AP Tests increase to $110, up from $100 last year

The cost of annual AP tests administered by the school has increased to $110 per test from $100 last year due to an increased demand for proctors.

Although the number of students taking AP exams peaked four years ago and has decreased the last three years, the administration is expecting a spike in test takers this spring, assistant principal Brian Safine said. All told, the school could administer as many as 1,654 tests in May, he said. In recent years, the base cost of the exam has stayed constant, with $94 going to College Board. The rest of the fee pays for the costs of administering the tests: the proctors who supervise the tests.

“Exam cost and the AP rules about proctoring ratios are the two most important factors in AP costs,” Safine said. “Over the past few years, we have had three or four primary proctors plus volunteers and office staff (secretaries, administrators and counselors) who contribute to the exam administration.”

Safine noted that prior to 2017, office staff did the majority of proctoring. However, the school found it more effective to decrease proctoring ratios, he said. “It wasn’t any one thing specifically, but it feels right. I’ve still got some living to do so this just gives me an opportunity to do it.”

Looking into the future, Robinson, 62, said he doesn’t have any clearly set plans, but he aims to partake in volunteer work or consulting work for schools and communities to continue his passion for helping young people grow and develop.

His wife, Robin, the principal of Springer Elementary in Los Altos, plans to continue her job for at least a couple more years, and Robinson sees himself spending a lot more time with family, especially in his role as grandfather. While he owns a home in San Diego, he wants to do so this just gives me an opportunity to do it. “I want to do so this just gives me an opportunity to do it. It feels right. I’ve still got some living to do so this just gives me an opportunity to do it.”

ICAC to perform comedy drama in annual show

On chilly weekend evenings in the quad, lively music continues to play as late as 10 p.m., accompanied by the thud of moving feet. Groups of 20 to 30 dancers practice in formation day after day, night after night, in preparation for their Bombay in the Bay performances at the McAfee Center on Feb. 15 and Feb. 16. Bombay in the Bay is hosted annually by the Indian Cultural Awareness Club (ICAC). The show will feature 10 acts, and the entire performance will last roughly two hours, starting at 6 p.m. both days. Dinner will provided for the Saturday show. Tickets for Friday cost $12, while Saturday costs $20.

Preparation for Bombay in the Bay ramped up in January and early February, with performers practicing over an hour and a half most days, ICAC officer Ronit Dey said. But planning for the event began in late October. One of the first tasks the student-led ICAC executive committee did was to choose a charity to donate to.

This year, they selected the Hi5 in India, which is dedicated to providing underprivileged kids with in-school basketball coaching with the goal of keeping them in school. Because both this year’s Bombay in the Bay movie theme and Hi5 are sports-related, ICAC officer Anika Seth said they picked “Bend it Like Beckham,” a comedy-drama from 2003 about two young soccer players, as the overall theme. “We chose ‘Bend it Like Beckham’ because it’s the most famous Indian sports movie,” Dey said. “It also has an American twist to make it more relatable.”

With well over 200 participants annually, the ICAC leadership and lead performers must plan and practice well in advance of their February deadline. Any potential participants in Bombay in the Bay sign up for roles in the dances, which make up each act in the show. These dances include: Classical, Bhangra, Freshmen, Sophomore, Singing, Tamasha, Juniors, Seniors, ICAC on pg. 5

Home of the FALCONS
ROBINSON RETIRING
SEARCH FOR NEW PRINCIPAL TO BEGIN SOON

On Jan 29, principal Paul Robinson sent out an email titled “Special Message,” announcing his plan to retire at the end of the 2018-2019 school year, after seven years as principal of Saratoga High and 40 years as an educator.

“It’s just time,” Robinson said. “It wasn’t any one thing specifically, but it feels right. I’ve still got some living I want to do so this just gives me an opportunity to do it.”

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Approximately 70 students took Mathematics Association of America’s (MAA) American Mathematics Competition (AMC) on Feb. 7 and 13 in the school library for a chance to qualify for the American Invitational Mathematics Exam (AIME). In the AMC, students are given 75 minutes to solve 25 challenging problems. Each correctly answered question is worth six points, each unanswered question is worth one point, and each wrongly answered question is worth no points. Those who score in the top 5 percent are invited to take the AIME, which will occur on March 13.

The AMC traditionally ranks high among all schools in the U.S. Last year, 34 students qualified for the AIME. Results for this year’s two tests will come out in approximately three weeks. 

History Bowl’s top team falls to Pi-oneers once again

The History Bowl varsity A team placed second at this year’s regional tournament, hosted at Saratoga High on Feb. 10, finishing with a record of 7-1 after seeding first in the top eight teams. Once again, they lost their final round to the Pi-oneers, a home-schooled team and longtime rival.

Saratoga’s varsity B team placed in the top eight with a record of 4-2, also losing their final round to the Pi-oneers. Varsity C and the JV teams did not make the playoffs, but Varsity C and JV did make finals for nationals.

Senior Kiran Rachamalli and juniors Grant Chen and Jason Hong placed in the top 10 of History Bee after the first two tests. Chen scored a perfect 80 on the first test and a 44 on the second test, while Hong placed with more practice before their last regional tournament in January.

“Last year’s two tests will come out in approximately three weeks,” said Mathew Luo.

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On the evening of Feb 7, students still scanning around campus could hear sporadic applause and a booming voice resonating through a microphone from the Media Arts Program Annex.

Inside the building, a crowd of students and parents watched as drone operators flew a drone so expertly as to make the audience gasp. The drones were flown in the portly room by the History Bowl varsity team and pilot, junior Matthew Luo.

Junior Daniel Zahren was among the audience members who was holding classes in a warehouse. "I've been to a couple Speaker Series this year and last year, but I liked that this one was related to the film industry and focused on how students can get into a career path," Zahren said. "I thought that hearing all of this from someone who's grown up in the technology world was exciting." As an added bonus, the message struck home with students in the audience. Juniors Megan Gupta and Rauna Zahabi left the theater with a positive impression.

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The build season of the FIRST Robotics Challenge (FRC), which kicked off on Jan. 5, will come to a close on Feb. 19.

Ever since the early-January release, team members have been working to finish building their robot. Now, since the team’s name is MSET Fish, the name of the robot was chosen to be a type of sushi made from raw fish and vinegar rice.

This year’s challenge involves creating a robot to climb walls and store certain objects. A large emphasis has been put on being able to code and design within the given four weeks.

“Programmers are going to have to do much more than they have done in the past,” said Raje. “It’s not just designing, programming, and testing; it’s also changing the robots themselves.”

The Robotics team works to build a robot called Nigiri before their Feb. 19 deadline closes. It is a more complex machine than in previous years. In order to stand a better chance at making it to the national competition, all programming, tuning, and testing of the robot code on the duplicate robot will have to be completed. Important tasks for the team include implementing an autonomous routine, adding more controls for the robot drivers, and calibrating important sensors.

The Robot team has been working in Kirk Davis's room to finalize the build of their robot, Nigiri. This has been a more team-oriented project as opposed to previous years, with attendance being taken at every meeting to determine eligibility for going to tournaments. Getting more team members involved in the robot design ultimately allows for a more effective club environment.

“With the team being larger, we have a larger pool of programming talent at our disposal,” said Raje.

This year, several seniors this year have experience in人工智能, including computer science, psychology, and engineering.

“With the advancement of technology, I feel this field is interesting, such as facial recognition and driving automation,” said Ayan Raje.

The seniors this year have a deep interest in the field and are willing to invest time into it. They are excited about the potential this field holds.

Overall, the Build Season of 2017 has been an amazing experience for the Robotics team. The team has been able to build a more complex robot and is excited for what the season may bring.
Beyond books, local library unifies community

By Anna Nounsuev & Rachel Breslin

The Saratoga Library has served as a focal point for the community since the first version of it was established in 1914. The Saratoga Library provides programming and resources for people of all ages and backgrounds come together to study, collaborate and immerse themselves in knowledge.

However, the library also hosts a variety of events, including club meetings, presentations for diverse audiences, scholarships and more to create strong relationships among community members and help residents explore their passions, engage in learning and connect with their others.

For example, the library offers a number of events designed to help teens develop a wide array of skills and strong ties with their community.

Library board members present ideas to the Teen Advisory Board, who then work with volunteers to create events to benefit Saratoga teens.

"The staff develops and presents programs that provide information, learning, and entertainment," teen librarian Birgit Spring said. "For example, programming is an integral component of library service that expands the library’s role as a community center."

Some of the teen events include the Teen Coffeehouse, the ACT/SAT practice tests and the CoderDojo club. The Teen Coffeehouse is a bi-yearly event organized by the Teen Advisory Board and allows students to showcase their talents, whether it be singing, dancing, playing an instrument or even combining comedic pieces, reading poetry or presenting art - anything that raises money for the library - hosts a paperback book sale in the Community Room.

The books come in through a variety of ways, such as through donation slots in the library next to the book return area and through the Book-Go-Round bookmobile in downtown Saratoga.

The Book-Go-Round served as one of Saratoga's original libraries and was only taken over by the Friends of the Saratoga Library when the present library was built in 1978.

"People donate books sometimes in bulk. They just bring in boxes," said Liz Guy, the vice president of the Friends of the Saratoga Library. "Our goal is to recycle the books and make sure they find a home again."

The money raised totals about $140,000 to 150,000 per year and contributes to help fund the library.

Aside from these teen-oriented events, the library also hosts the occasional talks with authors, cultural events such as Chinese nese brush painting and a quarterly paper-back book sale.

Four times a year, the Friends of the Saratoga Library — a volunteer organization — raises money for the library — hosts a paperback book sale in the Community Room.

"It’s a fun way that students can come together, watch performances, relax, and socialize," she said.

On the academic side, the CoderDojo Club is a monthly event dedicated to helping teens improve their coding skills with the guidance of adult mentors. The library partners with CoderDojo Silicon Valley to host a collaboration environment where teens can work on a personal project or collaborate with others to learn a new coding language.

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The Saratoga Library hosts a variety of events, such as discussion sessions and coding events.

Bal said that the sale helps provide books to people who would want them in stead of throwing them away while at the same time helping the library.

Each sale lasts two days and raises approximately $3,000 throughout the year. As part of the Santa Clara County Library District, the library is primarily funded by property taxes paid by residents living in the nine cities the County Library District serves, but the money raised through memberships, donations and retail sales — which includes the paperback sales, the Book-Go-Round and the library cafe — totals about $140,000 to 150,000 per year and also contributes to help fund the library in buying bestsellers, programs and special projects.

"I love the library," Guy said. "When I first moved to Saratoga, it was one of the first places that I found a community with my young children. I think it’s just a really important component in a community and it’s a great group!"

English teachers test out online grammar system

By Ann Thomas

Students sit in class, pulling out thick, red and yellow grammar books and flipping through the pages. Pencil scratch against the pages as students underline the text and write answers in the book. Pages turn, the red lines disappearing as students correct the errors and write answers in the book. It is held after school on a Friday and approximately 50 teens attend in total.

"Teens can show their talents in a friendly atmosphere among their peers while en-joying a good food and drink," Spring said. "The event helps to showcase the artistic talents of Sar-atoega teens and gives teens an opportunity to perform."

Nabeha Barkatallah, the co-president of the Teen Advisory Board, said that the Coffeehouse allows students to express themselves and exhibit talents that they wouldn’t usually get to show off.

"It’s a fun way that students can come together, watch performances, relax, and socialize," she said.

The public library is an integral component of library service that expands the library’s role as a community center. The Saratoga Library has served as a focal point for the community since the first version of it was established in 1914.

"It’s a way to get students potentially more interested in writing, without it feeling like homework," Ryan said. "Some students find the new format distracting while others appreciate the variety,‘ Ryan said. "Some students find the new format distracting while others appreciate the variety.

Despite the distractions, many students find that the website helps them improve their grammar skills.

"It’s nice to have something where it tells you what mis-takes you’ve made already," freshman Nikhil Kapasi said.

Tests for this new grammar website took place throughout the first semester and will continue through second semester as well. The English department wants to ensure that the grammar platform is a good fit for the school, and that teachers find the website useful in the topics in depth that students need to know.

At this point into the trial, teachers still don’t have all the information about how the site works, and do not want to make any conclusive judgments about it.

"I’m hesitant to reach an opinion, because I don’t have all the information," Nguyen said. "We are in the data collection stage at this point, so I don’t have anything to offer in the way of observations until I’m given the whole program."

The English department will continue to test and evaluate the website, in hopes of landing on an optimal grammar program.

"I think that the idea of an online pro-gram is very smart," Ryan said. "I think if we have the right one it will be user-friendly and students would get more out of it."

Winter Guard kicks off season with new shows

By Sofia Jones & Connor Kang

The doors to the music building open to the scene of 16 students practicing on a large black practice floor spread across the entire band floor. A somber poem is recited with piano music as the varsity teams' spin flags and toss rifles, all while keeping up with the tempo. This is a sure sign that a new Winter Guard season is underway.

