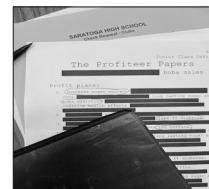


## OPINION 8



Breaking down the walls, literally

## FEATURES 10



Junior class office boba scheme exposed

## FEATURES 10



Freshman steals admin golf cart for joyride

# THE saratogafalcon

AN INDEPENDENT HIGH SCHOOL PUBLICATION

Friday, April 1, 2022

Saratoga High School | Saratoga, CA

Vol. 62, No. 8.5

## PARENTS RIOT AFTER SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

BY SelinaChen

In an uncanny resemblance to the Capitol Hill tragedy of Jan. 6, 2021, dozens of angry parents laid siege on the school library, where the highly-esteemed Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District (LG-SUHSD) school board had assembled on March 29 for a special session to verify the election results for three of its five member seats.

The miniature insurrection was precipitated by inflammatory speeches and wild claims of election fraud after the polls opened for the cities of Saratoga and Los Gatos. A candidate, successful businessman Don Triumph, also utilized social media

platforms like Twitter to voice his belief that he did not actually lose his seat.

At around 6 p.m., parents began congregating in front of the library — without masks — carrying posters and flags, as well as innovative weapons that represent their high-paying jobs: scalpels from surgeons, gavels from lawyers, TI-Nspire CX CAS calculators from engineers and four Teslas — including a Model S, a Model 3, a Model X and a Model Y — manned by the company's



senior project manager, that sped up the library's ramp.

A group of parents, described as "excellent leaders" by The Cat — a blog spin-off of Los Gatos's school newspaper El Gato — was featured prominently in this growing mob, with many describing their actions as still "safe and sane."

Around 8:30 p.m., the parents breached the defenses of the wall formed by the two schools' football teams, who coura-

geously sacrificed their time and safety to barricade the library entrance. Fortunately, no football player was injured and all board members had evacuated through an undisclosed exit before the mob's grand entrance.

The disappointed mob vandalized every surface available. Social media posts, such as one featuring a parent putting his feet on superintendent Mike Grove's desk, circulated in the community.

English teacher Erick Rector spoke to the Falcon about his reactions to this shocking incident.

With his experience teaching AP English Language and Composition, a class that

>> Riot on pg. 4

## Sophomore burns down science building

BY SarahZhou

Fire alarms blared on Feb. 30 as students shuffled out of their classrooms, greeting friends and rejoicing the lost class time to "yet another false alarm."

What they didn't know was that this alarm was not a drill.

Early that day in room 3015, sophomore Victoria Hu accidentally tipped over a lit bunsen burner, and no one had noticed the smoke until half

the room was in flames, due to being absorbed in an intriguing lecture on VSEPR structures.

The fire alarm, so used to being triggered, didn't start ringing until it caught on fire itself.

When students finally noticed the red hot blaze in the back of the room, Hu was still wiping her foggy glasses on her

>> FIRE on pg. 3



Courtesy of GREGORY LOUIE

Firefighters, delayed by six flat tires punctured by a box of nails spilled on Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road, let the flames blaze unattended for so long that the fire truck leading the fleet started smoking as it slowly wobbled toward the remains of the science building.

## 2022-2023 class day to be extended to 6 p.m.

BY Lihishoshani

Although the administration was deciding between three bell schedules with school beginning no earlier than 8:30 a.m. — per the law coming into effect during the 2022-2023 school year — and ending around 3:55 p.m. on Red Days, the newly chosen bell schedule has a much later end time.

Per the approved schedule, school will begin at 8:30 a.m. with academic tutorials held after second period. Due to teachers' stubbornness of not shortening classes beyond 90 minutes, the administration has reached a compromise for class time. As such, the new and



improved schedule will have 120 minute classes, allowing for a five minute siesta in each class. However, these improvements to the schedule result in an end time of 6:00 p.m.

Many teachers were against working past 3:45 p.m. on Red Days but agreed with this schedule because, "while the administration has not offered us anything yet, I'm expecting a huge bonus coming our way," English teacher Suzanne Herzman said.

Herzman also saw the schedule as a learning opportunity for the students.

>> BELL SCHEDULE on pg. 3

### BLOCK BELL SCHEDULE 2022-2023

#### Red Day

**1st PERIOD (120)**  
Period begins 8:30  
Period ends 10:30

**ANNOUNCEMENTS (10)**  
Period begins 10:30  
Period ends 10:40

**BREAK (5)**  
Period begins 10:40  
Period ends 10:45  
<passing period 10 minutes>

**3rd PERIOD (120)**  
Period begins 10:55  
Period ends 12:55

**LUNCH (45)**  
Period begins 12:55  
Warning Bell 1:40  
<passing period 10 minutes>

**5th PERIOD (120)**  
Period begins 1:50  
Period ends 3:50  
<passing period 10 minutes>

**7th PERIOD (120)**  
Period begins 4:00  
Period ends 6:00

#### Blue Day

**2nd PERIOD (120)**  
Period begins 8:30  
Period ends 10:30

**TUTORIAL (40)**  
Period begins 10:30  
Period ends 11:10

**BREAK (5)**  
Period begins 11:10  
Period ends 11:15  
<passing period 10 minutes>

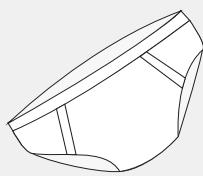
**4th PERIOD (120)**  
Period begins 11:25  
Period ends 1:25

**LUNCH (45)**  
Period begins 1:25  
Warning Bell 2:10  
<passing period 10 minutes>

**6th PERIOD (120)**  
Period begins 2:10  
Period ends 4:10

**Professional Collaboration and Meeting Time**

By Selina Chen, Lihishoshani & Jeanette Zhou



# newsbriefs

## Cafeteria plans to serve animal feed to students

In compliance with the new statewide free lunch program starting next fall, the cafeteria has begun experimenting with different meal options for next year's students. Their solution to an increased number of meals needing to be served: Jello.

According to an anonymous cafeteria worker named John, these free lunches will be made from beloved Jello, which satisfies students' taste, meets the school budget requirements and also provides an acceptable amount of calories per serving; John insisted the decision to use Jello as a main course meal was made with the students' health in mind.

"Halfway through the budget calculation, we realized that carbon-based life forms are unable to digest rocks, so we decided to use coagulated gelatin instead," John said.

Several meal options will be available, including Jello burgers, Jello tacos, Jello soup, wheat cakes and Jello. The cafeteria will also no longer be selling water or canned drinks, but some plumbing work is being done to reroute the locker room sinks to a spout in the cafeteria to make it easier for students to stay hydrated.

Most of the ingredients for the school lunches can be bought in bulk for low prices, and require minimal processing to render edible. For example, strawberry-flavored Jello only costs 1 cent per fluid ounce.

Large silos storing Jello shipments arriving will be constructed immediately behind the cafeteria.

"We are confident that the silos will be finished by the time the 2022-2023 school year comes around," John said. "These changes are exciting and we know the student body will appreciate something new and extremely tasty and healthy."♦

— Andrew Lin

Brought to you by:

## Spell Cheque

Four all off you're spelling needs.

Don't no the difference between their, they're, and there?  
We'll neither do we, butt now you have something to blame for you're slipups.

**Download Spell Cheque Two-day!**

shes graet → cheese grate

Amature → Am mature

Profeser → Profess her

Writeing → Right ting

Guidence → Guy dance

mispel → Miss Spell

Miniscule → Mini School

JEANETTE ZHOU

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The Saratoga Falcon

April 1, 2022

# Computer Science



FALCON // SELINA CHEN

Seniors Serena Li and Cici Xu sit in a corner of Room 303 to collaborate while writing an analysis of "Macbeth" in the Java to prepare for the AP Computer Science A exam, which they are both taking to earn a Seal of Bilingualism on their diplomas. The two also converse in Binary Code to practice using coding language in their daily life.

## Despite student pushback, district requires APCSA for all students

BY SamBai  
& JonnyLuo

The administration will require AP Computer Science as a mandatory class for all rising sophomores starting in the 2022-23 school year, citing a desire to increase often neglected STEM course registration at Saratoga High, assistant principal Matt Torrens said. The APCS mandate will also apply retroactively to current juniors and sophomores, who will have to take the class in future years.

With the world becoming more and more connected in the 21st century, Torrens believes that it is becoming especially important to develop language skills of all kinds.

"Our new policy aims to increase biliteracy rates at SHS — students should be fluent in both English and Java," Torrens said, "The State Department of Education feels that a year-long World History is too much and are in favor of limiting the year-long course to a semester-long course."

This change has been upsetting for many students, especially those who are more inclined to the humanities. Freshman Aiden Ye, who detests math and science, says he would rather leave the district than continue and take the class.

In response to this announcement, students formed the anti-APCS student union, led by Ye, in order to protest the mandate. The union is planning on holding a protest in the quad on April 8, where they will release bugs, purchased from the nearest PetCo and topped with pictures of computers ("computer bugs"), into the office.

Since the school is currently experiencing trouble finding new teachers due to low pay, English teachers with free periods will be teaching many of the new APCS classes.

