



FALCON SERIES

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ENTERTAINMENT



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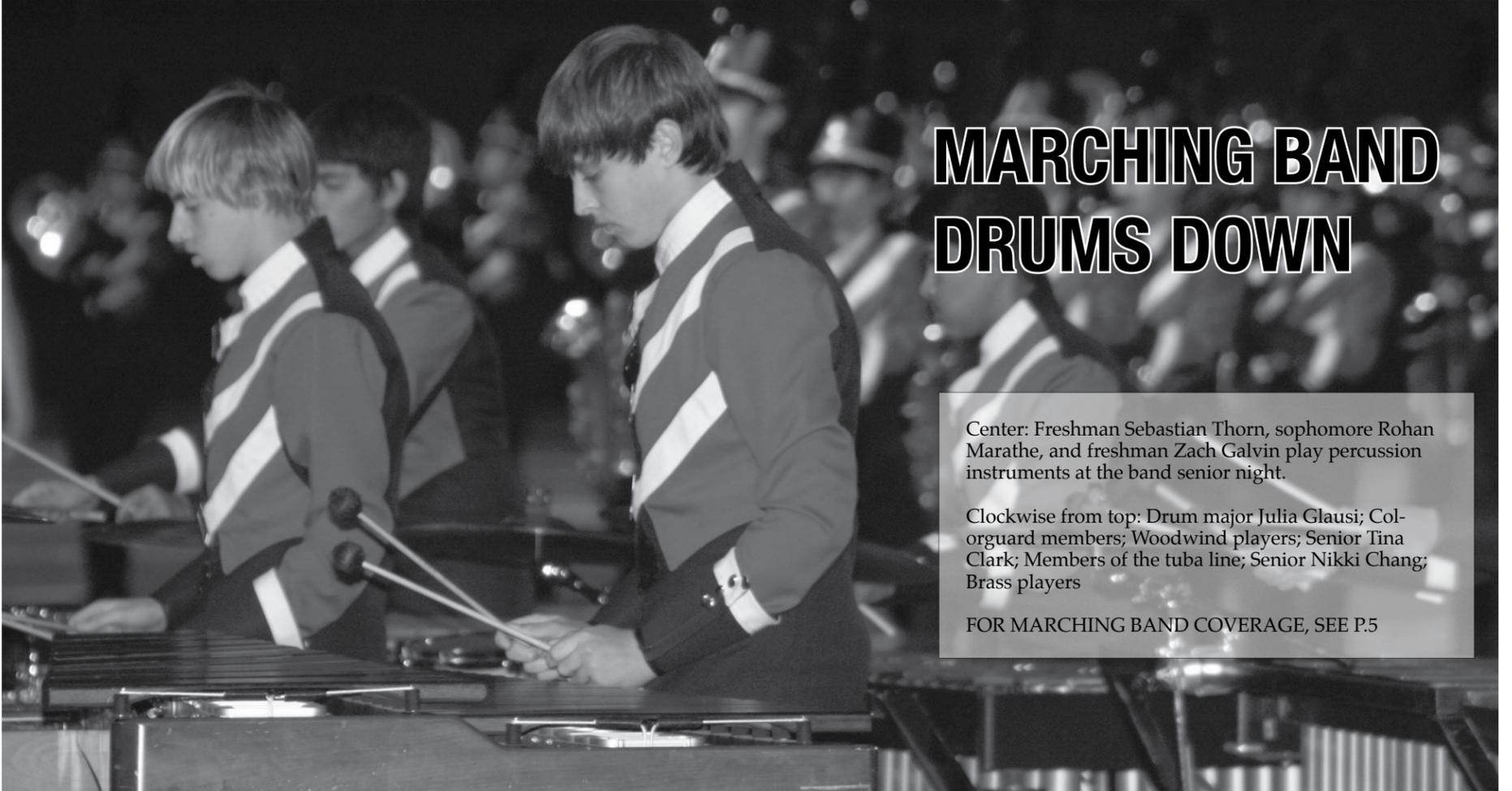
Saratoga High School | Saratoga, CA

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MARCHING BAND DRUMS DOWN

Center: Freshman Sebastian Thorn, sophomore Rohan Marathe, and freshman Zach Galvin play percussion instruments at the band senior night.

Clockwise from top: Drum major Julia Glausi; Col-orguard members; Woodwind players; Senior Tina Clark; Members of the tuba line; Senior Nikki Chang; Brass players

FOR MARCHING BAND COVERAGE, SEE P.5

photos by Brittany Judoprasertijo and Melody Zhang

SHS seniors grapple with CSU, UC budget cutbacks

by Andy Tsao

With the crumbling of the economy and state budget, many seniors are feeling the pinch.

"Some people may be intimidated by the cost of attending private schools," said senior Kevin Shimizu. "It gets scary when applying to a variety of private colleges costs upwards of \$600."

Even the University of California system is now unable to find sufficient funding to provide an education for its students and has recently announced that it will be offering admission to 10,000 fewer students, starting from the 2008-09 school year. Furthermore, the California State University system has also faced budget cuts and now cannot raise the money needed to support California's large student population.

"Initially, I felt disbelief at the fact that the government could be cutting funds for institutions of higher education when the demand for such institutions is rising," said senior Sunil Srivatsa.

Senior Vikram Babu also felt confused after he heard the news.

"I don't understand why education

always seems to be the first thing to be cut when the state is in a budget deficit," said Babu.

Babu and Srivatsa also feel that this move is extremely shortsighted. They think that some other programs could be neglected without facing huge consequences in the future.

"The government could have reduced funds for something not entirely necessary for society, like public transportation," said Babu. "Cutting down on education directly limits the potential of the next generation of young minds. I think these students are critical for the success of California."

As the chance to get into a respected UC campus dwindle, students are now pressured even more to perform well during the first semester of senior year and to write essays that will truly shine.

"Since that the UC system announced the enrollment cut, I've been focusing my attention mainly on the UC application," said Srivatsa. "I'm focusing less on my private colleges now, at least until my UC application is done."

see COLLEGE, p. 6

P.E. required for frosh athletes

When a sport ends, freshmen now need to take P.E.

by Lauren Kuan and Pia Mishra

After a 12-week season, freshman JV tennis player Priyanka Arunkumar was looking forward to a nice, relaxing break. To her surprise, she found out that she only had two weeks until she would have to go to a sports P.E. class to complete her semester requirement for physical education.

Starting this year, all freshmen must go back to sports P.E. after they are done

with a sport. This new requirement does not affect any of the current sophomores. Previously, once freshmen finished their season, they got the rest of the semester off without a seventh period. However, they now must immediately join a seventh-period sports P.E. class after their season is over.

Physical education teacher Yuko Aoki said this new rule has been established because the school is below state

see PE, p. 6

New scholarship honors student

by Karthik Anaamalai

Sophomore football player Steven Leslie lost his 12-year-old sister, Abby, to cancer last April. In her honor, the JV football team started a scholarship called the Abby Leslie Memorial Athletic Scholarship.

Leslie, a captain of the JV team, was honored that the team was creating a fund for his sister.

"When I heard that [the team] was

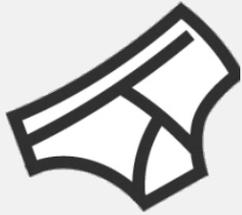
making a scholarship fund," said Leslie, "I thought it was a great idea."

The JV team reached out to members in the community for donations in order to fund the scholarship. In addition, they will be performing community service at Sacred Heart and the Second Harvest Food Bank.

Guengerich, the coordinator of the scholarship, said that the team

see FOOTBALL, p. 5

NEWS BRIEFS



Bosco 'lookalike' subs as campus supervisor

During lunch, students might spot a man who looks like assistant principal Joe Bosco in a casual wear. Many speculate that they are brothers, but in reality they are not. This "Bosco-twin" is actually Alfonso Gil Vasquez, who is substituting for campus supervisor Ben Cobarrubias, who is on leave due to a back injury. He also substitutes as a seventh-period P.E. teacher.

"I have been subbing ever since mid-September. I sub for whatever they want and every day," said Vasquez.

Before coming to Saratoga High, Vasquez worked at Enterprise Rent-A-Car as a branch manager in sales and at YMCA as a basketball coach.

"I grew in the area. I went to Prospect High, then to San Jose State. I heard from most people I know in the district [about the opening for sub-campus supervisor] and then I saw it on the joint district website," said Vasquez.

Vasquez graduated in 2003 with a BA degree in History and speech and communications. He presently attends National University to get his teaching credential. Bosco is impressed by the effort Vasquez puts into his job.

"I think he has done a great job. We are really happy with his willingness to take on job opportunities, subbing and get-

Winter Ball: the final touches

As Winter Ball comes nearer, the ASB is putting the final touches on their plans for the Dec 13 event. The dance will be held in the gym.

The theme for the dance is "Never Felt This Way" and will be DJ-ed by 94.9's DJ Delicious D.

Nancy Wokas, owner of a culinary school in Italy and mother of senior Alex Wokas, will cater the dance.

"She knows what we are doing so we are glad to be using her services," says Shiram.

Not only will there be the usual streamers, but also festive reindeers to get the school in the holiday mood.

A chocolate fountain will be used from San Jose Chocolate Fountains, and bids will continue to be on sale for \$22 until the week of the dance.

Leadership continues food drive tradition

Marching band members continued their tradition of collecting food donations for Second Harvest Food Bank on their Senior Night, held Nov. 20. This year, leadership will also continue to help the hungry, said adviser Karen Hyde.

Leadership will expand the tradition by collecting food at band concerts throughout November. There are more opportunities to contribute to the cause throughout the duration of December.

Donation bins will be set up at the Symphonic Wind Ensemble and String Orchestra joint concert on Dec. 10 at 7:30 p.m., the Symphonic and Jazz Band concert on Dec. 11 at 7:30 p.m. and the Choir Winter Concert on Dec. 17 at 7:30 p.m. Bins will remain in the McAfee unless otherwise specified and two cans from each student is humbly requested.

They will also be collecting cans in bins located in classrooms and the office.

"We hope that the school and students will embrace this opportunity to appreciate what they have and give back to others," said Hyde.

Two incumbents win school board election

The Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District (LGSUHSD) school board election took place on Nov. 4. The election involved three candidates, incumbents Lorrie Wernick and Rosemary Rossi, and Saratogan parent Robert Zager, who vied for two positions. The winners were Wernick and Rossi.

Rossi, receiving the most votes, said she hopes to "provide a rigorous curriculum for students, continue policies to ensure financial stability and improve the use of technology in teaching and learning." Rossi received 10,716 votes with 37.7 percent of the vote.

Wernick, coming in very close to Rossi in votes, said she hopes to "meet the academic, social and emotional needs of students, assure that students are prepared and maintain the excellence of the high schools in [the] district." Wernick received 10,094 votes with 35.5 percent of the vote.

Zager received 7,610 votes with 26.8 percent of the vote.

Although the members of the school board are finalized,

—by Mira Chaykin, Rebecca Nguyen, Uma Sambasivam, Apeksha Sharma and Anna Shen



Melody Zhang

Senior Andy Tsao, juniors Annie Lee and Mika Padmanabhan and sophomore Tim Rollinson assist with the Code Red drill on Nov. 25. The drill has been held annually to ensure the safety of the Saratoga High community.

Classrooms practice safety with Code Red simulation

by Lauren Kuan
and Pia Mishra

On Nov. 25, Saratoga High held its annual Code Red drill. The students barricaded their rooms as soon as they were notified and sat tight for about 45 minutes.

Last week, a special schedule was set in order to create time for a Code Red. The drill was performed in an effort to promote awareness about what to do in a potentially dangerous situation.

Code Red is the notification issued when there is an intruder present on campus. The students are asked to barricade the doors and prevent the intruder from seeing any potential victims.

Said sophomore Keerti Shukla, "I think the drills are really helpful and prepare us well for any serious situations."

Assistant principal Karen Hyde said that when the opportunity of conducting the drill was presented to the school they accepted without hesitation.

Said Hyde, "I thought that as an administrator it was im-

perative to have the students go through this process."

Code Red is also used to help take the hysteria and chaos out of any real Code Red situation. It is ideal for the students to be able to focus and think logically at these times. Drills in the past have included a full SWAT team being brought to the school. Having the professionals on campus helped the students realize the scale of the event.

Said Hyde, "It's the difference between book learning and life learning. It's the first time the students realize its not a bubble

Poetry students sell calendar

by Lauren Kuan
and Pia Mishra

The Creative Writing: Poetry class has decided to create a calendar that includes the students' poems, which were inspired by their recent field trip to Old Grandview Ranch, an awe-inspiring chateau of 25 acres located in the Saratoga foothills.

The calendar also includes pictures of Grandview that were taken by professional photographer Janet McLellan, mother of Creative Writing III poetry student Stephen McLellan, during the poets' visit in October. McLellan was there taking pictures as a record of the students' experiences when she realized that the pictures could be compiled with students' poetry into a calendar.

She is in charge of taking care of everything including getting it published and copyrighted.

The estate is owned by Dr. W. Donald Head, a former English professor who is a major collector of artistic and architectural pieces. His home had never been opened to students before; but due to a special request by poetry teacher Judith Sutton, he graciously opened for her students to spend time at various artistic sites on the property and write poems in response to each place.

"Dr. Head lets us go there so that we can get some kind of inspiration from his property and pieces of art and write poems," said senior poetry club co-president Aaron Garg.

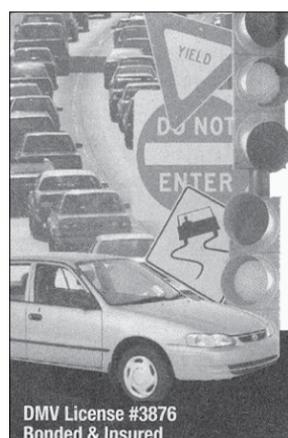
Profits will support the poetry classes for everything from field

trips to poetry readings and events. They are looking to give several to Dr. Head to show him their appreciation for what he has done for them.

"The calendar is really pretty since the photos are gorgeous, so it is a good memento to give to him," said Garg.

The calendars will be available for \$15 during the first week of December. The calendar notes the birthdays of recognized poets.

"Not only were we gifted by Dr. Head for opening his exquisite place to us but we were so fortunate to have Janet McLellan, a true artist herself, take pictures. Otherwise we wouldn't be able to make such a beautiful calendar, which includes all of the students' poems," said Sutton. ♦



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GATE program undergoes series of transformations

by *Synthia Ling*
and *Saniha Shankar*

Most students have been unaware of the fact that they are part of the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program, which provides funding for education opportunities for individuals identified as gifted and talented. This year, however, the program will change and not everyone will be considered gifted and talented.

According to English teacher Kerry Mohnike, who is acting as the coordinator of the program, the school's previous program was not doing what GATE is intended for.

Said Mohnike, "It was great, but if you have money that you're supposed to use

on a specific population, it is hard to say, 'OK, everybody in the school is GATE.'"

Starting this year, an identification program will determine which students are eligible to participate in a GATE trial program. Incoming classes will be identified from their eighth grade CSAT scores or from a teacher referral program. As of now, according to Mohnike almost 50 percent of the incoming freshman class is expected to earn scores high enough to participate in GATE.

"The one thing about GATE students that a lot of people don't understand is that there are people who are really gifted and talented in things that you can't test for," said Mohnike. "So we'll have a referral system to help people get into the program that way."

The program has around \$16,000, of which \$6,000 has been used. However, the amount has been inflated because it hasn't been used as efficiently before, so the amount available for next year is expected to be around \$5,000, she said.

Before, the budget provided by GATE only went to help fund AP and honors classes. This year the gate funding for the school is about \$11,700. Mohnike said the school is hoping to use this money to add some enrichment activities for GATE students, such as going to the Lawrence Livermore National Lab, the da Vinci exhibit at the Tech Museum, college tours, theater tours, or campus activities.

"I don't know much about the GATE

program, but it looks like it'll be a lot of fun for the people that participate in the enrichment activities," said freshman Anoop Galivanche.

Although this program is mostly for the incoming freshmen, upperclassmen will still benefit from the funding that still goes toward honors and AP classes.

According to Mohnike, this program isn't designed to separate GATE students and non-GATE students but instead help those who are truly gifted and talented.

"There are always the students who are smart, but may not do their homework," said Mohnike. "Our goal is to find these kids and make sure they don't fall through the cracks." ♦

FALCONFOCUS

Peck mixes old and new

by *Vijay Menon*
and *Guy Quanrud*

For English teacher Bill Peck, it seems as if all roads lead back to Saratoga. A former student who graduated from here in 1971, Peck now serves as an English teacher and coach of the school's mock trial team in addition to being involved in the school's drama department.

"I guess it was fate that I would end up back at Saratoga High," said Peck.

Peck said that his love for English literature influenced his decision to become a teacher.

"I had a background in Shakespeare and I love language," said Peck.

What Peck didn't know was the effect his teaching would have on his students.

"He is an amazing teacher and a very good educator," said senior Alex Shebanow. "I learned so much and he made class fun."

Some of his unique style of teaching has roots from his early career. Among other acting experiences, Peck worked at a Shakespeare company run by Executive Director Judith Sutton, a longtime English and poetry teacher at the school. Prior to this, Peck went to the American Conservatory Theater, an acting school in San Francisco.

During Peck's acting career, he co-starred as Romeo in a stage production with two-time Academy Award nominated actress Annette Benning, who played Juliet.

Peck "won the draft lottery" after graduating from high school, but was not deployed to Vietnam. Later, he worked at juvenile hall and in the East Side school

district of San Jose as a substitute. Over the years, Peck became a fan of rap music and gained a good grasp of youth culture

Using a combination of new and old, Peck has made a strong impact on his students.

"I try to stay up on my pop culture," said Peck. "I'm really interested in the language, how students talk these days."

Techniques such as breaking down "Romeo and Juliet" into life-like situations and comparing them to the gangs of today or even the odd but informative news he brings up in class have built the appreciation that his students have for him.

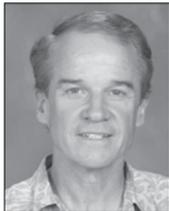
Peck is known for interesting students with his quirky methods, many of which can be attributed to his up-to-date knowledge of law. One such method is Peck's usage of legal documents, including sworn statements such as affidavits, as permission slips for students in his classes.

In class, Peck discusses students' rights as well as the school rules. Peck believes that by explaining this to his students, he can make them more aware of the school and answer any questions they have.

While legal talk has sparked interest among students, he also believes in some more traditional methods such as asking kids to memorize sonnets and lines from Shakespeare plays to perform for extra credit.

Most kids seem to appreciate Peck's approach. His love for the American culture including English literature is apparent to his students.

"His methods are really great," said senior Chapin Griffith. "His talk about stuff outside school made me really enjoy his class. He's just an incredible teacher." ♦



Peck

MODERN 'ROMEO AND JULIET' FINISHES WITH HIGH PRAISE



Melody Zhang

SENIOR HOLDEN SPARACINO (ROMEO) BUYS POISON FROM SOPHOMORE PATRICK FITZSIMOONS (THE APOTHECARY) DURING A SCENE OF THE SCHOOL'S PRODUCTION OF "ROMEO AND JULIET".

by *Pia Mishra*

After a preview during sixth period on Nov. 19 and performances on Nov. 20, 21, 22, 23, "Romeo and Juliet" concluded their production. Overall, the cast was very proud of their performances and the production as a whole.

"It was a really good production. I got a lot out of it because I put a lot into it," said sophomore Jay Lee, who played Mercutio.

Many of the newcomers to the production enjoyed their experiences. Freshman Madison Emery felt that the cast was very welcoming.

"It was great to be part of the production. The rehearsals were so much fun and the cast members were always so nice," said Emery.

The production incorporated many

of the modern elements director Chris Mahle had mentioned earlier during the development of the play. The Capulets and Montagues both donned in fishnet stockings, short skirts and tattoos. The sets were also simple and brown. Despite their modern outfits, the actors stayed true to the Shakespearean dialogue, which they had worked on immensely with Mahle and English teacher Bill Peck. The traditional fight scenes were also well-executed and believable.

"The fight scenes were really well choreographed and looked really realistic," said sophomore Synthia Ling.

The play had a full house almost every performance. Now that "Romeo and Juliet" has ended, Mahle is beginning to prepare for the upcoming musical, "Grease," which is currently set to be performed in spring 2009. ♦

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TOGATALKS

What did you think of the modern production "Romeo and Juliet"?



junior Eric Jung

I've read the play before, but to see it acted was really cool.

