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## School tests wireless

by Brian Kim

Taking its next leap in technological advancement, the Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District has already taken measures to turn three locations, including Saratoga High, into wireless hotspots for the convenience of both staff and students. While the project still has unresolved matters regarding security and management, campuses can expect hotspots to appear in scattered locations in a matter of months.

Having been up for consideration for the past two to three years, the "wireless school" project was initiated after the recent installation of a new school phone system. The district has already received some shipments of networking equipment that were ordered before winter break. As of now, the tech team is testing various configurations before access points can become available throughout Saratoga High, Los Gatos High and the district office.

"It's going to be really good," said the school's tech coordinator Julie Grenier. "We're trying to lock it down so that the security is good and students can bring in their own laptops, but there are a lot of little things that you need to think about before you just throw it out there."

The tech team and the district are currently working out the general guidelines of the campus hotspots, setting restrictions on who will be able to access the network at what times. Proposals include a username-based login, much like the

### THE BIG IDEA | Wireless

- GOAL:** Wireless networks throughout Saratoga High, Los Gatos, and district office
- NOW:** Testing configurations
- WHAT'S NEXT:** The tech team and district hope to start putting up access points in next few months

current system with school-owned computers, and throttled bandwidth to limit excessive Internet usage. Regardless, Grenier feels optimistic in that the school will soon be wireless.

"My hope is that, in the next couple of months, we will get the management part figured out, our test system done and our configurations set, so that we can start putting up access points," said Grenier.

Expanding on pre-existing wireless networks within the school, the district recently pushed forward its plans in order to keep Los Gatos and Saratoga technologically advanced.

"[The idea] certainly was taken seriously by the district with the arrival of [Cary] Matsuoka, the superintendent, because he is very tech-savvy," said principal Jeff Anderson. "In the middle of Silicon Valley, where any business that I have ever gone to has been wireless for a long time, we're a high school that's trying to be cutting edge. It seems like a natural thing to go to."

see WIRELESS, p. 6

## Lack of early admits leaves seniors feeling distressed

by Sophia Cooper

14%; 15%; 18%; 20%; 23%.

Those are the percent increases of current high school seniors applying early to Yale University, Northwestern University, Stanford University, Pomona College and Duke University, respectively.

In proportion to the increase of applicants to colleges and universities across the nation, more students are getting rejected or deferred from their early applications, putting a damper on the winter months for many now second semester seniors.

Many schools are also decreasing their total freshman class size due to budget cuts. Despite the current cloud, the coming months will bring more positive responses from colleges.

"We don't know how [college acceptances] will turn out in January, but I project that they will still be in great shape come June," said assistant principal Brian Safine.

Nearby Stanford University received 5,363 early applications this fall, admitting only 689.

Out of the 26 SHS students who applied, none were accepted early, but a few were deferred until the regular decision—a stunning result for a school that usually has several students admitted to Stanford each year.

"Our applicant pool is now a robust

international one, and those who ultimately made the cut are distinguished on a worldwide scale," said Stanford Dean of Admission and Financial Aid Richard Shaw in a press release.

Some colleges and universities, such as Harvard and Princeton, have already done away with the early application process entirely.

This is regarded as a positive decision by Safine.

"The frustrating results [of early application] we [at SHS] have seen this winter lead me to believe that both avenues [of early action and early decision] are fraught with some potential frustration," said Safine. "I think all our students should still apply very broadly and focus at what they're looking at to get out of a college experience, rather than what college admission officers are looking to hear from them."

Although second semester seniors may be feeling dejected about the lack of early admission to their top choice colleges and universities, Safine said the regular decision acceptances coming out in the next couple of months could change their feelings significantly.

"There's a tremendous interest in college, which is great," said Safine. "What I think is most important is that if the first [round of students] in the college applications came back frustrated, it's in no means time to get discouraged." ♦

### INAUGURATION TRIP '09



"Words cannot describe how amazing it was to see and be able to say you were part of history"

—junior Maddie Renalds

photo courtesy of mctcampus.com



Photos courtesy of Sonali Dujari

Left: A group from Saratoga waits to pick up their luggage; center: seniors Kelly Darchuck and Sonali Dujari help light the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; right: teacher Tony Palma throws snow at teacher Erick Rector.

## SHS students witness history

by Shannon Galvin and Annie Lee

At 9:04 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan 20., most teachers were not lecturing or going over homework. Instead, they were streaming the inauguration ceremony for President Barack Obama in their classrooms to let students watch history in the making.

A local group of 52, including students, teachers and chaperones and a couple other individual students who traveled with different organizations had the spectacular opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., and watch the inauguration in person.

Another group from Saratoga also traveled to Washington—Redwood Middle School Marching Band and Auxiliary paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue as part of the inauguration parade.

Said junior Jan Iyer, "It's been really fun and it's been an amazing experience. I'm really fortunate that I was able to come."

The group arrived in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 16. and spent the next two days visiting the Spy, Air and Space, and Holocaust museums; tourist attractions such as the show "West Side Story" and even a cemetery where the students had the honor of laying a reef on top of The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

On the third day of the trip, a smaller group of 12-15 went to see the Inauguration kick-off concert that featured Stevie Wonder, U2, Beyonce, Queen Latifah and other stars even Barack Obama addressing the crowd.

The fourth day was spent in Gettysburg,

see TRIP, p. 5

NEWS  
BRIEFS**Sadies makes a comeback on Feb. 27**

This year, the Sadie Hawkins dance, themed Opposites Attract, will be held in the Small Gym on Friday, Feb. 27. The dance has been separated from its traditional partner, Spring Fling week, which will be held April 13-17. Each weekend in March had already been booked for other events such as Bombay in the Bay, and because April is too late and too close to Junior and Senior prom, ASB was forced to put the dance in February.

Also, according to European traditions, Feb. 29 is a day when women propose to men, analogous to girls asking boys to a dance.

"We put [Sadies] on the 27 so it's as close to that day as possible," said Tuan. "I guess we're just trying something new. It's not a widely known thing, but I guess it also sort of covers Valentine's day."

Last year, Sadies was canceled due to alcohol problems at the Backlight Dance held the previous December. This year, Sadies has returned and already has the students excited.

"I was disappointed last year, but I guess it just makes this year all the more special, especially for the girls," said junior Karen Choi.

**Sports Boosters bring Crab Feed to Community Center**

The Sports Boosters hope to build appetites and funds with a Crab Feed at the Saratoga Community Center planned for tomorrow at 6:30 p.m.

For \$50, sports fans treat themselves all-you-can-eat crab or chicken. A raffle, after-dinner dancing and a no-host bar are also planned for the event, and the Saratoga Jazz Band will make a musical performance during the night.

The Boosters hope to raise enough money to supplement the athletic programs at the high school. Each athlete currently pays a participation fee of \$200, although the programs cost much more.

Boosters cover this gap through fundraisers throughout the year, such as the Football Tailgate held in the fall and the Holiday Boutique held in December. They also buy sports equipment and help pay officials.

"The idea was proposed by [principal Jeff] Anderson," said parent Debbie Sabella in an e-mail. "He has been to many crab feeds in the past and felt it would be a great fundraising opportunity and a community-building event as well."

The fundraiser hopes to attract 150 to 200 people from the school and community.

The crab will be provided through the Justin's Crab Company in Fairfield.

Currently, the Sports Boosters are bouncing around additional fundraising ideas for the coming year.

"Our goal is to provide opportunities that appeal to our entire school community," said Sabella.

**School to hold first Challenge Day in two years**

The school will hold its first Challenge Day in two years on March 17. The diversity program challenges students to "become better people" and forces them to address issues such as stereotypes, cliques and tolerance, according to assistant principal Karen Hyde.

The leadership class has been planning the event over the last year with sponsorship from the PTSO. A group of 80 students, 20 from each grade, have been invited to participate in the program along with members of the leadership class.

The students will be participating in activities from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. with two highly trained leaders. Although the price of hosting Challenge Day is an "exorbitant" \$3,200, Hyde said she believes that the investment is "well worth it."

"The program is emotional and touching," said Hyde. "It forces you to reassess where you are and where you're going and I think for that reason alone it's worth it."

Senior Rishi Taggarsi, one of the organizers and a participant in this year's Challenge Day, believes the experience will help students.

Said Taggarsi, "Challenge Day will be a great opportunity for students to overcome social and emotional barriers and find out more about themselves and those around them."

During the day, students will discuss issues such as cliques, gossip, rumors, negative judgments, teasing, harassment, isolation, stereotypes, racism, sexism, bullying, violence and homophobia. The event also helps students determine what they want to do with their future.

"I think a lot of our kids are in this rote thing about 'I need to go, I need to take this test and go on to the next one,'" Hyde said. "They don't really assess what path they're on, why they're doing this, and what is meaningful in their life, [which] I think [is] the true measure of success."

—by Shannon Galvin, Annie Lee, Vijay Menon and Karthik Sreedhara



Melody Zhang

**Senior Shanna Wade waits patiently as her blood is drawn by blood bank technicians on Jan. 23.**

# Upperclassmen donate blood, receive free movie tickets

by Vijay Menon  
and Jordan Waite

Maybe it was the free AMC movie tickets, maybe it was the drinks and snacks or maybe it was the ability to "save two lives" that brought a huge group of students to the community commission's annual Stanford Blood Drive on Jan. 23.

The drive was held in the Small Gym from 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and was open to upperclassmen of at least 17 years of age weighing at least 110 pounds.

"Overall, I thought the event was pretty successful," said senior commission member Swupnil Sahai. "We got a lot of people who were willing to donate blood. Over 70 students

donated and I was happy to see several teachers getting involved as well."

Sahai was pleased with the large turnout despite the sometimes negative stigma associated with giving blood.

"It was great to see so many people helping out despite their fear of needles, which was the most popular excuse I was getting when I first signed people up," said Sahai.

Senior Paari Kandappan was one of several students who donated blood.

"It's always a bit nerve-racking when they take blood," said Kandappan, "but I felt good about helping out the needy. The free movie tickets just served as an added incentive."

The commission had been

planning the event for a few months leading up to the event. The group met with a representative from the Stanford Blood Center in December in order to start organizing the drive. Commission members publicized the event in the weeks leading up to the drive by creating a Facebook event, distributing fliers and getting sign-ups in the quad among other things.

If all goes well, Sahai said the school can expect another blood drive to take place later this spring.

He hopes that even more students will donate blood next time.

"I'm definitely looking forward to donating when I turn 17," said sophomore commission member Daryl Chang. ♦

# Costa Rican exchange students experience life as Californians

by Rebecca Nguyen

Costa Rica is an ethnically unified country where 98 percent of the population is white or mestizo, a mix of American Indian and European. On the other hand, the United States is diverse and ranges from white to Hispanic to Chinese.

These two different cultures mixed to form an experience of a lifetime when six Costa Rican students arrived in Saratoga on Jan. 19.

Teenagers from both cultures were able to bond and compare their different lifestyles over the next three weeks.

Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguez had begun planning this exchange program, which has also taken place in the past, at the beginning of the school year. This program allows Costa Rican students to live with their host family and receive a first-hand experience of American culture.

"Señor talked about it during the beginning of the school year and I decided to just put my name down," said junior Varun Parmar, who is hosting Cristián Salazar. "It sounded interesting

and I wasn't sure if I was going to do it or not, but I figured I'd at least put my name down to get more information about it."

Meanwhile, other students were specifically asked to be hosts.

"Señora [Gina] Rodriguez asked me because the girl I'm hosting is actually Chinese," said senior Kimberly Hui, who is hosting Mariana Xu Zheng. "So she thought it would be a really cool experience for her to come to a Chinese-American family."

Besides Hui and Parmar, the host students include seniors Hannah Porter and Avinash Kumar, junior Chelsea Sabella, and sophomore Allison Buchanan. With so many places to visit, the hosts have already decided on a few places to take their guests.

