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News - May 29, 2015

Around Town

A NEW TRADITION ... At Gunn High School's graduation ceremony this Wednesday, June 3, there will be no caps decorated with bejeweled college names or fanciful logos. The senior class agreed to ban all college-related cap decorations this year and instead celebrate something of significance to them, said Principal Denise Herrmann, who brought the idea to students this spring. Graduation "is a time to celebrate what students have accomplished in their K-12 education, not to provide advertising for colleges and universities," she continued. "The students were encouraged to decorate their caps with something that is meaningful to them — music, sports, passions, hobbies, high school successes, etc." Student Noa Livneh penned an opinion piece in Gunn's student newspaper The Oracle last month in support of the ban. "Not only does decorating grad caps defeat the purpose of graduation, it makes many students anxious and sends a message to the community saying that all that matters about high school graduation is the college on top of the cap," she wrote. In a counter-piece, student Erica Watkins argues that the ban is an ineffective, symbolic gesture that sends the wrong message about the school's approach to school-related stress. "As stress is a healthy, common part of life, it would do all of our students a greater service to teach us how to deal with it rather than eradicate it," she wrote. "We are all moving on to the real world, and that is an accomplishment that students should be able to show to their community, whatever it is they are doing after high school." The pro-ban camp prevailed, however, and the senior class held two cap-decorating parties after school this week to get in the spirit. Senior Rose Weinmann, for example, chose to decorate hers with two words, "think responsibly," borrowed from an ad in The Economist.



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DROUGHT? WHAT DROUGHT? ... Let there be water! In honor of graduates and their families, Stanford University will ever-so-briefly turn on 18 of the campus' 21 fountains for Commencement Weekend. The fountains, which were shut down and drained in response to the state's prolonged drought, will be brought back on-line beginning June 1, with the Tanner Fountain in front of Memorial Auditorium and the Serra Fountain in front of the Hewlett Teaching Center, according to the Stanford Report. The White Memorial Fountain, located in White Plaza, will start flowing June 4, along with the fountain in front of Old Union. All 18 fountains will be operating by June 9. But never fear, water savers: The fountains, which require about 60,000 gallons of the liquid gold, will be shut off the day after graduation, June 15, and the water will be stored and used throughout the summer for routine tree irrigation.

FIRE TRUCKS FOR OAXACA ... The City of Palo Alto has initiated efforts to donate four surplus fire vehicles to its sister city of Oaxaca, Mexico. For years Palo Alto has supported Oaxacan firefighters by sending surplus vehicles (nine trucks have been sent to Oaxaca, a city located about 300 miles south of Mexico City) and emergency supplies. To assist with the efforts, Tacolicious, a restaurant in downtown Palo Alto, is hosting a fundraiser on Friday, May 29, with Manuel Maz, the fire chief of Oaxaca, Palo Alto Mayor Karen Holman and Palo Alto Fire Chief Eric Nickel. The event will raise funds to transport the four vehicles from Palo Alto to Oaxaca. The vehicle donation has been financially supported in the past by Neighbors Abroad, Palo Alto Kiwanis International, Palo Alto Rotary and Palo Alto University Rotary. "We are delighted to be able to give these vehicles to our sister city knowing how much they are appreciated and the care they will receive," said Marion Mandell, vice president for the sister-city nonprofit Neighbors Abroad of Palo Alto. For more information, visit firetrucksoaxaca.eventbrite.com.



BRACELETS FOR COUNSELING ... Two Palo Alto High School seniors started selling handmade bead bracelets this week to support Adolescent Counseling Services (ACS), a Palo Alto nonprofit that provides on-campus counseling to Paly and Gunn students, student news website the Paly Voice reported. Seniors Claire Chevallier and Emma Chiu began selling the bracelets earlier this month, hoping to support a service on their campus that has been overloaded after several teen deaths by suicide in the district this year, the Voice reported. All proceeds will go directly to ACS. The bracelets, available in several colors, are \$25 each and can be purchased by contacting either Chevallier or Chiu on Facebook.

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