

## WINDEMERE RANCH MUSICIANS SHARE THEIR STORIES

By Lauren Chen  
Staff Writer

### Yifan Tong (8)

"I feel like there are [many] more common instruments, like the piano and violin, that undermine the value of less common ones."

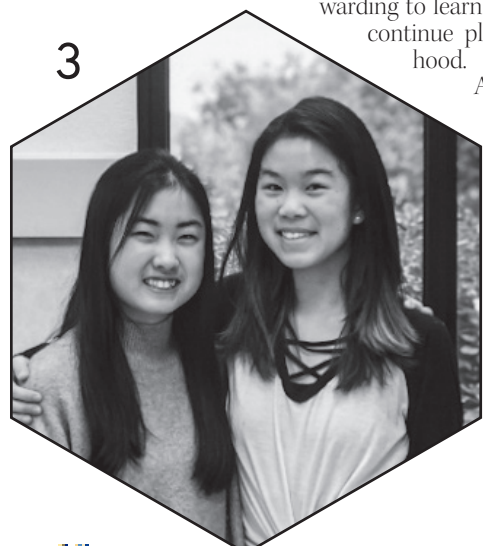
According to Yifan Tong, sometimes the best instruments are actually the most underrated.

The eighth-grader started playing the accordion seven years ago, after an accordion professor who was friends with Yifan's mom inspired her to sign him up.

Yifan has played an assortment of songs from a wide range of genres, but his favorites are some that his teacher wrote, as well as classical songs such as "The Flight of the Bumblebee."

When asked if he has advice for others looking to start a new instrument, he said, "I definitely recommend the accordion if you can find a good teacher and if you have a passion for music."

He added that the accordion is very rewarding to learn and that he plans to continue playing through adulthood.



After seven years of accordion performances, Yifan has many memorable experiences from concerts to look back on.

"My first performance, I stopped in the middle of my song, because I forgot the music. That was very awkward!"

### Jayden Lee (6)

Barely 5-feet tall, sixth-grader Jayden Lee plays an instrument that is almost as tall as him. This year, he started the tuba as one of the only two players in his grade.

"I like playing [the] tuba because it's the lowest pitched instrument in the band, so it stands out and is very original. I think it's really cool!" he exclaimed.

Jayden admitted that some of his friends tease him about his instrument. During our interview, one of his friends joked that he only plays the tuba to "compensate for his lack of size."

Regardless, Jayden enjoys playing the tuba in the school band and hopes to continue playing for years to come.

When asked why he chose the tuba over other instruments, he initially quipped, "Well, I'm narcissistic, so I wanted to use it as a mirror to look at my face." "But actually," he later said, "It's just really fun to play."

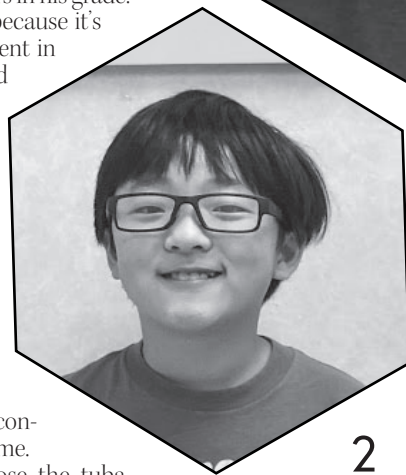
### Grace Yang (8) and Kristen Chen (8)

Eighth graders Grace Yang and Kristen Chen are not only talented musicians but are also already part of a successful string quintet. Kristen and Grace have been playing the violin and the cello, respectively, for four years each. They formed their quintet, OriginsStrings, with three of

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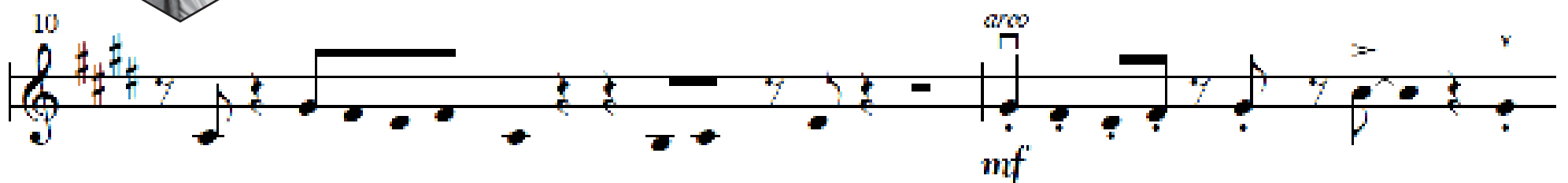
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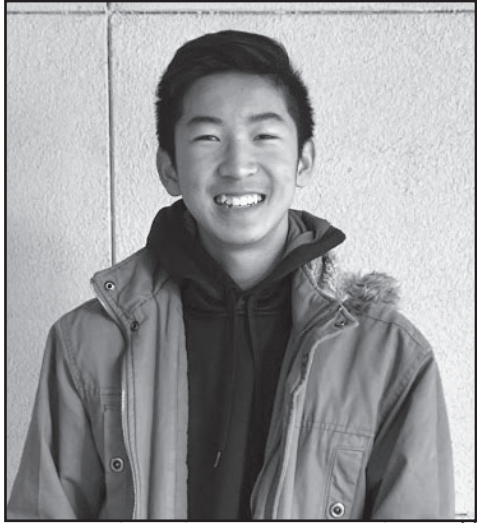
Roger Goodell risks player safety





## "Musicians"

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Harrison plays the soprano saxophone. // LAUREN CHEN

ten and Grace have been playing the violin and the cello, respectively, for four years each. They formed their quintet, OriginsStrings, with three of their friends from elementary school.

"In Origins, we can share our love of music with our community and play with our friends," Grace said.

By performing at events such as the Dublin Lunar New Year Celebration, the girls commented that OriginsStrings allows them to become more involved in the community.

Grace and Kristen both admitted that they almost ended up playing completely different instruments.

"I actually considered [the] flute," Grace recalled with a laugh. But ultimately, she decided on the cello because "it had a really nice, deep sound that sounded resonant."

"I almost started trumpet instead," Kristen added. "But I ended up with the violin because I liked the sound and my grandpa played it."

Both girls agreed that they are thankful they

chose to stick with their current instruments because of the experiences they share with the other members of Origins.

"I like [playing violin] because it's easy to express your emotions through it and relieve stress," Kristen said. "We definitely intend to keep playing in the future."

**Harrison Xu (8)**

Prior to meeting eighth-grader Harrison Xu, I had no clue that there was such a thing as a soprano saxophone. But Harrison explained the difference between the soprano saxophone and other types of saxophones.

"Fingers-wise, you use the same format and hold it a similar way ... The 'embouchure' is how you shape your mouth to play the instrument. To get the notes to have good tone, you need a stronger embouchure compared to other saxophones," he said.

Harrison started playing the soprano saxophone in sixth grade.

"I first learned how to play the alto [saxophone], but then I decided that it would be nice to 'broaden my range,'" he recounted. "I preferred to not go to a lower-pitched instrument, so I decided on the soprano."

Harrison explained that in middle school and high school bands, soprano saxophones are rare. He hopes that in the future, more young students can learn the instrument so that it becomes more common.

As we talked, it was clear in Harrison's voice that he took great pride in playing his instrument.

"The high notes are obviously very fun to play, because they're way higher than what other saxophones can hit. It requires a lot of skill, but once you master it, it's a lot of fun," he said.

Harrison loves the versatility of his soprano saxophone. "You can play jazz, you can play classical and some pop songs," he said. Still, he noted that the favorite song he's ever played is the R&B hit "Versace on the Floor" by Bruno Mars.

# SAN RAMON TAKES A STEP TOWARD URBANIZATION WITH THE BISHOP RANCH CITY CENTER

BY KATHERINE SHEN  
Staff Writer



Bishop Ranch's City Center has a modern exterior featuring pieces from local artists. // KATHERINE SHEN

City Center, the new mall in San Ramon, opened in Bishop Ranch on Nov. 8. This \$300 million shopping center is one of the largest Bay Area retail projects in recent years and was designed by Italian architect Renzo Piano, who also designed the Living Roof for the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. Its innovative and futuristic design points San Ramon in the direction of urbanization.

It's unique and different from both its surroundings and from oth-

er shopping centers and malls. Although some stores have yet to be opened, City Center offers many restaurants such as Starbucks, Boba Guys, Roam, Mendocino Farms and The Slanted Door. It also features retail shops like Williams Sonoma, Sephora (opening in the summer of 2019) and Anthropologie. Additionally, City Center offers a cinema with luxury dining known as The LOT, a play area for children and other modern features.

One of the highly anticipated restaurants is The Slanted Door, which serves Vietnamese cuisine. The City Center Bishop Ranch website describes it as "a nationally acclaimed Vietnamese cuisine-inspired restaurant featuring a stunning open kitchen and generous patio overlooking the Square."

The owner, Charles Phan, stated, "...Renzo placed an emphasis on design, and as a student of architecture, I appreciated the careful planning and detail to things like the sidewalk and parking lot, which play a large part in creating the overall experience." He explained that this was a reason why he decided to expand his business into the City Center.

As for the center itself, its purpose is to show that suburban areas can grow to be more advanced and modern. Antonio Belvedere, who presented the project to the City Council, said in an interview with the San Francisco Chronicle, "This is a great opportunity for us to explore...the suburban environment. We have to plant the seed that allows other things to grow."