In the fall, Color Guard members rehearse for the Winter Guard, which is indoors and solely focuses on the choreography of the Color Guard members. Varsity and JV teams have separate theme shows. Varsity’s show is entitled “Walking on Sunshine,” and varsity’s show is entitled “I Heard a Fly Buzz.”

The varsity team’s show revolves around rediscovering the life and works of poet Emily Dickinson — who gradually became a social recluse later in her life, wishing for her pieces to stay hidden after her death. Specifically, the show will be based on “I heard a fly buzz—when I died,” one of Dickinson’s best known poems.

Senior Guard member Hillary Zhou was initially surprised by the theme, which was chosen by Guard staffzag Leesaps, Gustavo Morales and Brittany Bennett.

"When I first heard this theme, I was like ‘Why are we doing a poem? I’ve done this in English. Do I need to do it again? But I think it’s taking a different approach,’” Zhou said.

Unlike previous years, Zhou describes the theme as “seeking someone else out whereas previous shows were more introspective, focusing on love, reaching goals and other clear-to-follow topics."

This year’s show leaves more to the imagination and allows students to interpret the theme of the story like “Harry Potter” and characters will adapt to the theme. The instructor is trying to host longer practices and more complex routines.

Sophomore Grace Wang said in order to create a cohesive group performance, the JV team must learn how to focus during practice. She also believes the JV team will have to step it up this season.

This year’s JV is being challenged more,” Wang said. "I remember last year we had a lot more people. We got really good at flag choreography, but this year, the instructor is trying to host longer practices and more complex routines.”

Senior Alex Baemmler around the song, “Walking on Sunshine” by Katrina & The Waves. The uniforms will be yellow and all really nice, so I won’t care for our equipment from the fall marching band show.

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mians: JV's show is entitled "Walking on

Sophomore Grace Wang said in order

"I think one of his absolute best qualities is man being and how he's a person aside from

Ishana Narayan dances in the classical act during

junior Ronak Pai went 4-0 and

Junior Adhit Sankaran. "We've improved

kinds of music and practicing a mix of American and Indian songs. For example, the Bhanga group as a leader in the mold of the principal. Kerry Mohinke, a long-time teacher and that person was an assistant principal in 2012 in the same school Robinson came on board at the school. She said that her qualities of kindness and patience along with her ability to lead by example have contrib-

When emotions get high, you can al-

as one of the tasks that contribute to his talent for dealing with com-

"When emotions get high, you can al-

specifically, Mohinke recalls Robinson's first year, when the school endured the reality of a sophomore girl named Audrie Pott

"I'm afraid I've left behind the idea that my

"I'm afraid I've left behind the idea that my

According to junior George Bian, Robin-

"I'm afraid I've left behind the idea that my

Robinson is excited to see what the next

The district board will send out inquiries across the nation to garner interest and bring in top candidates to be interviewed. Robinson also recalls how members of the school community reached him in San Diego where he was working as a principal and talked with people there to get a better idea of who he was.

Robinson is excited to see what the next principal can offer to the school. "I think I've gone about as far as I can, and now somebody with a new energy and a different view of things can come in and build on that and go the next step further," Robinson said. "The person that takes this position will be really good back to go and do some incredible things with this school."
When the Class of 2019 graduates this spring, the pluses and minuses grading system will graduate along with it. Beginning with the Class of 2020, the school implemented a grading system in which students receive plus or minus grades, as opposed to the more traditional A through F grading system. This change was made in an effort to provide students with a more accurate and meaningful assessment of their academic performance.

The new grading system, known as the Plus Minus System, is designed to provide students with a more realistic understanding of their academic performance. Under the old system, students would receive a letter grade, such as A, B, C, D, or F, which would then be converted to a numerical GPA. Under the new system, students will receive a plus (+) or minus (−) grade, which will be converted to a numerical GPA after all grades have been averaged. This system is intended to provide a more accurate and meaningful assessment of student performance, as it takes into account the varying levels of difficulty of different courses.

The new grading system has been implemented in order to better reflect the true performance of students. Under the old system, students received a grade that was based on a predetermined scale, which could be misleading. With the new system, students receive a grade that is based on their actual performance, which is more likely to be accurate.

In addition to providing a more accurate assessment of student performance, the new grading system is also designed to provide students with a more realistic understanding of what they need to do in order to succeed in their studies. Under the old system, students might have been able to achieve an A in a course that was not particularly challenging, simply because the course was easy. Under the new system, students will have to demonstrate a higher level of performance in order to achieve an A, which will help them to better understand the true level of difficulty of different courses.

The new grading system has also been implemented in order to better reflect the true performance of teachers. Under the old system, teachers were able to receive high grades simply because the courses they taught were easy. Under the new system, teachers will have to demonstrate a higher level of performance in order to receive high grades, which will help to ensure that they are providing students with the best possible education.

Overall, the new grading system is designed to provide a more accurate and meaningful assessment of student performance, as well as to provide a more realistic understanding of what students need to do in order to succeed in their studies. It is hoped that this system will help to ensure that students are provided with the best possible education, and that teachers are providing students with the best possible education.
AP TESTING
continued from pg. 1

Do some students struggle to find motivation in last stretch of school year?

By Connie Liang

In a 2018 column for the Psychology and Phycology Newsletter, Dr. Elizabeth Mantle defines academic burnout in three distinct areas: physical and emotional exhaustion, reduced sense of inefficiency and lack of personal accomplishment. When a student is associated with college fatigue, this is an all-too-familiar feeling for coaching and school students, in competitive environments like Saratoga High. Often, a lack of sleep and lack of physical activity are contributing factors.

Freshman Anouk Yeh is the president of the Leos Club, an avid member of the speech and debate team, a member of the MACLA Slam Poetry Team and a volunteer at a special-needs day care center, Angel Love. On top of all that, she is a dedicated student, “I feel like in the beginning of the year, everyone is motivated to get back to school, get good grades and ace all their classes,” Yeh said. “But once second semester starts, trying your best all the time gets pretty tiring.”

Now, Yeh finds herself more frequently taking longer naps before going to her schoolwork: a habit she didn’t have before.

Senior Katie Hulme — who was recruited to play volleyball for a world language AP test.

While students in the district may be shocked by the prices, neighboring schools charge even more.

In 2018 to set aside $550,000 annually to pay for AP or IB exams. As a result, all students regardless of household income are qualified to receive the discounted price of $5 for each exam. Safford noted that the school will waive the test fee for any student with demonstrable financial need.

Saford warned that next year, students are likely to face a far more difficult situation. This year’s price increases are not as significant as the CollegeBoard earlier announced that AP test registration will be moved forward to November and that the charges to drop the test would increase from $15 to $45 for an AP test and $145 for a world language AP test. In the San Jose Unified School District, however, board members decided in 2015 to set aside $550,000 annually to pay for AP or IB exams. As a result, all students regardless of household income are qualified to receive the discounted price of $5 for each exam. Safford noted that the school will waive the test fee for any student with demonstrable financial need.

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Many selective colleges require SAT Subject Tests for all applicants. There are over 20 different subject tests offered in mathematics, science, history, literature and foreign languages. Don’t neglect this important part of your application profile. Elite’s expert instructors know their subjects—and the tests—inside and out. Call Elite today for class schedules and for free counseling on what tests are best for you.

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Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editors-in-chief: Amy Tang

Opinion Editor: Elaine Fan

Reporters: Anishi Patel

The Falcon staff voted 25-10 in support of this article.

We need to start caring about the environment

By Connie Liang

A few weeks ago, I asked my dad, “Why are you just letting the faucet run like that? It’s wasting so much water.” He peered at me from beside the stove, where he was standing and cleaning some kitchen appliances. Clutching a dirty pan in one hand and a stained towel in the other, my dad replied with exasperation dripping from his voice. “Don’t be ridiculous.”

My father said a lot of many other doubt about how we are depleting our underground aquifers, how climate change is creating effects on all continents and how human activity will soon cause irreversible changes to our bio-sphere. This sentiment parallels general explanations concerning climate change. A 2018 Gallup poll concluded that only 56 percent of Americans aged 55 years and older are worried about climate change compared to 70 percent of American aged 18 to 34.

According to Business Insider, 10 percent of livable area in the cities of Miami Beach and Atlantic City will be underwater by 2030 due to rising sea levels. Worse still, 1.8 billion people will be living in water-scarce areas by 2025, according to National Geographic. That’s only five years after the current turbine class from high school.

We tend to think that environmental problems will only be pressing in the far-off future — in the time of our great-great-great, great-great grandchildren and beyond. But even cursory examiner task results that this is simply not the case, and the world is already starting to see major effects.

The year 2030 is a turning point, according to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. By 2030, if drastic measures aren’t taken to reverse the emissions of greenhouse gases, worldwide temperatures will rise 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times. This amount sounds insignificant, but it appears to be the tipping point. On the current track, this amount can only withstand 1.5 degrees Celsius above the average temperature of the world’s ecosystems, one of the most important being marine reefs. The rate of coral bleaching is projected to be 90 percent dead by then. This increase in temperature further also entails a greater risk of weather and heat extremes leading to the displacement of millions and a damage to key world crops.

So with all these looming threats, who isn’t more being done to reverse the course our planet is headed? An argument I often hear against environmental measures is that even if one person recycles aluminum soda cans, there won’t be any other person who doesn’t. Therefore, the effort won’t make up the mind. However, if even the smallest personal changes are made, the effects will be significant in comparison to actions of even the largest organizations.

Second, stress the small things. Recycling plastic, using reusable bags instead of plastic and see to it that all disposable wrappers end up in the correct bin. On a broader scale, governments and corporations alike must figure out how to cut worldwide greenhouse gas emissions prakti- cally in half by 2030, reaching a “net zero” in 2050. According to CNN, this maintains that the projected increase in temperature doesn’t surpass “the crucial threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius.”

Somehow, we will need to create, from scratch, an industry that focuses on withdrawing greenhouse gases from the air; implement new and improved industrial practices, and foster a more tangible urgency. All this leaves so much up to the what and responsibility of our future work- force — the high school and college students of tomorrow.

At the end of the day, the Earth can only withstand so much. It’s like a rubber band that’s been pulled from far too long. If we’re not proactive soon, it’s bound to snap, regardless of whether or not you believe it will.
No pluses or minuses reduce student stress

BY Angelina Chen & Rohan Kumar

As second semester begins, stress begins to pile up as students struggle to cram material and maintain borderline grades. Starting with the class of 2020, however, the administration introduced efforts to mitigate said stress — removing pluses and minuses from grades on transcripts.

Having a grading system solely reliant on A/B/C grades is beneficial toward students, as it helps prevent student GPA's while simplifying the grading system. The old 13-point system meant that students with an A+ would receive a 4.0, but students with an A- would receive a 3.67.

Normally, as are worth 4 points, B's are worth 3 points and so on. Honors or AP courses boost the point worth of each class by 1 point. This means that a student who receives an A- gets the same GPA as a person with an A+.

This four-point system has proven beneficial to many students, who tend to raise their grades just enough to push it to the next grade. Attaining an A at the school is already hard enough. Many students spend excessive hours studying and completing homework in pursuit of a high GPA.

Some may argue that this system does more harm than good, since students who achieve pluses are hurt by this change and don’t get the GPA that they deserve. However, principal Paul Robinson said that 60 percent of all students’ plus or minus grades each semester are minuses, meaning the change will help a majority of students.

Students who receive an A- in such a competitive school deserve to be rewarded adequately, and by removing the plus and minus from the grading system, it means that they will receive the grade they worked so hard for.

The removal of the plus and minus system can also help reduce stress and ease any associated academic culture.

With this change, students don’t have to spend as much time obsessing over being perfect. Without this kind of stress, students can lead a healthier lifestyle. It helps open up more free time for students to focus on their passions and to spend time with their families and friends.

For those who did not receive the grades they desired, the new GPA system of removing the pluses and minuses helps make their stress level reduce by alleviating the high stakes academic culture as well as boosting their highly valued GPAS.

Schools should integrate coding in younger grades

BY Rohan Kumar

Smartphones. Computers. Graphing calculators. Self-driving cars. Without a doubt, the results of computer programming are everywhere and part of our daily lives. But what about computer programming in school curriculums? Although computer science is a field that has seen a high demand for its skills, a lack of interest remains, and many people believe that it is not something applicable to daily life.

This integration doesn’t have to include complicated algorithms; even something as simple as the Terrapin logo can help develop the foundational skill set necessary for more involved programming. Students who begin coding at a younger age would be more likely to be comfortable with it. Teaching younger kids how to program also affects the way they think and problem-solve. It teaches students observation skills, which are vital when developing a basic understanding of how the electronics they use actually work. It also improves a child’s potential for creativity by giving them a resource with which to express themselves. Just as teaching students how to write allows them to express their opinions through essays or bring their characters to life through stories, teaching students how to code allows them to create websites, games, and more.

