



the saratoga falcon

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saratogafalcon.org

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MUSIC BUILDING HIT BY THEFTS



Jordan Waite

Thieves take over \$18,000 of instruments and equipment from music rooms.

by Lauren Kuan
and Karen Yang

More than \$18,000 worth of instruments and equipment was stolen from the music department's band and choir rooms in two separate incidents in early and mid January, though there was no evidence of forced entry.

Two privately owned violins, a school-owned bass clarinet, a computer system belonging to the choir, some

percussion instruments and several tuners were missing after students came to school on Jan. 12. Among the violins stolen, one belonged to junior Yuning Yang and another to junior Anthony Sutardja. The violins were worth \$600 and \$5,000, respectively.

"I thought someone was borrowing my violin, but then my mom just said to not worry about it," said Yang. "They probably stole it because violins tend to be worth a lot of money." Sutardja said he does not understand

why the thief stole his violin because there were so many other ones there too.

On Jan. 24, a local resident found Sutardja's violin under a bush on his property and returned it to the school with no hint of who the suspect was. Sutardja was able to identify the violin as his. However, the case and bow are still missing, and the violin is severely damaged from the rain and sun.

see MUSIC THEFT, p. 5

Alumnus competes on Jeopardy

by Robin Liu
and Kevin Mu

Answer: This Jeopardy contestant and 2008 graduate's list of achievements includes being yearbook editor and senior wrestling captain.

Who is alumnus Ryan Stoffers?

If you happened to tune in to Jeopardy on Feb. 1, you may have noticed a familiar face. Stoffers, now a sophomore mathematics/economics student at UCLA, got a shot at stardom Monday night when he became a contestant on College Jeopardy. Stoffers has been an avid follower of Jeopardy for several years now.



Stoffers on the set of College Jeopardy

"[Jeopardy's] been on at 7 o'clock for as long as I can remember," said Stoffers. "It became my favorite show around the beginning of high school."

College Jeopardy operates much like regular Jeopardy, with one contestant representing their college in a single elimination tournament.

The winner of the tournament receives \$100,000 and his or her name on a trophy.

All participants are guaranteed to win at least \$5,000. Schools competing in the tournament include Alabama, Brown, Columbia, Dartmouth, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Santa Clara, Yale and, of course, UCLA. Stoffers got on the show by first taking a 50-question online test on the Jeopardy website in August.

After scoring well, he was invited to an audition in November in LA. Then in December, Stoffers received a call telling him he would be on the show.

"I was really excited when I got the call," said Stoffers. "I called my friends and family right away to share the news. It was weird because I got the call at the beginning of December and the show wasn't going to air until February."

But the work didn't end there. Stoffers spent hours studying and quizzing himself to prepare himself for the intellectually grueling challenge.

see JEOPARDY, p. 4

'Anything Goes' sets sail this weekend

by Mary Mykhaylova

Cast members of light-hearted musical "Anything Goes" set sail last night with the premiere of their long-anticipated show complete with tap dancing and a live pit orchestra.

Other performances take place tonight and Saturday at 7:30 p.m., and there will also be a matinee on Sunday at 2 p.m.

"This show is different from others we've done in the past because of all the

extra effort that has gone into directing each specific aspect of the production," said junior Chaz Main, who plays Sir Evelyn Oakleigh, a wealthy Englishman with a quirky accent.

"Anything Goes" also features a live orchestra pit of nearly 20 students of Saratoga's very own music department. "Having the resources to be able

SHOWTIMES

Tonight at 7:30 p.m.
Tomorrow at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, Feb. 7 at 2 p.m.

PRICES: \$10 for students,
\$12 for adults

to work with a full pit for this show has been amazing," said Main. "I'm so thankful for them donating their time and skill to be a part of our production."

With the two departments working as one, this production has been an opportunity to "present the talents of the many different students we have here at Saratoga," Main said.

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Mock trial competes this week

After months of long and tiring practices, the 16 members of the mock trial team are competing at the county level tournament this week and next. If they earn enough points at competition, they will go to quarterfinals on Feb. 16.

Arguing a first-degree murder case, the team worked hard to display their best yet this season.

On Jan. 16, the mock trial team participated in the Santa Clara County Invitational. Although it was only a scrimmage, the team came out shining. It served as an outlet for the team to put to work the material they have been preparing since early October.

"The scrimmage is really just a check to see if we're ready for competition in February, and I think we did well," said captain Alex Song, an expert witness on the team.

"They were up for the occasion and showed they are getting close to being ready for the real thing," said head coach Dr. Hugh Roberts. "It is still very different when you first go into real courtrooms before real judges, and against top teams."

With the help of attorney-coach, parent Bob Galvin, and teacher-coach, Margarita Morelle, and several new members on the team, the students hope for a chance at finals this season.

—by Kavya Nagarajan

The Falcon to receive national award

For the second consecutive year, The Saratoga Falcon has joined 63 other high school papers nation-wide to be given a Crown Award from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association.

Last year, the Falcon's online and print editions each received a Gold Crown, the top award. On March 19, the editors-in-chief of the 2008-2009 newspaper, alumni Michael Chen and Dorey Schranz, will find out whether or not the newspaper that they were in charge of will win a Gold Crown once again.

The award ceremony will be held at Columbia University in New York. A total of 1,558 newspapers, magazines and yearbooks were eligible for the award, and a panel of nine judges narrowed the number down to 157 Crown recipients for newspapers, yearbooks, magazines and literary magazines from both collegiate and scholastic publications.

Adviser Mike Tyler believes that it's an honor to receive a Crown and be recognized, but it's not the only thing the newspaper is trying to achieve.

"It's a good thing to get any award, but success is more than getting a Gold or Silver Crown. It's serving the readers in your community well," Tyler said. "Those readers are your ultimate judge."

—by David Eng and Tiffany Tung

Souper Bowl aims to score touchdown for ceramics



by Jordan Waite

Rows of student-made soup bowls lie in Leah Aguayo's room in preparation for the Feb. 10 Souper Bowl.

by Maggie Lin

For most, the Super Bowl brings to mind heavy padding and players tackling each other, but at Saratoga High, the Souper Bowl, a clever play on words, brings to mind big ladles and volunteers tackling vegetables and broth.

After a four-year hiatus, the ninth Souper Bowl, a fund-raiser for the ceramics program, is returning on Wednesday, Feb. 10 from 5-7 p.m. in the cafeteria.

Ceramics teacher Leah Aguayo, the coordinator of the event, is planning a soup supper that the whole school and community is invited to. Aguayo and her students have made about 350 handmade bowls on the wheel in preparation.

"Our goal is to have people enjoy the soup supper and raise awareness of the beautiful ceramic work that my students produce," said Aguayo.

There is a \$10 suggested donation and the donation allows attendees to pick out a handmade bowl, and have a soup supper that includes a drink and bread. With the help of parent volunteers, Aguayo is making her famous soup recipes that include vegetarian minestrone, potato corn chowder, black bean soup, and chicken noodle soups.

Besides the work put into preparing the menu, the dedication of her students was required in order to pull off this event as they were involved with the making, trimming, and glazing of the bowls as well as the set-up and

clean-up at the event.

Senior Josh Jue, a third-year ceramics student, said, "I've made a couple bowls a week so I probably made around 15 bowls. I'm really excited to be a part of this fund-raiser and we've all put a lot of time and effort into it."

For all their hard work, Aguayo hopes to clear at least \$1,500 at the event when all is paid for as "this is an expensive event to put on, so some of the money is going for supplies and ingredients for the food."

Despite the amount of effort needed to pull the Souper Bowl off, Aguayo said, "When I'm so tired from working at the event and walk out into the cafeteria and see a room full of happy people eating my soup out of students' bowls, it is awesome. ♦"

District to take action on deficit

by Rebecca Nguyen
and Anna Shen

As the budget deficit for next school year nears a staggering \$3.06 million, the Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District (LGSUHSD) has started taking steps to deal with the growing crisis.

The district plans to save \$1.2 million mainly by increasing sizes of classes such as English 9 and algebra and cutting others that contain too few students. The district's next task is to find a way to handle the remaining \$1.86 million of the deficit and also maintain the quality of the schools.

"As we solve these budget problems, our highest priority is to protect our core instructional program," said superintendent Cary Matsuoka. "Our current students experience high school only once in their lifetime and we need to invest in their preparation and experience regardless of the circumstances."

The budget deficit for 2010-11 was caused by cuts in the state categorical funding and less revenue from local property taxes. Assessed valuation of property—the district's primary

source of funding—has slowed to an estimated 1 percent or lower. The budget deficit was originally \$1.6 million and gradually reached \$3.06 million in a matter of several months as worse and worse property value numbers came in.

To help alleviate the deficit,

UPCOMING DATES

Feb. 9 Board meeting at Los Gatos High School library begins at 6:30 p.m.

Feb. 23 Town hall meeting at Los Gatos High School library (7-9 p.m.)

Feb. 25 Town hall meeting at Saratoga High School library (7-9 p.m.)

several sections of classes will be cut at each school. Officials have decided to decrease the number of English 9 and algebra classes, thus increasing the average number of students in each class from 20-1 to 28-1.

The decreased number of classes offered at the schools will likely result in the issuing of "pink slip" notices to some teachers in February or March letting them know they might not be rehired for next year. The newest teachers are most likely to receive notices. How many teachers are laid off and

how many classes are cut will depend on how much money the district board's five members are willing to pull out of a \$4 million strategic reserve as they try to balance the budget.

In the meantime, teachers are also helping to lighten the budget crisis by tentatively agreeing to freeze their salaries next year (final voting took place this week). Administrators and other employees are likely to have similar pay freezes.

History teacher Matt Torrens says that the freezing of teachers' salaries is only to be expected and that teachers should do what they can to help the district in this economic downfall.

"The one thing [the district] could do is freeze our salaries and that's fair," said Torrens. "It's not unrealistic because we all share the burden. By freezing our salaries, we'll save other teachers from losing their positions and prevent class sizes from going up even more."

In addition to freezing teachers' and other employees' salaries, the district is also encouraging veteran teachers nearing retirement age to

see BUDGET, p. 7

THE FALCONPHOTO



Jordan Waite

Dressed as a character from the popular game Candyland, history teacher Matt Torrens has a blast at the rally on Dec. 11.

DRAMA | Students get in character for 'Anything Goes'

continued from pg. 1

With all of the action taking place on board of the S.S. "American," the production would never have been the same without a stunning set, all built entirely by the Department's tech crew.

"I actually feel like I'm on a ship, but it has been a challenge to get used to all of the different heights and steps," said senior Natalie Tkalcevic, who is playing Hope, a young woman who is engaged to Evelyn, but finds herself falling for another bachelor. "I'm afraid of heights so standing up on top has definitely helped me overcome my fears!"

Unanimously, actors expressed gratitude for the hard work that has been put in by the tech crew.

"Working on such an amazing set is great," said senior Hannah Brown, who is playing Mrs. Harcourt, Hope's zany mother. "It really helps you get into 'boat mode.'"

As opening night inched closer, actors had to reach past memorized lines, blocking and quick costume changes to truly bring out their characters and create a picture on stage.

"The rehearsal process is all about coming together and producing something amazing," said Brown. "I think we succeeded."

Every production is a bonding experi-

ence for the actors. Tkalcevic said that for her, "Anything Goes" was "an opportunity to reach out to others and grow new friendships that [she] wouldn't have had otherwise."

The final few days before opening, also referred to as "Hell week," are always tainted with full tech and dress rehearsals that tend to run late into the evening.

"Hell week is where 90 percent of the work gets put in," said Main. "It's also when the actors truly 'get in the show.'"

Though Brown noted that Hell Week has its name

for a reason, Tkalcevic in turn has her own sense of appreciation for these hectic times.

"People may think I'm crazy, but it's fun to see the entire production come together," she said. "Plus, free food!"

For the seven seniors in the cast, this will be their final production at Saratoga.

"It's very sad to be performing in my last show," said Tkalcevic. "Drama has always been my constant in high school and leaving is going to be really difficult."

"Anything Goes" is a lively production whose music and dancing are bound to leave everyone's spirits high.

"I love the feeling you have walking away from ['Anything Goes']," Tkalcevic said. "There's no better escape than seeing this show!" ♦

"It's very sad to be performing in my last show. Drama has always been my constant in high school and leaving is going to be really difficult."

—senior Natalie Tkalcevic



Jordan Waite

Senior Erin McCroskey, sophomore Joshua Harris and junior Jay Lee prepare for the musical "Anything Goes" at a dress rehearsal on Jan. 23.

FALCONFOCUS

Senior with hidden musical talent thrives as a composer

by Emily Williams

To most people, senior Jonathon Stutchman is a student, a leader, a classmate, a friend, and even a musician, yet few people know that behind his quiet exterior Stutchman harbors a hidden talent: He is a composer.

His talent and passion for both writing and playing music has remained generally unknown because he has little involvement in the school's music department.

Stutchman is a self-taught composer who has penned more than 40 full pieces of music, of which two have been published.

"I can't tell a lot about music, but I think a lot of composing is the music inside you and being able to convey that out there," said Stutchman. "So while I am

terrible at singing and it's pretty hard for me to tell what someone else is playing, usually I can write it down and get it out that way."

Stutchman didn't start officially composing until sophomore year, when he taught himself how through the help of books and an occasional critique from choir director Jim Yowell.

Music has always been a huge part of his life. Since age 4, he has been playing the piano, and finished the Certificate of Merit program his sophomore year. Besides piano, he plays the guitar and bass guitar and has occasionally played in local rock bands such as Revive the Lifeless.

Stutchman composes and plays music in both the classical and rock genres, even though he prefers to listen to more hip-hop and rock on a day to day basis.

"I listen to a little bit of classical, but only when I'm interested in appreciating it," said Stutchman.

On a typical week, Stutchman will spend anywhere from seven to 10 hours composing and practicing music. So far, his hard work has paid off through the publication of an original string quartet and an original rock song.

In addition, local rock bands such as Revive the Lifeless have played some of Stutchman's music.

When Stutchman sits down to write, he has a purpose and a message he is trying to express through his music. Observations fuel his inspiration.

"The people around me and stories I hear about them inspire me," said Stutchman. "Some music is a feeling I am trying to capture and other times it is a story that progresses. Sometimes instead of seeing things I hear them."

While writing, Stutchman first plots out the piece and then proceeds to trying it out on the guitar or piano. To complete the work, he uses a program called GuitarPro to polish the sound. After finishing each new composition, Stutchman often seeks the advice and feedback from close friends and family.

Looking toward the future, he said, "I'd like to still continue (music) in college. I don't know if I'm going to major in music, but I'm still going to be writing it."

He would love to compose music for plays or movies.

"If I got to compose the background tracks, that would be really cool," said Stutchman.

For people aspiring to compose their own music, Stutchman advises, "Just have fun with it. A lot of the reason why I like composing is because I have fun and I like seeing the satisfaction of what I did. You can find [inspiration] anywhere and after that it's just work." ♦



Stutchman

U.S. News ranks SHS as 93rd best high school

by Anna Shen and Karen Yang

In its most recently distributed "Best High Schools of America" list in December, U.S. News and World Report ranked Saratoga High as the 93rd best school among a list that includes charter and magnet schools in the U.S. and 30th among open enrollment schools (meaning regular public schools that accept all students within their boundaries).

"What I think is most important is when you pull out the schools that can choose who they take and leave just the schools that are open enrollment, which is us, we're number 30, which is spectacular," said principal Jeff Anderson. "That says we do a really great job of teaching whoever walks through the door, and we're serving our community. I want to take in everybody; I'd rather be inclusive than exclusive."

In 2008, SHS ranked 72nd, and in 2009, the school dropped to 80th. Although SHS has placed lower in U.S. News' top 100 high schools in each of the ranking's first three years, Anderson feels that the rubric used to rank schools tends to be inaccurate and does not truly reflect the caliber of each high school. Schools were ranked based on their overall performance on state tests, the performance of minority and disadvantaged students and the number of students taking and passing AP or International Baccalaureate tests.

"What is unfortunate about [rankings] is that they distract people from the more fundamental questions," said Anderson. "It's not to say that the schools in the top 10 aren't great, but does that mean that's why you should go there? And I think that's what people tend to do when they start seeing these rankings. They think if [a school] is not in this quadrant, then it's not as valuable as the ones that are in the upper quadrant, and I think that's a distortion; I don't think it's accurate."

THE BIG IDEA

U.S. News Rankings

2008: SHS ranked 72nd among open enrollment, charter and magnet schools

2009: SHS dropped to 80th

2010: SHS placed 93rd but among only open enrollment schools they ranked 30th

The slight drop from previous years does not concern students, either. Many believe that the lower ranking does not undermine Saratoga High's aptitude for preparing students for college or future careers.

"I do not believe for a minute that Saratoga's administration should be solely concerned with trying to improve our rankings," said senior Ashwin Siripurapu. "The primary job of this school should be to teach its students the skills they need to succeed in their careers beyond high school."

Other nearby schools also placed in U.S. News' top 100 high schools. Mission San Jose High School in Fremont placed 36th; Henry M. Gunn High School in Palo Alto placed 67th; Monta Vista High School in Cupertino placed 70th; Palo Alto High School placed 83rd; and Lynbrook High School in San Jose placed 98th. However, all five schools placed within the top 33rd among open enrollment schools. Mission San Jose placed 4th; Gunn placed 15th; Monta Vista placed 18th; Palo Alto placed 25th; Lynbrook placed 33rd.

"It's great to be in the top one hundred," said Anderson. "I like to say that we're actually in the top 30 when you look at similar schools, but I think we do a great job here for the students we have, regardless of what U.S. News says or what Newsweek says." ♦

Students help save lives one pint at a time

by Anna Shen
and Kevin Mu

Every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood. Saratoga High students helped save these individuals by generously donating blood in the Stanford Blood Drive Jan. 29.

The bi-annual blood drive was hosted by the SHS Community Commission and was scheduled to run from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The drive had a good turnout of 69 donations, according to head commissioner Daryl Chang.

"I was pleased with how the blood drive went," said Chang. "It was a success and we reached our goal."

Many students were inspired to donate their blood by the idea of making a difference and saving the lives of others in need of a transfusion.

"I was motivated to donate because it is important to help people who are in need of a blood transfusion," said senior Shawna Shirazi. "Since people know that

they can prevent death by donating, everyone should."

Many students afraid of needles or blood were reluctant to volunteer for the drive, but Shirazi believes that students can overcome their hesitations by focusing on the lives they can help to save.

"I don't think people should be scared of needles because the outcome of donating is more important—if no one donated, lives would be lost," she said. "I have given blood before and it doesn't hurt that much, so everyone should donate."

Students were required to meet certain criteria to donate blood in order to ensure the safety of the donors and the quality of their blood. Students must be at least 17 and weigh at least 110 pounds and cannot have traveled to a third-world country within the past year. Volunteers must also have a high amount of hemoglobin in their blood.

Donors received free cookies and drinks after donating, and the Stanford Blood Center also thanked volunteers with AMC movie passes and T-shirts.

The Community Commission will be holding another blood drive in April. ♦

Many students were inspired to donate their blood by the idea of making a difference



Senior Eda Isik watches as a nurse checks her blood pressure on Jan. 29 in the Small Gym.

SafeRides hopes to make weekends safer for students

by Karthik Sreedhara

Juniors and seniors volunteering to drive for SafeRides began their work Dec. 12 on the night of Winter Formal and will continue to offer services twice a month on weekends.

Senior Tiffany Mo, co-leader of the program, said SafeRides is more than just a taxi service for drunk students. "It is really for any Saratoga student who feels unsafe and needs a ride home," she said. "Many of our calls actually come from sober students."

Mo said that the first night ran without any significant difficulties. They had two drivers, two navigators, one dispatcher, and two parents working that night, and picked up two students.

