

# The Scribe

The Official Student Newspaper of Oakland Technical High

ISSUE 4  
DEC. 2013

www.oaklandtechscribe.com



Anya Kur/The Scribe

## Private Security Causes Controversy in Rockridge

By Nico Hall

With local crime on the rise, an Oakland neighborhood has decided to tackle the problem head-on. But their solution to a worsening problem is causing some controversy.

Crime rates in Oakland have been rising over the past year, with robberies up 24%, armed robberies up 45%, and burglaries up 40%, and the Oakland Police Department (OPD) has been unable to alleviate the situation. Some more affluent communities of Oakland, faced with a sparse and unresponsive police force, have taken the problem into their own hands by pooling money in order to hire private security.

Already an overwhelmed institution, OPD has suffered from the recent recession, with the loss of over 200 officers due to budget cuts. These cuts have Oaklanders worried, and those with the means are beginning to face the problem independently.

Most recently, this trend has spread to Lower Rockridge, a residential neighborhood only a 10 minute walk from Tech. The

*(Crime continues on Page 10)*

**INSIDE**

**News – Pages 2-4**

**Features, Holiday  
Special – Pages 5-7**

## Too Many Teenagers

*Enrollment at Tech Sees Exponential Growth, Has Many Worried*

By Trevor Harrison

In a district short on cash and unable to soundly manage all of its 84 schools, Oakland Tech has seen a dramatic rise in enrollment. Teachers and staff have already faced difficulties caused by over-enrollment, and many wonder when OUSD will finally draw the line.

This year there are 200 more students at Tech than the school has ever had before, and the extra students have caused many problems throughout the school. The hallways at Tech are even more congested than they have been in previous years, and in some classes the students outnumber the chairs, even four months into the school year.

Oakland Tech Principal Staci Ross-Morrison remarked, “Our class sizes are terribly large, and we have had to make the Computer Academy’s lab and our Family Community Center into classrooms.”

Oakland Tech’s student body has been steadily growing for several years now. In 2009, enrollment was at 1,690; by 2012 it had reached 1,880, and now it sits at a little over 2,100. The additional students face increased competition for limited locker space and spots on Oakland Tech sports teams.

The language and PE departments have been hit particularly hard because they cannot move classes to the upper campus. Ms. Deirdre Snyder, a Spanish teacher at Tech, has had to place students at her desk and in extra chairs at the back of the class. She said the larger class sizes “make it harder for [her] to give each student individual attention and [make it] easier for kids to get distracted.” She added, “People should be able to come and sit down in a chair. The district doesn’t know what [it is] talking about if it is forcing Tech to take 2,100

*(Enrollment continues on Page 10)*

# News

## Snapchat Turns Down \$3 Billion Offer from Facebook

*Why Rejection May Signal Demise of Facebook*



Courtesy The Daily Republic

By Rafael Sands

In a move that shocked both the tech industry and Wall St. alike, Snapchat founders Evan Spiegel and Bobby Murphy rejected a whopping \$3 billion buyout offer from tech giant Facebook. The decision reflects a growing disconnect between Facebook and its younger audience, suggesting that Facebook's days of popularity may be numbered.

Snapchat, a social media app which allows users to send self-destructing photos to their friends (the photos are deleted after the receiver is able to view it once), is now processing upwards of 400 million photos a day. Seventy-percent of the app's users are female, and an overwhelming majority are believed to be under 30 years old.

While the reasons for the rejection aren't totally clear, the decision is nonetheless remarkable because Snapchat currently has no profit model in place. Additionally, the company employs less than 30 staff members; the payout, had the offer been taken, would have been huge. The offer comes only a year after Facebook bought the popular photo-sharing app Instagram and its 12 employees for \$1 billion.

◀ *Snapchat CEO Evan Spiegel*

Many analysts believe Snapchat turned down the offer because their executives think Facebook is declining in popularity and that they can make more money on their own. At this point, however, this belief is questionable; while indeed fewer and fewer teenagers are using Facebook on a daily basis, it's unclear how Snapchat could independently earn more money than the value of the offer.

Tech senior Max Ray told us that "Facebook is obviously on the decline. They've turned their site into what is basically spam. Everything has ads and all of their games are pay-to-play." He went on to add that Snapchat is "already massively successful and has no reason to sell out to [a company like] Facebook."