"I don't think teaching APSC will be that difficult, especially because English is a language, and so is computer science," APSC teacher, Jarvin Bayona said. "It's elegant, beautiful and symbolic of so many other things, just like literature."

Many English teachers were originally opposed to this idea; however, after reading and analyzing "Coding for Dummies" by Nikhil Abraham, many teachers became more receptive to the idea.

"I believe I'm really going to enjoy teaching these new classes, especially because I preach so much about stepping out of your comfort zone," Bayona said.

On the other hand, freshmen such as Johnathan Ma argue that APSC will enable them to become better at TikTok. He believes that he can artificially increase the number of people who like his post through the use of computer science.

"Wow, just wow," Bayona said. "I hope my love for computer science will be passed on to the future generation, however unwilling they may be."♦

## School announces CS classes fulfill foreign language requirements

BY SelinaChen  
& SerenaLi

Recognizing the essential role of coding in Silicon Valley life, the school announced a decision on March 31 that starting from the 2022-23 school year, Computer Science (CS) languages will count toward the foreign language requirement, potentially replacing Spanish, French, Japanese and Chinese.

Teachers Jarvin Bayona, Thomas Wang, Audrey Warmuth and Paul John Forest have now been transferred to the World Languages department.

"Fluency in different coding languages is like learning dialects," Bayona said. "Just like how some Cantonese and Mandarin speakers like to compete with each other, I'm interested in seeing the language hierarchy that forms."

A current list of languages that meet the district language requirement include Java, C++, Python, JavaScript and Binary Code.

Seniors can apply for a Los Gatos Saratoga Union High School District (LGSUHSD) Seal of Bilingualism on their graduation diplomas with four years of education in any two of the above CS languages or a score of at least 4 on the AP Computer Science A exam.

To practice, students are now speaking in code in their daily lives. Falcon reporters heard the following snippet, spoken in Binary code, outside of the cafeteria.

"01000001 01110010 01100101 00100000 01110111 01100101 00100000 01100100 01101111 01101110 01100101 00111111," senior Anjali Nuggehalli said.

"01010011 01100011 01101000 01101111 01101111 01101100 00100000 01110011 01110101 01100011 01101011 01110011," freshman Will Norwood concurred.

Administrators who find Binary Code too long-winded for conversations, but still wish to partake in this cultural shift, turned to Java instead. For instance, the following announcement was featured in principal Greg Louie's Friday newsletter:

```
int lateCnt = 0;
for(int i = 0; i <= schoolYearLength; i++) {
    if(minutesLate >= 0)
        lateCnt++;
    if(lateCnt >= 6)
        System.out.print("Come to Treasure
Toga!");
}
```

Parents were delighted to see this announcement. Zhi Liu, mother of junior George Huang and senior engineer at Google, praised Louie for being "sensitive to society's real needs."

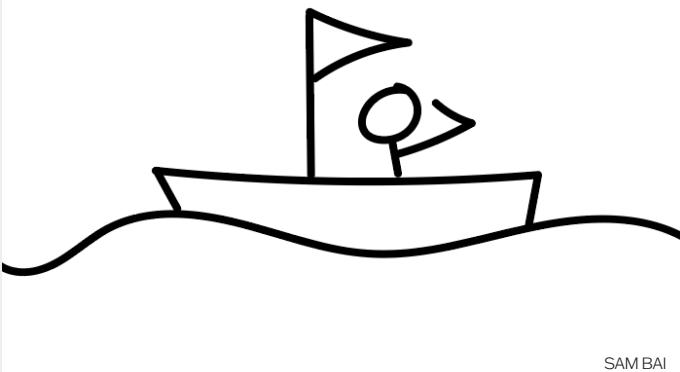
The decision is also highly applauded by STEM-oriented colleges.

"We view speaking CS languages as Silicon Valley-born students embracing their authentic identities," said an anonymous admissions officer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). "Those who strive for excellence in coding will be viewed favorably both in our admissions process and in their careers."♦

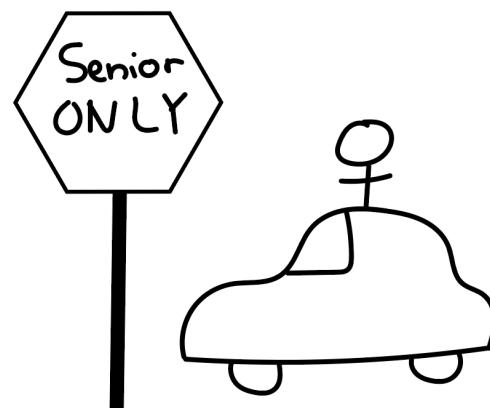
# Board announces expected advisory topics for 2022-2023

## Advisory Topics

### Flooded School Corridors



### Parking lot parking



### Advisory ending



ANNIE LIU

## FIRE

continued from pg. 1

shirt, wondering where the smoky smell was coming from. Quickly evacuating, students in room 3015 rushed out of the room, all shooting glares at Hu.

"I didn't mean to — it was my glasses," wailed Hu. "I promise I'll switch to contacts soon."

The fire raged on as students watching from the softball field cheered and whistled.

"It was the most exciting thing ever," said sophomore Amaris Charton, giggling at the memory. "It's a once in a lifetime experience to watch a place of such suffering being burnt down — good thing I procrastinated on my pre-lab because it looks like I won't be needing that anytime soon."

While the excitement was happening, sophomore Jarrett Singh was carrying a box of nails for his engineering project after leaving campus for lunch, when he saw the smoke coming from the science building. Distracted by the plume of smoke, Singh tripped, sending his nails flying all across Saratoga Sunnyvale Road. The fire truck that

was rushing to assist the school drove over the mess, resulting in six flat tires. The science building ultimately burned down, as the other firetrucks in the area happened to be out of gas, and weren't able to afford the \$7.49 per gallon.

When confronted, Hu once again placed all the blame on her foggy glasses for the destruction.

"I was fifteen minutes late to class, so everyone was already doing the lab, and my glasses were really foggy due to my huffing and puffing in the mask," Hu sniffled, her glasses fogging up once again. "I didn't see the burning flame, and when the bunsen burner fell over I thought someone else would pick it up — I'm not a very proactive person."

The science building is now hosting classes on the football field and students are embracing their chance to learn in nature on the artificial grass. Students of room 3015, however, are still shunning Hu for her incompetence, and are shooing bees that attempt to pollinate the turf toward her during class.

Hu, who has still yet to switch to contact lenses, has now invested in Anti-Fog Lens Cleaner and is "really hoping I don't burn down the football field — not that it would lower the chances of the football team winning," she said with a sneer.♦

BY Selina Chen  
& Lih Shoshani

Recognizing the abysmal social and emotional states of students, the board announced its comprehensive plan for next year's advisory lessons.

The diverse work group — consisting of adult board members, adult board members and more adult board members — has dedicated the bulk of their time to devise a list of mandatory topics:

### Promoting harmony with administrators post-crisis

Students will complete an online module called "GoGo Power-Administrators" on the educational simulation platform Kognito. In the hypothetical scenario presented in the module, a virtual avatar representing a hypothetical administrator — whose likeness is inspired by professor Dolores Umbridge from "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix" — responded to a hypothetical potential danger at a hypothetical school event with excellent poise.

Her exemplary communications with law enforcement and quick reaction time in detaining intruders was so highly-praised by hypothetical school board members that they considered naming the school after her.

However, the hypothetical student body fundamentally disagreed with the administrator's solution, prompting days of tension.

To complete the lesson, students must work to resolve the conflict by "conversing" with these simulated humans.

The work group voted to cover this topic in the first advisory lesson in recognition of the importance of "promoting complete deference — hem-hem, I mean harmony — between students and their authority figures," a board member said.

### Traversing through flooded school corridors

On Dec. 13, an ominous gray sky dumped rain upon the school, flooding the corridor between the English block and the MAP Annex and pooling into an ankle-deep

river (sans-alligator, sadly).

Three English classrooms were significantly impacted when the flood formed the turbulent moat around their doors, completely cutting off students' access unless they braved the waters. It did not help when confused teachers, armed with crackling walkie-talkies, gave contradicting directions that forced students to walk in circles around the building.

Finally, students squelched into their English classes with soaked shoes, only to be greeted with the alarming announcement that the entire back parking lot was flooded. Teachers across campus frantically abandoned their classes to rescue their vehicles — including one history teacher's unlucky Tesla whose front and back trunk were filled with rain water.

Reflecting on this debacle, the board realized deficits in the school's emergency preparedness. After all, the chances of a fire-induced evacuation to the upper field — before moving down to the lower field — is minuscule compared to California's notorious over-abundance of water.

Notably, the board commissioned the school's world-renowned robotics team to modify the golf carts into "Gulf Carts" for amphibious environments — one of its only successful decisions.

### Respecting class-level segregation in parking lots

"There is a hierarchy to be adhered to," an administrator said. "Respecting your elders is a trait the board deems crucial when entering the job market. Therefore we are trying to drill this value into our impressionable juniors."

If juniors cannot obey the law of the land, in which all but the last row of the senior lot is reserved for seniors, their precious tutorials will be converted to additional advisory modules about how a parking lot is a microcosm of society.