According to senior Rebecca Amato, Mo and senior Kevin Rollinson began to run the SHS branch through the Leadership class and is exclusively for SHS students. The SafeRides committee meets every second and fourth Friday and Saturday, at St. Andrews Church. On the first night, SafeRides ran from 11 p.m. to 2 a.m., rather than the normal time, 10 p.m.-2 a.m.

According to Rollinson, the program will get guest speakers, organize events as well as pass out pamphlets regarding the program.

"We are also going to try to work with the local sheriff's department and the areas 'Explorers Program' (a division of Boy Scouts of America) to warn about the dangers of drinking and driving," said Rollinson.

While waiting for calls, the committee usually hangs out at St. Andrews. "We usually watch movies, do our homework or play games," said Mo. "On the first night this year, we watched 'The Proposal' and played Pictionary."

Though they did not have any trouble running the program, getting it started has been difficult.

"I think one of the difficult parts of the program was getting out the word that the program doesn't condone or encourage drinking, but that it understands that some students may find themselves in situations where such a service might be needed," said Rollinson.

Mo said the committee consists of about 20 juniors and seniors, including drivers, dispatchers who take the phone calls and navigators who sit in the passenger seat.

"Even if we only get one call in a night, that's one less drunk driver on the road, and one more student that makes it home safely," said Rollinson.

SafeRides' number is (408)827-8761. ♦

CLUBS BEGIN TO RAISE MONEY FOR HAITI RELIEF

by Denise Lin

As the severe situation following the major earthquake in Haiti continues to make headlines, many clubs are stepping up to lend a hand. In response, the Red Cross Club gathered donations by distributing envelopes to all classrooms at the school.

"We've actually gotten a lot of benefit from that," said Red Cross Club president sophomore Lillian Chen.

The club collected more than \$700 with the proceeds going to the American Red Cross Haiti Relief Fund.

A few other school clubs are also holding events to add to the school-wide effort.

The multicultural club contributed to the efforts with a bake sale during 7th period and after school on Jan. 25.

Members of the club sold baked goods as well as hot chocolate to wet, cold students while simultaneously raising money for a good cause.

"We're supporting different cultures

around the world," said club president Shir Nehama, while helping to sell cookies at the top of the quad steps. "We thought that it's our responsibility to send in money to the Red Cross to support them."

The profits amounted to around \$130.

"We're going to give it to the Red Cross because we don't want to give it to some organization that we can't rely on," said Nehama.

In addition, Tzu Chi, otherwise known as the TC club, is planning to revive the Haiti efforts later on.

"TC club is not doing anything for Haiti in these few

weeks," said sophomore club president Cynthia Huang. "[However], we're going to do fundraising in the future, which can help the Haitians reconstruct their homes and schools." The club is probably going to raise money by selling baked goods and pearl milk tea.

This is important, said Huang, because due to the heavy, long-term damage, people in Haiti don't only "need money now, but [will] also in the future." ♦

"It's our responsibility to send in money to the Red Cross."

— club president Shir Nehama

SHS GRAD ON JEOPARDY

continued from pg. 1

"I prepared for the tournament by making flash cards of things that were easy to memorize and things that were my weaknesses," said Stoffers. "I memorized a lot of world capitals, works of literature and their authors, and operas and their composers."

On the day the show was filmed, Stoffers traveled to Sony Studios in Culver City. In addition to being a contestant, Stoffers was also able to enjoy meeting the show's own staff and crew, including host Alex Trebek.

"Everyone who works on the show is super nice and fun," he said. "Alex Trebek was really cool. During commercials he walks over to the audience and answers questions. I know he's probably heard them all a million times, but he still answers them with a smile and often a joke."

All of the hard work and preparation had proved to be worthwhile in the end, as he performed at his very best during the filming process.

"The onstage experience was a ton of fun. It goes by in a flash," said Stoffers. "A fact that I learned in Mr. Sheehy's U.S. History class came up, so I guess I would want to thank him for teaching me it."

History teacher Jerry Sheehy, also a fan of Jeopardy, has trivia every Friday in his World History class and remembers how Stoffers always seemed to know the answer to every random question.

"Ryan was a genius," said Sheehy. "He was just like a Jeopardy contestant, and he knows everything off the top of his head." Stoffers' game show experience didn't end there, however.

"One fun thing was filming a promo telling people to take the online contestant test," Stoffers said. "They wanted us to be goofy and over the top, which we all did. It'll be embarrassing when it airs, but oh well."

Due to printing deadlines, the results of Stoffer's appearance on Jeopardy could not be reported. Check out saratogafalcon.com to see the results. ♦

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TEACHER JOURNEYS TO ANTARCTICA

COCHRUM SPENDS WINTER BREAK STUDYING WILDLIFE

by Grishma Athavale and Karen Yang

After dreaming of going to Antarctica for 20 years, planning for five years and getting ready for three years, science teacher Lisa Cochrum finally turned her dream into a reality when she embarked on a 21-day trip to Antarctica starting on Dec. 17.

Cochrum traveled on a boat to the Falkland Islands, the South Georgia Islands, the South Shetland Islands, the South Orkney Islands and the main peninsula with other professors, historians and scientists from across the nation.

Because winter is the only time when Antarctica is available to tourists, Cochrum spent her entire Christmas vacation as well as one extra week of school to complete the full voyage to these islands and the main peninsula.

For Cochrum, who teaches earth science and biology, the main purpose of the expedition was to learn about the Antarctic ecosystem.

"[The district] agreed with me that it was a great trip for a biologist to do. There was all this stuff that I learned that I never necessarily would have expected to learn," said Cochrum. "I've learned more by doing than by reading; I'm a doer, not a reader."

This trip marked Cochrum's visit to her 70th country and seventh continent, and she has now seen all of the major ecosystems of the earth, a major accomplishment for her.

Each day at sea, she attended lectures on the food webs, the feathers and layers of penguins and the reproduction of the animals; whenever the boat docked, she went ashore to examine the exotic and various Antarctic wildlife.

"I really thought I'd be bored, but there was no down time," said Cochrum. "All I was doing was running from lecture to boat to meal to bed to lecture to shore trip to kayak; it was constant—hardly any downtime."

Her one-on-one interactions with the animals—the penguins, seals, whales and birds—left Cochrum with a deep connection that she was able to share with her students.

"I would spend my entire life in one-on-one encounters with animals if you gave me my choice."

—science teacher Lisa Cochrum

"I would spend my entire life in one-on-one encounters with animals if you gave me my choice, but

if I can get those animal experiences and bring them back to the classroom, it's kind of like a consolation prize for me. Nothing beats it. There's just a joy and delight in it. Seeing a volcano, then being able to come back and talk about it is so stupidly fun."

After spending three weeks in Antarctica on her dream trip, Cochrum found it hard to leave the icy continent where she had encountered a baby King penguin that had nibbled on her neoprene glove looking for food, witnessed the rare event of a fur seal ripping apart and eating a



Courtesy of Lisa Cochrum

Science teacher Lisa Cochrum travels to Antarctica to study penguins, a lifelong dream.

tiny Rockhopper penguin from two feet away and escaped from a collapsing iceberg arch.

"Those are the moments; nothing compares for me compared to those moments. It is when heaven and earth meet, and I am at my happiest," said Cochrum. "I just felt so incredibly blessed and privileged to have the opportunity to see it and then to talk about it over dinner with this wildlife biologist; that was such an enjoyable experience for me."

As she left the continent, sailing away to the chirping of the penguins, Cochrum felt a sad nostalgia for the memories and adventures she had during the past 21 days in Antarctica after dreaming of this exact trip for 20 years.

"I finally get there, I spend my three

weeks and the last day I'm like, it's over, it's over. This is the biggest trip I've ever planned for, saved for, or enjoyed, and it's over," said Cochrum. "I burst into tears, and once I started, I could not stop. I could hardly believe that it was over. But I would go back in a heartbeat."

Cochrum ranks her voyage to Antarctica as one of her top four favorite trips among with her trips to the safari, the Galapagos Islands near Ecuador and the rain forest.

"[The trip was] one of the best experiences of my entire life," said Cochrum. "Intellectually, it's stimulating, but on an emotional level, when I burst into tears, I thought, 'Wow, it really is what I think it has been. It has been one of the greatest moments.'" ♦

English teachers treat contest winners to dinner

by Tiffany Tung

When new English 12 teacher Valerie Arbizu came to the school this past fall, she brought along her own traditions from years of teaching at Evergreen High School in San Jose.

While there, she held an annual Canterbury Tales contest.

She decided to continue the contest this year with her senior classes, and English 12 teacher Erick Rector and AP Language teacher Ken Nguyen also decided to par-

ticipate in this Canterbury tradition in their own classes.

The students in these classes wrote their own tale using the style and conventions of "The Canterbury Tales" by Geoffrey Chaucer characterizing people on SHS campus.

Rector and Arbizu had the students' peers choose the winners while Nguyen chose the winners based on who wrote the most "Chaucer-esque" tale.

Because the purpose of the characters telling the tales in 'The Canterbury Tales'

is a contest—the character that tells the best tale in the story will enjoy a dinner at the expense of the other characters in the collection.

"It was only fitting to have students read their tales aloud and have their peers vote on the tale they enjoyed most," said Arbizu. "The winners of the competition were selected by their peers in class—and the classes chose very well!"

The dinner for the four winners from Rector and Arbizu's classes, seniors Alice Curtis, Jian Lee, Kayla Epsman and Sonya

Brenner, took place Jan. 22 at BJ's Restaurant in Cupertino.

Nguyen's dinner for his seven winners, seniors Sung Park, Annie Lee, Mira Chaykin, Alexa Francis, Ashwin Siripurapu, Daniel Chan and Vivian Hsiao, was scheduled to take place Feb. 4 at a family-styled Chinese restaurant.

"[The dinner] was a little awkward," said senior Jian Lee, "Mr. Rector tried to make it a little less awkward, but it didn't really help. It was glad that I went, though. It was fun and I would do it again." ♦

TOGATALKS

How would you feel if you were invited to dinner with a teacher?

I would feel awkward because it's weird to see a teacher in a different environment other than school.



senior Allison Chen

I feel like I'd be a little more relaxed than if I'd be having dinner with adults I don't know.



sophomore Vishal Goel

It'd be interesting to see how teachers behave outside of the typical classroom environment.



junior David Wang

THEFT | Concerns rise over \$18,000 worth of theft from music

continued from pg. 1

"I care about the monetary value of the violin," said Sutardja, "but I think no matter what, I still need to get it repaired because it's cheaper than getting a new violin."

Music director Michael Boitz suspects that the thief attempted to sell the instruments on Ebay or Craigslist, but Boitz has left the investigations to assistant principal Joe Bosco and sheriff's deputies.

The music department has never had a theft problem of this magnitude before.

Boitz said deputies believe a student committed the crime due to the lack of rationale to which the items were stolen. Despite this, Bosco and the deputies are still "looking at all avenues" to avoid eliminating any possibilities of finding the culprit.

"We don't really have behavioral problems at Saratoga High," said Boitz. "It is very minimal compared to other schools, but for some reason, we have a lot of theft going on."

Because of the recent thefts, Bosco urges students and staff to lock personal

belongings out of view and to avoid bringing valuable belongings to school if possible.

"Of course, we're ramping up security," said Bosco. "We're concerned about the recent thefts, and we're taking all precautions necessary to eliminate them as much as possible."

Although the door may possibly have been unlocked or ajar during the time of the theft, Boitz believed that the music building had been locked during the time of the theft and thinks the thief may have been in possession of a copy of a key. He

encourages the person who has stolen the items to return them anonymously.

"It's really difficult for kids at Saratoga High because kids are involved in a lot of different things," said Boitz. "They go after school for a practice or rehearsal and they think that it'd be safe to leave their belongings right here, but it is causing me great concern that it is not."

On Jan. 28, Yang's violin was found inside of Sutardja's case along with his bow at Foothill Elementary but it is still undetermined who has committed the theft. ♦



Junior Ren Norris adds a coffee cup to her trash "collection" for AP Environmental Science. She carted around her trash as a reminder of her waste from Jan. 5-11.

Students get 'trashy' in AP Environmental

by Vivian LeTran
and Ren Norris

Senior Ally Doles strolled out of the AP Environmental Science classroom toward the quad. Over her shoulder she slung a white garbage bag filled with empty Doritos bags, wrinkled wrapping paper and folded gum wrappers. Many heads turned and shot her inquisitive looks, wondering if she had become a walking trash can.

In reality, Doles was just doing her homework. This assignment was part of a lab for her AP Environmental Science class, which was studying waste management. The lab required students to accumulate all their garbage throughout the week, excluding food scraps or unhygienic material.

"We didn't have to include food, which was nice for the project, but that's where most people's trash comes from, so it wasn't as accurate as it could have been," said Doles.

The students carried around the trash bags from Jan. 5-11, after which they then went through the trash in class.

"We go through the trash and divide it up and analyze how much is paper or plastic, how much is recyclable and what

the use behind it was; whether it was used for cleaning up stuff, or from shopping, or from packaging from something they just bought," said AP Environmental Science teacher Kristen Thomson. "We want to see where it comes from, then recycle and get rid of it."

Despite the trouble of carrying around the trash bags, the students who took part in the lab found that they gained a greater sense of how much trash they really produce.

"It's interesting because we don't always realize what we're throwing away in our trash and how much we really throw away," said junior Leah Capek. "It was a hassle having to carry around the trash the whole time, but it caused us to look for ways to make less trash."

Thomson hoped this lab would help students realize how much trash they produce in a week, and alternative methods to managing their garbage that could reduce environmental impact.

"I just wish that they get an awareness of how much trash they do generate, and make them think about choices they make when they buy stuff," said Thomson. "If it makes even one student change how they approach what they buy or how they live, then that's a success." ♦

SHS Foundation stays strong

by Rebecca Nguyen
and Anna Shen

In the late 1990s, the school could hardly be viewed as a great facility for learning. In fact, Saratoga High had hardly changed its appearance or facilities in its first 40 years.

But because of the passage of a bond in 1998 and the efforts of a parent group called the SHS Foundation, the school is entering a new decade with mostly state-of-the-art facilities such as the McAfee Center, a lighted turf field, quad beautification, advanced technology in updated classrooms, an Olympic-sized swimming pool and a renovated gym, among other efforts. Working behind the scenes, the SHS Foundation has garnered approximately \$13 million in order to help fund such improvements.

"The SHS Foundation has impacted the school by providing awareness and funding critical projects that otherwise would either not be funded or take significantly more years to implement," said SHS Foundation executive board member Brad Mandell.

The foundation was created when parents raised money for the McAfee.

The foundation has been providing a way for parents to enhance the lives of students by donating money intended to improve the school's environment and technology.

"There are a lot of schools that need this money much more than we do," said senior Ashwin Siripurapu. "I think the SHS Foundation is really a great thing to have around."

The foundation for the McAfee, which was completed in 2005, raised five million dollars.

Despite the budget crisis, the foundation remains strong and continues to encourage parents to make donations. Recently the foundation has funded numerous technological advancements, including 30 brand new Mac computers for the digital photography lab, video projectors in classrooms, smart boards for the math department and servers for the Media Arts Program.

THE BIG IDEA

SHS Foundation

PURPOSE: Parents raise and donate money for new facilities and resources

CONTRIBUTIONS: Raised money to build the McAfee Center, the turf field, the pool and the updated gym, and donated to quad beautification and technology

"We have actually surpassed last year's funding, which continues to demonstrate the commitment that the parents have to enhance the students education," said Mandell. "We still have less than 20 percent of families participating, and we could significantly accelerate the technology plan for the school if every family contributed."

Teachers acknowledge that without the help of the foundation, their teaching styles and the school would be very different and less technologically advanced.

"The projection systems throughout the school have had a direct impact on what teachers teach and how

they teach," said history teacher Matt Torrens. "Six years ago when we had only two teacher-made projection systems, only a handful of teachers were integrating the Internet, PowerPoint and video clips into their classrooms."

The foundation has upgraded technological efficiency for classes, making information more easily accessible than before. Assistant principal Karen Hyde says that "technology improvements in the library have revolutionized how [SHS] teaches social studies."

Mandell said SHS Foundation has tried to accommodate the needs of students and will continue to adapt to changing educational trends in the future.

"[The foundation] enriches the environment of the school and provides differentiation in programs and tools to better prepare our students for college that otherwise would not happen," said Mandell. ♦

"We are so fortunate in Saratoga. There are a lot of schools that need this money much more than we do."

—senior Ashwin Siripurapu

Alumnus passes away

by Annie Lee
and Karen Lyu

On the morning of Jan. 5, a 2007 graduate Shota Hasegawa passed away in his sleep. The reasons for his death are still unknown and under investigation, and students, teachers and parents in the school's music community have been left to deal with a tragic loss.

"Anytime we have to deal with something that questions the mortality of ourselves and those that we love and our friends, I think it is really really challenging particularly when its someone very young," said music director Michael Boitz. "I think that brings a greater level of devastation."

The night before his death, Shota, 21, showed no signs of any medical problems. He had returned home from catching up with friends at approximately 8:30 p.m. to eat dinner with his family and head to bed soon after. When his mother went into his room the next morning, she was unable to wake him.

After graduating, Shota attended De Anza College in hopes of later on transferring to a college in Japan, from which he moved to America in elementary school. Throughout his high school career, he pursued his musical talents and expressed his kind-hearted nature through his avid participation in the music department. He played trumpet for four years in the marching band, Symphonic Wind Ensemble and Symphonic String Orchestra.

"He was a very loved member of the trumpet section," said Boitz. "He was a very kind person, very gentle, always putting other people before himself, a very selfless person."

Not only was Shota a core member of the music department, but so were the rest of his family members. Both his father and younger brother, Keita Hasegawa, who graduated last year, are fellow trumpeters and his mother, Takako Hasegawa, has dedicated several hours a day to helping the music department as a volunteer for the last several years. From fitting hundreds of band uniforms to treating the entire marching band to cold popsicles on a hot rehearsal day to traveling with the

band and orchestra, Mrs. Hasegawa has been an integral part of the music department even after both her sons graduated.

The news of Shota's death came as a shock to the entire community.

"I was speechless initially and it's hard to believe it," said senior saxophonist Victor Chan. "It was surreal and it took awhile for it to hit. Shota was really nice and even though he was a little on the shy side, once you talked to him you could have a really good conversation."

A memorial service was held on Saturday, Jan. 9, at the Presbyterian Church across the street from the school. With more than 800 students and parents attending, the church could not hold all those who came. An open casket ceremony was followed a reception held at in the school's cafeteria afterwards.

"Seeing the open casket made it more personal and it was really sad to see him like that. He'll be missed by a lot of people and it's devastating for us to lose him," said senior Terran Chao. "Although I wasn't too close to

him as a freshman, he was definitely one of my favorite seniors at that time because he was incredibly nice."

Students also expressed their condolences on Facebook, relaying comforting messages to his younger brother Keita and posting last messages to the group created in Hasegawa's memory. Noting everything from "his smile and presence around the music building" to specific memories of going on field trips or car rides, the Facebook group has more than 700 members and is still gaining members each day.

Ever since Shota's passing, students, parents and staff have been pouring donations, gifts and even meals to the Hasegawa house through this tough time. In order to give these donations back to the community in which Shota was brought up, the Hasegawa family has decided to create a scholarship in Hasegawa's name designated for students involved in music or the special education department.

"I think the blessing that Shota gave to us was that he kind of forced us to reflect for a minute and take time to recognize one another and it reminds us to connect with our friends, connect with our siblings and everyone else," said Boitz. ♦



Shota Hasegawa

'07 grad passed away Jan. 5 in his sleep.