The actors were all really talented and I thought the sets and costumes were great.



senior Julia Glausi

It had its highs and lows. I expected the more sentimental scenes to have a more romantic backdrop, but I enjoyed the occasional humor.



sophomore Clara Chou

Business club shifts focus to investments

by Brian Tsai

The Business for Life club started two years ago as the brainchild of junior Charles Sun and senior Paul Stavropoulos. Ever since then, the club has had big success, especially with the debut of two classes of the Introduction to Business course taught by Kirk Davis last year. Sun and Stavropoulos now want to head in a new direction by changing Business for Life to Investment Club.

"This year, we want to do a spin-off with Investment Club so that we can apply the things we learned in [Introduction to Business] to the real world," said Sun.

Despite the current problems within the economy, students are still eager to learn how to invest.

"I decided to join Investment Club because the stuff I'm learning will be useful in the future," said senior Alex Lun. "I also might major in business. I'm looking forward to the things we can do with [the club's] money."

By switching the club's focus to investments, Sun and Stavropoulos have created new objectives. They plan to raise \$1,000

as an initial fund, which they will later use to invest in the stock market. Sun and Stavropoulos hope to reach the \$1,000

Sun and Stavropoulos hope to reach the \$1,000 mark with help from banks and brokerages.

mark with help from banks and brokerages.

"Paul and I went to downtown Saratoga and Argonaut Shopping Center and got very positive responses [from local businesses]," said Sun. "The

thing is they need documentation before they can sign off any donations. Since we don't have the documents right now, there's not a lot we can do other than small

fundraisers."

The documents are needed to show that Investment Club is non-profit. Davis is in talks with a lawyer to obtain the necessary forms. With the non-profit status, Investment Club won't need to pay taxes on the money it makes.

A second goal of the club is starting a business scholarship. Within the next few years, once the club has earned enough money, a business scholarship will be awarded each year to a graduating senior. As for now, students from the Investment Club are focused on raising money. That way, each member will have a vote on where the money is invested. ♦

PTSO says, 'Just Do It'

New initiative funds many programs and equipment

by Alicia Lee

As the school year eases in, the Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) has had to make important decisions that affect the whole school's education programs. Grant requests for the 2008-2009 school year added to more than \$47,000. While all grant requests were taken into consideration, the PTSO was only able to fund \$29,000 toward staff and student grants, with some help from the school's supplies fund.

In terms of picking which programs to fund, PTSO members particularly focused on "seeing the number of students that will benefit from a specific grant, educational value for the students and what tools a teacher may use to evaluate effectiveness of the grant material," according to PTSO co-president Shinku Sharma.

A few of the several programs funded include the AP Biology classes, which received new equipment for Biotech labs; the MAP program, which received money to help pay for 35 new iMac computers and the poetry classes, which hired two mentors for coaching students individually in the course.

Other teachers and programs received grants for equipment to supplement their classes as well. PTSO also approved requests for two computers, which will be paid under the district's

general plan for technology and a Smart Board, which was approved by the School Site Council.

These grants were made possible largely because of the new PTSO initiative "Just Do It."

In this drive, the members pay \$100 per family as their share for materials and programs that benefit their students in all classrooms. So far this year, 30 percent, 366 families, of our school families have contributed to this important fund.

However, Sharma said some important programs, including the library and other student activities, are still not fully funded. The library hopes to launch a reading campaign with new books for recreational and pleasure reading, but at the moment, there are not enough quality books to begin a campaign. This is in part due of the lack of membership in the "Just Do It" initiative. Without the necessary membership donations, not enough funds will be able to reach the school.

The school goal is to have 75 percent of SHS families involved in PTSO through "Just Do It" and other contribution levels because it is currently short at 64 percent.

PTSO hopes that more families will get involved in PTSO and donate money for the school's programs.

For more information about PTSO, visit www.saratogahighptso.org. ♦

UPGRADES HELP ROOMS

by Kelly Lamble
and Alex Sclavos

The school has undergone some significant aesthetic changes, including renovation of the gym and football field, in the past few years.

Now those changes are continuing with more high-tech projection systems being installed in classrooms throughout campus and \$75,000 worth of equipment being donated to the weight room.

The school acquired the new weight room equipment after new management of the Quito Shopping Center tripled 24 Hour Fitness' lease and effectively forced them out because they were looking for businesses that would attract customers to shop at multiple venues in one outing.

Assistant football coach Adam Weiskal asked the 24 Hour Fitness owner if any of the equipment could be donated to Saratoga.

The new machines were moved into the weight room last month and are being used by many of the school's athletic teams. Several teams have taken advantage of the equipment

"It's nice to finally be getting new equipment," said senior football captain Scott Thoren. "The old equipment is run down and doesn't feel very sturdy, while

the new stuff is much more high-tech and safe."

The athletic department has decided to replace the old machines with the new ones and create more floor space to accommodate all the new equipment.

"We are looking to use a room that has been used for storage and open it up to become part of the weight room," said athletic director Peter Jordan.

Another change, maybe more obvious to the average student, is the projection systems being installed in 12 rooms all over campus.

Each system costs from \$8,000 to \$10,000 paid for with money provided by the School Site Council. The PTSO also contributed.

"For my algebra classes, I can get all the notes up on the board and they can see how things are supposed to look. All the graphs are already there," said statistics and algebra teacher Seem Patel, who is slated to get a Smart Board later this year, but is already making good use of her recently installed projection system.

Patel also thinks the projection system will help with student presentations.

"[Students] can plug in their own laptop and the PowerPoint will show up on the board. There are also videos with the stats book that I can show," said Patel. ♦



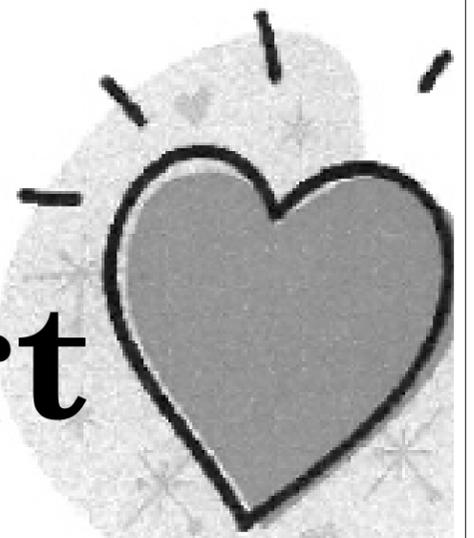
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Left: Color Guard members pose during their show "Mirror Images;" Right: junior flute player Steven Hong marches during band's senior night performance on Thursday, Nov. 20

photos by Brittany Judoprasertijo and Melody Zhang

Marching band brings competition season to end

by Kirstie Lee
and Karen Lyu

The marching band performed its last show of the season and for its 48 seniors, of their high school career, in the Western Bands Association (WBA) Championships at Diablo Valley College on Nov. 22. The band first competed in the preliminary competition and then placed 11th, qualified for the finals round in which they placed 11th as well.

Before and after the competition, emotions ran high, ranging from warm hugs, slapping of high-fives and even spilled tears. Many were both critical of the performance and proud of the work they had done.

"The show was very good,

although I'm not sure the performance was as strong as the final performances have been in years past," said senior Andrew Buchanan. "[This is because] I never really felt like we connected as a whole band."

The band has competed against some of the best bands in the state in the 5A division in six competitions this season.

"I was happy with the improvement that the group made between Saturday and Sunday," said band director Michael Boitz. "I thought Sunday was a really strong performance."

Senior Mihir Sathe said that he thought "from the field, it sounded pretty good" but that the band could have done better.

"When you have a really

good show, you know it," said Buchanan. "You can just feel the intensity in the air."

The band's field show this year is titled "Mirror Images" and is an eight-and-a-half minute performance. The music was inspired by Peter Graham's "Harrison's Dream" and Benjamin Britten's "The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra" and was a "very demanding and [advanced piece] for the kids, probably more [more challenging] than anything we've ever chosen before," said Boitz. "Musically there are a lot of fugues and a fugue sometimes is a reflection of the earlier idea which is like essentially like a mirror image. That's the storyline of the show."

The seniors in the band were honored at the Senior Night on Nov. 20 at Benny Pierce Field at 8 p.m. Parents and friends crowded into the stands to watch their seniors "graduate" and to send the band off with good luck wishes to finals.

This year, it was run a little differently in order to tie the event in with the community. The admission to see the show was a donation of two cans, all of which went to the Second Harvest Food Bank.

"It is really important that we [help out] when there are people [not far from this community] that are getting kicked out of their own houses," said Boitz. "If we can help somehow provide for a better holiday, then we should do it."

The night started with Boitz reading a short profile on each senior and calling him or her up to the spotlight along with his or her parents. The marching band then performed their show.

"The senior class is an incredibly talented group. They're going to be missed very much. They are one of the more talented classes we've had," said Boitz.

Senior drum major Paul Stavropoulos will miss being part of an amazing group.

"This has been the most eye-opening experience that [senior drum majors] Mara [Couch], Julia [Glausi] and I have ever had in our short lives," he said. "I would be happy to do it all over again." ♦

Senior arranges piano recital for community

by Andy Tsao

Fingers racing over the piano keys, senior Connie Shang brought forth the technically advanced, yet deeply emotional piece by Beethoven during her first self-organized recital on Nov. 8. Seated in the audience were dozens of family friends, silent as they listened to Shang's interpretive style.

Shang has been playing the piano for more than 11 years, and through her study of the instrument, has received honors of the highest degree. She was one of 13 students in the nation last year to pass the National Guild of Piano Teachers' prestigious Sonata Competition. She was also the accompanist of the Redwood Honor Chorus and is currently the accompanist for her church's youth orchestra.

With fellow pianist Valley Christian senior Tim Lin, Shang organized the private recital, which they had been planning for over six months.

"I wanted to showcase what I'd been playing all these years with a widely variegated program," said Shang. "In particular, [Tim and I] thought it'd be cool to arrange the pieces according to our unique counterpoint of styles: Tim enjoys brilliant technical displays, and I love deeply emotional pieces."

As this was her first self-or-

ganized recital, Shang sought inspiration in the works of world-renowned pianist and composer Wilhelm Kempff.

"Watching Wilhelm Kempff's interpretation of Beethoven was instrumental in helping me create atmosphere," said Shang. "I didn't end up borrowing much stylistically from him, but observing his composure lent maturity and depth to my music."

Shang was surprised, however, that she didn't receive much help from her piano teacher Joy Chen, who, according to Shang, "is

obsessed with planning for every contingency."

"[Chen] took a backseat on this recital and let me and Tim plan the whole thing," said Shang. "Looking back, I realize she did it on purpose to teach us how recitals don't just pop out of thin air."

Shang felt that the performance itself was also a success. The performance attracted about 30 guests, and afterwards, several listeners congratulated her for her ability to carry emotion across her music.

Although the comments were very positive, Shang feels that "there's plenty of room for improvement."

Although she will not be specializing in music after high school, Shang hopes to continue practicing the piano throughout college. ♦



Shang

FOOTBALL | Sister remembered

continued from pg. 1

said that the team received over \$15,000 in donations.

"Creating [the scholarship] was good," said sophomore Tim Lycurgus, "because it helped [Leslie] get through troubling times and it will raise awareness about the football program."

The money will be split into installments so that the school can use it to fund the scholarship for years to come. An exact amount for the scholarship has not been created yet.

"The team's performance in fundraising was over the top," said Guengerich. "The players really embraced; I never expected to receive so many

generous donations. Our goal was \$4,000, or about \$100 per player, but we achieved much more than that."

The scholarship will be given to a student athlete who had similar characteristics to Abby Leslie, someone who exemplifies "passion, leadership, camaraderie and a true love of a sport." ♦

FALCONSERIES

Seniors stick with attendance privileges of minors

By Shannon Galvin
and Vijay Menon

Forget playing it sick like Ferris Bueller when you want a day off—when students turn 18 in California schools, they are allowed to excuse their own absences.

Under state law, students aged 18 and older have the option to assume all of the responsibilities and powers that are normally charged to the parent as a minor.

But don't go rushing to the office to apply to clear your own absences yet, like every other benefit, the exception has its drawbacks.

To be able to sign off their own absences, the student must retrieve a form to be signed by a parent permitting them to do so. Both the student and parent must agree.

Said assistant principal Joe Bosco, "You can turn 18 and want to do this, but if your parent says no, that's it."

The students are then considered adults as far as the attendance rules apply. They are held up to the same standards as a working adult, which accounts for only five absences a semester. If a student misses over five classes a semester, they face some disciplinary action

such as a suspension or Saturday School.

Also, no distinction is made between excused and unexcused absences within those allowed five absences per semester. The exception actually grants students fewer missed classes than they would have as a minor.

Bosco said that in his two and a half years at Saratoga, not even one student has chosen the option to be viewed as an adult for attendance purposes.

"There's really no benefit," said Bosco. "It's just an option that you're granted when you turn 18. I think the main reason would be if you are 18 and not living at home anymore, you have uninvolved parents or you just want to be the one dealing with the school in calling in and your parent doesn't want to have to deal with it anymore so

they sign it."

Most students seem to agree there is little point to choosing that option at Saratoga.

"When I'm a senior," said sophomore Mikaela Burton, "I definitely won't go through the trouble of getting the adult privilege. It limits your absences, which is a bad thing if you get sick. It's also easier if your parents are just the ones to call in, because I'd probably forget." ♦





Uma Sambasivam

Senior Lisa Chang sells crepes by the quad steps after school during French Week, Nov 10-14.

French Club brings a savory taste of France to Saratoga

Club sells crepes to hungry students for French Week

by Annie Lee
and Sophia Cooper

A flock of students triggered serious traffic problems at the top of the quad steps Nov. 13, as French Club hosted their first school-wide event: National French Week Nov. 10-14. The students were there to get crepes being served by the club.

"French Week went well considering that it was our first big event and it was a big venture for the first time," said French Club member senior T.T. Tu. "I think this week put our club on the map."

The week consisted of watching *Chocolat*, starring Johnnie Depp, in room 408 during Wednesday tutorial and selling crepes for a dollar each on Thursday during seventh period. The club was also going to host an arts and crafts session during Friday tutorial where students could "design and customize their own French flags," said Tu, but due to a lack of participation earlier in the week, the event was canceled.

"The movie didn't go well because no one came to the movie," said Tu. "Well, two people did: the photographer from newspaper and the guy she dragged inside. Maybe if we had publicized it a little earlier, more people would have come."

Although there were posters around the school, a lack of communication also affected the participation. No information on the dates of the events were included,

just the overall schedule of the club activities.

"I thought it was good they were trying to raise money for [French Club]," said sophomore Kyle Fukui. "They should advertise it more and make [the crepes] cheaper, though."

Although the other activities fell through due to the lack of publicity, the crepe selling was a success for the club.

"Crepe selling went really well, almost better than anticipated because we ran out of food in the first 15 minutes," said Tu. "We sold 155 crepes. [Students] really enjoyed it, as a lot of them came back for seconds, thirds and fourths."

The proceeds from the club's crepes will help finance future French Club activities. Their other major event so far was participation in a French debate on Oct. 26 with other schools from the South Bay. For coverage of the debate, go to saratogafalcon.org.

Due to the gradually decreasing number of French students, this club went unnoticed by many students until now. However, considering the minimal amount of French students on campus, the club is doing well with about 20 active members that meet Tuesdays at lunch in room 408.

"A lot of people found out about French Club through [National French Week]," said French Club member senior Megha Rahgavan. "It helped promote us throughout the school." ♦

TOGATALKS

What do you think of French week?

I think the crepes were the best part of French Week.



sophomore Brandon Lin



freshman Anoop Galivanche

It was pretty fun. I enjoyed it and it was a great experience.



senior Paari Kandappan

P.E. | Requirement changes

continued from pg. 1

requirements for P.E.

However, many freshmen think the change is unreasonable.

Said Arunkumar, "I think it's unfair because none of the classes before us had to do this."

Other students are indifferent to the change.

"I really don't care," said freshman Anika Jhalani.

Besides the generally negative reaction to the requirement, many freshmen were confused as to why they have to join the seventh-period sports P.E.

"I'm still really confused about the whole thing in general," said Jhalani. "All the sports end on different days, so it's so hard for all the freshmen to know what's really going on."

Between the 130 students who have concluded their season and the students going out for the upcoming sports, P.E. teachers have found it increasingly difficult to keep track with the students' schedules.

"It's been really tough trying to coordinate the end of sports seasons with the P.E. classes," said assistant principal Joe Bosco. "With all these students going in and out, it's been tough on the P.E. teachers."

The freshmen now have around two weeks between the end of their season and when they must begin P.E. All fall athletes who are not participating in a winter sport were enrolled in the Sports P.E. class on Nov. 17. Each day missed will be considered a cut. ♦

APPS | Students seek safeties

continued from pg. 1

Babu, however, is also beginning to look at other schools in addition to the UCs in case he is not accepted. In order to prepare for the increased possibilities of rejection, Babu has begun to build for himself a safety net of schools to which he is confident he can be admitted.

"Right now I'm trying to apply to more privates because the budget deficit doesn't apply to schools that aren't publicly funded," said Babu, "and if worst comes to worst, there is always the option of transferring from a community college after two years into a UC."

Babu, Shimizu and Srivatsa feel that they must meet the rising competition for spots in the California public education program. With UCs and CSUs limiting the number of students they admit and

UC news recently announcing that applications are up 7 percent, an equivalent of 10,000 more students, for the 2008-09 school year, they feel that their chances of admission are getting lower.

"I don't like the fact that the UCs are getting more competitive because it really hurts the chances of many dedicated people," said Shimizu.

Furthermore, the schools that many once considered to be safeties are no longer sure bets due to the low number of slots available to incoming freshmen.

"[The new policy] could have a devastating effect on many students who are using CSUs as safety schools," said Srivatsa. "If they're denied their top choices, it is uncertain that their safeties will take them in with open arms." ♦

SPEECH & DEBATE

Team to host tournament

by Saniha Shankar
and Emily Chen

With the season in full swing, the speech and debate team competed in the two-day league tournament at Milpitas High School on Nov. 15 and 16. All individual events took place on Saturday. The competition was stiff, but sophomore Soorya Rangan broke to semi-finals in Impromptu and Sophomore Keeti Shukla advanced to semi-finals in Foreign Extemporaneous. Sophomore Vance Lindholm took fifth place in National Extemporaneous speech.

"I really thought all my practice finally paid off," said Lindholm. "It was

also really nice to have the support of the whole team during the final rounds of competition."

All debate events were scheduled for Sunday. Sophomore Karthik Annaamalai and Junior Rishabh Jethandani were undefeated in varsity Parliamentary Debate at the tournament with a record of 4-0. Sophomores Vijay Menon and Abhishek Venkataramana went 3-1. In JV Public Forum, freshman Sankash Shankar and Vineet Jain also went 3-1.

Saratoga will be hosting a Novice Debate tournament tomorrow. Coach Erick Rector is currently trying to organize the final details.

