

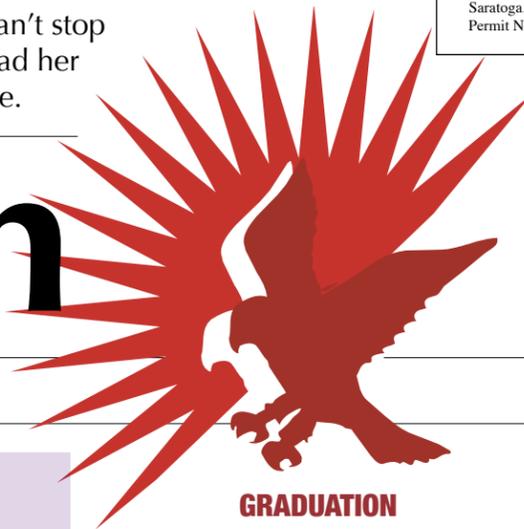


LIFE | 12-13
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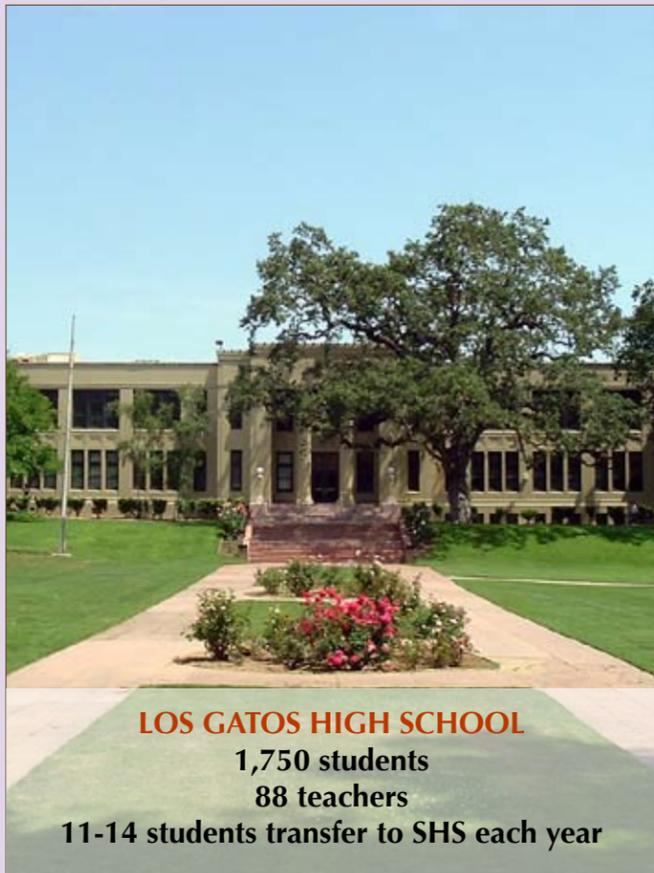
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OPEN ENROLLMENT CHANGES

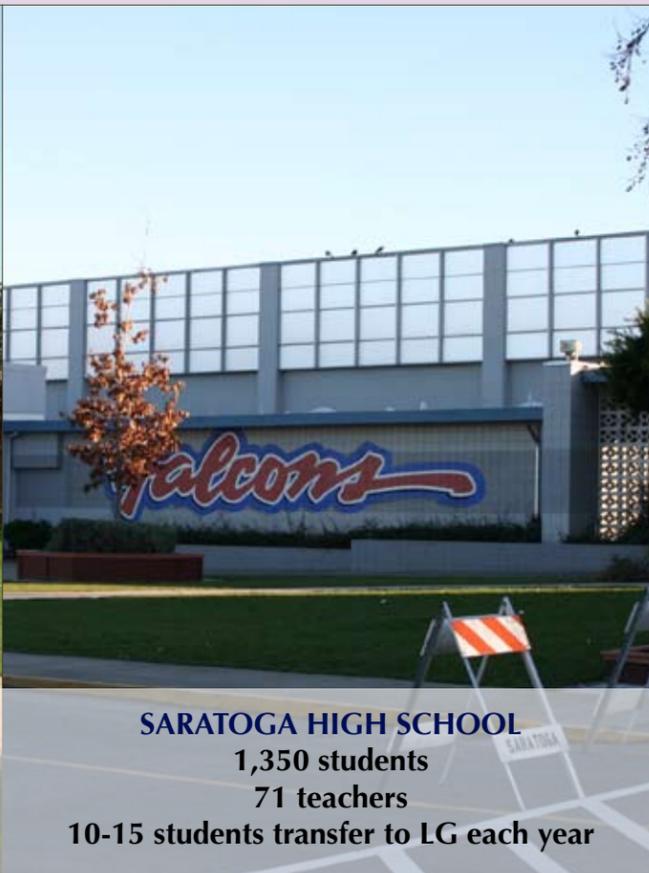
OVERCROWDED LGHS CLOSES TO SARATOGANS



LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL

1,750 students
88 teachers

11-14 students transfer to SHS each year



SARATOGA HIGH SCHOOL

1,350 students
71 teachers

10-15 students transfer to LG each year

DISTRICT CITES LACK OF SPACE ON LOS GATOS CAMPUS AS MAIN REASON FOR POLICY CHANGE

BY Samika **Kumar** & Michael **Lee**

Because of Los Gatos High School's growing enrollment, Saratoga students will no longer be able to transfer to Los Gatos High starting next school year.

Los Gatos, with about 1,750 students, is significantly more crowded than Saratoga with its 1,350 students.

Los Gatos additionally faces the issue of space for campus expansion.

"There are houses and businesses all around [Los Gatos High], so they have a finite space, and they're full,"

principal Jeff Anderson said. "The district is saying, 'We're not going to exacerbate that problem by sending more kids over there.'"

About 10 to 15 Saratoga residents apply for the Los Gatos High transfer each year, Anderson said.

Students living in Los Gatos will still be able to go to Saratoga High.

Jane Marashian, the assistant to LGSUHSD superintendent Cary Matsuoka, maintains that the policy is not being drastically changed. The policy normally allows transfers between Saratoga and Los Gatos.

"[It] says that every year, we have to look at the number of transcripts we can or cannot consider for open enrollment," Marashian said. "We're really just exercising the current policy."

Many students enjoyed the versatility of open enrollment. Sophomore Shreyas Nagaraj, a Los Gatos resident, transferred to Saratoga High at the start of his freshman year.

"I transferred because I wanted more of an academic challenge," Nagaraj said.

>> **ENROLLMENT** on pg. 6

INTEL SCIENCE TALENT SEARCH

Math project lands senior in finals

BY Brandon **Judoprasertijo** & Sabrina **Cismas**

Senior Amol Aggarwal's road to becoming a finalist in the Intel Science Fair began with a geometry project he was working on: how to find the maximum number of distances in the most efficient way.

Alerted to the contest by a mentor in Switzerland, Aggarwal started research in the summer of 2009. While most other competitors ventured to laboratories to carry out science-based projects, Aggarwal completed his geometric project at his home.

"I got interested because one of the questions in a math competition had something to do with this [subject], so it struck my curiosity," Aggarwal said.

The competition is a talent search, consisting of students who send their research of various applications in math or science to Washington, D.C. This year, 1,700 seniors from across the U.S. sent their research condensed into essays, which were then reviewed by Nobel Prize laureates, Ph.Ds and other notable

>> **INTEL** on pg. 6



Senior Amol Aggarwal, center, is presented with an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., on Jan. 28.



Courtesy of REN NORRIS

Students wear the traditional red and gold cords, which represent academic excellence and community service, at last year's graduation ceremony.

GRADUATION

School cuts grad cords

BY Jackie **Gu** & Karen **Yang**

When the class of 2011 walks down the field in their caps and gowns during the graduation ceremony on June 16, the red and gold cords that have typically adorned students' necklines indicating achievements in community service and academic honors will be missing.

Read *The Falcon's* opinion on the elimination of cords on page 8.

The idea for this change was initiated by principal Jeff Anderson, who decided to remove the cords because he felt that the ceremony should not be about individual recognition, but rather about recognizing the

>> **CORDS** on pg. 6

>> upcoming events

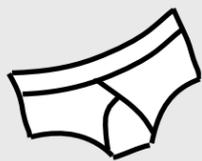
Feb. 11 Girls' Soccer vs. Fremont
Come support the Lady Falcons at the football stadium at 4:30/7 p.m.

Feb. 11 Orchestra Concert
The SWE & SS Carnegie Hall Kick-off Concert will take place at 7:30 p.m. in the McAfee Center.

Feb. 14 Valentine's Day
Valentine's Day is also the start of Winter Break. Check out the Entertainment Section for ideas on what to do on a date.

inside THE falcon

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news >> briefs

Spanish students prepare for Mexico trip

This year, a new group of 61 Spanish students are traveling to Merida, Mexico, over February break. The students are attending classes at a Merida International Language School, staying with Mexican host families and spending time completely immersed in the culture of Merida.

Students left Feb. 10 and will return Feb. 20, though they will be missing two days of school.

"I don't think two days really matter that much, in comparison to what we'll be learning down there," said junior Katie Cummins. "I'm more nervous about saying the wrong thing—saying something I don't mean and making a complete fool of myself."

Although language department head Arnaldo Rodriguez has taken students to Cuernavaca for the past 30 years, the trip will now be going to Merida on the Yucatan Peninsula in southeastern Mexico for the first time.

"We have many students that repeat the trip," said Rodriguez. "We wanted to give them a different view of Mexico. Cuernavaca has more Aztec influences, whereas Merida is Mayan. They're two very different Mexican cultures."

The students will visit new sites, including the famous Chichen Itza pyramids and the pyramids at Uxmal.

—Christine Bancroft

Princess Project brings prom to needy

This year, as Saratoga girls begin preparing for prom, underprivileged girls in other parts of the Bay Area will be receiving dresses and accessories of their own.

With the help of the Leadership class, this year's Princess Project will be collecting prom dresses until early February, and then the dresses will be shipped to the foundation at the end of February.

"Because we're so privileged to buy our own fancy dresses and accessories, I think it's a great idea for us to help girls who don't have the chances we do," said senior Pamela Lee, who is organizing the event.

The Princess Project takes donations from many different locations, including a year-round donation station in San Diego and annual winter donations in the Bay Area.

Students hope to make proms and quinceñeras memorable for many hopeful girls.

"The Princess Project became more publicized last year, and the turnout was pretty good. I hope to surpass that limit this year," said Lee. "I think the Princess Project is a fantastic idea for people to help others in need and for all girls to be given an equal chance for that perfect prom night."

—Christine Bancroft

Chess repeats as county champions

The tournament took place at Monta Vista High School on Jan. 29, and Saratoga once again defeated rival Monta Vista, Gunn and Lynbrook.

The day-long tournament consisted of about 60 players total. Saratoga brought a team of nine players who beat out the Matadors in a tie breaker. The two teams were tied with total team scores of 12.0 and Saratoga won the tie break 40-39.5. In terms of scoring, a win is one point, a draw is half a point, and a loss is zero points, with each person on the team playing five games.

The players had a big task ahead of them because the team has won the championship for the past four years in a row and aimed to defend the title. The team has also won first place in the state championship for the past six years.

Though it will be a challenge for the team to repeat as state champions after losing graduated seniors Charles Sun and Rolland Wu, the county championship is a good place to start.

"This tournament was definitely a huge learning experience and a humbling one as well," junior Evan Ye said. "I was amazed at how many of the players competed against ridiculously strong people."

—Shivani Chadha

>> picturethis

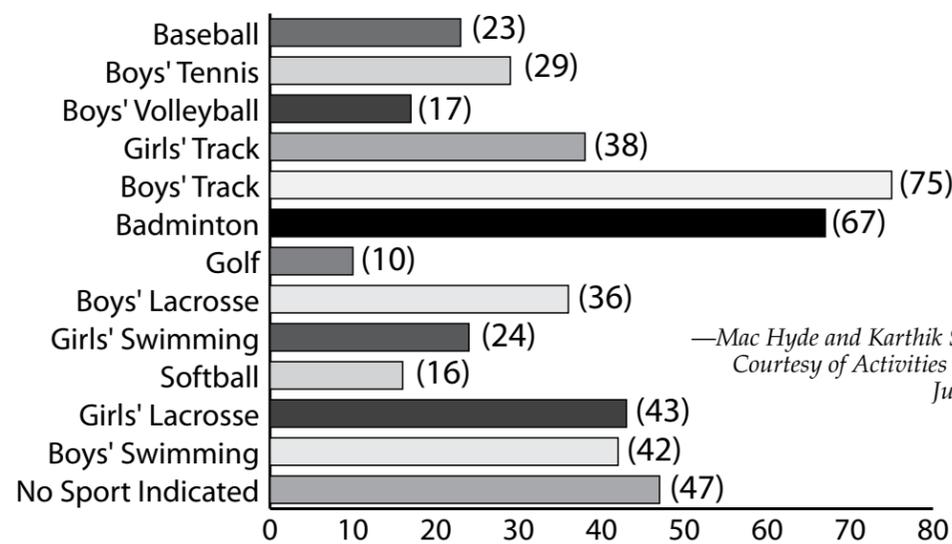


FALCON // ARNAV DUGAR

Junior Zara Sheikh brainstorms ideas on how to make the school more environmentally friendly during the Green Tea meeting on Jan. 28. Green Tea is the school's student thinktank on environmental issues.

falconfigures <<

Number of students who tried out for spring sports



—Mac Hyde and Karthik Sreedhara
Courtesy of Activities Secretary
June Lamm



DISTRICT BUDGET

Board votes to put parcel tax on May ballot

By Emily Williams

During a public hearing on Feb. 1, the school board voted 5-0 in favor of a measure to put a parcel tax on a mail-in ballot that will be returned in May.

For several months, the board has been considering this proposed parcel tax, which would cost residents \$49 a year, as a source of much needed revenue for both Saratoga and Los Gatos High School.

It will be the first time residents in Saratoga will be asked to support a parcel tax to support the high school district.

The proposed tax will last for six years and it is expected to raise \$4.8 million in that time span. It would earn \$800,000 a year for the high schools.

On Jan. 20 and 25, town hall meetings took place in both Saratoga and Los Gatos to present the budget for the 2011-2012 school year to the community.

Polling for success

The meeting turned into a question and answer session between the community and the board regarding the tax. Superintendent Cary Matsuoka said he thought that people left the meeting ready to support the proposed parcel tax.

The district has done some research regarding tax, hiring two different consulting companies to help determine

whether a tax was worth it.

EMC Research, a polling company, conducted surveys in the community and concluded that there was majority support for an \$49 tax. According to the company, even though people don't realize the district's need for funding. Another misconception among voters, according to the survey, was that 43 percent of people incorrectly believe that there is some sort of parcel tax already in place in the district.

"A lot of members of the community don't actually know the need of the school for money," board representative junior Anshu Siripurapu said. "A lot of voters don't realize the financial crisis that the district is in. Kids need to go out and educate the public about what is actually needed."

The other company, TBWB, works specifically with school campaigns and advised the district to hold a special election on May 3 with a mail-in ballot for the highest chances of success. Although this method is more expensive for the district, Matsuoka believes it will ensure the highest chance of success for the measure.

Deficit persists

Meanwhile, the board will have to present a budget in March that assumes that the tax will not pass. The district faces a \$942,000 deficit for the

coming year, and even the parcel tax does not mean the end of financial woes.

The school board compiled a list of cuts that they will have to make next year, assuming that the tax does not pass. The cuts will focus on reducing the number of classified employees, cutting from the special education department, reducing administration at the district office, decreasing utility usage and eliminating non-essential overtime pay.

Effects in the classroom

Although the board is putting all its effort into keeping the cuts away from the classroom, district-wide class sizes will increase by .25 students.

"We are doing everything we can to protect the classroom experience," Matsuoka said.

According to Siripurapu, if the tax does not pass, then the cuts will be deep and may impact students much more than previous cuts. Matsuoka pointed out the cuts for next year will come on top of the \$3 million in cuts last year.

"It's not like last year's money will come back," Matsuoka said.

The campaign will be run through donations, with \$75,000 raised. Siripurapu said in order for the tax to pass, the community must actively get involved by donating money and volunteering. ♦

>> correction

In the Jan. 14 issue, the caption under the Carol Grams photo on the bottom of page 24 incorrectly identified the singers as Victor

Zhang, Rex Sakamoto and Brandon Pierce. The singers are actually Victor Zhang, Eric Wang and Brandon Pierce.

ECO-FRIENDLY

Special Ed Department first to go paperless

STUDENTS' FILES WILL BE DIGITIZED IN AN EFFORT TO SAVE SPACE IN FILE ROOM

BY Sarah Hull & Parul Singh

In an effort to go paperless, the special education department has begun the process of converting the paper files of all its students into electronic documents that will be stored on a comprehensive database. The project will significantly reduce the amount of paper currently in storage and allow for a greater ease of access to the files.

"We have paper files for all the students, past and present, which means that we have hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of pieces of paper," said instructional aide Patrick Neddersen, who is in charge of the project. "We're trying to scan all the information so that we can search for information instead of having to go through these huge files."

The electronic files will be identical to the physical copies, except that they will be saved virtually instead of taking up much-needed storage space. Neddersen estimates that if the files were stacked on top of one another, they would be as tall as a two-story building.

"I think it's a good idea because there's an awful lot of paper taking up a lot of space, and it has really become an issue because we have so many files,"

said special education department chair Anna Marie Villalobos, who is assisting with the endeavor.

From a law standpoint, student files must be kept on site for five years after a student's graduation; however, the district keeps the files for an indefinite amount of time, which has led to the accumulation of paper.

Villalobos also hopes that the transition to an electronic medium will make it easier for staff to communicate with both students and parents regarding the student's progress within school. Once students have left Saratoga High, their files will remain within the database.

"Students won't need to worry about all the paperwork and it will be much less of a hassle if they have digital copy of their files," Villalobos said.

Neddersen is currently working on converting all the files into PDF documents and figuring out an appropriate way to store them. He scans all the files by himself, but he hopes that in the future other staff members will be instructed on how to do so in order to expedite the process, which he hopes will be completed before the school year ends.

Although the project has run into some difficulties, school psychologist Mark Atkinson, who is helping Neddersen,



FALCON // SARAH HULL

The cabinets in the main office file room are overflowing with stacks of old documents.

son, is confident that the challenges they are currently facing soon be resolved.

"I think the project is moving forward very well and I'm excited," Atkinson said. "There have been some hurdles on the technological end as well as the training of the staff, but I think once we finish we'll never go back [to paper files]."

Atkinson hopes that this effort to go

paperless will spread to other departments and prompt staff members to print out less materials.

"We're testing it out in special education first, but as we go along, we will evolve what we're doing based on feedback," Atkinson said. "I hope that in the future the whole school, maybe even the whole district, would be paperless." ♦

MAP BENEFIT



TALISMAN // MARY EDMAN

Some comedians tell a hilarious story about two dinosaurs on Jan. 13.

ComedySportz turns out to be a big hit

BY Rohan Rajeev

The six-man comedy troupe "ComedySportz" brought its entertainment to a packed McAfee center on Jan. 13 to raise funds for the Media Arts Program (MAP).

At \$10 a ticket, the act brought in nearly 10 times the investment of ComedySportz for MAP, since the group performed to a near full house of 500 students, parents and teachers.

"ComedySportz is such a fun event that the high turnout didn't surprise us," said MAP Coordinator and English teacher Kerry Mohnike.

ComedySportz is an improvisational comedy group that creates different situations in two separate teams. The two teams battled for the most points in games that tested the players' improvisational wit. The games included reciting stories, acting out situations, making speeches

and playing charades. The show also included a good amount of audience participation.

