanding statline. Each game, the team's only objective was to win.

Scan this code to watch game footage from the Saratoga vs. Seaside CCS first-round upset on Feb. 26, 1998.



Scan this code to watch game footage from the Saratoga vs. Seaside CCS first-round upset on Feb. 26, 1998.

1998 Boys' Varsity Basketball Team

Coach: Mike Davey (winningest boys' basketball coach in SHS history with 243-154 record)

Assistant Coach: Rusty DeHorn

Starting lineup (all seniors): point guard Ryan Anderson, shooting guard Luke Weger, small forward Mike Black, power forward Cory Schwaderer, center Oliver L'Abbe

Seniors: Mike Black (1997-98 first-team all-league), Luke Weger (1997-98 second-team all-league), Ryan Anderson, Jason Ng, Matt McKenna, Jeremy Devich, Cory Schwaderer, Oliver L'Abbe

Juniors: Jack Chiang, Geoff LaMotte (1998-99 first-team all-league), Arthur Akimoto, Matt Garapollo, Adam Weiskal, Andre Sorba

Sophomores: Micah Weger (1998-99 first-team all-league, 1999-2000 league MVP), Paul Zebb

with setting screens or running plays."

For Davey, the milestone upset still serves as a representation of what an underdog can achieve. In the 1980s, Saratoga basketball had not won 10 games in a year for over a decade. They broke the streak in the 1992-93 season, going 14-10 in Barry Mendenhall's second year as head coach. The year after, a young Davey took over and began emphasizing playing smart.

"We can be successful at this sport because we are bright and educated as a school," Davey said. "[Our success] is just a testament to our students' work ethic. We aren't the most athletic and we aren't the biggest, but we can succeed at anything if we give it our effort and we believe in ourselves. There's a lot of metaphors in that team for what Saratoga High was back then and what it is today still."

The result of the game taught LaMotte the power of teamwork and the importance of proper leadership and brought him closer to Davey as well as many of his teammates. In fact, Davey is even the godfather to LaMotte's daughter.

"In my work and as a parent, everything stems down to how you can build something that is greater than individual parts and how you cannot make it about yourself, but something bigger," LaMotte said. "The win against Seaside was a byproduct of thinking in this way."

LaMotte recalled that even though Seaside had better individual players, they lacked proper teamwork and began to point fingers as the game progressed after they made a few mistakes. On the other hand, LaMotte said the Falcons had stronger leadership under Davey, who "set examples as a great coach," and a higher level of maturity among team members.

For LaMotte, however, the greatest lesson he learned from the game was the importance of maintaining faith and staying confident in matters where it may seem impossible to do so.

"I'm a man of faith and that game [against Seaside] reinforced my faith and some of the prayers leading up to the game," he said. "It was an important lesson that the odds were stacked against us, but we had to fundamentally believe that we could win. Otherwise we wouldn't have stood a chance."

This idea of producing basketball success through intelligent play is still present today. On paper, the Falcons did not necessarily belong in the boys' basketball A-league this year since the school is the smallest school in the league by over 700 students, Davey said. Still, the team still went 6-6 and enjoyed a fairly successful season.

Luke Weger, who now coaches varsity basketball at California High, also still remembers this game fondly. Although the odds were stacked against the team, he felt proud about each player's full commitment to the concepts Davey had preached.

Weger attributes the outcome of the game to the team's coachability. The team was willing to try any game plan that Davey set forth and were confident in it.

Weger also credits the win to the clarity of the team dynamic — no player set out to score 30 points per game or average an outstanding statline. Each game, the team's only objective was to win.

WE MUST
 • REBOUND (SCREEN OUT HANDS UP!)
 • CONTROL THE TEMPO
 • PLAY HARD
 • COMMUNICATE WEAK SIDE
 • CUT OFF VIOLINE ON GO
 • MEET EVERY PASS/COME TO THE BALL HARD
 • TAKE CHARGES
 • PAU FAKE
 • CURL SCREENS

Courtesy of MIKE DAVEY
Head coach Mike Davey devised a game plan based on videos a college coach sent him.

Alumni shine as professional athletes and influencers

Carrie Steinseifer: Olympic gold-winning swimmer

In her sophomore year, Class of '86 alumna Carrie Steinseifer won the gold medal for the 100-meter swimming sprint at the 1984 Summer Olympics held in Los Angeles. Finishing with a time of 55.92 seconds, she tied with American swimmer Nancy Hogshead for the medal. That same year, Steinseifer went on to win two other gold medals — the 4x100-meter freestyle relay and the 4x100-meter medley relay — as part of the U.S. relay teams.