BAY MAG RECRUITMENT DRAWS LOCAL TEENS

by Emily Williams
and Serena Chan

Thirty-five students from Saratoga, Los Gatos, Monta Vista and other local high schools gathered in Room 805 on Jan. 9 with the shared interest of becoming part of the student-run BAY Magazine, which covers issues and trends that affect teens in the area.

The group listened to a 30-minute recruitment presentation by editor-in-chief T.T. Tu about the magazine's goals and sections in hopes of possibly becoming a staff member themselves.

This recruitment session welcomed anyone interested in journalism to join their staff. In order to make the first cut, applications were due the following Wednesday, and results were announced Thursday, despite the pressures of finals.

"We need to get started [with recruiting] because we will have people leaving for college," said T.T. Tu, who now attends UC Berkeley. "This is like the preliminary to get people ready to take over."

Students mostly heard about the session by word of mouth, friends on the

staff and fliers.

"I just saw the Facebook invite," said sophomore Kellie Chiou. "I've never really had an interest in journalism, but I want to try out new things."

Twenty-three applicants were chosen in the preliminary round of recruiting. On Jan. 24, two weeks after the original recruiting session, there will be another round of cuts based on the work ethics of the new recruits. Despite the fact that nothing is set in stone, the staff is already working on their spring issue.

The publication's slogan, "A magazine written by and for the Bay Area youth" has driven their search to find innovative teens from around the Bay Area to help preserve the magazine's fresh style. Some other requirements included an interest in reaching out to the community and skills in InDesign, Photoshop and Illustrator, as well as, according to Tu, "all around nice people."

"I'm looking for students who have an interest in journalism, a good background in it, and have a lot of time to commit to the publication," said Tu.

The commitment level includes weekly



courtesy of Brian Kim

Students listen to editor-in-chief T.T. Tu at a BAY Magazine recruitment session.

meetings and about two hours of work done individually each week. In addition, students may also get to go to restaurants or points of interest to write reviews and take pictures.

Although they were looking for students of all talents, Tu said, "We are trying to help our Web and public relations sections since they are new, so hopefully

a lot of people apply for those."

BAY Magazine is planning another recruiting sessions this summer in order to continue to expand their group and get a fresh set of minds and ideas.

"Hopefully this will make BAY Magazine more popular. But if anything, we will have more students involved and the more the better," said Tu. ♦

STUDENTS VOLUNTEER ON RAINY MLK JR. DAY

by Emily Williams
and Mac Hyde

On Monday, Jan. 18, the school held its first annual Martin Luther King Jr. community service day. Ninety-seven students and 30 adult volunteers attended an event sponsored by the Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO).

The activities included preparing food for a local charity, creating care packages for soldiers overseas, making cards for seniors and participating, a quad cleanup and a beach cleanup trip.

Parents Sudha Sreenivasan and Dory Albert organized the service day with help from many other parents.

The main events were held at the school from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Despite the heavy rain and wind, students were eager to help their community.

The dinner for the San Jose Family Shelter project was prepared in the school's kitchen. Students prepared a dinner that fed 100 people and was delivered that day.

Students volunteers also put together 600 care packages for overseas troops containing batteries, CDs, DVDs, electronic games, hotel-sized toiletries and healthy pre-packed snacks, all of which were donated by the community.

Another group made thank you cards for the soldiers, and Argonaut Elementary students made Valentine's Day cards for them. This same group, that made cards for the soldiers also made cards for seniors living at the Sunnyvale Retirement Center.

Another event included a campus cleanup project, in which 30 students worked to plant flowerbeds around the quad. The project received a \$500 grant from PTSO to buy the plants.

"I was pleased and amazed to see so many students and parents show up in the rain to plant flowers and shrubs around the quad," said Albert. "Everyone did a wonderful job and worked so well together."

Assistant principal Karen Hyde took seven students up to San Francisco for the beach cleanup event. But because of bad weather that included hail, the event was canceled for the day. Hyde proceeded by taking the students to a casual breakfast at a local restaurant as planned before heading back.

Parent Bonnie Nguyen said, "I'm impressed and thankful for all the students that came and helped to make to make a difference today. The number of students showed up exceeded my expectations." ♦

"Everyone did a wonderful job and worked so well together."

—parent Dory Albert

Rifle club? Times have changed for clubs, classes

by Robin Liu
and Tiffany Tung

Many things can happen at school within the span of 50 years. The flow of new ideas, new technology and new people all contributed to what Saratoga High has become today. Those trends and changes have often shown up in the form of clubs and classes on campus.

For instance, rewind to 1965. Imagine 12 of your classmates walking around holding rifles. Today, such a sight would cause a panic—and probably a full-blown Code Red lockdown. In 1965, however, the most anyone did was give an amusing glance when the members of the then Rifle Club brought their guns to school for their yearbook photo.

Now, students choose to join clubs like Indian Club as a way to spice up their club experience. A far cry from the days when "Block S" and "Future Homemakers of America" were popular.

In academics, the first AP classes didn't come until the mid 1980s, and numerous other classes that were available back then aren't offered today. Typing classes and home economics were options for electives, and there were multiple art and cooking classes.

English teacher Bill Peck attended Saratoga High during the late '60s and remembers the different classes that were provided at the school.

"[There was] Asian History and Latin

American History," he said. "World Affairs covered everything going on at the time, like the Vietnam War and the 1968 election."

Hands-on electives were much more prolific during the '60s. From auto shop to metal shop, there were many classes where students could perform much more manual work.

Furthermore, there were quite a few career-oriented classes such as business math and even shorthand classes. (Shorthand is a type of rapid writing which involves using symbols and abbreviations for words. In the past, it was required for secretarial training.)

The P.E. curriculum was also different, due to the separated classes. Peck recalls the games the boys played.

"They had gladiator fights, it was called 'Slaughterball,'" said Peck. "They would get all the freshmen and line them up, and all the upperclassmen would take the ball, run up to the midline of the gym, and whack, and the freshmen went 'oomph!' And the coaches enjoyed it. And then they outlawed it."

Languages like Latin and German have disappeared as well, replaced by Chinese and Japanese, as a result of adapting to the changing cultures that have changed the balance of ethnicities at the school.

As for clubs, they have come a long way from being more focused on.

"People used to laugh at the chess club when it came on the announcements," said Peck. "But today, it's cool to be smart." ♦



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BUDGET | Changes proposed

continued from pg. 2

accept a financial incentive, called the "golden handshake," in exchange for retiring.

The financial incentive will only be offered if eight or more teachers at Los Gatos and Saratoga choose to take the offer. Since a teachers' salary increases progressively as they teach longer, hiring new teachers will save the district tens of thousands of dollars.

The previously considered proposal of aligning the block schedules of the schools has been shot down, as "the ben-

efit is more to the individual teacher than it is towards saving money," according to principal Jeff Anderson. Both schools seem unwilling to change their block schedules to fit the other's.

The next schoolboard meeting will be held on Feb. 9, in which various propositions designed to help the deficit will be discussed. There will also be a town hall meeting at the Los Gatos High School Library on Feb. 23 and an additional one at the Saratoga High School Library on Feb. 25, where administrators will discuss the situation with the community and seek input. ♦

Ethnic watch list: effective precaution or racism?

Expansion justified to prevent future terrorist attacks

by Sophia Cooper

Thirty thousand feet above the ground, it's close to impossible to have emergency teams respond and arrive as quickly as on the ground. So what happens when a terrorist attempts to blow up a plane mid-flight?

This situation is exactly what the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the National Counterterrorism Center's Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE) are trying to prevent by expanding their terrorist watch list to include all passengers flying from or passing through 14 countries, located mainly in the Middle East and northern Africa, subjecting them to a full pat-down and a hand-check of their carry on luggage.

Provoked by the attempted terrorist attack on Christmas Day, the TSA and TIDE are making flying safe once more for not only American citizens, but all traveling the friendly skies, making their new safety precautions based on country completely justified.

The fact that the majority of the world's terrorists come out of Yemen, Iran, Cuba and Sudan is good reasoning to place those countries on the list. The other 10 countries also have a very high terrorist population, with Cuba, Iran, Sudan, and Syria recognized as state sponsors of terrorism. While some may regard this as racial profiling or discrimination, a large portion of these countries' populations are involved in ter-

rorist activities, giving the TSA and TIDE evidence to warrant their decision.

With the closing of Guantanamo Bay, many of the detainees are being shipped to their home countries and undertake a "terrorist rehabilitation program;" eventually they are announced as "cured" and repatriated. Where are the majority of these Gitmo releases being sent? The 14 countries on the new terrorist watch list.

Unstable governments and a hurting economy make it easier for terrorist groups, to gain new followers. With more people, terrorist organizations have a higher number of participants willing to partake in suicide missions, including those as passengers on airlines.

Using Umar Farouk AbdulMutallab, the attempted Christmas bomber, as an example, it is obvious that no matter how public the person's life is, they could still be a terrorist. Soldiers fighting in the War on Terrorism report that they can't distinguish enemies from civilians. If our highly trained militia can't tell the difference, how can the TSA?

It is completely justified that the TSA and TIDE enforce further security measures on passengers from the aforementioned 14 countries. As international airports have to abide by the regulations set forth by the U.S., security checks are more likely to find terrorists before they board the plane to enter the States.

If they want to come to our country, they've got to play by our rules. ♦

Racial profiling discriminatory, need better solution

by Karthik Annaamalai

The terrorist attack on Christmas day has raised many concerns about the safety of flying and has had many people wanting the government to devote more time in creating new security measures. The NY Times reported on Jan. 3 that citizens of 14 countries, including Saudi Arabia,

Pakistan, and Nigeria, who are flying to the United States are liable to more frequent and intense searches.

The Obama administration and Homeland Security are trying to justify their position by claiming this new regulation is not racial profiling. Upon closer look at the list, however, the majority of the 14 countries' populations are Muslim, with the list being: Yemen, Iran, Cuba, Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Somalia. Clearly, the government is taking a large step toward racial and ethnic profiling.

This will in turn result in an increase in racism. By encouraging the racial profiling of Muslims, the government will lead the general public to believe that the Muslim population is at fault for any terrorist attack that occurs, leaving innocent

people in danger of random attacks.

Homeland Security will devote all their time and resources to checking citizens from the 15 nations on the list that they will fail to properly check citizens from other countries. For example, Israel focused on extensively searching young male Middle Easterners who entered Israel, which they thought would

solve their problems. What the country did not realize is that terrorist groups started to send female terrorists through the borders who easily

got past the security checks. The same results may occur with the new regulations.

Instead, Homeland Security should find other ways to prevent terrorists from all nations, rather than just the 15 on the list. Many of the recent terrorist attempts have been involving liquids to create chemical reactions that would detonate the bomb. The easiest way for airport security to prevent this method is to find a way to locate the chemical liquids through the X-rays. This method would be far more efficient than racial profiling and would most likely catch more potential terrorists. Since there are less harmful ways to solving the problem at hand, racial profiling should not be used by the government. ♦

PRO CON

Homeland Security should find other ways to prevent terrorists from all nations, rather than the 15 on the list.



Community service should be more than 'looking better' to colleges

by Karthik Annaamalai
and Ren Norris

When many people hear the words "community service," they usually think of felons in orange vests picking up trash on the side of a highway as a form of punishment to compensate for a crime that they had committed. But here at Saratoga High, the words community service have a different meaning as most students believe that the more extra service they perform, the more appealing they will become to colleges.

At some other high schools, a certain number of community service hours is a requirement for students to graduate. But having this requirement defeats the

purpose of giving back to the community because students are forced to do it.

It is the same situation with students who only do community service to polish their resumé. Community service should be a way for people to help out those who are less fortunate, but students are defeating the intent of service by using it for other motives.

Even though the people receiving the service wouldn't know the difference as long as work is being done, the requirements for service would force those who don't really care serve, essentially detracting from its value.

Community service is more rewarding for the workers when they know they are performing the task to make a difference

instead of to look "better" for colleges.

Senior Malika Kumar is an example of a student who does community service for the right reasons. She volunteers for Good Samaritan Hospital as well as programs through Sacred Heart. At the hospital, Kumar works for a program called "Smile" where she goes to patient's rooms and cheers them up.

"I really like to give back," said Kumar, "because I think we're fortunate to live in Saratoga, where we have the benefits of a nice house, a nice school, and a really nice community. It's important that we help out people who are less fortunate."

Clubs such as Interact, Key Club, CSF and National Honors Society provide opportunities for students to serve, but

many students join these clubs for the sole purpose of appealing to colleges. It is not bad to gain college recognition for doing community service, but activities on your resumé should represent your actual interests, not something students do just to appear benevolent.

"It's really unfair for people to not be motivated by an actual desire to help out, but just be concerned with getting your hours," said Kumar. "It defeats the spirit of community service if people's hearts aren't in it."

By requiring students to perform a certain number of community service hours, the school would also diminish the value of service, making it more like a punishment and less of an act done out of the heart. ♦

Athlete's path diverted by concussion

"My post-concussion syndrome has given me so much grief."

Jordan Waite



It was an intense wrestling practice. The room felt like a sauna. Sweat was steaming off of the hard-working athletes. The only thing I remembered from that day was the face of the person I was wrestling. The rest was a blur.

I had gotten a concussion. It was the second that week and the third of my life. Teammates and coaches describe it as one moment I was fine and the next I was staring into space, unable to utter coherent words or move properly. I couldn't remember what I had eaten for lunch that day one year ago.

The ER doctor diagnosed me with a traumatic brain injury and sent me to a pediatric neurologist. The neurologist specified it as post-concussion syndrome, which is a fancy way of saying I have microscopic tears in my brain tissue that are a result of multiple concussions. He gave me the disappointing news that I would not be able to play lacrosse in the spring or wrestle the following winter because the consequences of sustaining another head injury were too high to risk. Now, a full year later, I am not cleared to play any sports yet, and just got permission to run.

I still go the same neurologist and every time I go, I hear the same demor-

alizing words; "You'll get better, It just takes time." The tough thing about post-concussion syndrome is that unlike a broken bone or knee surgery, there are no x-rays or scans that show the damage or indicate how long it will take to heal. The brain takes its sweet time.

For my whole life, I have defined myself as an athlete and my extracurricular life has been sports. When I was faced with the devastating news that I wouldn't be able to play my favorite sports, I was forced to re-invent myself. This task is much more difficult than it sounds, but I quickly latched on to some less dangerous hobbies such as photography and rock climbing.

I now have the mentality that if I am able to overcome this situation, I can handle almost anything.

What a head injury feels like

What most people don't understand about concussions is that while the brain is healing, everyday activities and uses of the brain that we take for granted are hampered. In the worst period of my concussion symptoms, I would be trying to focus on homework and many hours later find myself staring at a wall, having done one problem. This made even the easiest of homework assignments and tests extremely challenging, and even hopeless at sometimes.

Another common symptom of concussion injuries are problems with mood. Terrible mood swings and depression occur regularly in head injury patients,

so if I have snapped at you in the last 12 months, blame it on the concussions. Another symptom I have noticed to this day is that highway on and off ramps and elevators make me nauseous, when I used to be able to handle roller-coasters all day.

A common misconception of a concussion is that it only happens with a knockout punch, but this is only one way to get a concussion. Multiple, less forceful hits or constant jarring of the head can cause a concussion injury just as effectively as a single hard hit. This type of concussion can be even be more dangerous, as the symptoms are hard to diagnose and can go unnoticed until the injury has worsened, which happened to me.

An extreme example of this is the "walking dead" syndrome, where a concussion patient refuses treatment because they feel fine and after a few hours or even days, they suddenly die. This scenario occurred with the tragic death of famous actress Natasha Richardson in March 2009. Richardson sustained what the ski-resort paramedics diagnosed as a minor concussion in a skiing accident, on a beginner slope. Claiming to feel fine, she refused to go to the hospital and later the next day, she died from bleeding in the brain.

Schools take concussions seriously
The modern research on head inju-

ries is sparking much needed debate in youth and professional sports. Since most coaches aren't aware of the seriousness of head injuries, it is common for an athlete to get a concussion and then be put back into the same game. If the player sustains multiple concussions in one time period, they can start causing serious and irreversible damage. School administrations around the country are taking head injuries into greater consideration and are making changes to try to prevent them.

Washington state recently passed a bill that requires sports programs to educate athletes and parents and train coaches about head injuries. The bill also says that an athlete who gets a concussion must be approved by a certified health care provider before returning to their sport. California is in the process of legislating a similar bill. And the NFL, the toughest league of all, is even starting to take the problem seriously.

My post-concussion syndrome has given me so much grief that I cannot adequately express my experience with words, but in a weird way I am glad it happened. Everyone is forced to re-invent themselves at some point in their life, and I was given the unique opportunity to do so at age 16. I desperately miss playing sports, but if I had I not sustained this injury, I would not be the same person I am today. I have learned a lot about life from this incident and I now have the mentality that if I am able to overcome this situation, I can handle almost anything. ♦

Keep classes small

America's recession may be technically over, but the budget woes of school in California aren't disappearing. In the face of a \$3 million projected deficit for the 2010-2011 school year, the Los Gatos-Saratoga High School District is making cuts in the classroom, potentially growing the size of English 9 classes to 28 or beyond—a serious detriment to students and a regrettable move by school officials.

The idea to reduce the amount of classes, thereby increasing class sizes, might seem like a good idea on paper. The cuts could save money by decreasing the number of sections and therefore teachers, and, besides, there's probably enough room to squeeze 30 tiny freshmen in an English classroom, right? Wrong. The transition from middle school to high school is a tremendous one, and smaller English classes for freshmen can immensely benefit students in their freshman year and beyond.

Coming from St. Andrew's School, a small private middle school, I found it comforting that I had at least one class where I knew almost everybody and where I wasn't afraid to raise my hand and ask questions. For me, it was a major factor in helping me adjust to the new atmosphere.

Some might say that, since high school students should be able to get help when they need it, increasing classes for freshmen shouldn't really affect academic performance.

People who say this probably do not accurately remember what being a freshman is really like. Getting used to a new campus, shouldering harder classes and dealing with high school drama is a big deal, and it's easy to get lost in the daily shuffle.

English 9, however, is supposed to help freshmen deal with the sudden transition by providing a comfortable setting for them to learn and adjust. English 9, at least, is supposed to be different from the rest of high school.

By maintaining a low student to teacher ratio (about 20-1), freshman English teachers can give students the individual attention that students deserve and, in the case of freshmen, absolutely need to succeed.

A smaller class size forces students to actively participate in the classroom since no student can sit in the corner, outside the view of the teacher. They also tend to write more and receive more individual attention.

Studies have also shown that students interact better with their peers in such a setting. On the other hand, in large classes, students who struggle may not be heard and will not receive help. Some students will slip through the cracks,

an inevitability only worsened by the fact that many of these students are freshmen already working hard to adjust to high school life.

Smaller class sizes create immense benefits for students both educationally and socially, but there is a catch.

Of course, much like with everything else, higher quality learning comes with a higher price tag. But that doesn't mean we can or should erase small classes entirely. Instead, the school should reprioritize next year's to-do list and find other places to cut. In a previous *Falcon* article regarding the growing deficit, principal Jeff Anderson remarked that «Hopefully, [students'] education will not be impacted at all.» In that case, increasing English 9 class sizes is perhaps the worst way to balance the school's checkbook. ♦



'Einstein' should resign

TELEVISION PROGRAM FOR BABIES BACKFIRES

by Serena Chan and Aanchal Mohan

Today's ultra competitive society leads to some pretty silly ideas.

Take, for example, "Baby Einstein," a line of videos and other multimedia products aimed at teaching 3-month-olds to 3-year-olds how to talk and think at a higher level. It seems too easy: Sit your baby in front of a TV and they'll be speaking in no time. But recent studies from the University of Washington show this practice is backfiring.