With technology being integrated into the classroom, computer science job is not for everyone. Still, coding causes students to think critically, analytically, and help improve their problem-solving abilities.

Coding is a fundamental skill, and it is extremely important for students to learn how to code at a young age. Elementary schools should integrate basic computer programming in their curriculums. This is integral in maintaining a child’s interest in computer science, and it provides a jumping-off point for those who will eventually want to pursue computer science careers.

Old grading policy has more student benefits

BY Soledad Jones & Amoreen Zhu

Most students have experienced receiving a grade that they were not happy with, despite putting consistent effort into the class throughout the semester. Many have felt the disappointment of a borderline grade that they could not bring up, forced to live with a letter grade that was so close to being better.

But due to the removal of pluses and minuses in GPAs starting with the Class of 2020, an 89.5 percent grade that a teacher refuses to round up might as well be a flat 80 B-. This seems unfair to many students who struggle in the beginning of the semester but start improving as the semester goes on.

Teachers have vastly different approaches to every aspect of their classes, such as homework policies, best ways to study for tests and different grade weightings. Students usually need time to adjust to the new system, and it is important that students get used to the new grading system, known as the student’s transcript anyway, and neglect class mate material.

More importantly, the removal of pluses and minuses should be integrated into student’s grades. With the change to a student’s transcript and removing the plus and minus system, students will have more motivation to make steady progress throughout the semester. Currently, though students may move up a percentage or two, the grade and GPA change is not as noticeable, resulting in decreased motivation on some scales.

Although the GPA policy is helpful for students with grades on the lower end of a letter grade, it does not provide an incentive to work harder for all. Administrators may have thought that no pluses or minuses would help to alleviate stress from students, but it also demotivates students from bettering their grades. Students who put in significantly different levels of effort end up with similar grades as a result of this rule.

Having gradations within grades is beneficial in the long-run, and will result in a more deficient education. This would force indolent students with the grades they truly earned and motivates others to work harder. Pluses and minuses should be integrated into student’s grades. With the change to a student’s transcript anyway, and neglect class mate material.

Students may settle for a minus under the current system because they know that it will show up as a flat letter grade on their transcript anyway, and neglect class mate material. They otherwise would have processed more thoroughly.

Overall, the removal of pluses and minuses is important. It impacts all grades and benefits all students. It rewards hard-working students for their efforts. It changes the way that students look at their grades. It helps open up more free time for students to focus on their passions and to spend time with their families and friends.

Most students have experienced receiving a grade that they were not happy with, despite putting consistent effort into the class throughout the semester. Many have felt the disappointment of a borderline grade that they could not bring up, forced to live with a letter grade that was so close to being better.

By removing the pluses and minuses, students with the grades they truly earned are rewarded. It rewards hard-working students for their efforts. It changes the way that students look at their grades. It helps open up more free time for students to focus on their passions and to spend time with their families and friends.

Coding should not be required at a young age

BY Howard Tang

The Information Age, characterized by a shift from a traditional industrial economy to one based on information technology, has seen a high demand for computer science-related skills — a demand that has already begun to reflect in education, with the elementary school level.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in STEM occupations grew by 10.1 percent from 2009 to 2015 and may grow by another 23 percent by 2024. Surprisingly, the number of computer programmers themselves is projected to decline. Due to the perception of an abundant, ever-growing job market in computer science (CS), many schools have begun to implement a computer science class to teach students how to code. But element school students may not be ready to handle these intentions, making these skills mandatory won’t suddenly create legions of new, eager programmers.

Required CS classes are helpful for students who want to pursue a STEM-related career, but this becomes an issue when it is forced onto students interested in other disciplines. For these people, a large chunk of their studying would be occupied by something they don’t care about, and the skills would be quickly forgotten. Unlike some subjects like mathematics or physics, coding has little use in daily life, essentially rendering courses useless.

Here at SHS, only 168 out of the 1,341, or 12.5 percent of the student body, enrolled in a CS-related course, a small percentage of the whole student body.

The implementation of the students coming through the school would take a CS course during their time. Of those, a hefty portion take the class to satisfy the Applied Arts requirements or to decorate their resume with an AP course. If half of the students are not willing to take CS on their own, the class should not be forced onto all students.

Furthermore, students in elementary and middle schools have not yet developed a strong work ethic and are not used to spending significant amounts of time on schoolwork. Coding requires a strong mathematics background and an analytical mindset, and students in the early grades mostly lack the cognitive readiness to master these skills. Adding an extra subject to learn will either lessen the time they have for schoolwork or make students interested in different things, adding an extra subject to learn will either lessen the time they have for schoolwork or make students interested in different things. An extra subject to learn will either lessen the time they have for schoolwork or make students interested in different things. An extra subject to learn will either lessen the time they have for schoolwork or make students interested in different things.
Difficult to find motivation during second semester

BY Kaylene Thomas

A black cursor blinks steadily on an empty page. I drum my fingers on the keyboard in an attempt to start writing. For months, I have been staring at the document. Just staring at the words exhausts me. I close the document, telling myself I will write it later.

During second semester, getting through loads of work and long hours of school becomes more challenging for many students. Throughout first semester, most students put more effort into their studies, but as students move into the second half of the school year, they leave some of their motivation behind. I could hardly bring myself to write this newspaper story.

First semester is easier to push through because the routines and schedules that people have are different from the previous school year. Starting new classes and seeing different people brings a fresh sense of excitement to the learning environment. But second semester requires new classes and a schedule. Running through a cycle that students already endured for 18 weeks is extremely boring. I could hardly bring myself to write this newspaper story.

The repetition does mean that students are more prepared to effectively study for tests. While some students appreciate the identical routines, many find that the repetition causes them to lose interest in the work. Students could try new activities to break the monotony of second semester, and make it easier.

The lack of change in the school day and individual classes makes the experience dull. Once school has lost its novelty, students become less interested and there is little to drive students to work harder. To make matters worse, the level of difficulty in second semester often increases. Many teachers start to grade harsher as they assume more competence on the part of the students, and as a result, the work becomes more challenging. Students are required to put more effort into school if they want to do well, but many students are burnt out from the first semester's grind.

The repetitiveness and increased difficulty of second semester also leads to more procrastination.

Students know they need to complete their schoolwork, but can't bring themselves to start.

Others who start on their work sooner lose their focus easily. When they try to force themselves to do an assignment they don't feel like doing, their minds tend to wander. Every few minutes, students tell themselves they'll work a little longer before the work they just did.

The monotony of second semester requires students to put more energy into school work. However, the prospect of this extra effort discourages students from starting the work.

If teachers adjusted their classes during second semester, it could help students to do the work. Students could also try new activities to break the monotony of second semester, and make it easier.

Established habits make second semester easier

BY Rohit Kumar

Spending three hours on lab reports due to unclear teacher expectations, overstudying for easily acrable math tests and pestering teachers every tutorial are actions overly eager and grade-conscious students fall into during first semester. However, once second semester rolls around, these problems tend to fade away.

Second semester may seem tough, as students have to learn new concepts while remembering material from first semester. This five percent difference could make the difference between a 1450 and a 1500. This five percent difference could make the difference between a 1450 and a 1500. This five percent difference could make the difference between a 1450 and a 1500. This five percent difference could make the difference between a 1450 and a 1500. This five percent difference could make the difference between a 1450 and a 1500. This five percent difference could make the difference between a 1450 and a 1500.

By second semester, students have developed a rhythm to get through classes efficiently.

For freshmen, sophomores and juniors, the biggest reason second semester is less stressful is that students have developed a rhythm to get through classes efficiently. For most half of the school year, students are able to scramble to find the correct amount of time for their homework while maintaining their presence in extracurricular activities.

SAT offers a conceptual and comprehensive test

BY Raylene Morrison

The purpose of standardized tests such as the ACT and SAT is to assess a person's intellect and take away this unfairness. It is vital to be able to pick the most high achieving student and gauge their abilities on the SAT. The SAT section allows for a higher percentage of guessing correctly. Students are unsure how to solve a problem, guessing on the ACT has only a 20% chance of choosing the correct answer, whereas guessing on the SAT has in a 25% chance. This five percent difference could mean the difference between a 1450 and a 1500.

Also, the SAT math section is more conceptual than the ACT. Unlike the ACT, the SAT booklet provides a list of formulas for a plethora of shapes. Additionally, the content in the SAT math section closely aligns with the Alge- bra II curriculum, and contains insignificant- ly more geometry. The ACT tests concepts that are not included in the SAT, such as matrices, which is not tested on the SAT.

Those who take the ACT after Algebra II, primarily juniors enrolled in Precalculus with takes the ACT in the fall, will have to study significantly more in or- der to return Geometry concepts and self teach themselves material taught in Precal- culus. Taking the SAT allows these juniors to succeed with less studying.

The SAT reading section is easier than the ACT reading section, because it con- tains evidence-based questions, allowing test takers to choose a section of the pas- sage which provides evidence to the previ- ous question. If students are confused about a single topic, they can generally affect their ability to write the essay.

In contrast, the SAT essay requires writers to be knowledgeable on the topic of the essay, the SAT is entirely skill based. It is possible for a single topic to support all of these perspectives. They are provided with an information beyond a single paragraph which explains the topic. Consequently, if writers are unfa- miliar with the topic, this can greatly affect their ability to write the essay.

Students who have yet to take a stan- dardized test must start considering which test they will take. These students should prepare for the test that will allow them to best accomplish their goals: the SAT.

It’s a fact: ACT tops SAT as a better admissions test

BY Connor Liang

In 1926, Princeton professor and for- mer U.S. Army psychometrist E. L. Thorndike created the Standardized Aptitude Test for the College Board, a test intended to mea- sure intelligence, fit for college and for the military. This test was created in 1959 that the ACT, devised by Uni- versity of Iowa professor, is correct. It also aids test takers in finding the answer to the previous question if at first they were unsure.

Additionally, while the ACT essay re- quires writers to be knowledgeable on the topic of the essay, the SAT is entirely skill based. It is possible for a single topic to support all of these perspectives. They are provided with an information beyond a single paragraph which explains the topic. Consequently, if writers are unfa- miliar with the topic, this can greatly affect their ability to write the essay.

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Second semester may seem tough, but those four months of experience from first semester make it significantly easier. Second semester may seem tough, but those four months of experience from first semester make it significantly easier.

At the same time, they also have to de- termine which studying habits are most effective for each test. Depending on the learn- ing market well for World History, but not for chemistry. They are also less familiar with learning resources during first semester. Many teachers give review packets or sup- plemental notes to help students succeed. At first, using aids may be cumbersome since many students are not comfortable with them. Although powerful, websites such as Desmos have a lot of difficult-to-use func- tionality. The SAT is not as user friendly as the ACT, which is more user friendly. The SAT is not as user friendly as the ACT, which is more user friendly. The SAT is not as user friendly as the ACT, which is more user friendly. The SAT is not as user friendly as the ACT, which is more user friendly. The SAT is not as user friendly as the ACT, which is more user friendly.
Detention an ineffective form of punishment

Detention is traditionally perceived as a punishment—a means of discouraging students from showing up late to class, talking during class, or engaging in any other inappropriate conduct.

But what a lot of students fail to realize about detention is that, actually, they are the ones who are doing the punishing. Detention is a form of punishment that is as much the fault of the students as it is the administration.

In detention, students can either do homework and study, or they can try to find another detention by putting their phone or laptop away for an hour or so. This way, students will see detention as a learning opportunity. It’s one of the many things that students might not have at home.

It takes a lot of self-restraint for students to focus on homework and ignore all possible distractions. But what a lot of students fail to realize is that time to be productive.

In fact, many “white-washed” Asian Americans really aren’t that white at all. Most at least understand their native language are often second- or third-generation Chinese American whose families have arrived more recently.

Only those who completely depart from their traditions and cannot understand their less-proficient skills in their native language are often second- or third-generation Chinese American whose families have arrived more recently.

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It’s important to label a positive action that they seem more American cultures aren’t as community-based. Most Asian cultures aren’t community-based. Most Asian Americans really aren’t that white at all. Most at least understand their native language are often second- or third-generation Chinese American whose families have arrived more recently.

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Second semester seniors try new activities

REPORTERS ATTEMPT A DESSERT RECIPE FOUND ON ‘SUBLTLE ASIAN TRAITS’

what a neat idya

Neeti Badve and Nitya Marimuthu

Simultaneously scared and excited, we regarded our culinary creation. A beauti-
ful combination of condensed milk, table cream, multiple kinds of canned fruit we
had trouble pronouncing, macaroni and cheddar cheese, the Filipino dessert salad
looked like it might taste all right!