Furthermore, the San Francisco Chronicle states, "With the gamble [of this new mall] comes a leap of faith - that our suburbs can evolve in ways we do not yet know."

For example, the empty space and lesser-known stores can be replaced with newer buildings or could be updated. However, there is still the uncertainty of how the community might plan to do this or where they will get the money or space for this larger project of



The LOT offers shops and restaurants that encircle an open-air lawn with chairs for shoppers to relax. // KATHERINE SHEN

changing most or even all of San Ramon.

The San Francisco Chronicle explains, "The Tri-Valley's job growth rate has outpaced the rest of the Bay Area, and the area is well educated and affluent." This means that it isn't too unlikely that San Ramon can be improved and modernized.

San Ramon is getting closer to becoming a more developed city now that the City Center has been built.

Piano thinks "that this first block can be a catalyst that generates a larger district," according to the San Francisco Chronicle. The small town of San Ramon could have a newer, more advanced urban atmosphere in the future, starting with City Center.

## 2018 POLAR VORTEX WREAKS HAVOC IN THE MIDWEST AND EAST COAST

BY SIDDHARTH SIV-ALANKA  
Staff Writer

A polar vortex, a weather phenomenon, came into the Midwest area in 2018 and continues to impact the lives of residents today.

The polar vortex formed as a result of cooler air off the Arctic which swirled into a big pocket of cold and fast air.

The polar vortex was first found in 1853. Just 10 minutes outside in a polar vortex will give a person frostbite. Polar vortices are stronger in the winter and weaker in the summer. Volcanic eruptions in the tropical region give polar vortices a huge boost in the winter. Polar vortices are huge, as most have a radius of around 1000 km.

Polar vortices start in the winter when the air high over the pole cools down to -79 degrees Celsius. The

pressure from the temperature difference causes a reaction which creates fast winds between 120 miles per hour and 250 miles per hour that swirl into a big pocket of cold air.

The main cause for a polar vortex is when the temperatures of the Arctic are found further south than usual. The upper level winds change in intensity over time which makes a jet stream that brings cold arctic air. Global warming also plays a role in this because as the temperatures get more extreme, such as cold snaps and heat waves, the vortex can bring extremely cold temperatures south.

"With the place this freezing cold, you can't go around outside for more than a few minutes... and it's snowing continuously, leaving you boxed in," said Divya Malayanur, a Minneapolis resident who experienced the polar vortex.

The coldest temperatures have reached negative 45 degrees Fahrenheit in Chicago which is colder than Antarctica, according to the National Geographic. This proves how bad it is for people in this polar vortex area, the Midwest and the east side of the U.S.

The extremely cold weather has killed many people. In March 2019, around 21 deaths were caused by these terrible disasters in the area around Illinois, Chicago. The cold has also caused many other problems. Busted pipes, cracked windows, damage from fallen branches, collapsed roofs and ice damming are some of the few problems that people have to fix. Many houses have not come out in good shape.

Some things that people have done to keep their things safe from the Polar Vortex include staying indoors, insulating their

pipes, dressing in layers to prevent frostbite and hypothermia, setting their thermometer high, covering up any cracks in infrastructure, making sure carbon monoxide alarms are working and making an emergency kit.

Some things that people did to protect their cars have been checking their car battery, keeping locks unfrozen, checking engine coolant, checking their tires, replacing engine oil, getting an antifreeze gas line and protecting their engine.

Currently, the polar vortex is in Chicago, Illinois, giving frostbite to as many as 50 people in 2 days. In order to combat these harsh conditions, people have started donating to shelters, making sure people have enough food and helping people get to the shelter.

## GRMS GARDEN CLUB COMBATS CLIMATE CHANGE

BY SANJANA RAO & ANANYA PINNAMANENI  
Staff Writers

The Garden Club at Gale Ranch Middle School is contributing to putting an end to global warming. Global warming, which is caused by climate change, can cause poor air quality, extreme weather and vector-borne diseases, which are diseases spread by insects.

Although it may not be possible to completely put an end to global warming, it is still possible to lessen the effects of it, as demonstrated by the Garden Club.

Kiruthika Marikumar, co-president of the Garden Club, explains, "The Garden Club produces fresh plants, and we're planting a lot of flowers and shrubs and we're going to plant some trees, which will help reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the environment."

The Garden Club Supervisor, Mr. John Hanavan adds on, "Garden Club for me is a way in which students can become more in touch with the Earth itself and where we get our food and how we make plants grow and how

important plants are to us. That's what Garden Club is supposed to do."

Growing plants results in less fossil fuels, such as coal and oil in the air. Since fossil fuels are the main cause of climate change, gardening could be the first step toward stopping global warming.

A few people in this club may not make a huge difference in the world by growing plants, but they can still influence other people in the community to start taking small steps toward stopping global warming.

Caitlin Chen, another Garden Club co-president, mentions, "We want to help spread community awareness of the environment and help our environment against pollution and littering."

Hanavan emphasizes Garden Club's impact on creating more conscious community members.

"Hopefully that knowledge [of how the planet works] will translate into being able to have people who are going to take better care of the planet, who are going to have the ability to be connected to the planet by growing their own food or just by growing plants itself."



# TEEN ACTIVISTS **MOBILIZE** AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

BY SHYLA DY  
Staff Writers

The mass school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland has brought out the new generation of gun violence teen activists. The surviving students have banded together to form a political group that tries to tighten gun laws. Through their efforts they have inspired a lot of people and politicians to change laws. In addition, these traumatized students and grieving parents have taken to social media to express their feelings and help change laws. Despite their losses they were able to help stop anything like the Parkland shooting from happening again by introducing new laws.

After the massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, four teenagers came together to form a group. Cameron Kasky, Emma González, Alex Wind and Jaelyn Corin started March For Our Lives, which is an organization that advocates for stricter gun laws. They have emphasized that younger people would be the center of their mission and organization structure and will not be co-opted by special interests groups or wealthy backers. Their 10 point plan includes banning high-capacity magazines and semi-automatic guns, expanding background checks and trying to pass a law that disarms domestic abusers.

Gun violence is one of the most prevalent problems in America, and it likely won't go away easily

as 41% of the world's guns are in America and 31% of the world's mass shooters are American. As these statistics show, America is very behind compared to other countries.

In San Ramon, at Live Oak elementary school, Transitional Kindergarten(TK) classes are taught to hide in cupboards in case of a school shooting.

Some people think that arming teachers will solve the gun violence problem, but teen activists think that arming teachers is not necessary.

Teen activist Emma Gonzalez said in an interview with Harper's Bazaar, "Teachers do not need to be armed with guns to protect their classes; they need to be armed with a solid education in order to teach their classes. That's the only thing that needs to be in their job description."

These student activists have taken to social media to express their emotions and thoughts about what the school has done to help protect the students. After the shooting, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School implemented a measure in which students would be required to have clear backpacks. However, criticism poured in online.

"These clear backpacks accomplish absolutely nothing. Not every item placed in the bag is visible and there is no possible way to monitor the contents of over 3000 backpacks. It's great to know that this is where my community puts its resources," tweeted Carly Novell, a Parkland shooting survivor.

"Today was supposed to be our son Joaquin's high school graduation. This is exactly the mo-

"Teachers do not need to be armed with guns to protect their classes; they need to be armed with a solid education in order to teach their classes. That's the only thing that needs to be in their job description."

ment when the mission is more important than how we feel," tweeted Patricia Oliver, the mother of Parkland victim Joaquin Olver. Oliver also tweeted, "This should be my son" with a picture of her son's graduation cap and dress.

Tonight Show host Jimmy Fallon made an appearance at the Parkland graduation as the commencement speaker.

"Keep making good choices. I'm not saying it because you need to learn it. I'm saying it because you already taught it to all of us," said Fallon.

Fallon alternated between humorous and uplifting tones during his speech. "I can't promise that life will be easy, but if you make good choices and keep moving forward, I can promise that it will get better in ways you haven't even thought

of," he said.

The class of 2018 celebrated their achievements and honored those who couldn't join them. Four graduating students — Nicolas Dworet, Joaquin Oliver, Carmen Schentrup and Meadow Pollack — died during the shooting. To honor these students and others, the school had 17 minutes of silence for the 17 people killed in the massacre. The parents of those seniors received posthumous diplomas and a glass-encased cap on behalf of the senior class.

"Today my baby should be walking across the stage to receive her high school diploma. Instead, her brother Pollack Hunter is receiving it on her behalf because she was killed," Pollack wrote on Twitter.

The persistent lobbying from the parents of the victims of the massacre and students has motivated a Republican-controlled Florida legislature to pass statewide gun restrictions for the first time in two decades. The Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act states that one has to be 21 to legally purchase a gun, adds a three day waiting period for all firearm sales, creates risk-protection orders that can prohibit violent or mentally ill people from obtaining a gun and allows the police to petition a judge to freeze a person's right to own a gun if they prove to be dangerous to themselves or others. The efforts of these students have impacted the safety of guns and demonstrated strength and determination during a difficult time.

## GAVIN NEWSOM **RISES** TO ROLE OF GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA

BY PRIYA AGARWAL  
Staff Writer

The 40th governor of California, Gavin Newsom, took office on January 7th, 2019. Coming from the Democratic party, he plans to help Californians with education, energy, and an economy that will be beneficial for everyone in California.

Newsom is working on expanding the Californian Dream, which is the idea that everyone can make themselves a better life, no matter where they start off from.