The enjoyable performance was based on the tag-line, "Finals are coming; Laugh while you can." The attendees enjoyed the show as source of relaxation and stress alleviation before the heavy studying for the semester finals. Mohnike felt the event was a success, as it proved to be a night of clean jokes and laughter.

"If you were there at the performance, you would understand that it was a night of 'coagulating, bodacious prestidigitation,'" Mohnike joked, in reference to a joke made during the show.

ComedySportz performs on Fridays at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m., and on Saturdays at 9 p.m. and 11 p.m. in downtown San Jose near the intersection of San Carlos and 2nd Street. MAP hopes to make ComedySportz an annual event before finals. ♦

CHOIR

Schools come together to collaborate on 'Frostiana'

SARATOGA, LYNBROOK AND HOMESTEAD CHOIRS, SHS ORCHESTRA PERFORM ROBERT FROST POEMS

BY Deborah Soung

The Saratoga, Lynbrook and Homestead High School choirs joined forces Feb. 10 with the Saratoga orchestra to perform the masterpiece "Frostiana" in the McAfee Center.

"Frostiana," composed by Randall Thompson in the late 1950s, is the product of a great friendship between Thompson and poet Robert Frost.

Thompson composed seven movements in the 25-minute-long orchestral suite, with each movement using a poem written by Frost as its lyrics.

The concert was divided into two parts: first, each school's choir sang two songs and the orchestra performed one song and second, all choirs joined together to sing "Frostiana."

Orchestra teacher Michael Boitz conducted the orchestra, and each school's choir was conducted by its respective choir teacher: Crystol Isola for Lynbrook, Jeff Morton for Homestead and Jim Yowell for Saratoga.

For "Frostiana," Yowell arranged a slideshow with corresponding artwork and photographs to play behind the performers.

"We did one for a piece called 'The Armed Man' several years ago," Yowell said. "It helped enhance the music because the audience can see slides cast up against the back

wall behind the singers."

The entire "Frostiana" suite is not performed very often by high school choirs since it has so many and such complex movements. Most schools choose to sing only one or two movements with a piano accompanist, Yowell said, but the Saratoga choir had the chance

The entire "Frostiana" suite is not performed very often by high school choirs since it has so many complex movements.

to perform the entire suite since they had other choirs in the area to perform with and an orchestra for accompaniment.

"I chose ["Frostiana"] because we have a wonderful orchestra. We have a great orchestra director here, we have great singers here, and they love to take on challenging things," said Yowell.

"I usually just invite one other school, so this is the biggest [collaboration] we've had so far," Yowell said about the performance.

However, the suite proved to be a successful

choice with its inspiring lyrics and tunes.

"I have favorite moments in all of [the movements] because they're very inspiring, thoughtful and reflective," Yowell said. "They make you think a little more, and the composer made such a great setting for each poem so that he puts you in the mood right away."

Yowell chooses the final movement, "Choose Something Like a Star," as an example.

"That poem is like a reflection, a metaphor," Yowell said. "You choose your higher aspirations—you choose something like a star. You reach out and you grab it as opposed to always being so glum and negative." ♦

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CLASSROOMS

Substitutes: more than just a last name

BY Samika Kumar

8:45 a.m. As the first bell rings, lethargic students flood into their English class, surprised to find assistant principal Karen Hyde, who informs them that their teacher couldn't come because a tree fell across the road on their teacher's way to work.

Soon after, substitute Byron Hansen, a friendly man with glasses and a 38-year teaching record, bustles into the room. He introduces himself and takes roll.

All may seem so calm that the students never consider Hansen's perspective of the entire event. They may never realize that Hansen received the phone call to substitute at precisely 8:45 a.m.

This atypical day sounds rough. For substitutes, who are paid around \$120 per day, the overall result is worth it.

"The only reason why I sub is that the faculty and students are nice and the overall ambiance is good," Hansen said.

Hansen considers himself retired, but the students and staff who remember him as a substitute—and his love for math—can still see his desire to teach.

"The exciting part is I will see the stu-

dents who I had this year [develop] as they [go] through high school," Hansen said. "People say, 'Hi, Mr. Hansen,' when I walk down the hall, and I like that."

En Español

Just as Hansen is known for subbing in math, substitute Paddy O'Regan is known subbing for Spanish, due to her fluency in the language. O'Regan, a tall woman with a seemingly native Spanish accent, was originally a middle school Spanish teacher and is now in her third year of substituting.

"My first choice when I became a substitute teacher was to substitute for Spanish because it's my major," O'Regan said. "Spanish has definitely opened opportunities in teaching."

After her three sons graduated from middle school, O'Regan wanted to teach high school Spanish. She used high school substituting to get a taste of what high school was like.

"I didn't feel ready to apply for a high school position without knowing if there could be a positive relationship there," O'Regan said. "I found I loved high school. I am definitely going to apply for a Spanish position in a high school."

O'Regan has found that positive substituting experiences keep her eager to teach. One of her most inspiring memories happened at a San Jose high school.

"I remember a girl saying, 'I want to be a nurse. After school today, I go to a program where I'm learning to be a nurse,'" O'Regan said. "How kids like that just rise above everything just amazes me. They set their minds and hearts and take off."

Teaching tangent

Substitute Lawrence Sher, a cheerful man with laugh lines, eyeglasses and a deadpan sense of humor, chose substituting to "give back to the community."

"It was a chance to do something that

I enjoy, which is sharing information and helping people," he said.

Having substituted for 13 years, Sher finds that humor and patience help him.

"I get to see a lot of different students from a lot of different places," Sher said. "I work at all levels, all subjects, and patience is definitely necessary." Sher said.

Sophomore Aneesa Mazumdar believes more than just patience is needed for a substitute to shine. With an average of 20 substitute openings per week; it is hard for one to become memorable.

"The most important thing is to be really funny and personable," Mazumdar said. "If you want your students to remember you, you [should] make an effort to get to know them."

In the long run, substituting is an eye-opening experience, said O'Regan.

"What I like about subbing is getting to know that really amazing things are happening," O'Regan said. "In the media, California schools are the worst in the nation, but I see a lot of cool things at schools. Sometimes I wonder, are politicians ever in a classroom? I wish a politician would sub for a day, a week [or] a year, just to see what's going on." ♦

"What I like about subbing is getting to know that really amazing things are happening."

>> Substitute Paddy O'Regan

COMMUNITY COMMISSION



FALCON // PARUL SINGH

A nurse wraps senior Joe Walters' arm after drawing his blood at the drive on Jan. 27.

Stanford blood drive draws pools of donors

BY Vivian LeTran & Kyumin Shim

More than 80 people walked out of the Small Gym on Jan. 27, proudly wearing "I'm a donorsaurus," "Got Blood?" and "I'm a Hero. I gave blood," stickers on their chests as participants of the school's biannual blood drive.

These blood drives, co-sponsored by the Stanford Blood Center, have become a tradition since they were first held in 2000. The drive was organized by the Community Commission, headed by seniors Daryl Chang and Abhishek Venkataramana. The National Honor Society Club also helped with posters, flyers and providing volunteers for the drive.

This year, the commission met their goal of about 120 sign-ups and around 80 walk-ins.

"It's open to anyone eligible from our community, and this year we had about 100 sign-ups total," said senior Daryl Chang, one of the heads of the community commission.

The number of people who sign up is only an approximation as some people didn't show up, while others failed to

meet the requirements, such as low iron levels and recent travels to a malarial zone. A few students were turned away because of the age limit as well.

"Other schools use 16 years old as the cut-off, but Saratoga High does 17 years old because it is [assistant principal Karen Hyde's] policy," said Chang.

Each donor gave about 500 mL of blood, about the size of a water bottle or 1/10 of the body's blood. This amount could save up to four lives.

"I was excited to save lives," said junior Kellie Chiou, who donated blood for the first time. "There are a

lot of people out there who don't have a strong healthy immune system, so this is my chance to help them."

The event would not have run smoothly if it were not for the extra volunteers. There were 15 volunteers each period for a total of 45 volunteers throughout the day. Many volunteers were from National Honor Society, but other students participated as well.

"Overall, the blood drive was a success," said Chang. "Thank you for all the volunteers and donors who came."

There will be another blood drive in April for eligible juniors and seniors. ♦

"Overall, the blood drive was a success. Thank you for all the volunteers who came."

>> Senior Daryl Chang

IACP PRESENTATION

Speaker from Google shares tech knowledge

BY Denise Lin

The director of research at Google, Peter Norvig, gave about 30 students a sense of why the company is the leanest, meanest web-searching machine around in a talk at the Research Center on Jan. 28.

Norvig discussed a different "way of looking at and understanding the world," namely, how Google uses statistical data from the web and from user interactions to design an effective search engine. Each aspect of the presentation exuded a creative, thinking-outside-of-the-box vibe, from Norvig's multicolored, polka-dotted shirt to the ideas presented.

Norvig explained how Google is able to identify trends by first analyzing data from the Internet as a whole and then using this data to generate models based on probability, which optimizes search results and corrects spelling errors.

"The presentation showed me how Google can turn some thing very complex into something simple with just a little bit more data," said junior Eren Veziroglu. "It was surprising to see that most of it is based on conditional probabilities."

Norvig also described the algorithm that powers Google's language translator. Unlike other translators that can only rely on dictionaries and grammar rules, he said, Google Translate mainly relies on existing translated text to improve its ability to translate fluently.

The talk was centered around the idea that existing data compiled from the Internet can be used to achieve tasks that are much more difficult to do with algorithms alone.

For example, he showed students a scenic picture that was beautiful, except for a slight flaw, a building blocking the view of the lake. He then demonstrated that with enough pictures of roughly the same scene, one could use the suitable photos to completely replace the problematic section of the original picture.

After the presentation, students also asked questions about the framework

>> THE bigidea

Norvig's Presentation

Peter Norvig: The director of research at Google

Using data and probability to generate models: Norvig described how Google optimizes search results and corrects spelling errors

Existing data: Norvig also explained how Google can use existing data, such as to translate text and edit pictures

behind Google's online applications.

Norvig's talk was hosted by the Industry and Academia Connections Program, a program advised by assistant principal Brian Safine that invites experts in a wide range of fields. In the past, the IACP hosted other events, including an interactive laboratory session by Stanford's Chemistry Department, a talk by a practicing oncologist and a presentation on 3D TV by an expert from the consumer electronics industry.

"We are lucky to live in a place like the Silicon Valley where many of the world's leading minds live," said junior Arnab Dugar, the founder and head of the IACP. "Our goal is to draw upon this intellectual capital by requesting them to contribute an afternoon from their busy schedule so the students can get an idea about topics that they may not be exposed to otherwise."

Freshman Anushree Dugar, who invited Norvig, had attended one of his presentations last summer as a student scholar at the Google headquarters and was fascinated by how the Google search engine works, how advertisements on Google are ordered and how it is possible to use search queries for data analysis.

"Mr. Norvig is so knowledgeable in the field of computer science, and Google is one tool that almost every student uses on a day to day basis," Dugar said. "I thought he would be a perfect speaker to invite because of this direct connection with high school students." ♦



Norvig

SCIENCE CLUB

Science Bowl team exceeds expectations

BY Abhishek Venkataramana

"Toss up. Chemistry. Multiple Choice. Which of the following types of reactions occurs at the anode of a Galvanic cell—"

Buzz.

"Interrupt, A-2 Captain."

"Oxidation?"

"That is correct."

This is just one of the questions answered by the science bowl team during its inaugural competition in Livermore on Jan. 29.

"I always get excited when the question is on chemistry because that's the easiest topic for me," junior team captain David Eng said. "And when I heard 'anode' and 'Galvanic' I was doubly excited because I had just studied it."

Juniors Hansen Qian, Alyssa Zhang and Myron Zhang and sophomore Amanda Chow each contributed their own specialties to the group effort. Chow, Qian and Alyssa Zhang provided knowledge in AP Physics and Myron Zhang helped with AP Biology.

"Since it was their first time compet-

ing, I would have just been happy if they won a few matches," said AP Chemistry teacher and science bowl coach Kathy Nakamatsu. "I didn't expect them to make the playoffs, so it was a pleasant surprise."

Nakamatsu had coached science bowl at her two previous schools, but said this is the farthest her team has ever gotten in the competition. Nakamatsu hosted after-school practice sessions for the month preceding the event.

"We had excellent team dynamics," Myron Zhang said. "We each had our particular area of expertise, and we melded that together with quick thinking and button-smashing skills, and we managed to bring it all together."

They played seven rounds, with a record of 4-2-1 and advanced to the second round of a four-round playoff. The team beat Livermore High with a 88-36 win gaining a playoff spot, and secured a first round playoff win with a 142-66 victory over Irvington High. They lost to Foothill high in the second round. Mission San Jose won the tournament and advanced to the national competition.



FALCON // SARAH HULL

Science club members juniors Myron Zhang and Hansen Qian have some laughs while preparing with the team in the library for their Jan. 29 tournament.

"It was at one time exhilarating and at another time nerve-racking, and finally at the very end, we left with a sense of satisfaction that befits our ranking inside the competition," Myron Zhang said.

This year, the team was selected based on a qualification exam administered in

December. Next year, the science club hopes to hold tryouts earlier to qualify a second team to play.

"There's no reason that Saratoga High shouldn't have a science bowl team to rival Bellarmine's or Mission San Jose's," Eng said. "I have high hopes for us." ♦

MOCK TRIAL

Strong defense secures win against Valley Christian

BY Shannon Galvin & Vijay Menon

Employing a strong defense, the mock trial team savored a verdict of non-guilty culminating in a 250-209 win over Valley Christian on Feb. 2 at the Santa Clara County Superior Courthouse.

The trial was the first of the 2011 Santa Clara County Mock Trial Invitational. Twenty-one teams are entered this season, and eight teams will then move on to the quarter-finals. The county champ will proceed to the state tournament in Riverside in March.

The team's defense side competed in the first of four preliminary rounds. The defense followed up with a round against Leigh High School on Feb. 4 while the prosecution competed on Feb.

9 and will compete again tonight in the last contest of the preliminary stage. The results of these scrimmages could not be published due to printing deadlines.

The 12-member team has been working ever since auditions in October to prepare for the competition. However, the team puts in relatively few hours compared to its competition. While Saratoga practices two to three hours per week, teams like Valley Christian often practice up to six hours every week.

Mock trial is a competition in which schools argue the merits of an invented case before a real judge and are scored by actual attorneys. Much like a play, team members write and rehearse examinations and work on character development. At the same time, attorneys must be prepared to both make and defend

legal objections during the trial.

The defense team featured two members who were making their attorneys debuts. Sophomore Ashwini Velchamy and junior Michael Chang were competing in their first trials along with senior Vijay Menon. Although it was his first competition as an attorney, Chang quickly got into the groove of things.

"I felt a little nervous for the first few seconds," said Chang, "but then I realized it wasn't that much different from presenting to Dr. Roberts, our coach, so it went smoothly from there."

Velchamy echoed the same sentiment

about her first competition.

"I had never done anything like this before, so I was really nervous at first," said Velchamy. "It was a great experience, especially since we won."

Velchamy also received special recognition from the scoring attorneys for her performance at the trial.

If the team advances to the quarterfinals after their preliminary rounds, they will compete in a single-elimination bracket to win the county competition.

"That is our goal," said co-captain senior Shannon Galvin. "I think we can make it happen." ♦

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ENROLLMENT >> No more transfers to Los Gatos

continued from pg. 1

Nagaraj agrees with the decision to close Los Gatos's open enrollment. He realizes that overpopulation is inevitable with unregulated transfers into the high school.

Despite these changes, Anderson said exceptions to the policy are possible.

"If there's a student who is having a serious problem with another student, or if they're being bullied and they can't be around those folks, then that might

precipitate a change," Anderson said. "It has to be a compelling reason, and 'I just don't like it here anymore' isn't very compelling if that's all you can come up with for a transfer."

Anderson believes that the ban on Los Gatos's open transfer policy will affect 8th grade Saratoga residents more than current Saratoga High students.

After reviewing Los Gatos's increasing middle and elementary school class sizes, the board made the change.

"[Eighth graders] will go to Saratoga or they'll choose to go to a private school," Anderson said. "Usually the number of students who want to transfer to Los Gatos High once they get here is really small."

Four board members unanimously voted in favor of the change in Los Gatos's open transfer

at a board meeting last June. After reviewing Los Gatos's increasing middle and elementary school class sizes and restricted maximum capacity, the board made the change.

"It was a necessary result from a demographic study that indicated that Los Gatos High was going to pass capacity," Marashian explained.

Open enrollment for the 2011-12 school year is open from Feb. 2 through March 7 to Los Gatos residents who wish to transfer to Saratoga High. ♦

INTEL >> Senior in finals

continued from pg. 1

scientists. The number of hopefuls decreased to 300 semifinalists, then to 40 finalists, Aggarwal being one of them.

"Some folks call this the junior Nobel Prize," said Intel headquarters education manager Julie Dunkle. "They have amazing people judging the projects. They're all experts in their fields, so you know the work that he did is significant."

Dunkle and Mark Pettinger, an Intel spokesman, stopped by the school Jan. 26 at lunch to congratulate Aggarwal. In the teacher's lounge, Aggarwal received a huge cardboard boarding pass for his flight to an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., where the final stages of the competition will be held for a week in March.

Aggarwal, as well as math teacher P.J. Yim, were also presented with placards, with Aggarwal's honoring him as a finalist, and Yim's honoring him as the 2011 Teacher of Merit.

"Of course it's a great honor; it's needless to say that it's one of those things where people have won in the Superbowl of science," said Alok Aggarwal, Amol's father. "We're very proud of [Amol]."

Dunkle said that once Amol lands in Washington, he will be given \$1,000 for being a finalist and as much as \$100,000 if he wins first place in the competition that will carry out its final stages in the National Geographic Society Building.

>> THE big idea

Aggarwal's Project: "Repeated Distances in Convex Polygons"

The Question: Given a set of points, what is the max number of point pairs such that the distance between these points is some given length?

The Conclusion: Aggarwal improved the bound on this number by a factor of six.

Applications: Protein folding (biology), favorable rhythms (music theory), patterns in constellations (astronomy)

"He doesn't get asked questions [there] just about his project," Dunkle said. "He's going to have judges come by and ask him questions about all areas of science and beyond science; it's a little more encompassing."

After displaying his project under this high pressure environment, Aggarwal will also get the chance to incorporate his work in politics.

"He'll go down the hill and visit some Congress people," Dunkle said. "And in some of these meetings with the Congress, they'll really sit down with him and ask what they should be doing in the science education."

Aggarwal will wrap up his week in D.C. with a black-tie gala at the Smithsonian Museum.

"I'm looking forward to meet everyone. Washington, D.C., is definitely really cool," Aggarwal said. ♦

SARATOGA YOUTH COMMISSION

Bell Tower recognized for being teen friendly

BY Kevin Mu

Known for its upscale appearance, tasty food and affordable prices, the Bell Tower Bistro has been chosen as the recipient of the Saratoga Youth Commission's first Teen Friendly Business Award.

The Youth Commission created the award in an effort to attract more teens to Saratoga downtown and improve business for stores. A new teen-friendly business will be chosen in two months and will receive a certificate as well as a sticker to place on their window.

Bell Tower, a downtown restaurant recently opened by Michael Shadman and his wife Manhaz Khazen, beat out several other downtown businesses on qualities important to teens, such as ambiance, price, variety and service.