Being among the best swimmers in the world, Steinseifer shattered local records. In fact, she broke the school's 100-yard freestyle in her freshman year with a then-record time of 56.5 seconds at CCS.

Steinseifer's other notable athletic achievements include her participation in the 1983 Pan American Games in Venezuela and 1985 Pan Pacific Swimming Championships in Tokyo. She won gold medals in the 4x100-meter freestyle relay and the 4x100-meter medley relay — as part of the U.S. relay teams.

During this time, she was sponsored by Arena, a sportswear company and trained with the West Valley College Aquatic team. Unfortunately, her strict training schedule often forced her to sacrifice school and took a huge mental and physical toll on her. Due to the constant chlorine exposure, her skin dried out and nerves sometimes prevented her from focusing on her sport.

But despite the challenges she faced, she is remembered as the school's most decorated swimmer.

Tokyo.

During this time, she was sponsored by Arena, a sportswear company and trained with the West Valley College Aquatic team. Unfortunately, her strict training schedule often forced her to sacrifice school and took a huge mental and physical toll on her. Due to the constant chlorine exposure, her skin dried out and nerves sometimes prevented her from focusing on her sport.



Alumna Carrie Steinseifer hugs Nancy Hogshead after tying for the gold medal in the 1984 Olympics 100-meter freestyle.

— Nidhi Mathihalli and Stephanie Sun

Patricia Adura-Miranda: Transcendent bronze-medalist wrestler

During her time at Redwood Middle and SHS, Class of '97 alumna Patricia Adura Miranda — seven time U.S. national champion in women's wrestling — became the first female to join her middle and high school wrestling teams in all of California. She went on to wrestle with Stanford University's Division I roster — which was comprised of only men at the time — from 1997 to 2002. In her senior year, she became the second woman in NCAA history to defeat a male athlete in an open competition.

She also advanced in her career through representing the U.S. at four World Championships in women's freestyle, earning silver medals in 2000 and 2003 and a bronze in 2006. Miranda also participated in the Pan American Games, placing first in 2002 and first and third in 2003.

However, Miranda's groundbreaking accomplishments didn't come without hardship. When she committed to having a wrestling career in high school, Miranda embraced it as an essential part of her identity.

In a 2019 Falcon interview, she said, "I came up with a basic principle that at the very least, I want to know myself before I die. Mentally,

emotionally, physically — know who I am."

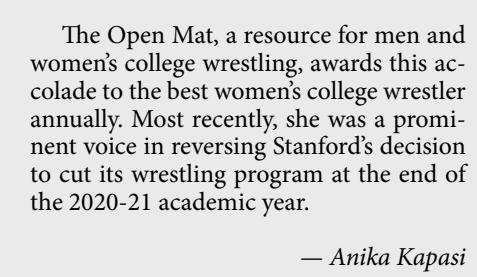
Miranda knew she wanted wrestling to be a significant part of her life, but her father refused to let her continue with the sport her freshman year. Miranda's parents emigrated to escape Brazil's military dictatorship in the 1960s, taking refuge in Canada before immigrating to the U.S.

Her father constantly scratched out her name from wrestling tournaments and even threatened to sue SHS to keep her out of wrestling, believing that education, not sports, was the only way for Miranda to be successful in life.

Miranda, however, eventually came to an agreement with her father: As long as she maintained a 4.0 GPA, she could continue wrestling. That agreement put her on a path for an outstanding career and helped her pave the way for the future of women's wrestling.

— Anika Kapasi

The Open Mat, a resource for men and women's college wrestling, awards this accolade to the best women's college wrestler annually. Most recently, she was a prominent voice in reversing Stanford's decision to cut its wrestling program at the end of the 2020-21 academic year.



ALUMNA Patricia Adura-Miranda

"The store clerk asked me, 'hey what do you wanna be when you grow up?' and I was like, 'pro skater,' and he was laughing." Class of 2010 alumnus Mark Suciu said on The Nine Club podcast with Chris Roberts episode 196.

Now, Suciu, the 2021 Thrasher Skater of the Year with 226,000 Instagram followers, has become a prominent figure in the skateboarding scene, in both content creation and competition. Since he began skating at age 6, he made waves by producing more skateboarding videos and magazine interviews before graduating high school than most pros do in their entire career.