"Seniors can't complain about their parking lot when they don't know how to drive in the first place," junior Shaan Sridhar said. "We got our licenses first; we deserve the spots."

The reporters of this story, who are seniors ardently defending

their rights, were verbally attacked by Sridhar during this interview.

### Promoting healthy rivalry between SHS and LGHS

Thanks to their English 11 Honors teachers, students now possess the perfect analogy to describe these two feuding communities: West Egg and East Egg in "The Great Gatsby." However, the result is destined to be different as Saratoga will do what West Egg couldn't: It will prevail.

The first step to Saratoga's conquest is the Falcon's acquisition of the El Gato newspaper. Falcon reporters began hatching this plan when El Gato's reporting on the vandalism on their own campus fell short in comparison to the Falcon.

However, Falcon-hired Mergers and Acquisition (M&A) lawyers are concerned about the burgeoning alliance between the Falcon and the Los Gatos football team. A Falcon opinion article and its refutation by the captain of the Saratoga football team established hostility between the award-winning newspaper and the consistently-losing team, and so the newspaper has now struck up an amicable relationship with the Wildcats under the "enemy of my enemy is my friend" doctrine.

All of these negotiations greatly enhance students' critical-thinking capabilities, making this endeavor a suitable advisory topic, the work group stated in a press release.

### How to not waste your time complaining about how advisory is a waste of time — because it's not going away

Self-explanatory.

The Falcon understands that this section is short but believes that it adequately reflects the board members' temper.

Overall, the work group is proud of this widely-commanded list when asked by the Falcon to comment on it.

"Great question! As you can see, we've tailored these topics to specific school issues so that they are down to earth," a board member explained. "We are so excited to see their success."♦

## BELL SCHEDULE

continued from pg. 1

"We're trying to model balance, health and wellness so sometimes it really helps to do a hardcore simulation where work-life balance doesn't happen," she said.

Sophomore Selina Chen, who joined the school in the beginning of the second semester of the 2021-2022 school year felt that the school was moving in the right direction, drawing from her experience in Chinese schools where she says "where students have proper

decorum."

"Students like to spend their free time after school on trivialities like relaxing with friends," Chen said. "Of course the school should destroy these inanities."

Additionally, the board is discussing a mandatory advisory held every Tuesday from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., which has to be attended in person with each student's second period class.

"In the beginning of the year, I was really lonely and felt I had no one to talk to, but during the advisory lessons I really felt connected to the digital animation characters," junior Shaan Sridhar. "I'm excited to see my new friends more often."♦

RED DAY	BLUE DAY
1st PERIOD 8:30 am	2nd PERIOD (90) 8:30 am
ANNOUNCEMENTS	TUTORIAL (40)
BREAK 10:10 - 10:15 am	BREAK 10:40 - 10:45
3rd PERIOD 10:25 - 11:55	4th PERIOD (90) 12:25
LUNCH (30 minutes) 11:55 - 12:25	LUNCH (30 minutes) 12:55
5th PERIOD (40) 12:35 - 2:05	6th PERIOD (90) 1:05 - 2:35
7th PERIOD (90) 3:45	

Graphic by ANNIE LIU

# Ripped jeans banned in recently implemented district dress code

BY Hannah Lee  
& Nidhi Mathihalli

Last Friday, a senior, who remains anonymous, was caught using notes during their AP Language midterm; instead of cheating in normal ways, such peeking at a desk-mate's Scantron, the student decided to cheat by putting their notes between the holes in their ripped jeans, in such a way that they could read them during the test.

After successfully using their notes without being caught in other classes in this way, they told The Falcon they got overly confident.

While still in the classroom, they also told their friend exactly how they cheated. This proved to be a fatal mistake: They did not notice that English teacher Erick Rector had snuck behind them and listened to everything they had just said.

"I took ninja lessons from when I was nine to 14," Rector proudly stated. "They didn't even notice I was right behind them. Everyone else was staring at me weirdly during my slow yet undetectable walk, but you gotta do what you gotta do."

Rector added that he has seen a lot of weird methods of cheating throughout his years of teaching, but none were close to the strategy employed in this incident.

However, Rector was not the only one shocked by this incident. Students in the class were baffled as to how a pair of pants was able to help their classmate cheat.

**"The idea was really creative, but considering the class average was a 51%, I don't think it worked out well."**

SENIOR Jeanette Zhou

"I was trying to take my test when I heard someone vigorously scratching their jeans," senior Jeanette Zhou said. "I thought [redacted student name]'s idea was really creative, but considering the fact that the class average was a 51%, I don't think it worked out that well for [redacted student name]."

The senior's witty jean-cheating method spurred a wave of many other students trying to successfully complete the scheme, setting a district-wide record of 100 academic violations being forwarded to the office within the span of two days.

Upon hearing about this incident from her son, whose AP Physics test curves have been getting worse as a result of the increased cheating incidents, one board member decided to act on this issue.

After further discussion, the board decided to officially implement a ban on all ripped jeans starting on April 5.

The board's decision shocked students, as many believed that the district was being extremely unfair toward the money and time students spent picking out their ripped jeans.

One student in particular, junior Samika Agarwal, has decided to respond to this decision with a petition to

stop the ripped jeans ban.

"I literally only own ripped jeans," Agarwal said. "Even the jeans that used to not be ripped are now ripped. It's not even a stylistic choice: I just trip a lot."

Agarwal added that she will not be able to buy new pants, since her mother is mad at her for spending over \$1,500 on Kraft Mac and Cheese — a worthy purchase, in her humble opinion.

As a result, Agarwal noted that her credit cards have been suspended and that she is not allowed to shop for other dressing alternatives.

Following the ban on ripped jeans this April, the board is currently in talks over banning controversial attire such as cat shirts, all Hello Kitty merch and cat ears.

Asked about her reaction, Agarwal said, "I really really really hope things get back to normal, you know." ♦



## Substitute shortage leads to seniors teaching classes

BY Lili Shoshani

Due to the nationwide substitute teacher shortage, the Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District (LGSUHSD) has started a new program intended to benefit students: The school has offered seniors better letters of recommendation and private meetings with Ivy League college admissions officers in return for teaching freshman-level courses.

Many have jumped at this teaching opportunity, including senior Apurva Chakravarthy, who now teaches history teacher Kirk Abe's fifth-period freshman class:

Ethnic Geography.

**"This has been a very valuable lesson for me since my lifelong dream has always to be a firefighter."**

SENIOR Apurva Chakravarthy

"It's been really hard creating my own grading scale and tests for my students, but someone had to do it," Chakravarthy said.

"It helps that Harvard, Yale and Princeton will know how hardworking I've been during this trying time."

Freshmen are finding this teaching change very effective because the new senior teachers have a better understanding of their students' mindsets, by teaching the material in a way the freshmen are able to easily digest.

"Ms. Chakravarthy is able to address the students with grace and professionalism, and can relate to students in ways Mr. Abe just couldn't," sophomore Sarah Thomas, who was held back a year and takes the freshman class in Ethnic Geography, said.

"Due to this staffing change, our class average has gone up and student morale has boosted."

Although substitute teachers may become more available as COVID-19 cases decline, the administration is considering continuing this program since it costs less and keeps students engaged.

"This has been a very valuable lesson for me since my lifelong dream has always been to be a firefighter," Chakravarthy said.

Abe himself has encouraged Chakravarthy's pursuance of teaching, since it allows for him to "spend time playing basketball with my old sport Sheehy." ♦

## RIOTS

continued from pg. 1

focuses on philosophy, Rector believes it pointless to consider whether the mob's actions are ethical or unethical.

"I don't care about the Utilitarian School or the Kantian School; this is Saratoga High School," he said.

Similarly, senior Joshua Fang, who plans to study political philosophy in college, applied his knowledge to analyze the situation and its implications.

"This is why Thomas Hobbes argued we should have a strong, authoritarian school board," Fang said. "With the current state of things, [the parents] will one day storm Harvard admissions office and scramble all the decisions, but I guess it's too late for me to benefit."

Unlike the Rector and Fang, who followed the insurrection on Zoom from the safety of their homes, the few students who were present during the siege found it traumatizing.

Freshman Anushka Tadikonda had been filming for her Media Arts Program (MAP) project on campus that day and captured a few clips with her camera.

"I thought I somehow got into a time machine and traveled back to Jan. 6," Tadikonda said. "The feeling worsened when I saw a parent named Marge Tailor Grey strutting about with her overpriced stilettos and hideous salon blowout." ♦

## USC admissions officer speaks on the college admissions process

STUDENTS REJECTING THEIR REJECTIONS IS A MAJOR PROBLEM, RECENT POLLS SHOW

BY Bill Yuan

The Falcon was lucky to get USC admissions officer Natasha Gatherer to speak about the school's decision process. According to Gatherer, the decision process is a long and painstaking one. After all, they "only get a little over two months to review around 70,000 applicants."

Before reading any of the essays, Gatherer told The Falcon she separates the applications into two even piles and immediately discards one of them at random.

"At USC, we only want the best students," Gatherer said. "We don't want students that are unlucky."

After her initial purge, Gatherer closely reviews each application one by one.