"We're really honored to have received this award," Shadman said. "I feel satisfied that the youth likes our restaurant because making the Bell

Tower a place for teens was what we intended to do. Getting this award from the Youth Commission clearly shows that we have achieved our goal, and we will work to maintain it in the future."

Shadman and Khazen catered their restaurant to the teenage demographic because they had trouble finding family-friendly restaurants for themselves and their own children in Saratoga.

"Every time we came to downtown, there was no place for us. There's no place for the youth to have a cup of coffee, dessert or a sandwich," Shadman said. "Our goal was to create something for families."

And although prices are higher than those at a fast-food burger joint, the Bistro offers a 20 percent discount to all students, which Shadman hopes will attract more students to stay in Saratoga when they head off-campus for lunch.

"This is a place for teens to enjoy. Bring your friends and just hang out," he said. ♦

The Youth Commission created the Teen Friendly Business Award in an effort to attract more teens to Saratoga downtown.

CORDS >> School changes policy to promote unity

continued from pg. 1

class as a unified whole.

"The day of graduation we want to honor everybody," Anderson said. "Whether you are at the top of your class, at the bottom, in the middle, it's the class of 2011—it's a ceremony for the group, and we feel that to individually distinguish folks at that ceremony takes away from the idea that you guys are the class of 2011."

Anderson had considered removal of the graduation cords for a while before deciding to act this year.

Influenced by his experience at previous high schools, where the administration's philosophy highlighted the milestone of graduation as an undivided class rather than as separate individuals, he chose to make the change at Saratoga High as well.

"It's great to honor people, but on that day we should be honoring the whole class," Anderson said.

Despite the absence of the cords from the ceremony, students will still be honored with cords earned for academic achievements and community service during the senior awards ceremony held three days before graduation, as well have their names listed on the programs distributed to the audience on the day of graduation.

"All those distinctions and scholarships will be in the program, so when everybody comes from out of town, all those accolades are still in print," Anderson said. "It's just that when we're looking at the group of graduates, they'll all be equal."

Although the administration has yet to publicize its decision, Anderson acknowledges that some students and parents will undoubtedly have dissent-

ing opinions on the change.

"Any time you change something, some people will say, change it next year when my kid's gone," Anderson said. "But we'll face the music, and I think we're on firm ground about why we're doing it, so we're going to stick with it."

Several students said they oppose the change because the absence of honor cords at the ceremony detracts from their persistence and efforts in maintaining a solid GPA. Others argue that the cap and gown outfit is incomplete without the ornamentation of the cords.



"It's a really big shock because the honor cords represent all the academic work we've done."

>> Senior Carina Chu

"[Taking the cords away] is a really big shock because the honor cords represent all the academic work we've done

over all our four years," senior Carina Chu said.

Still, some support the idea that the adorning of the cords at the ceremony is unnecessary. Although senior Gavin Chu has spent countless hours doing community service he understands that the cords are not significant in honoring his dedication to volunteer work.

"I like volunteering, so it doesn't really matter if I get the cord or not," Gavin Chu said. "The cord is just recognition for other people to see."

Anderson himself holds faith that students are not influenced by the incentive of cords as much as the less tangible rewards earned from pushing themselves academically and serving their community.

"I'd like to think people are doing community service because they want to serve their community, not to try and get a piece of twine around their necks," Anderson said with a smile. "I think there's more to it than that, so I don't perceive this as being something that's going to stop the world on its axis." ♦

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ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

New assistant principal a familiar face

MOUNT TRANSITIONS SMOOTHLY FROM TEACHING TO NEW ROLE

BY Parul Singh & Karthik Sreedhara

New assistant principal Kevin Mount is hoping to “make discipline a positive learning experience” as he transitions into a job he did not expect to have this year.

Mount was appointed to this position last month when former assistant principal Chris Cerbone was reassigned to be the administrator for NOVA, the district’s alternative education program.

Mount taught for four years at San Lorenzo Valley High in the Santa Cruz Mountains before he came to Saratoga in 2001 to teach English and AP English Language for another five years.

“I always taught English because of a love for the written word and the feeling I have about the power of language,” said Mount. “Plus, you get to read cool stuff, and I think the ability to write is really important.”

He earned an administrative credential while he was working at Saratoga High.

Mount, an avid runner, lives in Santa Cruz and has a daughter who attends UC Berkeley and a son who attends Harbor High School.

While teaching two sections of English 12 this year, Mount also worked at the district office and ran the NOVA

program, where his role included hiring and supervising staff members and implementing program changes.

The NOVA program helps about 40 students who attend for a variety of reasons, including academic concerns.

“Sometimes it’s just giving a kid a place where they can feel at home,” said Mount. “It’s a small community where everybody knows each other, and no one gets lost or overlooked. That’s the power of it.”

Mount believes his work at NOVA will help him become a better assistant principal here.

“I think it’s important to get to know students

and try to understand their context and situation,” said Mount.

Because Mount has taught here in the past, he is already familiar with the community and feels welcomed by parents and staff.

“Even just last night a couple parents of the students that I had when I was teaching here recognized me and welcomed me, and that felt really positive,” Mount said. “The staff has also been really great, but there are some younger teachers that I need to get to know a little better.”

Newly hired teacher Caitlin Galloway is taking over Mount’s two English classes for the rest of the year.

“[Galloway’s] so ready to go; she’s enthusiastic and interested in what

“It’s important to get to know students and try to understand their context and situation.”

>>Assistant principal Kevin Mount



FALCON // SARAH HULL

New assistant principal Kevin Mount fills out paperwork in his new office on Jan. 27.

she’s doing. She’s great,” fellow English teacher Cathy Head said.

Head also said Mount is an excellent choice for job of assistant principal since he understands what students and teachers are going through at the high school level.

“I have always admired [Mount], and I think he’s a phenomenal English

teacher. He is also totally organized and he knows his stuff,” Head said. She also said he has a great sense of humor.

Mount hopes, above all, that students will find him easy to talk to and encourages them to come speak to him if they have problems. Besides discipline, he is in charge of facilities and athletics in his new position. ♦

MATERNITY LEAVES

Baby bonanza: 3 teachers expecting spring babies

BY Shivani Chadha

There must be something in the water, because this year’s baby boom is not over yet.

English teacher Suzanne Herzman, Chinese teacher Sara Tseng and special education teacher Terra Vitarelli are all expecting and will give birth sometime this spring.

Herzman is six months pregnant and due in April. She revealed the news to her classes the week before winter break.

“I wasn’t planning on telling my classes until the new year,” Herzman said. “But then some brave students congratulated me early, so I decided I had to stop hiding under my baggy clothes.”

Herzman allowed students to reveal the good news to her classes, but she has chosen to not know the baby’s gender. She will be on leave beginning in April and will return in the fall.

Herzman is confident that students will be in good hands when a substitute teacher takes over and said that students have helped her become more excited for the baby.

“Students have definitely made it easier by being sweet and supportive,” Herzman said. “They have made it more of a reality for me, which is exciting.”

Tseng is due in March and will be having a baby girl. She revealed the news to her classes in October.

Tseng will be leaving in early March

for six weeks until the end of April and has made preparations for her leave.

“My students and I have been using Google Docs and Google Groups to keep in contact while I’m gone,” Tseng said. “I should be able to give assignments online so the substitute will only have to supervise.”

Tseng agrees that students have been supportive during this chaotic period.

Vitarelli is also due in the beginning of March and is expecting a baby boy. She will be leaving at the start of February break and will return in the fall. Vitarelli said her students have expressed ample concerns about her leave and replacement.

“Their concerns are legitimate, as change is always difficult to deal with,” Vitarelli said. “Several of them have suggested potential names for the baby, and it is neat to see them so invested in what I am experiencing as a new parent.”

Vitarelli said she will miss the students but is excited to introduce to them baby Vitarelli in the fall.

At this point, none of the teachers are aware of who their replacements will be during their leaves.

In addition, special education teacher and JV boys water polo coach Cabot Weaver and his wife welcomed their second child, baby girl Opal Amelia, into the world on the morning of Jan. 13. ♦



Herzman



Tseng



Vitarelli

TECHNOLOGY

Teacher sites become vital

BY Evaline Ju

Before sophomore Andy Fang pulls out his math textbook each night to do his homework, he checks *pjyim.com*, his teacher PJ Yim’s website, to make sure he is completing the right section—and looks at the counter counting the number of days since second semester began.

In our technology-dominant era, students have largely come to depend on the Internet for information. Following this trend, a rough count shows that 53 of the 71 teachers on campus have turned to posting links, notes and schedules in some form online.

Revamped about 18 months ago, the current Saratoga High website provides tools for making organized calendars and creating links to files and classes. Under each teacher’s name is his or her phone extension and a template to send an e-mail.

Most teachers utilize the school website, which seems convenient in spite of occasional file uploading problems. Some, however, find the website limiting. Currently, only eleven of the 71 have their personal teaching sites linked to the school’s, and Yim is one of them.

“I like working with [a] new medium to communicate with my students, so I prefer the flexibility that my own website offers,” Yim said.

He pays \$10 a year for the domain name, but the “real cost” came from time and energy spent for the initial setup, maintenance and ways to include teaching tools.

“The cost, however, pays for itself when I am able to help others,” Yim said, “be it teachers, students, or simply acquaintances.”

Teachers were able to host their own

falcon figures

71 The number of teachers on campus

11 The number of teachers who have personal websites

18 The number of teachers with nothing substantial posted

>> Evaline Ju

sites before the school-wide website made its debut in recent years. Biology and chemistry teacher Kelly Nicholson, with the help of IT manager Julie Grenier, found a way to host her former page on the *freewebs.com* site.

For the past two years, Chinese teacher Mariam Fan has used both the school website and the free site Weebly to help her students. On the school page she posts general information about classes and events, while her Weebly site allows students to view and post assignments, projects and photos. Students also create their own portfolios for finished or revised work.

“I think it’s a great way to see the different talents of the students,” Fan said.

The usage of Google Docs this year in Chinese classes has also helped Fan view students’ revisions, which are then published to Weebly.

Chinese 4 Honors student sophomore Stephanie Tang agreed that it helps when teachers use a website. “It’s easier because you’re doing everything online, and people can help you,” she said. ♦

Parents just don't

understand



FEROCIOUS TIGER MOTHERS SCAR THEIR OWN CHILDREN WITH METHODS

BY David Eng

B+. The dreaded grade that strikes fear into the hearts of Chinese mothers, right?

In an excerpt from her novel "Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother" published in the Wall Street Journal titled "Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior," Yale law school professor Amy Chua depicts the so-called "tiger mother," who dauntlessly precludes her children from attending sleepovers, participating in school plays, earning any grade lower than an A, etc. Since its Jan. 8 publication, Chua's article has polarized the public, leaving a grocery list of crazy-blogging Western mothers up in arms. This article figures to be particularly pertinent at Saratoga High, given the high Chinese population on campus.

While the tiger mother's heart is in the right place, her unrelenting motivation tactics are unnecessary and deleterious to the development of her child. The tiger mother's intentions are infallible. She hopes to protect her progeny from the pitfalls of "Western" life: her daugh-

ters from teenage pregnancies and her sons from drug addictions and just being plain old losers.

What Chua and like-minded parents fail to understand is that setting such rigid regulations demoralize and ultimately discourage a child's academic progress. Why would a boy learn his multiplication tables when his mother's ire simply awaits him at long division? And why acquire long division skills when shrieks of "incompetent baffoon" accompany derivatives and integrals?

Such is the tiger mother's inexorable pursuit of her prey. But here's the truly intriguing question: What happens when the tiger mother isn't frantically yanking her child's ear anymore? Will they continue to prance about the forest of education or will they simply lack the self-motivation to plod forward?

Essentially, the tiger mother believes

that the ends justify the means. In other words, she approves of the unrelenting castigation of her son albeit he grows up to be a doctor, lawyer or Indian chief. Such an ideology is not only outrageous, but also ineffective.

The tiger mother also fails to realize that given enough time, her prey will retaliate. *God forbid a disputatious child.* One of Chua's most egregious displays of disciplinary action is her inventive yet conquerable "no bathroom until you learn this piano piece" policy. Such a transparent method may intimidate the naive child into submission. But given enough beatings, a child well-versed in the art of parental rebellion would stubbornly throw proper etiquette down the toilet and make a statement right there.

This instance may be hypothetical but is well within the realm of possibility. The situation further escalates when the tiger mother grows frustrated with

her child's insolence. And would the mother continue to lambaste her child? Probably.

Assessing the validity of such a volatile parenting policy is difficult given the consistent success that the approach seems to engender. The Asian child's dominance in the classroom is particularly evident at SHS, where the valedictorian has been of Chinese or Indian ethnicity for four straight years. In addition, of last year's 27 National Merit Finalists, over three-quarters were Asian. Not all of these high performing students have tiger mothers, but that's not to say they are mutually exclusive either.

Saratoga High most definitely has its fair share of tigresses prowling its campus. These are the parents ensuring their sons and daughters become president of 20 clubs, overwhelming Mrs. Fong with their children's summer internship packages and stressing out counselors.

The fact that the tiger mother goes to such extremes to help her child succeed at least shows she cares. But, the constant abuse to which she subjects her children is damaging and inexcusable. ♦

The tiger mother also fails to realize that given enough time, her prey will retaliate.

Elimination of graduation cords not needed

This graduation, forget academic recognition. Forget community service honors. Forget individuality—from now on, the administration wants everyone to be the same.

As part of a new policy, students will not be able to wear the cords that signify distinction in academic honors and community service at the graduation ceremony.

Although students will still be allowed to wear the cords on Senior Awards Night, they will be conspicuously absent from the graduation ceremony this June. Even the cords traditionally afforded to school valedictorians and

salutatorians are being scrapped.

Principal Jeff Anderson cited the desire to shift the focus of the ceremony to recognizing the class as a unified whole rather than as individuals as the main reason behind the change. While such an effort is admirable, it detracts from the true significance of the ceremony—a celebration of the culmination of one person's efforts and struggles. After all, it's only one name that ends up on the diploma—not all 300-some names of the class of 2011.

In fact, in high school, students often struggle to distinguish themselves from the crowd. Some students play sports; others excel in theatre or student government.

Yet there are others—possibly the most inconspicuous—who quietly devote themselves almost exclusively to

their studies, toiling late nights and long hours to achieve some of the highest GPAs in the school. Such students rarely receive the proper recognition they deserve—and with the new policy on cords, even that validation has been removed.

Similarly, many other students have clocked in countless hours giving back to their community. Other schools encourage community service by requiring a certain number of hours from its students. Saratoga, on the other hand, has made an effort in recent years to honor those who go above and beyond in terms of service.

By getting rid of community service cords at graduation, the administration may unintentionally be conveying the message that it no longer supports such efforts.

A troubling aspect is that the administration did not make this announcement public at an earlier time. It is understandable that the school would hope to keep their decision under wraps in the hopes of avoiding backlash from angry students and parents.

However, the fact that news of this decision is only being made public a mere four months before graduation is simply unfair to the students, many of

whom had put in countless hours and kept detailed records of their service in order to meet the standards to receive the community service cord.

Still, much remains to be said about the value of service. It is true that students should not be doing service just for the sake of getting the cord. Most do not. It is unfair to take away the only special recognition that these students receive for their extraordinary efforts to help out the community.

If the school truly wants to promote equality, this policy of recognition should extend across to high academic achievers and community-oriented students—just as it has in the past.

The removal of the cords for academic honors and community service is simply unwarranted. ♦



STAFF EDITORIAL

>> Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Opinion Editor
Vijay Menon
Editor-in-Chief
Shannon Galvin

The Saratoga Falcon voted 27-10 in opposition to the removal of cords.

>> THE big idea

Graduation Cords

Problem: School eliminating graduation cords for high academic achievers and students with 100+ community service hours

Bottom Line: Though the school's effort to promote "equality" is admirable, the notice of the decision is not timely and is unfair to some students

AP tests improve to limit memorization

Students will gain from changes to standardized tests in future years

BY Evaline Ju

AP Biology book? 1,250 pages. AP US History book? 1,034 pages. Knowing all of that information for the AP tests in May? Probably pretty painful.

Fortunately, the College Board has decided to implement measures that will provide more detailed information on the concepts necessary for AP tests. It hopes to cut down on redundant memorization and

to stimulate more analytic thinking.”

For example, the number of multiple-choice questions on the biology tests will be shortened from 100 to 55, while a few free response and math calculation problems will be added.

When the College Board began issuing AP tests in 1956, it used concepts from freshman college courses.

However, as time passed, contributions to both science and history greatly increased the amount of material from which college professors could choose to teach—resulting in a gargantuan amount of information that high school students would need to know to receive college credit.

Some trivial details could be argued as important when looking at small, individual cases. However, when looking at American history over the course of hundreds of years, names like Frank Norris, the writer of the “Octopus,” and John Peter Zenger, a journalist, can be dismissed.

Starting the 2012-2013 academic year the AP Biology and AP US History curriculum will be condensed. Teachers will

be given lists of the important concepts along with a guide of what will not be on the tests.

Other science and history programs will receive alterations, only later, possibly in the 2013-2014 year.

The College Board is experimenting this year with the AP German and French language courses, while English and math tests have been deemed “manageable” at the moment.

Earlier this year in May the College Board also eliminated the penalty for guessing on AP tests, which previously deducted ¼ of a point for every incorrect answer. (Sadly, the penalty remains on the SAT.)

The changes are favorable to students, who no longer have to lose sleep

over meticulous details of history, though they may not fare as well on Jeopardy.

“I think that [giving more infor-

mation on the AP tests] allows students to focus their studies on what exactly they are going to be tested,” said junior Vineet Jain, who is taking AP US History this year. “Based on what I’ve heard, APUSH and Bio are the more difficult tests, so it will only help students in doing well,” he said.

Teachers can now avoid cramming in lessons from an entire textbook.

“It’ll be very interesting to see which parts they cut out,” APUSH teacher Kim Anzalone said. She said it would be greatly beneficial if the College Board began to specify time periods for the essay.

The cutting down of multiple choice questions justifies the elimination of the guessing penalty system.

Even if students succeed at correctly guessing many problems on the multiple choice questions, they still have to get through the free response questions.

The test may not become “easier” to some, as students may prefer multiple-choice questions to open-ended ones.

Yet because of this new system, people can focus on larger ideas and analyze what came from those ideas

While half of the current high school students will not be able to experience the altered AP tests before graduation, younger students from the school have something to breathe a sigh of relief about. ♦

Test changes

Fewer calculation and free response questions

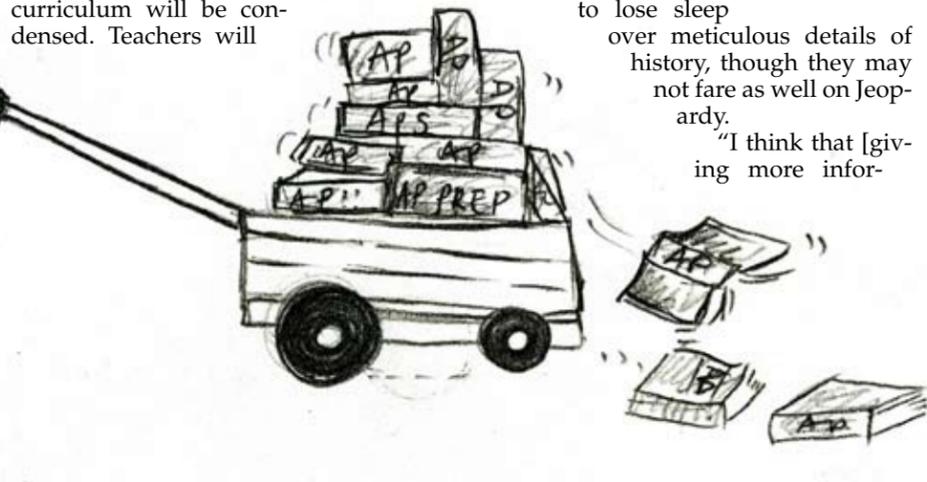
No specific names and dates for history

No guessing penalty

55 instead of 100 multiple choice questions for biology

More analytical questions included

>> College Board



KYUMIN SHIM

Arizona murders wrongly politicized

BY Synthia Ling

Gunshots rang out in front of the Arizona Safeway store on Jan. 8, transforming the line of eager local citizens waiting to speak with Democratic congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords into a screaming, chaotic crowd. Jared Loughner, 22, stood in the parking lot randomly shooting. The aftermath: six dead, 13 injured and plenty of controversy.