"[There are] tough calls we must make together on rail, water and energy... How we protect migrants, care for seniors and help the homeless, and how we will tackle the affordability crisis that is coming to define life in

State of the Union and offer a vision of an America fundamentally at odds with California values."

Newsom disagrees with the president on various issues, including the call for national security and the border wall, and is working to see the best of California and the U.S.

Newsom hopes to address many issues as governor, including strengthening gun control. Even though California has one of the strictest gun laws in the nation, kids still have a fear of going to school.

In addition to gun control, Newsom plans to address the issue of water needs and the Central Valley.

The source of the water continuously flowing in California is unreliable right now because of climate change. However, the needs are increasing

## WINDEMERE RANCH STUDENTS **WEIGH IN** ON WHAT BEING A GOOD STUDENT MEANS

BY KAYLA LEE, EMILY WONG & SATVIKI GUTTA  
Staff Writers

What makes a good student? This question has always been at the top of students' minds.

Many teachers, adults and students agree that a good student should be determined by their traits. However, they had differing opinions on what those traits actually are.

Maggie Gu, a seventh grade student from Windemere Ranch Middle School, stated, "I think a good student needs good time management, turns work in on time, turns in high quality work, participates consistently, [has] appropriate behavior, is respectful, positive and helpful."

Chelsea Hom, another student from Windemere Ranch Middle School concluded that a good student pays attention to the teacher and is responsible. She said, "I also think a bad student would obviously be irresponsible and have no respect to the teachers."

cluding themselves. Being inclusive is a way to be a good student. Bad students are unkind and don't try to be the best person that they can be."

and do their homework in advance.

However, teachers had very different opinions than the students on what makes a good student. The drama and stage craft teacher of WRMS, Ms. Warner, stated

that students who are kind are good students. Instantly, she can tell a good student from a bad student if they're sitting quietly, trying to listen and have polite manners. She mentioned that her students are really smart, but it's really hard when they don't want to utilize their strengths.

Mr. Tu, a science teacher in SRVUSD, tells us that traits of his favorite type of student include that they are willing to ask for help after they try to answer the question.

Similarly, traits he finds annoying are that when pupils want help, but don't listen when it's explained, because that makes it hard for him to teach them.

On the other hand, Jacqueline Lo, an adult in the San Ramon district, described a good student as honest, trustworthy, a peacemaker, someone who doesn't gossip about other people, is responsible, patient, genuinely loving, honors their parents, has self respect, respect others sincerely and is not jealous. Lo also labeled a bad student as jealous, prideful, selfish, unforgiving, and gossiping. They also talk behind other people's backs.

The paths to being a good student vary, but both teachers and students can agree that a good student who succeeds in life must study as well as love their life and speak for themselves.

Lo advised, "To me, labeling a student good or bad is not appropriate; many students can be considered good students, but may not have followed these actions or have these characteristics."

Teachers do not need to be armed with guns to protect their classes; they need to be armed with a solid education in order to teach their classes. That's the only thing that needs to be in their job description.

this state," Newsom said.

"I can tell you that I am all about making the lives of Californians and our great state better!" said Jenny Erickson, a sixth grade teacher at Windemere Ranch Middle School, in support of Gov. Newsom.

Newsom believes that many families cannot afford a proper life in California and will be working toward including everyone by tackling homelessness and expanding housing in an expensive state that desperately needs it.

Governor Newsom also has been voicing his own opinions on the political issues going around in the US, presenting challenges for other political groups.

"Now, just like back then, we must stand up for those maligned, marginalized, and scapegoated," he stated during his 2019 State of the State Address, "Because last week, we heard another president stand up at the

because the population is increasing.

"We need to protect our water supply from earthquakes and rising sea levels, preserve delta fisheries and meet the needs of cities and farms," said Newsom

Newsom is also considering restarting the California high-speed rail plan, arguing that the Central Valley has been neglected and has some of the worst air pollution rates.

"High Speed Rail is much more than a train project. It's about economic transformation and unlocking the enormous potential of the Valley," Newsom said about the project.

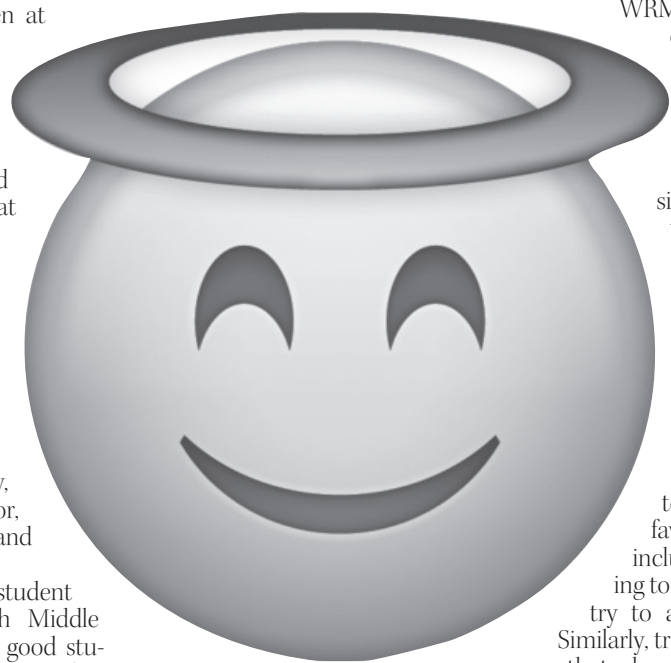
"Idealistically, all of his plans you spoke of sound amazing and it would be great if all of his proposals happened in California. Realistically, it's a lot to take on to get all of those programs and proposals up and running, so that is my only hesitation," Erickson commented.

"I think a good student needs good time management, turns work in on time, turns in high quality work, participates consistently, [has] appropriate behavior, is respectful, positive and helpful."

However, other students classified a good student to be respectful. Di-one Yang, a seventh grade student noted, "I think a good student is not always the one with the highest grades; a good student is one that tries their hardest to do their best. They learn from their mistakes and don't give up, just because something is different. Also, a good student would be kind to everyone, in

general should just love themselves and speak for themselves. Then they can fly with their beautiful wings in the future!" she said.

Audrey Li, a Windemere Ranch Middle School student recommended that the key to being a good student is to study a lot and stay focused all the time. She stated that if someone wants to be a good student, they should study three days before a test



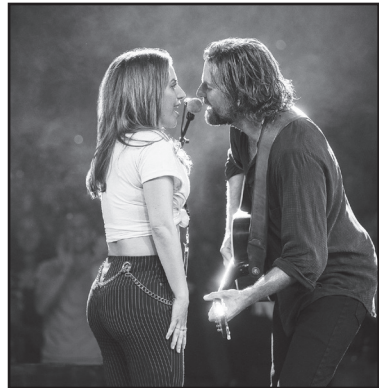
Evalyn Wong, a high school student from DVHS, commented differently. "A good student, or a good person



# BEST MOVIES OF THE YEAR

## "A STAR IS BORN" STIRS HEARTS

BY ABHA RANJIT & NIVRITTI GANESH  
Staff Writers



The film's stars sing their hit "Shallow," which won the Academy Award for Best Original Song. // WIKIMEDIA

The critically-acclaimed film "A Star is Born" is about a man, Jackson (Bradley Cooper), and a woman, Ally (Lady Gaga), who fall in love with each other, but that's only after everything they've experienced together. Ally, the main character, got rid of her obstacles, after Jackson, the other protagonist, helped her along the way. The film shut down expectations of its being some cliché story about love at first sight. The beautiful plot and inspirational characters made it a real tear-jerker.

Ally had a job as a waitress, although she had an amazing voice and a passion for singing. Her job didn't have

good pay, and she didn't enjoy her work much. After stumbling into Jackson while singing "La Vie En Rose," she gets the chance to perform on stage as a soloist. This is admirable because this ordinary waitress became one of the most well-known vocalists of all time. In the movie, she gains many fans to help her in her career path of music. She finally got what she deserved after so many years of hardship.

Jackson, on the other hand, was battling with himself and his emotions. He felt like the darkness was taking over, and he didn't want that to happen because he was in so much pain. Ally and Jackson became good friends after Jackson picked her up from the bar, and he decided that she should come on his tour along with him. During the trip, a recording producer finds out about Ally and convinces her to continue producing and singing pop music.

Meanwhile, as Ally's life was getting closer and closer to the peak of her musical path, Jackson's health spirals down as he attempts to get a stint in rehab. Ally cancels her own tour to stay with him throughout and help him like he helped her. Jackson doesn't approve of this, and he feels guilty for having Ally halt her successful career.

The film touched on depression, which isn't an easy thing to do. This resonated with viewers, especially ones who have watched loved ones struggle with depression. The movie brought out various emotions from the audience, such as feeling over the



Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga smile in the movie poster for "A Star is Born." // FLICKR

moon when Ally became a singer and her fanbase expanded. She earned a lot of support from these fans, and she could continue her dream because of them. On the other hand, it caused viewers to cry uncontrollably as they watched Jackson battle with his conscience.

Overall, this movie deserves the praise and accolades it has earned, as it touched many of its viewers. It brings the audience on a rollercoaster ride of emotions. This film is a must-watch and many viewers agree that there's much to be learned from it.

## "HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON" CONCLUDES WITH SOARING FINALE

BY TRINITY DEY  
Staff Writer

"How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World" was an amazing conclusion to the popular "How to Train Your Dragon" movie trilogy. It came out on Feb. 22.