After the first bite, we decided that our preliminary judgement was so far off, we
should never try our luck in the kitchen.

A few days earlier, Nitya was brows-
ing through the famous page, Subtle Asian Traits, when she came across a very interest-
ing post with a fascinating food picture.

"Filipino pasta fruit salad - macaroni, tinned fruit, condensed milk and cubes of cheese "puking emoji"!" the post read. "Any-
one else got a cultural dish they are ashamed
of?"

Below was a picture of a macaroni salad
that would look good if the ingredients to this "salad" were not spelled out above. The
case looked for, it was still the most overpower-
ing part of the entire dish. Every bite had the
consistency of surprisingly firm white
fruit with a semi-solid jelly, combined with the
soft squishy nature of the macaroni, all
drenched in the sweet syrup.

After realizing everything was too sweet
for our taste, we decided it was time to add
in the final ingredient: cubed cheddar
cheese. Before throwing the cheese into our
mixture, we ate some first by itself as a pal-
ette cleanser; more scared than ever of what
we had just created.

However, at first bite, we were pleasantly
surprised that the cheese improved the dish.

For someone who has an authentic
recipe and access to a knowledgeable as-
sistant to make the "salad" for them, this
recipe was far from appe-
tizing, so we decided to delay adding the
cheese, which we thought would be the most trying part of this concoction for our
unrefined taste buds. Boy, were we wrong.

Even though we put in only half
the amount of condensed milk that the recipe
called for, it was still the most overpower-
ing part of the entire dish. Every bite had the
consistency of surprisingly firm white
fruit with a semi-solid jelly, combined with the
soft squishy nature of the macaroni, all
drenched in the sweet syrup.

As weird as it sounds, the cheese actually
combatted and broke through the taste of
the powerful condensed milk. Our stom-
achs and mouths were able to handle the
food, although our taste buds did not quite
agree with it.

The unfamiliar (to us uncultured spoons)
dessert repelled the usually hungry teenag-
ers that spend time in the Journalism Room,
and was even subjected to a timeout in the corner by students who wanted to use the
table it was occupying.

The next time we try a recipe as uncon-
ventional as this one, we will make sure
to do more research on the subject matter
rather than an impulsive pick off of Subtle Asian Traits. The positive reviews that Nitya
read in the comments were either written by
people who had a miraculous family recipe, or by those whose taste buds were more re-
fined to the flavors of the dish.

As for us, the next time we pick a dish to try, we will make sure to pick one not as …

interesting.

Second semester seniors try new activities

1500 PIECE PUZZLE

On day one, we invited three friends over to help us complete a 1,500-piece puzzle
of a sky filled with hot air balloons of various designs. In two hours, we complet-
ed the frame of the puzzle, putting together edge pieces. Two days later, we invited six
more people over and completed another solid 2 percent of the puzzle in an hour.

It was fun to challenge our minds with close friends, but after a while, we
were just too fatigued to continue.

But we didn’t give up. Over the course of a week, we re-
solved three friends to come over about two hours a day. Four puzzle sessions later, we finished the
epic puzzle — two weeks after we started.

At times, the experience of solving such a chal-

lenging puzzle proved frustrating and left our backs aching, but overall, it was a surprisingly fun bond-
ing experience. Our bottom-line advice: Start with a
more doable puzzle, with maybe 500 pieces instead of 1,500.

CAMEO NIGHT

On a Friday night, we invited 10 of our friends over to Franciscan house to
play wholesome versions of truth or drink and fear pong, carrying out dares
written under the cups. Don’t worry, no alcoholic beverages were
consumed. Truth or drink brought us closer together, as
intimate details were revealed, and much tea was
spilled.

Fear pong resulted in toilet selfies, false re-

lationship status updates, a chastity belt made of
duct tape and a seductive dramatic reading of
of “The Practice of Statistics.” Overall, the
game night was a success. It was a refresh-
ing change from our usual hangouts and a
great bonding experience, and we plan to
continue to host more game nights as the
semester unfolds.

THRIFT SHOPPING

On a recent Sunday, we headed to Goodwill to cop some steals and create
outfits for under $20. Walking in, we were met with the classic smell of old lady
perfume as we began our search for cheap but cute clothes. After approximately
30 minutes of walking around, we both had our outfits picked out.

Amy’s outfit, which consisted of a red cropped quarter zip ($8), a black denim skirt ($4), and red sunglasses ($4), cost
$16. Franciscas outfit, which consisted of a white blouse ($3), patterned shorts ($5), and leopard print sunglasses
($4), only cost $12.

Recommended for all those ballin’ on a budget. It takes some digging to find cool pieces, but your new favorite
item is out there, and it’ll be less than $10.

DANCE WORKSHOP

On a Monday night, we traveled to San Jose to take an urban hip hop class at
On One Studios. Since both of us have been dancing since we were young, we
were excited to challenge ourselves by taking a class in groovy urban hip hop, a
genre we had little experience with.

The energy in the room was amazing, and we could tell that everyone was
there because they loved to dance and genuinely wanted to learn. Some of the
moves were definitely out of our comfort zone, but it was fun to challenge our-

selves.

Through the Monday Night Work-
shop was difficult, we plan to try more
workshops and classes. Monday Night Workshops cost $25 a person and a
standard class costs $15. ♦

– Amy Tang and Francesca Chu

ALL GRAPHICS BY KEVIN SZE
This generation is commonly known as “Gen Z” and succeeds the millennials. They are characterized as growing up alongside technology and the internet.

Airpods nestled in ears, juul pods tucked in the back pocket and tide pods packed in the lunchbox. Thousands of memes saved in camera rolls and 350-day Snapchat streaks sent daily. These are some of the most prominent associations for Generation Z, or those born between 1995 and 2012. On the other hand, Millennials, the generation born between 1980 and 1995, are often known for being “hipster” and enjoying ube cool treats like avocado toast and flat lattes.

Based on generational differences, we often form stereotypes, varying from habits, hobbies, slang and attitudes. Both generations have significantly contributed to the world we live in today, especially in aspects relating to the internet and social tendencies. Both generations also have some ridiculous and inexplicable tendencies and quirks that may be puzzling to the outsider. So where do the differences lie?

First, AirPods. Sometimes they seem to be in almost every teen’s ears. When parents yell at you to do something, you just blame your AirPods. You can’t hear your mom yelling at you to do the dishes because your AirPods are in. It’s super convenient too. You can barely see them so they’re the perfect excuse.

Besides that, for us Generation Z peeps, memes are more than entertainment; they are a source of life. They have transcended all barriers in the mortal realm, perhaps even outweighing food, water and air as necessities for survival.

It’s also important to note that we learned how to swipe before learning to speak. Technology has become an extension of our arms and a permanent part of our existence.

Some of us check social media 100 times a day and itch for our phones each time a notification pops up. It doesn’t matter if we have a huge exam the following day; we must get our fix.

Something that many Gen Z people may notice is the obsession with people receiving messages and immediately responding. No one likes to get left on “read.” If people don’t reciprocate, things get ugly. For example, you might get quite frustrated if you started a Words With Friends game on Facebook Messenger, and someone left you on read and didn’t play you back.

Basically, with instant gratification simply an internet search away, Gen Z kids are characterized as impatient and in need of constant stimuli.

But, to those adults that think we’re so impatient: If we are, would 1,000-day Snapchat streaks even exist?

Go back a generation and you have the Millennials.

The stereotype is that they were coddled by their parents (baby boomers) during a period of economic prosperity, and are now in need of constant pampering and attention. Positive reinforcement and compliments are like oxygen to them.

They get offended at the slightest of things and update their Twitter feed every couple of minutes. Of course, what they are for breakfast and what they think about while brushing their teeth is completely necessary information for all of their devoted followers to know.

Maybe they should have stuck with their single-family desktop computer, floppy disks and cassette players instead of being sucked into the digital age. Now, they too walk around with phones and tablets by their side throughout the day. However, instead of sending black screens with a messy red S on Snapchat, they scroll through Facebook, contemplating whether a post deserves the “Love” reaction or simply a “Like.”

Although both generations use social media, Millennials tend to stick to Facebook and Twitter over Snapchat.

They are also known for their skinny jeans, oversized flannels and Tumblr Instagram posts that give you 2008 Bethany Mota vibes.

Despite these differences, it’s evident that both generations have made the world a more interesting place, whether through inspiring Pinterest posts, or “weird flex but okay” memes. And although we sometimes don’t notice our weird tendencies, looking at them closely reveals they may not be as different from each other as they’d like to think. ◆

-Anna Navasolove and Sandhya Sundaram

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Dear #haters,

I’m a member of Generation Z, the demographic cohort following Millennials, or Generation Y. As of now, we are the most ethnically diverse, digitally skilled and information-sensitive age group in the United States. We also seem to be the most ridiculed.

Not one of us can go a week without hearing about how things were “so much harder” back in the days when the internet and smartphones didn’t exist or about how dependent we are on social media. It’s a defining characteristic of this generation, to be accustomed to nodding along while someone four decades older lectures us about the indolence the world is so sure we embody.

It’s easy to call us “attention-seeking” or “dramatic” when we express our frustrations with the systems around us, namely student loan debt and the affordability of, well, everything.

It’s also easy to gloss over the fact that Gen Z is more technologically apt and information-sensitive than any group before it, in favor of saying we are “glued to our screens.”

Because of our internet usage, we know how to keep our information safe and how to filter through online scams, catfishing and fake news better than nearly anyone else. Plus, as we enter the workforce, our high social media usage will require companies to change their marketing strategies, meaning it’s time to stop hating on our means of communication and start learning how to use it.

Additionally, all the stereotypes perpetuated about “kids these days” discredit our rising social activism and desire to catalyze positive change in the world.

In fact, our generation has already created and fueled a nationwide gun reform movement. We are climate change activists, feminists and advocates for mental illness de-stigmatization. From 16-year-old Greta Thunberg, who recently sparked climate change protests across Europe, to Nobel Prize laureate and education activist Malala Yousafzai, members of Gen Z are proving that we can and will change the world.

As cliché as it sounds, we are the future.

Sincerely,

Gen Z ◆

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"Kids these days" will change the world
Precursors

We are changing the English language, and it is glorious. Standing on the shoulders of Shakespeare’s sonnets and Milton’s epics, on Steinbeck’s stories and Orwell’s essays is the new teenage lingo, language that’s concise, powerful and descriptive, yet beautiful too.

Think of a thesaurus. What words could replace your colloquial, mundane terms and expletives — large, cool, shoot — and transform you into a dank, LIT AF, trash-talking memelord, hypebeast UBERFLEXER?

Big is the new large. Big is cool. Big is lit. Big is the dankest adverb. Big is not a traditional adjective, but an intensifier to signify the biggest things: Stephen Hawking’s big brain made him big smart; little Jimmy’s report card made him big dumb; big Tyler’s brown YEEZYs made him a big loser.

To properly incorporate “big” into your lexicon, be especially conscious of your usage of adverbs. Where words like “very,” “extremely” and “greatly” might have sufficed, “big” knocks them all out of the water with its conciseness, power and avant-garde quality.

Lit is the new dank, and dank was the new cool. But there are subtleties to catch between the two — for instance, memes can be either dank or lit, but there are only dank memes. Lit describes situations, not places, things or people.

A pizza party in history class? That’s pretty lit. Little Brooker’s giving out donuts to all his friends? That’s pretty lit. Elon Musk’s funding “Despacito 2”? Well, that’s BIG-LIT, ‘cause he’s my role model.

OOF is a new invention. It’s for those situations that really OOF you, those times where you really be feeling bad about something that happened to someone, but you lack the vocabulary or desire to properly express yourself and say anything meaningful.

OOF is the reaction to your report card. An SAT score. A rejection. The schadenfreude that comes with reading reddit.

OOF: Flexing is all about how big you can show off. For example, little Billy is flexing on the peasants when he complains about his precurve B+ on his AP physics test. Billy probably smirks, too, when he surreptitiously glances over his shoulder to see Bert’s score. What a loser.

Sometimes someone can flex, but flex weird. Then you go, “weird flex, but okay” and that’s that. A weird flex is telling your friends you studied for APUSH on time, or that you completed your math homework without copying from the answer key or that you can spin your pencil around your thumb a hundred times without dropping your thumb once.

That’s a weird flex. BUT FLEXING WE DO.

The slang of our generation might sometimes be vulgar, but it’s vulgarity that we own and we appreciate.

Yeet, and goodnight everybody.

The Gen Z Rosetta Stone

Silent Generation
Born before 1946

Baby Boomers
Born 1946-1964

Generation X
Born 1965-1976

Generation Y
(Millennials)
Born 1977-1995

Which social media platform is used the most often by teens?