While the tragedy shocked the nation, the public seemed more fixated on pointing fingers at who is to blame for this grisly act of violence rather than on condolences for the fallen. So whose fault is it?

Media on Palin

National news stations continuously replayed pictures of Sarah Palin’s advertisement of “crosshairs” that looked like gun sights over Democratic districts, including one over Giffords’s seat. There is even an eerie interview clip from Giffords responding to the ad stating, “When people do that, they’ve got to realize there are consequences to that action.” Clips showed Palin exclaiming the catchphrase: “Don’t retreat—RELOAD!”

In the media frenzy, many people rushed to link the shooting to Palin, who’s known to be an avid gun-toting hunter.

Right and left showdown

Meanwhile, Palin’s right-wing supporters rapidly threw back the blame to the left, citing that Loughner was a liberal and had “Communist Manifesto” listed as one of his favorite books on Myspace; the left responded that he

also enjoyed “Mein Kampf.” Both sides got defensive and unreasonably aggressive. This divisiveness seems to only reinforce that it was the heated political rhetoric in the first place that motivated Loughner to resort to this horrific act.

Nation in unrest

True, there are angry Americans and intensified debates. With the economic instability and high unemployment rate, it is inevitable that there will be frustration. However, resolving the nation’s current problems requires progressive political action.

Regardless of the way Congress votes on controversial measures—whether it’s health care or tax cuts—some people will be infuriated. Unfortunately, this anger sometimes leads to threats—hateful phone calls and e-mails—and in some extreme cases, violent action.

Nonetheless, people should not be forced to suppress their speech and beliefs, even if it means backlash and threats.

Because no matter how much Democrats and Republicans clash, neither side can be held responsible for Gifford’s devastating injury. One person, not political rhetoric, is to blame.

Let’s face it: There can only be one person to blame for this tragedy—the lone shooter. Although it may sound scary, these acts of violence aren’t always preventable. There can be safety measures taken and lessons learned, but just one person can slip through the cracks and create devastation. This shooting happened because of Loughner’s erratic mental state, not his right or left beliefs.

It is sad that the news stations and talk shows exploit this tragedy to create conspiracy theories and jump to false conclusions. Perhaps even more tragic than the shooting in Tucson is the shameless politicization of the tragedy.

Perhaps some political rhetoric is too extreme, but this rhetoric did not ultimately push Loughner to kill. Political leaders such as Sarah Palin will get the message without the unnecessary finger pointing and righteous indignation. The senseless movement to assign ultimate responsibility for this tragedy must come to an end.

Understanding for the mentally ill

If anything should come out of this tragedy, it should be more awareness in dealing with the mentally ill. There were warning signs to friends and schoolmates that Loughner had mental issues, yet they were never addressed.

Conversely, people should not also jump to conclusions that those who are psychologically ill are all violent; rather, the public should try to be more understanding and aware of those suffering and seek help if they know someone struggling with mental issues. ♦

There can only be one person to blame for this tragedy.

>> THE bigidea

Who’s to blame?

The Situation: After the fatal shooting of a Democratic congresswoman, political parties looked for someone to blame.

The Accused: Many were quick to blame Sarah Palin for her pro-gun views.

Reality Check: The blame should ultimately rest on the shooter as he is responsible for his actions.

THE saratoga falcon >>

THIRDPERIOD

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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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Are student loans really worth it?

BY Ashwini Velchamy

No matter how much effort and how much money you put into it, college always pays off ... doesn't it?

With significant cost increases to the price of college education, it's no wonder many are starting to worry about whether or not paying the high cost of going to a good college is worth it.

However, this mind-set that college loans are impossible to pay off mostly comes from those who failed to plan their futures properly and realistically.

Millions of students rely on loans to pay for part or all of college. An overwhelming number of them leave college with student debts averaging \$22,700, according to an article in Forbes. This statistic forces college hopefuls to think about whether they really want to spend several years (or longer) attempting to pay off those loans after graduation.

Also, with the tight economy and low wages, reports show that the jobs available to fresh college graduates are decreasing, increasing the appeal for other educational alternatives.

The horror stories of most who have struggled with debt, however, could have been thwarted if they had asked themselves a simple yet important question at the very beginning: Will I actually be able to repay this loan? Will the field I intend to study pay me a salary that will oblige this loan?

The Wall Street Journal said that after graduating from medical school in 2003, Michelle Bisutti from Ohio had student loans amounting to \$250,000. Now her total stands at \$555,000. This, while partly resulting from compounding interest



rates, also came from her deferring loan payments during college. If she had kept up with her loans from the start and paid them on time, Dr. Bisutti probably would not be haunted with such an enormous debt that might take her the rest of her life to pay off.

Many people, however, disregard this and end up taking a \$200,000 loan, when they can only possibly make \$50,000 annually, or even less.

College-goers should limit the amount

of loan they take out, or at least find other ways to finance their education.

The truth is that even with the high cost, college pays off. The economy may be at a low point with national unemployment rates at 9.8 percent, but those with college educations resulting in a bachelor's degree or higher only have a 4.7 percent unemployment rate. Those with some college education have an unemployment rate of 8.5 percent, while workers with only a high school diploma

are at 10.1 percent. This reinforces that, as expensive as college is, it beats having either a low-wage job or no job at all.

Overall, yes: College is definitely worth it. Why settle for less when you can get a great college education? Loans will, of course, play a part in your college life. However, by thinking rationally, minimizing spending and paying on time, you should not be prevented from seeking the education or career you want because of student loans. ♦

Don't alter writers' words

BY Izzy Albert

Sorry, Huck, they still want to "civilize" you.

One of the first great American novels, "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" has been both praised and slammed for its satirical approach to illustrate the atmosphere of the antebellum South. Mark Twain, the novel's author, exemplified the hostility between whites and blacks during the time through the usage of language and diction.

In order to correctly and accurately portray the appropriate vernacular, Twain used the infamous "n-word" over 200 times in the characters' dialogue. This one word has caused the classic novel to face much criticism, mostly from those who are ashamed of the racial slur's deeper meanings. The book is even banned in some libraries and schools throughout the nation.

In an effort to bring the novel back onto reading lists and into English teachers' curriculum, professor Alan Gribben of Auburn University has recently produced a new edition of Twain's novel that replaces "nigger" with "slave." The news of the novel's edited version sparked almost as much controversy as the original novel itself.

Changing literature—whether it be classic or not—should never be considered an option to provide a legitimate middle-ground for the readers. Literature's ultimate purpose is to make the reader contemplate the author's message on a deeper level, leaving everything open to interpretation. As a result, nearly every great literary work will cause its own sort of controversy in one way or another, which is exactly the point.

Tampering with an author's words is not only disrespectful but also incredibly ignorant. To completely rid of the

"n-word" in a classic tale is an attempt to erase a significant part of our nation's history. The "n-word," despite its negative connotations, is a necessary component to the novel's authenticity, simply because it represents people's beliefs at the time.

Censorship has become an uncomfortably common part of many Americans' everyday lives. Movies have ratings, taboo words are "bleeped out" in songs on the radio, and even the ambiguous "freedom of speech" and "freedom of press" have their fine print. Society will become completely corrupt when book stores begin to sell two versions of every novel: "original" and "censored."

In his novel, Twain mainly satirizes the many faults of civilization and society. Huck resists becoming civilized because of how corrupt society's morals were. It would be extremely ironic if Twain were alive to witness what is being done to his book today.

Twain, like all other esteemed authors, had particular intentions behind each word written in his novel. He purposely depicted slavery in a vulgar manner with the intention of bluntly portraying reality. If students are taught to read the "politically correct" version of the novel, they will in effect also be sheltered from learning about the complexities and truths of slavery and our nation's history as a whole.

As long as teachers directly address the use of the word in the novel and discuss it in class, learning about the word and its meaning can only be beneficial for students. Literature should remain untouched, unedited and uncensored. The readers should be exposed to the entirety of the story, the way the novel's author intended. ♦



SHANNON GALVIN

Closing Aeries during finals week causes stress

BY Shivani Chadha & Vivian LeTran

Imagine receiving your report card and seeing two C's in classes you swear you got A's in. Your parents go crazy and lecture you incessantly on the disappointment you've caused the family. But wait, you go to talk to your teacher the next day and find out it was all because of a grading mistake; all because Aeries was closed.

Finals is a stressful time for everyone, and the absence of Aeries in this time of need makes students even more anxious and worried.

For many students, Aeries is an important tool to gauge progress in a class or to talk to teachers about fixing last minute mistakes in grades. With Aeries closed, students are left completely in the dark.

Of course, the closing of Aeries is not intended to hurt students. The idea is for teachers to calculate, input and tweak grades without a badgering flow of angry e-mails from parents and students who are upset with a sudden grade drop. As a number of parents in Saratoga are in this habit, it is much more peaceful for teachers to just close off Aeries altogether.

However, teachers and administrators should also consider this from the students' point of view. Academics is an extremely important aspect of the lives of a majority of Saratoga students. Between putting in an incredible amount of time for review and trying to raise borderline grades, students have more than enough on their plates without being put into the dark.

However, when Aeries is closed, students are left stressing and unable to relax even after finals are over, as they are unaware of their grades for at least a few days after the exams.

Perhaps a compromise is to only close Aeries for a set amount of time each day during finals week. That way, teachers will be uninterrupted while entering grades, and students will maintain the ability to monitor their grades throughout the crucial week.

Another solution could be for all teachers to be required to hand out printed grade sheets to their classes so that students can at least verify their grades before the reports get sent out to parents.

No matter how, a change would help students enormously. Not only would it lessen the giant stress load, but also it would create a smaller margin of error for grading. At the very least, it would save our overly worried parents from getting heart attacks and save us from nonstop lecturing. ♦

Perhaps a compromise is to only close Aeries for a set amount of time each day during finals week.

>> THE bigidea

Closing Aeries

Current Situation: Aeries is closed for a week during the end of each grading period to avoid angry emails from upset parents and students

Proposed changes: Close Aeries for a set amount of time each day during finals week or require teachers to hand out printed grades

Bell Tower rings up sweet treats, delicious meals

REVIEWER ENJOYS VARIETY OF FOOD AT CONVENIENT DOWNTOWN RESTAURANT

BY Jennifer **Jin**

As I walked into Bell Tower Bistro and Patisserie for lunch, two buildings away from Planet Juice, I heard some jazzy music and the grill humming. The girl at the register was smiling and customers were chatting happily with each other.

Open every day from 6:30 a.m to 9 p.m, Bell Tower provides customers with breakfast, lunch and dinner. Although Bell Tower has only been open for six weeks, the restaurant is already overflowing with customers.

As I waited for my chicken pesto panini, I went to get my cutlery and a glass of water, conveniently located on a table in the middle of the restaurant. I then returned to my table, decorated with a vase of flowers. The appearance of the restaurant is inviting. The walls are covered in striped wall paper with some paintings. The ceiling is covered in black patterned tiles with glistening chandeliers and hanging fans.

After 15 minutes, the waitress came by and dropped off my panini. I bit into it and was pleasantly surprised. It was grilled to a nice brown and contained perfectly-melted gruyere cheese. The chicken had a nice savory taste, and unexpectedly, the dish came with two pieces of fruit. The portions

Bell Tower Bistro & Patisserie



(OUT OF FOUR)

Where: 20490 Saratoga-Los Gatos Rd Saratoga, CA 95070
What: Breakfast, lunch, dinner, french bakery and wine cellar
Top Pick: Chicken pesto with gruyere cheese panini



FALCON // JENNIFER JIN

Bell Tower Bistro & Patisserie, located in Downtown Saratoga, offers customers delicious French food and cozy, charming atmosphere.

were large and filling; it was worth every cent of the \$7.50 that I paid.

After hearing that they make their pastries from scratch and bake them each morning at 4 a.m, I decided to get dessert. I bit into my white chocolate brownie, and it felt like I was in heaven. The brownie was chewy and I savored every bite of it. Although I found the pricing a little expensive, the taste made up for it.

After I finished my lunch, I went and explored the surroundings of the restaurant. There is a patio with around 10 tables for those that would like

to dine outside. As I continued to walk down the ramp, water is flowing out of a fountain. In the very back, there is a wine cellar, open every day from 4:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., that offers wine tasting.

The food exceeded my expectations, and the environment made me feel at home. It's perfect for a quick snack or for a meal. The best part of Bell Tower is its location in downtown Saratoga. ♦

STYLE FILES

Esha Roy, 12



How would you define your style?

A mix of vintage, boho, classy, preppy and city.

Where do you usually shop?

I really like thrift stores, H&M, Urban Outfitters and little boutiques in Europe.

What's your favorite piece of clothing?

I like really big sweaters and cardigans right now.

Staff member juggles papers, books, fondant

BY Synthia **Ling** & Anna **Shen**

In the morning, Nada Macesic arranges English novels and science textbooks in the textbook room. In the afternoon, she generates countless papers and packets at the copy room. And in the evening, she constructs cake masterpieces with fondant and frosting at home.

Look at your textbooks and your binders full of handouts, and chances are Macesic is the one who copied your papers or checked out your textbook for you.

Most students probably don't know the story of the person responsible for creating and processing much of their school materials. Having spent her entire life in Europe, Macesic immigrated from the city of Novi Sad in Yugoslavia seven years ago, leaving behind her entire family. She speaks Serbo-Croatian and English. Now, she lives with her husband, retired Saratoga High librarian Hungarian-American Tibor Szalay, whom she met in her hometown.

Macesic has been working at the school for three years. In the morning she works in the textbook room while fellow staff member Janet Verson works in the copy room, and then Macesic switches into the copy room in the afternoon.

Even though she estimates about 2 million copies are made in just one year, Macesic keeps the system organized and quick with the help of a recently installed copy machine that can make 105 copies per minute.



>> **Nada Macesic**

Works in both the textbook room and copy room and enjoys decorating cakes.

"We have a lot of copies during the school year," said Macesic. "We have copy requisition forms, and we copy whatever teachers need."

She loves being part of the SHS staff family and enjoys both her responsibilities.

"My favorite part of this job here in the textbook room is dealing with the books and the students. It makes me satisfied that I can save these books, so we're not throwing them away," said Macesic. "In the copy room, I'm in contact with practically the entire staff of the school and they're all nice. I don't have any negatives about this job."

After a hard day of work, Macesic, like everyone else, has a hobby and passion. She loves to bake, and after years of practice, she has developed a talent for cake decorating.

From a cake disguised as a weaved basket and yarn balls that she rolled with fondant string, to a three-tiered cake with detailed gowns on the side, embellished little pearls and a red and gold crown on top, Macesic

makes all her cakes from scratch. More impressively, Macesic never took formal lessons and taught herself how to bake.

"Besides spending time with my husband and my friends, I love to bake cakes," Macesic said. "I bake my cakes for friends and decorate them and make them happy!" ♦



Courtesy of NADA MACESIC

Macesic baked an elaborate Elizabethan-style cake decorated with intricate pearls and gowns of frosting.

The best jobs save puppies, kittens

BY Deborah Soung

A veterinarian is a superman who can mend bones, destroy diseases and terminate tumors, often while running a small business.

The figure behind the DeAnza Veterinary Clinic, Dr. Brien J. Bates, DVM, diagnoses and treats species from puppies to parrots.

The average annual income for veterinarians nationwide is around \$81,000, according to Naviance, but the economy has made veterinarians' incomes more unstable.

Since fewer people are willing to own pets in this economy, a clinic could see only a few cases a day.

Unfortunately, he said, not everyone goes to vet school for the right reasons.

Bates, who earned his DVM from U.C. Davis, one of the most prestigious veterinary schools in the country, cautions against going into

veterinary medicine to have less contact with people, since veterinarians often need to talk with pets' owners in order to diagnose a problem.

"It's similar to pediatrics in human medicine because pets don't tell you where it hurts," Bates said. "You have to depend on owners; some owners are really perceptive, and some are not."

However, there are major differences between veterinary and human medicine in the variety of cases doctors see.

"One of the big differences between veterinary medicine and human medicine is that you get the chance to do a lot more [in veterinary medicine]," Bates said. "In human medicine, you have to specialize, and you're pretty much just seeing certain things."

While most veterinarians only see dogs and cats, Bates sees everything from the usual to reptiles, birds and rodents.

The wide range of patients "gives a little more variety, but you need more information in order to keep up with them," Bates said.

This poses a challenge since pets get "everything from colds to cancer," according to Bates. The most common dilemma he sees among animals is periodontal disease; other common ailments include skin disease and intestinal problems.

Though many pet owners may shudder at the thought of cutting open an animal, as Bates does in surgery, Bates said, "We're pretty wimpy, but animals are tough. You've got to see past that part."

But some owners, distressingly, give up too soon on trying to help their pets.

"Sadly we live in a paper cup society," Bates said. "Sometimes we get people who come in and say, 'I'm moving, I just want to put my pet to sleep,' and it's a healthy, 2-year-old pet. And of course there are rescue organizations or the Humane Society, but some people want to walk away from their responsibilities sometimes."

In other cases, Bates sees euthanasia as a process

which is "thankfully available to our pets when it's not available to people."

"There are pets whose quality of their life is so poor, and we can't keep them comfortable," Bates said. "Then, I think it's a kind thing to put them to sleep because pets are tough, and they'll just linger."

Bates said that pets who have an unsatisfactory quality of life often act languidly and without enthusiasm.

"[Pets] are all about food and attention," Bates said. "That's why we love them—they're less complicated than we are, and so if they're eating their dinner, still want to sit in your lap and go on a walk, their quality of life is pretty good, even if that hip joint's a little arthritic. But if they're curled up in the corner, they don't want to acknowledge you any more, they don't want to eat and they're just whittling away, that's their way of saying, 'I feel miserable.'"

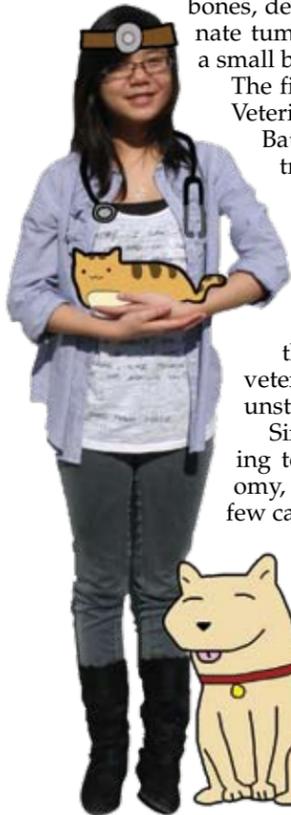
Despite the grim cases where pets cannot be cured and must be euthanized, veterinary medicine's rewards outweigh its occasional losses, making the profession a choice one.