Dr. Dimitri Christakis said, "The more videos they watched, the fewer words they [the babies] knew. These babies scored about 10 percent lower on language skills than infants who had not watched these videos."

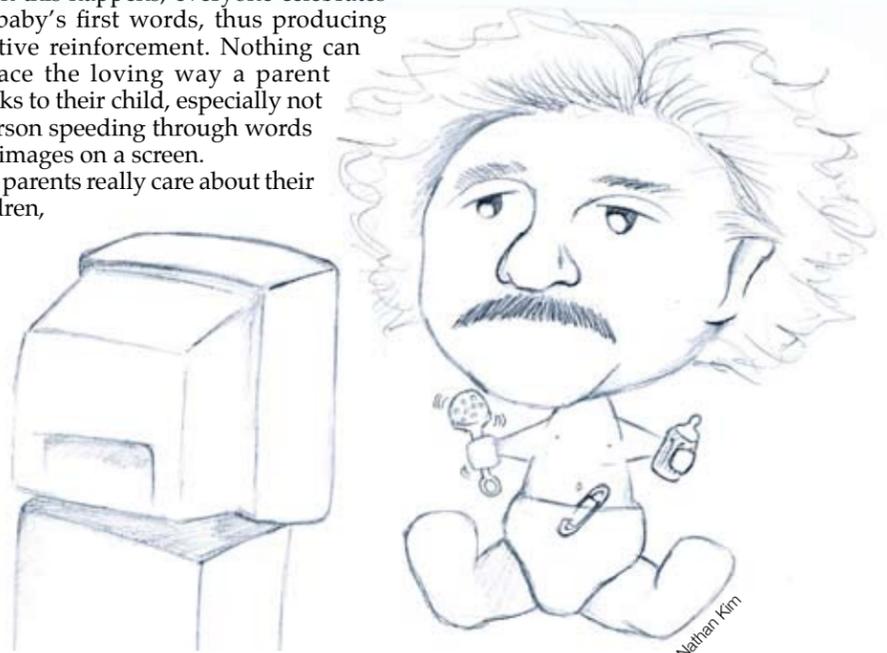
A normal child spends their first years with parents, a nanny, siblings, a real person. During the daily interactions the baby talk morphs into a real language. When this happens, everyone celebrates the baby's first words, thus producing positive reinforcement. Nothing can replace the loving way a parent speaks to their child, especially not a person speeding through words and images on a screen.

If parents really care about their children,

they should want to spend time bonding with them. As much as the electronic world is woven into society today, there's a limit to how much people should be dependent on it. Technology was created to make life easier, but in this case it is detrimental for the baby's brain growth.

Parents are so caught up with getting their kids ahead that they don't question whether their actions are truly helping. They are so desperate for their child to get a "head start" that they are willing to trust any company guaranteeing success. Research has shown that a baby does gain benefits by starting early, but technology such as "Baby Einstein" is not the answer.

There are still many other necessary characteristics, such as social skills and common sense, which cannot be taught through a prerecorded person on a television screen. It doesn't take an Einstein to figure out these skills need to be taught through human interaction. ♦



The Saratoga Falcon

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Shaggy-haired boy should not tangle with school rules

by Izzy Albert

No matter how ridiculous a rule or law may sound to some people, most rules and laws exist for a reason. They help keep the society in order and citizens somewhat sane. Rebellion against any rules, especially in an elementary school, can cause much havoc and unnecessary publicity.

An example of this can be portrayed through four-year-old Taylor Pugh of Floyd Elementary School in Dallas and his parents, who seem to think it's all right to rebel against their school system and its rules when they come across a rule with any hint of controversy. Unnecessary rebellion is what breaks down societies and establishments, and therefore Pugh and his parents should obey the rules the young boy's school enforces about their students' hair.

Because of his hair being too long, which did in fact violate the school dress code policy, Pugh was issued a warning to cut his hair or he would be suspended. Pugh refused to cut his hair, and his parents supported his decision, claiming that it's "not right to hold a child down and force him to do something ... when it's not hurting him or affecting his education."

Pugh, after being warned, was sus-

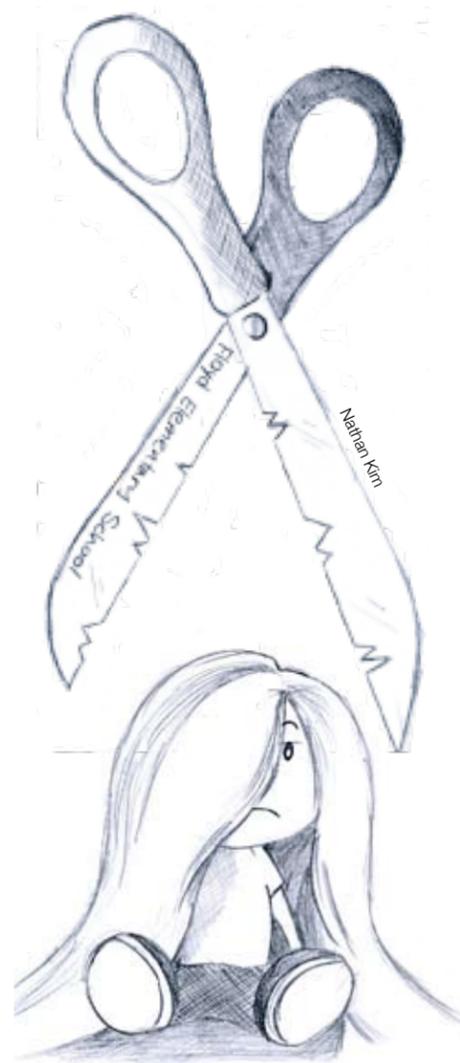
pended from his elementary school, infuriating him and his parents. This controversial situation gained news coverage fast, leaving many people shocked that Pugh's parents are showing their young child that challenging authority is by all means okay.

Being a parent comes with many responsibilities. It has been accepted that their main responsibility is to assure that they bring their child up as best they can in order to become a polite and civil young adult.

By enrolling their child in a school, it's implied that the parents and student must be able to comply with the rules and regulations the school enforces. Sure, maybe the kid likes his hair long; but the least he could do in return for a good education is follow the rules. If he is deathly afraid of cutting his shaggy hair, then he should just enroll in a different school for everyone's sake, rather than trying to get the press on their side.

Maybe the rule is a bit ridiculous, anyone would admit, but in all honesty every school has their strange and sometimes controversial rules. But students just need to deal with them, and parents need to also take them seriously.

After all, who's a 4-year-old boy to try and change his school's rules? ♦



TOGATALKS

Should Google decide to pull out of China?

No, because Google should wait and see if it will benefit them in the year 2010.



freshman Ishaan Kolluri

Yes. China is using them for their own personal benefits instead of using it productively.



sophomore Vineet Jain

Is Google chickening out of China?

by Arnav Dugar

In the 12 years since it was founded, Google Inc. has grown from a garage-based search engine into an internationally recognized cloud-computing and web search giant, yet the company is contemplating a bold step in the opposite direction, abandoning its business in China because of a China-based cyber attack on its intellectual property and continued frustration over government censorship.

Google's decision is rash and illogical, but it is a calculated move. The company's ostensibly philanthropic attempt to bring free speech to China seems to be shrouding an ulterior mercantile motive.

Google was lured into China by the growing market for Internet applications, but its services were blocked intermittently, giving Baidu, a Beijing-based rival search engine company, a huge advantage. As Google's attempt to take Baidu's market share failed, its hopes to establish a successful Chinese division were dashed.

By making a bold threat to leave China and refusing to censor search results, Google has already burned its bridges with the Chinese government, showing it has accepted defeat against Baidu and is not willing to return to China. However, instead of publicly admitting defeat, Google is using the hacking incident and the advocacy of free speech as a red herring for a commercial retreat.

Google provides no explanation on how the cyber attacks justify China, why the attacks mean Google should suddenly stop censoring search results, or what intellectual property was stolen.

Google linked the attacks to "Gmail

accounts of Chinese human rights activists," but claimed the accounts were not "accessed through any security breach at Google, but most likely via phishing scams or malware placed on the users' computers." However, Google fails to mention any details about the internal "security incident."

In addition, Google seems to be covering up the details of the security breach by only mentioning the instances in which accounts were hacked as a result of the user's actions instead of a lapse in security. Regardless, even if Google removed

its servers from China, it still would be susceptible to such hackings because these attacks can be carried out anywhere on the globe as long as an Internet connection is available.

Google is simply attempting to save face by turning the embarrassing events into actions of humanity. The Chinese government is highly unlikely falter from its views on censorship, especially since it has little vested interest in Google. Google, meanwhile, benefits from positive publicity from taking a "bold" stand against censorship. ♦

CANDID CARICATURES

by Arnav Dugar



Alumnus helps promote AIDS awareness

by Lauren Kuan
and Rebecca Nguyen



courtesy of Michael Nguyen

Alumnus Michael Nguyen spends time with a child as he helps bring him to the orphanage.

After graduating Saratoga High in 2007, Michael Nguyen, a junior at UC San Diego studying human development, decided to go to Tanzania around fall of 2008 to teach HIV/AIDS awareness through One Heart Source, a program that helps house orphans in Africa.

Nguyen felt that it was an opportunity he would not want to miss.

"I felt that I'm in college and it's one of those things where it's a chance in a lifetime like when else are you going to have time to go abroad and try to help someone else," said Nguyen. "It gave me a lot more perspective about the pandemic outside of the United States border."

Although the culture was bound to be different, Nguyen enjoyed his trip upon arrival.

"When I first got there, I was really excited and the people and culture were very friendly. The environment is different because time feels a lot slower there," said Nguyen. "In Africa, no one really cares about the time because it is just the flow of life, which is pretty cool."

Nguyen, however, did not have an easy time

for his whole trip: He ended up contracting malaria as well as amoebas.

"I had to be hospitalized for about six hours, but I was only hospitalized for amoebas and not malaria," said Nguyen. "I got very dehydrated and they needed to hook me up to an IV because I wasn't cleaning my hands as well as I should have."

"It gave me a lot more perspective about the pandemic outside the United States border."

—Alumnus Michael Nguyen

Nguyen's trip was filled with valuable memories, but one sticks out most from the rest. He remembers when the first two kids came from the orphanage that they were building and they moved on to a new home.

"It was a pretty cool day since I waited the entire program for kids to come in," said Nguyen. "It was a heartwarming moment because the two kids came from another orphanage where there was only one mom for about 30 kids."

With all of his experiences in high school and Africa, Nguyen advises students to take chances.

"Just keep your mind open because, when you come to college, there's plenty of opportunities so don't be scared to pursue them. If it sounds cool, then you should just do it," said Nguyen. "I feel as if I learned more than what other people learn through this experience." ♦

SARATOGA ALUMNI: HARD AT WORK

TWO GRADUATES EXPLORE
DIFFERENT LIFE OPTIONS

Coach Lii pursues career dreams back to Saratoga

by Karen Yang

After graduating in 2002, alumnus David Lii returned to Saratoga after college to work as both an assistant coach for the varsity football team and an investment analyst in downtown Saratoga.

Lii, who played football when he was a student here, continued visiting the team during the summers of his college years at UC San Diego. His love for the sport compelled him to take on the position of assistant coach. He now coaches the safeties on defense and works with the special teams.

"I don't consider it a job whatsoever. I get to go hang out with the boys and help them learn some life lessons on the football field," said Lii. "The more players, the better because that would mean more get to share the great memories that I have and the bonds that are built with the teammates."

Looking back to his years at SHS, Lii fondly recalls some of his best memories of playing football. He particularly remembers how he scored the only touchdown during the Los Gatos game his senior year after intercepting and returning a pass for a 96-yard touchdown.

"Football is the ultimate team game. The bond between teammates is like none other and is forever lasting," said Lii. "Football teaches you the discipline

that is required in order to achieve your desired goals."

The friendships and roots Lii has made through high school football extend beyond sports. During a visit to the team after Lii's third year at college, he asked Kevin Tanner, who had coached Lii, if he was in need of any summer assistance at his investment firm, Saratoga Research & Investment Management. After interning for a few years, Lii was hired following his graduation as an analyst on the firm's research team. He has since added the title assistant portfolio manager and, in addition to his research responsibilities, does most of the trading required to initially invest new

portfolios and rebalance existing ones.

"At Saratoga RIM, I like how I'm constantly learning," said Lii. "And having just touched the tip of the iceberg in my financial investment education, I won't be leaving anytime soon. Still too much to learn, and too much that our team here can accomplish."

After working for Saratoga RIM for over three years, Lii expressed his gratitude to the math courses he had taken at SHS. Having taken math through calculus, Lii appreciates the strong foundation that these classes provided for the economic courses he took in college.

"Without these fundamentals, economic theories like equilibrium and efficiency I learned would have been nearly impossible to understand," said Lii.

The groundwork provided by the AP



courtesy of David Lii

Assistant varsity football coach David Lii speaks with players during practice

Computer Science class he took here also galvanized his interest in that subject. Although he had entered UCSD with a plan to major in electrical engineering, Lii became fascinated with computer science after his first year. He was unable to switch to computer science, but he managed to change his major to management science.

Despite this disappointment, Lii continued to pursue his interest, taking all but one lower division computer science course. The skills he acquired from these classes now play a fundamental role at Saratoga RIM.

"The ability to think like a computer

scientist surprisingly comes into play at Saratoga RIM," he said. "It is the computer science logic that allows us to cut down our massive starting database [of 10,000 companies] and be able to focus our attention on the best 200."

Although Lii had no idea where he was headed while in high school, he now knows that the best advice he took was pursuing his interests, in both career and athletics.

His advice: "Find something that you're passionate about, and pursue your biggest dreams with it, working as hard as necessary to achieve your goals. And never give up." ♦

Best Friends of

WHO KNOWS YOU BEST? YOUR BOY FRIEND OR YOUR BEST FRIEND? FIND OUT NOW WITH THESE QUESTIONS AND SEE HOW THESE COUPLES DID.

Questions:

Try out these questions with your best friend and boyfriend or girlfriend!

1. Favorite food?
2. Favorite color?
3. Favorite shirt?
4. Favorite deodorant?
5. Celebrity crush?
6. What time they sleep?
7. Favorite inside joke?
8. If they could go anywhere, where would they go?
9. Pet peeve/worst habit?
10. Favorite class?
11. Favorite song?
12. Fear of...?
13. Most prized possession?
14. Call or text?

about Paxton

best friend

Ally Doles:

Paxton's favorite shirt: barbie shirt

Paxton's celebrity crush: Rachel Bilson

Paxton's favorite inside joke: Cocoa Pebbles

Would Paxton rather call or text? text

"There were a lot of answers for some, so maybe I wouldn't have gotten some of them. If we were on the same wavelength, then I did well."

Paxton's answers: favorite shirt: barbie shirt, celebrity crush: Eli Manning, favorite inside joke: raptors (with Mikey), cocoa pebbles (with Ally)

+9



boyfriend

Mikey McGinnis:

Paxton's favorite shirt: green/blue/grey shirt

Paxton's celebrity crush: me

Paxton's favorite inside joke: raptors

Would Paxton rather call or text? text

"I felt like I did bad."

best friend

Colleen Garland:

Kat's favorite food: pizza salad

Kat's favorite shirt: colleen-a-palooza

Kat's celebrity crush: Andy Samberg & Johnny Depp

Favorite song: "Fast Car" by Tracy Chapman

"I GOT IT"

Kat's Answers: favorite food: pizza salad, favorite color: green, favorite shirt: colleen-a-palooza, celebrity crush: Johnny Depp/Andy Samberg Chapman

about Kat

+8



boyfriend

Kevin Darchuk:

Kat's favorite food: deer

Kat's favorite shirt: the red one

Kat's celebrity crush: Johnny Depp

Favorite song: "Candy Shop"

"deer"

best friend

Courtney Hsu:

Becca's favorite class: choir

Becca's favorite deodorant: dove

If Becca could go anywhere, where would she go?: Taiwan

Favorite food: cookies

"[I don't think I did] very well. This is what we talked about when we were little. Now that we've grown up, we don't talk about this stuff."

Becca's Answers: favorite class: Choir, favorite deodorant: teen spirit, if she could go anywhere, where would she go? Taiwan, favorite food: cookies

about Becca

+5



boyfriend

Justin Fang:

Becca's favorite class: Chinese

Becca's favorite deodorant: HUH?

If Becca could go anywhere, where would she go?: Taiwan

Becca's favorite food: noodles

"I was disappointed I only got 4 points...I was impressed Kevin got the best score out of everybody."

best friend

Briana Bowker:

Cathy's favorite deodorant: Victoria Secret

Cathy's celebrity crush: Taylor Lautner

Cathy's worst habit: when people interrupt her

Cathy's most prized possession: Uggs

"I don't think I did that well because I felt rushed, but I think that I know Cathy better than Cody does."

Cathy's Answers: favorite deodorant: none, celebrity crush: not Taylor Lautner or Justin Bieber; none, pet peeve: I don't look people in the possession: sweet stuff my friends gave me and Cody's teddy bear.

about Cathy

+4



boyfriend

Cody Cai:

Cathy's favorite deodorant: none, smells good already (:

Cathy's celebrity crush: Taylor Lautner

Cathy's worst habit: not looking directly at you when she talks

Cathy's most prized possession: none

"I'm surprised I did better than Briana they've been best friends since eighth grade and I've only gotten to know Cathy better since we started going out."

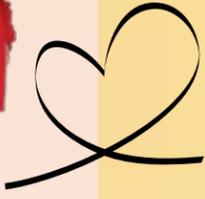
or Boyfriends?

The Couples:

+8



Mikey & Paxton



Seniors



girlfriend

Paxton Barco:

Mikey's favorite shirt: big black ski jacket

Mikey's celebrity crush: Emma Watson

Mikey's favorite inside joke: raptors

Would Mikey rather call or text? text

"Some of them, I felt like I knew right away, but some I didn't know."

Mikey's answers: favorite shirt: green prince shirt, celebrity crush: Emma Watson, favorite inside joke: raptors (with Paxton), bench (with Drew), call/text: text

about Mikey

+8



best friend

Drew Hsieh:

Mikey's favorite shirt: green prince shirt

Mikey's celebrity crush: Paxton Barco/ Drew Hsieh

Mikey's favorite inside joke: more weight (bench),

Would Mikey rather call or text? text

"I aced it. It felt like a physics test."

ly), call/text: text

+3



Kevin & Kat



Juniors



girlfriend

Kat Nobles:

Kevin's favorite food: pizza

Kevin's favorite shirt: Oregon shirt? (green)

Kevin's celebrity crush: Justin Timberlake

Favorite song: "Down" by Jay Sean

"[Kevin's] is probably all jokes."

Kevin's Answers: favorite food: meat?, favorite color: green, favorite shirt: the red one, celebrity crush: Brad Pitt, favorite song: "Tik Tok"

about Kevin

+3



best friend

Tim Lycurgus:

Kevin's favorite food: bagels

Kevin's favorite shirt: Oregon shirt (green)

Kevin's celebrity crush: Creed in the Office

Favorite song: "Good Life" by Kanye West

"I don't know any of this."

y, favorite song: "Fast Car" by Tracy

+4



Justin & Becca



Sophomores



girlfriend

Becca Chen:

Justin's favorite class: Orchestra

Justin's favorite deodorant: ?!

If Justin could go anywhere, where would he go?: my house

Justin's favorite food: rice

"I don't know [how I did] . . . who knows someone's favorite deodorant?"

Justin's Answers: favorite class: Chinese, favorite deodorant: Axe Dry, if he could go anywhere, where would he go? home, favorite food: rice

about Justin

+4



best friend

Kevin Pan:

Justin's favorite class: Chinese

Justin's favorite deodorant: Kevin Pan scent?

If Justin could go anywhere, where would he go?: my house for football

Justin's favorite food: hamburgers with bacon?