One obvious method for Snapchat to make money would be to implement advertising, but Facebook has had minimal success with this. As Max suggests, there appears to be a relationship between the number of ads shown to a user and the likelihood of that user splitting from the social network. Another idea would be to charge users outright for the service, but this likely wouldn't fare well either. A recent poll by the firm Greenlight showed that only 15% of Facebook users would be willing to pay for the service ad-free, and only 8% said they'd pay more than \$5/year.

For now, only time will tell if Facebook is indeed a dying fad and if Snapchat can do any better on its own.

*Do you think Facebook's days are numbered? Send your opinion to editor@oaklandtechscribe.com. ☐*

## Dates to Remember

Compiled by Anya Ku

Dec. 15 - Ice Hockey v. SJ Jr. Sharks (6:30 PM)

Dec. 17 - Boys Basketball v. California HS (4, 5:30, 7PM) [Frosh, JV, Var]

Dec. 18 - Minimum Day - Girls Basketball v. Pittsburg HS (5:30, 7PM) [JV, Var]

Dec. 19 - Winter Concert (auditorium, 7PM)

Dec. 20 - Turtleneck Day - Staff Appreciation Breakfast

- Senior Class Meeting (lunch)

- Girls Basketball v. Thurgood Marshall (5:30, 7PM) [JV, Var]

Dec. 23-Jan. 3 - Winter Break

Jan. 6 - Student Council Meeting

Jan. 8 - Minimum Day

Jan. 13-16 - Senior Portraits (reserve a spot now at [abcschoolportraits.com](http://abcschoolportraits.com))

### Check it out!

*The Scribe* is now online at [oaklandtechscribe.com!](http://oaklandtechscribe.com!)

View old issues, subscribe to email delivery, and more!

# News

## Economic Disparity Between Oakland and Piedmont Shows In Teacher Pay Differences



Anya Ku / The Scribe

By Josef Starc and Eliza Blackorby

As any Bay Area resident knows, there is a vast economic disparity between the City of Oakland and its small neighbor in the hills, the City of Piedmont. However, this contrast has become increasingly visible in the two school districts as well. With its test scores and Academic Performance Index rankings consistently at some of the highest levels in the state, Piedmont has set itself apart and has undoubtedly earned its spot as one of the best districts in California, while Oakland lags behind the average.

In 1907, a small group of Oakland citizens, hoping to separate themselves from Oakland, founded Piedmont within the city. By the 1920s, it was known as the “City of Millionaires” because it had more millionaires per square mile than did any other city in the United States. Purely residential, Piedmont remains home to mostly affluent families, and it retains its own police force and school district. With a median household income of over \$1,300,000 and some of the most expensive homes in the area, Piedmont has come to represent the wealth of the East Bay. Its schools reflect the commitment of its residents to the education of their children.

With ample parcel taxes and a community standing behind their schools,

Piedmont has fought to appeal to many of the best teachers looking to work in the East Bay. Since 1985, residents have approved parcel taxes every four years that, as of today, account for 30% of the school district’s budget and add on to the money provided by the State Department of Education. As a result, the compensation for teachers in the city can be extremely enticing, especially to those just beginning their careers. According to this year’s salary schedule, a first-year teacher in the city begins at a salary of \$44,220. After 25 years of teaching, a teacher in Piedmont can hope to make \$88,143. According to the California Department of Education, the beginning annual salary for districts similar in size to Piedmont USD, which serves approximately 2,600 students, was \$38,578 for the 2011-2012 school year, while the highest possible salary was just over \$78,000. As it stands, Piedmont residents are given – and take advantage of – the opportunity to supplement the state funding with their own affluence. Although Piedmont residents rely on Oakland’s libraries and other services, getting into a Piedmont school is nearly impossible for an Oakland resident and transfers into the district are very rare.

Oakland, by contrast, has very little extra money to spend on education. *(Piedmont continues on Page 9)*

### SEEKING COMMUNITY VOICES

Come January 2014, the print edition of *The Scribe* will be produced on 11x17” newsprint, which means we’ll have twice the print space that we do now. With this change, our editorial board is hoping to feature pieces from all corners of the Tech community - including students, teachers, administrators, parents, alumni, and neighbors. If you are a student, and you received this edition in print from your 3rd, 5th, or 6th period teacher, you may be eligible for extra credit in that class.