"During the week, we're planning on taking them to the mall. During the weekend, we're going to go to San Francisco and another weekend we're going to the Monterey Bay Aquarium," said Parmar.

Hui could see many benefits from having a person from Costa Rica live with her.

"I hope to understand better

how teens live from other countries, improve my Spanish and make a new friend," said Hui.

Language difficulties are an obvious obstacle, yet Hui and her family manage.

"It is kind of hard to speak to her sometimes, but we manage with her English and my Spanish," said Hui. "Actually, it's pretty cool because she happens to speak Cantonese also which is what my parents speak so it helps a lot because my parents don't speak Spanish."

Besides obstacles like language, similarities also form that bring the teenagers closer together.

"It's been really interesting and we've been able to find similar interests in music since we both play the guitar," said Parmar. "Also, I took him to lunch with some of my friends so he's had fun so far."

Through this experience, Parmar has learned a lot.

"So far, I've learned that life in Costa Rica is very different from life here," said Parmar. "Also he doesn't complain about anything and he's always open to try new things." ♦

# Robotics kick-starts season with sponsors

by Tiffany Tung

After being unable to find sponsors for the first three months of the school year, the Robotics Club began its activities following the For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) Robotics Competition Kick-off on Jan. 3.

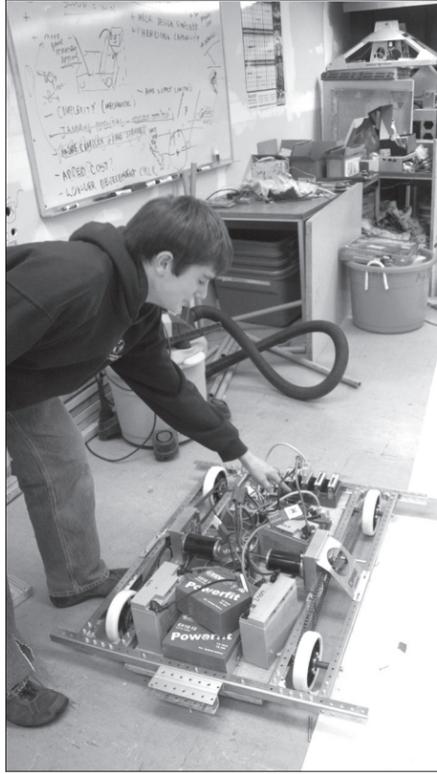
The club was unable to start in the fall. Because of the unstable economy, the club found itself searching for sponsors to help it fund its annual budget of \$10,000. Without the money, the members would be unable to build their robots.

According to Vice President junior Kandice Wong, one of the club's mentors, Ken Fukui, arranged for the club to present itself to some local companies in hopes that they would provide sponsorship.

Festo, Bosch, Silicon Light Machines and Automation Controls were among the companies that the Robotics Club presented to and mainly helped the club in terms of supplying materials and software. Private donors contributed to the club as well.

"Festo, which is a pneumatics company, offered all the pneumatics we wanted," said Robotics Team IT manager junior Craig Shih, "and Solidworks gave us software to work with, and we had some private donors like Hal Zarem, the Stevens Family and the Pham Family. Overall, we're really grateful."

The club has about four weeks to complete its robot after having a late start, and has already begun building the prototype in the Robotics Room. The members will spend approximately 250 hours in total building the robot, which will be programmed to shoot balls into a goal.



Melody Zhang

Junior Josh Height helps build a robot.

"We need to get our robot shipped out by the end of February to participate in the FIRST Robotics Competition on March 12," said Wong.

For now, the Robotics team is doing the best they can with what they have, and brainstorming for future projects.

"I hope we will stick to our schedule," said Wong. "It will be rushed, but I think we will be all right in the end." ♦

## FALCONSERIES

# School allowed to search students' possessions

by Karthik Annaamalai  
and Melody Zhang

The girl's bag contained marijuana, a pipe, empty plastic bags, a large quantity of money in \$1 bills, an index card that appeared to list students who owed her money, and two letters that implicated the girl in dealing marijuana. Tracy Lois Oden, a freshman at Piscataway High School in New Jersey was having her bag searched by her principal for cigarettes but was instead caught for drug use in 1985.

Oden fought the charges of drug possession, claiming that the Fourth Amendment protected her against such unreasonable searches. The Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that the search and seizure by school officials without a warrant was constitutional as long as the search was deemed reasonable given the circumstances.

Despite the misconception that student possessions are safe from the hands of school officials, under the Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District Locker Code, "school officials may search students and their property when there is a reasonable suspicion that...the student is violating the law...of the District."

While police must base their searches on probable cause, students in school must surrender their belongings when

there is reasonable suspicion, a standard requiring more cause than a hunch but still much weaker than probable cause. If officials suspect any substantial, threatening problem is present but do not know which student is responsible for the violation, random locker searches may be conducted.

"Yes, I've always supported [this policy]," said assistant principal Karen Hyde. "It would have to be something that would be explainable, something that I would be able to argue."

The last time a student's locker was opened occurred three years ago when the nets of the tennis court were lit on fire. Hyde said that the locker had "some interesting materials in it."

Senior Paul Stavropoulos agrees with the school's intentions but believes that there needs to be a limit on when a school official can open a locker.

"It is necessary in terms of keeping the campus safe," said Stavropoulos. "It is a slippery slope."

School officials say the policy is needed to ensure students' safety.

"You have to hope that administrators are going to have enough of a conscience and judgment to not do this vindictively," said Hyde. "It has to have a cause. This is about providing a safe environment and education for kids, whatever it takes." ♦

**SCHOOL RULES**  
Safety, security vs.  
student civil liberties



## FALCONFOCUS

# Mohnike juggles tasks

by Annie Lee

The clock reads 12:30 a.m. The roads are empty, students are studying for an AP Biology test and English teacher Kerry Mohnike is still working at home. Currently on her 18th year of teaching at SHS, Mohnike has assumed roles this year that often require her to stay up late in order to finish up work.

In 1991, Mohnike started out as the journalism teacher and student publication adviser, and in 1996, she switched to teaching English classes. In addition to teaching English 10 and 11 Honors, she has currently taken the roles of Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) coordinator, leading negotiator of the District Teachers Association (DTA), and Media Arts Program (MAP) member.

"[The roles I take on] usually come from a need I see. For instance, with the GATE program I thought that there was a population that might benefit from enrichment of some type, and with staff development, it was kind of my turn. You have to serve sometimes, and that's that," said Mohnike. "I guess I've just always been a little compelled to be a little over-involved."

With all these responsibilities and numerous hours of work, Mohnike is bound to lean on some shoulders to make life a little easier.

"I get a lot of help. My colleagues are very helpful and supportive and I don't do anything by myself," said Mohnike. "I'm on the staff development committee, so there are all those people. Also I'm a DTA negotiator, but there are also a couple other negotiators, like [social science teacher Matt] Torrens."

In addition to the numerous positions that she holds, Mohnike is one of many teachers required to take California Teachers of English Learners (CTEL) certification classes this year. Although

the classes add more to her workload and she had the option to simply take and try to pass a certification test, Mohnike wished to really learn something and benefit from the courses. Mohnike has indeed taken something away from the CTEL classes.

"This year with CTET, I do get a better sense [of students' lives]," said Mohnike. "Also, being involved in broader school committees, you do get a better sense. I could never know [a student's] life, but I think it does help."

Mohnike is not the only one who senses her empathy for the high stress lives of high school students. Many of her students have also discerned this aspect of Mohnike in her in class policies that allow students to take tests during a different date if many of their tests from other classes fall on the same day.

Said junior Sonia Siganporia, "I think she really does understand the stress that we students feel and it's nice to know that there's a teacher that is looking out for us and not just slamming down homework and tests."

Mohnike's teaching style has also been popular with many students. Whereas some teachers like to keep control of the class and run the activities, Mohnike prefers to allow the students to run the discussions and Socratic seminars while she mediates from the side. She also has a reputation of treating her students as adults and being open to new ideas.

With all the different jobs she holds and all the different things she does, Mohnike still puts teaching at the top of her list.

"The best part of my day is in the classroom with kids," said Mohnike. "If anyone is looking for a career and if they could be as happy as I am at my job doing what they do, they're really lucky." ♦



Mohnike

# Senior math whiz takes second in competition

by Tiffany Tung  
and Melody Zhang

Known for being the fourth fastest Rubik's cuber in the world and for continuously succeeding in math competitions, senior Andy Tsao took home second place for the Santa Clara Valley Math Association (SCVMA) Senior Olympiad on Dec. 13, winning a trophy and a book as a prize.

Although it is one of the lesser-known competitions, Tsao is still a widely recognized math competitor, having qualified for the United States of America Mathematical Olympiad (USAMO) in his junior year along with freshman Brian Wai, sophomores Albert Gu and Aggarwal Amol and senior Aaron Garg. This is a large number, considering most schools do not have more than one qualifier on a consistent basis.

Open to only seniors, the 90-minute SCVMA test consisted of about 30 questions covering pre-calculus topics. Tsao felt that the test was not especially challenging but ran out of time to check his answers and lost first place to Lynbrook contestant Patricia Li, albeit by only three points.

Having a rare, deep interest in math originally instilled by his parents, Tsao prefers to concentrate on other more significant math competitions and looks

forward to a future in math.

"It was one of the lighter math competitions," said Tsao, who said he didn't feel pressured. "I did it just for fun. I originally did not want to go, because college decisions were coming out that weekend."

According to Math Club adviser and Math teacher PJ Yim, there are only three contests offered by the SCVMA—Senior Olympiad; Japanese American Citizens League Tokutomi Competition; and Field Day, which is the largest of the three.

The Math Club prepares constantly for such competitions by meeting weekly to either take on-campus tests or

off-campus regional tests. Sometimes there are national exams, namely the American Math Competition (AMC), wherein the top 1 percent scorers are then invited to the American Invitational Mathematics Examinations (AIME). Those with the highest combined scores from AMC and AIME are invited to compete in USAMO and the winners then continue on to the International Mathematics Olympiad as representatives of the United States of America.

"I like doing math because I like feeling satisfaction after conquering obstacles and solving problems," said Tsao. "It makes me feel accomplished. I really hope to continue math in the future." ♦



Tsao

# 'PHANTOM' GRAD ADDRESSES STUDENTS

by Emily Chen  
and Mabel Hsu

On Dec. 15, the school welcomed a guest speaker, 1995 alumni Kyle Barisich, who plays the lead role of Raul in the national tour of the Broadway musical "Phantom of the Opera." He spoke to the fine arts program about his experience as a musician and actor.

In the McAfee Center, Barisich spoke about how teachers at Saratoga High affected his path to Broadway by encouraging him to pursue his dream.

"He moved to New York and told us how he spent a lot of his time waiting tables and auditioning as much as he could," said senior Sarah Baldwin. "He said that he used to walk by the opera house every day and visualize himself working there. Then he auditioned for 'Phantom of the Opera,' and four months later, he got a call asking if he would like to go on tour with them."

Barisich's account of his rise to success was of great interest to the students, many of whom have similar interests and dreams as Barisich.

"He [was] definitely really inspiring because of how [he thought] it wasn't just luck because he thought he could change luck by visualizing himself going there and doing what he wanted to do," said Baldwin.

The women's ensemble and chamber and concert choir then went to San Francisco on Dec. 18 and watched the musical. They also got to meet with him after the show. Watching Barisich perform on stage was much more personal for the students who were able to meet him in advance.

"When he talked to us at school, he told us about everything he got to do and then we saw him on stage and [I thought], 'Wow, you worked really hard for that,'" said sophomore Kaitna Shankar.

Barisich's down-to-earth demeanor was surprising to the students for someone who became so successful.

"He is really kind and courteous [and] said that the biggest thing that helped him was being polite with everyone," said Baldwin. "In general he's not what you'd think of an aspir-

ing famous person. [He didn't] step on people to get to where he is."