He posts weekly videos with stunning backgrounds and impressive tricks over all kinds of street obstacles. "He released tons of incredible video parts which seemed more like he was filming with friends than working on a project," fellow skater Lui Elliot said.

As for his competitive career, he skated in the Street League in 2019 and placed second in the U.S. Olympics qualifying, but faced a pivotal decision between the

Olympics or the Thrasher Trips that were going on at the same time. Ultimately, he chose the latter, giving up his Olympic dreams and pursuing his content creation career.

This choice ultimately panned out, as he became Thrasher's Skater of the Year in 2021. Suciu has not competed since 2021 but is still active on social media making skate videos. He currently has multiple sponsorships from big companies such as Adidas Footwear, Spitfire Wheels, Thunder Trucks, RVCA Clothing, Jessup Griptape and Atlas Skate Shop in addition to riding for Habitat Skateboards.

— Neal Malhotra

skate as much.

"I went to school. I didn't want to skate anymore," Suciu said in his interview with Elliot. "I was bummed at the idea that my body would still want to skate."

During the transition period from graduating college and going into professional skating, Suciu jumped into stardom with his video Cross Continental made with Thrasher Magazine. His "classic, raw, street skating" style eventually earned him Skateboard Mag's 2012 "Year's Best AM" title and a spot on the Adidas Skate team.

Over the coming years, Suciu made other big projects, signing with other sponsors like RVCA and Thunder. But his biggest video came out in 2020, Verso.

The video, produced by filmmaker Justin Albert, offers stunning visuals alongside impressive skating. It is different from most other skate videos in that the video does not try to focus on Suciu's face — it is all about the tricks themselves and the story it tells.

As for his competitive career, he skated in the Street League in 2019 and placed second in the U.S. Olympics qualifying, but faced a pivotal decision between the

Street League in 2019 and placed second in the U.S. Olympics qualifying, but faced a pivotal decision between the

Street League in 2019 and placed second in the U.S. Olympics qualifying, but faced a pivotal decision between the