#1: Snapchat (35%)
#2: YouTube (32%)
#3: Instagram (15%)
#4: Facebook (10%)
Other (8%)

A popular millennial color on social media is “millennial pink,” while a color trend commonly associated with Gen Z is yellow.

Which social media platform is used the most often by teens?
A message from outer space

As you enter biology teacher Lisa Cochrum’s room, your eyes are overwhelmed with the hundreds of photos plastered on the walls. The photos show her travels around the world as well as past students. Cochrum’s desk is littered with various knicknacks: stuffed animals, toys, and even a taxidermied fish.

Among all of her other interesting objects, according to Cochrum, her most prized possession in the room is a picture of her and astronaut Michael Massimino taken after he spoke at the school in 2014. “He’s very funny and personable,” said Cochrum. “He used that to try to make space science very accessible to the general public. He went on ‘The Big Bang Theory,’ he's been on science shows, he’s willing to come to a high school and talk to kids which is a phenomenal way to use his skill set.”

Along with the picture, Massimino wrote Cochrum a note saying, “To Lisa — with best wishes from the crew of Atlanta STS-125.” Atlanta STS-125 was the fifth space shuttle mission to the Hubble Space Telescope in which Massimino took part in.

“I respect the science that he has studied. I respect the fact that he took his degree and applied it in a new direction with NASA,” said Cochrum. “It is exciting to me that you could major in something other than aerospace and end up working at NASA.”

Mother recalled through paintings

Bright canvases are nestled on the edges of English teacher Emily Wu’s classroom, some depicting small images of abstract colors and others with serene naturalistic depictions of birds.

She’s kept these decorations throughout all the classrooms she’s worked in: a testament of student class work, her own affinity for painting and gifts from home.

These various acrylic ornaments keep her connected to memories, especially of her mom, a retired nurse who took painting classes back at home. “My mom just paints in her free time,” said Wu. “So she started with abstract ones — easy ones like the fruit one on the cabinet — and she started doing more perspective stuff . . . nature scenes, and I loved that one so she gave it to me when I moved up here.”

In English teacher Emily Wu’s classroom, many works of art decorate the walls, from picturesque paintings of birds to more abstract paintings, with shapes coalescing into an image.

A white lab coat of remembrance

Any teachers keep items that are important to them inside their classrooms, whether they are essential to teaching a class or hold personal and emotional significance. For chemistry teacher Kathryn Nakamatsu, the lab coats that she wears when performing class demonstrations holds special meaning.

“This coat used to be my husband’s,” explained Nakamatsu. Her late husband, Jayson Chang, taught Honors Chemistry at Northgate High School, and the two met while grading Golden State Exam Chemistry exams. “A month after we were engaged, he was diagnosed with cancer, and we were married for two and a half years,” Nakamatsu said. “When I wear it, it is like a memory of my first husband. He was a fabulous teacher, and the world lost a great teacher when he passed away.”

Today, Nakamatsu wears the lab coat in memory of her late husband, trying to emulate the passion and energy he displayed while teaching the subject he loved. “by Oliver Ye”

A silent warrior, a welded suit of armor done for an independent reading project by 2015 alumni Matthew Peterson sits high up on a cabinet in English teacher Amy Keys’ room.

‘Weld-done’ Armor for English class

After 29 years of teaching English, Amy Keys has acquired a large collection of exemplary student projects, some of which she continues to display in her classroom. Out of all of the items in her room, Keys identified her favorite as an incomplete suit of armor made by former student Matthew Peterson, Class of 2015, for an independent reading project.

The suit was inspired by the book “Johnny got his Gun” by Dalton Trumbo in which the main character participates in World War I, causing him to lose his arms, legs, and ability to speak, as represented by the missing limbs of the armor. However, the character retains the ability to think, leaving him trapped in his body, which is symbolized by the cage over the helmet.

“I was impressed that Matthew learned to weld specifically for this project,” Keys said. “by Eileen Bui”
Sixteen years ago, when one of English and MAP teacher Cathy Head’s former student’s kitten fell asleep on his AP textbook, the student did what any reasonable pet owner would do: he took a photo. After he gave the set of photos to Head, she tacked it on her classroom wall.

Seeing the example, other students brought pictures of pets to add to the now-established ‘Pet Wall,’ including cats, dogs, chickens, rabbits and birds.

Starting with a student’s photo of their dog Rafiki, Head started asking students to label the pictures of the pets they’d bring. About five years after a student brought pictures of their chickens, Head said that that student’s younger sister found herself wondering why her family’s chickens were pictured on the wall. The same coincidence happened with cat shots from the one family.

As new classes came in, students would often ask Head why their pet was on her wall. This collage of animals has kept Head in touch with remnants of graduated students in a way, keeping them in the family. -by Samantha Yee

### Mexican Toy Top Evokes Memories

On one of her bookshelves, Spanish teacher Sarah Voorhees keeps a small toy, nestled between gifts that she has received, including a clay skull and a wooden train. It is a small, wooden, handmade top that spins when you pull on the shoelace attached to it.

“If there’s nothing in the way it will spin forever and ever,” explained Voorhees. “It just makes me so happy because the kids [in Mexico] play with this kind of stuff for a really long time and not on their phones.” The top was given to her by her “host papa” when she attended the school trip to Cuernavaca around three years ago.

Voorhees especially appreciates that children in Mexico are not so “obsessed with their phones” as other children in other parts of the world. -by Oliver Ye

### Physics Duck-gree

From fun gadgets to stuffed animals, AP Physics teacher Kirk Davis’s room is home to a variety of toys. Last year, the most noticeable elephant in the room — or in this case, a large yellow duck — waddled its way into the classroom as a gift from 2018 alumna Allyson Chang. The duck, who often listens to Davis’s lectures along with students, joins Davis’s collection of a heat lamp, fancy thermometer, fake light switch, weiner dog that turns into a pen, two halves of a pear (because forces come in pairs, according to Newton’s Third Law of Motion) and more. This year, Davis added a snowman that spins in a circle and sings a song. Most of these items were gifts from students, Davis said. -by Sherrie Shen

### 50th Birthday Comes Early

“I was the best prank I ever pulled,” said veteran science teacher Kellyann Nicholson, as she looked wistfully at a photo on the wall above her office of fellow science teachers Lisa Cochrum and Kristen Thomson in shiny skirts. Above that photo hangs a large, shiny, blue number 50.

In 2000, Nicholson was the judge for a competition in which Cochrum and Thomson were vying to see who could wear a dress to school for the most consecutive days.

Feeling that the competition was a bit boring, Nicholson decided to work with former principal Kevin Skelly to pull a prank on the pair.

“I wrote a big fancy letter about how [the competition] needed to ‘cease and desist,’ and I used all sorts of fancy words in it,” Nicholson said. “I wrote that it was ‘exclusionary and it made people uncomfortable,’ and I went down to the office and made Mr. Skelly sign it.”

When Cochrum and Thomson received the letter, they thought it was real and went down to the office to try to straighten the situation out.

They soon realized that the letter was a prank and vowed revenge. They latched onto a plan to hold a “50th birthday party” for Nicholson.

“Back in your 30s you didn’t want people to think you were old,” Nicholson said. “They decorated my room even though it wasn’t my birthday and they wore these god awful dresses for me.”

For the next week, all of Nicholson’s students thought she was 50 years old. “They got me back good,” Nicholson said with a smile. -by Oliver Ye
Freshman Anouk Yeh gazed over a crowd of 700 people clustered at the Frank Ogawa Plaza in front of Oakland City Hall. With words full of force and emotion, she performed three slam poems she had written — one about feminism, one about seeking asylum and one about gun control — as people cheered and shouted support.

“After the way they were said, ‘understand when I say feminism, I do not mean the genocide of chivalry,’” Yeh said. “When I was speaking, it almost felt like there was an electric current in the air.”

She was pleasantly surprised about how well the audience received her performance for the annual Oakland Women’s March on Jan. 19, where she was invited by the women’s march “afterparty” organizer Rita Forte. Afterwards, numerous marchers praised her and gave feedback. A young girl even said that Yeh was her inspiration.

Advocating for the cause she supports helped Yeh discover her political beliefs and solidify her stance on several issues.

Yeh becomes involved with activism

Yeh began writing slam poetry last summer and got into slam poetry through a writing club a few months ago. At first, she was afraid that people would criticize her for speaking about controversial issues such as gun control and the true meaning of feminism, but now she thinks that people are grateful that she is willing to voice her beliefs.

“A lot of people might be scared to go into activism because it might seem daunting,” Yeh said. “But I think the most important part is to keep in the back of your mind that what you’re doing has a greater purpose than just yourself and that it may be benefiting people you don’t even know.”

She is part of the slam poetry team at DMC studios MACLA, an organization aiming to help young people gain the courage to participate in social movements. Slam poetry, which combines performance, writing and poetry in front of an audience and transfer personal experiences or beliefs, is one art form that activists may use to discuss social and political issues.

She was inspired by the 2017 Brave New Voices International Youth Slam Poetry Festival winner, Samuel Getachew, whose political poetry taught her the importance of

Youth activism involves young people speaking out about issues to raise awareness and bring about social change. It has played a crucial role in sparking prominent movements.

Examples of youth activism

One of the earliest examples of youth activism is the 1899 Newsboys’ Strike in New York City. The 14-year-old newspaper sellers — who raised the price of 100 newspapers from 50 to 60 cents, the homeless boys who sold newspapers on the streets to earn a living were outraged. They rallied and went on strike, refusing to sell any more newspapers.

Although Pulitzer and Randolph did not strike, they realized that people were passionate about the advocacy, as their classmates were killed and 14 wounded, a group of teenagers, including Emma Gonzalez, David Hogg, Sam Zief and Julia Cordover, began advocating for harsher gun restrictions and greater safety in schools.

By organizing nationwide March For Our Lives protests and promoting the hashtag “neveragain,” they garnered attention from people of all ages, spurring others to join the movement for gun control.

A few months ago, Yeh performed at the Tournammententertainment Poetry Slam in San Jose, participating in the fight for reform.

Yeh said that youth activism is gratifying and has a larger potential for impact than some people may think.

The Civil Rights Movement, the anti-Vietnam War protests, Tiananmen Square, Arab Spring, the Indigenous Water Rights Movement and March for Our Lives were sparked by youth or largely motivated by youth action.

A recent wave of youth activism came about following last year’s Feb. 18 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. After 17 of their former classmates were killed and 14 wounded, a group of teenagers, including Emma Gonzalez, David Hogg, Sam Zief and Julia Cordover, began advocating for harsher gun restrictions and greater safety in schools.

Yeh said that even though the March for Our Lives activists were unable to create legislative change as of now, they opened up the eyes of insurmountable people.

“I think that the youth have realized that even though they don’t want to grow up to become politicians or lawyers, that this is their future,” Yeh said. “If they don’t try to help steer the country in the right direction or try to do something, then this is going to be their mess to clean up.”

Morosin praised social media for its ability to spread awareness, generating movements almost instantaneously. When he was a teen in the 1960s, there was no mass media other than television, newspapers and radios, so movements started from rallying in the streets or making phone calls.

Now, joining a movement is much easier. Social media provides a platform where youth activists can connect with others and reach many people with their message.

Age should not dissuade young activists

Morosin said that although young people don’t have the same financial power as adults, they do have numbers and passion.

“They can change things that we’ve tolerated for way too long,” Morosin said. “Just because they’re young doesn’t mean they should be disrespected or that their life experiences are too short.”

When Morosin was a teenager, youth activism was largely concentrated on anti-Vietnam War efforts. He said that people were passionate about the advocacy, as their lives were at stake if they were to be drafted into a war that many did not believe in.

Morosin himself attended several protests. He said that the protests were very successful, as they raised awareness and got “under (then-President) Nixon’s nerves.”

Adults were forced to come to terms about identifying the reason behind the war, which spurred even more anti-war campaigns.

“Young people are outraged about what hasn’t been done by adults, so they participate in social movements,” Morosin said. “That is meaningful and powerful.”

In fact, six relatively recent influential social movements — The Civil Rights Movement, the anti-Vietnam War protests, Tiananmen Square, Arab Spring, the Indigenous Water Rights Movement and March for Our Lives — were sparked by youth or largely motivated by youth action.

In-depth

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Youth can change things that we’re tolerated for way too long.

SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCE AIDE Michael Morosin

Yeh said that youth activism has helped close the cultural gap between older generations and younger generations as adults have started taking youth activists more seriously. She said that there is no age limit for young people wanting to get into activism.

“If you’re a youth activist, there will always be people trying to discredit you because you’re younger, and you should just brush that aside because if you really want to do this than that shouldn’t be a limit,” Yeh said. “If you’re passionate and have the drive and are willing to do it regardless of age.”