**If you have something to say, let your voice be heard!** Email editor@oaklandtechscribe.com for all the details.

### CORRECTION

In our November issue, we mistakenly identified the photo on Page 9 as Courtesy of Mercury-News when it really belonged to our own Anya Ku.



# Features

## Bulldog-of-the-Month: Elise Buser

Know a Bulldog that deserves a feature? Send your nomination to [editor@oaklandtechscribe.com](mailto:editor@oaklandtechscribe.com)

By Sierra Warrick

We all have a passion that we keep hidden from our peers. This isn't always on purpose, of course; most of the time we just don't get the chance to talk about our lives outside of school. For Oakland Tech junior Elise Buser, this means that many of the people who pass by her everyday are unaware that she is a nationally ranked rock climber.

Elise started climbing at Berkeley Iron Works when she was just eight years old, but then stopped for a number of years to play competitive soccer. In the summer before 8th grade, at the age of twelve, she returned to the sport and joined the local Teen Team.

It was during this year that she first began to participate both in local Touchstone competitions and in the more intense competitions sponsored by USA Climbing. These competitions include two separate series – one for bouldering (short walls) and one for sport climbing (tall, 60 to 90 foot walls with ropes). While still on Teen Team, Elise made it all the way to the Divisionals competition in Seattle, Washington.

In 9th grade Elise began to realize that Teen Team was not giving her the training that she needed, and so she switched to Zero Gravity, a more competitive and grueling rock climbing program.

In the last few years on Zero Gravity, Elise has again gone to Di-

visionals in Seattle, qualified for Nationals, climbed outdoor rock faces hundreds of feet high in Donnor Summit, and won third place in a San Francisco Touchstone competition for women's advanced climbing. She currently practices three to five times a week for three hours at a time and is in training for the upcoming bouldering series.

When asked, Elise told me, "I think what I love most about climbing is how much I surprise myself." She often thinks back to the young girl she once was, working on V3 bouldering problems (on a V0 to V16 scale). "That twelve year old girl never would have imagined that four years later she would be climbing V8s and competing on the team that she once idolized." Elise also loves the rock climbing community, which she says is full of friendly and supportive people.

Elise says that the hardest thing about rock climbing is how it conflicts with school. Often during the week she is not able to begin her homework until after practice, which does not end until 7pm. This means that she regularly has to sacrifice sleep in order to keep up with both her grades and the sport she loves.

When asked what it feels like to go to competitions, Elise said, "At first, when I'm sitting in isolation waiting to climb, I get really nervous. But once I get on the wall I'm so pumped with adrenaline that the nerves fall away. The roar of the crowd buoys me and I lapse into a sort of Zen state where nothing else matters but the climb in front of me." □

## READERS RESPOND

Last month, we asked readers:

### Was Janet Napolitano the right choice for UC President?

Here's what they said:

Yes - she's experienced and will get things done (16%, 3 Votes)

No - her past role in the Dept. of Homeland Security makes her unfit for this job (32%, 6 Votes)

**Not sure - let's give her a chance before we judge (52%, 13 Votes)**

This month, we ask:

How should OUSD handle the over-enrollment problem at Tech?

Respond NOW at

[www.oaklandtechscribe.com!](http://www.oaklandtechscribe.com!)

*Elise competing at a Touchstone competition at Mission Cliffs Gym in SF.  
Sierra Warrick / The Scribe*



## Club Spotlight: JSA/ Debate Club

By John Oberholzer

Last month, 15 members of Oakland Tech's Junior Statesmen of America/Debate Club represented our school at the NorCal JSA Fall State Convention. The two-day convention included debates on everything from Walmart to partisanship to social expectations; TED Talks on subjects like Miley Cyrus, ObamaCare, and Hinduism; and a dance with hundreds of teenagers from all over Northern California. Tech students were particularly active at the convention – Junior and club leader Adrian Napolitano even brought home two Best Speaker Gavels. For new members, the convention was also a chance to experience the full depth and breadth of JSA.

JSA is not just a debate club. The organization encourages youth leadership on local, regional, and statewide levels. Our NorCal state organization even has its own newspaper, the North Star. In addition to debates on local, national, and international topics, JSA events can include speed-chess debates, debate wars, thought talks, crisis scenarios, workshops, mock trials, and political fairs. JSA offers something for everyone, from hardcore fiscal policy to social justice. And as a student-led organization, there are many opportunities to build upon the existing structure: your experience in JSA is what you make it.