"First I look at their SAT score. If they scored below a 1500 or took the ACT, then we automatically put them at the bottom of the pile," Gatherer said. After further narrowing down their applicants to "the cream of the crop," Gatherer always rejects the first application she reads and admits the second one.

"As we all know, first is the worst, and second is the best," she said.

For the rest of the applications, Gatherer evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of each applicant, and admits accordingly.



"As long as they are qualified or have handed us \$500,000 in dirty money, we will admit them," Gatherer said.

Applicants who don't quite make the cut can be waitlisted. However, if waitlisted students get endorsed, then the admissions office might have to think twice.

"Past admitted students have withdrawn their admission and left a note, saying that a specific waitlisted student is a better fit than them," Gatherer said. "What else am I sup-

osed to do? I have to let them in."

Gatherer's biggest struggle, however, is receiving emails from students rejecting their rejections.

"Even after receiving so many, the words 'I regret to inform you that I am unable to accept your rejection' get me every time," Hunter said. "Every year, we fail to reject around 2,000 students."

But overall, the decision process is a "holistic and merit-based system," she said. ♦

# JNCO jeans make a well-deserved comeback

EVEN THOUGH THESE PANTS COST OVER 100 BUCKS PER PAIR, STUDENTS AND TEACHERS THINK THEY'RE WORTH IT

By Kavya Patel  
& Sarah Thomas

Although the recent mask mandate allowed students and teachers not to wear masks to school, seeing their teachers full face for the first time wasn't nearly as shocking as the new fashion trend sweeping Saratoga High — JNCO jeans.

**The trend surged after February break, when many students started rocking the jeans with a basic top.**

Background for the fashionably uncouth: JNCO jeans are wide leg jeans that became

trendy for the first time in the 90s. Over the past few years, streetwear has become increasingly popular with people trading in their skinny jeans for mom jeans, but the trend of big jeans returning has definitely hit Saratoga hard. These days, everyone has a staple pair of JNCO jeans.

The trend surged on campus after February break, when many students started rocking the jeans with a basic top. The jeans are suitable for the winter season due to their ability to provide warmth.

Track coach Archie Ljepava loves the way his JNCO jeans flap in the wind as he drives around campus in his golf cart. "JNCO jeans changed my life for the better," Ljepava said.

Jerry Sheehy admits he loves his new collection of jeans, preferring to match them

with his blue Golden State Warriors shirt.

"A lot of my students don't understand why I feel so passionate about JNCO jeans," Sheehy said. "I'm a history teacher, and being able to showcase my style and my passion for history in one beautiful piece of denim has been life changing."

Assistant Principal Matt Torrens has been obsessing over his collection of JNCO jeans.

"Oh, I'm a JNCO stan!" Torrens said, accidentally letting a student slip away without filling out her Screener-19 in his excitement. "They make me look woke, savage and salty all at the same time! I can't believe the rage of these things! Of all the jeans I own, these are totes the best one! If you wear these things, your friends will be like, 'stop being so extra, you so boujee, we can't keep up'!" ♦



Torrens



Graphic by SERENALI

# Administration promotes innovative sport: Saratoga Sprinter's Shopping Spree for Valley Fair clothing

By Sanjoli Gupta

Saratoga High, known for its academics and wealthy students, has recently addressed what it deems to be its biggest area for improvement. Some may believe that it's the lack of mental health resources, while others believe it is a shortage of humanities classes. The admins, however, knew it was a lack of sports that represent student interests — more specifically, the "rich kid" culture of Saratoga.

Multiple news sources recently announced the school's purchase of great



Graphic by SERENALI

amounts of clothing from famous brands such as Gucci, Chanel and Prada to facilitate a new sport: the Saratoga Sprinter's Shopping Spree.

The idea to introduce this sport to Saratoga came to admins while enjoying their monthly lunch at Valley Fair mall, where they saw teenagers sprinting faster than the school's best football players to reach expensive and high quality stores.

The sport, which will require track and field skills and an expert eye, sees athletes sprinting to three pieces of clothing in every rotation of the track where they

must grab the most expensive item and carry it while finishing the race. First, second and third place gets to keep their apparel, and the new sport is reducing sprinting times by whole minutes.

The first person to make it through a mile with a quick grab and sprinting wins, allowing them to count all their practice time both for P.E. credit and as volunteer hours, automatically qualifying them for a Presidential Volunteer Service Award.

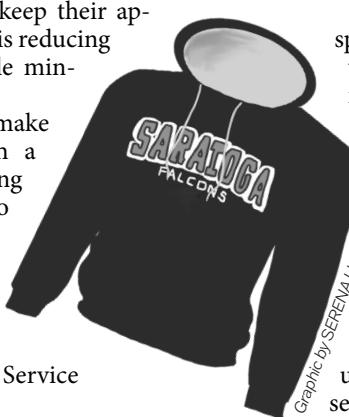
According to Head Trainer Orre, "A fun

fact about the sport is that Anna Delvey is the world record holder in the sport."

The new athletes come sporting their expensive clothing to school, and a few have heard rumors of students being forced to work to earn these sweats.

"I'm so used to my parents paying for all my apparel [...] running or working to earn anything is a completely new concept for me!" sophomore Nidhi Vadlamudi said.

For interested students, sign ups are in the student center or see Mr. Torrens or Mr. Ellis for more details. ♦



Graphic by SERENALI

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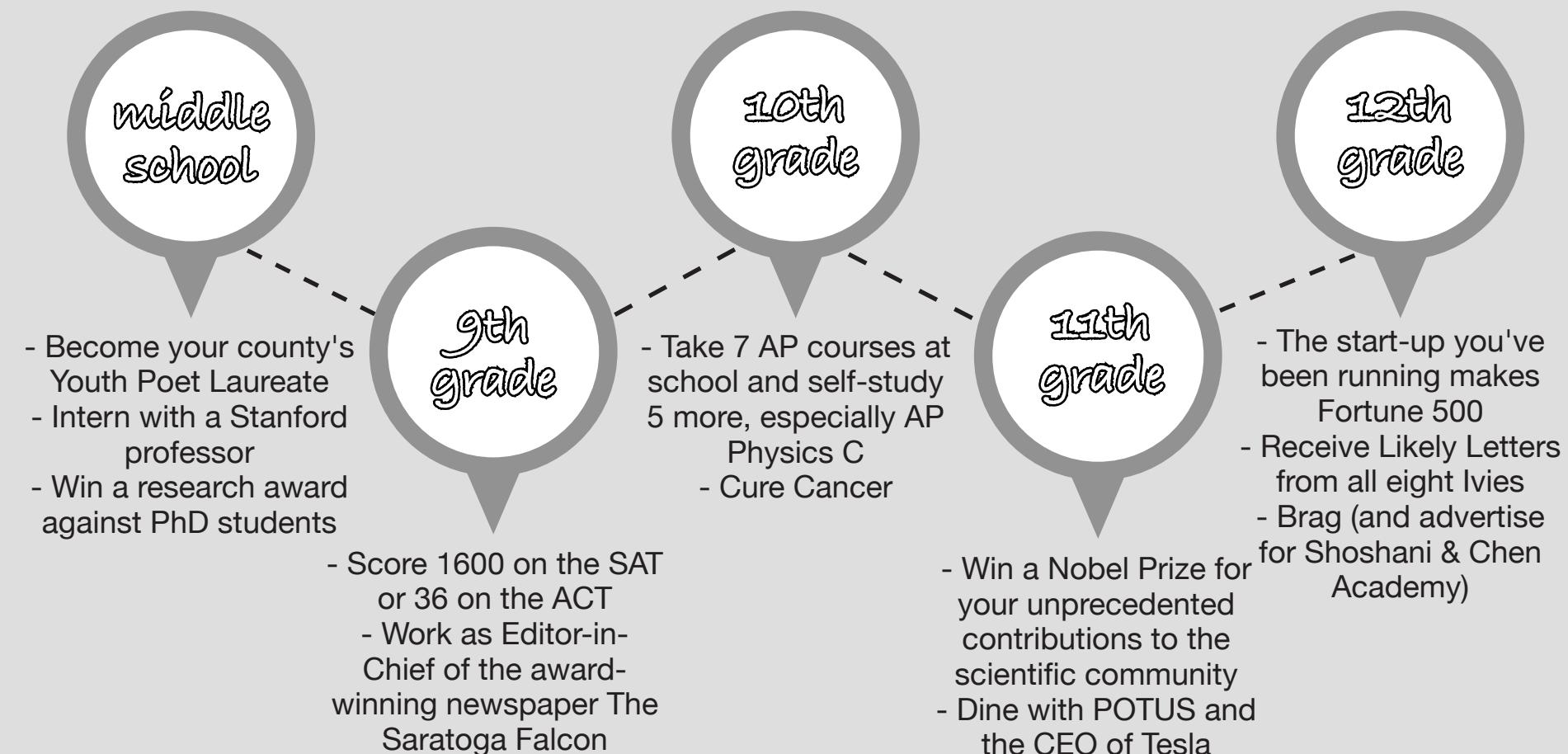
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Two Shoshani & Chen Academy students relax after taking the SAT on Feb. 11, satisfied with their exemplary testing performances.