Youth activism gains prominence: A history of students speaking out
Why I’m in the closet

COLUMNIST WEIGHS MERITS OF REVEALING HER SEXUAL ORIENTATION TO POTENTIALLY DISAPPROVING PARENTS

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

My first experience talking about sexual- ity with my traditionally Asian parents was in middle school. We were on the re- productive/sex education unit in science, and I had come home curious as to why my parents hadn’t given me the birds and the bees talk yet. In fact, I was curious as to why my parents hadn’t had this conversation with any talks broaching topics such as puberty, intercourse and sexuality when I had al- ready been having regular periods for a while. Even that subject was taboo; my mother had been scandalized beyond be- lief when I asked her to take me to CVS for tampons.

During one particular science class, I remember briefly brushing over the topic of relationships. We touched on same-sex couples and orientation, but my ques- tions were left unanswered. It was that afternoon that I asked my parents what they would think if I came out as lesbian. See, I’d been hearing clues about their stance on LGBTQ+ issues for a while. When we still watched TV shows togeth- er, my father had voiced his disapproval after finding out the lead of the latest shou- t on show was gay, while my mother had actually stopped watching. Every time I would ask them about their thoughts on current events in the news concerning LGBTQ+ issues, they would shy away from the topic, mumbling muttered ex- cuses. I think they suspected from the beginning that their daughter had widely liberal views compared to themselves.

That was why, when I began question- ing my own sexuality during sophomore year, I was extremely hesitant to tell any- one — mainly all of my family. Just as I had been navigating puberty by myself, I had to do it once again with my sexual orientation.

Most of all, I’m worried that I won’t be met with the same acceptance that my closest friends have afforded me.

In the beginning, I was confused and more than a little scared. I knew — well, I thought I knew — that my parents would not accept me for being anything other than heterosexual. So, I turned to the internet.

I’d heard stories of classmates encoun- tering explicit photographs, sleazy preda- tors and random people who wanted to meet up on sites like Omegle. To be hon- est, I wasn’t expecting for many results or posi- tive advice from my venture into the un- known. The actual outcome turned out to be much different.

Talking to people about my fears and concerns regarding my sexuality was a welcome release of all the pent-up ques- tions and emotions I continuously re- pressed. It was only natural for me to want to find out more about myself; and I did by talking about my predicament with random strangers on the internet. I received mixed advice. Regardless of their opinions, there was always one common thing that accompa- nied all of their replies — sympathy and a discussion about friends and family. I had gone through the same thing I had. It was a bubble-bursting moment for me.

To add to the confusion, I had be- gun a heterosexual relationship with a close friend who I had been confessing my sexual orientation to yet. I was scared that if I came out, it would imply that I had some- how lied to him — that I didn’t trust him enough to tell him about who I was.

In the end, the conversation went ex- actly how I hoped it would. So well, in fact, that I felt encouraged to come out to a few of my closest friends. Those con- versations also turned out perfectly — a miracle that I hadn’t expected.

Now, it was just a matter of deciding whether or not to publicly come out of the closet.

I think they suspected from the beginning that their daughter had widely liberal views compared to themselves.

This, I was particularly hesitant about. I had overheard conversations between my classmates before about how a certain student who had publicly come out was only doing so for attention, and I feared that I would be labeled similarly. I also didn’t want to influence the opinions of people who were already afraid of me without the label of my sexuality.

The truth is, I’m still undecided. A part of me wants to be able to reveal who I am to the classmates who I’ve spent four years of my life with, while a dif- ferent part of me thinks that the trouble that might come with it just isn’t worth it, especially if I’ll come well into my last semester of high school.

Most of all, I’m worried that I won’t be met with the same acceptance that my closest friends have afforded me. I’m afraid of being judged as someone I’m not, that assumptions will be made about the kind of person I am. I’m afraid that I’ll come to regret my decision to come out, and that I’ll begin to dislike myself for who I am simply because of the opin- ions of others.

It’s this same fear that has thwarted me from coming out to my parents. I don’t know what their reaction will be. I know for a fact that there will be a time in the future where I’ll have to tell them. I don’t know how I’ll navigate that conversation, or if I’ll be met with disgust or simply an acceptance. See, that day in middle school when I asked my parents what they would do if I came out, they looked up at my mother setting down her reading glasses and my father muting the game on the TV. I had been prepared for them to scold me for saying something so outrageous to their otherwise saintly and upright notion. What I hadn’t expected was an uncertain silence. ●

High school and college LGBTQ+ experience differs

The transition from high school to col- lege is usually accompanied by a mixture of fear and excitement, while college fresh- men and juniors brought back the Gay-straight alliances. I had overheard conversations between my classmates before about how a certain student who had publicly come out was only doing so for attention, and I feared that I would be labeled similarly. I also didn’t want to influence the opinions of people who were already afraid of me without the label of my sexuality.

The truth is, I’m still undecided. A part of me wants to be able to reveal who I am to the classmates who I’ve spent four years of my life with, while a different part of me thinks that the trouble that might come with it just isn’t worth it, especially if I’ll come well into my last semester of high school.

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“Being trans in college is radically different from high school.”

Sasha Berkeley

Berkeley, currently a freshman at the University of Oregon, first came out to her friends and family around the end of 2014. Berkeley said that while her high school ex- perience was difficult in some ways, com- pared to many other trans students in the Bay Area, she is very fortunate since she has never been openly harassed. Compared to high school, Berkeley has found that students generally have more opportunities until 2017, but is currently the only LGBTQ+ club at the school.

However, numerous colleges and univer- sities are offering a personal essay option for LGBTQ students to write about their expe- riences. Since 2014, Duke University has encouraged applicants to “share with more about how you identify as LGBTQ+ [if you have not done so elsewhere in the application] as one of their optional essay prompts.

According to the Huffington Post, prompts like these allow schools to “gain a complete and holistic pic- ture of each student.” In addition to providing students with the opportunity to share their experiences, the school believes that it can gain a better understanding of the trans student body through these essays.

“LGBTQ+ applicants will benefit from an- swering this question because it provides a space to safely disclose their identities while minimizing concerns over the stigma that comes along with ‘coming out’ in a college essay,” said Daniel Kort, president of Duke’s undergraduate LGBTQ student group. Enough Ehrabumi understands the impor- tance of writing essays about being LGBTQ, this option doesn’t appeal to him.

“Some people have a lot of pride in their struggle and what they’ve done to get over it and some people would rather just live their lives and ignore it,” he said. Berkeley, on the other hand, wrote about her experiences being LGBTQ and encour- ages other LGBTQ students to do the same if they are comfortable with it.

“Being LGBTQ is a valuable part of my identity and I imagine it is the same for many other LGBTQ students,” Berkeley said. “It shapes how you see the world, and reveals how other people see it too. The life experi- ences you gain from it are too immense to not reference when describing yourself.” ●

The LGBTQ+ Student Experience

Reality of College

Sasha Berkeley experiences more freedom in college as a transgender freshman at the University of Oregon.

Limitations of High School

The newly-revived GSA club is the only LGBTQ+ club on campus.

Idiocy in College Admissions

More colleges are now allowing an optional essay allowing applicants to explain their LGBTQ+ identity.

Difference in Opinion

Some students prefer to focus on the LGBTQ+ aspect to their identity while others prefer a more subtle take.
"I want it to be a museum that everyone can feel comfortable in because they can see themselves reflected in it."  

PHOTOGRAPHER: Kija Lucas

In Search of Home

When Lucas came to Montalvo in 2015, she was working on another body of work called "In Search of Home." For that collection, Lucas traveled to 13 states significant to her ancestry as a person of Eastern European, African and English descent. She based her work on stories she read about members of her family and their experiences with racism.

During this time when she was living with Alzheimer’s disease, Lucas said, "I have this moment of realization with her, but she’s unwitting in the collaboration."

"Collections from Sundown" features notes written by Lucas’s grandmother, who suffered from Alzheimer’s disease and passed away last summer. The notes range from reminders to perform certain tasks to descriptions of her experiences for the past 10 to 11 years.

"Collections from Sundown" is about my grandmother’s relationship with the world and her reality changing during that time when she was living with Alzheimer’s disease. Lucas and her mother had to have a conversation about being able to roll out of bed and start working, "because there’s no way in the world that she knew that I was going to live this long."

Lucas says that "I feel like home is more of an idea than an actual place." Lucas said, "It’s interesting because once you leave and go back to a place, it feels different. Part of that is because you’re different as a person, like I’m different than I was when I was growing up at home. Going back, it feels like it’s shifted, but it’s really me that’s shifted more."

"'Collections from Sundown' is about people, " Lucas said. "How do we grapple with that and how obviously race is something that’s embedded in our society?"

Like "Collections From Sundown," the photos from "In Search of Home" are all scans on a black background. Lucas treats different objects the same way, whether they are flowers or weeds.

People speak very similarly about botanicals as they do people — the idea of native and invasive species. Lucas said, "I use cultivated plants that are considered traditionally beautiful, but also things like weeds from the side of the road. Then I show them in the same way in order to talk about that hierarchy that we’ve created."

Objects to Remember You By: An Index of Sentiment

Lucas’s other works also emphasize the significance of objects. For "Objects to Remember You By: An Index of Sentiment," she has documented people’s sentimental objects over the course of several years.

"Objects to Remember You By" is about what we choose to hold on to in our lives and what makes us feel at home, but also what museums choose to hold on to and what stories our history books choose to tell, Lucas said.

Lucas has created a "museum that will live on the internet" with photos of objects, along with information about the objects and their owners, who range from 66-year-olds to 4-year-olds living across the country. Even though objects like a worn stuffed animal or a damaged pair of shoes might seem insignificant to other people, they can contain an aura someone has imbued the object with, Lucas said.

Lucas would like to raise money to build a more comprehensive website that would look more like a museum.

"I want it to be a museum that everyone can feel comfortable in because they can see themselves reflected in it," Lucas said. "I don’t think vvm museums or history museums are always welcoming to people. A lot of times they have objects that are stolen or maybe taken out of context, and so we don’t always all feel represented in that."

Distance from home

Lucas continues her search of home both as a body of work and as a personal pursuit. Although Lucas has always lived in the Bay Area, she often moves around because the cost of living is so high, leading her to question what home is.

"Arriving at a residency can sometimes come with feelings of discomfort working in a certain area, Lucas said. She brings objects like her coffee mug with her — "something that feels yours" — to help her adjust to a place faster.

Lucas finds it hard to feel settled in a place. Constantly looking for that feeling, she considers home to be more of a concept than a concrete location.

"'Collections from Sundown' is about home, heritage, and inheritance" in her work.

She considers Montalvo far enough away from her home in San Francisco to minimize distractions, enabling her to sit down and focus for longer in a space specifically made for artists.

"There’s something really amazing about being able to roll out of bed, make some coffee and just walk across four feet to the studio and start working," Lucas said. "It’s a really magical place that Montalvo has made for artists to focus on their work."
A published free-form poet, playwright, performer, French-language translator and astrology connoisseur, Ariana Reines was a resident artist at Montalvo Arts Center up until recently. Reines has published multiple books, such as “The Cow” and “Thursday,” and her poetry takes on a distinct style and subject matter: internal body-and-mind experiences, derived from Reines’s hope to truly connect with others.

“The cool thing about poetry is it’s close to the body because it’s measured by the breath,” Reines said. “I find that [poetry is] an exciting medium where all human beings have these bodily experiences.

In much of her work, Reines delves into the innate intimacy and intensity of poetry — how every poet’s internal beat is different, offering them guidance in dividing the lines in their poems based on “some mysterious metabolic rhythm.” Her writing style is based on spoken conversations. To her, it sometimes feels like people are “talking” to you but not “speaking” to you, and instead they’re putting words into the atmosphere and creating a sort of energy between the two people.

Reines’s goal with much of her poetry is to recreate this type of experience for the reader.

“Whether it’s a night that you spend talking to your best friend or to someone you just met, there’s something electric,” Reines said. “That’s something that I personally feel starved for."

Poet Ariana Reines draws inspiration from different cultures, artistic styles, natural world

Ariana Reines’s hope to truly connect with friends that are part of her world, “Reines said. “It’s not that it’s a specific circle; it’s a kind of funny to me about what we’re supposed to be looking at in our lives, “Reines said.

“Like, are we supposed to be looking at the reality in front of us, or what’s happening ‘over there’? So I liked the thought of having one eye on the physical manifest of reality and the other eye looking out at somewhere else."

Although she’s enjoyed traveling all over the world and collecting unique experiences in each place, Reines has decided to stay in California because she’s spent time in California before, having lived with old friends in Berkeley. The Bay Area is a unique aspect of her poems are the references to constellations and musical notation, and she wanted to add natural elements like Montalvo’s Redwoods, fungi and insects to her pieces as well.

In the traditional play, there’s a bunch of words and the actors come and make it physical, but I got really interested in re-verbing that,” Reines said. “Sort of exploring what if the writer was just like a dumb animal? And the language and the plot and the structure would control that, so it was a very different working process.”