"So far I don't know any answers."

: stinky tofu

+5



Cody & Cathy



Freshmen



girlfriend

Cathy Han:

Cody's favorite deodorant: doesn't use, but owns axe

Cody's celebrity crush: I don't know, but he doesn't like Taylor Swift

Cody's worst habit: his obsession with keeping his shoes clean

Cody's most prized possession: his shoes

"I thought that I was going to fail and only get two right so I'm surprised with how I did."

Cody's Answers: favorite deodorant: axe, celebrity crush: Taylor Swift, worst habit: taking food from my friends, spazzing, people stepping on my shoes, most prized possession: ipod, shoes, computer

about Cody

+7



best friend

Derek Chao:

Cody's favorite deodorant: axe

Cody's celebrity crush: Megan Fox

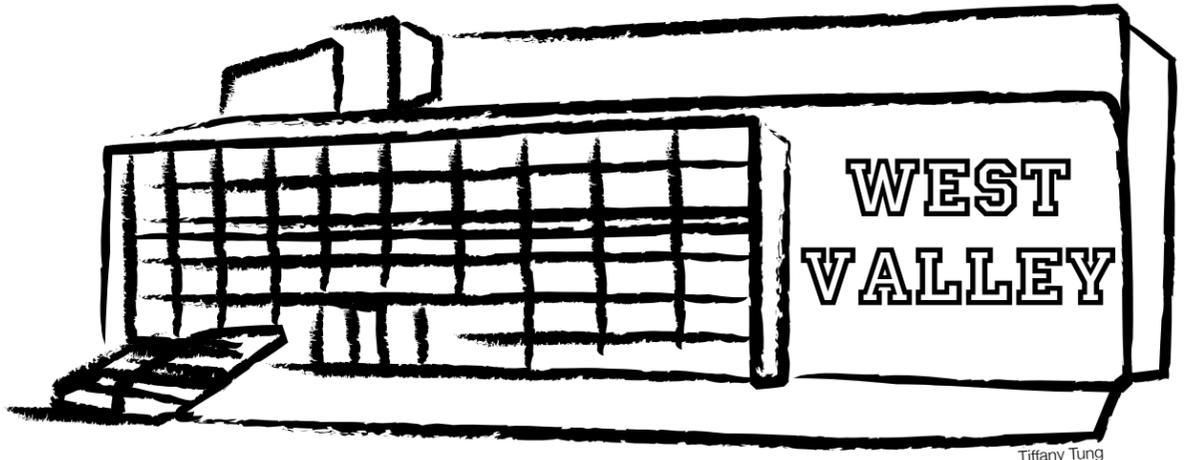
Cody's worst habit: n/a

Cody's most prized possession: me

"Whenever I have free time, I go over to his house and hang out with him. We like to play video games together."

eyes when I talk to them, most prized

Welcome to Middle College!



Tiffany Tung

For students who are fed up with high school, an alternative education program that is growing in popularity may be the answer

At right, senior Steve Chang studies for math in the Saratoga High School library. Because he was not motivated to excel at Saratoga High, Chang attended Middle College during first semester and loved the freedom (and free time) that came with scheduling his own classes. He has since returned to Saratoga High to complete his second semester.



Grishma Athavale

SENIOR RETURNS FROM MIDDLE COLLEGE

by Arnav Dugar
and David Eng

Unmotivated to succeed in a high school setting, senior Steve Chang sought change. He wanted less structure and more freedom. He wanted to forge a new path for himself. Although he has since returned to Saratoga High for the second semester of this school year due to academic difficulties, he said he found what he was looking for at Middle College.

Middle College is a branch of schooling that deviates from the typical path students follow to higher education but offers several attractive benefits.

Instead of devoting four years to sometimes rudimentary high school courses, Middle College students gradually amount college credits, giving them a head start toward earning an undergraduate degree and a real-life exposure in a college environment—not to mention that more than three-fourths of the student

body are girls, according to Chang.

Chang said he personally was not motivated to excel in the atmosphere at Saratoga High and it “didn’t make [him] feel the need to put an effort in school-work.”

Taking into account the advantages of a new program and his previous experiences here, Chang made his transfer at the beginning of this school year from the school system that had taught him for his whole life.

Chang recalls his first day at Middle College vividly. After all, he was one of only two students from Saratoga High entering the program and he didn’t know anybody there.

“It was difficult adjusting for the first week, but after that it was very easy to adapt to and enjoy,” Chang said.

However, Chang’s time at Middle College system didn’t detract from his social life.

“I’ve made a lot of new friends both in an out of school,” said Chang. “Having so much extra free time, I’ve gotten to know a lot of great people outside of school I wouldn’t

—Senior Steve Chang

otherwise get to meet.”

In addition to utilizing leisure time to meet new people, Chang also enjoyed the added control he hold over his new life.

“I like that I have total control over my schedule,” he said. “There’s no set amount

of time I am required to be on campus other than for my high school classes.”

Chang was required to take core history and English classes in order to graduate, but outside of those two, Middle College students select a few out of the wide spectrum of courses offered at West Valley. Chang opted to also take a math class and a ceramics class, both of which he enjoyed.

Chang said even though the professors in Middle College are knowledgeable, they aren’t quite as easy to find and talk to as high school teachers. In order to talk to one of his lecturers, Chang had to go in during set office hours, similar to the tutorial period at Saratoga or arrange special appointments.

Thinking back, Chang does not regret his decision to attend Middle College.

“In addition to teaching me independence and responsibility, Middle College has also showed me what college classes are like and what the college environment is like,” Chang said. ♦

“In addition to teaching me independence and responsibility, Middle College has also showed me what college classes are like and what the college environment is like.”



Courtesy of Courtney Payne

Junior Courtney Payne poses for a photo after a long hike with her Venture Crew.

INTO THE WILD

MIDDLE COLLEGE LAST STOP BEFORE STARTING TRAVELLING SCHOOL

by Grishma Athavale and Maggie Lin

Snorkeling in the Galapagos, backpacking in the Andes and hiking up to the summit of Machu Picchu. It all sounds like a dream vacation, but these breathtaking adventures will be daily fare for one lucky junior.

Starting Feb 1, junior Courtney Payne will attend the Traveling School, a program that sends 15 high school girls on a trip across the world for a unique educational experience. In various South American countries such as Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands, Payne will spend over two months experiencing nature to its fullest—rock climbing, surfing and white-water rafting are just some of the activities in the group's high-adventure agenda. She will also learn about the different cultures and circumstances of the people living in various countries in addition to doing some community service work.

Payne heard about the traveling school from her mom's coworker in 7th grade.

"He started telling us about the program and telling my mom and I how terrific it would be for me [to go there]," said Payne. "I started seriously considering going about a year and a half ago, and began the application process in February of last school year."

As a Venture Scout, a program similar to Boy Scouts except that it is exclusively for girls, Payne has always been interested in the great outdoors, and this program will open doors to so many different

worlds, Payne said.

"I am really excited about so many things. For one, backpacking, snorkeling, mountaineering and surfing for PE credit sounds really awesome," said Payne. "[Also] I think that giving back to the communities we visit—teaching children English and building water systems in small villages—will be very rewarding.

Payne will only have three days of "proper" schooling per week, in unorthodox settings such as the side of a glacier in a tent, a boat in the middle of the Galapagos Islands or atop Machu Picchu.

"I'm excited about the experience of really leaping into something completely new, without any real safety net; no friends, no family, no anyone I know... and yet that's also terrifying, like starting everything all over again," said Payne.

Meanwhile, Payne is taking classes at the local West Valley community college because of their flexible schedule. Going to school four days a week, Payne's workload piles up as professors expect students to conform to the high standards of a college class.

"Taking classes at West Valley College is different," said Payne. "Teachers expect you to do a lot of work on your own, and I have a lot of reading homework—I once had 90 pages for homework in class."

Due to the conflicting schedules of middle college and high school, Payne unfortunately cannot spend as much time as she would like with her friends. Nonetheless, she still looks forward to the many adventures she will experience in South America in the spring.

"As much as I regret not being here for my friends and family, I am excited to leave," Payne said. "It means I get to experience something most teenagers, most high schoolers, can't even dream of." ♦

DISCOVERING FREEDOM FROM THE 'RIGID PATH'

A BROAD RANGE OF CLASSES ALLOWS STUDENT TO THRIVE

by Albert Gu and Karthik Sreedhara

Junior Annaliese Parker, frustrated with what she perceived as the restrictive system at SHS, transferred to Middle College earlier this year because she yearned for more freedom and control over her academic success.

While on the campus of West Valley College this past semester, Parker has been able to take unique classes such as infectious diseases, human anatomy and counseling.

Besides the required core classes—English and history—students get to choose what classes and how many classes they want to take from the wide variety of courses offered at West Valley. The college environment even lets students decide when they want to schedule their classes, as opposed to Saratoga's high school's mostly randomized schedules.

"The high school had a rigid path of classes that was limiting what you could or could not be in and had almost no flexibility, especially in places such as the math curriculum," Parker said.

Besides being unhappy with the inflexibility she saw at the high school, she was also unhappy with the unpredictable variability in teachers—having an "easy" or "hard" teacher for a subject could potentially make or break your grade.

As opposed to college, where every class' teacher is known beforehand, in high school it is easy to end up with a teacher who does not suit a student's learning style. High school teachers also

often assign a large amount of "busy-work," said Parker.

"At West Valley, your grade is dependent on you, and if you aren't doing your work, then you're going to fail," said Parker. "Although there isn't much homework assigned, the teachers expect that you do your work and are learning, and your results reflect the amount of work you put in."

Other benefits of Middle College include longer breaks. Since West Valley

runs on a semester system with winter and summer terms, Parker gets a 6-week winter break because she doesn't have a winter session.

Additionally, the large number of available classes means that Parker

can arrange her own schedule. Now, although she has 12-hour class days twice a week, she has 3 to 4 day weekends every week that give her free time to do the things she enjoys.

And although she still has to take SATs, she doesn't need to take any AP classes since she's already taking actual college courses, which will eventually transfer into college credit.

Parker has nothing but praise for Middle College, despite the fact that she has had to make some sacrifices.

While she fondly remembers Saratoga High and main-

tains her high school friendships, she has found her own path of freedom and plans to continue on it. She looks forward to meeting students from other schools that are also participating in the program.

"I can take classes that actually interest me, get AP credit and have a bunch of free time at the end of the day to do the things I like to do," said Parker. "There's just so much more freedom. If anyone was thinking about going to Middle College, I would recommend them to go." ♦



PARKER

Frustrated by the lack of flexibility at SHS, Parker

decided to switch to Middle College this year.

"At West Valley, your grade is dependent on you, and if you aren't doing your work, then you're going to fail."

—junior Annaliese Parker

Q&A: History teacher explains alternative

Middle College Social Studies teacher Annie Blank answers a few questions about Middle College. She has an M.A. in History and a B.A. in English but also believes that qualities such as kindness, fairness and respectfulness are equally important qualifications for teaching.

What is Middle College?

Middle College is an alternative education system that offers juniors and seniors an option other than traditional high school. Students have access to all the classes and programs at West Valley; they take all kinds of classes, most of which transfer to CSUs and UCs.

Why did you choose to teach Middle College?

I particularly enjoy teaching Middle College students because these are students who really want to be at school. Our Middle College students look

forward to and enjoy coming to school—they participate intelligently and eagerly. They come to class prepared and often find themselves doing independent study on topics we cover in class.



BLANK

Loves to teach Middle College because her students are always eager to learn.

What are the benefits of Middle College?

Students want to take courses that are offered at West Valley because of their own personal interests. Many of our students say they are simply done with the "drama" that is part of high school. They want to be in what they consider a more mature, education-focused environment. Some

choose it because they can plan their daily schedules.

One benefit is that students earn college credits by taking college classes. This sets their college applications apart because their success at the equivalent of an entire freshman year of college shows universities that the student can handle college.

How does Middle College compare to high school socially?

Our students make friends with their classmates quickly; there aren't any groups or cliques. From my vantage point, it's wonderful to see students who would never walk across the quad to talk to each other become friends here.

How does Middle College differ academically from high school?

Many students actually have more time to work, hang out with friends and family and,

of course, study, than they did in their home high schools. Most college classes, including our high school classes, move quickly and may not have lots of homework—rather there are larger reports and assignments, so students have to learn to manage their time wisely.

Is Middle College appropriate for everybody?

Students who love high school life—rallies, lunch time, sport teams and the like don't choose Middle College usually because they enjoy the connection with their high schools. Students who have grade, attendance or behavior performance issues won't do well here because they have to come to class, do their work and be mature.

Middle College is a good match for a moderate to high performing junior or senior who is organized, mature and independent. He or she wants

THE BIG IDEA

Why Middle College?

PROS: Less homework, more free time, more mature environment, college experience.

CONS: Can't participate in high school sports, students must leave behind protective high school environment

WHAT'S NEXT: Blank will be visiting SHS next week.

the challenge of taking college classes and is ready to leave the high school environment.

Blank and Middle College English teacher Josh Hancock will be visiting sophomore and junior English classes next week. Interested students and their parents should attend the Middle College Information Night at West Valley College on March 11 at 6:30 in the Fox Center or e-mail questions to ablank@lgsuhsd.org. ♦

WORKING HARD



or



HARDLY WORKING?

The debate continues over which grade is the hardest and deserves the most respect.

SATs, classes make junior year chaotic

by Tiffany Tung

With AP courses weighing a student down and SATs and college applications in their imminent future, it's no wonder junior year is thought to be the toughest year for any student.

Counselor Dona Feizzadeh says junior year may seem more difficult because of these pressures.

"In general, juniors may seem more stressed out because in addition to their rigorous course load, they are also planning various standardized tests," Feizzadeh said.

Thirty-nine percent of 2009's graduating class attends a UC, and UCs mainly focus on both sophomore and junior years, a factor that increases pressure.

The college admissions process has also become more rigorous, Feizzadeh said, making students feel the need to enroll in Honors and AP classes.

Senior Craig Shih agrees with this sentiment, saying that although he might not do as well in AP classes, he feels like he needs to take the ones available to him.

"Last year, I took quite a few AP and honors classes," Shih said. "I regret taking some now, but taking the classes were fairly difficult and I had to work harder [than I normally do]."

Though Shih is a second semester senior, and worked on college applications on top of his regular course work first semester, he feels relieved of much of the

worry and panic that came earlier.

"College applications make life really stressful, but once they're done, they're done," he said. "There's nothing you can do about it until you get your acceptance or rejection letters."

Shih feels that in general, junior year is tougher, and says that he feels that seniors have more freedom as well, which factors into his decision in saying that junior year is more difficult.

"Although the majority may think that junior year is more rigorous than senior year, and I agree with this sentiment, it really depends on what classes a student takes and their academic workload as a whole," said Shih. "Comparing the two doesn't seem right to me. The science and math classes offered are essentially the same, so in the end, it's because of the student." ♦

"It really depends on what classes a student takes."

— senior Craig Shih

depends on what classes a student takes and their academic workload as a whole," said Shih. "Comparing the two doesn't seem right to me. The science and math classes offered are essentially the same, so in the end, it's because of the student." ♦

THE BOTTOMLINE

Junior vs. Senior Year

12th Grade: College Apps and an increase in AP classes.

11th Grade: Standardized Tests and grades that actually matter.

The Final Decision: Counselor Donna Feizzadeh and senior Craig Shih both feel that junior year seems slightly more stressful than senior year.

SENIORITIS PREVAILS

"My name is Annie and I have been tentatively diagnosed with senioritis."

Annie Lee



In a lone lit room at the corner of the house, the clock reads 3:42 a.m. Sprawled on the lamplit desk are several papers, an open textbook and an open capped pen. Ripped Tootsie pop and Hershey's kiss wrappers also scatter the surface of the desk. A teenage girl sits in front of her work. Her eyelids slowly begin to close. On the left side of her computer screen sits an almost blank Word Document that reads "Healthcare Bill Research Paper" across the top. On the right side of the screen, an intense game of Connect Four continues as the girl struggles to focus her eyes on the pieces. Wait a second, let's start at the beginning.

Hi, my name is Annie and I've been tentatively diagnosed with senioritis. It all started the week after AP tests my junior year. Two of my classes were essentially done for the year and I started to find myself finding amusement in counting the tiles on the ceiling or tracing the cracks in the desk with my pencil. That's when I started feeling the symptoms: inability to focus, uncontrollable procrastination, diarrhea and laziness. Just kidding about the diarrhea.

When I was just a wee freshman, I often heard about senioritis, but I didn't understand what it meant. Now, I finally get it. Each day after school, I go out to get a snack with a friend and then crash on my bed for a two hour nap. After I've rested up and eaten dinner, I sit down at my desk at around 9 p.m., open my books, and start to work. Or at least, I try to. Often

times, I don't begin seriously working until midnight or 1a.m. I'm always too busy looking for new videos on YouTube or stuck in a tiebreaker game of Connect Four or Jigsawce, an online puzzle game.

A couple weeks ago, I was a first semester senior, which meant that I constantly had the looming image of college applications in the back of my head. Each time I sat down and vowed to finish at least one college essay, I found myself watching "Charlie bit my finger" or America's Best Dance Crew on YouTube five seconds later. Or I found myself in the middle of my eighth game of Jigsawce with my friend two hours later. In fact, right now as I'm typing these words, I'm watching the League of Extraordinary Dancers on the other half of my screen.

Now that second semester has started, it's gotten even worse. With every homework assignment, I find myself watching over eight YouTube videos. With every test that I study for, I find myself eating at least a cup of ice cream, a bowl of soup of some sort and a handful of candy. Having a car doesn't exactly encourage me to get my work done either. Before having a license, I often went into the school library or to one of the quad tables after school to get some work done until I called my mom to take me home. Now, it's as if my car has a mind of it's own, bringing me to Starbucks, Bonjour Crepe, Target or even Valley Fair when I really feel like indulging myself... don't tell my mother.

When I head off to college where there are no parents to supervise me or daily homework to keep me on track in class, I know senioritis will simply become a way of life. However, if I work through it this year, I know that I'll be okay after I graduate. But let's not talk about that right now. I have a game of Connect Four calling my name. ♦

TOGATALKS

Which year in high school was the busiest?

First semester senior year because of apps. It's a whole new process, writing essays about yourself.



senior Varun Parmar

Junior year because of all the work. I had no time to socialize or have fun. It was just work all the time.



senior Maddy Renalds

Senior year was my busiest because I had college apps, more activities and harder classes.



senior Deepti Raghavan

Seniors find flexibility key in high school

by Anna Shen

With each year of high school, students seem to find it harder to manage academics, sports, extra-curricular activities and a social life, leading many seniors to look back fondly on earlier—and easier—days when they were freshmen, sophomores and juniors.

"I've liked each year in high school a lot, and each one seems different," said senior Madeline Rothenberg. "I would say with each year, I've figured out how to have more fun while still getting good grades. I cannot believe that we are seniors though and that so many students already know exactly where they are going. It's crazy to think about."

Other seniors remember having the free time to watch TV and surf the Internet when they were underclassmen.

"Looking back on freshman year, I barely had any work. I didn't know what 'work' meant, because I had plenty of

time to do other activities on weeknights and weekends. Sophomore year got progressively harder, but I still managed my time well," said Rothenberg. "Then junior year came around, and there was a lot of hype about taking the SATs and the workload from school just went up as well, especially since it was my first year with honor and AP classes."



Rothenberg

Although junior year is considered to be the most nerve-wrecking year of high school, senior Ashwin Siripurapu said junior year was simply a "natural extension" of everything he had done before in his life.

"Senior year was a whole new ballgame," said Siripurapu, who was accepted into Stanford as a part of the early admissions.