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### REGARDING MY STUDENT YU:

To whom it may concern at "whatever" university,

I say "Whatever" University because I frankly have no clue where Yu is applying. Her most defining trait is her utter disregard of authority, best exemplified by her decision to apply early to Yale despite my stern words warning her not to. As a result, she was deferred, with no sympathy from me.

However, her choice demonstrated her commitment to choosing her own fate and ignoring others' criticisms, so maybe she deserves some praise.

Even so, her deferral did not come as a surprise after taking a glance at her rather pedestrian transcript. How dare she take Calc AB instead of BC! I have trained my other students to burn with fiery ambition in their STEM pursuits, so please do not count Yu's sluggishness against the rest of my darling students, whose praises I sing to Yu every counseling session.

Yet, Yu is stubbornly pursuing international relations, and never once broke down in tears during my incessant scolding, so I'd like to commend her impressive emotional resilience. She is well prepared for the ups-and-downs

of college life.

Although she takes interest in the social sciences, she must sometimes overcome her lack of aptitude, evident in her choice to compete in Speech instead of Debate, likely because her muddled intellect can't handle the intensity of Debate crossfires. However, seeing that Speech is less time-consuming than Debate, and she miraculously managed to win some awards, I should applaud her ability to make calculated decisions, taking one step back for two steps forward.

I have trouble recalling how else she wastes — sorry, dedicates — her time.



SHOSHANI & CHEN ACADEMY

Oh, I heard news editor or something, so at least she's finally found a way to channel her creative writing abilities into producing nonsensical stories (possibly about me).

Thank you for enduring Yu's application. After four years, I still cannot discern the root of her lamentable life choices, but please consider her for admission nonetheless.

Best wishes,  
Selina Chen  
Co-Founder and CEO



### REGARDING MY STUDENT BENJAMIN:

To whom it may concern at Cornell University,

I am writing to advocate for the acceptance of one of my students to your school.

In all honesty, Benjamin is in no way suited for your college: He plays video games too much, lacks motivation and almost never takes the initiative to pursue new opportunities.

You may think one redeeming quality may lie in his acceptable test scores, but make no mistake: Those were all heavily dependent on luck. However, should you choose to accept him, I will have one more Ivy-League

student to boost my career records, so I urge you to at least glimpse at the few positive aspects of his application.

While his extracurriculars may seem dismal upon first glance, they are actually one of Benjamin's strong suits. He only pursues activities he holds a genuine interest in, a rare quality among the college-crazed high school students these days. The few he has should be more considered important than the plethora listed on other students' applications.

In addition, Benjamin's ability to ignore my advice is among the best I have ever seen, and I consider it to be a sign of a strong-willed, independent

leader who will forge his own path in life. Every remark made toward him, positive or negative, goes out the other ear, courtesy of his impressive mental fortitude.

If Steve Jobs had succumbed to the criticism and advice thrown at him, he would never have been able to successfully build Apple; I'm not suggesting that Benjamin is the Next Big Thing, but this singular shared characteristic could count for something. Maybe.

Lastly, I would like to highlight his impressive ability to sleep. While some may look upon this aspect as a sign of laziness, I see a relentless desire to be energetic the next day — a characteris-

tic owned by those with forward-thinking minds.

Rest assured, Benjamin will not experience the burnout many college students face during their undergraduate experience, and if you're lucky, he may even teach other students his methods.

Please consider Benjamin's admission for the sake of my resume — as well as his future, but that's neither here nor there.

Best wishes,  
Lini Shoshani  
Co-Founder and CFO

## togatestimonials

How did Shoshani & Chen Academy change your life?

"With the Academy, I no longer need to have a wizard brainwash the entire world to get into MIT."

senior Peter Parker

"I am the captain of a prestigious high school Decathlon teams thanks to the Academy."

senior Michelle "MJ" Jones

"The Academy encouraged me to pursue my passion in Lego-building, ultimately for the world to see."

senior Ned Leeds

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1

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2

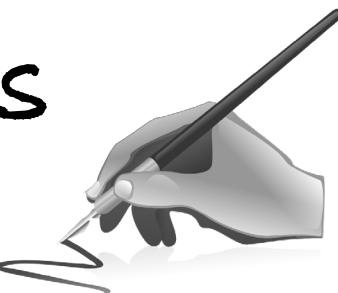
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3

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Because admissions officers prefer that your writing style reflects your true voice, we will ignore your grammatical mistakes and polish your diction so that you come across as a spoiled teenager with an ego the size of Russia





# features

# Math teacher PJ Yim leaves SHS to bring English and physics to younger students

BY SamBai, NikhilMathihalli  
& DanielWu

After an accomplished teaching career at Saratoga High and elsewhere, famed math teacher PJ Yim recently told his classes that he has made the difficult decision to transition to teaching humanities and physics at Redwood Middle School.

Throughout his 21 years of teaching mathematics, Yim was well known for blending humor with a strict persona, creating a unique classroom environment.

Yet, as the years went by, Yim admitted he gradually lost the motivation which initially brought him into the teaching profession. Yim claims that high schoolers are "immature" and "way too boring."

"Teaching high school students has become quite stale and boring."

TEACHER Pyong Jin Yim

"Teaching high school students has become quite stale. Every morning at 8:30 a.m. they walk in drowsy and fatigued, instantly collapsing on their desks. I've used all my signature methods to energize them, including pep talks such as 'Be like cactus,'" Yim said.

Yim further cited the lack of respect and attention the majority of high school students show, with many playing games on their phones and skipping class to sleep in

the student center.

Looking ahead, Yim believes that he will be able to rediscover his passion of teaching with a much younger class. Starting next fall, he will begin teaching sixth-grade Core classes RMS, which includes social studies, language arts and literature.

As a middle school core teacher, Yim will be aligning his current math curriculum along with material typically taught in sixth grade classes including the renowned book "Call of the Wild."

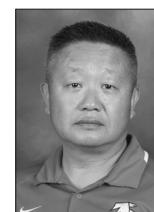
In "Call of the Wild," the dogs struggled to pull a sled when hundreds of pounds of load was placed onto it. Using mathematical concepts including vectors, drag, acceleration and tension, I aim to have students develop equations and solutions on how the dogs can overcome their challenge," Yim said.

In addition to English, the sixth-grade core curriculum includes details regarding ancient historical civilizations including Mesopotamia and China.

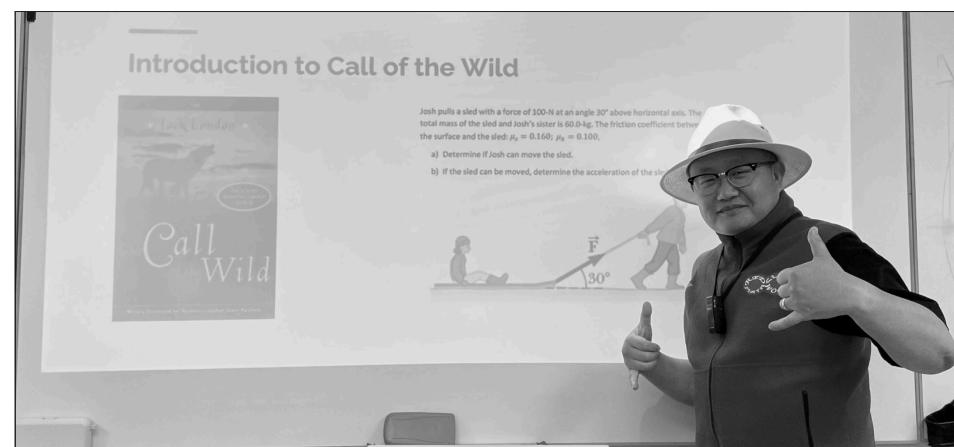
I aim to bring light to the various scientific and mathematical discoveries of ancient civilizations. The books currently drone on for way too long on pointless rulers. They need to be looking at the equations!" Yim said, visibly growing agitated.

Along with teaching at Redwood Middle School, Yim also plans on opening a Physics Club at Foothill Elementary, in order to spark a passion for the subject among young students.

"At such a young age, kids are undergoing a phase of discovery and enlightenment," Yim said, "By introducing topics including



Yim



FALCON // DANIEL WU

PJ Yim, donning a cowboy hat and his signature microphone around his neck, pulls up his "Call of the Wild and physics" presentation at the front of his class for middle schoolers.

quantum gravity, particle masses, and anti-matter to toddlers, their imaginations can truly be piqued with excitement."

The club will host a variety of projects. As a starter project, Yim plans on having club members simulate rocket launches to the Alpha Centauri solar system.

The Physics Club will also take part in competitions. There will be both a USAPhO and F=ma team composed primarily of fourth and fifth graders.

"Other competitive physics teams will be intimidated when a bunch of four footers pull up wearing Gucci and Supreme, accessories necessary for the performance of the team," Yim said.

Because of the lacking middle school English curriculum, not including enough crit-

ical thinking, Yim plans on bringing complex math "word" problems for his students to solve. The complexity of these word problems will be able to excel students in their rate of comprehension and mathematics.