The story starts with Hiccup saving dragons and bringing them to Berk, the home of the Vikings and a dragon haven. Due to the influx of dragons, Berk becomes crowded and begins to attract attention from dragon hunters, such as Grimmel the Grisly, a hunter who killed nearly every Night Fury, excluding Toothless. To secure the dragons' safety, Hiccup states that they will escape to the Hidden World, a fabled dragon sanctuary. On the way, Toothless meets a Light Fury and falls in love with it, but it was part of Grimmel's plan to capture Toothless. However, the dragons and the Berki-

ans work together to defeat Grimmel, and the dragons are saved. After an emotional farewell, Toothless and the Light Fury lead the rest of the dragons to the Hidden World.

This is one of the best movies all-around. It made me cry; this line from The Film Theorists says it all: "You cry in a movie not when it's sad, but when it turns out more beautiful than you ever imagined." The movie was packed with both humorous and heartwrenching moments. For example, Snotlout's, one of the Berkians, butt catches on fire. However, Hiccup has to make a difficult decision about leaving or staying on Berk.

The plot was interesting because it was a bit different from the other movies; it had a seemingly invincible villain who almost killed Hiccup. In addition, all the characters were well built, and their lines always fit their personas. The character arc was great for each and every character. It was the perfect

way to end the trilogy. The animation was flawless, you could not see even the smallest mistake. The voice acting was very good; you could hear the emotion in their voices. The quality of the voice acting was incredible too. They even nailed the different distances that sounds travel; when you're farther away from someone it sounds different than when you are closer to them. A lot of hard work went into the movie, and it cannot go unappreciated.

The development of the whole series was excellent as well. In every movie, Hiccup sounds a bit older than he was before, and that takes determination, precision and hard work.

Overall, this movie deserves five out of five stars. There's not much the film can improve on; it is lovable the way it is. It's sad to see the end of such a wonderful and iconic series, but all good things must come to an end.



"How To Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World" gives a fitting end to each beloved character of the franchise. // WIKIPEDIA

## "INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE" SMASHES BOX OFFICE

BY ALEENA SAROSH  
Staff Writer



"Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse" is a gorgeous, genre-bending film. // FLICKR

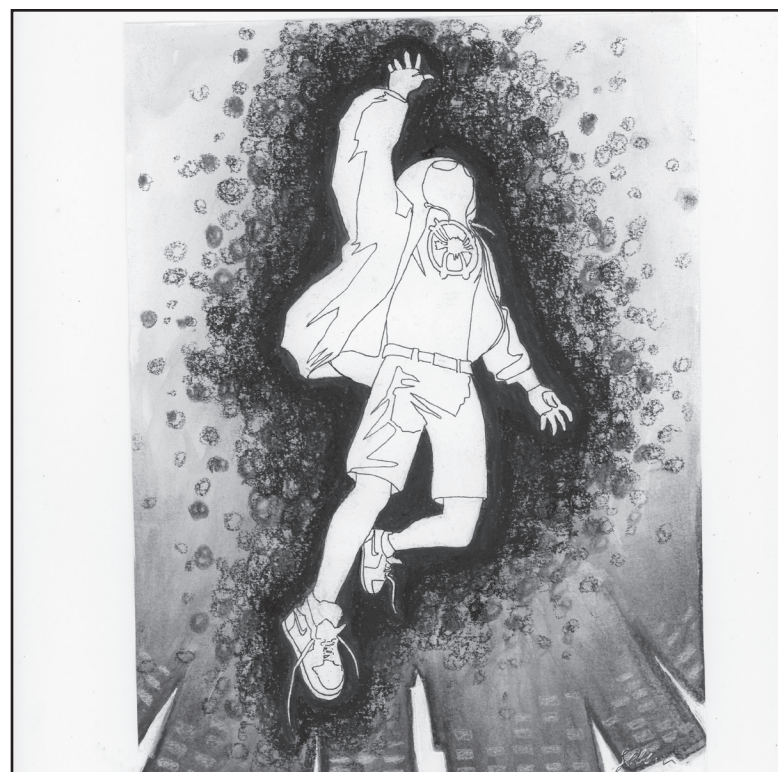
On Dec. 14, Marvel collaborated with Sony to release "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse." The movie is about a boy named Miles Morales (Shameik Malik). In Morales's universe, he is the one and only Spiderman, shortly after Peter Parker (Chris Pine) dies fighting Kingpin (Liev Schreiber), a crime boss trying to bring back his family. After Parker's death, five alternate "Spider-verses" converge in Morales's universe, bringing "Spider-people" from various worlds. They then all team up to save Brooklyn from Kingpin and return to their respective universes. The cast for the movie included Hailee Steinfeld for Gwen/Spider-Woman, Nicholas Cage for Spider-Man Noir, John Mueley for Spider-Ham/Peter Porker and Kimiko Glenn for Peni Parker.

The movie's animation was made to feel as if it was a comic book. This effect was created by using dots and lines. The animation was fresh and creative. I personally thought that this was a great idea, because it provided a unique viewing experience. Also, after Morales gets bitten by a radioactive spider, everything becomes even more comic, as with the onomatopoeia being put big bold on a bubble on the screen, or Morales sweating excessively when he sees his crush. This is different from your usual CGI with the eye-popping colors and shadings.

The departure from classic animation techniques were another highlight of the film. By using this animation style, the story would be told differently from if it had been live action. Another iconic part of the movie was the soundtrack. The soundtrack was full of rock and blues music to capture the feel of Brooklyn.

Now because of all the buzz from this movie, in August, it was announced that there's going to be a spin-off and a sequel. The spin-off series ("Marvel Rising") focuses on Spider-Woman and some other female Marvel heroes that haven't had their own movie or cameo so far. Little is known about the sequel, other than that its main character is going to be Morales.

The movie was definitely a hit with \$374.4 million made at the box office. Then, on Jan. 31, it passed "Hotel Transylvania 2" to become Sony's most grossing film. The outstanding film won The Academy Awards for Best Animated Feature Film, The Golden Globes Best Animated Motion Picture and the BAFTA Awards for Best Animated Feature Film. The film was a mixture of comedy and action and a great movie for the family. If you ever get the chance, I recommend watching this movie. You will probably never see another movie like this. From the plot to the animation, the movie makes you feel like you're really there, and it brings something new to the film industry.



Miles Morales discovers his spidey senses. // ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH KIM



# 5 LOCAL BUSINESSES YOU SHOULD VISIT

BY CHELSEA LEI & LEANNE PARK  
Staff Writers

## MEADOWLARK DAIRY

Looking for a classic drive-thru to get your ice cream? The Meadowlark Dairy in Pleasanton is the place to go. If you do not want to get in a car, there is also a walk-in place to order ice cream. There are five flavors of ice cream, and you can also get slushies or a diablo (a slushie with ice cream). Prices range from \$2.75 to \$4, depending on what you get.

**REVIEW:** Overall, Meadowlark Dairy is a delicious ice cream store. At a reasonable price, Meadowlark Dairy's ice cream has a light, yogurty taste that does not seem like any old soft serve ice cream served at a fast food restaurant. Also, with only a few minutes to wait in line to get your ice cream, it also offers great service. While other ice creams are more milky and creamy, Meadowlark Dairy has a very strong fruity taste. The pineapple ice cream tastes very fruity and it is more of a sorbet, but if you are looking for a creamy texture, then the classic vanilla is for you.



Meadowlark Dairy is a delicious and affordable creamery in Pleasanton. // CHELSEA LEI

## AMAKARA

Authentic Japanese food is often hard to find in our area, but there is one restaurant, Amakara, that definitely has it down. There are many rolls to choose from, such as the Dragon Roll or the Spider Roll.

**REVIEW:** Amakara is one the best Japanese restaurants in Dublin. The ingredients they use, especially the sashimi, are very fresh. Amakara's appetizers are delicious, as well. The fried calamari is seasoned in their special sauce. The grilled edamame is lightly

salted to give them flavor. Amakara has a wide variety of rolls to choose from. But, if you enjoyed the fried calamari, then you would like the Italian Dragon, as well. The Italian Dragon is a roll that is also seasoned in their calamari sauce. The roll contains crab meat, tempura, avocado and unagi. While Amakara tastes very good, the waiting time and the waiting area are slight letdowns. If you go to Amakara between 6 and 7, you will have to wait at least 90 minutes. The lines on weekends are extremely long, and many people line up at 4:45 when the opening time is 5. Also, the waiting area is small, so it often gets very crowded. Before going to Amakara, you should always make a reservation.



Icicles is a creamery in Pleasanton that specializes in rolled ice cream and its toppings. // CHELSEA LEI

## ICICLES

Ice cream is great and all, but rolled ice cream is arguably better. Icicles is a great place to get that. There are many flavors from Thai tea to pineapple. The closest store is in Pleasanton, and with enough aesthetic backgrounds to take pictures from, it is a great place to hang out with friends. Icicles is a bit expensive, but for \$8.75, you can enjoy one flavor and unlimited toppings.

**REVIEW:** This unique ice cream store is very good and it will only take you about 15 minutes to get there. Although the ice creams are a bit expensive compared to regular ice cream. Icicles has unlimited toppings and quite a lot of rolled ice cream. Additionally, there are dairy and gluten-free options that you can choose from. The Mai Thai is very popular at Icicles, and it tastes exactly like Thai tea. On the other hand, an all-time favorite is the Cereal Killer, where one can choose between Cap'N Crunch and Fruity Pebbles.

The wait time is long since there are not many employees, but you can watch your ice cream be made right in front of your eyes.