"I had never filled out a college application or gone for an interview or researched colleges before, so it was an eye-opening new challenge; in that sense, it was harder than junior year, even though the classes were somewhat easier."

Now after getting accepted early into college, some seniors are unsure whether they will be capable of experiencing senioritis, which, according to Siripurapu, means "to lack the work ethic that drove you through high school, because you know that you're going to college no matter what you do."

"Getting into college definitely is a huge relief. I honestly don't think I'll be trying less now that I've gotten into Stanford. So in a way, I think I'm sort of incapable of senioritis; more than that, I'm afraid of it," said Siripurapu. "Some people can be daredevils and try to fly as low as possible, in terms of grades, without getting rescinded, but I can't do that. Unless I'm getting good grades, I'm constantly afraid that I'll fail."

However, this is not the case for Rothenberg, who, after getting accepted early into University of Michigan, University

of Wisconsin and Loyola Marymount, can feel the spread of senioritis begin to permeate slowly.

"I did not have that much senioritis until this week after I heard from a couple of good schools that I was accepted into; so I feel like a lot of weight has been taken off my shoulders," said Rothenberg. "But since I don't have an exact school I want to go to, I need to talk myself into getting through this semester without slacking off."

Both Rothenberg and Siripurapu agree that certain sacrifices must be made in high school in order to end up where they are now. Siripurapu had to make social sacrifices in order to work harder, whereas Rothenberg learned to balance academics, a social life and sports.

"I did have to make social 'sacrifices,'" said Siripurapu. "I don't really regret the fact that I have absolutely no social life, but sometimes I wonder how things could have turned out differently." ♦



Siripurapu



Report Card

A: Easy Peezy Lemon Squeezy
B: MLIA: my life is average
C: Try harder next year

Freshmen: Easy A+

Despite the "go home freshmen" chants that break out during rallies from time to time, the truth is that most sophomores, juniors and seniors are envious of freshmen and their laid-back academic life. Freshman Amin Mirzadegan is enjoying his first year of high school but also apprehensive of what's in store for him in years to come.

"I've heard that sophomore year is a lot harder than freshman year, and junior year is just killer," said Mirzadegan. "I'm trying to enjoy freshman year as best as I can before I'm faced with tougher classes."

Along with maintaining good grades, Mirzadegan plays for the school's JV soccer team and a club soccer team and will soon be volunteering at El Camino Hospital.

Mirzadegan's hardest class is Algebra 2 Honors, followed by biology.

"It's been pretty fun because the workload is about the same as eighth grade," said Mirzadegan, "but high school is much better than middle school because of all the football games, dances and rallies."

Seniors: Rewarding B

For senior Aveena Shenoy, senior year interestingly parallels her experience of freshman year.

"Freshman year I was so happy and excited to be in high school, and now senior year I'm so excited because it's my last year of high school," said Shenoy. "Senior year is definitely way harder, but I still feel just as happy as I was freshman year."

For most, the workload isn't as intense as junior years', but amount of time and work college applications require definitely makes up for it.

"Most of the stress of senior year definitely comes from college apps," said Shenoy. "Starting in August, I've been working about 30 minutes a day on any given app, so it's been pretty spread out throughout the months."

Because of her love for the school and her grade, Shenoy is involved in Leadership, Link Crew, yearbook class and is senior class secretary.

"It's senior year," said Shenoy, "so doing the best I can and getting as involved as possible is a must."

Sophomores: Solid B+

"Having four hours of homework a night isn't fun," said sophomore Anika Jhalani. "It leaves no time for 'Gossip Girl!'"

Jhalani's optimistic attitude and cheerful personality has been helping her get through the sometimes stressful times during sophomore year.

"I feel like there is pressure," said Jhalani, "but I like it. It pushes me to work hard."

Jhalani is taking two honors classes, and participates in several extracurriculars such as speech and debate, drama and cheer.

Along with having to deal with the many activities she takes part in as well heavy workload thrown at her, Jhalani sometimes arrives before school to get extra help from her chemistry teacher Bob Kucer.

"In spite of everything, sophomore year really isn't too bad," said Jhalani. "I mean, I still have time for friends and I don't spend my lunches inside the library cramming for tests."

Juniors: Diligent C+

Trying to balance five honors and AP classes, mock trial, SATs and a social life can be exhausting, but according to Grace Kim, it's what junior year is all about.

"It's not easy," Kim admits.

"It's way harder than sophomore year," said Kim. "The teachers give you more stuff to learn at a quicker pace, so sometimes it's hard to keep up if you procrastinate."

Kim decided to not have a first period so that she could get as much sleep as possible this year.

"Sometimes I get home really late, like 10, and all I want to do is sleep," said Kim. "I thought I would be able to sleep in because I don't have a first period, but I end up getting up way before school starts to finish homework."

Although junior year seems impossible and tiring, Kim assures the classes "aren't that bad because there are some really cool teachers."

- Izzy Albert

THE ARTIST OF THE ISSUE: James Kim

After picking up the viola so many years ago, senior James Kim developed his talents as a musician. Along the way, he took lessons in or taught himself various other instruments, ranging from the guitar to vocals. For Kim, music is more than just a passion, it's his life.

Q. What instruments do you play and how long have you played each of them?

I've played the viola for a little over 10 years now. I picked up the piano a few years before the viola but only played it for six years since I believed that viola would have a better future for me. I sang with the choir group, Gloria, for three years and, recently, I began playing the guitar.

Q. Have you taken lessons for all of the aforementioned instruments? Any of them self-taught?

I've taken lessons for the piano and the viola and some vocal lessons as well. In the case of the guitar I taught myself, starting with chords and moving onto tabs.

Q. Which instrument do you consider your forte and why?

Viola is by far the instrument I have the most experience with. I've spent the most time practicing and participating in organizations with the viola.

Q. For what organizations or groups have you played these instruments?

CYS (California Youth Symphony) from 2002-2009, KAMSA (Korean American Music Supporters Association) from 2006-2009 and Chamber Orchestras in 2008.

Q. Do you plan to pursue any of these instruments in the future?

I plan on playing viola during college in an orchestra aside from studies (non-major but maybe minor). I also hope to pursue a little more practice with guitar and perhaps singing since these are musical talents I can utilize anywhere at any time.

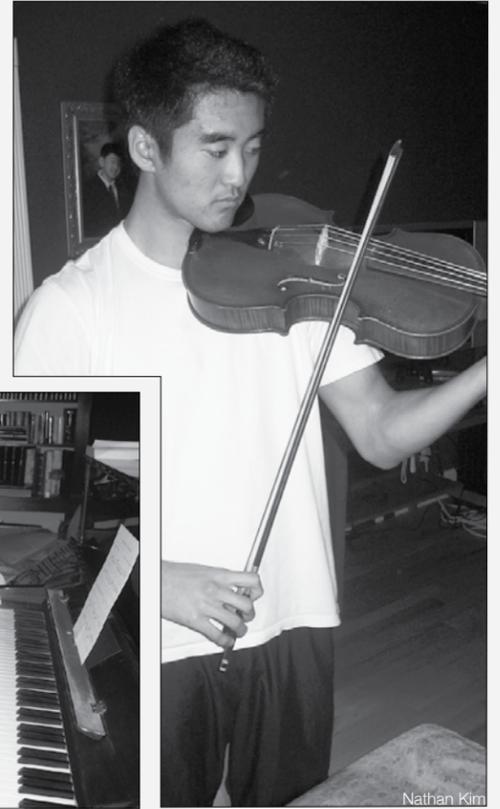
Q. How would you define yourself as a musician?

I guess I can be categorized as versatile because I've been immersed in a variety of instruments. I'm pretty passionate as well, putting in long hours to perfect the tone of my music.

Q. How have you benefited from being musically in touch?

Music has been a great stress reliever and an outlet I can turn to in order to channel my emotions. I also met my girlfriend, who I TRULY adore, through my participation in musical programs.

~ by Nathan Kim



Senior James Kim takes a break from schoolwork to fine-tune his musical talents.

AUDIO



FILES

Subject: Christine La, 12
Weapon of Choice: iPod Nano
of Songs on Device: 3000+

Songs of the Moment & Memorable Lyrics

1. "Git Up, Git Out": by Outkast
You need to git up, git out and git somethin.
How will you make it if you never even try?

2. "In one ear": by Cage the Elephant
It goes in one ear and right out the other.

3. "Friends": by Band of Skulls
My friends, they are so beautiful.

Tidbit: I listen to anything and everything except for country.

On the wings of what?

"I've been smothered by the maelstrom of *The Bachelor*."

Sophia Cooper



As Valentine's Day approaches, it's easy to get caught up in the wave of finding true love. But I haven't just gotten sucked in by its current, I've been completely smothered by the maelstrom of "The Bachelor: On the Wings of Love." Although relatively early in the ABC series, the addition of drama and fake hair extensions has brought me to the television every Monday night at 8 pm, waiting to hear who the dreamy pilot Jake will keep around. Although dramatic reality shows aren't my usual style (I'm a hardcore Monk, White Collar and Bones fan), there's something about this series that keeps my attention, and it's not just Jake's rock-solid abs.

There's something about this series that keeps my attention, and it's not just Jake's rock-solid abs.

Drama, drama, drama

What teenage girl doesn't have drama in her life? To make up for the lack in mine, I follow the twists and turns of relationships on television.

I could tell from the season premiere that having that many girls in the same house wasn't going to work out well, and I knew I wouldn't be disappointed. Although there hasn't been a full-on cat fight yet, watching the girls call each other "fake" and talk smack as soon as they leave on dates is oddly entertaining.

How can these girls put up with it? After two hours of watching them bicker over minuscule details of life, I'm relieved to be sitting in my living room watching the show without 20 other girls to argue with.

Dating tips

While I don't expect a guy to spend thousands of dollars to fly me on a private plane to a concert for two in Palm Springs, there are quite a few

date ideas on the show.

Going to a theme parks means screaming, holding hands, and sharing cotton candy. Need I say more?

Bungee jumping might be a little hard to accomplish as high school students because of the over-18 rule, but if Vienna and Jake can overcome their fear of heights and jump off a bridge together, it might be a good date plan.

The best destination Jake has taken the girls, however, was the rose ceremony in the Jan. 25 episode. After a week of touring the California coast in RVs, the girls reached their last stop: Villa Montalvo in the great city of Saratoga, Calif. I view the local spot as a great place to run hill repeats; the girls saw it as one of the most romantic and beautiful buildings they've seen.

I'm also taking notes on appropriate date attire. Just from common sense, I know that wearing a skirt is not a good idea for an amusement park. Sadly, some of the girls missed that lesson from their moms.

Pure entertainment

I'll admit it: I have my judgments about all the girls. I have my favorites, I know who I want sent home, and I participate in the arguments as much as the girls on the show do. The first night, I even threw a highlighter at the television when Jake sent home my favorite girl.

There are times when I hate Jake and want him to just leave, but then they show him shirtless and I'm addicted once again.

The fact that "The Bachelor: On the Wings of Love" even has an audience means that ABC's doing their job: mindless entertainment. Actually good shows such as "Monk" and "NCIS" get pushed aside to fill the airtime with "reality" dating to tell people how to fall in love and give them unrealistic expectations of marriage.

But until Jake finds his co-pilot in love, I'll be glued to Channel 7 every Monday. Don't call between 8 and 10; I won't answer. ♦

DESPITE ONCE POOR REPUTATION, REVAMPED CUPERTINO SQUARE DELIVERS

by Vivian LeTran

Cupertino Square, formerly known as Valco Fashion Park, has a reputation for being a lifeless and boring mall. After undergoing multiple ownership changes in the last few years as well as major renovations, the mall still does not draw a substantial number of customers. Lacking popular shopping venues, the fact that the square does little to increase the small number of people it attracts is understandable.

Despite the mall's poor reputation, Cupertino Square offers more entertainment than

an AMC movie theater.

"Even though there are barely any stores to shop at," said sophomore Vivian Hsu, "I like going to [Cupertino Square] for the bowling."

Although the bowling alley, Strike, is more expensive than other sites, the one at Cupertino Square is packed with entertainment. The place features glow-in-the-dark bowling and a top-of-the-line arcade.

The theater, AMC Cupertino Square 16, was added only a couple of years ago. Being new, the bathrooms are much nicer and cleaner than those of other movie theaters. The layout of the theater has a more modern and organized arrangement and the ticket lines are usually very fast. The AMC theater has made Cupertino Square a much more fun place to go.

"I think it was a really outdated place before the movie theater came in," said junior Ricky Chiu. "Ice skating is always fun too. It's funny to see

people who don't know how to skate fall."

The ice skating rink, Ice Centers Enterprises, is the closest ice skating rink to school. Indoor and year-round, the rink is a great place to hang out with friends.

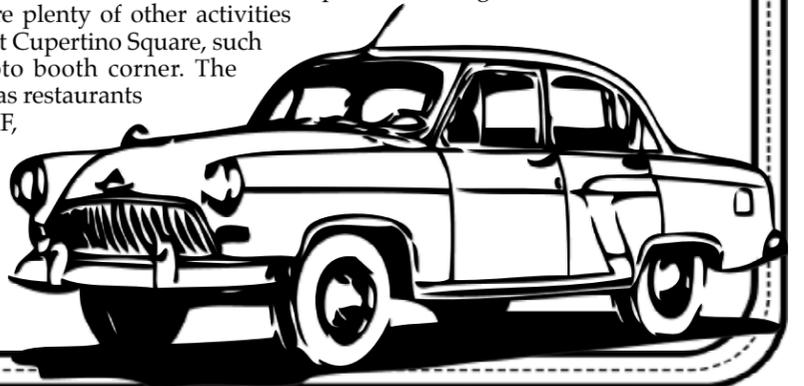
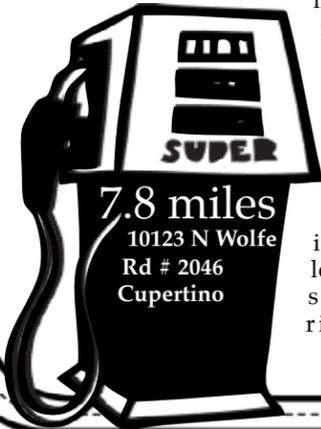
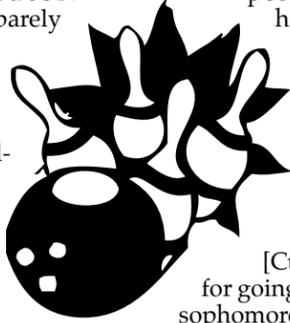
"The ice skating rink at [Cupertino Square] is good for going out with friends," said sophomore Kelsey Owyang. "It's better for outings than the one in San Jose [because] it's close and there aren't as many people that [almost crash into you]."

There are plenty of other activities to pursue at Cupertino Square, such as the photo booth corner. The mall also has restaurants such as TGIF, Todai and Fresh Choice.

Only 5.1 miles away by

Saratoga Sunnyvale Rd and Blaney Ave, Cupertino Square is convenient since it contains a variety of recreational activities. The lack of people may be a blessing in disguise as it constitutes shorter lines and easier accessibility.

"With all the new renovations, improved shopping areas and dining hall, [Cupertino Square] is beginning to become a better place to hang out," said Chiu. ♦



When the  symbol is on in your car and hopes for a lengthy excursion are trickling away, we'll get you somewhere on only...

A Gallon of Gas

Garrod Farms offers unique horseback riding experience

by Sarah Hull

While typical students may want to hang out at the mall or go to the movies, horseback riding with friends at Garrod Farms provides a more unique and unusual experience that, for those daring enough to give it a go, will create lifelong memories.

Located only three miles from SHS in the Saratoga foothills, Garrod Farms offers over 23 miles of trails that are located on both Garrod Farms' property and the Fremont Older Mid-Peninsula Open Space Preserve. The trails are at an elevation of over 1,000 feet and therefore overlook the entire Silicon Valley as well as San Francisco Bay.

The riders are able to view the breathtaking scenery and natural flora and fauna, which include majestic oak trees, flourishing vineyards, mule deer and the occasional coyote in addition to the entirety of Santa Clara County below. These vineyards are owned by senior Sophia Cooper's family who have been in the wine making business for generations.

"I think the trails are good for people who don't ride frequently or haven't ever been riding but want to see the nice scenery," said sophomore and long time rider Sophia Wang.

Anyone is allowed to ride as long as they are over age 8, and no previous experience is necessary. The qualified staff know the trails like the back of



their own hands and are always willing to help out or offer up stories about the history of the ranch. All of the trail rides are led by one of these staff members and last approximately one hour.

"The people who work there are really nice," said Wang. "They help you get on your horse, adjust your stirrups and stuff like that."

Despite the daunting prospect of trying to control another living creature, all of the horses available for these trail rides are well behaved and easy to manage.

"While some of the horses are stubborn, most of them are really sweet and calm," said sophomore Ansha Hussain.

Although horseback riding is a bit pricey, running at about \$45 for a one hour trail ride, the benefits greatly outweigh the costs. The experience is unforgettable and the memories produced will be cherished forever. So why not break out an old pair of tennis shoes, put on some worn out jeans, grab a few friends, and allow that cowboy side of you shine through? ♦

CURE YOUR SWEET TOOTH AT POWELL'S SWEET SHOPPE

by Ashley Tang and Viven Lu

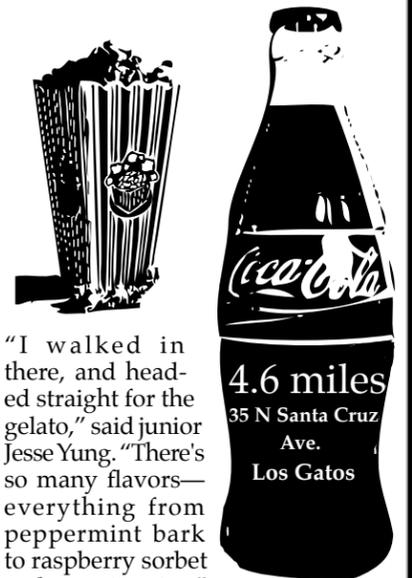
Powell's Sweet Shoppe in downtown Los Gatos is more than just a candy store. The fruity aroma of various sweets, colorful shelves and cheerful atmosphere all blend together to make the experience like going to Willy Wonka's Chocolate factory.

The enormous selection of candy may be overwhelming at first. Luckily, most of it is organized by section. To the left of the store is a set of drawers devoted entirely to gum, and on the right, there is a shelf overflowing with mints in cute little boxes and shapes.

However, Powell's has much more to offer. There's a spot in the back reserved for watching movies, complete with a fridge brimming with soda pop, giant-sized candy bars, and actual movie seats.

"We play Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, but only the original one," said sales associate Kelsie Skrace.

Nearly every type of candy imaginable can be found at Powell's. Shelves of chocolate, buckets of salt-water taffy and Jelly Belly dispensers line one half of the room. On the other side, a rack of lollipops almost touches the ceiling. Next to the cash register are two glass displays: one is filled with chocolates and truffles, and the other with 24 different flavors of gelato. Depending on the size of the scoop, prices range from \$2-\$5.



"I walked in there, and headed straight for the gelato," said junior Jesse Yung. "There's so many flavors—everything from peppermint bark to raspberry sorbet and even tiramisu."

All types of people come to Powell's. After all, happiness does not have an age limit.

"You could be going to a candy store for the first time, or reliving your childhood memories as a grandparent," said Skrace. "There is no age limit to this magical experience."

However, this fantastic dream comes at a price. For the best sweets around, one must expect a hefty pricetag.

"Last week I bought a single dark chocolate truffle from there," said senior Kenny Cai. "They put it in a little fancy box and it just melted in my mouth. I felt kind of bad eating it because it looked like art, and it cost me almost \$2, but it was worth it." ♦

Squawk for Squaw Valley

by Emily Williams

When the weather turns cold, Lake Tahoe becomes a big destination for skiers, snowboarders and even sledders seeking a sweet ride and good snow. There are a variety of ski resorts, but one of the best is Squaw Valley USA.