Having Barisich speak to the students, and then being able to watch his lead performance on stage was an inspiring experience for the students who had the privilege of meeting this successful yet modest alum.

"He made me want to sing better. Everything he did made me want to work hard at singing because [I thought], if he can do it and he's from Saratoga High, then maybe I could do it, too," said Shankar. ♦



Melody Zhang

Eddie Zhang and Leah Capek rehearse for the upcoming musical, "Grease," which will open Feb. 5

## Cast prepares to open for 'Grease'

by Holden Sparacino

The music and drama departments are collaborating together in a musical for the first time in years for the school's production of "Grease" which is due to be performed in the McAfee center from Feb. 5-8.

In the past couple years, the two departments have traded off directing the school's spring musical, making some students feel less connected to one department or the other.

Drama director Chris Mahle sees this show as an opportunity for both parties to put the past behind them and concentrate on creating a great show together.

"I really do believe 'Grease' marks the beginning of a beau-

tiful friendship between music and drama at [Saratoga High]," said Mahle.

Auditions were held at the beginning of December over the span of a week and ultimately resulted in the casting of 60 actors. Though the auditions were long, less had to be accomplished each day, making the experience less stressful.

"The kids were so relaxed," said Mahle. "They are all so talented. They gave incredible auditions and made selecting the principal players in the cast extremely difficult."

"Grease" was chosen just over a year ago between Mahle and Boitz at the same time that 'Romeo and Juliet' was chosen, "over dinner and Wii games during the holiday break," said

Mahle. The musical will be performed in February, as this was the most convenient time for both departments.

The two shows of the year were chosen because "both are very popular shows and [are] likely to generate a lot of interest from performers and audiences," said Mahle.

"Grease" has two leads, Danny and Sandy, who will be performed by senior Eddie Zhang and junior Maddy Renalds respectively. Both are expecting a great show.

"I'm looking forward to many years of incredible musicals with the Visual and Performing Arts Department as we continue to grow the drama program into something extraordinary," said Mahle. ♦

## Junior musician gains national honor

by Mira Chaykin

In November, junior Zach Jacobs painstakingly used both an accompanist and a recording artist in a makeshift studio in a church.

With several microphones pointed at him, he played his euphonium, a brass instrument, to make the audition CD for "The President's Own" United States Marine Band Concerto Competition.

Over December break, Jacobs was informed that he was chosen as one of only seven finalists from a national pool of more than 1,000 applicants to the prestigious musical competition, which is aimed at readying high school students for professional music careers in the future.

As a finalist, Jacobs has the opportunity to venture to Washington, D.C., for a recital at the Sousa Band Hall, in which judges will pick one or two finalists to perform solos with "The President's Own" United States Marine Band in April.



Jacobs

While most people would cower in the presence of a live audience, Jacobs said he manages to maintain a calm exterior.

"I'm pretty comfortable performing for people," said Jacobs. "As long as I make sure I'm prepared, it's more exciting than scary."

Jacobs said there are many people he attributes his respectable success to, including both SHS teachers and his private

instructors.

"I've only come this far because I'm constantly surrounded by people who always encourage and help me," said Jacobs.

Music director Michael Boitz, one of the people Jacobs prominently attributes his success to, said "I have actually only encouraged three students to do this in my career, as the competition is overwhelmingly remarkable and very prestigious."

Jacobs is also well aware of the importance of this accolade as he intends to pursue a career in music. This was a good step in the right direction.

"It feels good. Winning auditions always feels good. This is a pretty special one. It did take a lot of work so it feels like all this has paid off and I'm really happy," said Jacobs. ♦

## Students sing their way to Honor Choir

Hard work pays off as auditions bring several to regional, state, national levels

by Synthia Ling  
and Pia Mishra

Senior Christina Lauro looked at the faces of the two judges staring at her. She took a deep breath before she sang the first note of the Italian art song she had rehearsed for months.

After finishing the song with a perfect pitch, she had to sight-sing 10 measures of music that she had never seen before.

Following that, she listened to notes randomly played on the piano and sang them back.

Finally, she sang a major, minor, augmented and diminished triad, as well as a major and chromatic scale.

This long process is what Lauro and several other students went through for their audition for the Regional Honor Choir in early fall. Juniors Josh Liu, Thomas Denq, Bryant Bae, and seniors Jennifer Hansen and Lauro made it through the audition and earned a spot in the Regional Honor Choir.

The Regional Honor Choir is the first level of prestigious choirs followed by State, then National Honor Choir, that takes in between 800 to 900 students.

Hansen said she was aware of how tough the auditions would be.

"I began practicing in the summer until the auditions in October," said Hansen. "All of us worked really hard."

Choir teacher Jim Yowell helps guide the students for their auditions, which require plenty of preparation, hardwork and perseverance.

"[Auditioning] takes time. You can't just go 'Oh

yeah I'll do it,'" said Yowell. "You do have to rehearse it and practice so you feel comfortable so you are not nervous. If you're nervous, you certainly can't do your best."

Regional Honor Choir scores are also used to determine if the singers make it into State or National Honor Choir. Liu, Lauro, Hansen and Denq qualified for State.

Junior Samantha Pack and Lauro made it into National Honor Choir.

**"I think that it is really a reflection of them. They're wonderful students in a sense they have a great desire to share music they love to sing."**

—choir teacher Jim Yowell

"[National Honor Choir] only takes 200, so we have two from here in this school who made it," said Yowell. "It's really an honor because you are thinking of thousands of people who tried out for it."

Many of the students were extremely proud of their achievement and happy that their hard work paid off.

"I was really excited to make it in. It's really an honor to be able to sing along with the best singers in the state," said Hansen.

Yowell believes that these students have grown into fine musicians.

"I think that it is really a reflection of them," said Yowell. "They're wonderful students in a sense they have a great desire to share music that they love to sing." ♦

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# Arts hopefuls apply with non-standard methods

by Rebecca Nguyen  
and Apeksha Sharma

While most seniors were busy filling out questionnaires and writing essays for colleges this past fall, a few took a different path.

Seniors Vivian Fu, Candace Kao and Lisa Clark are among the handful of students who have decided to pursue a career in the arts.

Fu, a violinist, has applied to the New England Conservatory, the Cleveland Institute of Music, the University of Cincinnati's Manhattan School of Music and others. Fu first heard about these programs through a summer camp that she has attended for the past four years.

"For the past four summers, I have gone to the Aspen Music Festival," said Fu. "They have college conservatory day there, and there are music ads in all of their concert program books."

Unlike most college applications, Fu was required to send in a CD of her music, as well as a formal application.

"First you send in a CD for prescreening. It's due along with the application by Dec. 1," said Fu. "Then you get callbacks from the schools if they want to hear you live. Live auditions are from January through March and results come in April."

Clark, an aspiring graphic designer, applied to Rhode Island

School of Design, Parsons New School of Design, the University of Arts and others. Her application process was also quite different from others'.

Clark said, "You don't have to do essays, but you do have to do portfolios and at some schools you have to do some assignments for them and then you mail it."

The most enjoyable part of Clark's application process was looking through past projects.

"My favorite part was going through the work I have done throughout

[the years] and being able to see how much I have improved," said Clark. "My least favorite part was when you have to write paragraphs about certain pieces because I really don't like to describe my processes."

For Kao, though, the application process for an architecture major is more similar to regular programs.

Said Kao, "The schools have some extra forms and stuff that you have to send in with the portfolio but ultimately you just pack pictures inside a bound book or on a disk you just send them in."

Throughout the application process, Kao was filled with worry as well as confidence.

"Throughout the whole process, I was worried I would get something wrong. I had a bunch

of people like my parents and my college counselor check over my applications," said Kao.

Although Kao felt pressured by her applications, she did not feel as much stress as many other seniors do during this time.

Said Kao, "Overall it was pretty relaxing. The program I chose isn't available at a lot of schools, so I didn't have that many colleges to apply to."

She applied to USC, Carnegie Mellon and Rhode Island School of Design.

Kao found these schools through a family friend as well as through several websites.

"I talked to a friend of my mom's who is an architect and she recommended me a couple schools," said Kao. "There are also some websites that have architecture rankings, so I checked those out and picked some schools that I felt were right for me."

For several years, Kao has dreamed of having an art-related major, and finally decided to become an architect because of its functional use.

"I've always been into art and creating things so I decided that I didn't just want to do art," said Kao. "I wanted to do something

that had a practical application to the real world and incorporated elements such as culture, philosophy and something that people could use or see in their everyday lives like a building." ♦



Clark



Kao



courtesy of Vivian Fu

Senior violinist Vivian Fu applied to several music schools and conservatories across the nation.

## TRIP | Redwood parades

continued from p. 1

and while most of the group went to dinner that night, a couple students, kids and teachers split off from the group to enjoy Disney's Kids Inaugural Concert where they saw The Jonas Brothers, Miley Cyrus, Demi Lovato and other stars perform.

On the day of the inauguration ceremony, only eight had the highly prized tickets to get into the ceremony. Seniors Alex Slavos and Alana Ledbetter and junior Nick Olsen and his mom made up the first group of four with tickets while the other group four included seniors Abby Conroy and Alex Lun, junior Maddy Renalds and History teacher Matt Torrens. All eight had to wake up at 3:30 a.m. to take the metro to Capitol Hill. However, only the second group of four actually got in while the other four were forced to watch the inauguration from a TV screen in a hotel suite with the rest of the group.

"It was such a mob, people were pushing and shoving so it turned out that the first group [of four] didn't get in even though they had tickets for one of the best sections," said Renalds. "I think everyone was so excited."

Although they had to shove their way and fight to stay as a group, the lucky four who watched the ceremony directly behind the first reflecting pool, approximately 200 meters from Obama himself, had a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

"[At the inauguration], there was something different in the air. Everyone was calm and words cannot describe how amazing it was to see and be able to say you were part of history," said Renalds.

### Redwood Band Marches

After the inauguration, the entire group of 52 settled into a suite at the top of a hotel to watch the parade. They witnessed Obama and Biden walking on the street below and even saw the Redwood Middle School marching band performing.

The Redwood band was chosen after director Vicki Wyant submitted an application over the summer. Redwood found out in early December that they were accepted and quickly scrambled for plane tickets and hotel rooms near Washington.

On the morning of the parade, the middle school students woke up at 1 a.m. and boarded their buses in Williamsburg, VA., for D.C. They then had to wait around for the parade to start at 2:30 p.m. Redwood marched 17<sup>th</sup> in the parade in the first section of line-up. Unfortunately, the inauguration festivities ran behind schedule and the band had to stand in the frigid 20-degree weather for over 90 minutes as they waited for the parade to start. At least 15 participants of the first section of the parade had to drop out, but not one student from Redwood.

"Even one of the Marines dropped out," said Redwood Color Guard captain McKenna Galvin. "We were tougher than the Marines."

### After the March

Back at the hotel suite, Saratoga High students tried to watch the Redwood marching band from their windows. Because they could not hear the band, they opened the windows, but their hopes were crushed when the Secret Service forced them to close the windows for the politicians' safety.

"Government agents were all over all the buildings. There were [military] snipers on every building around," said Iyer. "It was kind of scary but still amazing."

Despite some ticket difficulties, the group had a positive memory of the trip.