"[There are cases] where you see [the pets] coming in, and they're not functional or in pain," Bates said. "You fix that broken leg, and then they're out running around again, and that's pretty rewarding—not only for the pets, but the people are appreciative." ♦

>> THE bigidea

Veterinarian
Average salary: \$81,000
Shadowing: Dr. Brien J. Bates at DeAnza Veterinary Clinic
The Good: Saving the lives of pets is rewarding
The Bad: Running a small business in this economy

Veterinarian



I want to

THROUGHOUT HIGH SCHOOL, STUDENTS OFTEN WONDER WHAT THE WORKERS, RANGING FROM FIREMEN

Engineering goes beyond the cubicle

BY Michael Lee

When electrical engineer David Garcia invited me to shadow him, I had no idea what to expect. At around 3 p.m. on Jan. 7, I showed up at Data Domain and waited for a bit in the lobby.

After getting his Bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and computer science from Berkeley and his Master of Science in electrical engineering from Stanford, Garcia went to work at HP for 26 years, then took three-and-a-half years off. He has been an employee of Data Domain, specifically the "consulting hardware engineer of the backup recovery systems division"—since last April.

Data Domain, Garcia later explained to me, specializes in commercial data storage. With its trademark "deduplication" technology, Data Domain can back up new data while skipping over the parts that have already been copied.

A few minutes after my arrival, Garcia walked into the waiting area. On the way upstairs to his conference room, he told me about a bug Data Domain was fixing. There, he introduced me to two other employees, and the three of them began a conference call with representatives from Intel and a manufacturing firm in Hong Kong. For an hour, I observed as they systematically imagined possible causes and solutions.

"It's a global development effort. [There are] a lot of

different time zones, and as a result I often end up with meetings very early in the morning or very late at night," Garcia said. "People think of engineering as a solo pursuit. The reality is communication is essential—for communicating your ideas, figuring out problems and getting things done."

While working hard, he told me, "In some ways you caught me at a bad time, and in some ways you caught me at a good time." I tried to speed up the interview so we would have time to tour the facility.

At Garcia's cubicle, I noticed some computers, numerous flash drives and a sea of paperwork—the supposed standard of all office workers.

After that quick stop, we descended to the first floor. He showed me into a computer lab, except these computers were much more powerful than the school library's Dells. Garcia showcased some of the machines the engineers were testing, emphasizing how expensive they were—probably as a warning. After

my tour through the sea of wires and equipment, Garcia sent me off at around 5 p.m.

After those two hours, I can say I learned three things. First, there really is more to engineering than making the new iProduct or laptop look good.

Next, computers have more uses than writing a report or checking Facebook, such as storing information. And finally, I realized engineering might not be as boring as I thought.

"[Engineering is] great fun," according to Garcia. "It's problem solving. It's working with other people. It's doing new and interesting things that nobody has ever done before."

Engineering can be somewhat all-consuming, as it's very hard and there's always something to worry about. But there's never a dull moment." ♦

>> THE bigidea

Engineer
Average salary: \$66,000
Shadowing: David Garcia at Data Domain
The Good: Interesting problem-solving, pays well, variety of job options
The Bad: Long hours, unpredictable job market

Engineer



What's cooking in the life of a chef?

BY JackieGu

Before I walked into the kitchen of Chez TJ, I wasn't quite sure what to expect. Angry-looking chefs aggressively wielding culinary weapons, like in "Iron Chef"? Perhaps high-strung chefs dropping pots right and left, as in "Food Network Challenge"?

What greeted me instead was a small, relaxed kitchen environment, free of the hypertension or samurai knives I'd come to expect from watching Food Network. But I'd arrived four hours before the restaurant's opening at 5:30 p.m., so the real show had yet to begin.

Chez TJ is a classy restaurant tucked in downtown Mountain View, a high-end establishment specializing in contemporary French cuisine, where four-course meals cost around \$85 and eight-course \$120.

Located in a classical Victorian home, the restaurant's interior is intimate and romantic. But because my own culinary skill extends to the ability to burn toast, it was quite a surprise to find myself in a restaurant that seemed to be the epitome of fine dining.

1 p.m.

Chef Nicolas Russell led me around the back of the building for a tour of the 1,500 sq. ft. garden. The "garnish garden" grows a wide variety of herbs that are fresh-picked and used as garnishes in the restaurant's dishes.

"Because Chez TJ is a Michelin-starred restaurant, the things that go on the plate have to be pretty much perfect," culinary horticulturist Louise Christy said. "If a bug walks across a leaf and bites it, it doesn't make the leaf inedible, but it does make it ineligible for the plate."

2:06 p.m.

Although Chez TJ doesn't open until the evening, a chef's work day starts at around noon. The time between noon and 4:30 p.m., is used to prepare sauces and garnishes, expediting the cooking process to shorten the customer's wait time. While the chefs prepared the ingredients, I spent much of the afternoon picking and washing herbs from the garden—tasks that even a culinary idiot like myself couldn't botch.

5:35 p.m.

Once the restaurant opened its doors, the atmosphere in the kitchen thickened palpably. Despite Chez TJ being a small restaurant with two fixed

menus and a reservation policy, the foggy tension in the air starkly contrasted with the earlier environment.

Extraordinary scents of salty, smoky caviar and creamy coriander soup saturated the air while orders continually trickled in, and although I left at 7 p.m., the rest of the staff was likely to stay past midnight.

>> THE bigidea Chef

Average salary: \$50,000 - 80,000

Shadowing: Executive chef Scott Nishiyama at Chez TJ

The Good: Being around food, sneaking munchies, self-expression

The Bad: Late hours, uncooperative customers

go to school for a couple of years and you'll be a chef, which is really not the case. It's not something you can do overnight."

But despite the grittier aspects of the culinary industry, everything is worth it, according to Nishiyama. Not necessarily in monetary terms—according to allculinaryschools.com, the national average of an executive chef's salary falls in the \$50,000 to \$80,000 range—but in freedom of expression.

"We have this innate desire to please other people, and we do this through our artistic energies," Nishiyama said. "Being able to produce something that people enjoy and make them happy is instant gratification."

After my six hours of shadowing at Chez TJ, I think I can safely say that the career of a chef does indeed go far beyond what is portrayed on the Food Network. And while I will probably never end up anywhere near the culinary industry (except as a customer), it is a field unlikely to ever die.

"At some point, I think food does become art," Nishiyama said. ♦



JOURNALIST. LAWYER. ARTIST. PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE. FIREFIGHTER. CARDIOLOGIST.
 HER. FATHER. DEPTER. DENYER. CHEF. VETERINARIAN. BIOMEDICAL ENGINEER.
 MUSICIAN. YOGA. JUDGE. DEVELOPER. HISTORIAN. CHEMIST. ARCHITECT.
 WRITER. EDITOR. SOFTWARE. INFLUENCE ANALYST. PHARMACIST.

THEY WANT TO BE IN THE FUTURE. FALCON REPORTERS SHADOWED
 FROM JOURNALISTS TO VETERINARIANS, FOR A DAY.

Firefighting requires skill, compassion

BY JustineHuang

On a warm Sunday morning, I visited the salmon-covered building emblazoned with the words "Saratoga Fire Department."

Fire stations and firefighters are known for the good deeds they symbolize and do. What most people don't realize are the sacrifices these heroes take to serve our community.

On average, a firefighter in California earns about \$30,580. A supervisor, or captain, earns an average of \$85,670, according to Naviance.

The Saratoga Fire Department consists of three different crews: A, B and C crew. They work three 24-hour shifts from 8 a.m. one day to 8 a.m. the next day. They then get four days off and continue that pattern for most of the year.

"We work holidays," said local firefighter Marcos Flores. "You could be working Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Eve, anniversaries and birthdays. It just comes with the job."

Most firefighters arrive at the station around 7:30 a.m. to check and place their gear on the fire engine. The crew that gets off and the crew coming in exchange information about the previous day. This usually takes about two hours.

During the second half of the day, firefighters are delegated to a variety of jobs, from servicing and flushing fire hydrants to making sure shops have exit signs, uncluttered floors and extinguishers.

Around 3 to 4 p.m., firefighters do their mandatory workout, which involves jogging and other light exercise that goes on for about 45 minutes. Flores said the crew works out to stay healthy and fit enough to

>> THE bigidea

Firefighter

Average salary: \$30,580

Shadowing: Marcos Flores at Saratoga Fire Department

The Good: Helps the community and gets recognition

The Bad: Less time to spend with family

do their demanding job. In addition to keeping physically fit, firefighters must also stay mentally sharp.

"We attend classes ourselves on anything from hazard training to paramedics," says Flores. "We've got to keep our skills sharp and practice a lot, because when that big event happens, we're ready."

Around 5 p.m., the fire station really becomes a fire house.

"If it's not too busy we get some downtime, and it's just like being at home," said captain Paul Yannoni. "For 30 years, we live with each other for one-third of our lives."

Depending on the events scheduled, the firefighters' agenda may change. "It's different every day," said Yannoni. "You can't say Mondays are really slow or Fridays are really busy. It's just kind of hit or miss."

When dinner time rolls around, the station often prepares a large meal for everyone to share. However, sometimes the food stays untouched.

"There are plenty of nights when we make a nice big dinner and we never get to have a bite," said Yannoni. "The bell goes off because of a 911 call and we're out of there."

During the daytime, the crew gets 60 seconds to respond to the call and move out. At night, they get 90 seconds. This stressful lifestyle contributes to the dangers that firefighters face. The leading killer for firefighters is cardio related, due to the fast-paced nature of the firefighter's job.

The term "fire department" only loosely covers what these firefighters do in their jobs.

Yannoni said that over 70 percent of calls are medi-

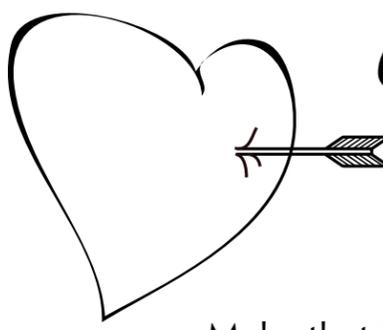
cal, while less than 3 percent are actual fires.

Along with keeping up with required skills, firefighters must have an amiable personality and be able to help others.

"Getting along with people and having a good attitude—that's probably the biggest thing about working in the fire department," said Flores.

I had always imagined firefighters as towering giants that put out fires with ease, with the help of trusty dalmatians. My time with the firefighters helped me learn that firefighters have a life away from what really should be considered as their work. They may not be superhumans, but they are heroes—at least in my eyes. ♦





Valentines Day

Movies and Music



Make that long-awaited Valentine's Day date with your significant other worth it with romantic movies and music.



Titanic
The classic tragedy of forbidden love

♥♥♥♥♥

For boys who write "Titanic" off as a chick-flick, rest assured that there is plenty of action and adventure to balance out the sappy romance between Jack and Rose. Lasting over three hours, this tragic love story has been critically acclaimed worldwide.



Tangled
An animated musical based on "Rapunzel"

♥♥♥♥♥

With the main characters voiced by singer Mandy Moore and Chuck's Zachary Levi, this family-friendly film puts a quirky, modern spin on an old folk story. Disney's latest masterpiece will keep viewers laughing, "aww"-ing, and on the edge of their seats.



When Harry Met Sally
The typical romantic comedy

♥♥♥♥♥

Though not quite old enough to be labeled a "classic," this film centers around two strangers, Harry and Sally, who meet and strike up a dysfunctional friendship. They soon realize that they are meant for each other after keeping the audience hooked.



10 Things I Hate About You
High school opposites attract

♥♥♥♥♥

A modern adaptation of Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew," this movie is perfect for those who want a heart warming romance. Add in a young, charming Heath Ledger and this high school drama is a must-see.



The Notebook
Summer love, kisses in the rain, true love

♥♥♥♥♥

Famous for making girls around the world sob, "The Notebook" focuses on the story of a couple in the 1940s. Set in the South, the whirlwind romance between Allie and Noah is kept alive through a series of letters.



500 Days of Summer
A boy's love for a girl named Summer

♥♥♥♥♥

Tom Hansen recalls his unpredictable relationship with Summer Fin, the girl of his dreams. Jumping around between their 500 days together, the film relays the message that love changes with the seasons.



Love Actually
A British romantic comedy

♥♥♥♥♥

Set in London, the movie boasts a large ensemble cast of English celebrities. The film follows ten different love stories about various individuals who are all somehow connected to one another.



Juno
Made the hamburger phone famous

♥♥♥♥♥

This 2007 comedy-drama focuses on a headstrong teenager dealing with the consequences of an unplanned pregnancy. Juno faces the pressures of adulthood while trying to sort out her feelings for her "friend" Paulie Bleaker.



Classic Love Songs

- At Last - Etta James
- My Girl - Temptations
- P.S. I Love You - The Beatles
- The Way You Look Tonight - Tony Bennett
- Time After Time - Cyndi Lauper
- With or Without You - U2
- Kiss From a Rose - Seal
- Love Me Tender - Elvis Presley

Modern Love Songs

- Perfect Two - Auburn
- You Belong With Me - Taylor Swift
- Because of You - Neyo
- So Close - Jon McLaughlin
- We Belong Together - Mariah Carey
- Just the Way You Are - Bruno Mars
- Collide - Howie Day
- With You - Chris Brown

CULLAN MCCHESENEY

Perfect music to set the mood

BY Shivani Chadha

If you're looking for some songs to brighten up your Valentine's Day date or to make a mix CD for your significant other, here they are.

Does love = money?



>> Izzy Albert

Iz Love

Chocolates and teddy bears and flowers, oh my! Valentine's Day is right around the corner. Gals, get prepared to watch sappy love movies all night with a gallon of chocolate ice cream by your side, desperately waiting for "the one" to spare you one text or phone call. Guys, unfortunately, you have much higher expectations. Winning your girlfriend's or crush's heart requires you to provide her with all of the necessary materialistic items, like jewelry, chocolates (not the kind with fruit inside) and flowers.

All of this is simply known and accepted—a "traditional" way of celebrating just another holiday. The one question lingering in my mind, though, is how it all came to this.

Saint Valentine's Day, an annual commemoration held on Feb. 14 to celebrate love, was established in 500 A.D. to honor an early Christian martyr named Valentine. Originally a holiday to express sheer adoration, Valentine's Day has undoubtedly become a "Hallmark Holiday," seeming to exist solely for commer-

cialization purposes.

A simple heartfelt card doesn't seem to be enough anymore, but the expectations now have a price tag. However, buying your "special friend" a box of chocolates is only really helping the See's Candy CEO save up for his fourth Ferrari.

Let's bring back the true meaning of Valentine's Day. Personally, I'd much rather prefer a sweet card over a sweet candy bar. I'm a bit sappy, but those cliché traditions always pull at my heartstrings.

Some nice things you can do for your significant other in lieu of buying materialistic items can include baking homemade goods, surprising them with handpicked flowers, romantically throwing rocks at their window, emulating anything you've seen in a Taylor Swift music video or burning them a CD of romantic songs. There are plenty of thoughtful things you can do that don't involve burning a hole in your pocket.

It's sad to see the true meaning of Valentine's Day become lost in the idea that money is the only way to win love. Love is not a new car or necklace; it is appreciating personality over everything else. So, let's celebrate the true meaning of love the right way. Let's bring back the original significance to this holiday. Gals, get off your couch and text that guy first. Guys, ditch the chocolates. Write her a sappy and heartfelt card. Trust me, it's a win-win situation. ♦

LADIES & GENTLEMEN

now presenting. . .

These performers find time to showcase their passions as well as earn some money too.

JUSTIN GEE

Twisting balloons into smiles

BY VivianLeTran

Higher! Higher! The crowd encouraged senior Justin Gee as he twisted balloon after balloon on top of an already made hat balloon. Finally, Gee handed the 5 foot hat to a man who roared with laughter and crammed the balloon onto his head.

This balloon twisting job, this particular one for a Christmas Fair, is one of the many that Gee attends almost every Sunday at either the restaurant Scrambles or the Willow Glen Farmers' Market.

Gee began taking interest in balloon twisting when he was five years old. He started twisting after seeing someone create a balloon structure. However, it wasn't until he was in fourth grade when he decided it was time for him to twist publicly.

"I first saw someone twisting at a restaurant and I thought it was cool," Gee said. "However, I picked up a book and [started learning how to twist] after I first popped a balloon in the car and I thought my mom's reaction was super funny."

Although Gee welcomes donations or tips, he never charges for his performances and only takes enough to cover the costs of the balloons. However,

sometimes Gee will play a silly trick on the costumers.

"What I do with [tips] is I stick the money inside of the balloon," Gee said. "It's always interesting to see their reactions because they think of how amazing it is, then they realize they can't get the money out of the balloon."

Despite having a central adult audience, Gee generally twists for younger kids.

Gee's creations, however, have a wider variety. He has created dogs, bears, giraffes, swords, monkeys, skateboards, balls and many other sculptures, but his favorite is his monkey balloon creation because of its visual appeal.

"I can make a lot of different animals; sometimes, I make my balloons up on the spot," Gee said. "It's kind of like a process. All you have to do is think about the shape of the animal and just fill it in with the balloon."

Gee's favorite aspect of balloon twisting is the enjoyment he gets from his customers' smiles and infectious happiness.

"You meet a lot of new people through twisting and it's funny to see the different types of people," Gee said.

"It's the funny little things that I enjoy. People get surprised and it's always nice to see them smile." ♦



"You meet a lot of new people through twisting. It's the funny little things that I enjoy. People get surprised and it's always nice to see them smile."

>> Senior Justin Gee

PETER AUVIL & ANGEL HERNANDEZ

DJ, turn the music up

BY ShivaniChadha & OliviaChock

One rainy day last winter, seniors Peter Auvil and Angel Hernandez were driving to a friend's house when a techno mix played on the radio. The tune caught their attention and the two realized that they shared the same love for base-heavy beats and house music. On that very winter day, the two seniors decided to try to join the DJ business together, and the dynamic DJ duo was born.

"Angel and I began DJing four to five months ago after being inspired by a YouTube video," Auvil said. "Angel's dad was also a DJ so he hooked us up with equipment."

Working almost every weekend, the DJ duo performs mostly at house parties and birthday parties. They have DJed at a few SHS rallies and the special education dance in December. In order to expand their DJ business, Auvil and Hernandez hope to perform at school dances and underage clubs soon.

The duo works together at all events and keeps pre-recorded 15 minute mash-ups at hand for when they want to take a break or join the party. The two seniors have ideas to expand and improve their business for future events.

"Right now we only have one set of turn tables, so we switch off," Auvil said. "But we're looking into buying a new set

because it would be legit if Angel and I could 'battle' when we DJ at events".

Hernandez and Auvil primarily use mainstream music because they find it fitting to their audiences. Hernandez said he likes playing electropop and house music. He said that music by hip hop producer David Guetta also has good beats for dancing.

The duo does not have a name, but Hernandez's personal name is DJ Verona. For both, DJing is an outlet for them to enjoy themselves and release stress from academics.

"DJing is definitely a way to relax," Hernandez said. "It does take a lot of time because I'm constantly looking for new artists and music to use."

To add to his repertoire, Hernandez listens to radio stations from other regions for inspiration.

"Other regions have music and songs that are different from what we have out here," Hernandez said.

For advertising, Hernandez had kept a Facebook page, but could not maintain it because of time restraints. He hopes to restart the page for publicity.

Hernandez aims to continue DJing after high school and possibly even make a job out of it.

"Right now, I'm just DJing for fun," Hernandez said. "But I think it would be fun to do it in college for money, and I think Peter might do the same." ♦



Auvil



Hernandez

FREDERICK LEE

Magician has a trick up his sleeve

BY AashnaMukerji

Wandering down the crowded streets of Santana Row on a Saturday afternoon, you might spot someone you know standing in front of a group of people.