Students may also expect to read a Shakespearean literature piece every night for homework and write fifty page analytical essays, mentioning instances of mathematics they discovered through their reading.

All in all, Yim feels that while his English abilities might not be up to par with most teachers, he believes his edge in mathematics will place him a bar above the others.

"Although English isn't my first language, by being a Core teacher at Redwood Middle School, my perspective in math will be able to better prepare students for future English classes as well as getting them a boost in math," Yim said. ♦

# Hemmerich sees success with wig startup

BY BenjaminLi  
& AllenLuo

Media arts teacher Alex Hemmerich's bald head glistened under the bright LED lights in room MAP02 as he carefully combed one of the wigs sitting in front of him. Grabbing the underside of the wig, he delicately lifted it off of the stand and placed it on his head to test the fit.

These wigs are a part of Hemmerich's new independent business expenditure.

After jotting down a few notes on a clipboard, Hemmerich took the wig off, and moved on to the next one.

These wigs are a part of Hemmerich's new independent business expenditure, "Hairmerich's," a company founded to produce high quality hair wigs for the follically challenged like himself.

"I started my company after a horrifying incident with a client I was photographing," Hemmerich said. "The light I was using bounced from the top of my head, off a mirror and into the camera. The exposure shot through the roof and the photo was ruined."

Hemmerich is one of many suffering from BHS (Bald Head Syndrome). However, instead of letting this condition define him, Hemmerich chose to find a new way to define himself. With his affordable, luxurious wigs, Hemmerich has created a new image for everyone who wishes they had a full head of hair. Not only does this include those affected by BHS, but also its precursor condition: BingHS (Balding Head Syndrome).

According to the AHLA (American Hair Loss Association), 85% of men and 50% of women will experience hair loss at some point in their lives. In the 25% of men with hair loss genetics, which unfortunately includes Hemmerich, balding begins before 21.

"These statistics were shocking to me," Hemmerich said. "I couldn't believe that so many peo-

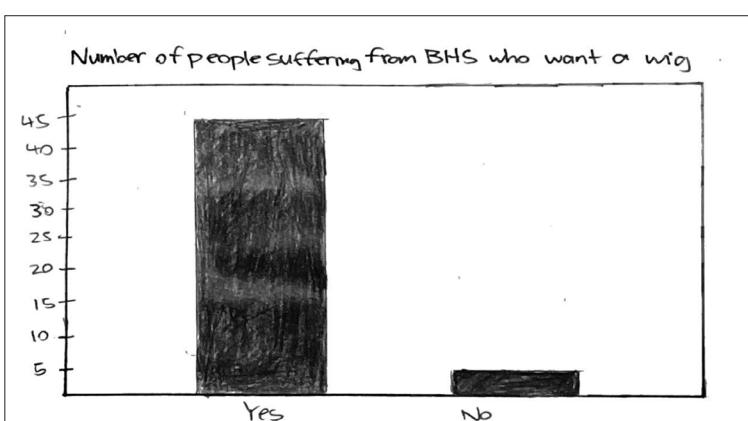
ple were experiencing this condition."

Hemmerich has chosen the finest quality hair for production of his wigs, sourced directly from the floors of classrooms. As Hemmerich says, the highly acclaimed movie "Rapunzel" was inspired by some locks of hair director Byron Howard found while sweeping a classroom floor.

"It's a great, renewable resource," Hemmerich said. "All you have to do is bring a broom and dustpan into a classroom, and you basically already have a wig."

Hemmerich initially kept the business local because of resource limitations. However, after receiving investments from several celebrities, most notably Jeff Bezos, a fellow sufferer of BHS, Hemmerich announced his plans to go global.

Bezos initially invested \$350,000 into the company, but increased the amount to \$500,000 after receiving his first wig. This money was monumental to the small business, allowing Hemmerich to secure more high quality hair imports and expand the areas in which they could deliver



An overwhelming majority of BHS sufferers plan on purchasing a wig.

to. Much of the reason Bezos increased his investment lies in the amazing quality of the wig he was given.

"It felt glamorous and empowering," Bezos said. "I finally feel rich."

Although the company is seeing astronomical success, Hemmerich has promised that he will not lose sight of his initial vision. He will continue to produce the highest quality wigs while expanding his production to help as many BHS victims as he can.

"I decided to be the change I wanted to see in the world," Hemmerich said, "No longer will people afflicted with crippling BHS have to fear blinding others with the light reflected off their scalps. No longer will we have to live in envy seeing the full heads of hair boasted by those around us. For far too long we have been held back by our lack of luscious flowing locks, now, we move forward supported by newfound confidence and rolls of comfort falling behind our backs." ♦

## togatalks

What are your thoughts on Hemmerich's wig startup?



junior Eli Tsives

"I absolutely love it. I plan on shaving my head and donating the hair to Hairmerich."



sophomore Matthew Zhang

"Ingenious. Truly making a difference for those suffering from BHS."



junior Jeremiah Chung

"I just purchased their whole inventory because it's that good. The best wigs I have ever worn."

# Shocking revelations! Junior Class Office caught in scandalous boba fundraising plot

BY Selina Chen  
& Sanjoli Gupta

The school has seen an unprecedented number of boba fundraisers from the Junior Class Office (JCO) this year as the JCO scrambles to compensate for its budget after adding an extra zero in its class T-shirt orders.

Recently, the Falcon received a series of documents from the JCO's internal communications, leaked by a whistleblower — an officer who prefers to remain anonymous out of fear of retribution but requested to go by the pseudonym of Dia Betes.

**JCO averaged 74.9 grams of sugar per cup, with the highest batch reaching 148.3**

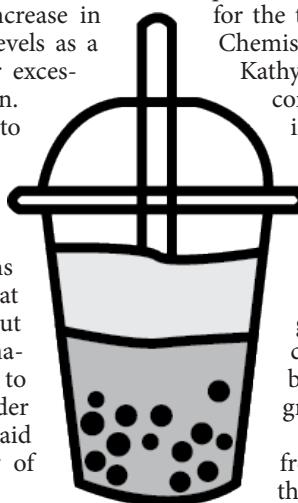
"I must start prioritizing morality above money," Betes said. "I regret my initial actions aiding and abetting this plot to destroy students' health, but my sense of ethics no longer allow me to keep it under wraps."

These documents, dubbed the "Profiteer Papers" for their similarity to the Pandora and Panama Papers, reveal that the JCO requests boba stores to add 200% sugar in all of the drinks.

In mid-April, the JCO plans to sell blood-sugar monitors to the growing number of students who will see an increase in blood-sugar levels as a result of their excessive boba consumption.

The final part to the Profiteer Papers, encrypted under passcodes the whistleblower had to go to great lengths to discover, reveal that the JCO is reaching out to several big pharmaceutical companies to negotiate a bulk-order insulin contract to aid in students' recovery of Type II diabetes.

"This revelation is uncharacteristic of my fellow leadership students," senior Associated Student Body (ASB) president Derek Hsu said. "We are currently in contact with the Center of Disease Control (CDC) and the Federal Food and Drugs Agency (FDA) to prepare for the inevitable fallout."



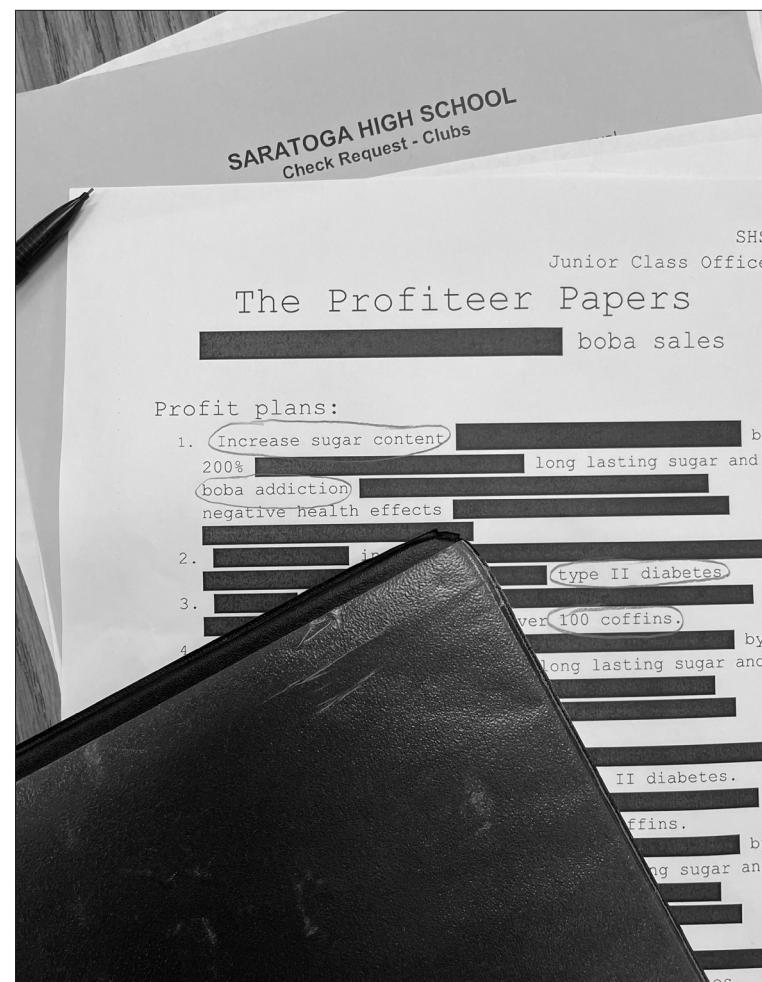
ble fallout."