Oakland Tech's JSA/Debate Club meets every Thursday at lunch in room 103, Ms. Wolfe's classroom. Most meetings feature a formal debate on relevant local or national political issues. Participants develop their critical thinking and public speaking skills, increase their political awareness, and boost their self-confidence. For ambitious students, leadership opportunities are available on both small and large-scale levels. □

# Features

## Peter and the Starcatcher

By Rozzie Heeger

Many children have been touched by the youthful joy and innocence of Peter Pan. But what so many have yet to experience is the power of Peter's story before his rambunctious adventures in Neverland. This story is told in the play "Peter and the Starcatcher" by Rick Elice, adapted from the similarly named 2006 novel by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson. Told with staggering color, effervescent music, and delightful staging, "Peter and the Starcatcher" is the most imaginative play to hit the stage in years.

In short, "Peter and the Starcatcher" chronicles the journey of an orphan boy (who does not receive the name "Peter" until the second act of the play) and his new friend Molly as they conquer the sea, fight the vicious Captain Black Stache, and ultimately discover both who they are and who they want to become.

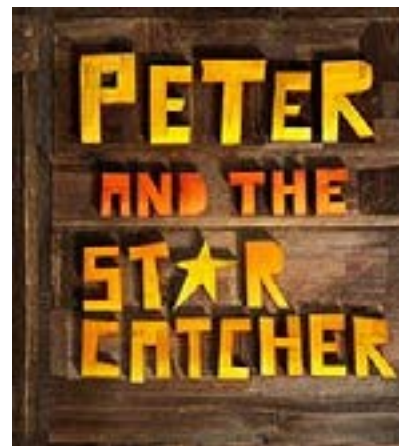
What makes this piece of theater truly extraordinary is its ability to make the audience believe in what it sees onstage. The production take place on a nearly empty stage and only uses a handful of props. But the combination of incredible staging, brilliant acting, and the creative use of props brings the story to life to an extent not achieved in most plays.

The play employs the use of what may seem like cheap visual tricks to tell its story. For example, the infamous crocodile is made using a large green sheet and a string of white flags. But the simplicity of such tricks allows the audience to

visualize the action in their own minds. This encourages unlimited use of the imagination, an idea emphasized in almost every aspect of the play.

"Peter and the Starcatcher," at its core, is a comedy, effortlessly weaving clever wit and slapstick jokes into the action onstage. The humor found in the dialogue and action greatly contributes to the overall playful and adventurous tone of the play. It is no wonder that in its opening year on Broadway, "Peter and the Starcatcher" was nominated for nine Tony Awards, including Best Play, and took home five wins at the end of the night.

"Peter and the Starcatcher" is pleasing audiences across the country and will continue to do so for many years to come. The play reminds children and adults alike of the beauty of imagination and the importance of adventure for all ages. The Broadway show just left San Francisco, but it's such a hit that it's sure to be back. The story is also being made into a movie under the direction of Gary Ross, the producer of "The Hunger Games." □



Courtesy Wikipedia

# Features

## The Best Holiday Movies of All Time

By Alice Blackorby and Meta Austin

### 1.) *It's A Wonderful Life*

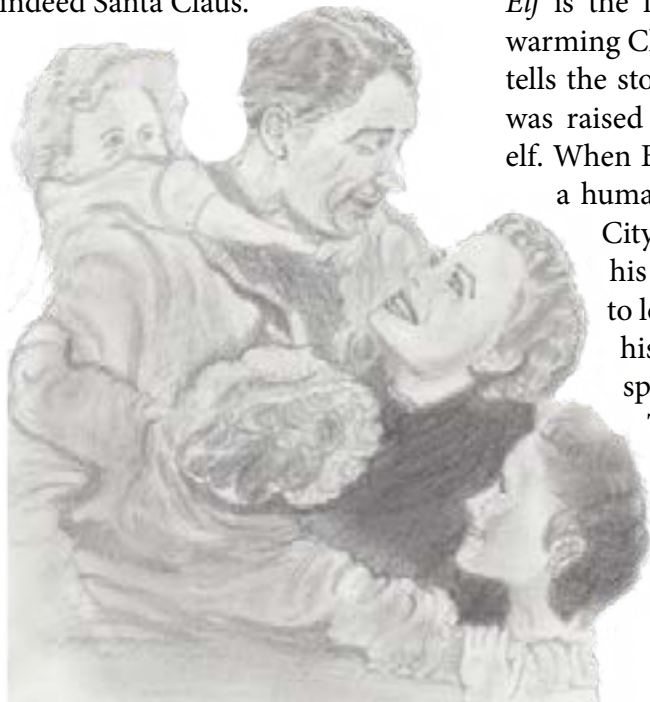
"Every time a bell rings an angel gets his wings."