"We're excited to be hosting," said captain Farid Jiandani. ♦

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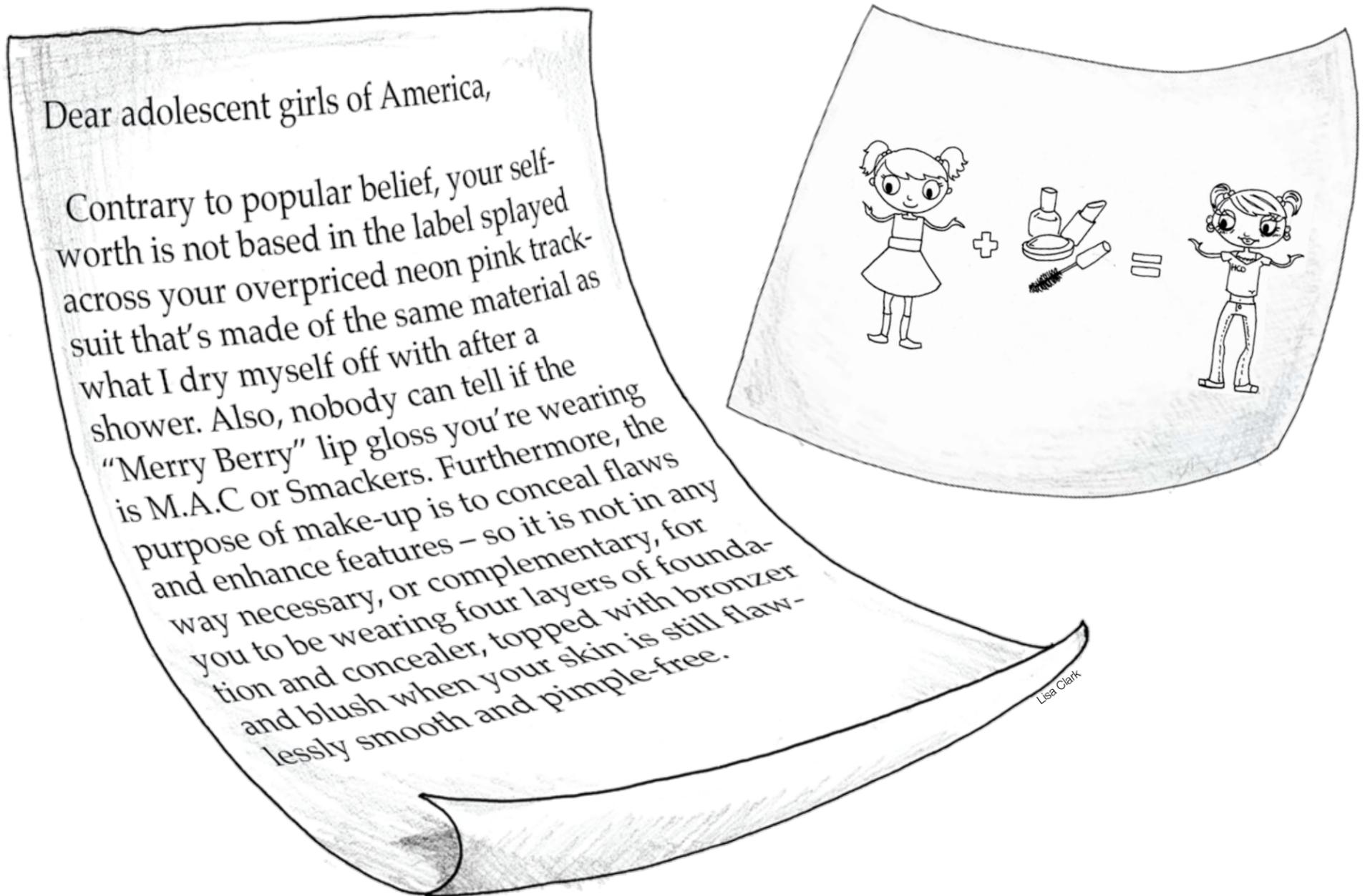
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Make-me-up, pretty please?



AS MORE AND MORE ADOLESCENT GIRLS RELIGIOUSLY MIMIC HOLLYWOOD, IT'S TIME TO TEACH THEIR PARENTS WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE

by **Emily Chen**
and **Elizabeth Cheng**

Paparazzi-crazed Hollywood has made it possible for voyeurs and pop-culture fiends across the country to see every change of outfit Lindsay Lohan may make in the course of a day. Adolescent girls are being exposed to this constant barrage of Juicy Couture tracksuits for Starbucks runs and Gucci bags for Blockbuster visits and strive to emulate such high-fashion styles.

Although we realize that it is an individual's right to purchase expensive luxury brand names if they possess the wealth to do so, the fact of the matter is, it's never necessary for a 12-year-old girl to be wearing velour sweatpants that cost more than an iPod nano, when she is just going to get sick of it by the time next season rolls around.

The capricious nature of adolescent girls should further serve as an argument for why parents should not indulge these ridiculous demands. Pre-teens and teens alike should not be focused on deriving their sense of self from the labels in their closet, but rather for their intellect and personality. For parents to

capitulate to a pouting pre-teen who is sulking because she doesn't have the "cool" labels is detrimental to that child's growth as a human being and ultimately society as a whole, as more and more of these label-sporting girls overrun the media, giving the impression that "every-one's has one."

People do have the choice to wear what they wish, but again, it is unlikely those girls know what they're doing by wearing low tank-tops and short miniskirts

Another point to make is the fact that many of the styles the girls try to emulate are simply unsuited for them. Take for example, the mottos that decorate many Hollister and Abercrombie shirts. Pre-teen girls buy the clothes without actually understanding the implications.

Many would argue that how offensive the words are depends on the person reading them

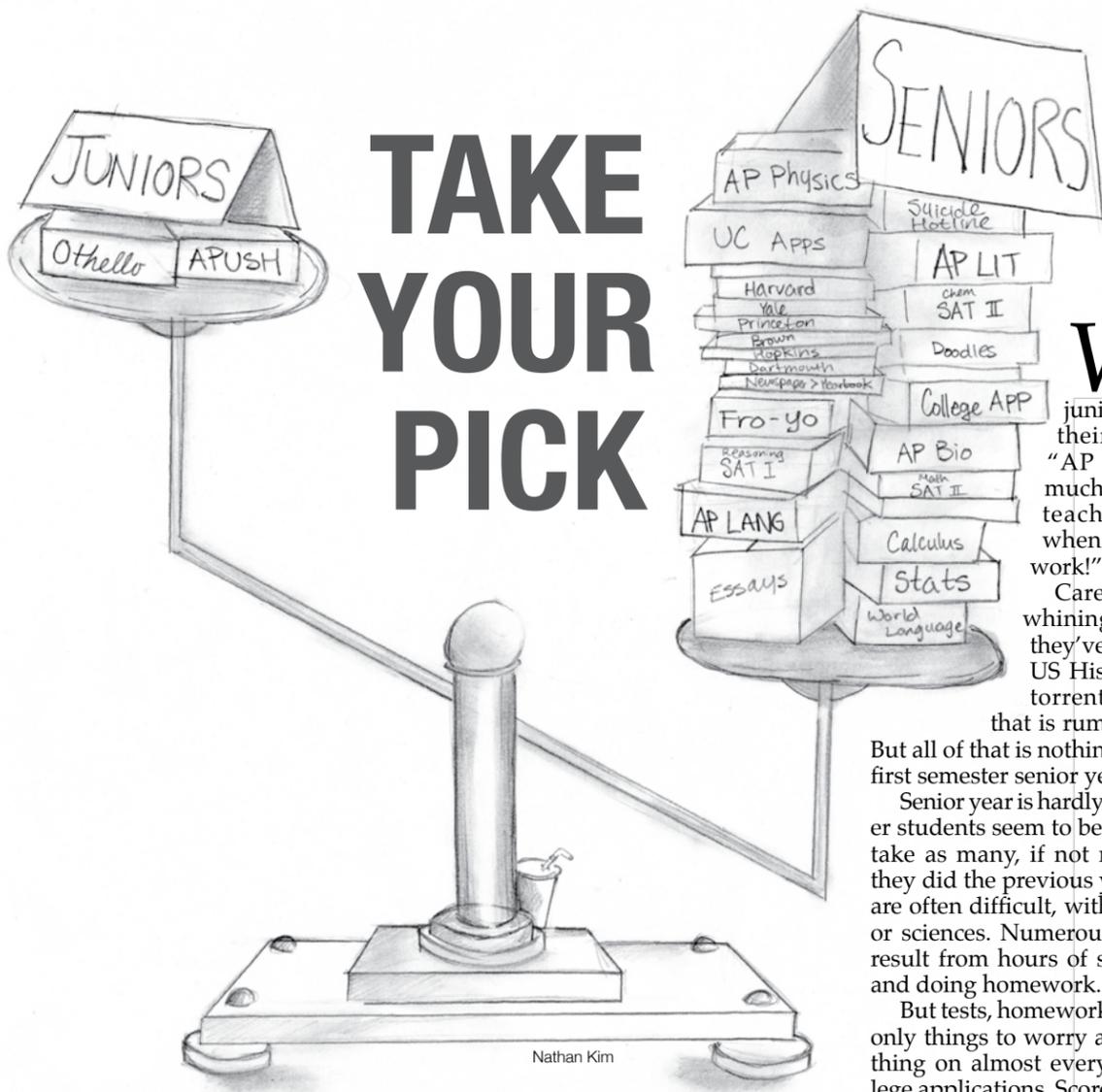
and that people have the right to wear whatever mottos they choose. But it is doubtful that most little girls want to give off a conceited and arrogant persona despite what their T-shirts may say.

There is also the matter of questionable cuts on the shirts and the short hemlines on the skirts. With celebrities unafraid to bare their skin, many pre-teens seem to be doing the same.

People do have the choice to wear what they wish, but again, it is unlikely those girls know what they're doing by wearing low tank-tops and short miniskirts. If they knew they were inviting the leers of perverted old men, they would likely choose clothing with better coverage.

While we realize it is not in our power to enact any sort of measure that would prevent young girls from wasting their money on unnecessary designer goods and wearing fashion simply not made for their age-set, we simply want to point out all the harms that undoubtedly occur as a result of the practice.

It is bad enough that society glamorizes being unhealthily thin – do we really need to also spread the message of materialism and mindless conformity? ♦



TAKE YOUR PICK

Stress from junior year pales in comparison with senior year demands

by Elizabeth Cheng and Andy Tsao

While roaming the hallways, it's not unusual to hear juniors complaining about their copious AP classes. "AP US History takes so much time," they cry, "and teachers just don't know when to stop piling on the work!"

Careful juniors—don't go whining to the seniors. True, they've finished the rigors of US History and survived the torrent of exams and stress that is rumored to be junior year.

But all of that is nothing, *nothing* compared to first semester senior year.

Senior year is hardly the slacker year younger students seem to believe it is. Most seniors take as many, if not more, AP classes than they did the previous year. The combinations are often difficult, with many doubling math or sciences. Numerous near-sleepless nights result from hours of slaving away studying and doing homework.

But tests, homework and projects aren't the only things to worry about. The number one thing on almost every senior's mind is college applications. Scores will be forgotten and

grades mere letters, but college applications decide futures. Juniors typically do not realize the real stress of applying until they sign up for the Common App their senior year.

So what exactly is so stressful about applying? First, there's the necessary standardized test scores that need to be sent in. True, juniors are taking the SATs, but they always know that they'll have more chances if they're unsatisfied. Come senior year, students are left with one, maybe two, chances to perform up to hopes.

Then, of course, there's everyone's favorite part: the essay. Actually, *essays*, to be more precise. Many schools require different prompts and even those affiliated with the Common App require supplements that essentially nullify the convenience of having a single application for many schools. Taking into consideration the number of prompts and versions of essays that will undoubtedly be written, it is common for seniors to end up writing at least 10 different essays.

Each essay also needs to be original, interesting, personality revealing and attractive to the admissions officers. By the way, there's a 600-word limit. Wonderful, isn't it?

So, juniors, next time you want to complain about that pesky English 11 Honors test on the same day as your English 11 Honors reading quiz, realize that the junior year workload doesn't even come close to the senior year experience—at least until college apps are over. ♦

Strange encounters at the DMV



Shannon Galvin

Super Shannon

The DMV has always had a reputation for employing people who are a bit out of the ordinary. To begin with, what sane person would want to spend the day in a car with people who can barely drive? Nobody would choose to deal with people who've spent two hours in line waiting to just renew their license. A few months ago when I went to the local DMV office to take my permit test, I experienced the DMV in all its strange glory.

Like any other teenager, I waited until the day of my permit test to hurriedly cram. After my mom drove me to the Los Gatos branch, I got my number and sat down in a chair to begin filling out the paperwork.

After writing down my name and address, it asked whether I wanted to be an organ donor. I checked "yes," because I'd seen enough medical shows on television to know organ donors can really make the difference in someone's life. I felt that if I could do something to help, I would definitely do it.

Within 15 minutes—surprising by DMV standards—my number was called and I went to the open desk.

"Wait a second," said the DMV employee. "They've got me working two jobs today,

and they don't pay me any extra for it either."

I watched as he handed a man his license plate.

"Looks hard," I said sarcastically.

"I figure if I go slower, they won't give me as much to do next time," he explained.

I nodded, and pushed my paperwork toward him after the other customer left.

With painful sluggishness, the DMV employee examined the form. He entered the data into his computer slower than my 7-year-old brother could type.

"Do you know you're not dead when they take your organs out? They like to keep them fresh."

—DMV employee

"You can't get your license until February," he said.

"That's a long ways away."

Of course, I might've still been there in February at the pace he was going. I nodded impatiently.

"I suppose you've done research on this organ donor company?" he asked me.

"Um, no," I answered.

"Do you know you're not even dead when they take your organs out? They like to keep them fresh," he said.

"Yes, I know," I said.

"You're technically brain-dead when they remove your organs."

He stared at me and stroked his goatee.

"Did you also know that if you wanted to give your organs to your mom, you couldn't because they belong to the company?" he said.

"Well, you can make a re-

quest to do so, right?" I said.

"I don't know," he replied.

He stared at me for several more uncomfortable seconds, waiting for me to change my mind. But I wasn't going to give in to him. Why did he care anyways?

"So, I'm guessing you're not an organ donor?" I said.

He slowly shook his head and directed his attention back to his computer. After a few more lines were entered, he printed out a slip of paper.

"Go stand in line over there to take your test," he pointed.

I hurriedly shuffled away from his desk, glad to escape.

Privacy really isn't much to ask. After all, the DMV is not the place for employees to add their own opinions. If he was simply trying to take longer in order to have less work to do, he should find another job.

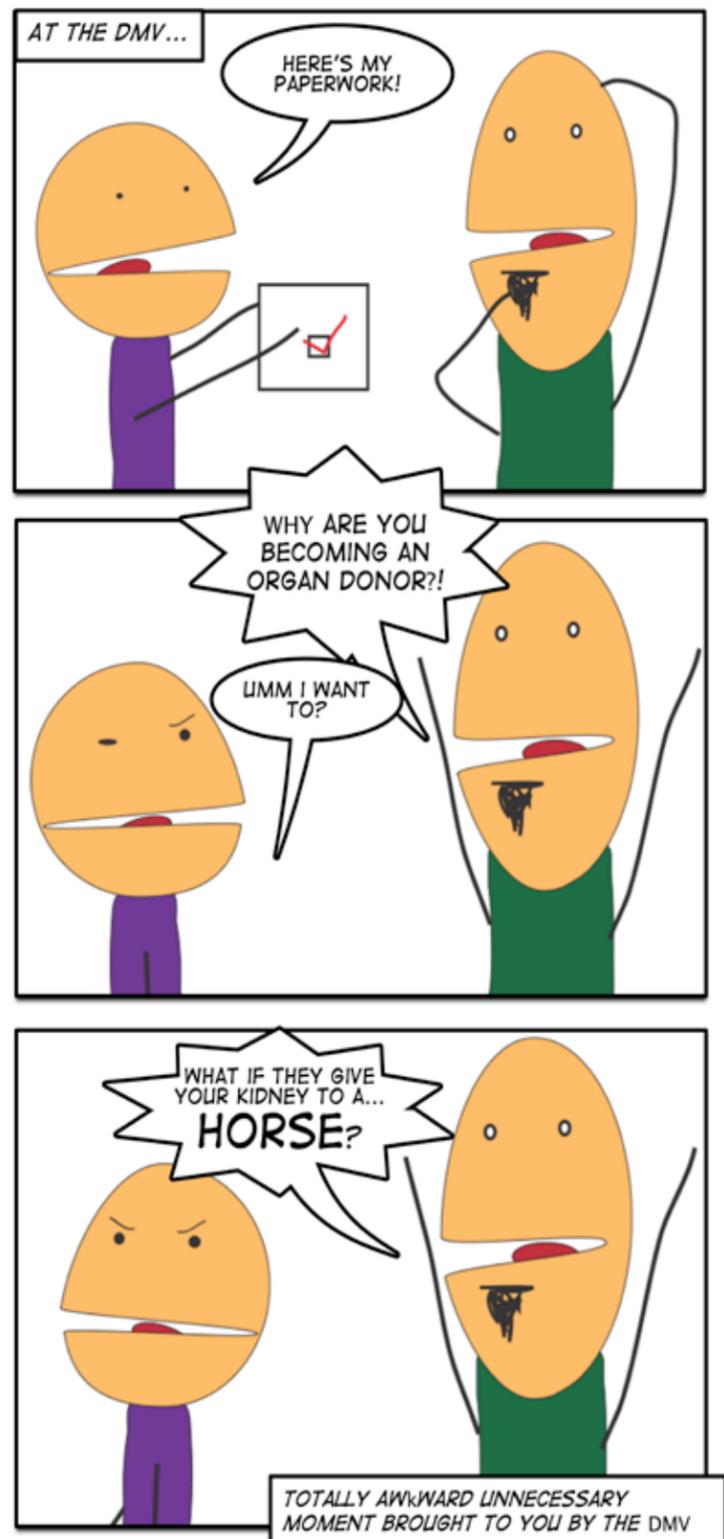
Luckily, the rest of my visit went uneventfully. I passed the test, took my picture and got my permit.

On my way out, I glanced back at the desk and saw another poor girl was standing there as the same employee awkwardly talked about something on her form.

Mind your own business, buddy. Customers have the right to their own opinion and privacy—it's a government agency after all. To help fix these problems, the agency needs to provide evaluations for customers to fill out. Just because we have no choice but to go to the DMV doesn't mean we should have to deal with grumpy employees and poor customer service.

As for me, I'm planning to stay as far away from the DMV for as possible—at least until February comes around. ♦

Dept. of Mental Vegetation | by Alex Song



MEDICINE KILLS MORE THAN THE COMMON COLD



Brian Kim

Have it your way

I spent a week crossing my fingers, hoping I wouldn't catch the bug my sniffing and coughing classmates were spreading. Unfortunately, I woke up with a full-blown cold in no time, feeling the worst I'd ever felt for months.

Normally, I let my colds naturally pass since choking down nasty cherry liquid isn't my cup of tea. But after three days of a relentless stuffy nose and painful sore throat, I headed to Longs in search of a remedy. Thanks to 7th grade biology, I was well aware that science had yet to discover an instant cure for the common cold, but either way, I was going to get the most efficient medicine the store could offer. I sorted through Benadryl, Tylenol, Nyquil and a whole shelf packed with mundane brand names, but none of them sounded like they'd suffice my need until I came across Zicam.

A unique cure

Zicam isn't the average pill or liquid menthol most cold medicines come in the form of today. In fact, Zicam is a gel that gets shot into the nose through a bottle, which at first didn't sound too bad. Actually, it sounded a bit more exciting than the average choke-down pill, and a plus was that it was one of those products that looked like it would work because the company widely advertised it on television. Cold medicine is cold medicine, and from my experience, you can't go wrong with a product that maintains a five-star rating on Amazon.com.

Before I made my purchase, I scanned the back of the box. Nothing really stood out, except for the part that said I might experience temporary discomfort "such as burning, stinging, sneezing or increased nasal discharge." It didn't say "permanent" anywhere, and if it weren't for the bold tagline on the box, "Get over your cold faster," I

probably would've left it behind because of its 12 dollar price tag.

I made my purchase, and as soon as I got home, I did an immediate product test, following the discreet instructions on the side of the box. Low and behold, Zicam cleared my sinuses, stopped my coughing and got rid of

my sore throat, all without any noticeable burning and stinging! I felt ecstatic and as good as new within a couple minutes, except for one thing: I still couldn't smell or taste anything.

Out of curiosity, I looked to the Internet to diagnose why I was unable to smell and was shocked by what I saw. The first page of results Google gave me showed lawsuits, warnings and news reports describing cases in which people experienced a permanent loss of smell, or anosmia, after using Zicam.

And then I flipped out.

What now?

Just like that, I lost my sense of smell to something that was made to cure my cold; a 12 dollar tube of gel took a lifetime of smelling and tasting taken away in less than 10 seconds.

I couldn't believe it, literally, so I decided to crack down on Zicam. Investigating the issue on a more in-depth level and under a state of paranoia, I looked up the main active ingredient in Zicam, Zincum Gluconicum, and discovered that along with other zinc compounds, the active ingredient can indeed incinerate the nasal tissue.

The strange thing was that I didn't feel a burning, but then again, how would I know if I could even feel my nasal tissue burning? I certainly couldn't smell it at that point.

It was already Friday night, past

rarely do.

Without a real basis by which to judge the level of drunkenness, San Jose officers are given free reign to make subjective decisions on whether or not a person is drunk. Giving officers this type of power is a recipe for abuse.

San Jose citizens have long

complained that the police use the law as an excuse to arrest people whose attitudes they don't like. The arrests are difficult to challenge or overturn due to the lack of objective evidence available to jurors.