Courtesy of THRASHER MAGAZINE

All graphics by NIKHIL MATHIHALLI and HOWARD SHU

The Falcon Crossword: Places Around Campus

by Nilay Mishra
& Anthony Wang

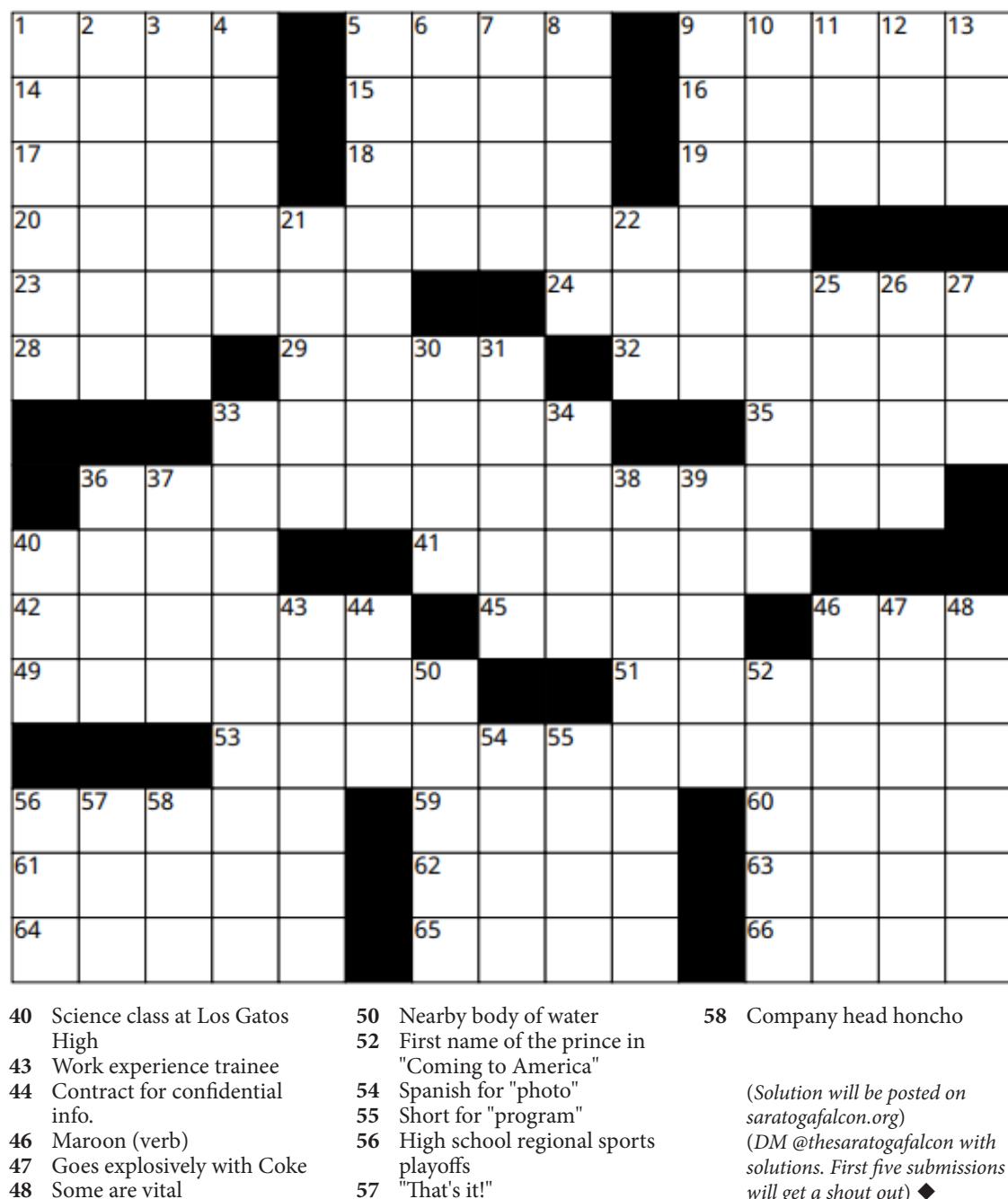
ACROSS

- Large deciduous tree from the mint family, or its namesake prized hardwood
- Tossed by Rosencrants and Guildenstern
- Carne _____
- _____ Skye, who played Diane Court in "Say Anything"
- Lhasa _____, a Tibetan dog breed
- Star Wars villain
- March Madness org.
- Remain undecided
- Tax-dodger's greatest fear
- Next to the school swimming pool
- Add _____ to injury
- "Hoot," "Chomp" and "Scat" novelist Carl _____
- Nuclear Energy Institute (abbr.)
- Smidgen
- Existential question behind "to be or not to be": to die _____?
- Bread bakery
- Person, place, thing or _____
- Contains foosball and air hockey tables
- First four letters of vacation rental company
- Soccer player _____ Ramos
- Communist dictator
- Pronto
- Subculture associated with depression
- Makes conscious (of)
- More malicious
- Cars allowed, but not students
- Digital memory storage for rapid retrieval
- I wasn't _____ yesterday!

- ¿Cómo _____ usted?
- Sport on campus
- C standard library function that converts string to int
- First name of the owner of Twitter
- Cut off
- Unit in P.E.
- Clutter

DOWN

- Adventure hero of Belgian comics
- Dawn-of-mammals epoch
- West African folklore character who takes the form of a spider
- Actor _____ Reeves
- AP Diploma program based on AP Seminar and AP Research
- International oil cartel
- Colloquialism: "Money _____ object"
- One way to say, "Obviously!"
- "_____: Way of Water"
- City just north of San Francisco
- +
- Framework to reduce workplace discrimination
- The _____ of war
- Prequel to the Odyssey
- Grande
- Small dish paired with entrée
- They lived happily _____ after
- Teachers' org.
- Bills with Alexander Hamilton
- Las Bellas _____
- Penguin Random House and HarperCollins
- Style of dance
- Venue
- Trolley cars
- Many a dictator's problem
- Sports: forty-_____



- Science class at Los Gatos High
- Nearby body of water
- First name of the prince in "Coming to America"
- Work experience trainee
- Contract for confidential info.
- Spanish for "photo"
- Short for "program"
- High school regional sports playoffs
- "That's it!"
- Company head honcho

(Solution will be posted on saratogafalcon.org)
(DM @thesaratogafalcon with solutions. First five submissions will get a shout out) ♦

Much-needed tips for Falcons with no game when it comes to finding love

HOT TAKE: DATING AT OUR SCHOOL IS LIKE DIGGING THROUGH THE DUMPSTER

Alli-so bad at spitting rizz



Allison Tan

As senior class president (they made me include this), I must announce that an unforgivable disease has infected our high school and it's not COVID-19. I cannot verbalize the outright disgust I feel every time I see underclassmen mingling and shouting "the Rizzard of Oz." Enough is enough.

The hard truth is that Saratoga has no game and if they want to improve, they need to finally take initiative and talk to their romantic interests.