*It's A Wonderful Life* is an incredible movie about a depressed man who is facing extreme economic troubles. However, he is saved by an angel who teaches him about his own importance. Parts of this movie are sad and frightening, but this just makes it that much better when everything comes together in the end. It is a story of community, friendship, and family.

### 2.) *Miracle On 34th Street*

"Oh, Christmas isn't just a day, it's a frame of mind."

*Miracle On 34th Street* is a wonderful holiday movie about the fantasy of Santa Claus. Kris Kringle calls himself Santa Claus and hopes to convince a young girl, Susan, that he is indeed Santa Claus.



### 3.) *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* (1966 animated short)

"He brought everything back, all the food for the feast. And he, he himself, the Grinch - carved the roast beast."

*How the Grinch Stole Christmas* is, of course, the tale of the angry old grinch who tries to ruin Christmas for the merry little town of Whoville. The animated version takes the words directly from Dr. Seuss' book, so it all rhymes, making this the most clever of all the holiday classics. *The Grinch* is a feel-good movie with a great ending: the Grinch realizes the true meaning of Christmas and his little heart grows when he sees the Whos celebrating without their decorations.

### 4.) *Elf*

"We elves try to stick to the four main food groups: candy, candy canes, candy corns, and syrup."

*Elf* is the funniest and most heart-warming Christmas movie there is. It tells the story of a man, Buddy, who was raised in the North Pole as an elf. When Buddy discovers that he is a human, he heads to New York City at Christmastime to find his real father. Buddy is easy to love with his eccentricities, his unbeatable Christmas spirit, and his huge heart. This movie will have you laughing and crying and is a great film to share with your family during the holidays.

### 5.) *A Charlie Brown Christmas*

"Get the biggest aluminum tree you can find, Charlie Brown, maybe painted pink."

*A Charlie Brown Christmas* is a story about how Charlie and his friends each have a different idea about Christmas. It's funny, lighthearted and arguably has the best soundtrack out of any classic holiday movie made. *A Charlie Brown Christmas* is perfect for this festive season.

### 6.) *The Polar Express*

"The thing about trains ...[is] it doesn't matter where they're going. What matters is deciding to get on."

*The Polar Express* is about a boy who boards a train to the North Pole on Christmas Eve and, through his adventure, learns to believe in Santa Claus again. The story is creative and sweet, but the most remarkable thing about it is how well the animations display the elaborate illustrations of the picture book that it was based off of.

### 7.) *Home Alone*

"This is my house, I have to defend it!"

In *Home Alone*, an eight-year old boy, Kevin, is accidentally left at home alone during the holidays and must defend his house from two dim-witted burglars (*The Wet Bandits*). *Home Alone* is a timeless movie and a wonderful story which will make anyone nostalgic about their childhood. □

"It's a Wonderful Life" illustration by Fiona Gregg / The Scribe



# Features

## Recipe Spotlight: Holiday Favorites

By Paula Fortune

### Paula's Ginger Snaps

#### Ingredients:

1 cup sugar  
 ¾ cup butter  
 ¼ cup molasses  
 1 egg  
 2 cups flour  
 1 ½ tsp baking soda  
 ½ tsp salt  
 1 tsp cinnamon  
 ¼ tsp nutmeg  
 1 ½ tsp ginger

#### Directions:

- 1) Preheat oven to 375° and grease two baking sheets.
  - 2) In a medium-sized bowl, mix together the flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, and ginger.
  - 3) Beat the butter and sugar in a separate bowl until fluffy. Add the molasses and egg and beat the mixture again.
  - 4) Add the dry ingredients and combine well.
  - 5) Roll the batter into balls (about 1 inch in diameter) and roll in granulated sugar. Place on baking sheets about two inches apart.
  - 6) Bake 12-15 minutes and allow to cool before serving.
- (from the Fortune family kitchen)