Additionally, many of the arrests occurred downtown, where police officers are routinely stationed in low-income,

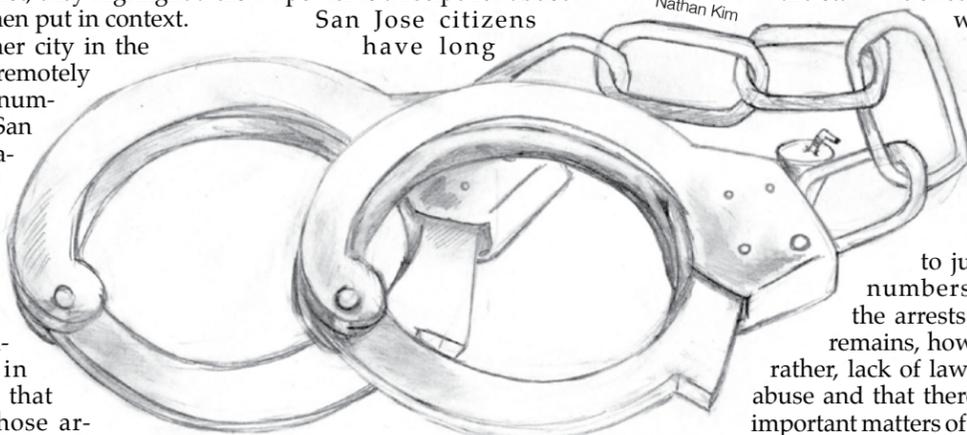
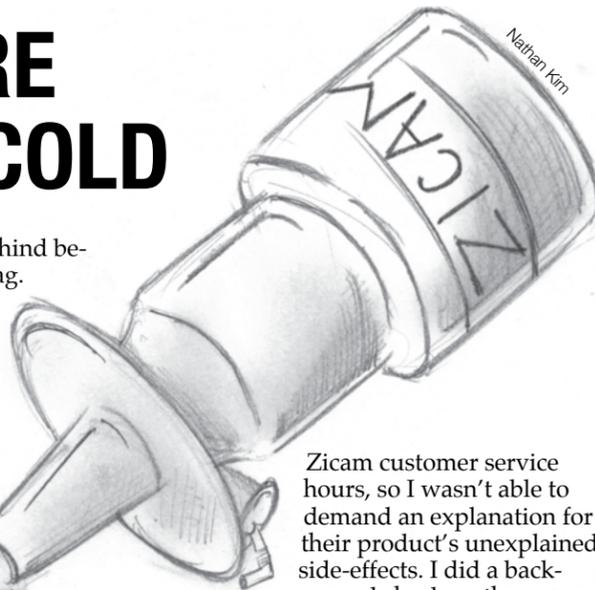
predominantly Latino neighborhoods. Many Latinos have complained that they are being unfairly targeted by the heavy-handed police presence constantly around them.

Many police in downtown San Jose are stationed just outside of bars,

waiting to make arrests. Clearly, these cops don't have the protection of citizens in mind and are simply aiming to get as many arrests as possible.

The SJPD has tried to justify its high arrest numbers by claiming that the arrests save lives. The fact remains, however, that the law—rather, lack of law—encourages police abuse and that there are other far more important matters of public safety that the police could be attending to than public intoxication.

While one cannot be certain of how many of last year's 4,661 arrests were abusive or discriminatory, the SJPD should resolve this troublesome situation by simply requiring its police officers to provide a breath test before making future arrests. ♦



The Saratoga Falcon

STAFF POLICY

The Saratoga Falcon is published five times per semester by the Advanced Journalism classes of Saratoga High School, 20300 Herriman Ave., Saratoga, CA 95070.

Views expressed in *The Saratoga Falcon* are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the administration, faculty or school district.

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The staff of *The Saratoga Falcon* is committed to objectively and accurately representing the diverse talents, cultures and viewpoints of the Saratoga High School community.

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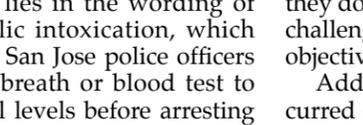
SJ arrests for drunkenness excessive

by Vijay Menon

Last year, the city of San Jose arrested 4,661 people for public drunkenness, by far the highest number in California. While these statistics may seem insignificant at first, they highlight a disturbing trend when put in context.

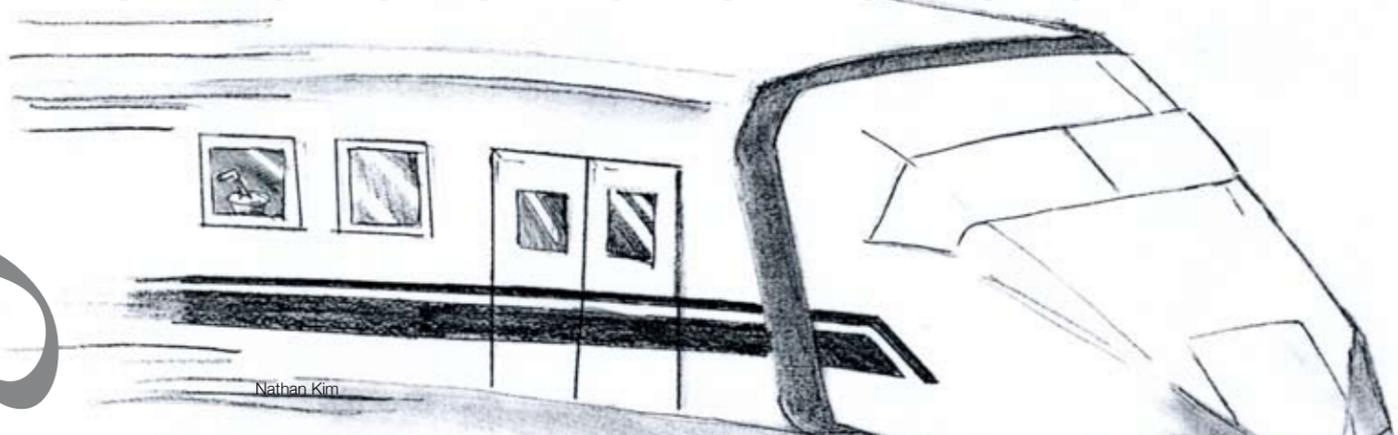
The only other city in the state that comes remotely near San Jose's number of arrests is San Diego. Its population totals 300,000 more than San Jose, yet it had 1,400 fewer arrests. One must be skeptical of the absurd number of arrests in light of the fact that 60 percent of those arrested are Hispanic, a group that makes up only 32 percent of San Jose's population.

The problem lies in the wording of the law on public intoxication, which does not require San Jose police officers to administer a breath or blood test to check for alcohol levels before arresting people. While officers can offer one, they



Get Political

In the aftermath of the historic 2008 election, writers analyze the results



PROPOSITION 1A BENEFITS OUTWEIGH COST

by Andy Tsao

In the recent election, millions of Californians voted not only for Sen. John McCain or Barack Obama, but also for the many state government propositions. At the top of the list was Proposition 1A, an act that would build a gargantuan railway system throughout California. When the votes were tallied at the end of the day, Proposition 1A passed, ushering in a new era of improved public transportation.

The big idea

The goal of the super-railway was to provide means for more efficient transportation

in the state and to bolster the failing economy by creating new jobs.

The high-speed train sports several enticing features, among which are the capacity to carry 117 million passengers annually and to drastically reduce traveling time and fuel usage. Through reduction of traffic on intercity highways and around airports, the high-speed train will aid the current transportation infrastructure by providing for more efficient means of traveling in these areas.

Many opponents of this proposition believed that California, with its \$11 billion debt, cannot afford to build the railroad system. Such an

undertaking, they said, would drive our economy into depression. Those citizens, however, failed to realize that our current transportation system costs \$20 billion a year due to wasted gas and lost time during congestion. In an economy that is deep in recession, \$20 billion a year is something we can't afford.

A smart investment

The train system is so far the cheapest and most environmentally safe method of responding to the congestion problem. According to the California High-Speed Rail Authority, California would have to build nearly 3,000 lane-miles of freeway, five airport runways

and 90 departure gates by 2020 in order to serve the same number of travelers as the train system, a feat that would cost over twice as much as the rail system and would have much greater negative environmental impacts.

Moreover, the train system would provide for cheaper passenger costs than travel by air or automobile today. With speeds of up to 200 mph, the train will pave way for a cheap, efficient and environmentally stable means of high-speed transportation.

The rail system would also provide a stimulus for our faltering economy, creating 160,000 construction-related jobs and

another 450,000 permanent jobs by 2035. Material transportation costs will also be lowered, as the train can be used to transport lightweight freight.

Despite opposition to Proposition 1A, the benefits of the train system far outweigh the dent it would make in the budget. Right now, people are talking about saving up until the United States becomes more stable, but the economy as it stands needs money pumped in for it to prosper once more. People need to accept the fact that they need to spend money in order to gain money. To those who voted yes on Proposition 1A: congratulations on making the right choice. ♦

Show pride in political views

by Emily Chen

The community of Saratoga High is somewhat of a paradox in and of itself. Our state is obviously heavily Democratic, yet there's a reason our Republican governor Arnold Schwarzenegger visited our humble school for a fundraiser a few years ago.

We are a community of teenagers, a demographic that is known to lean to the left, raised by parents who largely fit the mold of the conservative upper-middle-class American. Such heterogeneity of political views should be embraced, yet too many students seem to be caught up in the false mindset that they must conform to the views of their peers and feel shame if their ideas conflict with the "popular" plan. The bulk of the problem seems to be that if students identify themselves as Republicans, they feel as if liberal students will ostracize them.

For students to conform how they dress or what they wear is one thing, but to conform their minds in fear of criticism is an entirely different matter. Students should not feel the need to hide or alter their beliefs to match what others are trumpeting as the only solution. No student's opinion is any more valid than another's. In the end we are just teenagers voicing what we think.

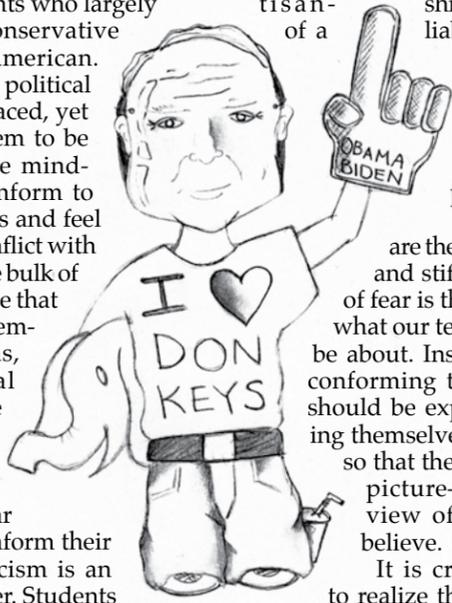
Students are often ashamed to admit their conservative leanings for fear of ridicule. Whether left-leaning students identify as Democrats because Obama has made it popular, because they want to rebel against their conservative parents, or

simply because they really do agree with the Democratic ideals, they should extend the same liberties that they are exercising to those who share more conservative ideals.

Being a Republican is not a bad thing; after all, America is still largely known as a center-right nation. The clash and overlap of ideals is what forms the foundation of American politics. Yes, sometimes it can get dirty and yes, sometimes bipartisanship proves to be more liability than an asset. Ultimately, however, if there were only one reigning party, there could be no compromise.

As students, we are the future of the nation and stifling our beliefs out of fear is the exact opposite of what our teenage years should be about. Instead of mindlessly conforming to others, students should be exploring and exposing themselves to differing ideas so that they can get the entire picture—a truly accurate view of what they really believe.

It is crucial for students to realize that they need to be able to stand up for what they believe in, whether it's popular or not. It may start with being ashamed of political beliefs now, but when entering the real world, students will find that they have much weightier issues on their hands than just a stance on a proposition fellow students may take issue with. What will they choose to do when the stakes involve money, promotions and intimidating bosses? Students need to learn how to take a stand now, for their future. ♦



VOTING SYSTEM NEEDS REFORM

by Brian Kim and Tim Tsai

Following the debacle of Florida in the 2000 presidential election and the close call in Ohio in 2004, many were relieved to see Barack Obama elected without controversy. The fact is that the Electoral College has continually caused problems for voters and recent elections show that voting reform is necessary.

The Electoral College started in the late 1700s, a period when most of the world still relied on monarchies. The Federalists, most notably Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, did not trust common Americans with the vote. To them, there were too many illiterate and uneducated people in the country to elect a suitable leader.

Although the problem of uneducated voters persists, it's on a much smaller scale than during the 18th and 19th centuries. Most Americans are literate and the media have become a tremendously influential part of Americans' lives; it was impossible to escape from the names "Obama" and "McCain" these past few months. It's true that there still are a vast number of voters who have little idea of what the candidates stand for, but at least today, the resources are available for voters to adequately research the candidates, formulate their own opinions and make well-informed votes.

Furthermore, the Electoral College does not give candidates an incentive to campaign equally in all the states. Case and point: California. Obama and McCain made few appearances here to see its 17.3 million voters. Meanwhile, less

populous states such as Missouri, South Carolina and Florida saw the candidates dozens of times.

Many people don't realize that the electoral vote is the only vote that decides the President. The "race to 270" is the deciding factor in who wins the presidential election, where only one candidate can receive 270 or more electoral votes by selected individuals. The popular vote has no bearing on the eventual President; a candidate can win the popular vote but still lose the election if the opposing candidate receives 270 electoral votes.

Proponents of the Electoral College cite that it is a safeguard against voter fraud. Thus, if fraud is so outrageous (as it was in Florida during the 2000 election), an electoral voter can potentially vote against the state's popular vote.

This is unlikely, however, because the elector who votes against his party lines is likely to be ostracized from his party. Furthermore, it would take a catastrophic election for the possibility of the Electoral College deciding the president while disregarding the popular vote. Fraud would have to be on such a high level that America's voting system would face much greater problems than just the Electoral College.

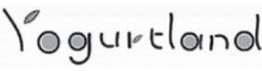
The Electoral College was created to rid the uneducated votes, until today, where it has become practically useless to the presidential election. With a media that fills the airwaves with political ads and messages, voters now have a much higher level of understanding of political issues than those in the 18th century, rendering the Electoral College unnecessary and outdated. ♦

The Electoral College has continually caused problems for voters and the recent elections only show reform is necessary.

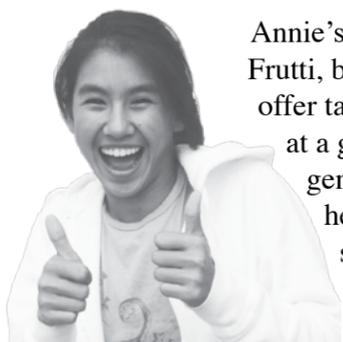


Frozen delights

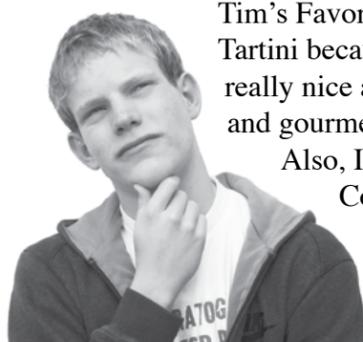
Sure it's getting colder, but this newly popular tart treat is tasty any time of the year. With a plethora of frozen yogurt stores popping up all around, three reporters took a look at which ones are worth braving the cold for.

SHOP	TASTE	LOCATION	EXTRAS	PRICING
 20488 Stevens Creek Blvd Ste 2040 Cupertino, CA 95014	The yogurt was perfect consistency, not too icy but not too creamy. It didn't melt quickly and was filling.	Located next to LeBoulangier with parking underneath the building. Layout is good but could get chaotic on a busy day with its one registrar.	Flavors include: original, vanilla, lychee, chocolate, taro and raspberry tart.	\$0.38 per ounce, toppings included. Everything is self-serve.
 10123 N Wolfe Rd Ste 2119 Cupertino, CA 95015	Yogurt is creamy like ice cream, but still has the signature icy taste of frozen yogurt.	It's located next to AMC 16 on the second floor in Cupertino Square (Vallco). The store is secluded in it's own corner. It has only three small tables and a couple uncomfortable couches.	They provide four flavors: chocolate, vanilla, original tart, and another fruit tart that changes weekly. Toppings include fresh fruit, mochi balls, and various cereals and nuts.	\$0.35 per ounce, but is not self-serve. Customers choose between three sizes, and after the employee swirls the yogurt customs pile on as many toppings as desired.
 19700 Stevens Creek Blvd Cupertino, CA 95014	By far the widest variety of flavors. Unique ones include taro and cheesecake. In addition to fresh toppings, also has syrups.	Convenient because there are many stores around it, like Beard Papa's Cream Puffs. Lots of parking and outdoor seating.	Odd, icy consistency. It melted quickly into a gross yogurt. The flavors, however, made up for the texture. They was a huge variety and each one was amazing.	\$0.30 per ounce, toppings included. Everything is self-serve.
 20560 Town Center Ln Cupertino, CA 95014	Its yogurt is noticeably creamier and smoother than all other competitors'. The yogurt has a nice balance of milkiness and tartness.	Tricky to find, it's on the side of the Villagio building that holds Amici's and Curry House. There is limited outdoor seating and a flat screen tv.	Offers green tea and pomegranate flavored yogurt, as well as cereals, mochi and the typical fresh fruits for toppings. Smoothies, called blenders, are also offered.	Small: \$2.50; Medium: \$3.50; Large: \$5.50. Green tea and pomegranate cost a dollar more. One topping is \$1.00, and additional toppings are \$0.25.
 18562 Prospect Rd Ste B Saratoga, CA 95070	Very creamy, and tastes practically identical to ice cream except without the fat.	Located in the Westgate shopping center next to Rojoz and McDonald's. The store is extremely clean, and there are several tables and chairs.	A cake cone with any flavor of yogurt is only \$1. Six flavors of yogurt: peach, original, chocolate, vanilla, peanut butter, mint, and another that they rotate. Gelato is also sold.	Small: \$3.00; Medium: \$3.75; Large: \$5.75. 1-2 toppings are \$0.95 extra. Employees serve everything for you, but they give extremely generous servings.
 1600 Saratoga Ave Ste 203 San Jose, CA 95129	The worst of the bunch, the yogurt was excessively icy to the point where there were actually chunks of ice. It was also really grainy, with a very unpleasant mouth feel.	In Westgate Mall, where TCBY used to be. Space is very small and doesn't have the same modern, feeling of the other stores.	Various flavors of non-tart yogurt. Also has an area called Chalk Zone where customers can write in chalk on the wall.	Kid-size: \$2.25 Toppings are an extra \$0.50, but when I ordered blackberries they only gave me three.

by Emily Chen, Annie Lee and Tim Rollinson



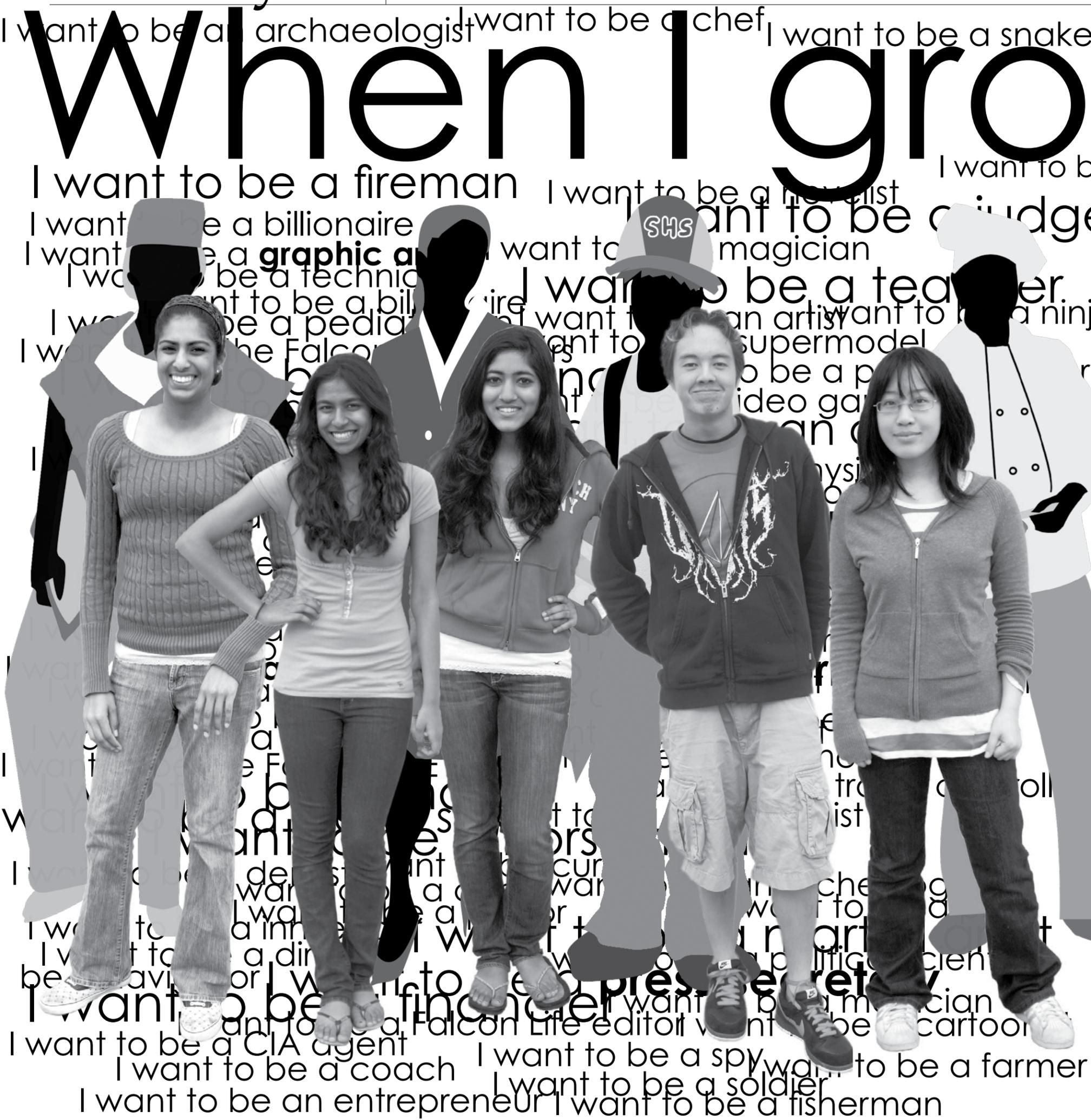
Annie's Favorite: Frutti, because they offer tasty yogurt at a great price, generous helpings and service with a smile.