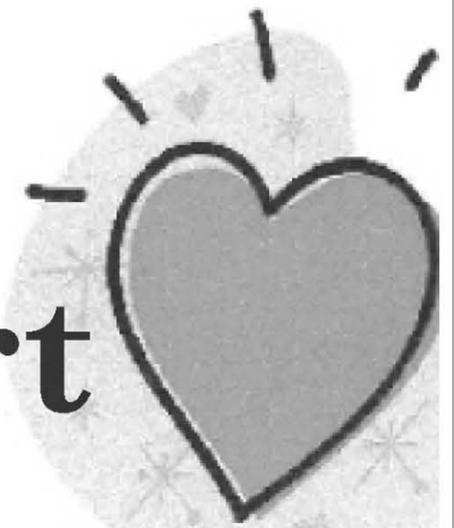
"[The trip] definitely exceeded my expectations," said junior Natalie Tkalcovic. "It was tiring, but it was worth all the exhaustion because there was always something to look forward to the next day or the next hour. There was never a dull moment." ♦

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Choreography: SHS Skating Club

## May 2009

# 6th annual heart skate



## 'BIZSMART' STUDENTS WIN TRIP TO NEW YORK

by Tim Rollinson  
and Jordan Waite

Sophomores Gabe Guido, Alex Sturge and Matt Cresci created a marketing plan for a kids' juice drink to win a competition at a local business camp they attended this past summer. As a reward, they will be going to New York in May to present their ideas to company leaders.

The boys, who have been family friends for years, heard about the camp from their moms, who said the camp could be a good experience for them. Sturge, Cresci and Guido were a bit skeptical but agreed to attend the camp.

"When my mom first told me about it I really didn't want to waste my summer doing that. Now that it's over I realize it was an awesome experience," Sturge said.

The camp, camp Bizsmart, was 10 days long in June and took place at the Foothill College campus in Los Altos. It included lessons about being successful in business and time to work on a business plan for a product of their choice. The three learned about how leadership, teamwork and many other skills are essential in the business world from some successful business leaders, including C.K. Prahalad, a distinguished businessman and author.

They spent mornings learning the major ideas of business and receiving advice. They were then asked to form groups and show what they had learned through a project.

"I learned the basics of business and was then asked to apply what I had learned, which was a very effective

method," said Sturge.

The students' task was to make a business plan for a real kids drink company, Water Roos, which is a low calorie juice drink that has no sugar. The plan consisted of a slideshow presentation that accounted for the cost to make and market the product and calculated the expected income for Water Roos.

The boys went into the camp as close friends so they had the advantage of working together on the same team.

"It was cool being on a team with [Sturge] and [Guido] because we understand each others ideas and aren't afraid to tell someone if they are wrong," Cresci said.

They presented their ideas to a panel of judges who compared their plan to those of hundreds of other high school students participating. Sturge, Cresci, Guido and the rest of their group won the competition and will fly to New York to present their plan to a board of world-renowned businessmen this May.

"I was really excited when we won because it was a great payoff for the work we had put in during the two weeks," said Cresci.

Sturge has never been to New York and is looking forward to the adventure and the chance to learn from some very successful people.

"I'm really excited for the trip," said Sturge. "I get to hang out with my friends in New York and have the chance to meet many successful businessmen." ♦

For additional information about camp Bizsmart, visit [www.campbizsmart.org](http://www.campbizsmart.org).

## School website to be completely redesigned

by Vijay Menon  
and Karthik Sreedhara

Students who log into the official school website [saratogahigh.org](http://saratogahigh.org) next spring will be in for a surprise—a newly redesigned Saratoga High website.

Media Arts teacher Tony Palma, principal Jeff Anderson, tech coordinator Julie Grenier, and librarian Kevin Heyman have been working with the company Educational Networks to help create the new site.

One of the main reasons for the major changes is the difficulty users have when navigating the website. The new one will be much "cleaner, more organized and easier to use," according to Palma.

"If you want to access information, there will be multiple ways to get there," said Palma. "If you want to get to your teacher's website, you can go through the staff directory, or through department directory or you can search by name or by subject. You'll be able to access the information you need quickly."

Visitors of the site will also be treated to several brand new features, such as a calendar of events that continually updates itself based on the date, a module that will cycle through pictures of the school, websites for each teacher, a new and revamped search engine and a language translation tool, said Palma.

According to Palma, the current website is stagnant and hard to use. People who need to post items on the website must first e-mail the information to the person who manages the site. The

site manager then posts it using an on-campus server, but the process is tedious with only one editor.

With the new website, any teacher or administrator can post information on their part of the site from any place with web access. He hopes that with this new system, information will be updated more often and that the public can rely on the website for new information when needed.

"We've broken up the one-person editor and decentralized the web authority, so it will be easier for whoever is responsible to edit their part of the site," said Palma.

Also, every teacher will have a presence on the website because the new site will not require teachers to have any previous experience with website-creating software such as Dreamweaver.

The school's main goal is for the website to be the "front door" to the school, and to be people's first source of information about the school.

"I'm glad that they're updating the site," said sophomore Navneet Ramesh. "It's really hard to find the information I'm looking for on the current site."

Since August, the school has been providing information to a team of designers such as their desired style, color scheme, text and layout. At completion, the entire process will cost around \$5,000, Palma said, but it is a price worth paying.

"Hopefully it'll be a seamless transition, but ultimately it's going to be better for the future no matter what we end up doing," said Palma. "It's going to be beautiful." ♦

## WIRELESS | School to add hotspots

continued from pg. 1

With the convenience of a wireless network through entire campuses, staff and students will be able to access information on the go.

"Rather than having a history class go to the Research Center, the possibility would now be that you could have three or four laptops in a classroom," said Anderson. "While certain activities are going on, you're enabling students to go over and get information off the Internet. The problem with [computer] labs is that they're big, expensive and they need to be managed. Wireless would allow that immediate access anytime, anywhere."

Although the district was able to purchase some equipment, it also was forced to make sacrifices due to financial reasons, which may delay the complete integration of the campus hotspots.

"It's all a matter of having enough money to fund wireless," said Grenier. "So far, it is all theoretical. We have a test site going, but until we put up all the different

access points to see what kind of coverage we get, there can be a lot of glitches. We're installing it ourselves, so we're learning as we go."

Despite the costs, Anderson believes that a "wireless school" is still a worthy investment.

"Obviously, with schools and technology, one of the things you run up against is money," said Anderson. "We don't have

**"It's all a matter of having enough money to fund wireless. So far, it's all theoretical."**

—tech coordinator Julie Grenier

unlimited streams of money like some corporations do to keep up with all the technology as it develops, but I think wireless has been around long enough that the price is manageable, and that it is a direction we need to go."

Anderson believes that the network development is promising.

"We probably don't even know all of the advantages that we would get out of this now because we haven't had it," said Anderson, "but I think we can all speculate about one or two that would be possible if we did go wireless. We want to expand into that area and see what happens. I think it's exciting in that respect." ♦

### TOGATALKS

What do you think of a wireless school?

"I think it's really great because now students can work on their laptops easily"



freshman Hansen Quin



sophomore Connie Lii

"I think it will be useful especially for people who have an iPhone. It will be easier to go on the Internet."



junior Samantha Tsang

## Saratoga High School Hall of Fame

**We are looking for alumni who contributed to our school while they attended and to society after graduation!**

Please nominate any person whom you feel is best described by the above criteria. Submit the name of the nominee, his/her year of graduation, and a short summary of his/her contribution to Saratoga High and to society. All nominations must be emailed to [shsevents@gmail.com](mailto:shsevents@gmail.com). If you have any questions, call (408) 867 3411 ext. 208

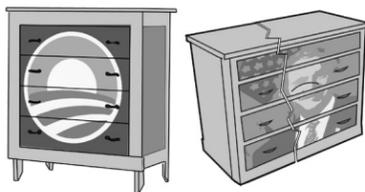
**PLEASE SUBMIT ALL NOMINATIONS BY APRIL 1, 2008**

# Welcome Mr. President, Thank You Mr. President

IN LIGHT OF THE 44TH INAUGURATION, HERE ARE THE TOP TEN THINGS PRESIDENT OBAMA SHOULD DO

## 10. Lead the people

Obama's charisma—and the fact that President Bush's approval rating is a negative value—is what won him the election. Now, he must try to stay in the public's good eye because if he's liked, he won't have to watch out for Iraqi television reporters armed with size 10 shoes. One way to start would be to get his daughters those puppies he promised.

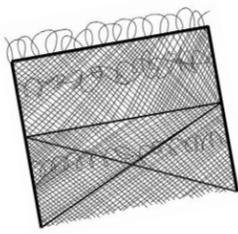
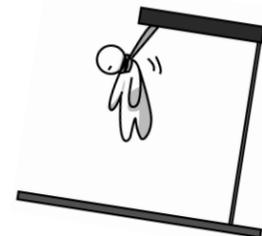


## 9. Pick the right staff

A major issue during the election was Obama's lack of experience. At least he didn't pick George Bush for anything important.

## 8. Define torture

Since Washington is so divided on the definition of torture, this is what Obama should do: subject George Bush to all his "interrogation techniques." If he doesn't enjoy the feeling, it's torture, if he does, it's not. Simple!



## 7. Monitor immigration

The Chinese are gaining power in the economic arena, but that doesn't mean we have to copy all of their ideas. Just because they have a Great Wall to keep out the Huns, it doesn't mean Americans need a "Great Steel Barbed-Wire Electric Fence of the Rio Grande" to keep their jobs safe from Mexicans.

## 6. Focus on national security

In light of the recent attacks in India, it seems terrorists are becoming more active. Obama should implement new policies to strengthen American security. "Randomly" checking all turbaned males at the airport and forcing passengers to throw away their shampoo is no longer enough.

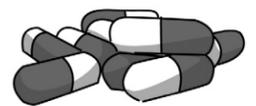


## 5. Introduce better educational policies

No Child Left Behind promised no child would be left behind. Based on the current college acceptance percentages at Saratoga this year, it seems more like every child was "left behind."

## 4. Improve the health care system

Hillary Clinton promised universal health care. However, Obama, after seeing the three-week wait list for Advil in France, decided to do things a little differently. He is going to mass produce Advil and distribute it to the elderly and the sick.



## 3. Solve American energy issues

Gas prices are suddenly plummeting (under \$2 a gallon!), but we still need to establish energy independence. Solution: Harness the hot air coming from Sarah Palin's mouth.

## 2. Withdraw troops from Iraq

Obama assured us that he would withdraw the troops in Iraq, but really, what's going to happen to our global mission of imposing democracy?



## 1. Get the economy back on track

"Spread the wealth?" Oh, my God! Obama must be a socialist! Well, a tax cut for the middle class could mean a record number of sales on Black Friday next year. Although people should be *saving* money, not spending more of it, that's going to be the case. Don't you want more discount electronics?!

# UNDERAPPRECIATED

Some sports seem to get all the love and all the fans, leaving others behind in their shadows

## Girls' tennis shunned too often despite consistent success

by Mika Padmanabhan

Last Fall, the school sent two of its finest girls' varsity teams to the CCS finals; field hockey and tennis. Only one of these teams, however, was properly recognized and received encouraging attendance at the games, while the other was mostly ignored. Despite exemplary performance for several consecutive years, the girls' tennis team does not receive the attention it deserves.

The first step to gaining respect is having a relatively large campus presence, which includes attendance to the games as well as

the publicity of the game dates and results. It seems only the members of the team, the athletes' parents or people on the newspaper staff know anything about the team. This is due largely to the lack of publicity.

Big home tennis matches rarely receive a lot of, if any, publicity while even the least significant of the volleyball, football and water polo games are well-known and attendance is encouraged.

One may argue that the lack of publicity is the fault of the players for not making a big deal about it. For CCS, Palo Alto, and Monte Vista matches, however, players tried to encourage attendance and boost campus aware-

ness of the team's success. Even so, fans failed to show up.