### Easy Peppermint Bark

#### Ingredients:

8 peppermint candy canes  
 12 ounces (about 2 cups) dark chocolate chips  
 12 ounces (about 2 cups) white chocolate chips



#### Directions:

- 1) Unwrap the candy canes and place them in a food processor. Pulse on/off several times for 5-10 seconds until they are crushed into small pieces. If you don't have a food processor, you can use a rolling pin to smash the candy canes into smaller pieces. Just make sure you seal the candy canes in a large Ziploc bag first!
- 2) Set aside ¼ of the crushed candies to spread on top of the finished piece.
- 3) Cover a cookie sheet with aluminum foil.
- 4) Melt the dark chocolate in a double boiler or in a microwave. Stir in the ¾ of the candy cane bits. Pour the mixture onto the prepared cookie sheet and use a spatula or knife to spread it evenly a little more than 1/8" thick. The chocolate does not have to reach all sides of the sheet. Place the tray in the refrigerator to harden.
- 5) Remove the tray from the refrigerator and spread the white chocolate in an even layer over the dark chocolate.
- 6) While the white chocolate is still wet, sprinkle the remaining ¼ of candy cane pieces over the chocolate evenly. Lightly press down on the candy to ensure that it sticks. Place the tray back in the refrigerator to harden for 30 minutes. □  
 (Peppermint Bark recipe adapted from www.candy.about.com)

## A Homegrown Holiday

*How to Make the Most of Winter Break in Oakland, CA.*

By Jazzy Lee

If you don't find yourself on the beach sipping fancy drinks or skiing on the Alps this winter break, have no fear of being "trapped" in Oakland! There is no need to worry about boredom this winter break. Instead of desperately searching your Netflix queue for some unwatched gem, go local and see the best the Bay has to offer.

### 1. Watch the animals get lit:

I'm referring to sparkling rows of hanging lights, that is. Check out the "Oakland ZooLights!" at the Oakland Zoo with your friends and family. The event runs every evening until January 5th from 5:30 PM to 9:00 PM and costs \$8.00 for admission.

### 2. Treat Yourself:

Find the best hot chocolate in town with some friends. I highly recommend Bittersweet, "The Chocolate Cafe," on College Avenue, as well as Casa de Chocolates on Ashby Avenue, whose Frozen Mexican Hot Chocolate is a best seller.

### 3. Feel the cold:

If you can't visit the snow, try to make time to visit the cold and slippery floors of the Holiday Skate at the Oakland Ice Rink. General admission is \$9.50 and skate rentals are \$4.25.

### 4. Volunteer:

'Tis the season for giving, so give back to our community through one of our local charities: The Harbor House Ministries, The Alameda County Community Food Bank, and The Mayor's Community Toy Drive. They can always use our help through volunteering and/or donating. □

## The Binge Watchers

*Each month we will cover a different show we think is worth watching non-stop.*

By Sophia Taylor

### Binge-Worthy Show #2: "The IT Crowd"

The British comedy, "The IT Crowd," can be seen as an equally hilarious but lesser known version of The Office. Created by Graham Linehan and starring Chris O'Dowd (Bridesmaids), the show is centered around three unconventional employees of the fictitious London company, Reynholm Industries. This ragtag group of IT Department staff includes the lazy and often times insensitive Roy (O'Dowd), the socially-inept genius Maurice "Moss" (Richard Ayoade), and the technologically incompetent head of the department, Jen (Katherine Parkinson). Despite their trio being more than a little unusual, they form a friendship that is as zany as it is endearing.

The outlandish humor of "The IT Crowd" is perfectly captured in the following dialogue between Roy and Moss:

(From Series 2, Episode 5, "Smoke and Mirrors")

*Roy: Is this another one of your inventions?*

*Moss: Might be.*

*Roy: What was the last one? Oh yes. A ladder, to help moths escape from the bath. How is that useful?!*

*Moss: How is that not useful?*

*Roy: Moths don't get stuck in baths!*

*Moss: Yes. They. Do!*

*Roy: Even if that were true, it's just not in their nature to learn how to use a ladder! They have wings! When a moth thinks about travelling vertically upwards, a ladder is just the last thing they would think of! Moss, I don't like to be negative about it, but everything you invent is worthless!*

*Moss: Ah! Well, prepare to put mustard on those words, for you will soon be consuming them along with this slice of humble pie that comes directly from the oven of shame, set at gas mark "egg on your face"! [pause] I sort of forget what I was talking about.*

The balance that the show successfully strikes between slapstick humor and witty dialogue makes "The IT Crowd" worthy of binge-watching. Though it is no longer airing on TV, all four seasons can be found on Netflix. □



Cartoon by Pun Master Naomi G / The Scribe



(Piedmont continued from Page 3)

tion. The city passed one parcel tax in 2008: Measure “G,” a \$195 per household tax, was meant to increase teacher salaries, the availability of classroom materials, and extra-curricular school programs. More recently, Measure “L” was shot down in 2010 after coming just shy of the necessary two-thirds majority to pass, receiving 65.43% of the vote.