## YERSEN GELATO CAKES

Yersen Gelato Cakes is a dessert shop in Danville that sells amazing gelato you would not regret getting. The most popular flavors are roasted pistachio, biscotti and hazelnut. The gelato cakes are like ice cream cakes, and you can customize your own cake. You can choose which flavors you want and they will make it especially for you.

**REVIEW:** Yersen Gelato Cakes sells excellent gelato that is made fresh daily with quality ingredients. The flavors aren't very new or unexpected, but the hazelnut and biscotti are worth trying. The owner is very friendly, letting you try multiple flavors before choosing if you want one, two or maybe even three scoops if you can handle it. While many other stores may offer handmade ice cream cones for another extra dollar or two, Yersen Gelato Cakes actually lets you choose if you want a cup or cone with no extra fee! However, the most unique part of this shop is the gelato cakes. If you reserve a cake a week before, you can let the owner know which flavors you want in it and what shape you want it: from cushion shaped boxes to a dome, the gelato cakes are worth the \$20.

## BOBA GUYS

If you're a sucker for high-quality, great-tasting boba, you should go to Boba Guys. There is a vast menu that includes unique drinks like the strawberry Cali-pico (which is jasmine tea mixed with strawberries and Kefir yogurt), and the chocochata (horchata with chocolate). Also, on a cold day, they serve hot boba in cute cups. The closest location is in San Ramon. Drinks start at \$4.50.

**REVIEW:** Boba Guys is very delicious and has a lot of unique items on their menu. For example, the strawberry cali-pico is only sold in Boba Guys. Its thick and yogurt-textured drink is splendid, and you can't get enough of it. Although the prices of the boba may be expensive, I recommend going to this place.



Boba Guys opened recently in San Ramon's City Center and are known for their drink flavors and boba. // LEANNE PARK

# IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY... WOMEN ARE TAKING THE LEAD

BY ADRIANNA VILLESIS  
Staff Writer

If you're a "Star Wars" movie geek like me, then you may have noticed that women have begun to take a greater role in recent films. Just like reality, everything evolves over time. Fashion, music, technology and, of course, movies. In the film industry, women have gained more respect, rights and equality. In the "Star Wars" saga, women won more speaking parts, screen time and most importantly, lead roles.

In a "Telegraph Films" article, beginning in 1977 with "Episode IV: A New Hope," only 15% of the movie had women on screen — not including women without speaking parts. But in 2017, "Episode VIII: The Last Jedi" was released, and women had 43% of the movie's screen time.

For example, Rey (Daisy Ridley), a Force-sensitive Jakku scavenger, was a critical character in "Episode VII: The Force Awakens" and "Episode VIII: The Last Jedi." As key characters from the prequels and the original trilogy leave the series, more actors and actresses join as new characters in the ongoing saga.

Of the seven characters listed, five of the characters who died were male. In the prequels and original trilogy, the series was predominantly characterized by male leads. However, recent films have seen a significant shift towards female characters. Let's take a look at some of the key characters in the current saga.

With a total of about nine critical characters, five were portrayed by women, indicating that there

are more female roles in "Episode VII: The Force Awakens" and "Episode VIII: The Last Jedi" than in previous films. In fact, Rose Tico was arguably the most important character in the most recent film.

Without Rose Tico (Kelly Marie Tran) — "the story of 'The Last Jedi' wouldn't have ran its course the way it did, as it was she who stopped Finn from almost deserting the Resistance, she who provided hope to a group of enslaved children and she who saved the life of one of the main trio. A truly inspirational woman, if I do say so myself, proving also that women can be more than just love interests — they can fight for what they believe in and be intelligent, as well as being quirky and lovable," Affinity Magazine stated.

In April at Disney's Star Wars Celebration, director Rian Johnson said, "[She] has the biggest new part in the movie and ironically is played by the smallest actor."

Although Tran's character seems to be winning a lot of respect, many hated the movie because of the increase in women leads and Tran herself.

When "The Last Jedi" first came out, Tran received love and respect from fans who appreciated her character. But in the summer of 2018, she had to delete all her Instagram posts because of users making rude comments online. This led her to write a letter revealing that she has dealt with similar moments all through her life starting at the age of nine.

She stated in her letter that she "believed those words, those stories, carefully crafted by a society that was built to uphold the power of one type of person — one sex, one skin tone, one existence." The exact same things many people have been

telling Tran online.

She has been treated unfairly for being different. You might've thought having a lead role in a "Star Wars" movie would've gained her more respect and acknowledgement. She is the first woman of color to have a leading role in a "Star Wars" movie, and she is the first Asian woman to appear on the cover of "Vanity Fair." But it was exactly the opposite; instead, she faced racist comments regarding both her and her portrayal of Tico.

Another very critical role is Princess/General Leia. We were hoping to see much more of Leia in Episode IX this coming December, but sadly Carrie Fisher's appearances in Star Wars ended when she passed in December 2016. From the

very beginning of the Star Wars series Leia was an important character. Appearing polite and petite, just as you would expect a princess to behave, Leia, however, became the general of the Resistance. The development of Leia from a slave for Jabba the Hutt to a strong leader/general of the Resistance shows how the portrayal of women has changed. Not a damsel in distress, but a powerful leader.

So what does this say about women taking the lead in "Star Wars"? Some may call it inspiring. Some call it the next step in women's history. Others would call it a bad decision from "Star Wars" producers.

I say it's long overdue.



Women are winning more roles in the Star Wars series now than before in previous years. // IMAGE COURTESY FLICKR



# SCHOOL LUNCHES LEAVE AN EMPTY STOMACH

BY ARJUN SANDIL  
Staff Writer

Little Johnny was excited to try school lunches for the first time. He didn't expect to be served frozen pizza bagels and a soggy Bosco stick. Poor Johnny was saddened. Every day, 31 million little boys like Johnny are getting served this sort of food across America. The idea is that these "quality" lunches are to be served to children whose parents do not have time to pack lunches. It's a good concept, but is the food really worth it? The biggest problems with school lunches are the wait for the food, the options and the quality.

One problem with school lunches is that you have to wait a very long time to get the food. In fourth grade, students wait 25 minutes just to get pizza and milk. That's more than two thirds of the lunch period, and when they come back, they have less than ten minutes to eat. The issue persists even in middle school, with lengthy lines.

Experts from the FDA say you should have at least 20 minutes to sit down and eat. If you eat too quickly, you could become obese, have higher blood pressure or get a bloated stomach.

There aren't nearly enough school lunch options as well. I'm vegetarian, so my options are limited even further. In my elementary school and even my middle school, there were two vegetarian options for main courses. Pizza, but that was only available on two days, and Bosco sticks, which only came on Friday. So vegans and vegetarians are faced with a dilemma.

What happens if we have to buy a lunch on a day with meat being the only option? Do we stomach the meat, or do we go hungry for the rest of the day?

And last, but not least, is the quality of the food. The uninformed consumer buying lunch for the first time will receive a nasty shock. For example, many people told me that school lunches weren't that bad. I believed them, but on my first day, I was served a lukewarm pizza with thick milk. Not only is that disgusting, but it is not healthy at all. Both the pizza and the milk must have been expired. Having expired food can lead to acid reflux, stomach pain and vomiting; this is not a recipe for healthy kids.

Many parents argue that they don't have the time to pack their kids' lunches. Although this may be true, the parents could simply get up 15 minutes earlier. This is not a big sacrifice if their kids are eating healthier. As you can see, this is a simple fix, and it is not a costly alternative.

The evidence is overwhelming. School lunches are not worth it. They not only take a long time, but there are not enough options for the food and the little food that is available. Though there are many reasons why parents cannot pack food, the benefits far outweigh the added inconvenience for parents. Schools can also start fundraisers to help provide better food, and they could charge more for the improved food. Unless the school changes the food, you should not buy their lunches.

# VIDEO GAMES TEACH REAL-LIFE VIOLENCE

BY TAHLA ANSARI & AATIF AHMED  
Staff Writers

The U.S. military uses violent video games like "America's Army" and "Call of Duty" to train the soldiers in the tactics of war. When interviewed, 15 members of the military said that it was important to stay in the mindset of a soldier, even when not on duty. The best way to achieve this, they said, was to play first-person shooters, according to an article in "The Conversation." The military also uses violent video games to desensitize the soldiers so they would not feel pity for the people they kill. Violent video games were not invented for the entertainment of teenagers and kids and are increasing violence in the world.

Violent video games make people more hostile. According to ProCon.org, 60% of middle school boys and 40% of middle school girls who have played at least one M-rated (Adult Rating) game hit or beat up somebody. A 2014 study in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that violent video game playing had a link with increased, long-term, aggressive behavior. Furthermore, several studies have shown that children who play violent games are more likely to bully their peers, get into physical fights, be hostile, argue with teachers, and show aggression towards their peers throughout the school year.

According to Educational Neuroscience, children who play violent video games, particularly for extended periods of time, might engage in violent behavior, or even copy acts of violence experienced during gameplay. Research addressing these concerns is important given that 97% of American teens play video games.

Video games desensitize people to real-life violence. It's used as part of their training, soldiers would play first-person shooters, so that in the event of war, it would be easy for the soldiers to shoot and kill someone.

When soldiers were off-duty, they would play these games to be in practice. If violent video games impact the soldiers, then they will also numb the teenagers that play them. According to Psychology Today, the repeated

play of hyper-realistic violent video games desensitize gamers from having emotional responses to acts of violence and numb their feelings of guilt. Also, according to Michigan News, playing violent video games changes brain function and desensitizes chronic players to violence.