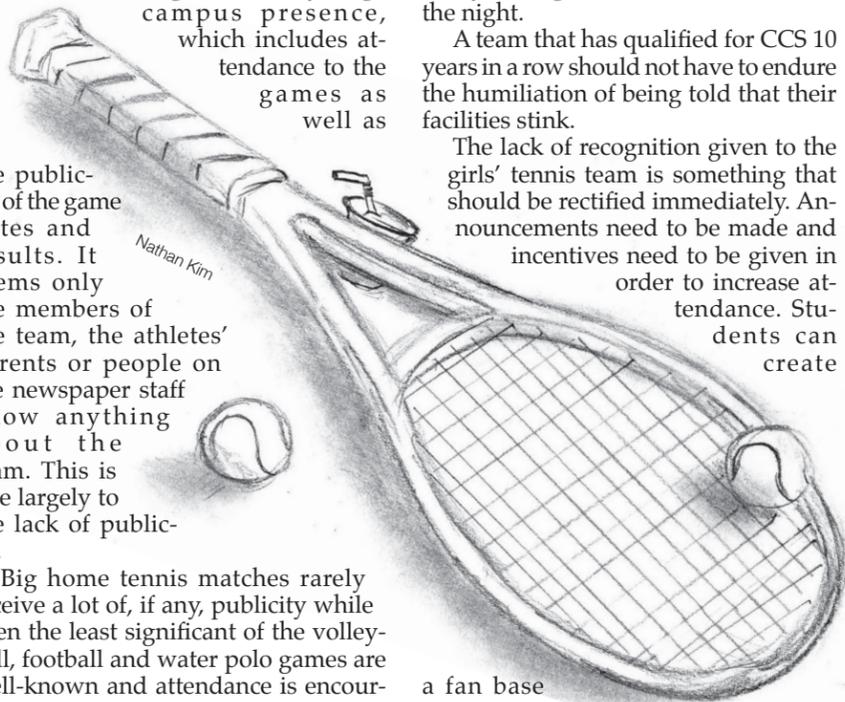
The community and school have displayed a similar attitude towards girls' tennis. In recent years, the football and field hockey teams have received new fields. In comparison, the tennis community has been asking for new courts and new lights for many years, but the requests have gone nowhere.

Even athletes from other schools have noticed this lack of interest. Opposing teams have often complained about the cracked courts and poor visibility during matches that extend into the night.

A team that has qualified for CCS 10 years in a row should not have to endure the humiliation of being told that their facilities stink.

The lack of recognition given to the girls' tennis team is something that should be rectified immediately. Announcements need to be made and incentives need to be given in order to increase attendance. Students can create

a fan base to promote attendance. The community, at the very least, should work towards getting new, lighted courts. The appreciation of athletes, even if occasional and fleeting, is something that every student who plays a good game deserves. ♦



## Badminton harder than most think

by Tiffany Tung  
and Melody Zhang

The fastest recorded tennis stroke belongs to Andy Roddick at 153 mph. The fastest recorded squash stroke belongs to John White of Scotland at 172 mph. The fastest recorded badminton stroke belongs to Fu Haifeng of China at 206 mph.

The shuttlecock may be composed of merely cork and feathers, but its power and speed should not be underestimated. In a world where tennis reigns supreme among other racket sports, badminton is pushed aside and seen as weak—if acknowledged as one at all.

### Badminton downplayed in America

While some predominantly Asian-American Bay Area schools have badminton available for their students, other parts of the United States, such as the Midwest, don't have large enough Asian-American communities to promote the sport.

Even many Saratoga High students scoff at badminton. They think it's a "wimp" sport and the team doesn't train as hard as others do.

It has become a joke to numerous students who try out every year in order to avoid PE.

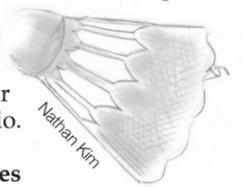
And yet, the number of students who drop out prior to tryouts due to brutal conditioning is astounding. It has become customary to see nearly 100 students try out for about 50 positions, and every year about 20 students drop out during the first few preseason weeks.

### It's really not that easy

The truth is, the aerobic stamina, agility, strength and precision required in badminton greatly exceed that of most

other sports.

As a result, badminton is much faster both physically and mentally. Repetitive movements, fast reaction and direction changes require intensive drills, conditioning and quick decision-making. The lightweight racquets, which have led to much doubt over the dedication needed to excel in badminton, have encouraged development of sophisticated racquet movements and don't restrict players from making lightning fast shots the way other racquet sports often do.



### Wounds and casualties

Badminton players condition as much and sometimes more than players in other sports.

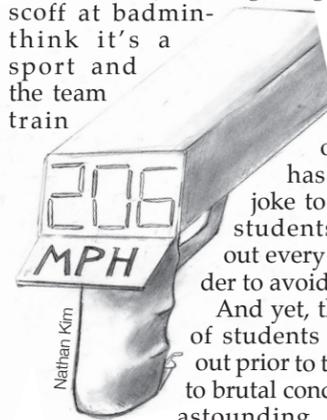
Though the small court gives the illusion that a player doesn't need to move around much, the shuttlecock compensates for that by traveling between opponents quickly, requiring players to reposition themselves for the upcoming shots as fast as possible.

The need for instant reflexes and agility in the relatively small court often leads untrained players to trip over their own feet, resulting in the same sprained ankles and knee injuries seen in other sports. Badminton also causes tennis elbow, golf elbow and other conditions diagnosed in other types of athletes.

Way back when Saratoga Badminton experienced its glory days from 2003 to 2005, when the team placed first in its league for three consecutive years. But the team has been on a downhill slope ever since, annually experiencing coaching changes and a lack of support.

Despite the team's dedication and training, they have never heard supportive classmates cheering, "Go Saratoga badminton!" during games.

Every year, the school chooses a male and female athlete of the year. Someday, they'll hopefully choose a badminton player and give the sport the recognition it deserves. ♦



## Students can do better: Cheating, stealing not to be taken lightly

by Shannon Galvin  
and Melody Zhang

Forget teaching students about biology or algebra. It's time to go back to basics—back to when teachers had to remind students to not take others' belongings and to tell the truth.

Cheating isn't something people should ever take lightly, yet in an alarming new survey conducted by the Josephson Institute, a majority of high school students nationwide admit to cheating, without a single flicker of guilt.

According to the survey, 30 percent of high school students have stolen from a store and 64 percent have cheated on a test. Of those who have cheated, 38 percent have done so two or more times.

The results show an increase from a survey taken in 2006 when only 60 percent of students admitted to cheating.

And here's the kicker: 93 percent of students surveyed said they were satisfied with their personal ethics and character, and 77 percent affirmed that "when it comes to doing what is right, I am better than most people I know."

But the study also touched on one important issue: extracurricular activities. With the type of competition students must go through today to get a spot in an "acceptable" college, the importance

of academics has gradually become less important next to other activities. There are only so many hours in a day to get top grades while juggling sports, community service, band and college applications.

Pressure to excel in everything has pushed the temptation to cheat from every student's peripheral to their foremost attention.

With the pressure and competition of today's high schools, it is no surprise that cheating exists, but it's shocking that the numbers are so high. The push for straight A's has left behind what keeps our society together: moral ethics and character.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals said that to help students make the right choice, they need to emphasize classrooms

where learning takes a higher priority than the right answer.

But it's not just an increase in academic cheating that's causing worry. Results of theft are also dismaying. The survey found one-third of students acknowledging their having stolen within the past year.

Some adults have attributed this decline in morals to the absence of a caring environment. They again point to the fact that today's society is much too apathetic to teenager behavior.

But it would be wrong to completely

blame students' shortcomings on society. Students should not only let their community shape them, but also shape their community in return.

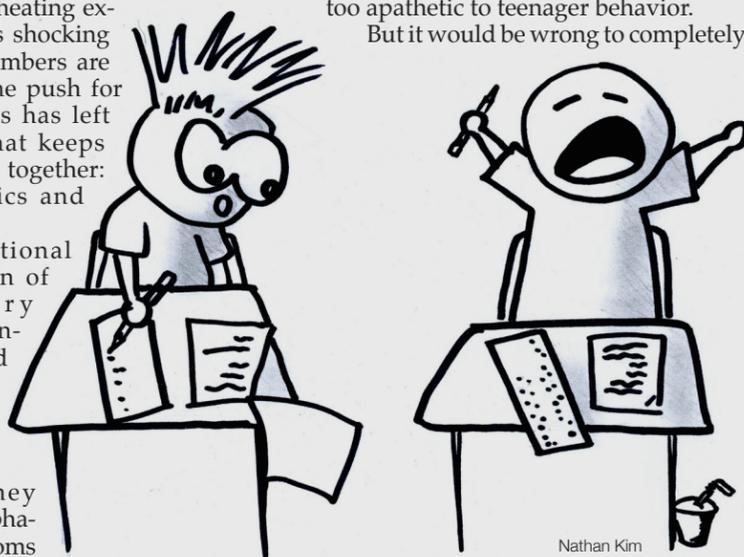
Now that the disturbing truth has been laid out for all to see, students should rise to the occasion and strive for self-improvement. Society isn't the problem; the problem lies within the students themselves. Deep down, everyone knows the difference between right and wrong.

Students need to stop lying to themselves, their parents and their friends. They need to accept that cheating and stealing are wrong and be held accountable for their own behavior.

Students also need to hold other people responsible for breaking the rules. Too many times students get away with cheating because others choose to overlook it.

Time after time this repeats until students reach the point where it doesn't seem to matter anymore. More schools need to enact a code of honor that all students can and will follow. They need to encourage the morals that seem to be left behind.

It's nice that some of the adults are trying to cover for us, but it's time for us to grow up, shoulder our own responsibilities and correct our faults. ♦



# BIG THREE BAILOUT MEANS MORE WASTED MONEY

by Andy Tsao

In the recent Congressional debates, the "Big Three" bailout, a proposal to pump \$14 billion into the American auto industry, was heavily discussed. The Big Three auto companies, GM, Ford and Chrysler, announced that it wouldn't be long before they had to declare bankruptcy. On Dec. 19, President Bush approved of the bailout, giving the auto companies \$13.4 billion in an effort to keep them alive. While an influx of government money could certainly postpone this crash, however, it is completely unnecessary when considering other, more cost-efficient methods to save the Big Three.

The Big Three

companies could have filed for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy. This means that the debtors would be allowed to continue running the company. It is overseen by a federal bankruptcy court, which makes sure that the company runs to the benefit of its creditors. Usually, this process involves a lot of company restructuring to maximize efficiency, but the Big Three haven't re-

organized yet. Rather than bail them out, the

government should have exercised restraint and let Chapter 11 pull the Big Three from the endangered zone.