The play, influenced by her meeting Fletcher, was titled “Mortal Kombat,” inspired by the video game. It was structured with rounds of physical fighting, the ultimate fight being a fair fight with an adversary.

The play, which performed in Switzerland, Canada and New York, became a really interesting laboratory for exploring,” Reines said. “Not just the relationship between fighting and dance, the relationships between unspoken aggression and verbal confrontation, but also looking at the ways that very different bodies try to negotiate dominance in space, and so it was a really exciting, fun, weird experience.”

Another type of insight that further expanded Reines’s artistic life is her practice of astrology. She had initially been adverse to working with anything witchy or cult-related, since her mother’s schizophasia had manifested when her mother developed an obsessive-compulsive disorder.

However, when Reines was in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, she saw a voodoo priest practicing and was inspired by a unique approach to healing people.

“After that encounter, she began her New York based astrology project called Lazy Eye Haver, where she works with individuals’ horoscopes to hear their stories and offer insight into their lives in a unique way. “I called it ‘Lazy Eye Haver’ because there’s something kind of funny to me about what we’re supposed to be looking at in our lives, “Reines said. “Like, are we supposed to be looking at the reality in front of us, or what’s happening ‘over there’? So I liked the thought of having one eye on the physical manifest of reality and the other eye looking out at somewhere else."

A unique aspect of her poems are the references to constellations and musical notation, and she wanted to add natural elements like Montalvo’s Redwoods, fungi and insects to her pieces as well.

“She trees, the smell of nature; it’s a real nice fit for me,” she said. It’s really magical. California, the state, I’m a fan.”
Couples explain meaningful stories behind their favorite love songs

Kay Jeweler and Santiago Dutro:

When senior Santiago Dutro first heard “Sunflower” by Rex Orange County, he knew his girlfriend senior Kay Jewler would enjoy the vibe of the song. “It was a little sad but sweet and definitely more of Nick’s style of music than mine,” Feng said. “It was one of the first songs he ever showed me that was more slow and quiet, so it always brings up loving memories.”

When I asked senior Joelle Compeau if she and senior Nick Bray had a song that was special to them, she responded simply with “the Pina Colada song.” Dumbfounded, I googled “the Pina Colada song,” which I found out was officially titled “Escape” by Rupert Holmes. The song is about an unhappy couple who both publish ads in a newspaper to look for a partner to run away with. They eventually find each other’s ads and decide to run away from their original relationship, only to be confronted by the same person they ran away from. Bray first played it in his car, and although he felt like it was “a boy” and “super catchy,” Compeau didn’t like it as much. “I could tell Joelle did not appreciate the first few verses the first time I showed her the song,” Bray said. Compeau found the lyrics a bit contradictory to a successful relationship, but she enjoys the song because it brings back memories. “I thought it was special because he played it when we were on the way to the beach,” Compeau said. “He really liked the song and knew every word and I thought it was really cute.”

On the other hand, Bray believes that the overall message of the song is one that couples should always keep in mind. “The song is about your partner’s aspirations that you didn’t know about,” Bray said. “It reminds us that we are separate people with big goals and encourages good communication.”

Nick Bray and Joelle Compeau: ‘The Pina Colada Song’ by Rupert Holmes

Although the concert was crowded, they had a blast and will always remember that night. “It was really hot and crowded because we were in the general admissions pit but it was still so fun,” Jewler said. “[Rex Orange County] did a cover of ‘No One’ by Alicia Keys which I listened to a lot when I was kid, so it was a cool combination of my taste of music now and what I listened to growing up, making the night even more special.”

Movies to get through post-V-Day sadness

Who isn’t guilty of watching cheesy romance films one after another, wishing that they too could experience that kind of love? These six movies we’ve selected are perfect for a chill night spent at home in bed.

Starring Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams, “The Notebook” is a beloved classic that never fails to draw a few tears. Released in 2004, the movie follows a lower-class boy, Noah, and a rich girl, Allie, who fall in love. But after Allie moves away, and Noah serves in World War II, they face difficult obstacles that test their love for each other. Whether you are rewatching it for the fifth time or just discovering it, “The Notebook” is a great movie describing how no matter the challenges, love will always prevail.

Another good but lesser-known movie, starring Blake Lively, is “Age Of Adaline,” a love story surrounding a woman who suddenly stops aging for an unknown reason. This film, released in 2015, will make you think about what in life really matters and what isn’t as important. As compared to other movies, the mood of this film is more serious and related to the topic of missed opportunities. If you’re looking for a tragic love story that has a surprising twist, this movie is for you.

If you are looking for a movie that can make you simultaneously laugh and cry in a span of 20 minutes, “Me Before You,” released in 2016, is the movie you need to watch. This film is on the serious side and touches on themes like death and depression that people often avoid. It follows the story of a young woman, Lou Clark (Emilia Clarke), who becomes a caregiver for a paralyzed man (Sam Claflin) and tries to show him that life is worth living.

In August 2018, the lighthearted Netflix original in this movie “All I’ve Loved Before” aired to great acclaim. It tells the story of a teenage girl, Lara Jean, who writes letters to a boy she never plans to send out. But after somebody sends out the letters, Lara Jean’s life is turned upside down. But due to a series of unexpected events, she ends up falling in love with a boy in her school, Peter Kavinsky. But will Lara Jean work up the courage to tell him her true feelings?

If you want a consistently watchable romantic comedy, “P.S. I Love You,” released in 2007, follows a woman who loses her husband to an illness, but discovers on her 30th birthday the first letter out of 10 that he wrote her before he passed away. This classic surpasses most other cheesy romantic movies and will definitely give you a good cry.

Perhaps the most well-known romantic movie of all time, “Titanic,” released in 1997, is one of the best blockbusters movies ever created. The movie follows a rich woman, Rose, played by Kate Winslet, who is set to marry a wealthy man named Cal but ends up falling in love with a poor man, Jack, played by Leonardo DiCaprio, aboard the Titanic. You will definitely be in for a ride with the iconic scenes and heart-wrenching moments in this movie.

Who needs a date to spend the afternoon with? These six Netflix films are perfect to watch with your significant other while you cuddle up on the couch with a bucket of popcorn to keep you company!
2019 Falcon Fun Run

Saratoga’s First Annual Walk/Run 5k & 10k
Sunday, March 3rd
9 am Start Time

Register at falconsportsboosters.com
Race starts and ends at Saratoga High School

Pre-registration: Website
$35 Adults
$25 Students/Teachers/Seniors

Day of Event Registration: Starts at 8am
$40 Adults
$30 Students/Teachers/Seniors

Proceeds Support:
Saratoga High School Athletics
SHS Alumna reflects on her experiences winning bronze medal at 2004 Olympics

by Shama Gupta & Allison Harley

NOW A SUCCESSFUL LAWYER, 1997 ALUM PATRICKA MIRANDA EXPLAINS HOW SHS PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN HER PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING CAREER AND LIFE

Miranda takes down her opponent in a preliminary round at the 2004 Summer Olympics. Representing the United States, Miranda won the bronze medal in the 48 kg weight class.

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After late season skid, Falcons look to regroup and get healthy heading into Division III playoffs

BY JUSTIN GUO & SASHA VASILKOV

The Falcons, who were originally headed for a top 2 seed in Division III CCS, will have to brace their underdog status after a late-season losing streak.

The primary reason for their Feb. 8 loss to the previously 1-21 Lynbrook Vikings, the Falcons will likely enter the playoffs as the fourth seed, which still get a first-round bye if they are a fourth seed.

The Falcons were 14-9 headed into their final game Tuesday night vs. Fremont and no matter what, they will have a home CCS game. The game will either be in the first round or the quarterfinals, if they receive a by.

However, their loss to Lynbrook was costly, and the Falcons are going to have to regroup with even less time to get their game on track.

Making it worse, the game was the team’s Senior Night, and the Falcons fell just short of an attractive becoming a dogfight with forwards of 20 points early in the first half.

In the fourth quarter, they had just turned the corner and were ready to take down the Vikings’ best free throw shooter allowing the Falcons to pounce on this team up 4 with less than 30 seconds left.

In the remaining seconds of the game, the team’s two captains, Hakim Sun and Kyle Yu, took over.

With the Vikings expecting the Falcons to shoot a quick 3 and go for a foul, Yu took what the defense gave him, driving to the lane for an easy layup to cut the lead to 2 with 22 seconds to go. He then picked off the Vikings’ inbound pass, giving the Falcons a crucial double-digit lead with one final possession. Then, after their final timeout, Sun hit a elbow jumper after to the inbound out of bounds.

Ultimately, the Falcons were not able to turn their momentum into a win, and ended up losing 72 to 65.

Team shortcomings

The Vikings did not make a single field goal during the overtime, with all of their 11 points coming from the free throw line, a theme that has been representative of their recent struggles.

According to Yu, the main reason for the loss, was the Falcons’ lack of defensive focus and discipline, making the Vikings’ line at inopportune times during the extra period.

Coach Patrick Judge has emphasized this aspect of the game as the one thing the Falcons have to tighten up heading into CCS.

Their defensive shortcomings were clearly indicated in the fact that it was the first time all year that the Falcons lost when scoring more than 60 points. They were previously undefeated in 6 games, when they hit that milestone mark. 

Coach Judge added that especially with the better offensive teams in CCS, when the pace slows down, the Falcons will have to achieve their goal of keeping teams to under 50 to be competitive in games.

Sophomore point guard Tyler Chu added that their previous drubbing of Lynbrook by 17 points played a huge role in their lax at-titude toward the game. This has been a con-sistent theme for the squad, with the majority of their losses coming to teams that won’t even make CCS.

“I think we were a bit too confident for the entire first quarter, and we just got too deep in a hole to come back,” Chu said.

For the team, it was the first time they had come out on the short end of a game and know that they are capable of losing.

“Either way, I can’t lose,” Chu said.

Why bandwagoning isn’t only acceptable; it’s the best

BY KEVIN SZE

As I write this, my favorite NBA team is the Golden State Warriors, my favorite NFL team is the Los Angeles Rams and my favorite MLB team is the Boston Red Sox.

I guess that makes me a “bandwagoner,” but I don’t think that necessarily means that I don’t like my teams. In fact, I’m a huge fan of the team they have created and I’ve been a loyal fan for years.

The fact that I’ve been a fan for so long means that I’m passionate about the team and their success. And when they win, it’s just that much more exciting.

For me, following sports is simply entertainment. Blindly investing my emotions into a team that doesn’t even know me just isn’t worth it. That’s why bandwagoning is so great. I can guarantee that the team I’m rooting for always wins, and I leave each game happy because my team won.

I might be rooting for the Toronto Raptors to put a dent in the Warriors dynasty as I write this article, but don’t be surprised if my allegiance changes and I root for the Denver Nuggets to get their first ring. Either way, I can’t lose.
With star-studded backcourt back, Falcons are poised to make a deep CCS playoff run

As of Feb. 12, the Falcons were 4-8 in league and 13-11 overall. They will likely play their first CCS game on Feb. 16, but as of Feb. 12, the Falcons are still unsure of who their opponent will be.

Multiple injuries and strong competition in the De Anza League have prevented the girls’ basketball team from winning as many games as they did last year in the lower Camino League. However, they have pushed through the challenges and became a strong force.

“Even though we had injuries and were missing players, we still played through and gave the best effort we got.”

— Senior Kitty Huang

Despite no basketball coaching experience between them, teachers Rector and Wang step up to guide JV girls team

With the departure of Mike Davey at the end of last year from coaching basketball, the girls’ JV basketball team had no head coach.

It was the second consecutive year where the girls were looking for a new coach to take the reins.

“This year, there was no clear cut internal replacement to take over, especially considering Davey was the varsity coach for four years.”

— Teacher Erik Rector

Last summer, English teacher Erik Rector stepped up to the task along with the new computer science teacher Thomas Wang, who volunteered to be an assistant coach.

Though neither of them had any experience coaching basketball, they are both alumni who were heavily invested in sports during their time at the school.

Wang played basketball under Davey from 2006-2009, and Rector played basketball and rowed during his high school days, graduating in 2000.

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While the team will lose seniors Rachel Bakke, Huang, Kruka and Hanna Zahabi to graduation, many strong underclassmen such as Loo, sophomore point guard Iris Lee, sophomore post Beretek Bailey and freshman post Amaranagana Tyagi will remain as the nucleus of the team.

“I hope they can keep on playing hard like they have been doing. Hopefully, they definitely have a chance of winning league-champs next year if they have their full team with no injuries.”

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— Assistant coach Edwin Chen
Head Coach: John Li  2017-18 record: 12-0  2017-18 recap: Despite breathing through all conference games in the lower El Camino division, the Falcons failed to send any players to CCS. This year, the team will do battle with the upper De Anza division.