People have become so embarrassed to approach people organically because of the ever-evolving online culture that they'd rather stalk their crush's snap maps and astrological compatibility than talk to them in person.

I promise you are not going to find your next relationship as a Discord kitten on Valorant.

I trace this lack of social skills to a hyper-academic culture, where students must sacrifice going to school dances in order to catch up on a hefty load of homework assigned over break.

Oftentimes, students here do not balance their social life with their academic life, resulting in suppressing their emotions and neglecting their love life.

On the other extreme, the people that do have the confidence to talk to other peers romantically are typically notorious for spitting the most outlandish game. "That is river rat behavior," I often find myself thinking out loud to my friends when they explain yet another offensive and borderline perverted pickup line sent to their DMs.

What happened to good old-fashioned chivalry? The best present you're going to get from a significant other from our school is heartbreak, a heart attack, a waste of time or a janky proposal brainstormed on the school toilet and drawn on a very small scrap of poster paper made by your best friend during tutorial.

Now that I'm (kinda) done complaining, I'm here to offer solutions:

- Go on real dates (not middle school type hangouts in Downtown Saratoga because you both don't have cars).
- Talk to someone you are interest-

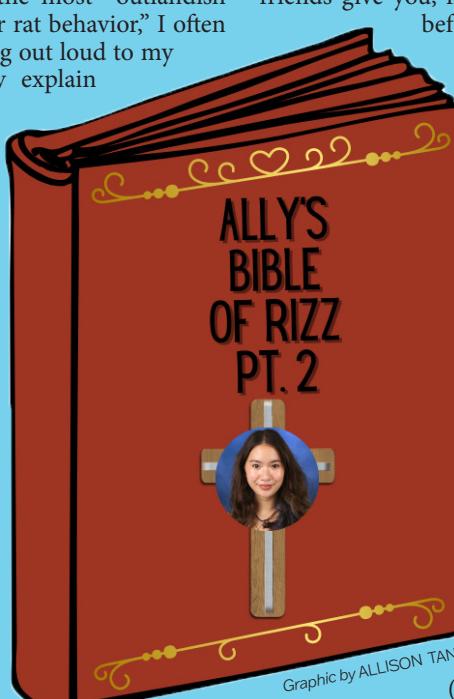
ed in one-on-one and not exclusively in group settings.

3. Don't listen to crappy advice your friends give you, like waiting three days before responding to someone's snap (your Snap with the broccoli filter over it is not worth the wait).

4. Avoid the classic Bay Area viewpoints at Mt. Eden and Skyline and instead go on creative dates to make things exciting. I suggest you take a gander about an aquarium or botanical garden, or partake in silly antics such as baking cookies from scratch or heading down to BJ's on \$4.99 pizookie Tuesdays (share a chocolate chunk pizookie with one spoon).

5. Or ignore all my previous points and date someone from a different school. Warning: Success is not guaranteed! (Evidence: me).

This is a desperate call to action for all Falcons and community members: Please, for the love of God, brush up on your game before we all die alone. ♦



Graphic by ALLISON TAN

top ten

MOST INTERESTING SENIOR TRIP IDEAS

10 Channel Islands National Park. There are no transportation services, buildings or stores on these islands. If you liked "Lord of the Flies," you can truly live the experience here.

9 Mars (one-way trip). For all the seniors whose lives are doomed to begging for money on the streets after only getting into a top-30 college instead of a top-10 college, this is the solution. Your other-worldly talent will certainly get you into Stanford now ... as long as you also have a 4.9 GPA and cured cancer.

8 The North and South Poles. Maybe polar coordinates will be useful here.

7 The college you got into. A very unique idea to demonstrate your school spirit!

6 The local Planet Fitness. This is where people use machines in revolutionary ways, like doing push ups on the assisted pull-up machine. You might even get to use the machines by waiting through their 10 minute breaks between sets.

5 England (city). You can walk around yelling "1776" and enjoy quality British delicacies like beans on toast. Watching American sports at 3 a.m. also hits different.

4 Arizona. Taking "let 'em cook" way too literally.

3 Gotham City. We said most interesting, not best. The Riddler might blow up your whole apartment complex for 10 gifted subs on his Twitch stream.

2 The Caribbean. Reward yourself with an extremely overpriced trip to Turks and Caicos ... or sneak on a ship and hope you end up there.

1 The Journalism Room. There's no better vacation than enjoying the food at Deadline Night!

>> Kavya Patel and Howard Shu