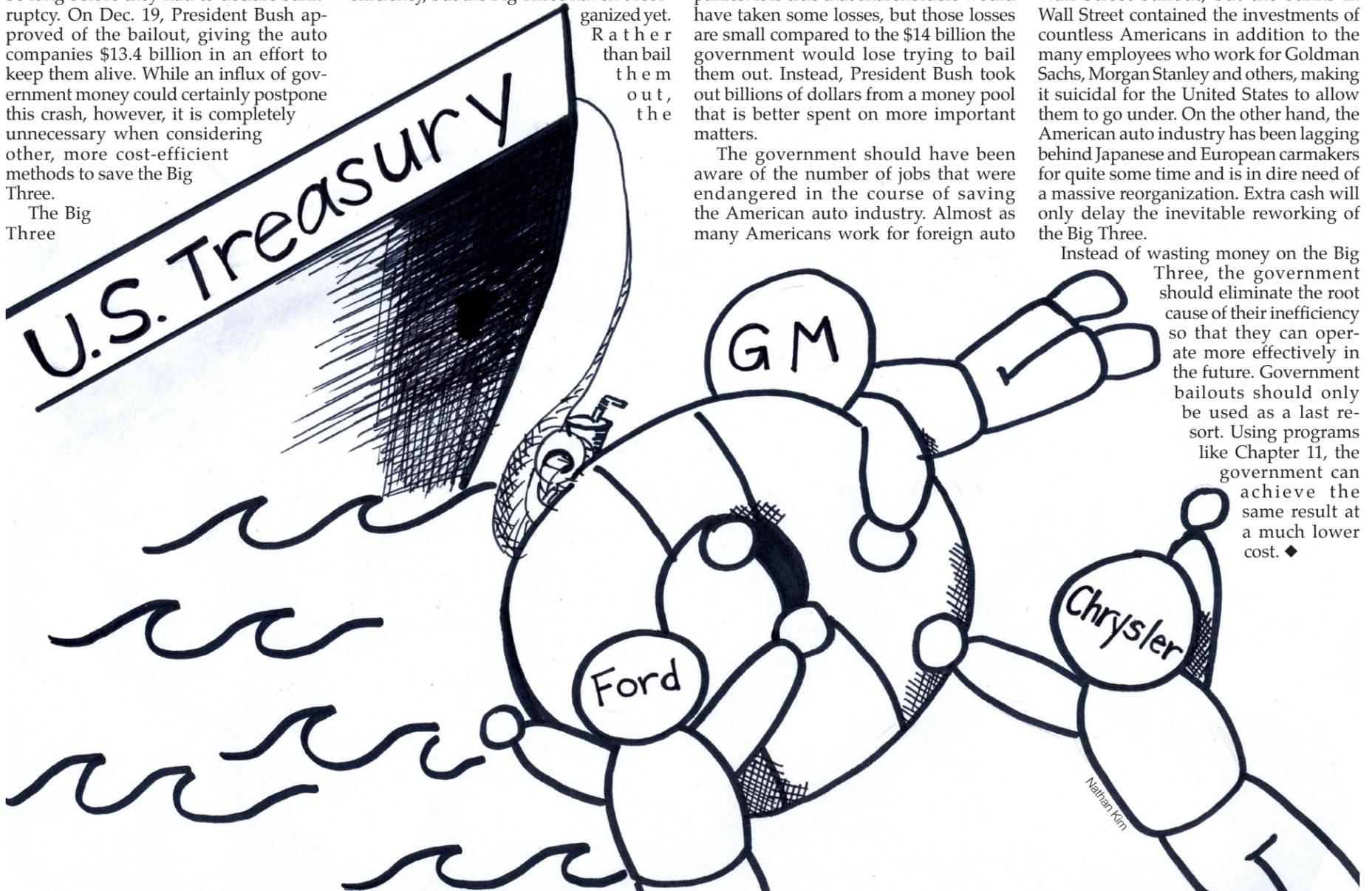
By cutting down on their bulky unions contracts and benefits, the Big Three would have saved the government billions of dollars while providing for a much-needed reorganization of the companies. It is true that shareholders would have taken some losses, but those losses are small compared to the \$14 billion the government would lose trying to bail them out. Instead, President Bush took out billions of dollars from a money pool that is better spent on more important matters.

The government should have been aware of the number of jobs that were endangered in the course of saving the American auto industry. Almost as many Americans work for foreign auto

industries as they do for American auto industries, and by saving the American Big Three, we could in turn be working against auto companies like Honda and Toyota, along with the jobs of all of the Americans who work there.

The Big Three bailout may seem like an enticing option in lieu of the recent Wall Street bailout, but the banks in Wall Street contained the investments of countless Americans in addition to the many employees who work for Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley and others, making it suicidal for the United States to allow them to go under. On the other hand, the American auto industry has been lagging behind Japanese and European carmakers for quite some time and is in dire need of a massive reorganization. Extra cash will only delay the inevitable reworking of the Big Three.

Instead of wasting money on the Big Three, the government should eliminate the root cause of their inefficiency so that they can operate more effectively in the future. Government bailouts should only be used as a last resort. Using programs like Chapter 11, the government can achieve the same result at a much lower cost. ♦

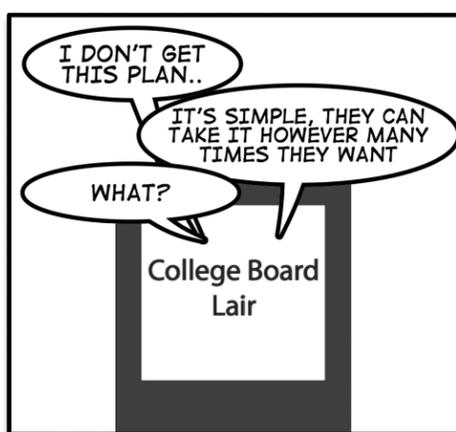


# Disadvantages follow new College Board policy

by Robin Liu

Invasion of the standardized test | by Alex Song

Testing has always been a tedious process. For many students, taking the



SAT means sitting for hours and rushing through problems to finish within the time limit. After the test, however, students often have to repeat the process numerous times to improve their scores. Even then, after taking the test a second time, the score may not improve much, or worse—it could worsen.

To ease the stress, students want the privilege of choosing the best scores of each test for colleges to see. This March, that wish will finally be granted. According to an article by the *New York Times*, the College Board, the company primarily responsible for the regulation and writing of the SAT, has decided to allow students taking the SAT exams to use Score Choice.

This policy will allow students to pick which single-sitting score they would

like to send to colleges. Under the current policy used by the College Board, all scores from all sittings are sent to colleges, whether the student scored well or not. Score Choice may seem beneficial by allowing students to put their best scores out. Some students at Saratoga High, however, feel negatively about Score Choice. Junior Vicki Ni believes that it gives an unfair advantage to students who can take the tests numerous times.

"[Score Choice] is bad because people can take the test as many times as they want," said Ni. "It's unfair to the people who work really hard and try to take the test only once."

Most students at Saratoga High already have the advantage of being able to afford SAT classes and books. Giving them

the privilege of Score Choice will allow students to take the tests over and over again without worrying about a low score. Those who already can't afford to take the test more than once will be at an even greater disadvantage when Score Choice comes into effect.

According to the *New York Times*, the College Board previously used the policy of Score Choice from 1993 to 2002. It also reports that in 2002 the company felt as though their policy was unfair to students from lower income brackets because these students could not keep retaking tests in order to improve their scores.

Many college officials, who argue that it is a marketing move by the College Board to increase its revenue from students who take standardized tests, have questioned

this change in policy. Schools including Stanford University, the University of Pennsylvania and Pomona College, continue to request that all applicants submit all test scores from all sittings. In cases like these, admissions officials point out, that Score Choice will not help students when applying to college.

In addition, Score Choice eliminates the benefit of a composite score for the SAT Reasoning test. When some colleges review a student's scores, they take the best score from each section of the Reasoning test. For example, a student's final Reasoning score could be made of a writing and math section from October and a critical reading section from May.

If students use Score Choice, they can only choose their test with the highest total

# the price is wrong

Students find ways to save money in the wake of the global recession

## COLUMNIST FINDS ROOM FOR WANTS AND NEEDS



**Brian Kim**

**Have it your way**

Surviving on a budget can be a relief and burden at the same time. Sure, the freedom of having money on hand without parental consent has its perks, but the responsibility of keeping my account balance from bouncing back can get tricky at times. From what I've heard, others go as far as freezing their credit cards in a cup of water as a method of self-restraint from impulse purchases. Hopefully, that's an extremity to which I won't have to resort.

With monthly allowances of \$150, I cover gas, lunches, phone bills and miscellaneous necessities. On top of those, however, there are also other expenditures my parents would consider "wants" rather than "needs," including clothing, books, movies, etc. Thus, the amount I would be able to

spend is capped, and during most months, I'm not always able to buy both the things I want and need. Now, I'm not suggesting that people stop eating lunches in order to save some cash. Instead, there are alternate avenues one can pursue in order to make room for both the "wants" and the "needs."

### Less room for more cash

The basis of money issues comes from lack of self-control in the midst of impulse purchases. With a couple of tweaks to how you handle money, the amount of money spent can easily be diminished.

For starters, I generally never keep cash in my pocket because of the size of my wallet. Acclaimed for being the thinnest wallet in the world, the Koyono Slimmy has only three pockets: one for a couple of dollar bills, one for credit cards and one for business cards, limiting what I can carry around. First to be eliminated due to space on the list is cash due to how tempting using dollar bills can be, since there isn't a risk of my balance bouncing back as with my debit card or constant parental monitoring of my purchases. With a little

training from a minimal wallet, however, withdrawing cash is the least of my concerns unless I am heading to a place that doesn't accept Visa.

### Everyday spending

While I spend money on movies, drink breaks and clothes, the problem is that there aren't always easy ways to tackle all of these with a short balance. Thankfully, most restaurants and cafes often carry stamp cards so that my tenth or so purchase is free. As far as clothing goes, the best sales, in my experience, happen online. I'm not big on apparel, but when there's a good deal on clothes, I make my purchases months ahead of a time in bulk to save on shipping and tax.

In most cases, the things that you have your eye on are cheaper somewhere else. It's just a matter of where you look. I'll admit that watching out for sales online isn't the most exciting, but I usually find specials

through online deal aggregators, such as *dealnews.com* and *slickdeals.net*. I find these to be extremely useful in avoiding retail prices on goods ranging from apparel to electronics. I bet there are only a handful of people in this school that knew there was a 30 percent cash-back sale on all purchases from eBay only three months ago; all it takes is a matter of knowing where to look.

Discounts are always the hardest to find on movies. I've come to fully believe that Blockbuster is overpriced and that theaters have raised ticket prices too high. One alternative to Blockbuster rentals is that red box on the side of Safeways and Luckys. They look a little

suspicious next to the lottery machines, but they keep up on new releases and only cost a buck. As for theaters, the best solution I've encountered is buying bulk tickets at Costco. It's not necessarily the most conventional method, but it's the cheapest I've seen so far,

running at about five tickets for \$40.

### Gift cards without boundaries

After the holidays, I notice that I usually end up with a stack of gift cards to stores at which I wouldn't normally shop. Thanks to *cardavenue.com*, gift card recipients can buy, sell and trade their unwanted store credits with others.

Buying gift cards for cheaper than they are actually worth may sound untrustworthy, but, rest assured, the process is painless. A perk to this service, called *Cardassure*, guarantees participants with the promised amount of money written in the description. While there are services like *cardavenue.com* on eBay, there always seems to be a better deal when buying an iTunes gift card for half its actual worth.

While the "wants" aren't always going to be easy to buy on a budget revolving around the "needs," remember that there's usually a backdoor to retail prices, no matter what you're looking to purchase. It may sound like a lot of work, but it beats staying at home with an empty wallet. ♦

### The basis of money issues comes from a lack of self-control in the midst of impulse purchases.

## TOGATALKS

### HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SAVING MONEY RECENTLY?

It's a matter of finding happiness in the small things. I don't use money unless I have to.



senior Paul Stavropolous

My mom is an extreme coupon collector.



junior Amy Wang

I put my money in a bank account instead of spending it.



freshman Paras Unadkat

## TOPTEN

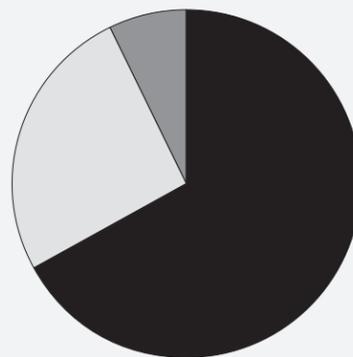
### WAYS TO SAVE MONEY

- 10 Dress up as a hobo to get free food at the soup kitchen.
- 9 Give people used giftcards...that \$0.87 can go a long way
- 8 Buy your beef at Taco Bell or PetCo. They're basically the same thing.
- 7 Do your shopping at Mervyn's. Oh wait. It's too late. They are already bankrupt.
- 6 Take extra napkins from fast food restaurants to use for extra toilet paper.
- 5 Train your dog to beg for food so you don't have to buy it.
- 4 Use the squeegee at the gas station to wash your entire car.
- 3 Eat out at a five-star restaurant; the food is bound to cost just as much as the school's.
- 2 Get your haircuts from the same place as Russell Brand. They have to be cheap.
- 1 Use freshmen to push your car; they count as an alternative energy source, right?