Because the Falcon takes pride in "its authenticity and professionalism," according to senior Editor-in-Chief Andy Chen, reporters set out to test whether the sugar content of JCO's boba is really higher than those of other fundraisers.

Using refractometers for the liquid and glucose test strips for the toppings, courtesy of Chemistry Honors teacher Kathy Nakamatsu, the Falcon compiled an alarming report:

While a regular cup of boba has approximately 38 grams of sugar, the drinks sold by JCO averaged 74.9 grams of sugar per cup, with the highest batch reaching 148.3 grams each.

Using knowledge from AP Statistics, the Falcon conducted a significance test and yielded a p-value of approximately 0, therefore rejecting its null hypothesis and concluding that there is convincing evidence that the JCO's boba has a higher sugar content than regular boba — a result that adds credibility to the Profiteer Papers. ♦



The reporters of the Falcon has found evidence of the Junior Class Office's insidious plot to hurt students, detailed in "The Profiteer Papers."

## Freshman takes admin golf cart for joyride around math building, leads to horrific catastrophic crash

BY Victoria Hu

The whir of wheels on pavement echoed through the school's hallways as freshman Sarah Zhou maneuvered an administrator's red golf cart through the math quad. After picking up the unattended cart from its original parking spot behind the science building, she drove through the back parking lot and decided to take a loop around campus.

For 12-year-old Zhou, driving one of the school's golf carts was a golden opportunity to practice applying the concepts she learned in her Drivers' Ed course. While other students were watching a movie during her third period Health/DrEd class, she left the room and set out to gain "real world experience."

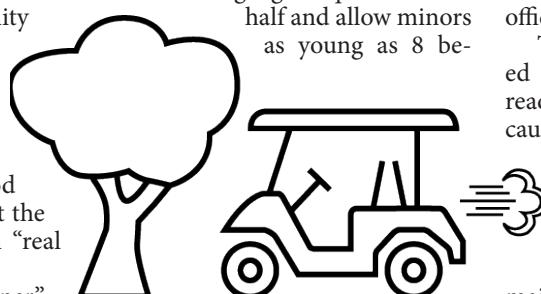
"I'm a hands-on learner," she said. "After the last two years of sitting still in front of Zoom, I believe that it's more crucial than ever that students have the chance to learn outside of the classroom."

Her excursion around the

school wasn't Zhou's first experience with driving golf carts, either. A self-proclaimed professional, she visits posh country clubs every Saturday to dine with Saratoga's wealthy elite and hone her golf-cart-driving skills.

Zhou said she has received criticism for daring to drive at such a young age. Nevertheless, she continues to argue that California law should cut the

driving age requirement in half and allow minors as young as 8 to



hind the wheel. Zhou added that allowing precocious preteens to drive would teach them responsibility and important life lessons such as "red means go."

"It's a bold stance for me to

drive as a freshman, but I am a bold person, breaking down barriers and paving the way for California's next generation," Zhou said.

And break down barriers she did.

Zhou managed to successfully drive all the way past the math quad and down the hallway between the 400 and 600 wings. However, after a staggeringly long distance of 10 feet, she crashed into the main office.

The collision's impact added stress to the building's already-weak infrastructure, which caused a wall to collapse.

Neither Zhou nor the golf cart sustained injury. After the crash, she drove out of the collision zone and parallel parked next to the remains of the building.

Although Zhou landed in mild trouble with the administration and earned a punishment of 15 minutes of Treasure Toga, her joyride around campus was worth it, she said. She had the opportunity to peek into various classrooms en

route to the office, and sightseeing Saratoga students hard at work helped increase her school spirit and made her feel more connected to the school community as a whole.

"Overall, I would definitely recommend driving a golf cart around campus," Zhou said. "Coming into my first year at Saratoga, I think it's crucial for us freshmen to be able

to find our place in the community and enjoy the famous 'high school experience.'

Most importantly, Zhou managed to parallel park for the very first time, which is a goal that she has been working towards every Saturday in the country club since her third grade.

"Olivia Rodrigo can suck it," she said. ♦



Zhou shows off her parallel parking in front of the office.

## togatalks

Should the school offer rental golf carts on campus?

"No, I believe the school should offer strollers or horses and carriages for top tier comfort"

freshman Shannon Ma



"Yes, golf carts will allow sophomores to feel superior among others and get around freshmen."

sophomore Nikhil Lin



"Yes, so junior Howard Shu can carry even harder... the man's way too good."

junior Arnav Swamy



# Battling pungent geese diarrhea, senior runner finishes first with personal worst

By LynnDai, Victoria Hu  
& Sarah Zhou

As senior track captain and long-distance runner William Leung made his way through the crowd of runners at the 3.18-mile Santa Clara County 290th annual meet, he felt a horrifying squish as his shoe made contact with the ground.

Leung, determined to place at the meet, kept running. However, as the strange slogging continued, he slowed to examine the strange substance. As he picked up his foot, other runners did so as well, only to discover a repulsive amount of geese feces clinging to their shoe soles.

"I just couldn't believe how bad it smelled," Leung said, scrunching his nose together and wincing, recalling the putrid scent of poop wafting through the air. "The worst part was the texture — it was squishy and firm all at the same time."

Undeterred and unable to wipe off the feces, the runners continued on the path, most finishing 80 minutes later. Leung, who usually runs a 6:00 mile average on 3-mile courses, finished with a personal worst of 63:18.

When asked to recall why the course took so long, he only shook his head.

"You won't believe it," he said.

"The poop acted like superglue — I could barely lift my foot! It felt like 10-pound weights were strapped to my legs."

Besides the feces cascade at the beginning of the meet, Leung recalled a slew of other unfortunate mishaps.

At the one-mile mark, runners discovered a monstrous amount of poop providing a foul blockade — six feet and 3 inches high — preventing them from crossing a narrow trail.

As Leung came upon the spectacular sight, he turned to cross country co-captain junior Carolyn Wang and the two shared a look of disgust and amazement.

"We were both in shock, and so were all the other runners," said Wang. "I just didn't know so much could come out of something so little."

In order to climb over the veritable mountain of poop blocking their path, the resourceful runners found broken tree branches lying nearby to use as makeshift trekking poles. This decision was inspired

by Wang's previous experience as a hiker, she said. After several minutes of slogging up and over the feces, Wang and Leung managed to create a small foot trail over the manure pile, paving the

way for other runners. Although meet organizers noticed the runners' struggles to make their way through the dung, they ultimately decided not to cancel or postpone the meet.

"It's absolutely crucial that we train the kids to have resilience and problem-solving skills," meet organizer Billy Joe said. "They can't be only fair-weather runners, so they need to be able to handle all sorts of small dilemmas."

As runners near the series of four hills in the course continued trudging through the muck, around the 46-minute mark, they heard a ferocious squawking noise coming from their right. The new flock of geese started laying feces on the ground while the runners were still moving.

"It felt like we were in a battlefield zone," Wang said. "The geese poop were dropping bombs."

She recalled that most runners ducked for cover in a grove of nearby redwood trees. After the feces-storm ceased, runners crawled out of their safe zones and most continued the meet relatively unscathed with three to four

splotches of white goo on their backs. The ordeal delayed their running times by approximately 31 minutes, she said. However, Leung didn't stop with the other runners. While he said he didn't encounter any more confrontations with geese, his nostrils would never be the same.

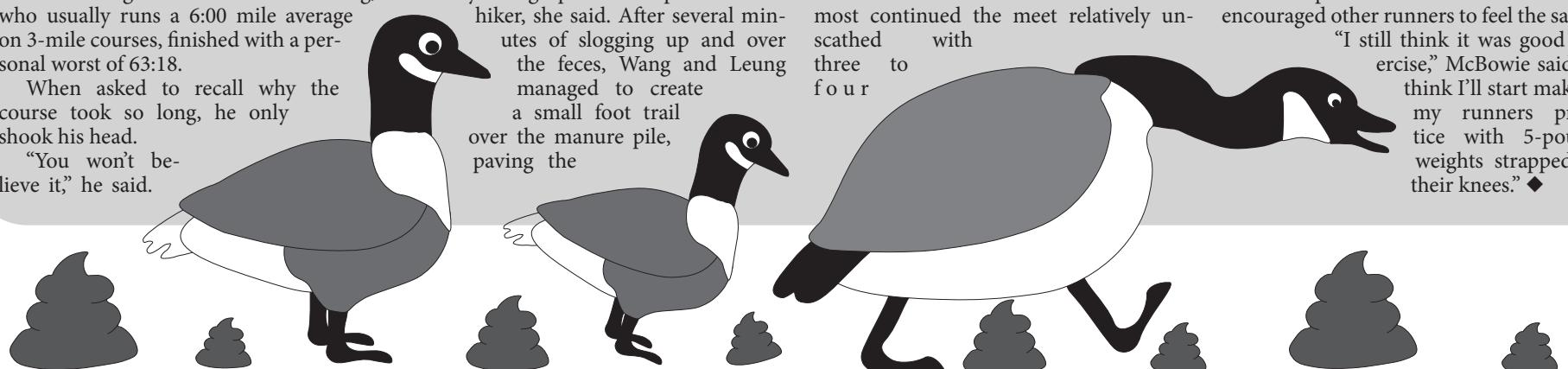
Leung finished first in a soiled red uniform onlookers described as an "unrecognizable, gloopy figure."