By knowing how to handle a gun or kill someone, kids can execute these actions that are shown in the video games. This obviously would put other children in danger, as it provides people with the tools to carry out school shootings or other violent killings. According to Live Science, Anders Behring Breivik, the man who shot and killed 69 people in Norway last year, wrote in a manifesto: "I see MW2 more as a part of my training-simulation than anything else. You can more or less completely simulate actual operations."

Moreover, according to The New York Times, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold went on their shooting rampage at Columbine High School after their parents took away their video game privileges. They relied on the virtual world of computer games to express their rage. Cutting out games sent them into crisis. Studies have also shown that those responsible for shootings were more likely to be an accurate shot and to aim for the head if they had played a first-person shooter style violent video game with a gun style controller.

Video games increase violence in the world and mess up young minds. Kids and teens who play violent video games become more aggressive, learn violent acts from the games they play and become insensitive to the affliction and torment of others in the real world. Imagine all the precious lives that could have been saved if violent video games were not available to the general public.



IMAGE COURTESY OF PHYS.ORG

# WE SHOULD TAP INTO TAP WATER

BY SHREYAS SAMBARA  
Staff Writer

Water is one of the necessities of life. The human body is made up of more than 60% water. That means we can't live without it. Since water is such a big part of people's lives, many people have made it a point to get the best

"...the truth is that bottled water could be worse than tap water.."

tasting and a cleanest water. People are going for alternative water remedies due to lack of awareness, and cities need to do a better job of clearing any misconceptions.

There are many misconceptions about the cleanliness of the tap water supplied by the city's water district. But why do many Americans not trust tap water? Many Americans link the cleanliness of water with its taste. The reason water doesn't taste good is that the mineral content in the water contributes to its taste. The main minerals found in tap water are calcium and magnesium. But these minerals are actually good for human bones. Even though tap water is actually good for the human body, many people think it isn't because of unawareness. From personal experience, I remember that even my dad had thought cleanliness was linked to the taste of the water. He called a water purifier company which sold water purifiers. I remember

the sales representative tested our tap water with some chemicals and tried to prove that the tap water was hard and unhealthy. It was unclear whether what he was saying was right or wrong. His comments had a big influence on me. I wondered if tap water was safe.

Most people believe that tap water is unsafe and are going for purified water. There are several ways to obtain it, including bottled water and water by reverse osmosis. Reverse osmosis, or RO, is a filtration process that takes all the minerals out of the water. It takes out the bad minerals, but it also takes out the good ones. Aside from health related issues, RO is very expensive too. According to online research, Reverse osmosis costs \$3,000 to \$10,000 depending upon the company and capacity. RO machines are also bad for the environment. For every one gallon of purified water, four gallons of unpurified water are discarded.

Many people have the misunderstanding that bottled water is cleaner than regular tap water. But the truth is that bottled water could be worse than tap water. According to the Food and Water Watch, tap water is checked more frequently than bottled water. If tap water is contaminated, water companies have the obligation to notify the people and take necessary actions. However, there are no proper laws around bottled water. Bottled water can contain harmful substances like polyethylene terephthalate and polyvinyl chloride. Moreover, the plastic water bottles are not biodegradable and cause severe environmental damage. In addition, people are paying 2000 times more for one gallon of bottled water compared to tap water. The total amount of plastic bottles left in the environment is 38 million, which is over

\$1 billion dollars worth of plastic.

There is no awareness about water quality. Most citizens are confused about whether their tap water is safe or not.

Dan Martin, the City of Pleasanton Utilities Superintendent, said, "If the water isn't safe, we can't supply it to the people."

The water district makes sure that water is absolutely safe before it's distributed to the residents. Some people may bring up the lead outbreak of Flint, Michigan. However, we can't pick a few examples and generalize. The city of Flint, Michigan made some bad decisions. The pipes in Flint were too old, and were made before a law was passed to ban lead pipes. Now, it's mandatory for water companies to put in additional monitoring in place to ensure there are no mistakes.

The math is simple. In San Ramon, the total population is about 73,500 residents. If 50% of them installed water purification equipment, that roughly costs \$4000 per household. There is also an estimated annual maintenance of approximately \$11 million spent by these households. The cities can easily provide improved monitoring at a lower additional cost so it increases the confidence of the residents and dissuades them from spending unnecessarily.

Tap water is absolutely safe. However, people are making their own decisions to buy purified water. Water companies should spread awareness about the quality of water they are distributing and cities should explore putting in additional water quality monitoring so people don't spend an exorbitant amount of money installing water purifiers or buying bottled water.

# BTS 'ARMY' INFLATES POPULARITY

BY RACHEL LEE  
Staff Writer

Bangtan Boys or BTS is a Korean boy band that consists of seven members. This band is formed under Big Hit Entertainment and debuted in 2013. They are a very well known group that I'm sure mostly everyone has heard of. They have a strong dedicated massive fan base known as "ARMY." BTS is not overrated but some of their fans make them seem like they are which results in them actually being overhyped.

The definition of overhype is, "make exaggerated claims about (a product, idea, or event); publicize or promote excessively." BTS are unquestionably overly publicized by their fans which lets people think they are too popular. These fans communicate worldwide through Social Platforms and have become louder and more noticeable. Through the use of the Internet and devoted ARMYs, BTS grew like wildfire over the past years. However the fanbase has a toxic immature side that leaves many people hurt. An example of this is when a Kpop girl band Momoland made fun of one of the members' voice crack. This was obviously meant as playful banter but many supporters took it seriously and started leaving death threat comments on their posts as well as making fun of their low sales. Not all ARMY are like this but some take it too far to cause drama and it makes BTS' image look poor.

Despite all that, all ARMY have different opinions and intentions. Gracie Hahn is an eighth grader that has been an ARMY for a year who found the band through friends and YouTube. "I became a fan of them due to their vocals, dancing,

personality, and more." She says, "I think a lot of people say they are overrated because they don't know much about them." Gracie thinks that ARMYs are "perfectly normal fans that are passionate about the success of BTS." She thinks "other people and fandoms see ARMY as crazy because they've never experienced being one." Kaylee Chen is an eighth grader like Gracie who has been an ARMY for about three years who found them to see why they were so popular. "I really got into being an ARMY after seeing their personalities, how they

were closely knit like a family, and how hard each of them worked." She thinks people find them overrated because they like other bands that are "just as good" or even better. Another reason is because of the massive "pushing" fans that are constantly promoting them. "I will always appreciate our ARMY, however because the fandom is so large and widely varied there is a dramatic, toxic side to them... I believe it is unfair to stereotype a fanbase based on the behavior of only a handful of immature fans."

BTS started as a loved Kpop band with the same amounts of fans as any other Kpop group. However, they started gaining more and more popularity over time and many awards. They were the first Kpop band to receive first on the Billboard 200, the first to win a BBMA the youngest ever recipients of the Order of Cultural Merit and the first to place first on the Social 50 Chart. BTS were the most retweeted celebrities in the world for 2017 and 2018 and won a Guinness World Record for "having the world's most Twitter engagements for a music group". They currently has 18.4 million followers on Twitter and 15.7 million on Instagram.

People who aren't ARMY are often confused of why BTS is so popular and how. Lauren Chen is a non-ARMY who is not too familiar with the band. "It's cool that an Asian group is gaining so much popularity. I think they're popular because they're unique compared to American bands." She said. She comments that she knows their popular songs because of the advertisement at her school from her friends that are ARMY. "I know some ARMY can be really die-hard fans, but most fan bases are like that. I'm not against them, I just don't think they should obsess and go too crazy over them."

Repeatedly I hear about BTS from ARMY and how I should become a fan like them. However I also equally hear from others that BTS is overrated and people questioning their popularity. The definition of to overrate is, "have a higher opinion of (someone or something) than is deserved." As I said before, BTS was created by Big Hit Entertainment which is a South Korean entertainment company established in 2005. Currently, BTS and another boy band TXT are the only groups under Big Hit. Before the

fame of BTS, Big Hit was the poorest, smallest company that almost declared bankruptcy in 2007. The seven membered group started off living in a tiny dorm, selling their albums for ten cents on the street for food. In 2014, they were going to disband due to their low profit and the company was losing all their artists. The band didn't give up and started composing and writing their own songs that became hits. Overhyped and overrated are two very different words. BTS is definitely not overrated, many people think that because they've heard of them so much and find their fans to be dramatic or chaotic.

BTS is a very popular group that you hear about constantly. Most ARMY care so much about the success of the band that they come off as a crazy fan. Like any other popular band or idol, BTS' fanbase has a dark side, but that shouldn't define a person's opinion on them. BTS is overhyped because of their dedicated faithful fans that want nothing but the best for their icons and they completely deserve the fame they are getting now.



IMAGE COURTESY OF BOOKING AGENT INFO



IMAGE COURTESY OF PITCHFORK



## SCHOOLS SLIGHT BULLYING

BY PRANAV GUNTURU  
Staff Writer

There have been many flaws in school responses to bullying. They're either not meaningful enough or students just don't want to pay attention to what they say. What should we do in order for kids to have a good time at school? It's not fair for most of the students. Or is the district just not strict enough about their bullying policy? We need to review what the government and other people in the U.S. say. Bullying has been a big deal ever since schools first established and it is still an ongoing issue. A suburban elementary school in the southeast

**"What is really concerning is that kids normally tend to grow more violent when they are older..middle and high schoolers aren't really paying attention."**

U.S. implemented a schoolwide intervention because bullying incidents were negatively impacting school climate and being handled inconsistently by staff. The staff at this school have not handled the bullying incidents, and it started to affect the entire school. Something like that can happen anywhere, and we need to be aware of it.

