

- TAYLOR FIGHTS WITH KNIVES
- LEILANI TAKES ON SAILING

PEOPLE

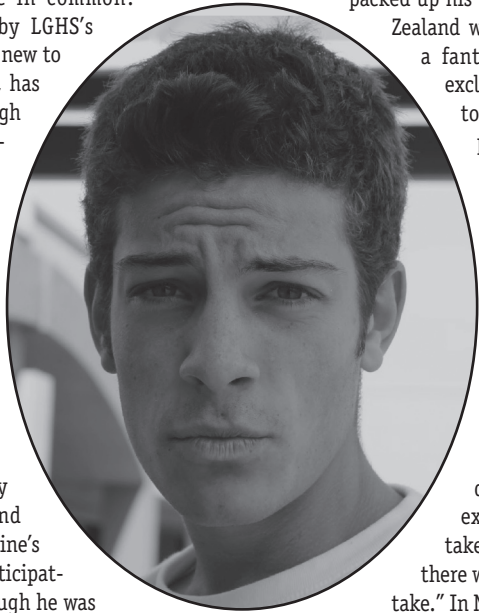
EL GATO • FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2014 • WWW.ELGATONEWS.COM

Clarke brings New Zealand flair to LGHS

by Danika Lyle
News Editor

What do curling, living in New Zealand, and stand up comedy all have in common? Each are activities done by LGHS's own, **Ryan Clarke**. Clarke is new to LGHS, and, in the past year, has attended three different high schools, lived on two different continents, and played five different sports. From Bellarmine High School to New Zealand to LGHS, Clarke has been a very busy student.

After graduating from Fisher Middle School and giving the commencement address, Clarke attended Bellarmine College Preparatory. Clarke was highly involved in both clubs and sports, running for Bellarmine's Cross Country team and participating in Ping Pong club. Although he was invested in many activities at the school,



Clarke states, "I felt like for all the work I did, I was getting very little in return."

For the second half of freshman year, Clarke packed up his bags and moved to New Zealand with his family. "It was a fantastic experience," he exclaims, "just the chance to change and to meet people of a different country was amazing." If Bellarmine's schooling was a slight shift in a different direction for Clarke, then New Zealand was a huge leap. Grading was based on a series of individual assessments, "The grades were pass or fail with different degrees of excellence. I elected to take the classes I wanted, there was no real path I had to take." In New Zealand, Clarke was taking Math 12, Physics, Chemistry,

Biology, History of the World Wars, and English, a completely different course load than the classes LGHS freshmen take. Despite the drastic differences between New Zealand courses and LGHS courses, Clarke excelled in all of his subjects.

As for sports, Clarke seems to have experimented with every athletic activity. From popular sports such as swimming and water polo, to lesser known ones such as rowing and ping pong, Clarke likes show his athletic ability. One of the most unique sports that Clarke was involved in this year was curling. Captain of his New Zealand school's varsity team, "The Spice Curls" (his own original name), Clarke showed great talent for this shuffle-board like sport. "I think of it more as a hobby. I am hoping to start a team in LG as well," said Clarke, and many students have already

expressed an interest in joining.

But the most characteristic thing about Clarke is not his athletic ability, but his impeccable humor and timing. A master in the art of puns, Clarke incorporates his gift of puns into everyday conversation, English assignments, and his infamous Instagram captions. When asked about his skill with puns, Clarke quickly replied, "On a scale from pun to ten... I'd say ten." Clarke also has shown his skill in stand-up comedy during his debut at the Under 21 Club's Open Mic Night. Fellow Sophomore **Caliyn Grimes** said that Clarke was, "Hilarious as usual."

From athleticism to humor, and everything in between, Clarke has brought charisma and skill to LGHS.



Photos C. Pla

Campbell knife fights

by Cole Potter
Web Editor

Everyone has a hobby. Whether it is playing guitar, binge watching television shows, or obsessively playing board games, one must always have an outlet for the pent up stress that a week of school and extracurriculars generates. However, not many of us can claim an ancient, deadly style of combat as something we might do on a Sunday.

Freshman **Taylor Campbell** is a competitive knife fighter, but her interest in the martial art extends far beyond it being just a hobby. Campbell faces off against international opponents in potentially life threatening situations on a fairly regular basis.

Campbell's participation in the activity began in kindergarten when she was faced with bullying from her peers. Along with taking the traditional route of reporting the incidents to an adult, Campbell decided that further action needed to be taken. She switched schools and enlisted in martial arts classes to cope with and protect herself against the possibility of future bullies. Soon though, it became clear she had an innate talent for the sport, and she found herself moving quickly up in the ranks of her local studio.

Nowadays, she competes internationally with

the US National Team and often faces off against rigorous competition. "I'm competing against ages fourteen to eighteen," says the fourteen-year-old Campbell. She also manages to keep her composure in combat, "I rarely feel in danger. I have actually broken other people's bones more than I have had mine broken." Her parents agree with this sentiment and have supported her in her martial art endeavors. However, even the parents of an international knife fighter have their limits, "They pulled me out of football. They thought it was too violent." Her stint in the tackle sport only lasted a few weeks before she returned to the arena.