Tim's Favorite: Tartini because it has a really nice atmosphere and gourmet yogurt. Also, I loved the Cookie Crisp cereal for a topping.



Emily's Favorite: Red Mango, because although it is more expensive, the high-quality and creaminess of the yogurt makes it worth it.



Student checks up on her doctor dream

by Mika Padmanabhan

Honestly, I have never liked my doctor. She is crabby and yells at me for cracking my knuckles, banging my legs on the medical bed or not taking my medicine properly. I have, however, always wanted to be a doctor, because it seemed so easy and the pay is great. All that needs to be done is to go into a room, pretend to look at the patient for two minutes and prescribe them antibiotics right?

I decided that shadowing a doctor would be the best way to really know what it is that they do. I shadowed doctor Haritha Rachamallu, a general physician at Kaiser Permanente in San Jose, as well as a Saratoga mother.

The experience has taught me a completely different side of the medical practice and proved my initial perceptions of

the career completely wrong.

When I first arrived in Dr. Rachamallu's office, she was on the computer reading up on a patient's medical history and charts.

"Doctors double check the patient's past illnesses, previous visits and the current medications [to] make sure that new medicines prescribed will not interfere with the old ones," said Rachamallu.

After reading the patient's medical history, doctor Rachamallu and I visited an older lady who had been the doctor's patient for 11 years. The two seemed to share a special relationship, almost like they were family. After hearing the patient's concern that her condition was not completely under control, Dr. Rachamallu prescribed another medicine and not only called the pharmacy but made sure that the lady did not have to pay the full visit fee.

Since the lady had Medicare and some supplemental insurance, only a certain amount of money was covered by the plan.

"I try to tweak the numbers the best I can to help her get the most out of her plan," said Rachamallu.

Rachamallu said that working as a doctor gave her a different perspective on life and people, but she sometimes felt like she wasn't able to spend enough time with her kids when compared to other Saratoga moms who stayed at home.

"If I really wanted to, I could stay at home," said Rachamallu. "But my love for my patients keeps me working to help them."

The amount of care and dedication doctor Rachamallu had for her patients amazed me. She really loved her job and what she was doing for the people in need, and even tries to put in extra hours when possible.

"I answer phone calls during my lunch hours, and e-mails at home after dinner," said Rachamallu. "Being a doctor involves taking extra time whenever you can. It's a lot of work."

After shadowing Dr. Rachamallu for a day, I have found a new appreciation for doctors. My experience has really sparked my interest to be a doctor, not because it is easy, but because I can really make a difference in someone's life. ♦

reality CHECK

Doctor

Average income: \$132,000
Hours: 50 to 80 hours a week
Education required: 5-8 years plus specialization for a general physician

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a scientist

Up

Baker concocts passion

by Tiffany Tung

"I would like to order three hundred croissants."

"When do you need it by?"

"Tomorrow."

"Pick them up at four."

This situation commonly occurs in the Los Gatos patisserie, Fleur de Cocoa. Master pastry chef and chocolatier Pascal Janvier works for hours on end to produce carefully handcrafted pastries, each with detail painstakingly added on to ensure perfection.

Many people commonly believe that the job of a pastry chef is an easy one. However, this is not the case, which I found out after much research.

Since I was young, I have been inspired by television shows on the Food Network. I have always believed that pastry chefs have had a magical ability to bring happiness to people through their food. At 9, I determined that I wanted to pursue this career.

I soon learned, however, that not everyone can be a pastry chef. These people need to have the passion and creativity to create such dishes. These desserts need to be appealing to the eye and taste buds as well as be original creations.

Some professional chefs start their apprenticeship to an already established pastry chef at young ages, and then years later, open their own patisseries or work in high-class establishments. Others attend culinary school after high school and work as pastry chefs for restaurants.

Janvier began his training at the age of 13 as an apprentice in his hometown of Normandy, France. He later received his masters in Pastry and Chocolate and

came to America to teach American chefs how to reproduce their own pastries. He was soon struck by the desire to make his own pastries again, and the result was Fleur de Cocoa.

Chef Pascal Janvier's day begins at 5 in the morning when he prepares ingredients for the day's cakes, and it ends around 2 or 3 p.m.

Janvier also focuses on teaching the other cooks how to make pastries. He trains each cook for a long time in order to ensure that each dish will be flawless.

A pastry chef's reputation depends on the quality of the food he serves, so he cannot afford to make a mistake that could potentially lose customers.

"It takes a lot of effort to be a pastry chef," said junior Layla Daryan, who works as a waitress at Fleur de Cocoa. "In the end, it all pays off when you eat the food. [Janvier] can be strict, but his pastries are really good."

After reflecting upon this, I reached a decision not to become a pastry chef. Although I like baking cookies and cakes, I would prefer baking as a hobby rather than a career.

In the meantime, I'll work on becoming a YouTube celebrity. ♦

reality CHECK

Pastry Chef

Average income: \$56,147

Hours: 12 hours per day

Education required: Bachelor of Arts degree in Culinary Arts or Associates degree in applied science culinary arts

Lawyer's hard work pays off for success

by Kavya Nagarajan and Saniha Shankar

We were ready for the climactic scenes, the intense evidence and the brutal cross examination. What met us was not a cut-throat lawyer, clad in Armani, but a relaxed, easy-going woman who welcomed us with a smile, at the offices of Bisgaard & Smith in San Francisco.

Although we didn't go into an actual trial, it didn't take long for us to realize that we were in for a surprise. We entered the building and were escorted up the elevator into a cool air-conditioned office. While we didn't get a chance to examine current court cases, due to confidentiality, we were able to talk to civil litigation lawyer Pamela Ferguson.

"People always watch movies and expect lawyers to prepare their cases at lightning speed, but it's not like that at all," said Ferguson. "In reality, it can take one to two years to prepare for trial."

Ferguson has been a civil litigation lawyer for more than 20 years and works at the Lewis Brisbois Bisgaard & Smith law firm in San Francisco. The law firm has several offices located across the United States and is currently expanding. Civil law commonly deals with conflicts between individuals and organizations.

As Ferguson told us, it takes a lot of dedication to be a full-time lawyer. Lawyers, on a normal basis, work an average of 60-80 hours a week, and on average make anywhere from \$100,000-\$400,000. Most people have difficulty balancing a social life and their job.

"Studying law is [fascinating]," said Ferguson. "I really like what I do, and I would never trade it for another job."

She told us about one case that she worked on, involving a hemophiliac who sued a company for infecting him with AIDS. This case was argued during the time when blood transfusions were not checked for the HIV virus; therefore, many people were unknowingly infected.

reality CHECK

Lawyer

Average income: Ranges from \$100,000 to \$400,000

Hours: 60 to 80 hours a week

Education required: Completion of law degree (J.D.) and pass bar exam

The young man sued Bayer Corporation for infecting him with AIDS. The law firm that Ferguson worked for had to argue on the side of the company and explained that because the company did not have the technology to actually filter the blood, it was not in their control. The judge ruled in favor of the company. This showed us the extent to which a case hinges on well-argued presentations of the facts.

Looking at our surprised faces, she took a different route, and told us about her daily routine. According to Ferguson, she starts her day by checking her calendar to see what meeting, interview or conferences she has that day. This way she can stay on top of things and not fall behind at the last minute. She often does research and looks for expert witnesses to back her side of the case. After researching, she may have a meeting with an expert witness or a meeting with one of her own witnesses.

After hearing her schedule, we realized how much work goes into a single case. But it didn't stop there. Ferguson mentioned casually that she also happened to have anywhere from 20-60 clients at a time.

We had always known being a lawyer was a lot of work, but we had no idea it was this much work. It was an eye-opening experience to discover just how much movies and TV distort the real workings of this occupation. Lawyers deserve credit for the time and commitment that they take out of their lives to make sure the truth comes out. ♦



Photo by Mabel Hsu



Photo courtesy of Mika Padmanabhan



Photo courtesy of Saniha Shankar

From left to right: Senior Guy Quanrud inspects a ladder with fire captain Manuel Burns. Junior Mika Padmanabhan checks a patient's blood pressure at Kaiser Permanente. Juniors Saniha Shankar and Kavya Nagarajan look over papers with lawyer Pamela Ferguson.

Firefighters ignite interest in every day heroism

by Guy Quanrud

It's 8 at night, and the siren rings. Within just 60 seconds, a response team zooms out of the West Valley Fire Station.

Within 5 minutes the fire truck arrives at the scene, vanquishing the fire and saving the day. That's just standard procedure for West Valley firefighters.

On Nov. 9, with the help of captain Manuel Burns, I had a chance to experience the fun and thrilling life of the fireman.

I saw not only a full tour of the facility but also the firemen's annual check up on ladders from almost all the stations in the San Jose area.

I witnessed a practice test for the alarm and met the different people who worked there.

During a rescue, the overall game plan for the fire encompasses far more than their actions.

First, there is County Communications who first dispatch police, firefighters, or ambulances to an emergency situation. The "satellite station" in the firehouse gets the call and then ships the firefighters out depending on the situation.

At the scene, it can get tricky. One situation could be performing CPR on a victim who has suffered a heart attack.

Another situation is deciding precisely how to deal with the flames. If the fire was potentially caused by arson, the firefighters have to try to eliminate the fire without destroying the evidence.

And recently, according to Burns, they have even had to deal with hazardous materials.

Still, not every call is for such "high

stakes." After all, some of their actions are as simple as school visits. Yet in high-pressure situations, it's quite heroic to see the courage these people possess every day.

"It's an adrenaline rush," said Burns. "Sometimes I've been pretty jacked up."

Outside of the heroism, the life of a firefighter could be seen as pleasant. Within the station there are dorms, a kitchen and a complete set of workout weights to keep their bodies fit.

"We train about two hours a day," said Burns.

Thirty guys share the apartment, serving 24-hour shifts, for around 56 hours a week.

"Most of the time we are here 3 to 4 hours a day at a given time," said Burns. "We make sure everything runs perfectly, the people are pretty dedicated here."

On a normal day the station gets about two to three calls ranging from school visits to actual fires. In a year, there are around 900 calls.

"I recognize [working as a firefighter] as a gift," said Burns. "It is something that I can't imagine myself not doing. It is a dream job." ♦

reality CHECK

Firefighters

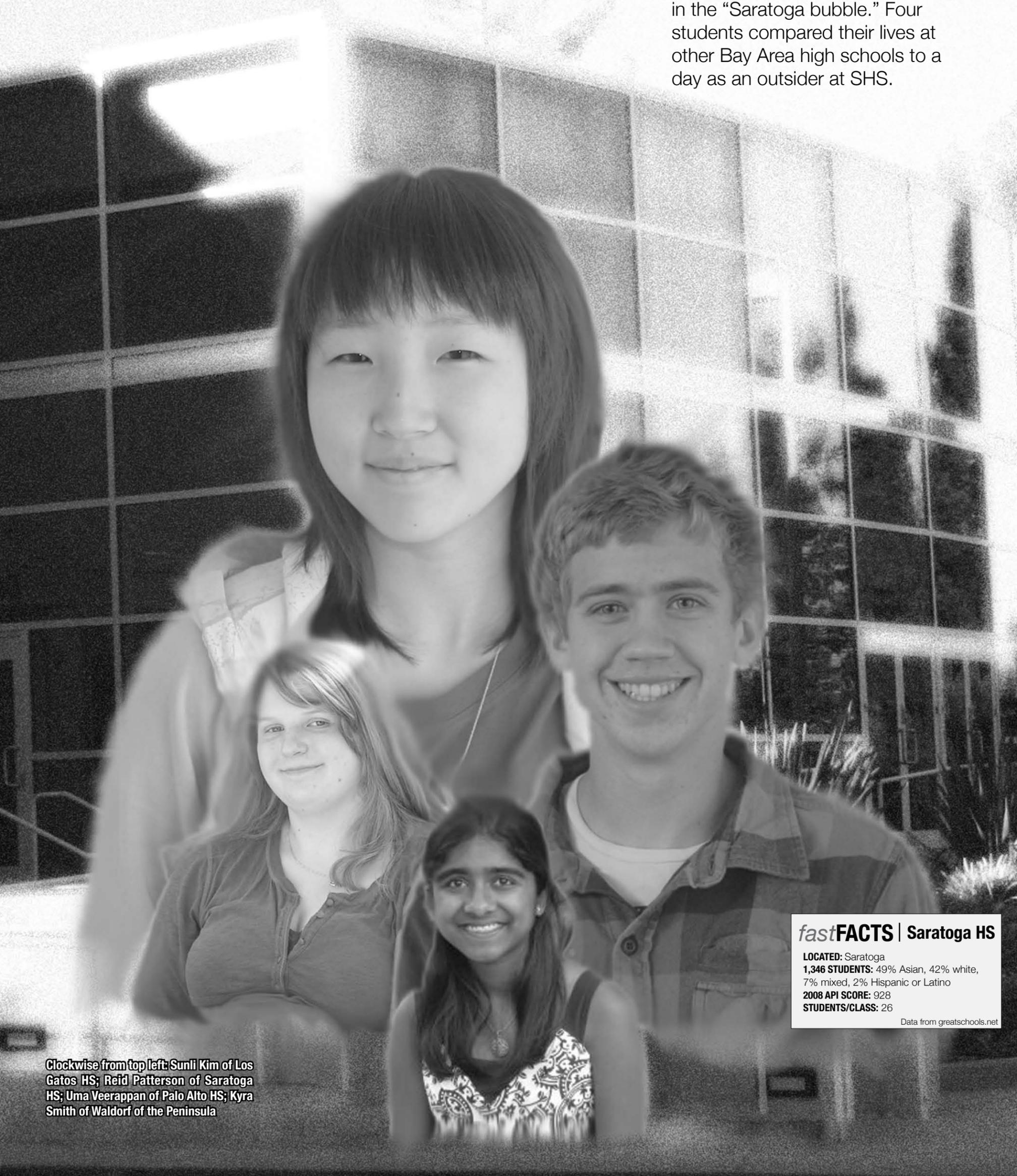
Average income: \$46,000-\$100,000

Hours: Depends on the shifts, average of 56 hours a week

Education required: High school diploma, fire company will provide training

The Outsiders

Students often complain of living in the "Saratoga bubble." Four students compared their lives at other Bay Area high schools to a day as an outsider at SHS.



fastFACTS | Saratoga HS

LOCATED: Saratoga
1,346 STUDENTS: 49% Asian, 42% white,
7% mixed, 2% Hispanic or Latino
2008 API SCORE: 928
STUDENTS/CLASS: 26

Data from greatschools.net

Clockwise from top left: Sunli Kim of Los Gatos HS; Reid Patterson of Saratoga HS; Uma Veerappan of Palo Alto HS; Kyra Smith of Waldorf of the Peninsula

Junior prefers stressful SHS to stricter Mitty

by Mira Chaykin

Think Saratoga High is strict? Try spending a day at Archbishop Mitty, says junior Reid Patterson who transferred here two months ago.

Patterson said that despite several differences between Saratoga and Mitty, the biggest and most aggravating difference is the amount of freedom students have.

"Mitty is like a prison. You can never leave," he said.

Students here complain they can't go off campus at tutorial, but at Mitty, he said, students must stay on campus until the day is over and sometimes, even longer.

"If you only have six periods, they

still only let you leave 30 minutes before seventh period gets out. That's an hour they make you stay on campus in addition to school," said Patterson.

He also said many students have free periods, during which they are still confined to the campus.

For Patterson, the closed campus lunch was negatively magnified by the poor quality of the food. He said he would rather "not buy food at all than be subjected to the Mitty cafeteria."

Patterson feels that between the two, Saratoga is the friendlier school. He said the fact that Mitty is religious adds to a tense environment.

"Because it is a Catholic school, there are assemblies with strict religious messages and everyone is more uptight," said Patterson.

Patterson also disapproved of Mitty's strict punishment system. Here at Saratoga, students must have five tardies to get one Saturday school. At Mitty, that standard would be considered lenient.

"If you're late to class, you have to get a detention, which at Mitty is a page of words in small font about Mitty rules that you have to copy on a blank page of paper," said Patterson.

Despite stricter atmosphere, Patterson said Saratoga is more academically demanding.

He also concurred with the equally common sentiment that Saratoga is dreadfully void of school spirit when juxtaposed with Mitty's abundant school pride.

"Saratoga is more academic, while Mitty is more spirit and sports oriented," said Patterson. "Their sports teams would destroy Saratoga's." ♦

fastFACTS | Mitty HS

LOCATED: San Jose
FULL NAME: Archbishop Mitty High School
1,657 STUDENTS: ethnicities not available
STUDENT/TEACHER RATIO: 17:1

Data from greatschools.net

Paly student find much to enjoy at 'small' SHS

by Karthik Annaamalai

The first thing Palo Alto freshman Uma Veerappan saw as she walked on campus was the newly built McAfee Performing Arts and Lecture Center.

"[The McAfee Center] looked really good," said Veerappan. "The glass on the outside and the steps leading up to the doors are a nice touch. It must be fun performing in it."

Veerappan noticed many differences between her school and Saratoga High when she visited the school on Nov. 14.

"Something that really surprised me was Saratoga High's lack of racial diversity," said Veerappan. "In our school, we have a mix of every type of ethnicity, but at Saratoga High, there are only a couple different races. It was awkward at first, but end the end of the day I got used to it."

Veerappan also liked how the campus was smaller, and fewer students go here. Paly has 1,700 students while SHS has 1,350.

"It would be cool to know almost all the people in your school," said Veerappan. "Also, Saratoga High's campus is smaller, which is a good thing because the classrooms are easier to find."

Veerappan thought that the teachers were "very nice and taught well" and that the teaching styles between both schools were very

different.

She also said that the school's facilities were "very high tech."

"The classes here are more chill. The teachers and students seem more relaxed," said Veerappan. "At Palo Alto, there are some teachers like this, but sometimes classes are really intense."

An aspect of the school Veerappan did not like was the closed campus during lunch.

"A closed campus makes you kind of feel restricted," said Veerappan. "In our school, everyone can go off campus for lunch, not just upper classmen, because we have a shopping center nearby."

Veerappan, however, thought that both campuses were beautiful.

"Palo Alto is more open and spacious," said Veerappan, "but Saratoga looks better. It has a lot of new buildings and projects going on."