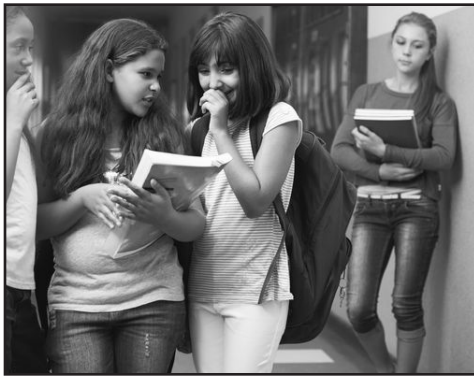
According to apa.org, research shows that if U.S. laws go far enough to prevent bullying at school. The nationwide effort to reduce bullying in U.S. schools can be regarded as part of larger civil and human rights movements that have provided children with many of the rights afforded to adults. Because of these rules, students are feeling hopeless, helpless, and suicidal. As a result, even kids from Australian schools have decided for parents to clinically

treat them so that they can reduce their children's fear of bullying.

People are becoming more aware of this issue and have decided to find a way to resolve it. Normally, students would tell an adult or teacher who can help them, but from past experience, many times school staff says, "Don't do it again." From my perspective, this doesn't work. However, the good thing about school bullying rules is that they have different ways for kids to talk their way through the problem. For example, they have Imessage and a program called SoulShoppe that comes once a month to talk to kids about ways to help manage their emotions. This is very effective for school districts who need help with bullying for all students.

But what is really concerning is that kids normally tend to grow more violent as they grow older. Since schools are mostly setting up programs for elementary middle and, high schoolers aren't really paying attention. The district should understand that just because kids are younger, we shouldn't only pay attention to what they physically do. Eventually they will turn out the same way by bullying when they get to higher grades and will continue these behaviors.

Things can get out of hand with bullying, which will result in violence. We need to develop ways for the schools in San Ramon to give our students a good experience at school. This way students can pay attention in class, feel less stress, and have fun.



COURTESY OF VERYWELLFAMILY

## NEW TECH BENEFITS LEARNING

BY SARAH TAN  
Staff Writer

Now that we have learned more about technology, we've started improving our devices that are used every day by most people. As people come up with new and improved devices, they're now being used at school almost daily, and are essential for homework. But there can be downsides to using these devices in classrooms every day, which brings up the question of if they really benefit classrooms. Having devices like computers in a classroom is very beneficial to both students and teachers.

There are several benefits of having computers available to classrooms that would be impossible with only books and traditional tools. For example, if your class was given an assignment to do research on a certain topic, it would be much more convenient to use computers and online resources than to spend the whole period looking through books that might not even have what you need. It also saves time to have access to devices in the classroom.

Randal Hart, an eighth grade core teacher at Windemere Ranch Middle School, says, "We didn't get as much time in the library when we had to wait our turn for computers, and having them in the classroom has been helpful."

Websites that are often used by teachers can also teach students at their own pace, instead of the teacher going at one pace. For example, Membean teaches new vocabulary in levels so everyone can learn at their own pace.

Using the internet is also better than just telling students about something important in history. For example, an article called "Debating the Use of Digital Devices in the Classroom" by The Room 241 Team claims "electronic devices in the classroom can enhance the learning experience by providing instant video access. Martin Luther King's 'I Have a Dream' speech is not just something to read about."

Of course, with all these pros, there are bound to be some cons and people who take advantage of these materials. According to the article "Electronic Devices in Classroom: Help or Hindrance?" by the University of Miami, "many students try to hide their iPhone on their lap or open their laptops to sites that have no tie to the classroom work and create a

distraction to themselves and others." There's no way to make every student in a school to abide by the rules, since there are a lot that decide not to. But there are ways to easily prevent it from happening all the time.

First, the teacher can set up the desks in a way where they are able to monitor the all the computers while at their desk, such as placing their desk behind all the students' desks. Of course, they would need to enforce their rules, so there would need to be punishments. If a teacher catches a student playing games on their computer, they can simply make them put away the computer. If the class is working on a research project, the person can be told to use books while the rest of the class uses the internet.

If a teacher doesn't want to change the whole formation of the desks in their class, there are still other ways to get around the issue. Not only can teachers take away the student's device, but there are also several free softwares teachers can download and install to monitor their students' computers during class. There are even many softwares that suit the computer the teacher uses. For example, there is a monitoring software called MyVision Free for Mac computers and PCs that allows teachers to see all their students' screens, and can even let the teacher control the screens and lock out usage if a student misbehaves.

After knowing about these ways to prevent people from misusing devices, some might still say that they won't work and schools shouldn't have computers in classrooms. Try to think about the allowance of computer use as a law. There are several people that break the law, knowing it's illegal, but that doesn't mean those laws shouldn't exist. Just because some students want to misuse electronic devices, it doesn't mean that electronics altogether should be banned from school.

Computers provide many benefits to the classroom, such as easy access to the internet, and allowing students to learn some subjects at their own pace. The pros of having computers and devices in a classroom outweighs the cons, and even if there are kids that misuse the devices, there are always ways to punish them and prevent students from being off-task.

## LOOKING AT CHILD LABOR

BY SRINITHI DODDAPANENI  
Staff Writer

Child labor is the gainful employment of children below an age determined by law or custom. We need to take more steps to prevent child labor around the world. There are many downsides for the children working around the world.

The kids are treated poorly and put to work in dangerous industries, harming their health and risking their lives. If they die, another child gets "recruited." According to the United Nations, there are about 218 million child laborers across the world. About 1.6 million of them are sent to work in a polluted, dangerous industry. That may not seem like much, but you and I could be one of those 1.6 million kids. This is something we need to pay more attention to. Some people are even trying to hide the fact that they are putting children to work. The government should take immediate action against this.

It is important for children to have a good education. They can't achieve their dreams without a good education. Who knows what they could become one day? We can't because we are holding them back to do work.

That boy has to work for his education and doesn't have enough money to pay for school supplies. He got 14 cents for one shine. Think about how much money he has to make to buy school supplies and how much he has to work for it. An average work period for him is 12 to 15 hours. How will he even fit in an education when we has to work and sleep?

Some people say we need to keep child labor. The children make some money, which keeps them out of poverty. However, working for 12 hours in a dangerous place is not worth the 14 cents that children get. These children are treated like slaves, being dragged around and constantly told what to do.

We should take more steps toward preventing child labor because it risks lives; they get treated like slaves when children need education! It is very bad for the children and their health. They could even possibly lose their lives working. They need education because working isn't good and can't earn you a good job. They need a job once they grow up, better than menial labor. They need an education.

## FOOD LABELS ARE DECEIVING CONSUMERS

BY LAMISA ZAMAN  
Staff Writer

Everybody knows that on the back of any food package there are a list of ingredients. But, most people never actually pay attention to them. For example, most packaged foods contain some sort of sugar, but people may not be able to easily identify where that sugar comes from. Companies don't want their product to seem like they have a lot of sugar, and so they give different names to it.

According to Kris Gunners from "Healthline", "Food manufacturers often put different types of sugar in their products. A food may contain sugar, high-fructose corn syrup and evaporated cane juice, which are all different names for the exact same thing — sugar."

Unfortunately, sugar isn't the only thing companies are hiding in a pathetic attempt to take our money. There are other things hiding behind the infamous food label. Serving sizes are often overlooked and not actually considered.

According to an article on "LiveStrong", "When a product is labeled 'fat-free' or 'low-fat,' it doesn't necessarily mean that it's healthier. When food companies create a reduced-fat version of certain foods, they typically add in extra sugar or sodium to please palates." Companies write words to make their products seem like the healthier option, but most of the time they are the complete opposite.

Big Box Retailers are more harmful than you think. According to "Progressive Grocer", in 2011 alone, chain supermarkets made 95% of revenue for large food companies. These grocery stores have companies that deceive consumers with their labels. It is much better to buy foods from farmer's markets because the foods there are fresh and not packed with lies. Shopping at farmer's markets guarantees healthier foods and ones without labels.

There are more to food labels than what's seen at first glance. They might seem to be useless, but there are lies, and things that companies mask so the consumers won't see the truth.

## STANDARDIZED TESTS FAIL STUDENTS

BY PRANAV SURAPARAJU  
Staff Writer

Standardized testing is ineffective, and yet it is used in most schools across the country, destroying teaching's true purpose.

Teachers no longer teach so students learn the material, but so that students pass and make themselves look good. Across the country, more and more universities and colleges are changing their admission process to be test-optional. Standardized testing is therefore useless for countless amounts of reason but mostly because it doesn't provide any feedback on how to perform better, doesn't value creativity, and doesn't value diversity, and just creates stress and test anxiety.