League: De Anza Division

Key Matchups: Milpitas, Palo Alto

Star Players: Seniors Nathan Luk and Nicholas Zhang, junior Alvin Ren, sophomore Ryan Hsiao

Key Additions: Freshmen Enoch Jung, Victoria Tao

Key Losses: No. 1 boys’ singles Stephen Ding, No. 1 girls’ doubles Maha Shimekawa, No. 1 mixed doubles Cameron Chou

Prognosis: Following the graduation of many key players in the Class of 2018, the team will be forced to fill its top positions with less experienced players. Returners and new talent from the Class of 2023 will prove vital to the team’s success. Under the guidance of new coach John Li, the Falcons look to rebuild their position in the upper division.

With longtime head coach Charley Situ leaving to coach at Mountain View High School, the team found a new head coach in Li, who once played badminton semi-competitively in Taiwan, but now plays recreationally. Assistant coach Calvin Blocker will return to help out during practices and open gyms.

Although Li does not have much experience coaching, his experience as a competitive player allows him to provide the team with valuable insights.

He plans on implementing a more rigorous training program by first having all players start in singles to train their strength, stamina and footwork.

Senior Nathan Luk, a returning captain, has been helping Li become more integrated with the team and is also working on scheduling preseason scrimmages.

He cites the large skill difference between Division 1 and Division 2 levels of play as a likely cause of “growing pains” for many of the underclassmen, who are not as accustomed to playing top-level opponents.

However, Luk remains hopeful as newcomers will help patch the holes in the lineup created when Ding and others graduated last spring.

“This with internal improvement bolstered by incoming talent, I have full confidence in the ability of our team to get their foot in and succeed in the upper division,” Luk said.

Tryouts started Feb. 1 and the Falcons’ first conference game will be against the reigning De Anza League champions, Monta Vista, on March 5.

— Connie Liang and Sherric Shen

BOYS’ VOLLEYBALL TEAM REMAINS STRONG

Head Coach: Brendan Wang  2017-2018 record: 13-3 in the De Anza League, 17-2 overall  2017-2018 recap: The Falcons finished third out of the eight teams in the De Anza league. The boys made Division III CCS, but were eliminated in the first round by Pacific Collegiate.

Key additions: Junior Cameron Chow

Key Matchups: Monta Vista, Harker

Star players: Junior setter Mohan Duvvuri, senior hitters Derek Chou, Joshua Lee and Usman Khan

League: De Anza Division

Key Losses: middle blocker Harrison Fong, outside hitters Collin Hovey and Evan O’Brien

* Due to the lack of signups, there will be no JV team.

Prognosis: After winning NorCal in 2015 and 2016 and placing 1st and 2nd respectively in CCS Division II during the 2015 and 2016 seasons, respectively, the boys struggled to keep up with their lofty expectations last season. They dropped one division in CCS and failed to advance past the first round in the CCS playoffs after losing alumnus Joel Schneidmiller in graduation to 2017. This season, the team will face a similar challenge in learning how to play without alumnus Evan O’Brien, who had been a staple on the team.

An additional challenge the boys will have to face is connecting with their new coach, Brendan Wang, a 2017 alumnus from Homestead High.

In spite of these challenges, junior captain Mohan Duvvuri believes the team still has potential, provided that seasoned players step up and lead the team.

“The upperclassmen that have experience are going to have to step up and take more of a leadership role,” Duvvuri said. “This is our second straight year with a new coach, so the people who have been there are going to have to use their experience to help the team.”

Tryouts concluded on Feb. 12, and the boys’ first game will be on Feb. 27 against Lynbrook at home.

— Justin Guo and Oliver Ye

BADMINTON MOVES TO DE ANZA LEAGUE

Head Coach: Trey Freeman  2017-2018 record: 3-16  2017-2018 recap: The girls struggled during games because of limited subs and finished 8th in the SCVAL league.

Key matchups: March 6 vs. Los Gatos, March 15 vs. Mountain View, March 20 vs. Gunn

Star Players: Kathryn Hamilton, senior Ines Pickard

Key Losses: Nanyoung Kim, Milan Nguyen, Laura Bhuuri

Prognosis: Last year, the JV team combined with the varsity team halfway through the season, splitting the team in terms of skill level and team chemistry.

The team lost in the first round of CCS while junior Kevin Sze and sophomore Albert Jung continued as individuals to the second round.

Key Matchups: March 6 vs. Palo Alto @ Baylands GC 3:00 March 19 vs. Cupertino @ Santa Clara Time TBA March 27 vs. Monta Vista @ Coyote Creek 2:30

Star Players: sophomore Michael Burry, junior Kevin Sze

Key Loss: Charles Qi

League: De Anza

Prognosis: The bar for this year’s team has been set extremely high. After a solid 9-3 season, the team has matured, improved, and is prepared to win leagues this year and make a deep CCS run.

This year’s competitive squad is relatively the same as last year’s because of the very few losses.

The larger interest in lacrosse this season will allow the girls more subs. Almost 50 girls signed up for tryouts this season while only about 30 did last year.

Tryouts occurred on the first week of February, but girls participating in winter sports will only join after their current season ends. The first game will be on Feb. 27 against Woodsdale Priory. Junior Julia Yoo said that the increased interest in the sport might be because the new coach, Trey Freeman, also coaches the girls’ field hockey team in the fall.

The upperclassmen on the team also tried to recruit new players because they feared that the sport may be cut due to a lack of participation. You hopes that the team will bond and learn to play cohesively rather than as individuals so they can do better than last year.

“The team’s strength is making everyone feel included and encouraging each other,” Yoo said. “I hope that the team will have good chemistry so we can work both in and off the field together.”

— Anna Novoselov

BOYS’ GOLF RETURNS STELLAR LINEUP

Head coach: David Gagnola  2017-2018 record: 9-3  2017-2018 recap: Although the team was very young, with three freshmen, one sophomore and one junior, the boys advanced to league championships and CCS. The team lost in the first round of CCS while junior Kevin Sze and sophomore Albert Jung continued as individuals to the second round.

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Star Players: sophomore Michael Burry, junior Kevin Sze

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This year’s competitive squad is relatively the same as last year’s because of the very few losses.

“We have a really strong core players in the sophomore and junior years, so it should be fun to see how the team grows and gets better,” sophomore Michael Burry said.

Last year at SCVAL League Finals, the team came out with a score of 373 and placed second, losing to Palo Alto by two strokes. Since Palo Alto already qualified for CCS, the next CCS spot went to the Falcons. They qualified for CCS for the first time in four years. According to Burry, this year’s traveling competitive squad is relatively the same as last year’s because of the very few losses from graduation.

Likely members of this team are Burry, Sze and sophomore twins Albert and Geoffrey Jung.

Similarly, the scheduling of the practices and the methods of training have remained constant. The first match is scheduled to take place on March 4 against Monta Vista.

“I think this is one of the most talented teams to pass through Saratoga High in a long time,” Burry said. “I’m excited to be a part of it and I am looking forward to competing with Kevin for the top spot.”

— Kevin Sze and Howard Tang

GIRLS’ LACROSSE GAINS PLAYERS


Key matchups: March 6 vs. Los Gatos, March 15 vs. Mountain View, March 20 vs. Gunn

Star Players: Kathryn Hamilton, senior Ines Pickard

Key Losses: Nanyoung Kim, Milan Nguyen, Laura Bhuuri

Prognosis: Last year, the JV team combined with the varsity team halfway through the season, splitting the team in terms of skill level and team chemistry.

“The team’s strength is making everyone feel included and encouraging each other.” JUNIOR Julia Yoo

For most of the season, many players would play for an entire game. However, the larger interest in lacrosse this season will allow the girls more subs. Almost 50 girls signed up for tryouts this season while only about 30 did last year.

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GRAPHIC: BY KAREN CHONG

SPRING SPORTS

THE saratogafalcon

February 15, 2019

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Breaking down the Holy Trinity of .IO games

1. Surviv.io (5/5) — reviewed by Rohan

It was not love at first sight. To be completely honest, there is nothing lovable about three circles that move sporadically around, absorb an assortment of colorful shapes and discharge lines at other circles. However, controlling these round figures to beat up toilets, blow up barrels and shoot other round figures full of colorful bullets can be extremely addicting.

After playing a couple games of the 2D battle royale, I was hooked. A few days later, I pretty much knew every single gun in the game (there are 40 by the way, so it was quite an achievement). It turns out my friends were also surviv.io addicts, so every day after school, we whipped out our Facebook Messenger apps, tested the code to our group chat and got last place in squads. Getting into a match is fast and easy, book Messenger apps, texted the code to our group chat and addicts, so every day after school, we whipped out our Facebook Messenger apps, tested the code to our group chat and got last place in squads. Getting into a match is fast and easy, so it’s essentially instant fun with your (imaginary) friends whenever you’re bored.

Fun in Surviv.io never ends: it’s fun for beginners and fun for veterans. After a year of playing, there are still new ways to scramble, push and crack your friend’s eggs. Shotguns for getting up close and egg-sonal, snipers for practicing high-level prediction skills (otherwise known as blind gaming), assault rifles for some good of spraying and praying and rocket launchers for the people who can’t aim (no offense).

The game has been evolving, progressively becoming more and more fun. At its creation in the fall of 2017, there were only three classes and nothing to unlock. Now, I play to earn myself some currency eggs that I can spend to make my avatar egg look more stupid than it already does. There are also bigger, cooler maps and skins for weapons.

My only complaint is that the grenades in Shellshock.io have an uncanny resemblance to exploding boomerangs. Every time I throw a grenade up the ladders to get those campers on the top of the platform, it comes back down and explodes my poor egg persona. Why can’t eggs be grenade-proof?

2. Shellshock.io (4.5/5) — reviewed by Rohan

Shellshock.io is a pretty unconventional game. Bullets move at approximately negative 5 miles per hour and egg avatars use egg cartons as ammunition containers. However, as the first .IO game I really got into, Shellshock.io introduced me to the power of simplistic graphics and straightforward gameplay. With zero experience, you can jump into a Shellshock.io game and have a ton of fun. Creating a game is easy, and you can easily go toe-to-toe with all your friends in a full-on egg brawl.

With four classes, there are many unique and interesting ways to scramble, push and crack your friend’s eggs. Shotguns for getting up close and egg-sonal, snipers for practicing high-level prediction skills (otherwise known as blind gaming), assault rifles for some good of spraying and praying and rocket launchers for the people who can’t aim (no offense).

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3. Agario (4/5) — reviewed by Oliver

Agario seems almost like a myth today, only the most experienced .IO gamers even remember it. However, the old gold motto applies in this case: It’s still one of the most legendary .IO games out there.

Agario is a simple game: You attempt to be the most glutinous cell-out there, grabbing up some tasty, colorful morphs from the ground or absorbing other wannabe glutons to make you even bigger gluton. Because big fat cells are slower than small ones, it is sometimes beneficial to split yourself up or eject pieces of yourself like a bloopy machine gun.

The simple yet creative (and sometimes hilariously weird) mechanics of the game, along with the straightforward format of objective of eating as much as you can (which is also my goal at parties with free food), make Agario an extremely satisfying game to play! It also has game modes for everyone.

The free-for-all mode, where players try to get on the leaderboard for size and stay there, is perfect for people who have nothing else to do than run away from other blobs until they get to the leaderboard by pure luck. The battle royale mode is perfect for people who are pressed for time, and the teams mode is fitting for people who can’t survive the other two modes.

I personally get a bit tired of trying to be the biggest blob. Why be the biggest when you can be the most helpful? My professional altruism strata, where you grow big and then split into a bunch of smaller blobs to let other blobs absorb parts of you like a tasty cell buffet, is quite fulfilling. Except when someone absorbs all of you with one split (where did gratitude go?).

WAYS TO SURVIVE VALENTINE’S DAY

10 Buy yourself a gift. Who needs someone to buy you a gift anyway? You’re an independent high school who is ... broke.

9 Eat a lot of candy. Live in a sugar-induced state of bliss for a day so you won’t notice how single you are.

8 Write your significant other a handwritten note. It’s show you care more than a typed letter, even if the only thing you scribble on it is “I’m sorry”.

7 Give your heart to someone you care about — or at least a liver.

6 Learn how to play the cowbell. The beautiful sounds that the cowbell gives off when you vigorously smack it under a windowsill will truly reflect your love for your partner.

5 Learn to play Beethoven on the piano. Use those forced childhood lessons to do something romantic.

4 Watch a romantic movie. By yourself. At home. With ice cream.

3 Distribute a penny to each of your friends. When they reciprocate the favor next year, you can finally say you received Valentine’s gifts.

2 Play a lot of Brawl Stars. What better way is there to spend Valentine’s Day than with your true love?

1 Get a Hershey’s kiss. It’s a decent substitute for the real thing.

Rohan Kumar and Oliver Ye