As you make your way over, junior Frederick Lee takes out his cellphone and shows you a picture of the nine of clubs. He then pulls out a deck of cards and tells you that by waving his phone over it, he can extract that particular card from the deck. A card pops out of the deck face down and the picture on the cellphone disappears simultaneously—it's the nine of clubs. Placing his phone aside, Lee rubs the card on the table until it vanishes only to reappear in the picture on his cellphone.

The ability to make things disappear was fascinating to Lee when he was five. Around the age of eight, he moved on, accepting that the task seemed impossible. However, Lee said he rediscovered the art in his freshman year when he purchased

some trick card decks on a whim at the Dollar Store and only then decided to pursue his passion for magic.

After performing a few tricks in ninth grade, Lee wanted to improve and master the skills required to reach an advanced level of magic. Although he has moved on to more advanced magic, Lee still looks forward to "expanding [his] knowledge in magic."

Card tricks demand great dexterity and can take a few minutes to days to learn. In order to prevent himself from getting rusty, Lee makes sure to revise his tricks whenever he feels the need to.

Lee has been performing magic for two years, usually on crowded streets in Santana Row from mid to late afternoon. He hopes to broaden his locations to parties and restaurants.

To make his tricks more realistic, Lee performs them with items borrowed from the audience. He doesn't perform his best tricks on a daily basis, choosing instead to save them for rare occasions.

"My most impressive tricks are ones that most people can't explain," Lee said. "To me, it doesn't matter what the trick or illusion is, but how it is presented."

Someday, Lee hopes to be as good as the professionals in the magic business. Since he first started practicing the art of magic, Lee has enjoyed "the audience's reactions, the connection that forms between the magician and the audience, and the hope of giving someone a gift they will never forget."

Although he plans to pursue other interests in the future, Lee would still enjoy being a part-time magician.

"I could use magic in my job to enhance a boring day," Lee said. "I want to perform for a wide range of audience members, and of course, share the fun in experiencing magic itself." ♦



FALCON / SARAH HULL

F. Lee 2012

Saratoga High School

MAPing out the road to executive producer

BY Dylan Jew

On the average day, SHS TV executive producer senior Alex Chan can be found in the MAP building, where he is in charge of an entire staff of broadcast journalists.

His position is analogous to the duties of an editor-in-chief of a newspaper. All the videos have to get signed off by him before they can be published. He spends much of his time checking and editing videos made by on-air reporters.

Chan's favorite part about being executive producer is the "freedom of being the boss and not having anyone in control of him."

Chan's path to this position began when he took Media Arts 1 as a sophomore. From there he became the unit producer in his first year at SHS TV. As the executive producer, he must know how to run everything. His advice to other students applying for the sought-after position is to be interested in the production and produce quality work.

As a unit producer, Chan managed a group of six reporters. This year, Chan

has the responsibility of making sure the other producers along with the entire staff are on task and on top of their deadlines. He keeps the operation running smoothly by checking in with SHS TV adviser Tony Palma and the other producers.

One down side to being the executive producer is not reporting and making videos or projects.

"I miss [the videos] sometimes," Chan said. "I miss being creative and seeing the final product when it's finished."

In order to be a member of SHS TV, a student must have taken either Media Arts 1 or Journalism 1.

"I recommend taking media arts," Chan said, "because Mr. Palma is the teacher, and it will help if he already knows you."

There are many characteristics that define an executive producer. Students must be responsible, organized, assertive and good in both the media arts and journalism aspects of SHS TV.

"Students need to have a real interest in filming and journalism," Chan said. "Don't apply for executive producer just



FALCON // PARUL SINGH

>> Ask a Leader

Q: If I've never edited videos before, how do I become executive producer?

A: Just join MAP and maybe you'll find an interest in media arts. That's what happened to me. I didn't know I was into all of this until I tried the multimedia journalism program.

<< AlexChan

to put it on college apps."

Having good leadership skills is also extremely important for executive producers. The executive producer needs to make sure the entire staff is on task and must have a lot of dedication. Good candidates are people who naturally lead group projects or are team captains for sports.

With SHS TV still in its early stages, having started in 2009, the executive

producer must be flexible and willing to learn at all times. Saratoga's multimedia journalists are still settling into their \$3 million facility, and they are constantly experimenting with new applications of the technology at their disposal. Chan has been busy this year making sure everything is set up the way he wants. As executive producer, he has launched the SHS TV website, advertising opportunities and the openings for videos. ♦

Where does a leader go?

>> John Roberts
ASB Secretary 1984
Investment firm owner

Q: How did your experiences as a leader in high school help you later in life?

A: My experience as a student body officer helped me extraordinarily after high school. Interacting with adults (i.e. Karen Hyde) in a business setting provided me with valuable real world experiences that carried through to job interviews after college.



Roberts

I remember giving a presentation to the school board at one of their meetings—quite intimidating for a 17 year old. This helped when it came time to do college presentations, and I would say it helped me land a summer job at IBM that I had for three summers in college.

These opportunities in turn helped me land a good job after college and get into law school.

Q: Are you still an active leader in your current life? How so?

A: Yes. I am one of the owners of my firm, Denver Investments, a \$9 billion investment advisor, and have been working there since 1996. I am active on a number of non-profit boards, and serve as the chair of trustees of one of these non-profits.

—by David Eng

Leading more than just an act

BY Ashwini Velchamy

As junior Penelope Burgess stands in the spotlight, center stage, all eyes are fixed firmly on her. She delivers her lines with ease as the character she is playing takes over her. To audience members, being the lead seems like something a person just does easily. Those involved, however, know just how much work it takes to be the lead of a play. But who becomes the lead in the first place?

"Basically, someone that can mold into their idea of that character, but still come up

with original and creative ideas of their own," said Burgess, who played one of the leads in the play "Our Town."

Senior Jae Lee, who is the lead in the spring musical "Jekyll and Hyde," believes that the most important quality of a lead is the ability to keep an open mind and not be afraid to make a fool of oneself.

Drama teacher Kerry Mohnike said choosing who becomes the lead usually depends on the part itself.

"Obviously, it helps if one has some

training and experience," Mohnike said, "but sometimes directors see things in auditions, follow up on references or just have a hunch."

She said leads in high school plays are typically determined by seniority, but that the same principle does not necessarily influence real-world directors.

"A lead has to carry a show, so being suited for the part, being responsible to their castmates and director and coping with a large number of lines all play a part," Mohnike said.

However, Lee stresses that being the lead is not the most important part about drama.

Lee also said how everyone's input is appreciated in drama, no matter what role they come from.

"I've played many supporting roles and smaller parts, and having been on both sides of the spectrum, I don't find that I get any special treatment strictly because I am the lead," Lee said.

Getting into drama

Lee encourages aspiring actors to not feel self-conscious or care too much what

others think.

"Just do it! Not just in a 'try it out' kind of way," Lee said. "Once you get a part and start to get the groove of things, make a fool of yourself! The more you experiment, the more foolish you'll look. Getting comfortable and feeling outrageous will take you a long way."

After he is assigned a part, Lee learns his lines and always peruses the script to understand his character's motivations in each scene.

Burgess offers similar advice about preparing for drama.

"I go back and think about my character," said Burgess. "Why they're doing what they're doing, why they're saying what they're saying, why they are who they are. Then it's memorizing lines and songs and blocking and dancing and once that's done, it's all about performing and having a good time!"

Love of drama

"It's so much easier than you think and it's incredibly fun," said Burgess. "Where else would you be able to dress up as a prostitute, wear curlers all day long without any questions, or get murdered four nights in a row?"

Lee enjoys drama because of the freedom that comes with it.



FALCON // VIVIAN LeTRAN

Senior Jae Lee will lead the spring musical "Jekyll and Hyde."

"I love roaming some alternate world, exploring as someone else would, and finally giving the audience the opportunity to do the same," said Lee.

Mohnike's advice for being a lead is simple and straightforward.

"Practice, take classes, get to know people," said Mohnike. "Walk-on stars are not unheard of, but drama can be a tough place for a weak ego." ♦

>> online extra

For full-length stories and a guide to being a sports team captain, visit:

www.saratogafalcon.org/features

Follow the

Sometimes we take leaders for granted, as if they are some kind of supernatural beings. But anyone can be a leader.

Leader extraordinaire: ASB pres. shares secrets

BY Emily Williams

Senior David Mandell knows what it takes to make people listen, he knows what it takes to be a role model, and, most importantly, he knows what it takes to be an influential student at Saratoga High.

Mandell fills numerous leadership roles for many different on-campus organizations. He is the Associated Student Body (ASB) president, he acts and directs plays, he is drum major in band, and he is speech and debate captain.

What makes a good leader?

Mandell has worked hard to gain the respect and trust of fellow students, a virtue that has served him well. He has been involved in leadership since he was the board representative at Saratoga Elementary when he was in kindergarten.

"I got to eat ice cream sandwiches at the first meeting," Mandell said. "I think that's why I wanted to become a leader in the beginning."

But Mandell soon found that being a leader was more than just eating ice cream sandwiches. He discovered that "it's every day things" that make a person a leader.

"It's the simplest things like saying 'good morning' or 'hello' to some one that you don't

know. You'd be surprised how many times I have heard that and it made my day so much better. Just a smile makes some one's day that much better," he said.

The key to being an effective leader, according to Mandell, is gaining the respect and trust of others. People have to be able to trust their leader to know what he or she is doing. This is true not just in student government but also in life.

The passion to lead

Mandell credits his upbringing for his ability to command respect from others, whether it be adults or peers.

"My mom always taught me really good morals. Simple things like thank you notes—they don't make you a leader, but it gets the respect of others," he said.

Mandell's combination of charm, friendliness, honesty and genuine compassion earn him respect from adults and peers alike.

"He's a lead-by-example kind of kid and I think people recognize that," assistant principal Karen Hyde said. "He brings people in and makes it work for them. He makes people feel special."

Mandell's natural leadership qualities and his passion for the responsibilities that he as-



FALCON // SARAH HULL

>> Ask a Leader

Q: What does it mean to be an effective leader?

A: Some people base being a leader on a certain position you hold and some people define it on the little acts that you do through out the day. I think that you need both to be a very effective leader.

<< David Mandell

>> hyde's side

Running for class office

Show up: Attend student council meetings every other Monday night at 6 p.m.

Run: If you're shy, sign up to be a commissioner.

Who: We look for people who are like 'I'll do it just because I want to get involved.' No prior experience needed.

—Asst. Principal Karen Hyde

sumes have given him the confidence to lead his peers. In the end, Mandell said, it's not about the job, but the intent of the aspiring leader.

"You just have to do what you love and sometimes you'll be a leader in your own way. Sometimes you won't have the position, but people will follow you if you trust yourself," he said.

The confidence to dream

Mandell has always made room to follow his own heart no matter what others think. In seventh grade at Redwood Middle school, Mandell opted to join honor chorus even though a friend cautioned him that doing so would be "social suicide." Mandell believes that his ability to follow his passions with confidence has improved his ability to lead others.

"If I am committing 'social suicide' at

least I'm doing what I love, and I think that is somewhat of a difference that makes me stand out," he said.

According to Mandell, the greatest barrier for students who want to become leaders is the fear of rejection.

"I think people are afraid of trying and not being received well by the other students," he said. "If you stand up there and make a speech and they make fun of you it puts you back. It is really easy to be swept up in the high school hierarchy to be the cool one as opposed to the one following your dreams."

Mandell's positive attitude keeps him going even when things don't work out. He keeps his spirits up by looking at the opportunity in his rejection and failure.

"These are the times that we need to take some risks," Mandell said. "Life shouldn't be measured by the things we do but by the risks we take." ♦

Drum majors, orchestra managers 'do the do'

BY Ashley Tang

Any student participating in a music program knows and appreciates the leaders who work diligently to keep the department running smoothly. These leaders go beyond what is expected of most other members, thus maintaining the unity of a band or orchestra.

"Leaders are people who walk the walk and oftentimes do the do," music department director Michael Boitz said. "Someone who makes an impact on the program to make it stronger and better."

These leaders improve the music program by investing both time and effort.

"You always see our managers running around and working hard," Boitz said. "When something needs to be done, they get it done."

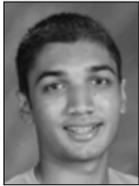
Contrary to some beliefs, these leaders did not simply show up one day already possessing the qualities that they have now.

Junior Akash Kar, head manager of band and an orchestra manager, believes that in order to achieve a leadership position in the music program a student must learn to be punctual, dependable and dedicated.

"First and foremost, you need to be an active person in the group," Kar said. "Once you've established that, the next thing to do is to

show initiative. Start to help out once in a while when help is needed."

Students wanting to take action can do so in a variety of ways. Aspiring band leaders can come early and help the drum majors set up or stay back and help clean up the field. Ambitious orchestra members can assist orchestra managers with setting up chairs and stands for rehearsal or they could help "rack and stack" after rehearsal.



Kar

"If you're a good marcher, go out and help the people who aren't as great as you," Kar said. "Or give them some advice on your own time. It's very obvious who's dedicated and who's not."

Little things like helping someone out or picking up a piece of trash in the band room do get noticed, more than some might think.

"In my mind, I can see at the end of rehearsal who helps put stuff away, and who does it with a good heart and a good spirit," Boitz said.

After proving his or her dedication with time and effort, a student may consider applying for

the job of drum major, band leader or orchestra manager. But first, what exactly are their responsibilities?

"As drum major, you're kind of the mediator between the teacher and the students," senior drum major Jason Shiuan said.

"Basically, your main goal is to make sure rehearsal runs smoothly for the teachers and directors so that they don't have to worry about small things like having a microphone, getting the field set up or making sure people are ready. We kind of help them run the group."

Band and orchestra managers set up and clean up for rehearsal, coordinate competi-

>> who's who

- Orchestra Managers
- Laruen Gardanier (12) Cello
- Walter Hsiang (12) Cello
- William Tang (12) Violin
- Alton Fong (11) Violin
- Akash Kar (11) Bass
- Hansen Qian (11) Cello
- Vivian Tsai (11) Violin
- Christopher Lee (10) Violin

—David Eng

tions and concerts, take attendance and prepare and distribute music. Behind the scenes, band managers prepare schedules and drill coordinate sheets and equipment. In contrast, section leaders run sectionals about once a week and need to be voted in by band members.

Once a student decides to apply for a leadership position, he or she can talk to Boitz to obtain an

application and sign up for an audition. "The application [for drum major] is like any other application," Shiuan said. "You have to write a couple of paragraphs about why you want the position and how you can help the group."

The audition part of applying for drum major requires much more preparation, although the actual audition differs each year. Previous candidates have had to teach a small group of people how to march. But for Shiuan, his audition was to conduct the band for one piece.

Although applying for a leadership position may require a lot of work, it's part of what makes the music program so successful.

"We have to narrow it down and make it as stringent as possible so that we can have a very strong manager team," Kar said, "which, I'm happy to say, we do have." ♦

Leaders



>> Myron **Zhang**, 11
Hours of sleep per night: 7-8
Extra Activities: Extra workload from 6 AP/Honors classes, summer science internship applications
Number of classes: 6
Opinion of stress: 5 out of 10

“My extracurricular activities add to the stress because I don’t actually love being a part of them.”



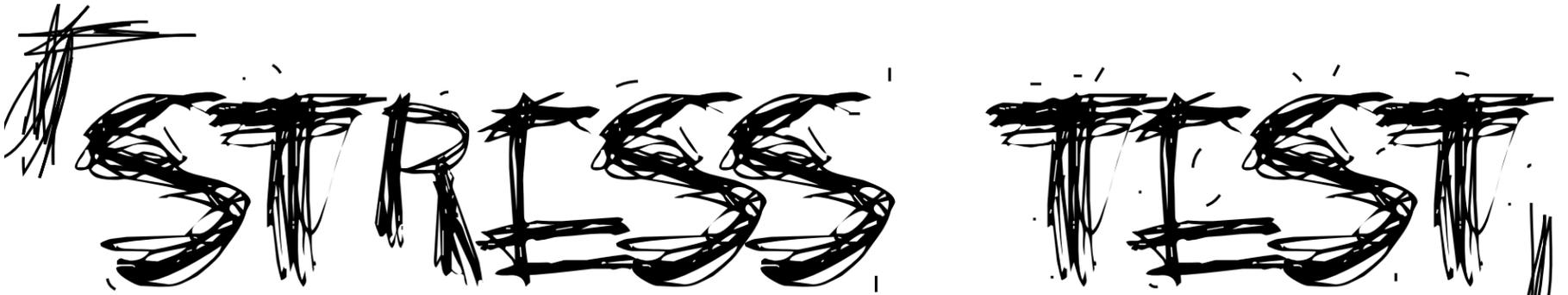
>> Todd **Nguyen**, 10
Hours of sleep per night: 6-7
Hours of homework per day: 3
Extracurriculars: Robotics, swimming, band
Goals: Get straight As
Opinion of stress: 6 out of 10

“The most stressful event is taking Mr. Kucer’s chem tests. Also, I have band, swimming ... and more band.”



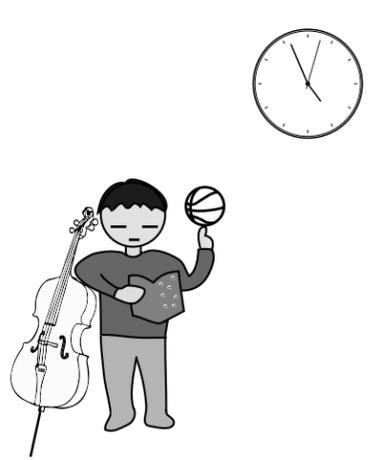
>> Karen **Sung**, 09
Hours of sleep per night: 6-7
Hours of homework per day: 4
Extracurriculars: Piano, tennis
Goals: Get into a good college
Number of classes: 6
Opinion of stress: 5 out of 10

“Although I’m only a freshman, I feel stressed because of all the pressure that is put on me.”



Students and professionals offer their opinions on relieving stress and relaxing in the SHS pressure cooker.

Kyumin Shim



Arnav Dugar and Kyumin Shim

ALL WORK AND NO PLAY

When it comes to both stress and academic success, it’s no secret that Saratoga is at the top. How does high pressure impact students?

BY Kim **Tsai** & Giulia **Curcelli**

Like a lot of students, junior Rebecca Chen wishes there were more than 24 hours in a day. She goes to school from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and then is off to a 3-hour swim practice, followed by 5 or more hours of homework. She usually only gets 7 hours of sleep on a normal weekday.

Overloaded with stress, students often feel that there is no hope or that there is simply too much to do. Guidance counselor Alinna Satake agrees that, in general, high school is a stressful time.

“In a school like ours,” Satake said, “you get a lot of self-perpetuated pressures [such as] peer pressure and social pressure to perform and outperform each other.”

As students go through their high school years, they become more accustomed to the presence of extreme stress.

“It’s hard to live up to the standards that people, especially our parents, want us to meet,” sophomore Ashley Joshi said. “I try really hard to do the best I can

do, but sometimes it’s not good enough, so I push myself to give more than I have.”

A large part of the stress also comes from the academics themselves and the amount of work they require. Students take numerous honors and AP classes to appeal to elite colleges. However, admission to a name-brand school doesn’t always promise success.

“A student’s character and ability is ultimately going to be much more meaningful in determining their success than the name of the college they attend,” assistant principal Brian Safine said.

Admins want students to slow down

Both Safine and Satake agree that if students could accomplish one step at a time and feel proud about it, their lives would become much healthier. Guidance counselor Christy Cali believes that procrastination often increases stress, and students should be doing more earlier to avoid running into problems in the future, during a so-called “crunch period.”