Oakland residents’ lack of support for educational funding has resulted in lower salaries for teachers - a starting teacher begins at a salary of just \$39,420. Even after decades of service, the most a teacher can hope to make in Oakland is around \$70,993, well under the state average and far below the highest possible salary of a Piedmont teacher. As a result, fewer teachers are attracted to the prospect of working in Oakland.

Oakland has not been able to enact a parcel tax like Piedmont has for two main reasons. First, Oakland has far fewer families with children, which means fewer parents voting. Second, the typical resident of Oakland does not make nearly as much money as the typical resident of Piedmont and therefore is less likely to support such a tax. With dwindling state funding and consistent problems with the administration of funds within the OUSD, it has become apparent that more than the general state funds are necessary to ensure a district’s success. Without paralleled activism and financial support, the gap will continue to widen between Oakland’s educational system and that of our neighbors on the hill. □



Anya Ku / The Scribe

## Holiday Gift Guide

### 4 simple but thoughtful gift ideas

By Molly Hetherwick

The weather outside is frightful - but your gifts this holiday season don’t have to be! Instead of waiting until the last minute to buy a lame pair of socks or a “You’re #1!” coffee mug, this list can help inspire you to get or make thoughtful and tasteful gifts for your friends and loved ones of all ages.

**1) Pick up some sweet treats.** Food is always an excellent choice because it’s easy to find and usually doesn’t cost very much. Make sure you consider for whom you are buying it and what sort of food they like. Chocolate is usually a hit - especially the gourmet varieties. You can look for seasonal chocolate in stores like Farmer Joe’s or Trader Joe’s, but by far the best boxed chocolate comes from “See’s Candies,” which sells a variety of other sweets as well. Be careful about buying chocolate with nuts or soy - those are common allergens that can turn a festive celebration sour very quickly.

**2) Write a short letter with a gift card inside.** While it isn’t the most heartfelt present, gift cards are useful and easy to acquire. To make the exchange more meaningful, include a note about how the gift receiver improves your life or why you appreciate them.

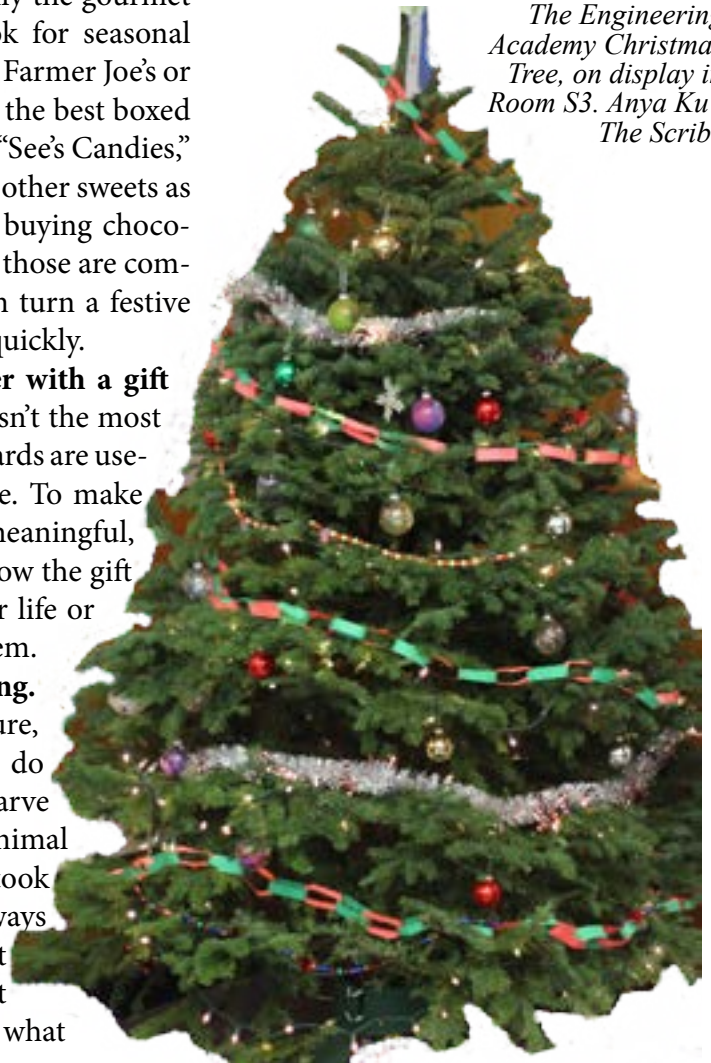
**3) Make something.** Paint or draw a picture, compose a song or do a cover, sculpt or carve wood into a favorite animal - anything that clearly took time and effort is always an appreciated gift. It shows that you thought long and hard about what