His private coach Davie McBowie experienced a slew of emotions when he saw Leung approaching the finish lines. Initially unable to recognize Leung, McBowie said he felt disappointed, confused and later concerned for the runner's health.

"We prepared so hard for this meet, and I was so excited to see him bring it home," McBowie said. "But then I see this inhuman gloopy mess sprinting towards me at full speed! That's the stuff of nightmares."

Even though both were disappointed with his time, McBowie was relieved to see Leung place first in the meet. He said he remains optimistic for future meets and encouraged other runners to feel the same.

"I still think it was good exercise," McBowie said. "I think I'll start making my runners practice with 5-pound weights strapped to their knees." ♦



## To combat Swimming Transferred Diseases (STDs), swim team requires masks in pool

By Jonny Luo  
& Stephanie Sun

When junior Rosie Kline woke up on March 27, she saw an urgent message from swim coach Christian Bonner on her phone saying masks were now required during swim practices.

Later that day, when Kline walked into the swimming pool — late, as always — she saw the entire swim team struggling to swim with bright blue masks.

"Honestly, swimming with masks feels like getting waterboarded, and I really hate it," Kline said.

The district voted unanimously in favor of a bill to enforce the mask mandate during swim practices, despite the fact that students are no longer required to wear masks in their classes anymore.

This decision was partially prompted by a sudden increase in Swimming Transferred Diseases (STDs) among swimmers. Common symptoms include doggy paddling, stopping in the middle of difficult sets and loudly complaining about the pool's freezing temperature.

District officials said that the decision to implement the mask mandate was also influenced by an increase in cases of the Omicron subvariant BA.2, which is soon expected to dominate American cases. Ordinarily, this would not warrant wearing masks in the pool; however, compounded with the spread of STDs, the district decided to prioritize student safety and reinstated the mask mandate for swimmers.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), STDs are spread through bodily fluids, specifically through spitting, peeing and chewing gum

in the pool.

Bonner said the STDs began to spread when the team began practicing at the West Valley swimming pool, which was contaminated after an infected West Valley water polo player peed in the pool.

In order to prevent students from relieving themselves in the pool, porta-potties have been set up in convenient locations across the pool deck in response to complaints that the locker rooms were "too far."

Bonner said he has always hated when sick students show up to school or practice, and he feels grateful to the district for enforcing harsh mask mandates to further prevent the spread of STDs, which have already crippled the team. Because so many athletes were out sick, the team lost three meets against Palo Alto, Homestead and Gunn High.

"I'm sick and tired of students not showing up to practice because of their STDs, so it's great that they now have to wear masks to prevent its spread," Bonner said. "Hopefully, the team will be back and functioning within a few weeks."

Bonner has also been thankful for the training opportunity that swimming in masks has afforded him as a swim coach.

"Swimming is an aerobic activity; it's about holding one's breathing, and wearing a mask makes swimmers have to hold their breath for much longer periods of times," Bonner said. "I'm thinking about making my club swimmers, who are currently un-

infected, wear masks because I've seen great improvement in these [SHS] swimmers."

Much of the swim team is extremely frustrated with this new mandate. Senior Alex Yang, who was disqualified from a swim meet after his mask fell off during a dive, said he considered quitting the team.

"I'm really upset right now," Yang said. "I would've placed first, but my mask fell off, and I was disqualified."

The team later found out that, because Yang's mask fell off, the entire team and opposing team were exposed to STDs.

When informed about this exposure event during swim practice on March 26, sophomore Victoria Le was surprised, shocked and even a little happy.

"STDs have a quarantine period of 10 days, and because it's only transmitted through pool water, I can still attend school, but I don't need to swim, which is great," Le said.

Le also said she was glad that Yang infected her with STDs because she no longer had to swim the 500 freestyle in the next swim meet.

The team also distributed SHS branded masks for swim meets for players to use, which many considered a waste of the team's already-minuscule budget.

Beyond these minor annoyances at swim meets, players also complained about their masks falling off during flip-turns and dives during practice, after which Bonner would

yell at them for not following proper safety protocols.

When Le complained to Bonner about her mask constantly falling off, Bonner said, "Just get used to it, LMAO."

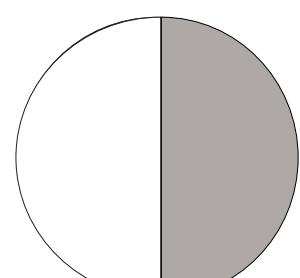
The school is also instituting weekly mandatory testing for swimmers alongside their weekly PCR tests. These tests require swimmers to spit in a tiny vial — which takes many students many tries — in order to test for the virus.

This mask mandate and weekly testing has frustrated some swimmers to their limit.

"I'm quitting the swim team," Le said. ♦

### >> falconpoll

Do you support this new mask policy?



50% It's amazing

50% It's amazing but in gray

0% Terrible nightmare policy

The Falcon polled 1 junior.



# The Falcon Crossword: April Fools

Solution will be posted on saratogafalcon.org this Sunday



FALCON // JONNY LUO

Junior Atrey Desai contemplates life as he stares at a tree in Hyde park after a difficult Calc AB test.

1	2	3	4
5			
6			
7			

BY Bill Yuan

## ACROSS

- 1 Imitate  
5 Function of a printer  
6 Type of cat  
7 Cheat, in a way

## DOWN

- 1 Take by force  
2 Has debt  
3 Pod occupants  
4 Knowledgeable



Graphic by HARSH and NETTE



## Juniors steal llama to keep as new journalism pet

hail-lli the  
lee-ama

Hannah Lee and  
Nidhi Mathihalli

Standing in the plane's aisle with huge smiles on our faces, we stopped to give each other a high five. We didn't care that we were holding up the crowd trying to disembark.

We had just stolen a llama.

Gucci Goat (a.k.a "G.G"), our new nut brown ccarra-sullo llama (not to be confused with a goat), swindled from the streets of Hollywood, was officially named the newest edition to our families on March 1.

Gucci Goat rocked a Louis Vuitton hand-kerchief tied around his neck, gold hoops hanging from both ears and a baby carrot sticking out from the side of his mouth. We felt so cool walking beside Gucci Goat.

However, our enthusiasm was soon forgotten, as we both realized that we forgot to tell our parents about our new pet.

Had he been a dog or cat, our parents might have let us keep Gucci Goat; due to his size and dietary requirements, however, our parents refused to let Gucci Goat into our houses.

"Hannah is usually a nice, obedient child who tells us before making any decisions,

none of which have been rash," Lillian Lee, Hannah's mother said. "So it was really surprising when she showed up at the door with a suitcase in one hand and the llama's lease in the other."

Lillian added that she was extremely confused at the situation, and was unaware that the llama was Hannah's until she was told that Gucci Goat was "the new, rad addition to the fam."

Mathihalli's family too was disappointed, and her mother, Savitha Raghathamara, refused to comment on the situation. However, her brother, Nikhil Mathihalli was able to provide some insight to the family's reactions.

"Nidhi's literally so annoying," Nikhil said. "She always acts as the good child in our family, even though I've told my parents countless times I'm always the one helping around the house and doing chores, not her. I'm glad that they are finally noticing her true colors."

Despite the lack of acceptance from either family, we decided to keep Gucci Goat and asked for help from our journalism teacher Mike Tyler. Though he was skeptical at first, Tyler eventually gave in to the circumstances, especially when we told him that we had gathered all of the seniors and made a pact to quit The Falcon if he rejected our advice to keep Gucci Goat in the journalism storage room.

"It was blackmail," Tyler said. "They blackmailed me."

Due to our successful negotiations with Tyler, Gucci Goat now spends his days in the journalism room. To pass time, Gucci Goat has been dealing bags of baby carrots to the Chickadees and spending time on making his Finsta go viral. ♦



## top ten

## ALLERGIES (GONE WRONG)

**10 Grass.**  
How to touch grass - the tutorial has a 100% success rate

**9 Sun.**  
Just close your eyes. See, all better.

**8 Bees.**  
Don't worry you're not alone. I too have nightmares about the Bee Movie.

**7 Cats.**  
This is a scary one. Cats have nine lives; you only have one.

**6 Band-aids.**  
Stay safe y'all.

**5 Latex.**  
Stay safe y'all.

**4 Class of 2024.**  
Golf carts everywhere beware.

**3 Dust mites.**  
Small, but mite-y.

**2 Nuts.**  
I'm praying that y'all don't also have a latex allergy.

**1 Milk.**  
But, are you allergic to heavy cream?

&gt;&gt; Harshini Velchamy