This is, in fact, often the case. Junior Shannon Roseberry often struggles to balance her school work with her extracurricular activities such as drama, volunteering, piano, dance, Girl Scouts and recreational gymnastics.

“I don’t get enough sleep and I am tired the next day,” Roseberry said. “Being tired makes me procrastinate and not get stuff done.”

Statistically speaking, a spring 2010 School Site Council Survey shows 51.6 percent of parents said

their children were “about right, but not overstressed” while 40.3 percent of parents said their children were either “more stressed than [they] think is healthy” or “way more stressed than [they] think is healthy.” The rest of the parents reported there was little or no stress for their student.

However, the staff thinks that this is simply due to the competitive nature of the school. Safine believes that Saratoga High has done a lot to combat stress in recent years.

Relieving stress for the greater good

“Seven years ago, there was one tutorial on campus, not three,” Safine said. “There was no morning break. There was no block schedule. If you had seven periods, you had homework for those every night.”

Recently, the school has opted for another change to reduce stress. Starting next school year, first semester finals will be before winter break.

“We didn’t plan it to make students more miserable,” Safine said. “We planned it so you guys can have a real break when you finish finals.”

On a personal level, students also look toward hobbies that can alleviate some of the stress. Sophomore Sophia Zhu enjoys watching anime or going on Facebook to balance her stressful routine.

Satake agrees that making time for enjoyable activities is a priority when trying to reduce stress.

“Even if it’s just 15 minutes of doing something you love,” Satake said, “do things to make you happy.” ♦



>> Chris **Chung**, 12
Hours of sleep per night: 6.5
Tests in an average week: 3-4
Extracurriculars: Marching band drum major, rally commission, ASB
Number of classes: 7
Opinion of stress: 7-8 out of 10

“I want to go to a college that fits my personality, where I can do well academically and have a social life.”



>> Charles **Li**, 09
Hours of sleep per night: 7
Hours of homework per day: 2
Extracurriculars: Speech and debate, wrestling, robotics
Number of classes: 6
Opinion of stress: 6 out of 10

“To relieve stress, I just try to relax and go to sleep. I feel the most stressed when I forget to do something.”



>> Rebecca **Chen**, 11
Hours of sleep per night: 6-7
Hours of homework: 5+
Average number of tests: 2-3
To relieve stress: Talks to friends
Stress sources: School, swimming
Opinion of stress: 10 out of 10

“It’s tough right now with school and swimming and parents; it feels like I can’t keep up with everything.”



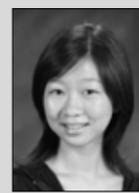
>> Brandon **Pierce**, 12
Hours of sleep per night: 6
Hours of homework per day: 1
Extracurriculars: Rally, volleyball, youth band, link crew, choir
Goals: Make it in music
Opinion of stress: 8 out of 10

“I want to make it big in music, and [what I do] in my few spare minutes is move towards that goal.”



>> Jeffrey **Scott**, History
Hours of sleep per night: 5
Hours of lesson prep: 3-4.
Extra Activities: Taking classes for masters’ degree starting in April, hanging out with friends
Opinion of stress: 8 out of 10

“To relieve stress, I attend sports games. My dad has season tickets to the San Francisco Giants.”



>> Maggie **Sun**, 09
Hours of sleep per night: 7-8
Hours of homework per day: 2-5
Average tests per week: 4-5
Extracurriculars: Dance, guard
Goal: Go to a good college
Opinion of stress: 8 out of 10

“I think stress is the feeling of not being able to deal with everything at once and not having enough time.”

Stress impacts students in both the short term and long term

by Evaline **Ju** & Jennifer **Jin**

The star basketball player was in a scoring slump and despite studying for hours each night, her grades had dipped. Her parents noticed the changes and told her to see a therapist. She thought it was a crazy idea, but after a few appointments, she felt like she had more control over her life again.

This star basketball player is far from the only teen to see her life spiraling out of control. At an academically intense school such as Saratoga, students have become accustomed to living with constant pressure. As a result, stress has become a common problem among students.

“[Junior year] is really stressful because you have all these tests, SATs, SAT IIs, and you have to keep your grades up,” junior Sarika Srivastava said.

Dr. Chris Polizzi, a clinical psychologist in Los Gatos, sees many high school students “who are high-performing both academically and athletically,” but become stressed by their activities.

“A certain amount of stress is inevitable in life, even if a person could have everything the way [he wants],” he said. “In fact, low levels of stress are actually helpful to motivate us and push us to perform at our best.”

However, if this stress is left to build up, there can be disastrous results. By changing the way bodies normally function, stress disrupts the natural balance essential for well-being. Over time, it can take a toll on both the mind and body.

According to Polizzi, long-term stress

without breaks can result in a range of problems, such as making more mistakes, forgetfulness or sleeping problems.

Chronic stress can damage the immune response system, according to Stanford University’s Center on Stress and Health. With added exposure to stress, a body’s ability to fight disease decreases.

“Planning ahead to avoid crises can also keep your stress at manageable levels.”

>> Dr. Chris Polizzi

A body produces stress hormones when necessary, increasing blood pressure. However, with constant stress, organs can begin to fail and cause the body to suffer anything from weight loss to strokes and heart attacks. In addition, stress can adversely affect mental growth and health.

Psychologically, stress causes quick temper, anxiety, irritability and a lack of concentration.

“[Long-term stress can cause] a failure to maintain basic healthy relationships with peers,” said Jason Esswein, a San Jose marriage and family therapist.

Even when a person mentally recovers from stress, the physical harm may remain until further treatment. While some simply cope with stress by sharing their thoughts or finding different interests, other teenagers feel the need to turn to stronger alternatives that may result in drug abuse and eating disorders that can

increase the recovery period.

To alleviate stress, Polizzi advises using techniques to relax, like breathing deeply or altering negative thoughts, which turns off the body’s fight-or-flight response.

He tries to adjust his patients’ schedules by adding in more free time or fun activities and changing diet and exercise regimens to aid in treatment.

According to Los Gatos marriage and family therapist Dr. Beth Proudfoot, stress hormones build up in muscles, and exercise releases them.

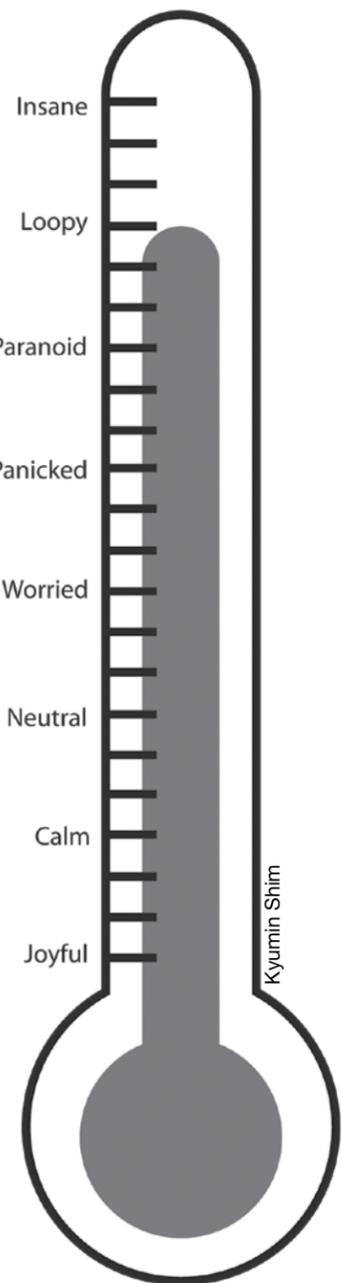
“Music can be helpful, but not if you’re trying to do two things at once,” Proudfoot said. “So, lay down and listen to quiet music, then turn it off before you try to focus on something else.”

On the bright side, eating a healthy diet, exercising and communicating with friends or family can prevent stress in the first place.

“[One has] to learn to express feelings and be aware of surroundings,” Esswein said. “One needs to set boundaries.”

When feeling anxious, some people experience an increase in heart beat, difficulty breathing or irritability. Some also choose to increase their consumption of substances like alcohol or drugs, often leading to worse problems than the stress they were originally feeling. Awareness of the signs of stress can help a person to combat it.

“To avoid excessive stress, it is important to know what types of situations trigger stress for you individually,” Polizzi said. “Planning ahead to avoid crises can also help keep your stress at manageable levels. Also, ask for help!” ♦



>> What’s your **stress** level? <<

1.) You have ___ AP/Honors classes

- A) 0. Just cruising through.
- B) 1-2. Meh. Just okay.
- C) 3+. Just a 5.0 GPA is unacceptable.

2.) On an average night, you get ___ hours of sleep

- A) 7+. I sleep more than my dog does.
- B) 4-6. My eye’s twitching and I live on Monster.
- C) 0-3. What’s sleep?

3.) You have ___ hours of homework per night

- A) 0-1. Go home, freshman.
- B) 2-3. Homework? No ... Internet ... forever ...
- C) 4+. Procrastinators unite ... later.

4.) You regularly attend ___ extracurricular activities

- A) Maybe **one** a week. Maybe.
- B) 2-3. I enjoy the activities I attend; I don’t think I need any more.
- C) 4+. Band, sports, drama, orchestra—I do ‘em all.

And just how **stressed** are you?

If you answered **mostly As**, you’re pretty chill. You are the envy of upperclassmen who wish they were you, or you’re a second semester senior.

If you answered **mostly Bs**, you’re the average Saratoga overachiever, but you’re not too stressed to have some free time.

If you answered **mostly Cs**, it’s too late to save you. Comfort yourself with chocolate, Snuggies and reality television.

—Christine Bancroft



>> Clara **Chao**, 11
Hours of sleep per night: 5-6
Hours of homework per day: 3
Extracurriculars: Orchestra
To relieve stress: Runs, reads, sleeps, goes to church
Opinion of stress: 4 out of 10

“When I go to church or play a song I really like in Orchestra, I feel better. I feel stressed when I’m wasting time.”



>> Maya **Nag**, 10
Hours of sleep per night: 5-6
Hours of homework per day: 4
Average tests per week: 2
Extracurriculars: Running, band
To relieve stress: Listens to piano
Opinion of stress: 6 out of 10

“I feel quite stressed during the third and sixth weeks of the grading period; teachers administer so many tests.”



>> Ken **Nguyen**, AP Lang
Hours of sleep per night: 6-7
Hours of lesson prep: Many
Peak stress season: Oct.-Jan. because it is the end of the term
Main stressor: Grading essays
Opinion of stress: 6-7 out of 10

“I go exercise, cook, or watch brainless TV, like ‘Jersey Shore.’ It’s hilarious; it makes me feel better about myself.”

Baseball is my life

Back from injury, junior relishes sport despite his intense workloads



>> Roy Bisht

Da Bisht

January 31. For many students, this is just a regular dreadful Monday morning, but for me, it is the beginning of baseball season.

Baseball is my life. I watch every Giants game during the season, and during their off-season I count the days until the first pitch of next season. I love repping the Giants with player jersey shirts and going to Giants games, whether it be 20 rows behind home plate or in the bleacher seats about 350 feet away from the action. Watching baseball may come as a thrill to me, but being in the game is even better.

After waiting 10 months to play for the school team again after injuring my arm mid-season last year, it's obvious how much I'm itching to step on the field again. And when I say itching I was literally sitting in my A.P. U.S. History class during seventh period, itching.

Appreciating the game

High school baseball practice is not the most exciting thing out there, but it sure felt like it after not participating in a team practice since last March. I savored every grounder I took and every ball I threw like it was the last time I would ever play the game. After seeing my season end last year because of one ill-fated throw, I've learned to respect the game more and treat every day like it is the last day I'll ever step on a baseball field.

What better way to take out frustration from junior year than crushing a ball with a metal bat?

Especially during junior year, where the intense workload from A.P. and honors classes can completely overwhelm a student (not to mention the SATs), baseball is a great way to relieve the stress that has been building up for the past five months. I mean, what better way to take out frustration from junior year than crushing a ball with a metal bat?

A way of life

As cliché as it may sound, baseball is more than a game; it's a way of life. I live, sleep and breath baseball, so the feeling I had when I got back onto the field with my teammates was incredible—definitely worth the 10 month hiatus.

I don't care if you call it America's past-time or the most boring sport on the planet, it's still the sport that I live for. Yes, I actually enjoy taking extra grounders after practice with my baseball buddies and getting extra swings in the batting cage. Sure, it might just be high school baseball, but that's doesn't stop me from anxiously counting down the minutes until practice every day during school. ♦

Family dynasty continues to grow in SHS athletics



FALCON // PARUL SINGH

Sophomore Mary Johnson, senior Greg Johnson, sophomore Stephen Ruff and freshman Jacob Marr share relatives who have dominated Saratoga athletics in recent years. Their tradition started in 2002 when a cousin entered the football program.

BY Roy Bisht & Dylan Jew

UC Berkeley football wide receiver and '08 alum Alex Lagemann, senior football captain Greg Johnson, Pomona College scholar athlete and '07 alum Augie Lagemann, sophomore varsity baseball player Stephen Ruff, freshman football player Jacob Marr and sophomore basketball player Mary Johnson. What do all they all have in common?

They are all part of a long list of relatives who have dominated athletics at Saratoga High in recent years. The Lagemanns, Johnsons, Ruff and Marr are all cousins.

Their sports tradition began with Augie in 2002 when he entered the football program. Nine years and five relatives later, the family is still going strong.

"It's awesome," Greg said. "I've

been blessed to have so many people in my family have such a strong connection through sports."

The family has always enjoyed sports and gets together to play during family gatherings. Sports bridge the age gaps between the family members and have allowed the kids to become closer and have more things in common with each other, Greg said.

"Our age groups are so spread out that when I was younger, the older kids were forced by their parents to play with us," Greg said. "But now that we're older, we all play together and have a great time."

All the kids love different sports, including wiffleball, football and basketball, he said. Most of the kids play a variety of sports.

"We play a lot of video games but mostly sports. It's great to have a fam-

ily that loves playing sports so much," Ruff said.

Not only do the casual games entertain the family, but they also help the younger ones improve their athletic abilities by giving advice on improving their games and challenging them.

"We sometimes ask them what it's like to play college sports and we pick their brain for ways to get better," Ruff said. "Plus it's even more competitive for the younger kids when they're going up against college football players."

Even though they may compete hard in pickup games, they are still a family "who always support each other," Greg said. With such a tight-knit family comes the great sense of pride.

"I really enjoy being able to say 'he's my cousin' or 'she's my cousin'; that type of stuff makes me really proud to be a part of this family," Ruff said. ♦

Athletes grieve swim coach death

MONTA VISTA LEGEND RON FREEMAN TAUGHT THOUSANDS

BY Tim Rollinson

The Monta Vista High School pool deck will be noticeably quieter this year. Longtime coach and teacher Ron Freeman passed away on Jan. 21 at age 52 from a heart attack after watching a Monta Vista basketball game.

Freeman was a figurehead in the Monta Vista community. His career at Monta Vista lasted more than 30 years, a time in which he taught and coached countless students. He could be found on campus at all hours teaching both PE and history while coaching swimming and water polo. He was known by many as "Screamin' Freeman," a tribute to his booming voice and fiery personality.

"He was an icon," swim coach Kristen Thomson said. "Everyone knew who he was."

Monta Vista has been in mourning since his passing, honoring him with flowers and notes on the pool deck. The school has also honored him with pictures and notes on its official website. A Facebook page in his honor now has almost 2,000 members. However, the bad news has not been contained to Monta Vista; it has made waves among the entire aquatic community. An article even appeared on the website of USA water polo reporting the untimely death.

>> his legacy

Ron Freeman

Director of Santa Clara Valley Athletic League for swimming and water polo

Thirty-year career at Monta Vista

Taught history and PE

Also coached SHS students

"I heard about it right after it happened," senior swimmer Adam Hinshaw said. "He was really well-known and respected in the swimming community."

Thomson mentioned plans of honoring Freeman at this year's league finals,

which will be hosted at Saratoga on May 4, 5 and 6.

Freeman served as the director of the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League for both swimming and water polo, scheduling and coordinating events. Thomson is hoping the finals could be named in Freeman's honor.

Freeman also coached SHS students. "He was brutal sometimes, but it was always to help us get better," said senior Will Tang, who learned to play water polo from Freeman.

"He seemed intimidating at first but in reality he was really encouraging," said senior Pia Mishra, who had Freeman as a water polo coach her freshman year at Monta Vista. "He was the hardest working coach I ever had."

The loss will leave a gaping hole in the local swimming scene, and many young athletes will never get to experience the truly unique Freeman.

"Everything he did was for the students," Freeman said. "He never gave up on them; his dedication was really admirable." ♦

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Improved teamwork takes team to new level

Young talent leads team to 4-4 record in El Camino Division

BY Karthik Annaamalai & Roy Bisht

After a slow start, team meetings and teamwork have changed the Falcons from a mediocre team to one with a strong 11-7 record.

"We evaluated ourselves during one of our team meetings and decided that our chemistry and teamwork needed to improve and since then we've started playing much better," sophomore center Stevie Berman said.

After beating Wilcox 54-50 on Jan. 25 and Monta Vista 44-33 on Jan. 21, the Falcons have climbed from the bottom of the standings to the middle, and are now tied with Monta Vista for third place in the six-team El Camino League.

The change in play has been noticeable on the court, which Berman attributed to better teamwork.

"We have played much better as a team and our overall performance has really stepped up too," Berman said.

Even though the Falcons stumbled early on in league play, losing 54-44 to Mountain View on Jan. 18, 49-36 to Milpitas on Jan. 7 and 41-39 to Fremont on Jan. 4,

their momentum from the Wilcox and Monta Vista victories has given them a newfound confidence.

"Right now, we feel like we can beat any team in our league," Berman said.

"This momentum will hopefully carry us into first place."

On Jan. 28, the Falcons suffered a tough loss against Milpitas in overtime by a score of 52-50, and even though they lost, players said the game will do nothing but push them to play better in the games ahead.

"In the Milpitas game we fought hard and in overtime the shots just weren't falling for us, but I think we can easily bounce back," junior center James Huang said.

After the Falcons lost guard Daniel Chou, the team's consistent top scorer at 13.3 points per game, to graduation last year, coach Trevor Naas needed someone to step up to fill the massive hole. Senior guard and forward Chris Guengerich stepped up to take that role and has done nothing but impress this season.

"Last year, when we needed a bucket, we looked to Daniel [Chou]," senior guard Tyler Jew said, "but this year, Chris [Guengerich] is the guy we look

to score points. He always manages to find an open look to sink a basket."

Current team leaders in scoring are Guengerich, Berman, and

sophomore guard Kyle Dozier. Berman is also the leading rebounder.

Since the team's pre-season winning percentage was well over .500, they have already clinched a spot in CCS playoffs. Their next match is against Monta Vista at home on Feb. 11. ♦

"Right now, we feel like we can beat any team in our league. This momentum will hopefully carry us into first place."

>> Sophomore Stevie Berman

>> scoreboard

Jan. 25

Saratoga 54, Wilcox 50

Sophomore forward Kyle Dozier sinks two free throws with 2.3 seconds left to secure the victory.

Jan. 28

Milpitas 52, Saratoga 50 (OT)

Falcons suffer an overtime loss versus a team that blew them out earlier this season.

Feb. 1

Saratoga 59, Santa Clara 55

Senior Jasneil Nat scores a season-high 23 points.



FALCON // PARUL SINGH

Senior forward Jasneil Nat attempts to score a basket against Wilcox on Jan. 25. Nat finished with 10 points on 4 field goals.