Veerappan said that she would still go to Palo Alto if she had the option of choosing between both schools because her campus is "soothing and green. It is very calming and is a good environment to work in." ♦

fastFACTS | Palo Alto HS

LOCATED: Palo Alto
1,690 STUDENTS: 57% white, 19% Asian, 12% mixed, 4% African-American
2008 API SCORE: 900
AVERAGE CLASS SIZE: 24 students

Data from greatschools.net

Ever heard of Waldorf?

by Apeksha Sharma

"One classroom is the size of my school," said Waldorf School of the Peninsula sophomore Kyra Smith. "Everything is about 10 times bigger."

The Waldorf school has campuses in Los Altos and around the Bay Area, with only 23 students in Los Altos, most of whom have been there since their early grades. Smith, however, went to Saratoga High for her freshman year and transferred only recently.

"At Waldorf, we have more one-on-one time with the teachers," said Smith. "We also go on field trips and do lots of art."

Waldorf doesn't offer the same classes as Saratoga. After the first bell rings at 8 a.m., Waldorf students will either have music or "eurythmy", which is a version of movement therapy.

"After the first class there is main lesson, which is a block class that goes on for about four weeks," said Smith.

Some of the traditional classes, such as math and english, are offered, but unlike at SHS, are one-semester courses.

"These classes are like the ones at Saratoga, it's just that they aren't broken up the same way," said Smith.

Waldorf also has a choir and theatre program, and the students are required to participate.

"I don't mind not being able to choose whether or not I have to take the class," Smith said. "I'm sure that other people do, though. If you do not like art you would hate the school."

The SHS bell schedule is different depending on the day of the, but at Waldorf the school day is always 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m..

fastFACTS | Waldorf

LOCATED: Los Altos
FULL NAME: Waldorf of the Peninsula
246 STUDENTS: 80% white, 15% Asian, 3% African-American, 2% Hispanic or Latino
STUDENT/TEACHER RATIO: 10:1

Data from greatschools.net

"I miss the fact that I don't get to sleep in on Wednesday [like I did at Saratoga]," said Smith, "but we get to start later almost every day so it's ok."

Waldorf doesn't have a cafeteria, but sophomores and above can go off campus for lunch.

"Sometimes we go off to Whole Foods or something, but not often," Smith said.

The school only uses math textbooks and offers no electives.

"We learn in a totally different environment and only occasionally have tests. We don't have finals either," she said.

The classes are also "more formal and relaxed in ways, we have more fun [with] lots of projects, art, using your creative side, no busy work," said Smith.

The Los Altos has are only 14 freshmen, eight sophomores and one junior, Smith enjoys being at a school where bonding is simple.

"I love my small little 23-student school," says Smith.

Despite funky class schedules and out of the ordinary classes she thinks, Waldorf provides a special bond.

"I like that we get attention with the teachers more and build relationships with the teachers. We also get to do more interesting stuff because there is less than 300 of us in each grade," she said. ♦

LGHS presents more than just the football rivalry

by Uma Sambasivam

The words "Los Gatos High School" sometimes bring out shivers among Saratoga students, mostly in defense of the 29-year losing streak in football. Although the rivalry is based mostly on athletics, the two schools have a variety of differences that contribute to the animosity.

"LG is more sports-orientated than Saratoga High and Saratoga High is more music orientated," said Los Gatos sophomore Sunli Kim, who shadowed Saratoga on Monday, November 10.

Athletics are a priority at LGHS, where the entire school is caught up in the Wildcat spirit. Football games at Los Gatos are a huge deal during the fall.

"You have to wear orange or black on Fridays," said Kim.

While here, Kim saw that the campus looked neat and seemed much friendlier than LGHS.

"Saratoga is really nice in the middle

and [has a much nicer] layout than LG," said Kim. "LG has a really gorgeous front lawn and it is pretty, [but] the back is really just a maze of buildings."

Even though Los Gatos High has more buildings and more space, Kim doesn't think Saratoga High is quite as crowded.

"At LG, there is a small skinny hallway. It's really crowded," said Kim. "You have to push and elbow the people around you to get through."

The campus of each school is not the only difference. She liked SHS' longer lunch period, which is 10 minutes longer than LGHS. Unlike SHS, however, LGHS has off-campus privileges for all grades.

She was surprised at how the groups at Saratoga High were separated.

"There were a lot of gender separated groups. In LG, usually there is a mix of boys and girls in groups," said Kim.

She also believes that there is a big difference between the students, with SHS students being more pressured by the peers and parents to excel academically.

"In [Los Gatos], you can tell the difference between the people who have ambitions and the people who don't," said Kim. "Here I couldn't tell the difference. Every-

body was really focused on getting good grades."

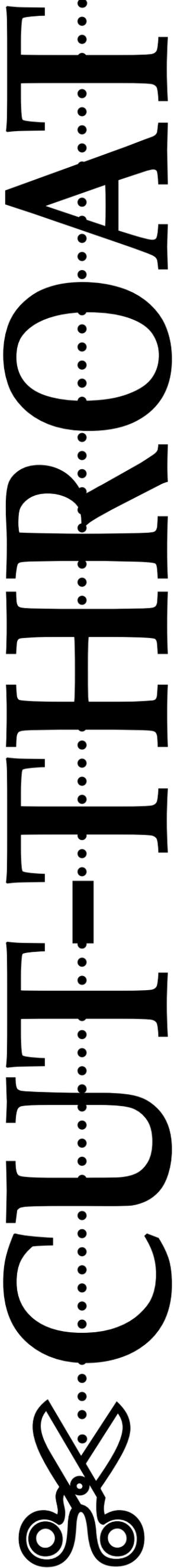
In addition to the varying personalities of the students, LGHS students attend all seven periods every day. She thought that it was a good experience trying out the block schedule but felt

fastFACTS | Los Gatos HS

LOCATED: Los Gatos
1,805 STUDENTS: 76% white, 11% mixed, 8% Asian, 4% Hispanic or Latino
2008 API SCORE: 842

Data from greatschools.net

CUT-HER-OUT



Students' struggle to reach top of academic ladder can come at a price

Teachers witness consequential student behavior for better grades

by Synthia Ling

Teachers at Saratoga High are more than familiar with the student behavior after graded quizzes and tests are passed back. They immediately begin asking their classmates what they got. Competitive spirits show as they compare their grades with those of other students and hope that they did better.

"You can see [the competition] in the classroom when students get their papers back," said English teacher Kerry Mohnike. "Even when the teachers tell them these are your scores and they are personal, quickly they are buzzing about, 'What did you get? What did you get?'"

As people who watch students in school every day, teachers are able to see the competitive atmosphere and the way many students obsess over their grades too much.

"I think that students push themselves to extremes to increase their grades. I think that they stress out too much over what I would deem as little things," said English teacher Erik Rector.

Rector, a Saratoga alumnus who graduated in 2000, feels that the competition has not changed since he attended the school. Similar to today, students worked hard for the better grades they desired.

Guidance counselor Christy Cali, who has been at the school for eight years, said she does not see more competition now compared to previous years. She believes the school is a "highly academic school," but says that they are working hard to try to reduce students' stress.

Other teachers have seen more positive forces at work.

"Here, I think students are helpful of each other," said World History teacher Mike Davey. "I don't see a lot of academic competition. I think everybody is concerned with how

"Students push themselves to extremes to increase their grades...they stress out too much over...little things."

— English teacher Erik Rector

they do, which is important, but I also think it's nice that students are concerned with how their peers are doing. I don't see it as competition-driven at all."

Mohnike believes that while competition can be healthy because it motivates people to work harder, it also causes students who are doing well to feel that they are failures.

"[Students] might feel that they're not accomplishing when they are in an amazing place and doing a very good job because they are trying to

compare themselves with people who are going above and beyond," said Mohnike.

Sometimes going above and beyond is not enough for students. Their desperation for higher scores often leads them to "grub" for a grade, despite the size of the assignment.

"When you're coming up and bugging the teacher about one point when there are 1,000 points in the semester, you're probably losing credibility even though you are getting your one point," said Mohnike.

The school has also run into incidents where students have cheated as a result of competition.

"We've always had cheating. We discourage it because we have an integrity policy," said Cali. "There have always been kids that have copied homework. There have always been kids that have put too much on their plate and therefore rely on cheating in order to accomplish what they need to accomplish."

There are better things for students to do rather than cheat to improve grades.

"What students could do when they are feeling pressure is form study groups," said Cali. "I think what helps the school and what makes it less competitive is when [students] work together and form a team like you do in business." ♦

Saratoga academically friendlier than Monta Vista, says columnist



Pia Mishra

Mamma Mia it's Pia

From a young age we've been taught to compete and to come home victorious. At every AYSO soccer game, ballet recital and swim meet, we've been taught to have "friendly competition" with the next-door neighbor Johnny or with cousin Erin. But we all know, it won't be friendly. It will be a fight even if it's not easy to see. Getting to that soccer ball, landing that pirouette, reaching that wall is the difference between a celebratory ice cream at Coldstones and a quiet car ride home. That same spiteful sense of competition is what occurs between the most animalistic of humans, teenagers.

As a new student here, it was natural for me to compare between

Saratoga High and my old school, Monta Vista. From the campus to the food at lunch, everything in my life was part of a huge compare and contrast chart between Monta Vista and Saratoga. If it wasn't enough to be comparing the two in my mind, I had all my friends asking me which was better. Ironically, it was like a competition about competition.

Like all kids growing up in the Bay Area, I knew the most important thing to compare is the academics. Having switched from the extremely competitive, Monta Vista, Saratoga felt like a breath of fresh air. Yes, academics are an important factor at this school, but it didn't nose itself into every aspect of life.

Thinking about last year, I'm surprised that I made it out alive. I remember my parents telling me I should do my best, but by the third day of freshman year, I had come to terms with the fact that "doing my best" wasn't going to get me anywhere.

After studying for four hours straight (with maybe the occasional

glance at Facebook) and feeling good about the test afterwards, I received a great, 12 out of 25 which wasn't going to go over well with my mom. It was like homework and tests had grabbed both of my hands and named me their new best friend. Believe me, it wasn't nice.

When I came to SHS, I expected exactly the same. Crazy teachers who didn't want to teach and intense students focused on their goals of Ivy league colleges. However, I was pleasantly surprised. After the first few weeks of school, I realized the competitiveness was there but it was small. People do compare grades and test scores but quickly changed the subject to the upcoming dances or the high costs of lunch. I was taken aback at first, but slowly I've begun to enjoy it.

Honestly, I'm glad I made the switch. High school is supposed to be the one of the best times of your life when you're still young and get to live a little. With all the APs and SAT lying ahead of me, I'm still a little doubtful of that but, I guess I'll just have to do my best. ♦

COMPETITION: CURSE OR BLESSING?

Students weigh the benefits and disadvantages of Saratoga's academic rivalries and pressures

by Tim Tsai

It's a common scene after every test. Students rush straight to the nearest computer to check their grades on Aeries, the school's web-based grading program. Soon, news of the highest scores spreads, and everyone in the class knows the top score and who got it. Some students are happy or relieved with their scores, their late-night studying having finally paid off. Others bemoan the curve, and still others quietly watch their classmates revel in their triumphs while they push away thoughts of their own grade.

Episodes like this show the school is not only academically challenging but also academically competitive.

"Academics at Saratoga is almost like a sport," said junior Eric Gast. "You have to be competitive if you want to do well."

Gast especially sees the competitive attitude of many students when receiving their test grades or checking Aeries.

Occasionally, this competition leads to students shaming other students.

"There's always going to be people who like to put down people who aren't doing as well as they are instead of helping them," said Gast.

For senior Claire Marsh, college applications as well as standardized testing has brought about academic pressure. However, she has already adapted to the stress.

"The competition mainly arose junior year when people started talking and stressing about grades," said Marsh. "But after dealing with all the competition and stress for a while, it becomes manageable, almost normal."

Students often feel compelled to do well because there exists the notion that everyone else is doing well.

"For me, there's always the sense that I have to try and do better because of competition, even though it should really come from myself," said Marsh.

Sophomore Michael Chang feels that although there is a lot of pressure to do well academically, most of it comes from parents and himself.

"The pressure does become overwhelming at times because if you don't do well in school, you know it will hurt your grades and your parents might be mad," said Chang.

Marsh believes the constant preoccupation with academics causes other problems.

"I feel that if people weren't so concerned with grades, they could enjoy high school more," said Marsh.

"Yes, grades are important, but I feel that there's much more to high school than just grades."

Although Gast, Marsh and Chang all recognize that there is a great deal of academic pressure here, they all feel that there is a healthy side to this competition, too.

Gast said he enjoys attending Saratoga High, even with the high academic standard, because the school and the teachers and students push him to do the best he can academically.

"I think the competition here is healthy because personally it makes me do better," said Gast.

"If I went to a school with very low academic standards, then I would never want to strive to be better. In the end, it has both a good side and a bad side, but in the long run, it strengthens you if you can overcome it." ♦



HIGH ACHIEVERS RECEIVE LOW BLOWS

by Brian Kim

Ranked No. 72 on U.S. News's list of Top 100 Best High Schools this past year, Saratoga High continues to be seen as one of the best schools in the nation. Although the school has rejected explicit rankings, many students feel as though they undergo ranking through systems such as Naviance and the University of California's Eligibility in the Local Context Program (ELC).

Consequently, many students strive to be at the top of the academic heap. But this leads to a problem: not everyone succeeds and resentment builds against those who win in the academic competition—especially if they're seen as getting top grades without really trying.

Most cases lie within the junior and senior classes, where many of the same students take honors and A.P. classes. With students being able to track how they compare to other students, the competitive spirit only worsens.

"The seniors have had four years to establish themselves and now we have rankings to prove who's at the top of the class," said senior Stacy Ku. "News of things like that spreads pretty quickly, giving us more room to speculate on things like who's going to be valedictorian or who's going to be in the top 4 percent."

"Higher-ups" and "Lower-downs"

Such students sometimes receive no sympathy from their peers.

"People don't support you when you get good grades," said senior Joyce Wu, who has taken many honors and A.P. classes and done well. "They just say things like 'I hate you' and 'Shut up.' Even though they're talking sarcastically and joking, if everyone does it for a long time, it gets to you."

Students say curving grades adds to the problem.

"The competitive atmosphere alienates both the 'higher-up' and the 'lower-down' on the curve," said Wu. "The 'higher-ups' constantly get bugged and bothered about doing well. Even the times when you completely failed [exams], people tell me things like, 'I'm sure you aced it. Shut up!' which is like rubbing salt in the wound."

Some of the ridicule occurs behind the backs of students.

"There are some people who are really dedicated to their work. I think it's unfortunate that some [people] might

dislike me because of it," said junior Ashwin Siripurapu, who is taking four A.P. classes this year and has excelled at math and science. "I oppose grading on a curve because it doesn't determine how well you know the material; it determines how much better you know it than everyone else. I'm sure that someone who doesn't do well in school can find another avenue by which to pursue success and maybe improve his or her chances of getting into a fine school."

The competitive environment worsened by curving makes some feel as though their academic abilities are

"The 'higher ups' constantly get bugged and bothered about doing well. Even the times when you completely failed [exams], people tell me things like, 'I'm sure you aced it. Shut up!' which is like rubbing salt in the wound."

— senior Joyce Wu

measured in comparison to their classmates'. For this reason, students often interrogate others for their scores, causing even those who normally do well to hide their grades.

"The fact that you did well on tests is tempered by the fact that it makes others mad," said Wu. "You never get congratulated and instead are forced to hide it, not only to avoid hurting others' feelings, but also to avoid antagonism."

Friends aren't always friendly

In such nerve-racking situations, Wu seems to feel that even friends will turn on each other, pointing fingers and making judgments rather than giving moral motivation.

"Your friends should be the ones supporting you on your achievements," said Wu, "but our competitive environment compels us to feel badly if other people do better because we feel inadequate. Although we don't automatically think it, the fact that if we have worse grades, we're going to be murdered by competition is still in the back of our minds."

Although Wu despises the negative effects the competitive nature in her classes have on her, she, too, feels that if she were put in others' situations, she

would do just the same.

"Sadly, I, as well, experience a little inching feeling that makes me feel better if a smart person scores badly," said Wu.

Despite the difficulty Wu puts up with provided by her peers, others feel that higher scoring students inflict the trouble upon themselves.

"I don't think it means that everyone in the school is jealous of students who do well," said Ku. "Some students tend to call a lot of attention to their own achievements, and that overall attitude is going to cause some sense of animosity. It's going to affect others negatively in the long run."

Third-person perspective

Such behavior disheartens not only those who fall victim to it, but also the teachers who witness their students attacking each other.

"It upsets me," said one teacher, who wished to be anonymous. "I don't think it's about the grade. I think it's about learning the material. There's a lot of emphasis put on what grade you get. For instance, I'll pass back tests, and some kids will overreact when they get a B by saying they failed. That's not right."

Along with aggressive attitudes, the teacher also believes that unhealthy competition provides room for students to resort to irrational decisions to make the grade.

"It makes me wonder what kinds of things we're teaching kids," said the teacher. "People cheat and lie to get ahead. I know it's a lot harder to get into college nowadays, but this mentality that you have to get into an Ivy League or you're not a good student is a bit of a stretch."

Despite the extreme levels of competition to reach academic success, even those sitting on pedestals do not always enjoy the limelight.

"I don't try to hurt people," said Siripurapu, "but at the same time, it wouldn't be a good idea for me to underperform just to ensure that others do better. We could in theory all conspire to put the same answers for our tests to beat curving, but someone would see that they could do really well at the expense of everyone else. It's just human nature." ♦

TOGATALKS

How is the academic competition in your class?

It's positive because it motivates me to do better. For me, it hasn't always been about getting to the top. I try to learn something from the class that's going to be useful for me in life. Generally, if I try to strive for that, it ends up taking me to the top.

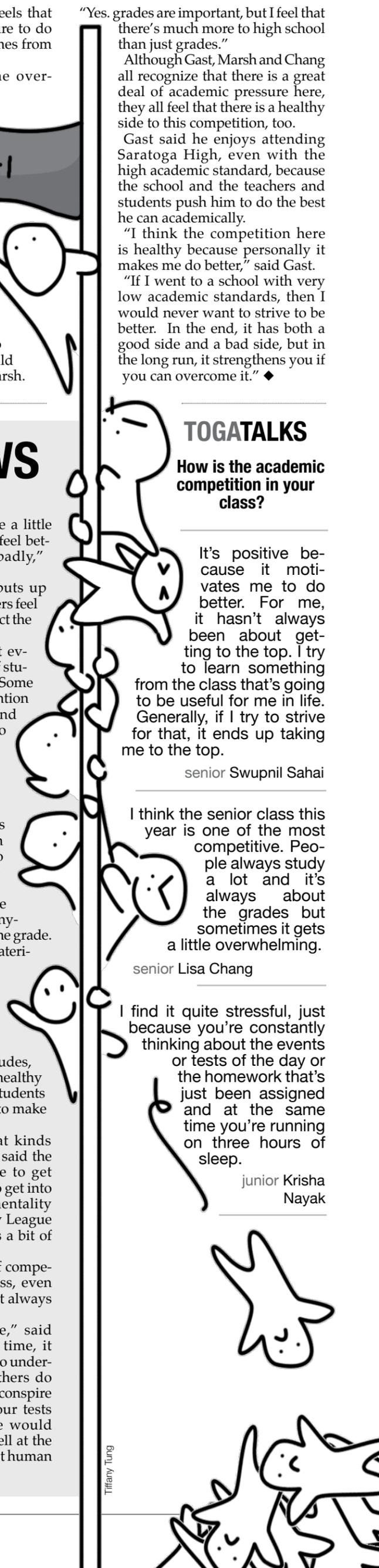
senior Swupnil Sahai

I think the senior class this year is one of the most competitive. People always study a lot and it's always about the grades but sometimes it gets a little overwhelming.

senior Lisa Chang

I find it quite stressful, just because you're constantly thinking about the events or tests of the day or the homework that's just been assigned and at the same time you're running on three hours of sleep.

junior Krisha Nayak



Tiffany Tung

THE ARTIST OF THE ISSUE: Adrienne Eller

Sophomore Adrienne Eller is an actress both inside and outside of school. Having been in many productions such as "Into the Woods," Eller has been casted as Peter Pan at the Children's Musical Theater in San Jose, which will run from today until Dec. 14.

Q: What inspired you to act?

A: When I was younger, my mom and babysitter would always tell me 'You should do theater' and I was like 'No, I don't think so.' But then my mom signed me up for a camp and then I just stuck with it.