—by Karthik Annaamalai

## FALCONPOLL | Spending Money

Approximately how much do you spend in a regular week?



- 67% \$0 to \$40
- 26% \$31 to \$70
- 7% \$70+

The Falcon randomly polled 100 students on January 21 and 22, 2009.

# Senior's attempt to curb spending for a week results in newfound appreciation

by Tim Tsai

Senior Farid Jiandani found an innovative way to make money his freshman year. He was invited to the birthday party of a Saratoga High alumnus and at the party they played poker. Jiandani won \$76 at this party and has been earning money this way ever since.

Because Jiandani has had a source of income, he has chosen to spend money on things he finds worthwhile.

With poker and summer jobs, Jiandani has been able to justify his own spending. This past summer, he spent \$8,000 of his own money on various enhancements on his 2003 E320 Mercedes.

"I researched the modifications for four months before finding the right price, mechanics and parts," said Jiandani. "I am very satisfied with the results as well as the price tag."

Furthermore, Jiandani often eats out, especially at Chipotle, sometimes as often as twice a week.

"I love Chipotle," said Jiandani. "To me, a Chipotle burrito is completely worth the price and drive."

Because of the economic downturn, however, *The Falcon* challenged Jiandani to strictly budget his expenses to \$15-20 for a week.

"I didn't think this task would be too difficult," said Jiandani. "If I am capable of earning the money I spend, I was sure that I could budget it as well."

Most of Jiandani's expenditures are on gas and food. Thus, he came up with a plan to pack his own lunches and drive his grandparent's Toyota Avalon for long distances.

Jiandani woke up earlier than usual and packed a peanut butter and jelly

sandwich lunch every day for school. For the first two days of the week, Jiandani stayed on campus during lunch. His friends were amused by his sudden change.

"I was completely shocked to see Farid staying on campus," said senior Kushal Shah. "He was always the one who wanted to go off-campus for lunch."

"I had to work hard to convince my friends to stay on campus with me," said Jiandani. "Eventually, I just ended up going off campus with them eating my packed lunch."

During the course of the week, Jiandani had to make frequent trips to Palo Alto and San Francisco. For his trips, he drove the Avalon, which gets 28 miles per gallon, compared to the 19 of his Mercedes.

"The speakers weren't quite as loud, but it was still an enjoyable drive," said Jiandani.

In the end, he couldn't resist some desires. During a trip to Blue Rock Shoot at the end of the week, Jiandani saw a pie. He didn't have the cash to pay for it, so he convinced a friend to purchase it for him.

"While money was still being spent, technically I was still saving mine," said Jiandani, justifying the decision. "And it was pumpkin pie."

Ultimately, Jiandani felt living on a budget was a truly rewarding experience. Even though, Jiandani could not stick to his budget throughout the week, he still learned from a week of closely watching his expenses.

"I'm glad I did this," said Jiandani. "My wallet feels fatter even though I played less poker, and I'm sure my parents appreciated this." ♦

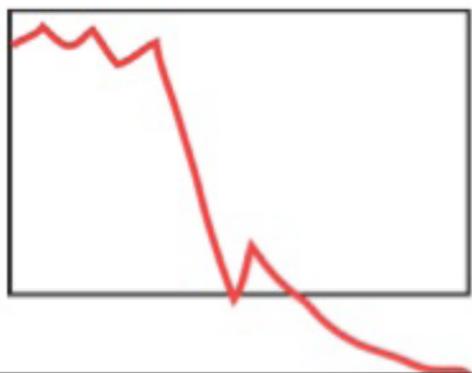


Mabel Hsu

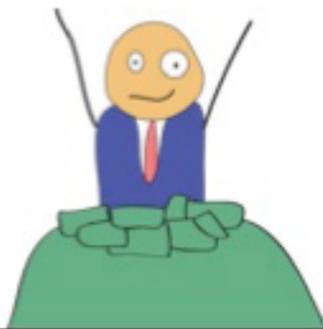
Senior Farid Jiandani prepares to drive home in his Mercedes Benz. For the week that he had to save money, Jiandani only drove his Benz for short distances.

## Designer Recession | by Alex Song

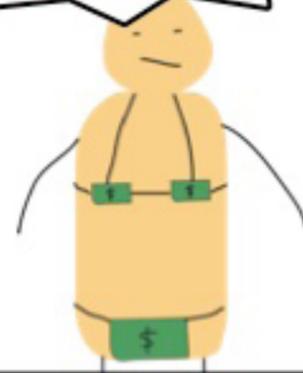
WITH THE RECENT ECONOMIC DOWNTURN...



WEALTHY PEOPLE HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY SEXY



INTRODUCING THE SPRING LINE OF "MONEY BIKINIS!"

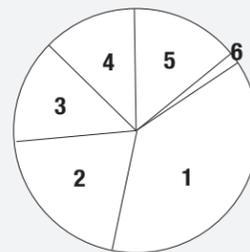


# Top 5 SHS Hangouts

With a lack of city hangouts, students find their own areas on campus to chill with friends.

## FALCONPOLL | Top Hangouts

Where is your favorite place to hangout at SHS?



1. 38% Parking Lot
2. 21% Library
3. 15% J-Room
4. 13% Music Quad
5. 13% Other
6. 1% Little Theater

The Falcon polled 166 randomly selected students on Jan. 9.

## Parking lot offers refuge for upperclassmen



Seniors Michael Guercio, Casey Farmer, and Alex Wokas hang out in the front parking lot during lunch.

by Tim Rollinson

The lunch bell rings and the empty parking lot suddenly fills with hungry and eager students. Some leave to rest at home or eat at a nearby restaurant, while others remain in their cars eating and talking with friends.

During lunchtime, tutorial, after school and before school the parking lot is in complete pandemonium but it also works as a place for students to escape the stress of school.

The parking lot is a hangout for stu-

dents who want to get away from the chaos of the quad but don't want to be crunched for time or spending money going out to lunch.

"I always hang out in the parking lot after school," said senior Michael Huang. "It gives me a time to meet up with my friends before we all head home."

Flocks of seniors and juniors can be found lounging around this location before, during and after school. It acts as the transition point between SHS and the world around it.

Seniors Matthew and Daniel Shepherd hang out in the parking lot for another reason. The twins arrive 10 to 15 minutes early to school and spend that time listening to mellow music.

"It is really nice to just sit in the car and relax before school starts," said Daniel. "It is a great way to mentally prepare yourself for the day."

Many students also use their cars as a kind of locker.

"I hold books in my car so I don't have to lug them around all day," said junior Cameron Tooyserkani.

Other students use their cars as study areas. Tutorial and lunch provide plenty of time to study, and a car is a comfortable and quiet place to do that.

Being close to the school means a quick trip to the car during lunch, tutorial or even break is convenient.

"If my friends and I can't decide where to go to lunch, we often eat in our cars, which is less stressful than leaving campus and it's more peaceful than the quad," said Huang. "Plus, most of us are broke, so we save money too." ♦

Uma Sambasivam



Melody Zhang

Seniors Felicia Tang, Sacha Maniar, Nyssa Spector and Tejas Mulye study in the library.

## Library draws in dozens

by Lauren Kuan and Pia Mishra

Many people spend their tutorials cramming for their AP Physics or Spanish test next period in the library. Contrary to the common belief that libraries are for "dorks," the school's library continues to attract dozens of students during lunches, free periods, tutorials and seventh period.

Approximately 40 students come in during lunch to study or converse quietly. During tutorial, about 70 students come in to work on group projects, write speeches or just hang out with friends.

"I usually go in when I need a quiet place to study. It's a good place to concentrate," said sophomore Alex Chan. "It's also warm, which is a plus."

Students go to the library during seventh period as well to wait for their parents to come pick them up before school events and practices.

"I come in [to the library] to get a head start on homework before my mom picks me up," says freshman Ruchie

Bhardwaj.

Head librarian Kevin Heyman said that he has also noticed an increase in students as the weather gets colder.

"You can definitely see the difference in the number of students in here from earlier in the year to now when it's a little bit chillier," said Heyman.

However, due to changes in the library's policy that came into permanent effect last spring, many students have stopped going to the library as frequently.

The changes included a "no talking rule" and a "no sitting on the floor rule" as well as other rules that did not fare very well with all the students.

"My friends and I always used to go sit in the library but now because of the changes, we don't go in as often," said junior Lauren McInnis.

Despite the restrictions, many students still continue to go to the library which continues to offer the same warm and quiet atmosphere. Whether it's a place to study, to read or to just stay warm, the library is definitely a great choice. ♦

# 2

# J-room gives couches, warmth to students

by Sophia Cooper

Perfectly comfy leather couches, 33 iMac computers and a really good heater draw students into the comfort of room 303 to hang out with their friends.

Room 303, commonly known as the Journalism Room or the J-Room, is headquarters to the two Journalism 1 classes, two Falcon staffs, and The Talisman yearbook staff. With over 170 students in the program, the J-Room is a rush of activity during lunch and tutorials.

"I try to keep [the journalism room] as open as possible, without affecting the work that students are doing," said journalism adviser Mike Tyler. "[But] if I do see it start to cut into the journalism work, I'll have to shoo some people away. I try not to."

On average, the J-Room houses ap-

proximately 30 students during tutorials and lunches, but on cold days, its capacity can reach over 70, according to Tyler.

"Sometimes it can get too crowded and I have to boot [non-journalism students] out of here because it's hard for the journalism students to get [their work] done," said Tyler.

Students are drawn to the J-Room because of its spacious area, large tables and access to computers. Although all SHS students are welcome in the Journalism Room, Tyler does have to exercise crowd control when the students get too rowdy and loud.

"I have a little bit more sympathy [for students] on

days when it's really cold out," said Tyler. "Being a California school, [Saratoga High] does not have all that many great indoor spaces for students, so this is one of the better places on campus to hang

out and be warm and spread your lunch out on a table."

Although the J-Room has not been closed off to non-journalism students so far this year, the previous school year had some behavioral issues that resulted in some students being kicked out of the room.

"The problem last year was that I had some kids who were on the couches and literally blocking access to people moving in the room, and I kind of had to get them out of here," said Tyler. "So far this year it's been ok."

Tyler enjoys having students hang out in the J-Room during lunch and tutorials, whether they are in the journalism program or not.

"I think one of the things that is central to a program like this is that it's a friendly, positive atmosphere and if students want to be here, so much the better," said Tyler. "I think it helps the efforts of everybody and makes it a popular thing to do by having that kind of an atmosphere." ♦

# 3



Melody Zhang

Juniors Paxton Barco and Ben Clement work hard on their publications in the J-room.

# Music quad antics create harmonious memories

by Lauren Kuan  
and Pia Mishra

The marching band is well-known on campus, achieving statewide recognition as one of the top in the state and as one of the most popular extracurricular activities on campus. Some of the more than 200 students spend their out-of-school hours inside the band room and around the music quad.

Students from several groups come together and gather in the music quad, which is located next to the band room.

As a result of a recent Eagle Scout project by senior Kevin Shimizu, there are more benches around the band quad, attracting more visitors.

"I hang out there because it is right next to the band room and it is in a really convenient spot, especially after band class," said senior Vicky Chang.

Around 25 students routinely crowd around the tables and meet each other

after school to share stories and gossip.

The music quad is a meeting place where anyone can gather and do whatever they want.

Students even play different games in the quad, like baseball and tag.

"One time we even played baseball in that area, and someone tripped on the uneven ground and broke her leg," said senior Elizabeth Cheng. "Another time the guys were playing this game where they tried to jump on top of each other and one of them even ended up breaking their collar bone."

The seniors in band have gained a stronger bond through the many lunches spent together.

"The band quad is just some place where we can always go to talk and hang out with each other," said senior Lewis Chen. "We've had many memories and good times with each other there." ♦

# 4



Melody Zhang

Juniors Dana Burley and Kanchi Kerjiwal, both in the band, hang out in the band room.