Squaw's big mountain can handle crowds, so even on a busy weekend, lines are relatively short. This also means there is a variety of runs for people of all levels. For those who don't enjoy hitting the slopes, the ice skating rink at High Camp can be accessed by a cable car for some winter-time entertainment.

Squaw, home of the 1960 Winter Olympics, may seem intimidating to beginners because the first visible runs are black diamond and blue squares, but there are plenty of beginner runs at the top of the mountain. Just take the chair lift to either East Broadway and the Gold Coast Lodge for hot chocolate.

For more intermediate skiers, Solitude and Shirley Lake are nicely groomed runs. Red Dog is harder and can tend to be icy on warmer days, but when the temperature drops, it is also a nice slope with multiple ways down.

The views from black diamond KT-22 are superb, so don't be scared off by the threatening signs. The Saddle is a fun double-blue way to get down the mountain, but for more advanced skiers the West Face, 75 Chute and the Nose are all good runs off KT.

Off Emigrant is The Funnel, a steep, unroomed "expert only" run. Another great Expert area is Headwall, which is great because of the northern exposure, but the best runs include North Bowl and the Face.

As for the crazy thrill seekers, a hike across sharp rocks to The Slot, a steep and narrow run, is well worth the effort with a word of caution against high winds.

Perhaps the scariest, most challenging slopes are the rarely open Palisades, only accessible by a major hike from Siberia up to an almost vertical slope that often has a huge cornice.

Squaw also offers cheap prices for teens 13-18: for an all-day ticket on a holiday weekend, a teen ticket costs \$64 while the adults pay \$88.

Squaw is worth at least a day of your weekend. Even if your parents drag you kicking and screaming for "family bonding time," there is always the hot chocolate to look forward to after. ♦

Point to Northstar

by Karen Lyu

Winter should be all about huddling up in front of a fire and drinking hot chocolate, but the truly best thing about winter is carving the slopes

at Northstar on Lake Tahoe's north shore.

Although it has recently been remodeled to become an attraction any time of year, Northstar is most famous for its winter slopes.

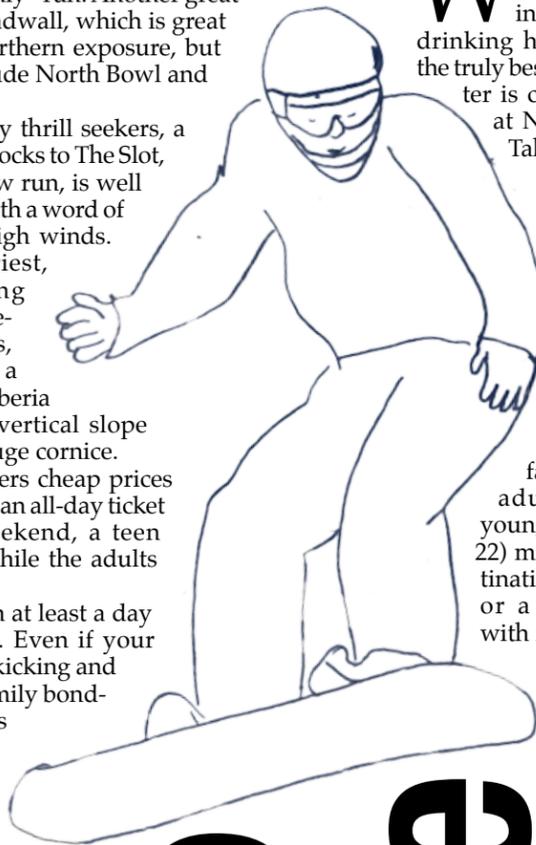
Its welcoming atmosphere and fair prices (\$79 for adults and \$74 for young adults, ages 13-22) make it a great destination for family trips or a weekend away with friends.

Northstar gets good quality snow for the slopes every year, but in case the weather doesn't cooperate, they

have one of the biggest snowmaking machines in the country. The view from the resort is spectacular and with the gondolas, you can get one of the best views of Lake Tahoe and get up to the lodge in a safe and fun way.

There are runs for every kind of skier or snowboarder, from beginner to expert. The terrain park is great for those who want a bigger thrill, complete with jumps, pipes, and rails. Although many people flock to Northstar during long weekends, the lifts are fast and the runs are long, making it easier to deal with the crowds. There is also a Village Run, which skiers and snowboarders can take down the mountain instead of riding in the gondola. This slope provides the convenience of getting down faster than riding in the gondola combined with a easier slope for warming down.

If you want to take a break from the slopes, head to The Village where novelty shops, restaurants, cafés, and snow gear stores are open. In addition to the friendly staff and reliable bus routes around the resort, Northstar also provides an ice rink for those who are fans of ice instead of snow. Grab your gear and head on up to Northstar! ♦



BREAKING #1 VACATION BLUES

Friends ditch you for Maui? Visit these four exercise centers to work on the beach body they wish they had before vacation.

Fly high at Sky High

by Cullan McChesney

People dream about being weightless and traveling 30 yards in one hop. However, unless you have a few million dollars to blow on a trip to the moon, the closest you're going to get to such an experience is at Sky High.

Sky High has several locations, the closest of which is in Santa Clara. It is essentially a warehouse filled with three separate smaller areas each with their own unique layout of trampolines. In the first area you can play trampoline dodge ball; in the second you can jump into a giant foam pit; in the last and biggest area there are trampolines covering the entire floor and one wall. Sky high also incorporates large areas for parties and gatherings.

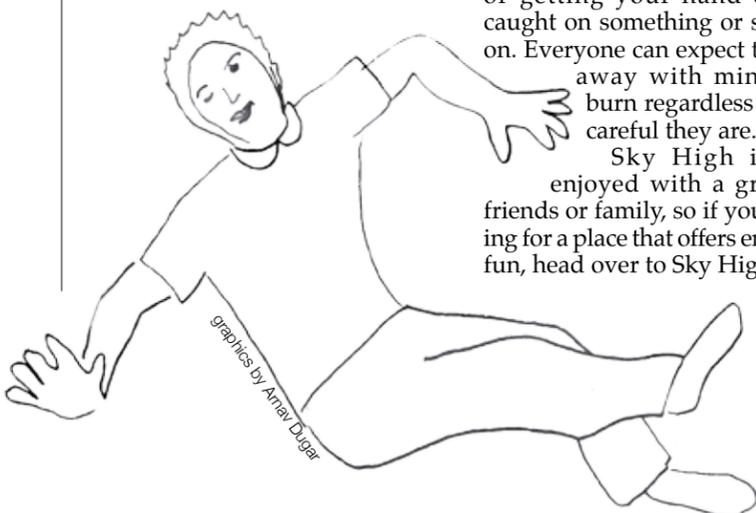
Although the majority of people at Sky High are under age 13, as the saying goes, "you are never too old to have fun." There is not much more fun than literally bouncing off the walls.

The staff is a little on the grouchy side, but that's expected with little kids screaming in their ears everyday. If you are respectful of others and watch out for other people, you'll be fine.

Hours vary from day to day but Sky High is always open from at least 2 to 10 every day. Cost depends on the day, weekdays jumpers pay \$10 for the first hour and \$7 for each additional hour. On weekends it is \$10 for every hour.

However, proceed with caution as sprains or limb injuries are common thanks to dangers such as landing the wrong way or getting your hand or foot caught on something or stepped on. Everyone can expect to come away with minor rug burn regardless of how careful they are.

Sky High is best enjoyed with a group of friends or family, so if your looking for a place that offers energetic fun, head over to Sky High. ♦



graphics by Arnav Dugar

Planet Granite rocks your body

by Jordan Waite

As soon as you explore the Planet Granite rock climbing gym in Sunnyvale, the massive facility really does feel out of this world. Not only are there climbing walls in every direction, there is a complete weight training area with rows of treadmills and elliptical machines and a large outside area with more climbing. Planet Granite is a great place for a full-body workout, a fun activity with friends, and relaxing yoga.

The Sunnyvale Planet Granite facility is one of the largest climbing gyms in the country, with more than 25,000 square feet of climbing and bouldering. It is designed to provide rock climbing routes for a wide range of skill levels from beginners to even the most experienced climbers.

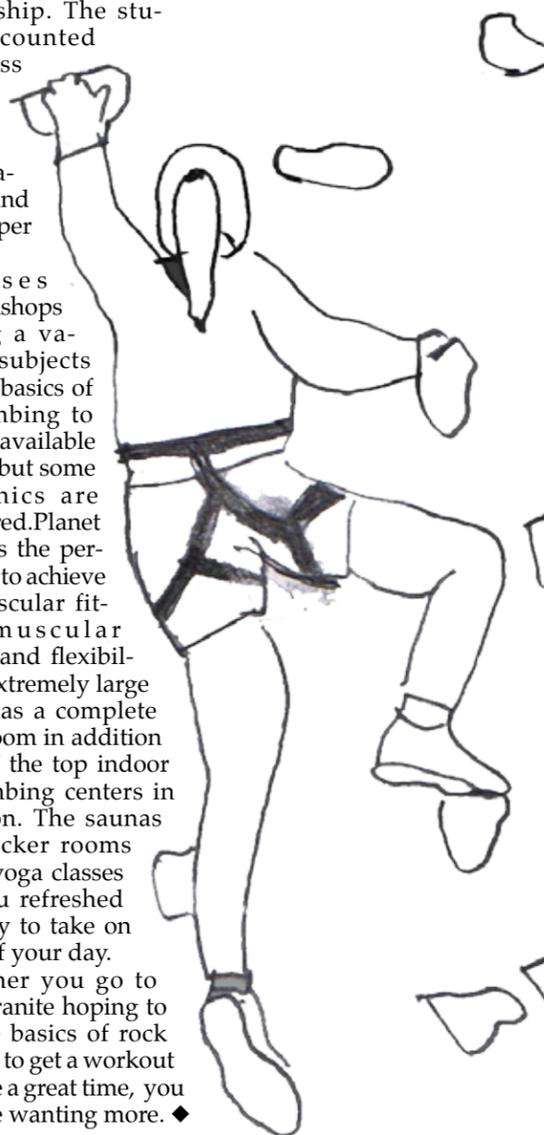
The gym offers both indoor and outdoor climbing with 119 top ropes reaching up to 60-foot heights. The different sections of the gym are re-routed regularly, so that visitors will never run out of new things to climb. There are also over 20 hand-carved cracks designed to make climbers feel like they are on real rocks.

A day-pass at Planet Granite is only \$18, which grants access to all their facilities, including the full weight room. There are also 10-day passes that can be purchased for \$160, and there is a student rate of \$13, which is offered on weekdays before 5 p.m. Planet Granite also has great membership plans, including a full access membership or a fitness only

membership. The student-discounted full access membership requires a \$35 initiation fee and costs \$53 per month.

Classes and workshops teaching a variety of subjects from the basics of rock climbing to yoga are available for a fee, but some free clinics are also offered. Planet Granite is the perfect place to achieve cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and flexibility. The extremely large facility has a complete weight room in addition to one of the top indoor rock climbing centers in the nation. The saunas in the locker rooms and the yoga classes leave you refreshed and ready to take on the rest of your day.

Whether you go to Planet Granite hoping to learn the basics of rock climbing, to get a workout or to have a great time, you will leave wanting more. ♦



ATHLETE OF THE ISSUE

Guy excels on, off field

by Sophia Cooper

She's been on varsity soccer for four years. She was the school's fastest 100 meter sprinter as a freshman and remains a top sprinter. She's a head of the Invisible Children club and spends hours working on projects for the leadership class.

No, she's not Wonder Woman. She's senior Sarah Guy.

With her main activity being soccer, Guy plays on the Alpine FC Pumas, a Portola Valley club team which travels around the country for tournaments and showcases, year-round and helps lead the Falcons as one of three senior co-captains, doing "warm-ups for everyone, ... [running] team bonding with the other captains, ... and [yelling] a lot on the field."

"It's so much fun playing with the people I play with," said Guy. "[My club teammates] are all really focused and good, but outside of practice we have so much fun together. [At school], I get to play with people I don't usually have classes with or don't normally hang out

with. I'm playing with my sister [sophomore Louise Guy] this year, which is nice because I haven't done that in a long time."

Soccer has been a huge part of Guy's life since she was 8 and joined her first team.

"My dad just signed me up for [AYSO] when baseball fell through," said Guy. "I have no hand-eye coordination."

Measuring in at a small but powerful 5'3", Guy provides a tough defense for the Falcons and was First Team All-League for the SCVAL El Camino League last season.

Guy is waiting to hear back from colleges before deciding whether she'll play for a NCAA team. With a tough academic schedule ahead of her, she doesn't

foresee enough time to play for a Division I team. Whether designing the next version of a prosthetic leg or playing on the women's national team, this girl is going places.

"The game itself is really fun for me to play," said Guy. "I do kind of want to play [college soccer], but chances are I won't be able to because I'll hopefully be going into [biomechanical] engineering." ♦

Measuring in at a small but powerful 5'3", Guy provides a tough defense for the Falcons.



photos by Prolmage Studios

Led by QB Manning, Colts favored to win Super Bowl

by Karthik Annaamalai

After a long and trying season, the New Orleans Saints and the Indianapolis Colts each have a chance to establish themselves as the best team in the NFL. The Super Bowl, an American tradition happening on Feb. 7, is unique because the participating teams each have 60 minutes to prove that they are the best team in the NFL.

One game decides the success of their team. One game until the end of the season. One game to play their hearts out.

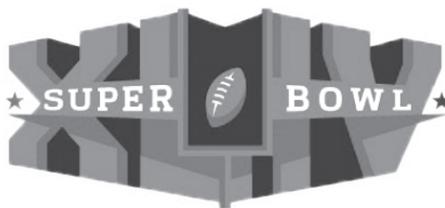
The AFC champions, the Colts, are the clear favorites to win this match, led by veteran quarterback Peyton Manning, who has four MVPs, the most any quarterback has ever received.

For Manning to win his second Super Bowl, the Colts must accomplish two things:

1. Utilize young receivers

Although the Colts have two all-star passing threats

in wide receiver Reggie Wayne and tight end Dallas Clark, both with 100 catches and 10 touchdowns in the season, these receivers will be covered closely by an equally talented Saints' secondary led by safety Darren Sharper and corner back Tracy Porter. The Colts, ranked second for passing yards per game, have to rely on their passing attack to win the contest as they are ranked last in the league in rushing yards per game. Manning will need to use his younger receivers Pierre Garcon and Austin Collie in order for the Colts to move the ball and score consistently.



2. Shut down Marques Colston

The key for the Colts' defense is for their corners to stop Saints' quarterback Drew Brees from targeting his favorite receiver, Marques Colston, whom he has connected with 70 times for more than 1,000 yards. Colston, a tall and physical receiver, will most likely be matched up with Colts' second-year corner back Jerraud Powers, a smaller, quicker player. If Powers is able to keep Colston in check, the Colts will have an easy time stopping Drew Brees' passing attack.

To win their first ever Super Bowl, the Saints will need to:

1. Use Reggie Bush

Saints' running back Bush has been phenomenal

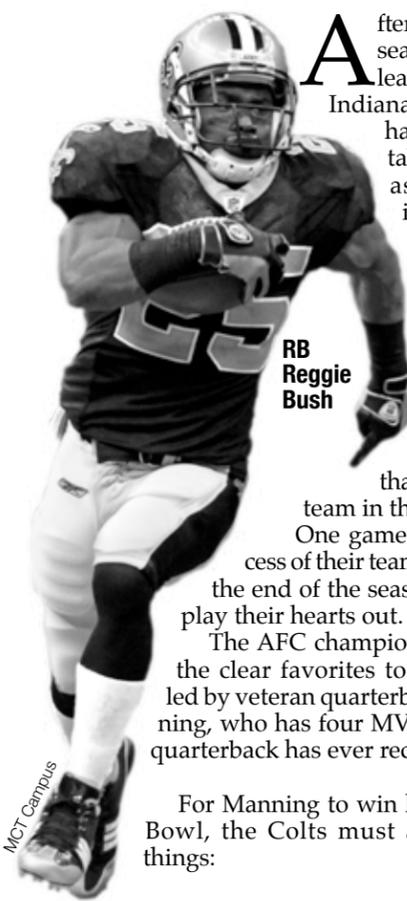
in the playoffs this year. Although he is yet to prove himself in the regular season, Bush has stepped up in the playoffs, especially against the Arizona Cardinals, a game in which Bush rushed for 84 yards on just 5 carries. He also returned a punt return for a touchdown in that game. The Colts' linebackers will not be able to match the speed and quickness of Bush, so the Saints will need to put the pigskin in the hands of Bush to wear down the Colts' rush defense, ranked 24th in the league.

2. Clock Management

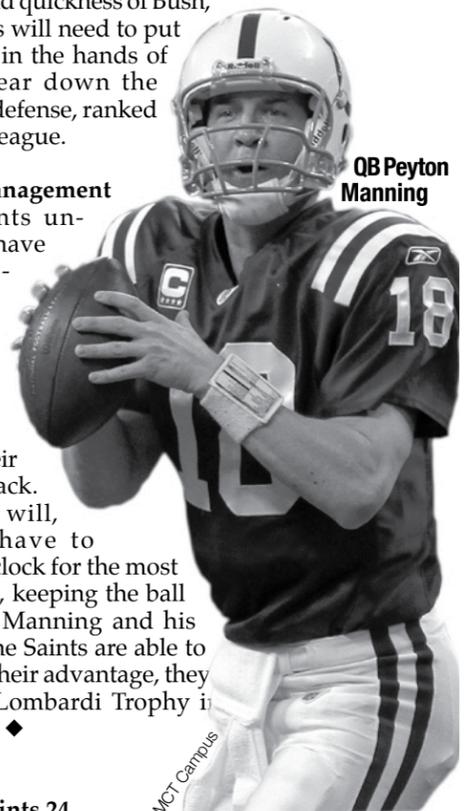
The Saints undoubtedly have the off-eweapons to move the ball with ease, assuming that they establish their rushing attack. The Saints will, however, have to control the clock for the most of the game, keeping the ball away from Manning and his offense. If the Saints are able to use time to their advantage, they may see a Lombardi Trophy in their hands. ♦

Prediction:

Colts 31, Saints 24



RB Reggie Bush



QB Peyton Manning

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BOYS' SOCCER

Sophomore captains lead under new coach

by Roy Bisht and
Aanchal Mohan

One new coach ready to bring home a victory? Check.

Two sophomore captains ready to lead their team to the top? Check.

Twenty-two skilled soccer players ready to play their best to become league champions? Check.

The boys' soccer team is now in second place out of eight teams in the El Camino League as of Jan. 25. They credit this new-found success to good chemistry.

"We all play really well together," said senior goalie Kevin Benzing. "Even though we all come from different teams

and different grades, we manage to put that aside on the field."

Players also credit new head coach Adam Clarke for their victories.

"[Clarke] is a really fun coach and puts a lot of trust in us," said senior right defender Sawan Shah. "He teaches and coaches us, but at the same time he treats us like adults and lets us make our own decisions."

Clarke's coaching strategy seems to be working for the team as they have already beaten last year's win total with three wins so far: against Palo Alto on Jan. 5 (2-1), Wilcox on Jan. 7 (2-1) and Lynbrook on Jan. 14 (4-0). As the season continues, Clarke is still trying to find the line-up and

formations that work best.

"We've been changing up our positions on the field a lot trying to find one that actually works with our team," said sophomore defender and co-captain Manish Raghavan. "[Clarke] completely changed our formation before the Lynbrook game, which led to a 4-0 win."