Q: In the future, would you like to act as a career?

A: Yeah, I mean ideally it would be awesome to go and do theater in New York. It's a goal.

Q: Have you taken any acting classes?

A: I just do drama at school. I do trainings like at summer camps, but nothing really serious.

Q: Who's your favorite theater actress or actor?

A: For stage acting, I'd probably say

Kristen Chenoweth because she's just really funny, plays her roles really well and she's just really unique.

Q: Out of all the plays and musicals you have been in, which one is your favorite?

A: Either "Peter Pan" or "Into the Woods." It'd probably be "Into the Woods" because it's my favorite show of all time and I really liked the part that I played, which was Little Red. So it was fun.

Q: What is your favorite musical or play?

A: It changes all the time. It currently is "Thoroughly Modern Millie," but I also like "Wicked," "Phantom of the Opera," "Into the Woods" and "Spring Awakening." I like them all.

Q: For how long have you been acting?

A: I started my first ever when I was 8 in a summer program where we put on a show and took little acting lessons.

Q: What's your most memorable moment on stage?

A: I would have to say the first time I did "Peter Pan" in March when I flew through the window. It was really cool because the music was really loud and you just



courtesy of Adrienne Eller

SOPHOMORE ADRIENNE ELLER (UPPER RIGHT) AS PETER PAN IN HER LATEST THEATER

fly really fast, the audience cheers, and there's all this fairy dust. That's probably the coolest thing I've ever done.

that's not real and then make it real, that's why I enjoy it. ♦

Q: What excites you about acting?

A: It's really just enjoyable to bring another character to life, and it's not quite as easy as it seems. But to bring something

Tickets for the Children's Musical Theater production of Peter Pan are available at cmts.org.

—by Rebecca Nguyen

Page releases third CD



courtesy of Paul Page

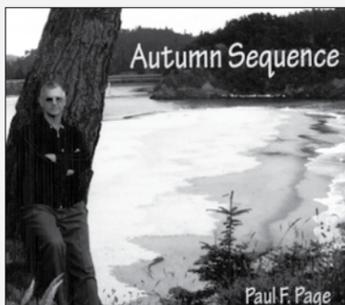
ENGLISH TEACHER PAUL PAGE SHOWS THE SHEET MUSIC FROM HIS NEW ALBUM.

by Saniha Shankar

English teacher Paul Page has recently released his third CD, a collection of piano music called "Autumn Sequence."

"The music on this CD is sort of a hybrid classical, which means that although the music is contemporary, it is based on classical models," said Page.

The album, which is being distributed by cdbaby.com and will soon be distributed through iTunes, consists of 14 solo piano pieces that Page composed and recorded. According to Page, it was named "Autumn Sequence" after the second piece of the album and the mu-



sical sequences that consist of repeated phrases and passages that are found in every selection on this CD.

Page is currently working on other projects, but is waiting for the pieces to be ready before combining them into another CD.

Page has to balance work from school along with his composing.

"I try to write whenever I can, and it varies from week to week. Sometimes I'll play for only an hour or so, while other weeks... well,

let's just say I don't tend to get an awful lot of sleep during those weeks," said Page. "Like I tell my students, 'it's the school work first.'" ♦

AUDIO FILES



Subject: Freshman Will Edman

Weapon of Choice: iPod Nano

Genres: Grunge, Hard Rock, Metal

1. Prayer of the Refugee : Rise Against (3:19)

Memorable Lyric: "I can stand my own ground, I don't need your help now"

2. Man in the Box : Alice in Chains (4:46)

Memorable Lyric: "He who tries, will be wasted. Feed my eyes now you've sewn them shut"

3. Heart-Shaped Box : Nirvana (4:39)

Memorable Lyric: "Hey! Wait! I got a new complaint forever in debt to your priceless advice"

4. Fade to Black : Metallica (6:56)

Memorable Lyric: "There is nothing more for me, need the end to set me free"

5. You Can't Bring Me Down : Suicidal Tendencies (5:50)

Memorable Lyric: "You can't bring me down, it's not like I'm running away"

—by Jordan Waite

Language barrier evolves into creative passion

by Rebecca Nguyen

After moving from China to the United States in 2001 with no knowledge of English, senior Guo Zeng was placed in a first-grade class. She was 10 and should have been in fifth grade.

After long days of language barriers with classmates, every afternoon Zeng would go home and watch dubbed Japanese cartoons that allowed her to learn most of her English and catch up to grade level.

"Every day I would go home and have nothing to do so I would watch Kid's WB, and back when I was in fifth grade they would always have *Yu-Gi-Oh!* and *Pokémon*," said Zeng. "It was from those two shows that I learned half my English even though it wasn't a very good source."

This was when Zeng's obsession with anime began. Soon Zeng began to immerse herself into the worlds of different mangas, which led to her watching their corresponding animes.

"For most of the anime shows that I watch, I first got introduced to them through their corresponding manga," said Zeng. "I really like *D. Gray Man*, *Soul Eater* and for a while *Pokémon* until I realized how bad the dub was."

Not only did Zeng read and watch, but she also crafted cosplay, or costumes of her favorite anime characters for herself and friends.

"When I first started making costumes, I had no idea what I was doing. It was the first time that I had ever made any piece of clothing," said Zeng. "So I just sort of winged it. I improvised a lot, messed up a lot, but eventually it came out somewhat like what it was supposed to be."

Zeng was able to wear her cosplay costumes around proudly at anime conventions she attended. So far she has gone to three, where most of her time is spent chatting with artists and enjoying their displays.

"Mostly I wander around the Artist Alley where a lot of artists set up their own tables and sell their artwork, but I really enjoy talking to them and learning different things from them," said Zeng. "Even though it's an anime convention, not all of the artists there are actually anime artists. There was this amazing lady that had just mind-blowingly awesome watercolors. I learned a lot from her."

Through the years anime has allowed Zeng to relax and escape the worries of everyday life.

"My favorite thing about anime is that it's so unreal that it lets me forget about reality for half an hour and relax," said Zeng. "You know, forget about stress, forget about school, and just sit there and watch so that you can be completely immersed in another world." ♦



Zeng

Anime ≠ Geekiness



Melody Zhang

Listen to me

I have a love-hate relationship with anime. I binge-watch anime to the point where I can consume a 30-episode series in a week—that's about 20 hours of TV—and then spend the next three days in withdrawal, moping.

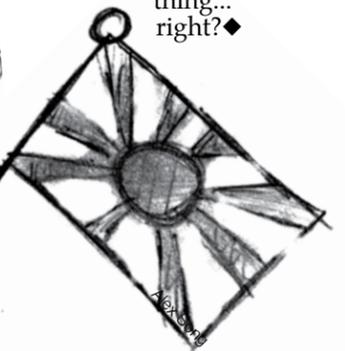
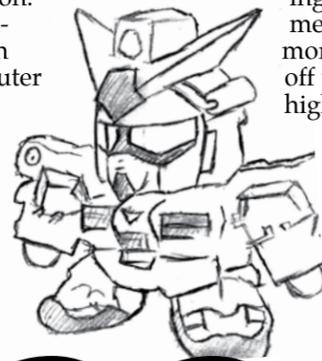
It's hard for some people to understand this addiction. People eye me strangely when I rant about the amazing time I had at Fanime, a huge anime convention, and just muttering the word "cosplay" causes many to shudder in fright at the thought of massive groups of people dressed as characters from a favorite show. It's because of these kinds of reactions that so many people stay closet anime fans.

I've pondered people's hate of anime and have been able to come up with only one reason for it: They don't know what it is, and therefore they feel prejudiced against it. Consequently, an increasing number of people keep their love a secret except for a few hardcore "otakus," who continue to scare anime-haters with their obsession.

The stereotypical "otaku" sits in front of his computer watching anime for hours, shunning all social contact, only taking breaks to catch up on some manga. But

what he's watching isn't what people think it is.

Anime is often viewed as a childish form of media full of unrealistic squeaky-voiced, scantily-clad girls and lame plots of fluff. But the truth is, anime can be similar to what is shown on TV or in the theaters. I have found that anime can often hold even deeper plots than live-action filmed movies, perhaps due to the freedom animation gives the director. Weighty themes are often explored by anime directors. *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, a classic, introduces unorthodox views of morality through war. The psychological complexity of the show parallels that of the dark hit *Donnie Darko*. What is often seen in anime is highly applauded in Hollywood, which merely recycles its plotlines, varying only its presentation. Voted by Time magazine as one of the most influential Asians of the past 60 years, anime film director Hayao Miyazaki (producer of *Princess Mononoke* and *Spirited Away* among other hit films) has been enjoying success for the past few decades with his thought-provoking films. His themes include environmentalism, war and even politics, but are displayed in such a way that even young children have greatly welcomed his works. I'm not ashamed of loving anime. People should be more open with what they like rather than hide it in all day. Doing so has definitely helped me learn to enjoy life so much more. It helps take my mind off the stressful life of being a high school student and I can confidently say that I'm not a study-a-holic. Which is a good thing... right? ♦



weeaboo

-noun

1. Someone who is obsessed with Japan, Japanese Culture, Anime, etc., but does not have any ancestral Japanese origins. (syn: wapanese; japanophile)

Two regular white guys, one huge obsession

by Nathan Kim

Seniors Mat Spencer and Scott Thoren claim, "We are so white we make rice look black"; for this reason, one would probably not expect their shared obsession for Japanese cartoons called manga.

Starting in fourth grade, Mat and Scott began their cultural enlightenment by watching *Dragonball Z*, a Japanese anime dubbed with English voices.

Of course, this was not considered anything out of the ordinary, because *Dragonball Z* was popular among Americans, unlike many series that are geared toward Japanese, often with subtitles or American voice-overs. However, in the years to come, they found themselves more deeply immersed in anime than they could have imagined.

Thoren remembers

bers becoming interested in anime during late eighth grade.

"I was at my friend's house and saw his little brother watching [anime]," said Thoren. "I just laughed then, but really got hooked after watching a few episodes."

Spencer started watching episodes online a little before Thoren and owes it to a case of boredom on a rainy day. They say they have been taught lessons by the shows and find depth in the characters' stirring speeches and intense combat.

"Anime and manga actually teach some pretty intense life lessons," said Spencer. "I'm going to make my kid watch it when he's young so I don't have to teach him how to be a good man."

Spencer and Thoren's obsession has not gone unnoticed by their peers, and they receive a good deal of teasing. "I don't think it's wrong for me to watch anime because I'm white," said Spencer. "My friends are always ripping on me, but I don't let it phase me because I know how legit this stuff is."

Thoren found a solution to his friends' reactions and decided to make them watch a few episodes. "I had them watch some [anime] and even they couldn't deny that there's some crazy footage there," said Thoren. Both agree that watching anime is a learning experience and helps them "come into contact with fellow oriental students."

"Because of manga, I actually feel more connected to my Asian roots than I think most of my Asian friends are," said Thoren.

So far, the pair have read and watched countless series, including *Bleach*, *Naruto* (*Shippuuden*), *Full Metal Alchemist*, *Death Note*, *GTO*, *Samurai 7*, *Samurai Champloo*, *Rurouni Kenshin*, *One Piece* and *Yu-Yu Hakusho*.

Viewers read manga to continue the storyline and pick up where the animation ends. Spencer and Thoren read the comics online, sometimes simultaneously reading three or four different mangas.

"I would say I spend about 20 minutes a night reading manga online," said Spencer.

From the array of anime they have watched, Thoren and Spencer could easily name their favorite characters.

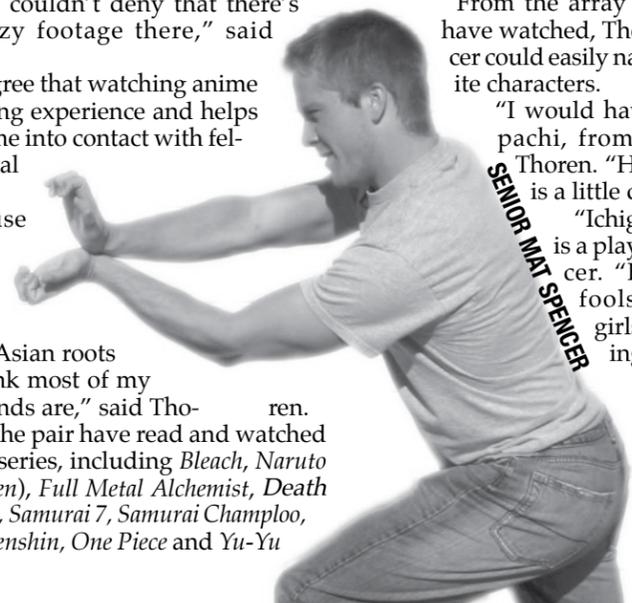
"I would have to say Kenpachi, from *Bleach*," said Thoren. "He's badass and is a little crazy."

"Ichigo [from *Bleach*] is a player," said Spencer. "He dominates fools and gets all girls like it's nothing."

Though they defy racial stereotypes, Spencer and Thoren remain devoted fans of anime. ♦



SENIOR SCOTT THOREN



SENIOR MAT SPENCER

FIELD HOCKEY

TOGA LOSES CCS BATTLE WITH LG, TAKES SECOND

by Shannon Galvin
and Ren Norris

You can't always win them all, but you can definitely give them a run for their money.

That's exactly what the second-seeded Saratoga field hockey team accomplished against its rival No. 1 Los Gatos at the CCS finals on Nov. 22 at Willow Glen High School. Saratoga managed to keep the score close, but in the end the Wildcats won 2-1 to secure first place and hand the Falcons just their second loss of the year.

This was Saratoga's first appearance in the title game since 2004 when the Falcons were co-champions with Archbishop Mitty.

The Los Gatos offense quickly went on the attack, pressuring the Saratoga defense with a succession of five short corners within the first five minutes of the game. Two minutes later, Wildcat senior co-captain Rachelle Comeau scored a goal, giving Los Gatos an early lead, but Saratoga had an opportunity to tie it up late in the first half. Senior co-captain Laura Ruddy drove a hard pass to senior forward Katie Marsh, who shot the ball into the net; the goal was nullified, however, as the referee called a foul, and it remained 1-0 after the first 30 minutes of play at halftime.

In the second half, senior forward Claire Marsh redeemed the goal with a hard shot during a short corner penalty on Los Gatos.

"It was really exciting when we tied it up," said sophomore Vanessa Block. "It boosted our energy and we really thought that we could win."

With the score tied 1-1, the contest heated up and rough play dominated.

Junior Sam Li was injured twice but toughed it out and came back into the game both times. A Los Gatos player also received a yellow card and was forced to sit out for five minutes, leaving the Wildcats a player down. The play continued to be rough, and several players from both sides also received warnings.

Three minutes left in the game, Comeau scored another goal to the far left corner to



Uma Sambasivam

SOPHOMORE VANESSA BLOCK FIGHTS FOR THE BALL IN FRONT OF THE FALCONS' GOAL AGAINST LOS GATOS AT THE CCS FINALS ON NOV.

pull Los Gatos ahead for the win.

"In the second half we really came out hard," said coach Amber Wilson. "We played our game and that's all we could have done."

A loud and enthusiastic crowd cheered the Falcons throughout the match. The team was supported by "Code Red," a group of spirited football players who dressed up and proudly rooted the girls on, but in the end, Los Gatos secured first place with a 2-1 win, holding on to their first place league ranking in the season.

Semifinals and Quarterfinals

The Falcons reached the finals with a 2-1 victory against last year's CCS champions on Nov. 18 at home under the lights. St. Francis had reached the finals four years in a row before playing Saratoga this year.

The Lancers scored first on a hard shot

into the far right corner of the goal, but only a minute later Saratoga responded with a goal of its own. Senior co-captain Kelly Darchuk dribbled by the St. Francis defense on breakaway down the right side of the field and crossed the ball to Claire, who barely tipped it past the goalie.

Saratoga's other goal came from Ruddy, who scored on an assist by sophomore Ren Norris. At the quarterfinals, the girls secured a 2-0 shutout against Leigh on Nov. 15 in the quarterfinals after a bye in the first round.

Block helped the Falcons pull ahead on a shot from the top of the circle with less than three minutes gone by and Katie Marsh scored a goal in the 15th minute off a free hit by Ruddy.

Season Wrap-up

Next year, the field hockey team will take a hard hit as goalkeeper Stephanie

Douglass, defenders Ruddy and Megan Mandell and forwards Darchuk, Ashley Charette and Katie and Claire Marsh graduate. Many seniors had been playing on the varsity team since their sophomore year. The team hopes their juniors and sophomores, as well as incoming JV players, will take their place and keep up the team's success.

The girls will begin training again in February and plan to travel to the local field hockey tournaments in the spring. Also, they plan to continue the dedication they followed this year with practices and conditioning over the summer.

Darchuk said the team's second place finish was an unforgettable way to end her field hockey career.

"I'm really proud of our team and how we came together and did so well this season," said Darchuk. "No loss to Los Gatos is going to change that." ♦

BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY

Talented group misses state by one spot

Menezes finishes 13th in the three mile CCS race for a second year, one place short of qualifying for states

by Sophia Cooper
and Kelly Lamble

They were so close.

After their fifth-place finish in the Division III race at the Nov. 15 CCS finals at Toro Park in Salinas, the boys' cross-country team missed its season goal of qualifying for the state meet by just one spot. The team fell short to Monterey High School by only 26 points, losing 149 to 123.

The team was led by senior captains Alan Menezes and Kian Banks. Menezes finished 13th in the 3-mile race with a time of 16:50, followed by Banks, finishing 25th in 17:22.

"Personally, I'm not happy because [my time] was a lot worse than I ran at the beginning of the season this year," said Menezes. "Actually, it was worse than I ran at the beginning of the season of sophomore year, so I was pretty disappointed about that."

Adding insult to injury, this was the second year in a row Menezes placed 13th, one spot away from qualifying for state.

Sophomore Kyle Fukui raced well, earning a personal best time of 17:40. He placed 30th overall.

Juniors Nick Olsen and Kyle Borch finished 43rd and 48th, respectively. Although the race was not Olsen's best, the

fact that he was able to race after struggling with a leg injury is admirable.

Also racing were freshman Harry Curtis, who finished 50th, and sophomore Garrick Chan, who finished 63rd.

"Our younger guys PR'd so that was good," said Menezes. "But as for all of our upperclassmen, we all did a lot worse than we expected."

A few of the key members of the team were recovering from recent injuries and could not compete in recent meets. Menezes did not race at league finals at Crystal Springs in Belmont on Nov. 4 and took a week off of training to heal a swollen knee.

Olsen tore his I.T. band, which runs along the outside of the leg and connects the hip to just below the knee, in the beginning of the season, only racing twice at the Lynbrook Invitational on Oct. 30 and at CCS finals.

"[Olsen] did OK considering that he hasn't run all season, but Kian, Kyle and I were all pretty disappointed with our races," said Menezes.

Despite losing two of their top runners to graduation, the team remains optimistic for a chance to qualify for state finals next season.

It will take hard work, but the cross-country team is willing to make the necessary sacrifices and train year-round.



courtesy of Alan Menezes Sr.

The boys' cross country team starts its 3.2-mile race in the CCS finals at Toro Park on Nov. 15. The BOYS TOOK FIFTH PLACE, ONE SPOT SHY OF QUALIFYING FOR STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS.

Fukui said that the team will have to train even harder next year, which means that they will have to work hard in the off-season.

"I think our team is pretty much going to stay about the same as far as how good it is," said Menezes. "Every year we've

had the talent, but it hasn't come together. I think next year it will be the same situation... hopefully it comes together for them. We still have [Olsen], [Borch], Fukui and [Curtis], and we have some [good] freshman coming in. They should be a good top five next year." ♦

FOOTBALL

LAST-SECOND FIELD GOAL ENDS CCS HOPES

by Karthik Annaamalai
and Abhi Venkataramana

With 1.9 seconds left in their last game, the Falcons watched the Wilcox Chargers' kicker Cesar Duenas set up to attempt a 30-yard game-winning field goal. The crowd looked on as the ball sailed through the field goal posts, not only ending the Falcons' game, but their season as well.

After their 38-35 loss to the Chargers on Nov. 14, the Falcons fell to fifth place in the De Anza Division, missing CCS by just one spot. Despite failing to advance, the Falcons say they had a successful season as they have proved themselves capable of playing in their new division, the highest division, which a public school can compete in.

Coach Tim Lugo thought that the team has greatly improved from where they were at the beginning of the year.