Now, as she begins high school, Campbell has found skills she learned in years of knife fighting to be valuable. She utilizes her inherent competitive nature to thrive on the LGHS field hockey team. The discipline that the sport has taught her has allowed her to manage her time well this year by still attaining good grades, attending two different sports practices every day, and taking up the new language of Japanese. Although one might think that Campbell was motivated to take Japanese because of countless years of participating in a sport with heavy Japanese and other Asian influences, her reasoning was a good deal simpler, "It was the only language available."



C. potter

GUSTAFSON STARTS A CHARITY ORGANIZATION

by Jessica Blough and Lark Breen
Culture and World Editors

Sophomore **Anna Gustafson** is not afraid of pursuing her passions and going after them with all her heart. She has filled her schedule with school, dance, football, church, friends, and starting her own charity called Strong and Courageous.

For Strong and Courageous, Gustafson sews pillowcases and stuffed animals to encourage kids to follow their dreams and stay strong despite their rough backgrounds. After months of searching for an organization that would take a fifteen year old with a big dream seriously, she gained the support of Santa Clara County's KAFPA, or Kinship, Adoptive, and Foster Parent Association. Gustafson has always wanted to do something to help people and serve God in the community. Her current project is to sew 100 pillowcases for Christmas gifts to foster children. In the future, she hopes to expand her organization by sewing pillowcases, blankets, bags, and stuffed animals for foster kids and hospitalized children, eventually expanding to reach children as far away as Rwanda. Gustafson states that "as long as there is a need [for help and inspiration], I hope to be there, and I hope to help."

Besides her passion for serving others, Gustafson loves football. She has attended every home San Francisco 49ers game with her dad, a coach for LG's football team. Anna happily states that "[the games] are my happy place, a time to get away from everything and just focus on football." Her favorite player is linebacker Patrick Willis due to his inspirational journey from a rough childhood to finding strength in

Christianity and following his dreams. She hopes that she can inspire children through Strong and Courageous the way that Willis inspires her.

Gustafson also finds solace in the dance studio, where she practices ballet, jazz, and some hip hop. Although for much of her life she would rather have been playing a more aggressive sport, like soccer, she became hooked on dance after she was bullied in fifth grade and used dance as an outlet to cope with her emotions. Now, Gustafson practices throughout the day, going so far as to do the splits while she eats lunch. She is a part of the school dance team and the Bay Ballet Academy. Gustafson notes that "the pain [that comes with dance] makes me feel like I am working hard." Ballet has taught her discipline and perseverance in tough situations.

In the future, Gustafson will continue to dance, root for the Niners, and work to serve her community. Though she thought that her passion was to defend and help others by serving in the in the US Air Force, she has recently realized that "I can defend people, I can help people, I can serve people, I can go be strong and courageous, and it doesn't have to be on a battlefield." Look out for this determined and passionate student and **help support Strong and**



courtesy A. Gustafson

MORTON IS A MAGICAL MUSICAL MASTERMIND

by Liat Rubin
Editor-in-Chief

Junior **Clara Morton** is a fascinating combination of extremes: She was once painfully shy, but is now outgoing. She is both the weirdest person you have ever met and the most relatable. She is both cheerful and serious. Her intricate personality is a true testament to the magnificence that is Clara Morton.

Morton enjoys various creative exploits, notably marching band. She has been a part of band since eighth grade at Fisher Middle School and ninth grade at LGHS. Morton first became interested in marching band when her brother and LGHS Alum joined the team. When she first joined, Morton couldn't decide what instrument to play, but ultimately chose a mallet instrument called the vibes. For those uneducated in the realm of marching band instruments, Morton describes the "vibes" as "a piano you play with sticks." Morton plays in the front ensemble, and is a section leader. She enjoys band because it has introduced her to an abundance of new people that she might not have met otherwise. "I find so much happiness in band," Morton said, "I am always excited to go to practice!"

Being a part of band has also taught Morton to read music, a tool she has used to learn how to play both piano and guitar. Although she enjoyed piano, Morton found herself becoming more and more interested in guitar, a transition she credits to her seventh grade self's dream of becoming Taylor

Swift. She often pairs her passion for guitar with her passion for singing and enjoys performing songs by artists like Daughter and Vance Joy.

Through various activities like Marching Band and Freshman Skills Day, Morton has had the opportunity to meet new people and create diverse relationships. "I love meeting people who are different than me. You have to put yourself outside of

your comfort zone in order to grow," said Morton. Because she values individuality so highly, Morton is bothered by "people who judge other people too harshly." She urges her peers to accept others' differences, partly due to her own struggle with self acceptance. An extremely shy preteen, Clara was only able to break out of her shell after meeting friends like fellow Junior **Hayden Manseau**, who "accepted [her] in all of [her] weirdness."

Morton has always tried to maintain a positive outlook on life and has done so by focusing on things that make her happy. She especially likes finding "the little things" that make her happy, which include writing in her free time, snuggling with her dog, purchasing plants, and spending time with her grandma. Morton also enjoys putting stylish outfits together as a means of self expression, "It is one of my favorites parts of the day! I create an outfit the night before I wear it, sometimes it takes me twenty to thirty minutes because I have to try it on."

Morton's main goal in life is simply "to help people." A regular volunteer at the Oak Meadow senior center and member of the Freshman Skills Day Body Self Image Team, she believes that nothing is more rewarding than making a difference in someone's life. Her compassion has fueled her desire to pursue a career in psychology.

With her refreshing outlook on life and diverse talents, Morton is a pleasure to have at LGHS.



courtesy C. morton