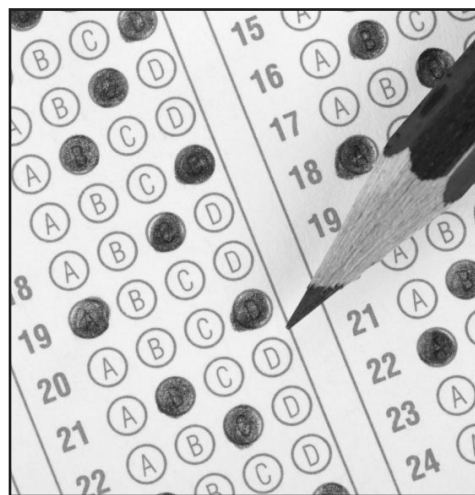


IMAGE COURTESY OF THE VIGORNIA

Standardized tests don't provide any feedback to students on how they can perform better. The results aren't even given back to the teachers and students until months later, and there are no instructions provided by test companies on how to improve these test scores. American students are spending growing amounts of time preparing for and taking high-stakes standardized tests. The federal government requires students to take annual state tests in math, English, science and social studies. Some states and school districts have gone even further, requiring standardized tests for every subject, including art, music, journalism and physical education. Yet, after children take these tests, they don't receive any feedback other than their

score. How are they supposed to improve when these tests are just taken and do not benefit the child?

Standardized tests don't value diversity. There are a wide range of differences in the people who take standardized tests: they have different cultural backgrounds, levels of proficiency in the English language, learning and thinking styles, family backgrounds and past experiences. Yet, the standardized test treats them as if they are all identical; identical to the group that took the test several years ago, and to which the test has been "normed" (e.g. this original group is the "norm group" against which any future test-takers are to be compared). Standardized tests simply don't care about diversity whether you have a different learning style, background, language proficiency, mental health state, or socioeconomic status; these tests treat all kids as if they are the same.

Standardized tests create stress and test anxiety. Some kids do well with a certain level of stress. Other students fold under pressure. So, again, there isn't a level playing field. Brain research suggests that too much stress is psychologically and physically harmful. When stress becomes overwhelming, the brain shifts into a "fight or flight" response, where it is impossible to engage in the higher-order thinking processes that are necessary to respond correctly to the standardized test questions.

"I have this thing where every time I take a test even if I studied for it I forget when I see it because of the stress and I'm scared I'm going to fail, so every time I took the test I always did really badly," explained sophomore Nasra Hassan. Standardized testing can be harder for people who have mental health issues and can cause stress and anxiety. About 16-20% of students have high test anxiety, making this the most prevalent scholastic impairment in our schools today. Another 18% are troubled by moderately-high test anxiety, according to American Test Anxieties Association (ATAA).

Standardized testing is completely useless and it damages people's self worth and some people will beat themselves up over it themselves if they don't get a good score. If standardized tests were removed not only would it reduce stress but build confidence. As a result banning standardized testing would be helpful to a lot of people, especially students and teachers.



# DUKE DEFEATS LOUISVILLE AFTER HISTORIC SECOND-HALF COMEBACK

BY ASHRAY PAMULA  
Staff Writer

On Feb. 12, Duke's Men's Basketball prevailed over the Louisville team by a score of 71-69 in a heavily contested game that featured a historic comeback due to outstanding plays from forwards Zion Williamson, Cam Reddish and R.J. Barrett.

Despite the comeback that Duke had to make in order to win the game, for most of the beginning, both teams scored evenly with the largest point differential within the first half being only 10 points. By the end of the half, both teams were still battling out an even game as the score was 38-29 in Louisville's fa-

vor. Both teams were heavily guarding the rim as Duke's Big Three were limited to a mere 255 points and the rest of their team only earning four points. Going into the second half, most viewers and analysts came to the consensus that Duke would pick up steam throughout the remainder of the game and hustle their way to a hard fought victory. Although the end result was just about true, the second half didn't go as planned at all as the Louisville Cardinals outscored the Duke Blue Devils 21-7 in just the first 10 minutes of the half. As the game went on, Louisville obtained a 23 point lead, and many fans began to celebrate, knowing that their team was just 10 minutes away from defeating one of the top teams of col-

lege basketball. However, Duke managed to execute one of the greatest comebacks in the history of college basketball. Strong defense and a renewed offense allowed Duke to slowly but surely bring the lead to point deficit to three, when Reddish hit possibly the greatest three-pointer of his career. From there, Duke made a final defensive stand, and after a Louisville foul, Reddish, once again, came through for his team and sank both free throws, winning the game for the Blue Devils.

After the intense, historic game, many fans were speechless. Louisville's previously ecstatic crowd was anything but happy as only a few standout Duke fans were left in the sea of cardinal red seats.

When asked about the game by an ESPN reporter, Williamson responded, "It just took us playing hard. They were playing harder than us. Louisville's a very great team, but we just had to play harder than them."

Chris Mack, head coach of Louisville, chimed in by adding, "[I] give Duke great credit. Their kids never quit. They battled. They turned us over what seemed like a thousand times in the last four or five minutes. I'm stunned."

Mack's reaction was similar to most of the public. In fact, a comeback like this ranks among some of the largest, but with so much on the line, this comeback's importance was greatly emphasized.

The Blue Devils also played sound basketball throughout the March Madness tournament. They lasted till the Elite 8 stage, in which they were knocked out by Michigan State Spartans due to a 68-67 loss in a thriller game. However, Williamson is regarded as a popular prospect for an NBA first-round draft pick.



Freshman RJ Barrett grabs rebound against Louisville. //DUKE BASKETBALL REPORT



Duke senior Zion Williamson celebrates after the comeback victory over Louisville. //RALEIGH NEWS AND OBSERVER

## NFL FAILS TO ADDRESS CONCUSSION DILEMMA

BY SAMARTH JAYANTH  
AND HRISHI BHARATH  
Staff Writers

Roger Goodell isn't making the National Football League (NFL) safer due to his problems with money. Roger Goodell is the commissioner of the NFL, and he once said, "We want players to enjoy long and prosperous careers and healthy lives off the field. So we focus relentlessly on player health and safety, while also keeping the game fun and unpredictable."

Although some may say he is living up to his statement, he's actually downplaying the concussion issue as he argues his way to get a pay raise instead of sending money towards concussion research. Also, he acts oblivious to pressing player issues. For example, the average life expectancy for an NFL player is 20 years less than that of the average American, meaning that most play-

ers die before they can fully enjoy their retirement (Vox.com).

Roger Goodell hasn't made much of an effort to change the rules to make the game safer.

He hasn't made sufficient progress in limiting player concussions. If anything, since he took office in 2006, the number of reported concussions in the league has only increased. In 2005, only 158 concussions were reported, but in 2017, there were 281. Also, the rules the NFL made to try to prevent concussions only sparked more concussions. Since Roger Goodell doesn't want to ruin the sport, he has upheld rules that don't protect the safety of players. Today, NFL rules state that when a ball carrier's helmet falls off, the play will be blown dead. However, when a player without the ball loses their helmet, they can easily get hurt. Roger Goodell has not truly made the sport safer on the rules' side of the sport.

The game isn't safer, but it is really

important to know why it isn't safe. Concussions or repeated blows to the head are directly correlated to chronic traumatic encephalopathy. (CTE) One study found that out of 111 former NFL players, 110 of them had CTE. The symptoms include difficulty thinking, impulsive behavior, depression, short-term memory loss, difficulty planning and working, emotional instability, substance abuse and suicidal thoughts or behavior. This commonly leads to death through suicide due to depression, or the failure of bodily functions which may lead to complications in the heart as well. Finally, one of the worst things about CTE is that kids are even at risk. Since the NFL inspires kids to play football, most kids play, but after too many repeated blows to the head, they could be at serious risk for CTE. The NFL must make itself safer, or they will endanger the lives of many.



Various lawsuits are filed against the massive increase in NFL concussions and injuries. //WTXL.COM

## FALCONS SNEAK PAST GRYPHONS

BY ASHLEY LEE  
Staff Writer

On March 7, Gale Ranch Gryphons and Windemere Ranch Falcons badminton played at Gale Ranch Middle School. There were several rallies, with many mistakes and communication errors between teammates. In the third observed games, the game scores were 8-2, 5-5 and 5-6.

In the first game, 7th-graders Sahiti Mallikharjuna, Saranya Mediseti and Sanika Saleem composed of the six Gryphon teams in the second group. To start this game, the Gryphons served the birdie out of bounds, letting the Falcons to earn a point. However, when the Falcons served, the birdie did not go over the net, tying the score. Soon, the Gryphons had seven more points while the Falcons had made one more, making the points 8-2. Most of these points were earned during a service because they missed the birdie. Gryphons won this round by six points, and had many rallies that reflected this skill gap. The final score was 8-2.

The second game had Chloe Yee and Kylie Lai as one of the six Gryphon teams in the third group. Gryphons first served the birdie over the net and the two teams rallied back and forth until the Falcons missed the shot. When the Falcons served, the Gryphons missed the birdie. Then, Lai smashed the birdie, and it skimmed over the net. This skill worked for her and she used this multiple times during their serves. At the end, their final score was tied at 5-5.

In the third game, Rafael Fernandes and Felipe Schreiner composed of the teams in the fifth group. Their game started off with Gryphons serving the birdie and rallying twice until the opposing Falcon team missed. Howev-

"I thought it was fun, because the first round was okay, but the second round was fun. I think that Windemere won this time. I could have payed attention to the birdie and hit the birdie softer when I'm closer to the net"

- Kylie Lai's partner

er, right after this, the Falcons earned a service ace, evening the score. The Gryphons served and the Falcons missed, but the next time, they rallied many times. Gryphons hit the birdie over the boundaries many times during their game, resulting in the score being 6-5, with Falcons winning this round.

Mr. Schlientz, one of the three badminton coaches at Gale Ranch, said, "I thought it was fun, it seemed like all the games were pretty competitive. Next game, I would imagine that Windemere would have more students because it's a home game for Windemere so

it's hard to tell who's going to win, but I still think it will be a pretty even match-up."