"In our first game we had six turnovers and did not score," said Lugo. "But at week 10, we played the league champions and lost by a field goal kicked during the last few seconds. The team has come a long way."

Many factors affected the team's success, one of the most important being Lugo himself. An experienced coach with many league titles under his belt, Lugo brought many changes to the program.

Sophomore running back Greg Johnson liked Lugo as the new coach and Lugo's game plans going into the games.

"I think that Lugo is a great coach," said Johnson. "He has turned the [football] program around. I also liked the way that



Theresa Yeh

JUNIOR QUARTERBACK VINCENT CARSTENS EVADES WILCOX DEFENDERS WHILE LOOKING DOWNFIELD DURING THE FALCONS' 38-35 LOSS

we ran the ball. It is mechanical. If we execute, then we can always score."

Another factor for the Falcons was the implementation of the Wing-T offense, a formation last used during the Benny Pierce era.

Senior quarterback Michael Guercio thought the Wing-T was the perfect formation for the Falcons and was vital to their team's success.

"The Wing-T was a good offense to use

this year," said Guercio. "When we used to run the spread formation, we had a greater chance of having a big play, but the Wing-T is more efficient and can move the ball better."

The season is over, however, and nothing that has happened can be changed. To help the team improve next year, Lugo hopes to introduce a P.E. class for football players. This class would allow the players to condition, lift weights and train for

the upcoming season.

"There are many benefits to having a class like this," said Lugo. "The players can take this class to get better and I can keep an eye on the players and their grades."

Lugo feels that the team has done well this year but looks forward to better results in upcoming years.

"Something I want to accomplish," said Lugo, "is [to] get better every year." ♦

GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

State meet ends with mixed results for Nast, Wai

by Ashley Chou

Unlike the rest of their friends who were sleeping-in and eating leftover turkey the day after Thanksgiving, junior Karen Wai and senior Katie Nast were making their way down to Woodward Park in Fresno for the prestigious cross country state meet. In the words of Charles Dickens, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

Wai ran a smooth race on Nov. 29 and placed 83rd, thanks to well-planned workouts and tapering, or cut-downs on training, in the last few days prior.

"I was so nervous," said Wai. "I knew what the course was like and it was my last race of the season so I really wanted to do well."

Nast, on the other hand, had a drastically different story. She described her mindset throughout half the race as "delirious."

"I have thyroid problems," said Nast, "I think something was wrong with it because I was totally delirious the last mile, and I was doing this weird shuffle weave thing with my legs and I was even running backwards."

Throughout that last mile, Nast floated between consciousness and unconsciousness as she gave it her all to make it to the finish.

She was ahead of a good 100 other people when Nast's unsteady state caused her to be surpassed by them all in the last 200 meters of the race.

"I got lost at some point and it ended up taking me 10 minutes to finish the last 200 meters because I was running backwards," said Nast. "I just completely lost control of my legs and they started to wobble and weave. I had two officials next to me asking if I needed to stop and if I was okay."

Nast was highly disappointed with her results, especially when she recalled

the "pity clap" as she came in last across the finish line.

Nast said her sudden delirious state could have been caused by an insufficient level of iron in her blood or a problem with her thyroid medication. She has decided to take a week-long break from running to recuperate.

Though Nast's race didn't go as planned, Wai was able to shatter her freshman year time by 20 seconds.

"There's always that 'I could have done better' thought after a race," said Wai, "but overall I'm pretty happy with my time."

The Central Coast Sectional (CCS) held on Nov. 15 helped her to State. Despite the abnormally warm weather and underlying pressure in everyone's eyes that sunny morning, Wai delivered, placing a fantastic five on the individual score sheet.

"I didn't want to expect anything, but I knew I had tried my best and I just hoped it turned out well," said Wai.

When she heard the news, all she could do was let out a large sigh of relief.

"I was happy and excited," said Wai. "During the entire race, I kept on thinking that it would be my last one if I didn't make it to State."

Her new strategy this year of simply running more mileage was what increased her endurance and ultimately led to her success.

Wai joined Nast, who placed third individually at CCS, in the State lineup. Though the Saratoga girls' team placed 8th overall, this was not the first time Wai went to State. In Wai's freshman year, the entire girls' cross country team made it to state when they placed second in CCS.

Though the State meet came with mixed results, both girls had an outstanding season.

Nast achieved three new personal records and Wai achieved seven, her last one being at State. ♦



Melody Zhang

JUNIOR KAREN WAI SPRINTS TO THE FINISH LINE AT THE END OF HER 3-MILE CCS RACE ON NOV. 15. WAI FINISHED FIFTH ON THE INDIVIDUAL SCORE SHEET, QUALIFYING FOR THE

Mitty stands in way of girls' CCS, NorCal dreams

by Annie Lee
and Kelly Lamble

After several years of disappointments in CCS, the girls' varsity tennis team finally broke the curse by placing second in CCS, second in NorCal and first in the League this year. In the end, only Archbishop Mitty kept the girls from being the best team in Northern California.

"We accomplished many things that a lot of people didn't think we would accomplish," said coach Tom Uyehara. "As far as I know it's the best results we've had in a while for Saratoga girls' tennis, so I'm very happy with this season."

Girls finish as finalists in NorCal

After breezing through the first two rounds and beating both Granite Bay and Foothill 6-1, the girls faced Archbishop Mitty in the finals of NorCal losing 2-5 to the Monarchs on Nov. 22. The score, however, is no indication of how hard the girls fought for the championship. No. 1 doubles junior Annie Lee and freshman Sarah Lum, No. 2 sophomore Catherine Nguyen and No. 4 singles senior co-captain Kara Wang all split sets, but despite their efforts, none of them were able to pull out a victory.

"I know we were a little nervous and a little out of place at CCS, but the second time around I'm happy that they put a little bit more of a fight," said Uyehara. "Defeat is always difficult to handle, but I think we handled it very well."

Girls finish as finalists in CCS

In the CCS finals, the girls suffered a tough loss to No. 1 seed Archbishop Mitty at Courtside placing second on

Nov. 19. No. 3 singles junior Malavika Padmanabhan and the No. 3 doubles team of sophomore Mary Edman and freshman Lisa Asai were the only two matches that managed a victory for a score of 5-2.

The loss took place after the team swept through the quarterfinals where the Falcons beat Palo Alto at Courtside Tennis Club on Nov. 17. The two deciding matches, No. 2 and No. 3 doubles, split sets at practically the same time. Both Saratoga teams pulled out a win in the end for an overall victory of 5-2 over the Vikings. The team also breezed past the first and second rounds of CCS, defeating both Santa Cruz and Homestead 6-1 on Nov. 12 and 14, respectively. The second, third and fourth singles spots were secured within the first hour of the match, starting the team off to a significant lead.

Season wrap-up

Although it was hard for the girls to swallow the defeat in the CCS and Norcal finals, the girls feel that they have bonded into a great team and finished a successful season.

"I think we had a great season. Actually, great is an understatement," said Marsh. "We did really well result-wise, and not only was that part great but being a part of a team that bonded so well made it really worthwhile."

The end of the season, however, has been somewhat bittersweet for the girls as the team will be losing three valuable seniors this year: top singles players Wang and Marsh and strong doubles player senior Nikki Behmaram.

"The tennis team has been such a big part of my life this past season, and to have it end makes me wish this season could go on forever," said Wang. ♦



Annie Lee

SENIOR CO-CAPTAIN KARA WANG WARMS UP FOR THE NORCAL FINALS AGAINST MITTY ON

BOYS' WATER POLO

Three seconds too late

Despite highly successful season, first-place team loses CCS qualification bid to Fremont High School

by Kevin Mu
and Guy Quanrud

The Falcons headed into the final league playoffs confidently and in first place. But nothing, not even a 11-1 season and comfortable first-round bye could prepare the boys' water polo team for the biggest shock of the season.

After scoring a total of 18 goals to Fremont's 12 in two season victories against the fourth-seeded Firebirds, the Falcons were positive they could pull out a victory. They even took a comfortable 6-3 lead into the 4th quarter.

With 35 seconds left and the Falcons down 7-6, junior Jonathan Chen scored the tying goal that seemed like it would push the game into overtime. But with just three seconds to go, Fremont's set man scored on a close shot that passed the outstretched arm of senior goalie Justin Winningham and gave the Firebirds a stunning victory. The Falcons' hopes of advancing to CCS fell apart.

A key factor in the loss was that many of Saratoga's starters were sick. Though they all played, their performance was clearly affected, said senior Nick Mortazavi, who scored four goals during the match.

"A lot of us were sick so we hadn't practiced together for a couple of days and that hurt us," said Mortazavi. "We kind of underestimated them too. We came in as

the first seed as thought that we could beat the Firebirds. We were overconfident."

Fremont went on to win the playoffs and headed to CCS while Saratoga headed off to a sluggish game against Wilcox. Sick and stunned from their earlier loss, the Falcons fell behind and couldn't catch up. They finished third in the playoffs after losing their final game against the Chargers.

Despite their disappointing finish in the league playoffs, it was still a successful season overall for the Falcons. After going winless in league play last season, the boys turned it around and won the most games in the El Camino Division.

"We had a great season," said Mortazavi. "It's just one game. We won 11 and we lost one in leagues and we're still winners. I felt proud of the way the team played."

First-year coach Christian Bonner was also satisfied with the team's performance this season.

"Overall it was a good experience for myself and the team," said Bonner. "It was a shame that after we had the second-best league record after tournament play that we couldn't go farther."

First team All-league awards, honoring the outstanding players in the El Camino Division, were awarded to Chen, Mortazavi and Winningham. Senior captain Arian Mahini received second team All-league. Winningham finished second in voting for goalie of the year. ♦

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

Lady Falcons just short in second round of CCS

by Nathan Kim

Sticking it out through a difficult season, the Lady Falcons concluded their season with a 2-12 league record; however, they had a winning record including the pre-season, with a 19-16 record.

Saratoga qualified for Division Three of CCS, which is determined by the number of people in the competing school.

The Lady Falcons lost in the second round of CCS with a loss to Valley Christian on Nov. 15 in four games: 15-25, 17-25, 25-21 and 22-25. Valley Christian was ranked second and Saratoga was seventh. They struggled with the first two games, but passing improved in the next two.

"It was probably one of the best games we've had, but we just couldn't pull it off," said junior libero Emily Baba. "We did a good job trying to rally back again."

Saratoga defeated Monterey High School on Nov. 12 in their first CCS match in four games: 25-16, 25-9, 21-25 and 25-12. The Lady Falcons prevailed even without senior middle Kiersten

Dolbec and senior outside hitter Katherine Moran, who were unable to play this match due to injuries. Junior outside hitter Nicole Gagnola filled in Dolbec's position.

The players agree that they have much room for improvement in their passing game. The players found that their defense was the weakest part of their game, with poor passing contributing to most points lost. Saratoga's strong front row offense proved to be the leading reason for their two wins, blocking several of their opponents' attempts and creating plays with their sets and hard spikes.

At the end of this year, however, Dolbec, the key to the Lady Falcons' front row, will graduate, weakening the offensive attack. To make up for this loss, the team will have to work on covering the holes in its defense and find another dominant player to plug up the middle.

"Most of the other teams have graduating seniors this year, and we're a pretty young team, so we'll probably have a stronger season next year," said junior opposite hitter Chelsea Sabella. ♦

SCOREBOARD | CCS

11/15 Valley Christian def. Saratoga 25-15, 25-17, 21-25, 25-22

The Falcons had trouble passing against second-seeded Warriors and despite a change of momentum in the last two sets Valley Christian pulled off the win.

11/12 Saratoga def. Monterey 25-16, 25-9, 21-25, 25-12

Despite the absence of two key seniors the Falcons overcame to defeat the Plainsman in four games.

GIRLS' WATER POLO

League loss to Gunn ends team's CCS hopes

by Pia Mishra

The girls' water polo team ended its season with a 6-5 double overtime loss to Gunn during the first round of league finals on Nov. 5. Two consecutive victories against Mountain View and Homestead to finish league play had left the girls feeling optimistic going into the tournament even though Gunn had defeated them twice before.

"We weren't really sure how we were going to do this game because both times when we had played before we had lost," said senior co-captain Alison Norris. "But at the same time we had improved so much that it was hard to already condemn it as a loss."

Though the outcome of the game was not what they wanted, the girls were proud of their performance, which included a goal in the last 12 seconds of the fourth quarter.

"I can't even describe how proud I am of the girls," said Norris. "We've improved so much this season as a team and I honestly could not have asked

for a better season."

The girls have learned from their mistakes and plan to use them to improve next year.

The girls have learned from their mistakes and plan to use them to improve next year.

Junior Sammi Lotti felt that a win against Palo Alto, whom they had not defeated in years also helped the girls bond.

"It felt great to defeat them. It was a tough game and we really pulled it out," said Lotti. "It really helped us get closer as a team and made the season great."

The team will remain in the same league, playing teams like Los Gatos, Homestead, Mountain View, Gunn, Los Altos and Palo

Alto.

Without Norris and fellow seniors Kaylee Pettingill and Amanda Murabito, however, the team will have to adjust to playing without some of their key offensive players. The girls still think that if they have the same chemistry they had this year, they should fare well.

"I think that our team will be able to adapt with no problems," said Norris. "I have faith that they can do it." ♦

"I can't even describe how proud I am of the girls. We improved so much this season."

— senior Alison Norris

ATHLETES OF THE ISSUE

Friendship strengthens team



Uma Sambasivam

Senior field hockey co-captains Laura Ruddy and Kelly Darchuk, who were named Athletes of the Issue, stand with coach Amber Wilson after receiving the second-place trophy at CCS finals on Nov. 22.

by Rahul Thakker

Seniors Kelly Darchuk and Laura Ruddy have been best friends since sixth grade. They do almost everything together, and though their friendship is unusual, it has never been stronger.

"Our friendship is really strange," said Darchuk. "We get bored a lot so we do a lot of random stuff together. I don't even know where we get most of our ideas."

One thing the girls share is athleticism. Darchuk and Ruddy each play three sports: both are members of the field hockey

and softball teams, but during winter, Darchuk can be found on the soccer field while Ruddy hits the basketball court.

They agree, however, that field hockey is their favorite.

"The girls on the team are the best," said Ruddy. "We have really good team chemistry and field hockey is the most fun because you get to run around. Plus, it always helps when you are really good."

This season, co-captains Darchuk and Ruddy led the girls to an 8-1-3 league record and second place finish in CCS. From the center forward position, Darchuk controlled the

offense and was the team's leading scorer while Ruddy anchored the defense. In three games during the championship tournament, the dominant duo combined for a goal and two assists, not to mention several other key plays.

Athlete of the Issue is not a prestigious award, but Ruddy said she appreciates recognition for her and Darchuk's efforts.

"I think that is an honor," said Ruddy. "It displays not just our hard work but the hard work of all of our teammates, too, because without them we never could have done as well as we did." ♦



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Redwood Yearbook class pays Talisman staff a visit

25 yearbook students from Redwood Middle School and adviser James Conn got a taste of high school journalism when they visited the Talisman staff on Friday, Nov. 7. Trekking from their school to Saratoga High for fifth period, the eighth graders had the chance to see the staff in action and learn the tricks of the trade.

"It was painful walking all the way from Redwood to the high school, but in the end it was definitely worth it," said eighth grader Samantha Cheng. "The Talisman staff was really helpful, and I think everyone learned something new."

The middle school students were broken up into groups and then rotated to different stations (editors, photographers and reporters) led by Talisman members. Each station gave a presentation of their role on staff.

"They seemed kind of shy at first, but once they became more settled in, they became more interactive and asked more questions," said senior editor-in-chief Stacy Ku.

The Talisman staff was excited to take on the leading role and show the eighth graders a high school yearbook experience.

"It was nice that we were able to provide an example that they can look up to," said editor-in-chief Sonali Dujari. "It seems like the Redwood yearbook program has improved since our day and will continue to get better."

Student from Australia joins SHS

Moving from city to city may seem hard to adjust to, but imagine moving to a completely different country. Freshman Sam Cokes had to go through this transition when he recently moved from Sydney, Australia, to Saratoga.

"Because of all the sharemarket crises, there were not many houses around," said Cokes. "So, we just decided to take a house wherever we could. Moreover, we were looking for a change in our lives."

Despite the tough change, Cokes loves the SHS environment and interacting with his peers and his teachers.

"I like the people, the way the schools work, the lifestyle and the music—pretty much everything," said Cokes. "My teachers here are fun, definitely compared to my teachers in Australia who were really bad. I didn't like them at all."

Although Cokes cherishes his life here in America, he feels nostalgia for his life back home.

"I miss all my friends and riding my bike. I also lived really close to the beach, where I would go surfing a lot," said Cokes.

—by Liz Cheng and Girish Swaminath



FALCON FREEZE FRAME



photos by Melody Zhang

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: **B-BALL** SENIOR ALEX SCLAVOS BATTLES IT OUT AT THE SCRIMMAGE AGAINST WESTMONT HIGH ON NOV. 18. **MAKING SUSHI** FRESHMAN SALLY QUEVEDO DYES HER RICE BLUE DURING A SUSHI-MAKING SESSION IN JAPANESE 1 ON NOV. 10. **SOUND OF MUSIC** SOPHOMORE WALTER HSIANG AND SENIOR ADELA CHANG PLAY AT THE ORCHESTRA EXCHANGE CONCERT ON NOV. 1. **PURE BLISS** SENIOR CONNIE SHANG PERFORMS IN HER PIANO RECITAL WITH A FELLOW MUSICIAN ON NOV. 8. **LET'S GO GIRLS** SEVERAL BOYS RUN AROUND THE TRACK DURING THE FIELD HOCKEY CCS SEMIFINALS TO SUPPORT THE GIRLS ON NOV. 18.

TOPTEN

WAYS TO LOSE THE THANKSGIVING FAT

- 10 Walk to school: Don't get lost in the endless drop-off loop.
- 9 Watch the "Fear Factor" episode where the contestants eat cow testes: You won't eat for days.
- 8 Save the wishbone from the Thanksgiving turkey and wish the fat away: Miracles can happen.
- 7 Join the wrestling team. Use those jellyrolls to your advantage.
- 6 Run away from the seniors when they chase you for parking in their spots.
- 5 Go to Winter Ball in the gym: Freaking is a good workout.
- 4 Run away from Aunt Mustache trying to give you a goodbye kiss.
- 3 Wear giant jeans and act like they are your old ones. That way you can tell people you lost weight and you won't actually have to do anything.
- 2 Carry your Talisman yearbooks to the trash can. Go Newspaper!
- 1 Here's a concept: exercise.

—by Annie Lee and Tim Rollinson

'Sleeping beauty' tries waking up



Annie Lee

In My Own Little World

The alarm rang as the time hit 7 a.m. Susie Q slapped the alarm clock off, climbed out of bed, brushed her teeth and got ready for school.

Most people start their day similar to the way my imaginary friend does, but I definitely don't. Don't understand? Let's rewind and I'll explain.

The alarm rang as the time hit 7 a.m. No movement. The alarm rang again five minutes later. Still no movement. The alarm continued to ring annoying siren noises periodically every five minutes. Still no movement. Then Annie Lee's mother came into the

room, tickled her and threatened to pour water on her face if she didn't wake up. Finally, movement.

It's practically impossible to wake me up. It's almost like trying to wake up a dead sloth with earplugs on. It's not that I don't want to have enough time to get ready for school: I just can't hear the alarms.

Some people find this funny, and some find it frustrating when they can't wake me up at sleepovers but I find it very serious. What if there's a disaster and I don't have time to get out because... I was sleeping? In fact, this has actually happened before.

I woke up, waltzed into the kitchen, and my mom asked, "Did you feel that last night?" I couldn't tell if my mom was making something up and trying to be funny (which she usually isn't) or trying to explain something that I missed. I later found out that I completely slept

through a 3-second earthquake.

Another time, someone tried to break into our house by breaking our windows, which of course set off the barking of my obnoxious little Chihuahua and Yorkshire terrier for the rest of the night. But lucky for me, I slept like a baby through the entire thing and woke up at noon to my mom and dad trying to clean up the mess that I had not even been aware of.

Many people go through denial when they have a chronic condition or serious illness. I've gotten over the denial, and I'm at the next step: I need help right away. I don't want to be the one who tells the stories about how my roommate robbed me when I was sleeping or drew a mustache, a beard and a hairy wart on my face without me knowing. And for those of you who are snickering while reading this, don't even think about it. ♦