the recipient wanted and went out of your way to make something that they would value. Even if you think it isn’t perfect, the person you’re giving it to probably will. It’s the thought that counts!

**4) Buy a book.** Support your local bookstore and buy a copy of the latest novel by your favorite author or an author you think they might like. Make sure it’s a book you’re certain they’ll enjoy.

It may be cold outside, but hopefully with this list your gifts will warm everyone’s hearts. And maybe (if you’re lucky) you’ll get a few meaningful gifts yourself. □

*The Engineering Academy Christmas Tree, on display in Room S3. Anya Ku / The Scribe*



*(Enrollment continued from Page 1)*

kids.”

Troy Flint, director of public relations for the Oakland Unified School District, said Oakland Tech has been overenrolled because the school is the most popular in the district, and the enrollment office takes that into account when it sets the population caps for each school. He also mentioned that some parents had threatened to leave the district if their child was not placed at Oakland Tech.

Ms. Morrison said that if “Stanford, UCLA and Bishop O’Dowd [can] say, ‘I am sorry, these are all the students we can accept,’ then Oakland Tech should be able to do that too.”

When asked if he believed that Oakland Tech administrators should be able to turn away students if they feel they don’t have enough resources, Flint said, “I think it depends on how overcrowded the school has become. If it’s a few extra students per class then there should be a way we can accommodate them.”

But with Oakland Tech’s enrollment growing every year, he said, “eventually we will cross that line.” □

*(Crime continued from Page 1)*

neighborhood’s “casual carpool,” a community organized and staffed carpool service, was the victim of a particularly brazen armed robbery, in which residents had their smartphones, wallets, and laptops stolen. This crime pushed locals to raise tens of thousands of dollars on a crowdfunding website to hire a private security force for unarmed patrols of the neighborhood, Monday through Saturday.

The hope is that the mere presence of security forces will deter criminals, but not everyone is on board. “The problem for me is that you can hire a security guard but they can’t really do real policing. They’re just an extra set of eyes,” said Rockridge resident Tony Mills. “Obviously the best thing is to have more police, and that’s the piece that we can’t seem to figure out how to get done,” he added.

Those from areas unable to hire their own security are uncomfortable with decisions being made in their city that they have no say in. Others feel uneasy with what they see as a grim militarization of their city, as well as the potential for racial profiling, which is already a major issue with the OPD. Most are frustrated that fellow Oaklanders are making isolated efforts to suppress the city’s crime problem instead of tackling the problem at its source.

Some residents are

worried about running into issues with the security forces themselves. Those whose neighborhoods aren’t patrolled are especially concerned because, as they aren’t part of the contract, the security companies have no responsibility for them if an issue arises.

The police department itself is grateful for the potential easing of their workload. “We welcome the extra set of eyes and ears,” says OPD spokesperson Johnna Watson, “Any help that we can receive to reduce crime in our city is good for all of us.”

While the results of this activity are yet to be seen, city leaders insist that it should only be considered a temporary solution. “I hope they’re successful, but they’re certainly not a substitute for police,” said Oakland City Councilman and representative for Lower Rockridge Dan Kalb. “As long as we understand that — that it’s a supplement for the time being — then let’s all hope it works.” □

*Students gather at Lake Merritt for the 1st Annual OT 5K Fun Run/Walk, Dec. 8. Anya Ku / The Scribe*



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