Of course, the success of the team cannot solely be credited to the coach. Though the team is underclassman-dominated, the lack of seniority is made up in the skill level of the young players. As they continue on with their season, the players admit that they have to work on not judging their opponents too quickly.

"We need to work on not counting

teams out," said sophomore defender and co-captain Jonathan Junqua. "We lose stupid games because of it."

A key example of this was the game against Cupertino on Jan. 12. While the Falcons could have won, they ended up losing 2-1. The Falcons hope to redeem the loss when they play Cupertino again at home on Feb. 2. (Due to printing deadlines these results could not be published.)

The Falcons will continue their season with a home games against Lynbrook and Santa Clara on Feb. 9 and 11, respectively. These next games will be crucial for the team as every win from now on will potentially help the team qualify for CCS. ♦

WRESTLING



Jordan Waite

Sophomore Alfred Murabito pins an opponent in a match against Fremont on Jan. 22.

Senior's injury leaves leadership void on mat

by Jordan Waite

Sophomore wrestler Nick Marshall let out a sigh of relief as he stepped onto the awards podium at the toughest tournament of the year on Jan. 23, Mid-Cals, to receive his seventh place medal. The Mid-Cals tournament in Gilroy is a two-day competition in which the best wrestlers from all over the state come to represent their schools, and Saratoga was well represented. Other notable Falcon performances were sophomore Alfred Murabito, 127 lbs, and freshman Zachary Hansen, 105 lbs, both making it to the second day of the tournament, held Jan. 22-23.

The Falcons have dedicated this season to building up their younger athletes, an understandable goal since over three-quarters of the team are underclassmen. The challenges are obvious: maturity, discipline and the difficult jump from middle school wrestling to the high school program.

"Self-confidence is hard to come by when winning is so important," said head coach Gabe Tseng. "There is a lot of pressure on these athletes to perform."

The team has struggled with dual meets this season, resulting in a disappointing league record of 0-4 as of Jan. 26. Although they have not won a dual meet, they have made impressive showings at tournaments and hope to shine at the end of the seasons.

"We will definitely surprise at League finals with the adjustments and improve-

ments we have made," said Tseng. "I look forward to surprising everybody at the end of the season and showing the league and the Central Coast Section that we are rebuilding."

The Falcons have also had numerous injured wrestlers, creating gaps in the lineup that make winning a dual-meet near impossible. Senior captain Alan Yen, 191 lbs, has not been able to compete for some time due to an injured foot but

will be able to wrestle soon. It is difficult for the team when its leader is injured, according to Tseng.

"It's difficult for a leader to lead off the mat. It's much easier to lead by

example," said Tseng. "Injuries have allowed for the opportunity for younger guys to step up."

Two wrestlers who have consistently done well for the team are Hansen and freshman Henry Wei, 154 lbs. Although they are both freshmen, they stepped up and took on leadership roles by excelling in tournaments and working hard in practice.

"[Hansen and Wei] have provided leadership by example since Yen went down for a month," said Tseng.

With this rebuilding season, the Falcons are less concerned with their win-loss record and have focused on individual improvement.

"While we want to have success, we don't want to sacrifice growth and improvement for winning," said Tseng. "Winning is secondary; growth and improvement is first." ♦

"Self-confidence is hard when winning is so important. There is a lot of pressure on these athletes to perform."

—coach Gabe Tseng

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Disappointed by league play, Falcons focus on CCS games

by Izzy Albert

Every shot counts. Nobody knows this better than the girls' varsity basketball team, who could have won three of their five first league games if it weren't for their low free throw-shooting percentage of 45 percent.

Despite their 1-5 season record in the De Anza league as of Jan. 26, the girls have already made it into CCS by virtue of their 8-9 pre-season record.

"We're in a very good league," said coach Mike Davey. "[It's] the best public school league in the Bay Area, so that on top of player losses that we didn't anticipate makes it difficult."

The team's goal for the remainder of the season is to continue improving so they are ready for CCS.

"We have to stay focused, and that's tough when you've been losing," said Davey. "But we really need to get better in order to be successful in CCS."

Key players include senior point guards Emily Baba and Anna Schroeder and leading scorer and rebounder senior Nicole Gragnola.

Gragnola, who broke a school record by scoring 42 points in a pre-season game against Pioneer, is praised by her teammates for showing leadership and pushing the team.

"Nicole plays her hardest constantly," said Schroeder. "She helps each of us improve in practices by pushing us to play and practice harder."

The team celebrated when Gragnola broke the school record, because it truly "reflects how much effort she puts in for the team and how much she cares for the game," according to Schroeder.

With Gragnola under the basket to make easy two-point shots, the one thing the team needs to improve on is shooting outside the three-point line.

"What we really need is someone to step up and be consistent as a shooter, so we can knock down 3's when we're being zoned," said Davey.

Staying positive has been a strength for the team, Davey said.



Prolmage Studios

Senior Nicole Gragnola scores a lay-up.

"I'm very appreciative of the fact that the girls haven't quit, despite of their losing streak," said Davey. "They still play hard, and I think they believe that we're going to continue to get better and get some wins down the stretch."

The team believes that if they continue to improve and try their best, then their season has a good chance of turning around.

"If we put in 100 percent, improve on the little things and give it all we've got, then we will definitely start winning," said senior post Baylee Yates. ♦

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FALCONFOCUS

Senior skates professionally

Suciu places ninth in an international skating competition in Tampa

by Mary Mykhaylova

Out of 250 top skaters, senior Mark Suciu placed ninth at the 15th international annual "Tampa Am" competition in Tampa, Florida, in early December. The contest was open to all skateboarders worldwide, and each participant was sent by a sponsor to compete.

"It's a little ironic to me that skateboarding competitions get the most coverage, because competitions are such a small part of skateboarding," said Suciu, who does not particularly like contests, and says most true skateboarders share the same anti-competitive attitude.

"Nobody takes them too seriously, and no one is out to be the best," said Suciu. "It's a place where everyone becomes friends, skateboards and has a good time."

Skateboarding became Suciu's hobby at a young age. Though at first it was merely a pastime he could pick up one week and forget about the next, his interest blossomed when he got the opportunity to watch other local skaters practicing.

"I got to see some difficult tricks up close, and realized that there was so much more to skateboarding than what I knew," he said.

Since then skateboarding has progressed into a passion for Suciu, and his skill has improved, leading him to attend "Tampa Am."

The contest proceeded over the course of four days. Those who qualified after the first two days moved on to participate in the subsequent semifinals and finals. Suciu ended up placing first out of about 125 skaters during his first qualifying run.

"I did OK in my first run, but I felt that my second was much better," said Suciu. "I didn't fall on any tricks, which gave me time for an extra trick that I was very surprised to land."

Because of his high ranking during the

qualifiers, Suciu got the "Golden Ticket" straight to the finals, skipping the semis. The finals only had 12 skaters remaining, and they all competed with three one-minute runs.

"In the finals, I was skating with skaters that I had previously only seen in skateboard magazines and videos," he said.

Not only were there hundreds of people at the event, but it was also televised by a local news channel and broadcasted live on the Internet.

"Since it was focused on such a small group of widely known skaters and my little self, it was extremely nerve-wracking," said Suciu. "It was really difficult to skate under such pressure, and although I could have done better in a more stable situation, I'm proud of my performance."

Every run is an ordeal, since skating is doubtlessly a very risky sport, so Suciu has twisted and broken various parts of his body numerous times; however, he not only does not let this discourage him, but still continues to practice.

"When I get hurt, I can't just stop skating," said Suciu. "I'd go crazy if I did."



courtesy of Patrick Beaudouin

Senior Mark Suciu does a "crooked grind."

Even so, these injuries prevent him from skating at his full potential for a short period of time, but could never deter him from his art.

"This could be easily related to love," said Suciu. "Nobody stops looking for it after they've been heartbroken." ♦

GIRLS' SOCCER

Big wins bring hope for league championship

by Olivia Chock and Ren Norris

Freshman goalkeeper Ally Nilan-Axline started her varsity soccer career off in style. In her first regular season game, she stopped many shots from Wilcox on Jan. 7, resulting in a 1-1 tie. After playing preseason on the JV team, Nilan-Axline was given the opportunity to move up to varsity earlier that week as senior Jan Iyer recovered from an injury.

"My dad had always encouraged me to do varsity and he was really happy when I got to move up. I think this is just going to be a really good team especially since I have great defense," said Nilan-Axline.

Due to Nilan-Axline's strong preseason with the JV team, varsity coach Kim Anzalone thought she was the most qualified to be the back-up goalie.

"For being a freshman, Ally has totally created her own space because she is out-

going, positive, friendly and confident," said Anzalone. "Ally told me she is looking forward to learning as much as she can from [senior goalie] Jan [Iyer]."

The team played a tough season opening game against Wilcox. The equalizer was scored by senior captain defender Sarah Guy during the last minute of the game.

"It was a very exciting game at the ending goal. The ref said 'one minute' and I was like 'one minute!?' But we shoved it in and got the job done," said assistant coach Brandon Chow.

The girls pulled off an impressive 3-1 win in their second league game against Cupertino on Jan. 12. Senior Adele Perera had two back-to-back assists to junior

"Our first few games gave us a lot of confidence. It made us realize we are a good team that can work together"

Mckenzi Crase and sophomore Kari Clark, and junior Ren Norris scored off of a corner by sophomore Courtney Brandt. The team also came away with a 1-0 victory against Lynbrook on Jan. 14, with the lone goal scored by freshman Amanda Schwartz.

"Our first few games gave us a lot of confidence," said senior co-captain Sam Li. "It made us realize we are a good team that can work together."

However, the girls lost their first game to Santa Clara on Jan. 23 by a 1-0 score. Santa Clara managed to score in the first half and held the Falcons to no goals, despite their many shots taken in the second half.

"I was disappointed since we dominated the entire game and had about 15 opportunities on goal that we just couldn't

finish," said Anzalone.

Coming off their first loss, the team came back with a win against Milpitas on Jan. 26, the only goal being scored by Clark off of a corner by Brandt. On Jan. 27, the team pulled off a big 3-0 win against Fremont, who was undefeated and No. 1 in the league. Goals were scored by Brandt, Clark and Crase with assists from Crase, Brandt and Perera. The win brought the team's El Camino league record to 4-1-1, and put them in second place.

According to Anzalone, the team will look to finish more of their scoring opportunities in order to dominate the rest of the league season, as they rematch the teams. They played Wilcox on Feb. 2 and faced Cupertino on Feb. 4. (The results of the games were unavailable due to publication deadlines.)

"The girls are coming together," said Anzalone. "They are becoming a team rather than individuals." ♦

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Four-game rally couldn't come at a better time for Falcons

by David Eng and Jenny Zhang



David Eng

Junior guard Chris Guengerich scores over two defenders from Branham High School.

After a slow 1-7 start, the boys' basketball team finished the non-league season strong, posting a 3-1 record over the winter break.

This four-game surge came at a good time for the Falcons, who rolled into their first league game versus Cupertino with some positive momentum.

Saratoga's winning ways continued against the Cupertino Pioneers, as senior shooting guard Daniel Chou exploded for a career-high 27 points on six three-pointers while shooting an astounding 71 percent from the field.

"During the preseason, we had a seven game losing streak, but now we've come back and started winning again," said Chou.

Chou has been the primary source of offense for the Falcons and is leading the team with 13.1 points and 2.5 three pointers per game through 17 games. However, as he was quick to point out, scoring is not everything.

"Coach [Trevor Naas] emphasizes defense," he said. "He thinks that if our defense is good, then our offense will just fall into place."

The team's defense had been performing fairly well through the first three league games, holding opponents to 41.3

points per game while the Falcons have averaged 46.3 points of their own. Surprisingly, Saratoga had a 1-2 record for its hard work after dropping consecutive games to Milpitas 49-41 on Jan. 13 and Mountain View 43-41 on Jan. 15.

Senior 6'3" forward Andy Johnson attributed the losses to poor fundamentals and ball security.

"Both games we should have won, but at the end we just made silly mistakes," said Johnson. "We can definitely improve on being strong with the ball and not make poor passes."

These two flaws in the team's game seem to be the only things stopping it from contending in the competitive El Camino Division. Limiting turnovers and stressing ball security were two of the three simple keys for success that second-year varsity coach Naas outlined at the beginning of the season.

Saratoga followed up their loss to Mountain View with a 66-40 drubbing at the hands of host Monta Vista High Jan. 20. However, the Falcons recovered in a big way two days later by defeating visiting Lynbrook High 76-61.

Chou had the hot hand again, tallying yet another outstanding 27 point performance. Johnson added 20 points and junior guard Chris Guengerich chipped in with 12 points.

Freshmen forwards Stevie Berman

Jan. 22: Saratoga 76, Lynbrook 61

GAME HIGHLIGHTS:

Falcons returned from several tough losses to beat league rival Lynbrook

PLAYERS OF THE GAME:

Daniel Chou: 27 points
Andy Johnson: 20 points

and Kyle Dozier have also been contributors on varsity, filling roles in Saratoga's player rotation, according to Chou. Berman averages a team-high 7.1 rebounds per game and in steals and field goal percentage. Dozier has chipped in on both ends of the floor in a significant fashion.

"We don't really think of Stevie and Kyle as freshmen anymore. They're just a part of the team," said Johnson.

Saratoga's 6-11 record (2-3 league) is not what the team initially planned, but Chou notes there have been many positives.

"We've had a couple of bad possessions. Overall our season hasn't gone too bad, despite our record," he said.

The Falcons played Santa Clara (Jan. 27), Cupertino (Jan. 29) and Milpitas (Feb. 3), but due to printing deadlines the results could not be published. Saratoga head into hostile territory tonight as they face Mountain View at 7 p.m. ♦

Saratoga Snapshots

B.K. does P.E.

The Skinny

What's Hot Online
saratogafalcon.org

News: "Teacher implements new workout program" by Cullan McClesney

Opinion: "Theft bursts bubble" by Vivien Lu and Ashley Tang

"Dead Week, Dead Policy" by Apeksha Sharma and Kyumin Shim

TOPTEN

REASONS WHY VALENTINES' DAY IS OVERRATED

- 10 Because Singles Awareness Day is much more fun.
- 9 Because it's not required to give everyone in class a Valentine. I miss those Power Ranger cards.
- 8 Because La Fondue doesn't actually taste that great. And now I'm broke.
- 7 Because Hugh Grant suddenly becomes a great actor. Just watch "Love Actually" and "Bridget Jones' Diary" again like everyone else.
- 6 Because that Nigerian Princess wasn't actually in love with me and didn't wire me \$2 million.
- 5 Because Barry White can only take you so far.
- 4 Because everyone somehow ignores Black History Month.
- 3 Because my mom gave me a Valentines' Day card.
- 2 Because despite my numerous advances, girls just don't understand me. Or they call me a creep, same thing.
- 1 Because I still don't have a girlfriend. Sadface.

—Alex Song

THECRITIC

"The Buried Life"

Mondays at 10 p.m. on MTV

When the pilot episode of a show is called "Attend a Party at the Playboy Mansion," I feel like I should test that show out and if the new MTV show "The Buried Life" lives up to the hype. The show documents the lives of four twenty-somethings working through a list of things to do before they die while trying to help the world along the way. The unique blend of philanthropy and fun is a winning combination. Other dreams include making a toast at a strangers' wedding and doing a sketch with Will Ferrell. ♦

—Tim Rollinson



Brian Kim



Jordan Waite



Jordan Waite



Grishma Athavale

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: **Shock Factor** senior divya singh, senior nicola pedicini, junior talia balma and senior jessica liscom react as an egg cracks after being dropped from the roof in kirk davis' physics class on jan. 13. **behind the scenes** junior parisa mirzadegan works with the camera in multimedia journalism on jan. 26. **code red** students, dressed in red, sit with the falcons and cheer on the girls' basketball team when they played lynbrook on jan. 22. **swing fever** sophomores

"I kept telling myself that I'd take care of [my P.E. requirements] eventually. Well, two years later, here we are."

Brian Kim



"Get moving, senior!" said physical education teacher Yuko Aoki. I hustled down the track—fists clenched and heart pounding—before my mind did a double-take, and I realized that, once again, my name at birth had been one-upped. Jokes and references aside, I'll make it known here: I am a senior enrolled in physical education.

Along with the redesigned gym attire, revised curriculum that tends to stray from the classics like dodgeball, and a natural reluctance to share with anyone which class I had during second period, the new name reference was only one of the many perks that came with saving P.E. for last.

I still remember sitting down with guidance counselor Frances Saiki going over the list of graduation requirements I had yet to fulfill. As I slowly sank into my seat, dreading the moment she would notice that I was missing two of the four required semesters of P.E., I kept telling myself that I'd take care of it, eventually, by taking up a sport like golf. Well, two years later, here we are.

P.E. experiences

But let me make myself clear: Being in P.E. wasn't as bad as everyone made it out to be. I won't deny that, at first, it was a bit unnerving to tell friends which class I was heading to next, or to explain why I almost always plummeted into the Journalism Room couch in weakness at the beginning of third period. I will say, however, that as much as I feared being seen by friends dressed in a gym uniform, contorting myself for various workouts, the only person I had to be afraid of was myself.

We all feel the same way. It's the class that isn't necessarily difficult, but is merely something every student needs to do. While I stand as one of the tallest in class, overlooking a room of 30 or so sophomores and freshmen, I feel out-of-place a lot of the time, but blending in with a group of friends, including one other senior whose name will not be disclosed for obvious reasons, makes the once-dreadful class feel less embarrassing.

I will say, however, that at times I do wish I took advantage of that extra period during my sophomore year, because as far as I can remember, P.E. back then was much different than P.E. right now. I recall a time when fitness assessments came only twice a school year and workouts-of-the-day merely consisted of passing around a tennis ball on the courts. While over the past semester I do remember playing basketball and badminton once or twice, the new curriculum in the class requires hours in the weight room, track and lots of strenuous workouts.

No shortcuts

I'll admit that in none of these settings am I an Adonis, but it beats lounging around at home after school re-watching episodes of "How I Met Your Mother," as my bones slowly wither away from the lack of exercise. Sure, I consider my eating habits to have headed south as a side effect of the college application bombardment, but Mrs. Aoki's P.E. has kept me in check.

As I headed into my second semester of senior year, I met a fork in the road. I had the choice of trying out for a sport and saying goodbye to P.E. for good, or sticking to my guns and keeping with my original plan to make my schedule the least complicated as possible. Let's just say that as of today, I am a second semester senior who just enrolled in his fourth semester of P.E. ♦

buzzworthy

Physics project: scrambled or over easy?

As many students were busy concentrating on bubbling the first few answers for their finals week of Jan. 11, Kirk Davis' physics classes gathered outside to drop eggs from the roof of the science wing.

But the purpose was far from creating a sticky mess on the ground. In fact, it was the opposite: Students formed groups of up to three students and were given the task of designing and building a container within a fixed budget and list of materials to prevent the egg from cracking. One group tried to use a parachute to slow the egg's decent while another used a balloon base to provide padding.

"[The students] are investigating impulse, a principle of physics, which is change in momentum," said Davis. "The amount of force on something depends on how long it takes to stop, so they have to increase the amount

of time it takes for the egg to stop."

The week before finals, the classes were busy discussing designs, tying balloons, cutting string and wire, folding paper plates into cones, gluing popsicle sticks and stuffing in cotton balls. In addition to the difficulty of the task, some students also faced unexpected challenges.

"The designing process was a difficult because we lost some of our resources for the project," junior Tasha Patel said. "One of our balloons popped so then we had to change our entire idea."

About half groups achieved the engineering feat, according to Davis, earning three extra credit points while others received partial credit for eggs with slight damage.

"Our egg cracked," Patel said, "because the whole thing flipped sideways and the egg didn't get much protection when it hit the ground." Still, they earned two points for their efforts. ♦

—Arnav Dugar