ATHLETE OF THE ISSUE

Football star also excels on the basketball court

BY Aasim Naqvi

Senior Chris Guengerich is known for his stellar play as a wide receiver on the varsity football team. But he has also gained a reputation as a force to be reckoned with on the basketball court.



Guengerich

"I'm probably more skilled in football just because I've focused on it more," Guengerich said. "I've worked harder for [football], but I actually like playing in basketball games more."

Guengerich, who starts as a forward, is one of a few players returning to the varsity squad this year after last year's 9-15 season. This season he is currently averaging 11 points per game during the six league games played so far.

As a leader on both teams, comparisons between his football and basketball careers are inevitable. Due to his great play at wide receiver, Guengerich won the prestigious San Francisco 49ers Player of the Week for Week Five.

As for his love of basketball, he said the social aspect of the game was the initial force in luring him to basketball.

"A lot of my friends played [basketball], so I started playing," Guengerich said.

As he began playing from a young age, a few aspects of the sport served to keep Guengerich's attention all the way through high school. Other than the sheer enjoyment from playing the game, the physical benefits basketball offers give more than enough reason to

continue playing, Guengerich said.

"I still like playing basketball because it's fun and I've been playing for a while," he said. "It also keeps me active and in shape."

Teammates praised Guengerich's abilities and effort. Varsity guard Kyle Dozier said Guengerich's presence helps the team.

"He cares about his teammates and is unselfish," Dozier said.

Despite being a quieter presence on the court compared to his football prowess, Guengerich's reputation as a tough competitor and strong leader on the football team is no different when it comes to basketball, according to his teammates.

"He may not be the most vocal person, but he plays hard and leads by example," Dozier said. "He leads with the way he plays on the court, which helps the team a lot."

Additionally, Guengerich's strong work ethic never seems to waver, varsity forward Salmaan Javed said.

"I'd say he runs the hardest and brings the most physicality during games and practices," Javed said.

After playing at a high level for several years and experiencing intense, tough games, his pregame butterflies don't last the whole game, Guengerich said.

"I get nervous before every game until I feel for how my opponent plays," he said. "I'm also less nervous after I score my first basket."

Even after playing a sport for so long, he said he stays motivated for one main reason.

"I always want to keep improving and get better," he said. ♦

"I'm probably more skilled in football just because I've focused on it more, but I like basketball more."

>> Senior Chris Guengerich

GIRLS' SOCCER

Team looks to make CCS for second year in a row

BY Shivani Chadha & Olivia Chock

With one last game left in the regular season, the girls' soccer team, currently in first place in the El Camino League, is getting close to making CCS for the second time in seven years.

In order to make it to CCS, the Falcons must finish at the top of the league. The team must perform well in their next four games to maintain their edge over Milpitas and Fremont, who are close behind.

Making it to CCS will be no easy task, especially in the team's last game today against Fremont. The team will be missing several key players including sophomore Paige Kingston due to the Mexico trip, freshman center midfielder Stephanie Ho said.

"Fremont is really good and physical," Ho said. "Playing against them will be challenging without some of our best players."

As of late January, the team had yet to lose a league game. The team won its game against Santa Clara 1-0 on Jan. 31 and also won 1-0 against Wilcox on Jan. 28. Freshman forward Lindsay Webster scored a goal in both games.

The team beat Santa Clara, Cupertino, Lynbrook and Milpitas prior to the Jan. 21 game against Fremont, a team the Falcons tied 2-2. Juniors Kari Clark and Antara Rao scored goals against Fremont.

"[Fremont is] a really strong team and they challenge us in every aspect of the game, but I still believe our team is stronger," sophomore defender Megan Doles said.

This season, much of the team's success can be attributed to new coach Molly Flannigan's implementation of a new formation on the field. The formation is called the 4-5-1 with three midfielders

>> scoreboard

Jan. 21

Saratoga 2, Fremont 2

Juniors Kari Clark and Antara Rao led the team to score two goals.

Jan. 28

Saratoga 1, Wilcox 0

Freshman Lindsay Webster scored the goal.

Jan. 31

Saratoga 1, Santa Clara 0

Junior Courtney Brandt lofted a ball into the goalbox in a corner kick, and freshman Lindsay Webster headed it in.

forming a triangle in the center and two forwards that also play outside mid.

"The formation didn't work too well at the beginning of the year because it was new to all of us," Rao said. "But we got the hang of it by the time the season came around and it's really helped us offensively."

Doles said the advantage of the new formation is that the wings are always open, forcing a game through the middle of the field. In addition to the formation, individual skills and passing have helped the team progress overall.

"We pass really well which makes it easier for us to get around the other team," Clark said. "Our defense is also pretty solid and we have good midfielders and forwards who can shoot."

The Falcons have one game left in the season until CCS, so its biggest concern is staying hungry.

"Our biggest weakness will be staying strong throughout the rest of the season," Clark said. "We can't get caught up in the success we have had so far." ♦

Runner overcomes asthma

BY Emily Williams



FALCON // VIVIAN LETRAN

Most runners dread hot days, but for senior Jennifer Vannier, they are the perfect conditions for running. When it's cold, Vannier's asthma acts up, making it difficult for her to run. Yet, she keeps running anyway.

Before high school, Vannier was never a runner or even an athlete for that matter, but she was always interested.

"I went into high school not really knowing anything," she said. "I wanted to do all the sports; I wanted to be the person that was really athletic. I was really naive."

During her freshman year, Vannier joined the field hockey team, but she struggled to keep up with the rigorous training and conditioning of the sport.

"I was so far behind everybody and I couldn't tell why," she said. "It felt like I was really bad and I wasn't trying hard enough or something."

In fact, Vannier would get light-headed just walking around with her friends and passed out frequently. Finally, Vannier was diagnosed with extreme exercise-induced asthma two weeks before the start of her junior year.

"It was really frustrating because I didn't know what was happening, and when I found out it was almost even more frustrating because I knew that I had a handicap that probably will never go away," she said.

Vannier was cut from the field hockey team during her junior year as she struggled to find an asthma medi-

cine that worked for her. She was devastated, but she vowed that she would work twice as hard to make the team her senior year.

She wanted to focus on building her endurance. Her good friend and cross country runner senior Hannah Harter suggested that Vannier join the cross country team.

"I thought I could never do cross country," Vannier said. "[Harter] told me that effort is the most important thing, so I came and I ran."

Joining mid-way through the season was tough, but team coach Danny Moon welcomed her.

"I would not have been able to keep running if everyone on the team hated me and [the] coach hadn't been nice," she said.

While she was running cross country, Vannier continued to struggle to find an asthma medication that worked for her. One made her so sick that it took away her appetite and caused her to vomit every day before practice. However, she continued to try hard.

"I have to take double of what you are supposed to take in order to run, and I really object to taking steroids because they are against my morals," she said. "I tried to get off of them one time and I had a total emotional breakdown because of what that does to your emotions."

As the cross country season progressed, Vannier fell in love with the sport. She said that cross country has changed her life. Especially influential

was Moon, who encouraged her to "become self-motivated, push herself and most importantly, have fun."

"Running makes you a lot more emotionally stable. It's been my stress outlet," she said. "Also, I've been able to meet a lot of different types of people. They have almost become like my family now. They are always there for me and that really means a lot."

Vannier is neither a natural athlete nor the best on the team, but her spirit makes her stand out.

"[My asthma] also compels me to try harder, because I have to try twice as hard and twice as long just to be as good."

She said no matter what happens she always wants to do her

best, even though she sometimes feels that she should be faster for the amount of work and dedication she puts into the sport.

"As long as I am improving and trying, that's all that really matters for me," Vannier said. "It's sort of proving that I can do it even though I definitely may not be the best runner or athlete on the team."

Although Vannier initially joined cross country in order to get in shape for field hockey, she fell in love with running. Vannier hasn't touched a field hockey stick since she discovered her love of running.

"It was a blessing in disguise," she said. "It was such a terrible day and then I joined cross country and it's been my life since then." ♦



"[The fight] is sort of proving that I can do it even though I'm not the best runner on the team."

>> Senior Jennifer Vannier

BOYS' SOCCER



FALCON // SARAH HULL

Sophomore midfielder Amin Mirzadegan chases the ball against Mt. View on Jan. 21.

Falcons gaining ground on CCS appearance

BY Rohan Rajeev

At the beginning of the season, boys' soccer coach Adam Clarke had high expectations for his team—to finish in at least third place in the De Anza "A" Division, which would qualify them for CCS playoffs. Now he has started to see these hopes take shape as the team, currently in fourth place as of early February, plays its last few games of the season.

The Falcons will have a chance of grabbing a playoff spot by placing either fourth or fifth place as wild cards because they managed to remain undefeated during the preseason.

"We want to control our own destiny," he said. "This division is very talented, but I feel our squad is talented enough to have a guaranteed spot in the playoffs."

To strengthen the team and to secure a playoff spot, Clarke decided to recruit sophomore midfielder Amin Mirzadegan and freshman defender William Guy from the JV team. They both debuted for the Falcons in their 1-0 win at Santa Clara on Jan. 7.

"[Mirzadegan and Guy] showed potential for the next level from the beginning and contributed to the team's success," Clarke said.

Working with the new players, the team managed to hold Palo Alto to a 0-0 draw on Jan. 28 after previously losing to them 4-1 earlier in the season on Jan. 5. Prior to that game, the Falcons had lost 2-1 in a tough battle with Mountain View on Jan. 21 and were shut out 3-0 at Los Altos on Jan. 19.

A pivotal win of the season came on Jan. 14, in a 2-1 win against Los Gatos. Junior forwards Rajiv Ramakabir and Troy Doles, the team's top scorer, had two second-half goals to turn the game around after being down by one goal.

"Even though we knew Los Gatos wasn't going to be the team they were a few seasons ago, it was still an exciting win," Clarke said.

Fans of Falcon boys' soccer can expect to see the team grab a spot in CCS with a 1-0 win over Los Gatos on Feb. 4 and an expected win over Santa Clara on Feb. 7. Due to printing deadlines, the score of this game could not be published. ♦

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WRESTLING

Boys succeed at Mid Cal tournament

BY Brandon Judoprasertijo & Deborah Soung

Regardless of the nervousness emanating throughout Gilroy High School during the weekend of Jan. 22, the wrestling team remained staunch and wrestled their way into the upper ranks of Mid Cal, one of the most difficult wrestling tournaments in California.

The tournament, which had started on Jan. 21, yielded outstanding results. Sophomore Henry Wei placed sixth, freshman Isaac Tung took seventh and junior Alfred Murabito took fourth.

With only seven of 14 wrestlers, Saratoga placed 26 out of 70 teams, which put the team ahead of every other school in the SCVAL league which participated, including powerhouse teams like Palo Alto, Gunn, Fremont, Harker, Homestead, Monta Vista and Wilcox.

"Because of their hard work and heart, we proved once again that Saratoga wrestling is all about Falcon Pride," said coach Joe Pele.

The team managed to wrestle its way to the top ranks through diligence and hard work; in fact, most members spent over 12 hours at the tournament.

In the two-day tournament, only wrestlers who won their matches on Friday could proceed to the Saturday matches. Murabito, Wei and Grant wrestled both days.

"There's no substitute for hard work," said Murabito. "I didn't do anything special, I just wrestle a lot. It's the experience that helps a lot."

Though the wrestlers said the tourna-



FALCON // SARAH HULL

Junior Alfred Murabito pins a Cupertino wrestler on Jan. 27. Murabito took fourth overall and the Falcons came in first for their league.

ment went well, they want to improve on certain nuances in their wrestling.

"We probably need more strength in numbers, because we don't really have that many upperclassmen," Borch said.

Nevertheless, the team's results at the tournament were outstanding.

Pele called the weekend "quite a performance, considering this is one of the

toughest tournaments in the state."

The team has been faced with many problems all season long so far. Key wrestlers have been injured and some teammates even dropped out of the sport. However, freshman Jason Li remains positive about the future.

"We show improvement every tournament," Li said. "Even though so many

people have been quitting or getting injured and we aren't as strong as we should be, we still will be doing very well at the league finals coming up."

The team will be competing at the League Finals tomorrow, Feb. 12. The varsity team will also be going to the CCS Tournament Feb. 25-26 at Independence High School. ♦

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Sophomore leads team to the top

BY Justine Huang

Throughout early February the girls' basketball team had yet to lose a league match up and stood first in the El Camino Division. This impressive record meant that the team has a good chance of qualifying for CCS.

"We have our hopes up and are playing really hard. I have high hopes for our team," senior forward Tasha Patel said.

As of Feb. 2, the Falcons held a 13-6 overall record. Sophomore post Hannah Johnson had anchored the team's offense

and scored a total of 94 points in league games, averaging 13.4 points per game. She embodies the talent of this year's team. At 5'10", Johnson defines versatility. She joined the team her freshman year, and immediately made an impact on the team with her height and skills on the court.

"She'll come before practice or stay late and work on stuff," said senior forward Keerti Shukla. "Overall, she's very dedicated and motivated and she's an amazing player."

Johnson has consistently led the team to wins, scoring the most points in several games and contributing to the team's score and spirit.

"She's really consistent and a really strong player," added sophomore guard Michelle Won. "Even though she's not the tallest on our team, she has the most drive. We can always count on her to make a lot of points."

Johnson attributes her consistency to

her dedication to helping her team secure a league championship. After the team was moved down to the lower El Camino Division at the beginning of this year, Johnson felt that this goal is attainable.

"The main goal we're aiming for right now is winning our league," said Johnson. "Though, we have a young team, I believe that if we train more we can win."



"The main goal we're aiming for is winning our league. I believe that if we train more, we can win."

>> Sophomore Hannah Johnson

Other top scorers include sophomore guard Kim Chou, junior guard Shriya Nagpal and senior forwards Amber Arroyo

and Arya Parhar.

Counting this year's league and non-league games, Nagpal has scored a total of 122 points, Arroyo has gotten 119, Parhar has gotten 97 and Chou has scored 101.

The girls have a game tonight (Feb. 11) at 6:15 p.m. at home against Los Altos. On Feb. 16, they will play Cupertino High; JV at 5:30 p.m. and varsity at 7. ♦

>>> score board

Jan. 28
Saratoga 64, Milpitas 38

Sophomore Hannah Johnson scored 22 points and had 15 rebounds.

Feb. 2
Saratoga 61, Santa Clara 34

Senior Amber Arroyo sunk 10 freethrows and scored 20 points.

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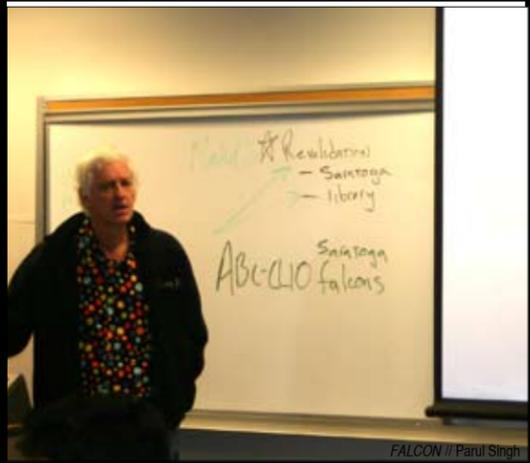
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Columnist finds joy in Starbucks name policy



>> **Samika Kumar**
Smiley Samika

Starbucks. It's my best friend. A visit to Starbucks changes my day from average to spectacular for two reasons: the steaming, sweet chai tea latte I order every time I visit and the vast majority of names I can pick from when the person at the register asks for my name.

But cashiers didn't always know me as Bob, Jane or Barbara. I used to give my real name because I was too scared of forgetting what name I used when my order was called or worse, having the awkward conversation of, "You don't look like a Rihanna..."

One special trip to Starbucks, exactly a year ago, threw all my worries out the window. It started off as the typical routine that any coffee lover goes through. After waiting in the Starbucks queue for several minutes, it was finally my turn. The lady at the register took my usual order—chai tea latte. And then... the crucial question.

"Can I have your name, please?" I gave my reply, which was undoubtedly

unexpected to both the lady behind the counter and myself.

"I'm, uh, John?" The lady cocked her head to the side and gave me a skeptical look.

"Are you sure about that?" she asked. I guess she noticed the confused expression that had spread across my face.

Since that day, I have used a multitude of names, ranging from Mary to Timothy to Sarah to Sam. The possibilities are truly endless.

I have no doubt, however, that some names have elicited more exciting results than others. Take my most recent Starbucks visit for example. After my chai tea latte order, I gave the guy at the register my name. "Cleopatra."

"Hmm, Cleopatra, I don't think your name will fit on the register," the guy said. In a failed attempt to sound witty, he spat out, "Can I shorten it to Cleo?"

I nodded shyly. As I walked away, he remarked, "Cleopatra, that's a pretty name."

"It's... a family name," I replied, trying to look convincing. The guy nodded in awe—my first "gullible" joke where I was not the victim.

So if you ever go to Starbucks and hear an Indian girl say her name is Joe or Antoinette or Lucy or Kathy, make sure to look closely.

That girl just might be me. ♦

I have used a multitude of names, ranging from Mary to Timothy to Sarah to Sam.

Quiz kids hope victory over Fremont enough to 'collect' third round slot

By Karen Yang

To "Quiz Kids" host Brad Friedman, seniors Shannon Galvin, Vijay Menon and Jeremy Pham are not only competent contestants for the Bay Area trivia tournament after defeating Fremont High 500-280 on Jan. 16, but also proud owners of unique collections. In their interviews, each of the seniors impressed the host with tall tales of their extensive collections—Menon's road signs, Galvin's Hot Wheels and Pham's comic books.

"We don't really," said Menon. "We just made it up."

Despite a strong victory against Fremont, the team faces much uncertainty regarding their advancement to the next round. In the Bay Area

"Quiz Kids" tournament, after each participating team plays two games, the top eight of the 32 teams are allowed to continue to the third round as determined

by the sum of points accumulated in the first and second match.

Although the Saratoga team won both matches, their total score of 840 points is unlikely to earn them a spot in the next round, Menon said.

"We're happy we won, but I wish we got more points because I don't know if we have enough points to go onto the next round," Menon said.

The team was again unable to prepare for the match due to Galvin and Menon's involvement in a mock trial scrimmage the day before and finals the following week.

Galvin attributed their success to Menon, who sharpens his trivia knowledge by watching "Cash Cab," a game show that offers taxi cab passengers the chance to win money by correctly answering a series of trivia questions on the way to their destination.

"It was a fun experience," said Galvin, who encourages juniors to assemble a team to enter the show next year.

Their game will air on KRON-4 at 2 p.m. on March 12. ♦



topten

WAYS TO GET A TICKET

- 10 **Drop your kids off in the parking lot.** We only wish this was illegal.
- 9 **Take an underclassman off campus.** Just kidding—no one ever gets caught for that.
- 8 **Go to In-n-out Burger during lunch.** Google maps says you will have 12 seconds to eat.
- 7 **Wait until the light turns yellow to go.** That's hilarious... especially when you're trying to get to class on time.
- 6 **Take up two spots while parking.** I promise, no one will be mad.
- 5 **Rev your engine really loud.** Chicks love a show off.
- 4 **Limo tint that whip.** Are you really that ugly?
- 3 **Write "OMG I'm legal" on your windows.** That doesn't attract any attention.
- 2 **Put a loud exhaust on your car.** 'Cause your Toyota Camry is definitely a race-car.
- 1 **Play music with the bass all the way up.** Most senior citizens love Tupac.

>> Roy Bisht and Cullan McChesney