# Drama family finds home in Little Theater

by Girish Swaminath

Loud laughs echo across the quad; students chase after each other while playing random games; others randomly fight with fake swords and props used for their upcoming plays.

The Little Theater is the only place on campus where SHS students can observe such atypical scenes on campus.

The Theater houses a drama family that is extremely open with each other and welcoming to visitors. Because drama people share similarities in personality and perspective, they find comfort in an environment where they can appreciate one another and just be themselves. They do not need to be something they are not, as they are "home."

"The drama room is a nice place to be loud and rambunctious," said junior Patrick Hawks. "We are naturally loud and it's a really small, close group. It's especially fun hanging out during lunch and after school."

To drama students, the Little Theater is a haven where they can socialize and take a deep breath of fresh

air from the stress and pressures of academics. In addition, it provides an ideal environment for students of the "loud" personality type to express their "inner-selves" without anxiety or hesitation. The Little Theater gives drama students a sense of satisfaction and pride they might not possess anywhere else on campus.

"Without the comfort of each other and the Little Theater, all of us would be lost in this school," said junior Hannah Brown. "It is a completely different atmosphere from the rest of the school. Just being in the Little Theater is conducive to theatrical behavior."

People who do not belong to the social circle of the Little Theater often possess a stereotype that theater kids are "intense, loud people who love the center of attention." However, drama students seem to accept the existence of such stereotypes and are not bothered by any labels and generalizations people might place on them.

"We don't really mind the stereotyping," said Brown. "We are who we are. Stereotypes don't take that away from us." ♦



Drama students eat lunch in the Little Theater.

# 5

Uma Sambasivam

facebook®

Do you know who's been looking at your profile? Facebook is the No. 1 social networking site with users of all ages, but how safe are you?

facebook.com

facebook

Home Profile Friends Inbox

Settings

Logout

Search



Account Settings

Privacy Settings

Application Settings



## Saratoga Falcon

Wall

Info

Photos

Boxes



## Basic Information

Networks: Saratoga High

## Personal Information

## About Me: Preston hoax fools local users

by Annie Lee  
and Kavya Nagarajan

Have you heard of Ashley Preston? For those of you who haven't figured it out, Ashley Preston is not a real person but instead a social experiment conducted by the Falcon staff.

She had a fake profile on Facebook that stated that she was supposedly starting school here for second semester after moving to California from Hialeah, Fla.

Preston was made up by members of the Falcon staff in early December to simulate how easily students readily distribute access to their profiles through Facebook.

After only one week of being on Facebook, Preston became "friends" with about 150 students from SHS and several students from other schools, such as Los Gatos.

Not only was she "friends" with these people, but she gained access to all of their photos, videos, friends and profile information, which often includes AOL instant messaging screen names, cell phone numbers and sometimes even addresses.

Several of these "friends" even conversed with Preston through wall-to-wall conversation, messaging, or live online chatting. Some voluntarily offered her their phone numbers, and others invited her to hang out. Many of these students were unaware that they were simply chatting with Falcon staff members whom they see at school every day, not

a blonde senior from Florida.

A few students challenged her authenticity, but this did not trigger other students to take action and block Preston from their profiles. In fact, almost all of Preston's friends still remained friends with her even after some openly questioned her validity.

As word spread, some students at school even talked about how confident they were that she was a fake. Despite all that, they

put you in a position where you could be compromised," said school psychologist Mark Atkinson.

This is the danger of online predators. If it is so simple for members of the Falcon to come up with a fake name and false information and find a random picture to mislead students, it stands to reason anyone could do the same thing.

No one had seen Preston, or talked to her in person, but most people didn't hesitate to let her access their profiles. Most students said they accepted her request only because they noticed that they had a lot of friends in common. However, this still means users are leaving all their personal information open to someone they may not even know.

Not only did Preston friend people, but several people also requested to friend her. Within just hours of the creation of her profile, almost 15 people had added Ashley, and not all of them were from Saratoga High. For the next two weeks, she continually received around the same number of requests each day.

"I think some students see Facebook as a competition and when your goal is to use Facebook to look more popular than you are then I think by definition that's a problem," said Atkinson.

Ashley Preston is not the first fake person to enter the Saratoga High network, and unfortunately, she probably won't be the last. Parents and others hope that other fakes will be just as harmless. ♦



"Ashley Preston's" profile picture used to trick other users into believing she was really an incoming student.

failed to cut Preston out of their lives by removing her from their friends. Preston still has access to these students' profiles even though she might have been a stalker or a pedophile.

This degree of trust causes many school officials to worry. They suggest that students take a more cautious approach to socializing online.

"If you're putting images and photos, your own content could

## Information

## Change name to save face

by Saniha Shankar  
and Brian Tsai

If you're looking for senior Sandeep Chandrasekhar on Facebook, try typing in his new name Deep Deep Mustafa Muhammad.

A rumor that colleges will use information on Facebook profiles to make admissions decisions has caused several seniors to change their Facebook names to make it harder for colleges to find them.

"[At first], I thought the rumor was true because my friends told me," said senior Kathy Koo, who changed her Facebook name to Kassie Ko. "Even though it might not be true, I just did it just in case."

Students have hidden or removed content on their profiles that could give inaccurate or negative impressions. Others have taken steps to change their privacy settings. However, some fear colleges will have administrator access privileges to private profiles. Like others, Koo believes this would infringe on students' right to privacy.

"It's your own privacy, and they shouldn't be snooping around and judging people before they accept you or not," said Koo.

According to assistant principal Brian Safine, private profiles aren't accessible by colleges. In addition, few colleges include random checks of Facebook profiles in their process of reviewing applications.

"They might look at a student's online activity if there is something that stands out on their application," said Safine. "[Or] follow up to spot-check if it's something students claim that they've done that [colleges] can access online."

The colleges that do make Facebook checks are private schools with bigger budgets to devote to college admissions. According to an article in the Wall Street Journal by John Hechinger, a survey showed that 10 percent of admissions officers from 500 top colleges looked on Facebook and other social networking sites to evaluate students.

In the end, many seniors see Facebook checking as unnecessary.

"I definitely think colleges are wasting their time looking on Facebook, because most of the time, they can't even find people," said Tejas Mulye, a.k.a. Thajus Moolyay. "I think everyone should change their names so colleges will cease using this stupid tactic." ♦

Applications

31

Online Friends (19)

News Feed

Status Updates

Photos

Posted Items

Live Feed

Showing All Stories.

 Bob Fields wants chicken soup, cough drops and a vacation from everything.  
6:15pm - Comment

 Shannon Galvin and Jordan Waite wrote a new note: Despite privacy concerns, students feel site is secure.  
Mon 8:57pm - Comment

## Despite privacy concerns, students feel site is secure

by Shannon Galvin  
and Jordan Waite

It was a normal session on Facebook for junior Sam Pack. After commenting on her friends' pictures, writing on others' walls, updating her status and playing the various games, Pack was about to log off when a 30-year-old man she has never met proceeded to "lick" her through the "SuperPoke" application.

"That was a creepy experience," said Pack. "I immediately blocked him and quit that application."

It's not uncommon for students to have similar encounters with strangers on this widely used network, which has over 120 million users worldwide. Privacy settings such as only allowing Facebook friends to view a person's profile and pictures are available, although many students neglect to change settings from the default.

Even with stricter settings, there are still holes in security. Users can send a message to people without being friends

with them, and even though the student networks are supposed to be secure, it isn't hard for adults to fake their age and be a part of the same network as high school students.

With everything from full names, personal photos, phone numbers and e-mail addresses in their profiles, Facebook makes it easy for online predators to target those who aren't careful about protecting their information.

### To Friend or Not to Friend

Students expressed mixed views on who to accept as friends on the website.

If someone adds junior Joe Stevens on Facebook he will accept, whether he knows them or not. He feels that it's mean to reject people that he knows, though he also recently accepted a stranger from Egypt, regardless of the fact Stevens did not know how the person found him.

Sophomore Grace Kim agrees with the free friending.

"I usually accept someone," said Kim.

"One time, I decided to ask them who they were, and it turns out she was the person sitting in front of me in one of my classes, so I didn't want to ask anymore. If they want to be my friend, I won't stop them."

Freshman Penelope Burgess, on the other hand, is wary of the requests from strangers.

"I'm not sure if they're actually from Saratoga or not and if I don't know who they are, why should I pretend they're my 'Facebook friend'?" said Burgess.

### Adults on Facebook

In addition to the millions of teenagers who have an account, adults commonly immerse themselves in the online networks. One such adult at Saratoga High is Spanish teacher Gina Rodriguez. Though she has a profile, she never asks students to be Facebook friends and only accepts requests of the students she knows well.

"I use Facebook for my own friends more than my students," said Rodriguez. "But I say happy birthday to my students that

I'm friends with on Facebook."

Many parents have also jumped onto the Facebook bandwagon.

Stevens said that he's adjusting to his dad being online. "Truthfully, he just wanted to be able to see all the pictures of me and my sisters that were posted on Facebook," said Stevens. "As much as I can understand that, I really am rather uncomfortable with him seeing the conversations that I have with friends and particularly some of the applications."

### Facebook found safe

After questioning 30 students, it was found that on a scale of one to ten, with ten being completely safe and one being dangerous, Facebook was about an eight.

"It's much safer than MySpace," said freshman Natalie Berg, "since something you write on your profile doesn't show up in a Google search. There are definitely some creepers, but you just have to be safe." ♦



### My Wall-to-Wall with Emily

[Back to My Profile](#)

Write something...

 Give a Gift to Emily

Post



Emily wrote

at 11:09pm on January 14th, 2009

## Think that paper bag can fit over my head?

Columnist admits to indulging in possibly shameful but common practice of "Facebook stalking"



Emily Chen

I'm not a creeper

It has been 92 minutes since I sat down in a burst of conviction to write this article. This burst of conviction has proved to be very short-lived, however, as in these 92 minutes I have gotten exactly these two sentences done. What have I been doing?

Friends who know me well might guess that I was just wasting time as usual on the Internet. Well, such friends would be almost correct, except I don't consider it to be "wasting time." Seeing as how this article is about Facebook stalking, I really just spent a solid hour and 32 minutes conducting intensive research on my topic.

But let's clarify the definition of "Facebook stalking" lest anybody think that I am a real stalker (Because I'm not. I swear.) According to Urbandictionary.com, Facebook stalking is "to ascertain information about an individual

through the Internet networking site Facebook." Actually, I just chose that definition because it was the least creepy sounding out of all the other definitions that used sinister words like "monitor" and "anonymous," which just carry such an unfriendly air about them, don't you think?

Facebook stalking is something that, at least in my case, is really quite innocent. It is bred out of boredom and innocuous curiosity, and never out of an actual desire to "stalk" anybody.

True, it does satisfy my inner-voyeur to an extent, but I can hardly be faulted for being interested in the much more interesting lives of other people. I doubt anyone out there would not have their interest piqued by those hearts (or breaking hearts as the case may often be) that show up on your newsfeed.

It always starts harmlessly enough, with me checking my newsfeed and seeing that six of my friends have recently written on the wall of, let's say, Ashley Preston. Who is this Ashley Preston, I wonder, and why do six of my friends know her?

So I meander on over to her profile, and browse her photo albums and wall posts, just to satisfy my curiosity that my friends aren't having secret parties

without me. Yet I notice that there are some hostile remarks made on several of her pictures, and who doesn't like some good virtual passive-aggressive Facebook commenting? So I click on the hostile commenter's profile, and thus sets off the chain of so-called "stalking" that ends up eating up way too much of my time. It is procrastination at its finest, but that is all it is.

So yes, I just admitted to spending significant amounts of time browsing profiles of people I may or may not have actually ever spoken to. But before you jump to any conclusions and think I'm a creeper, you might as well admit it: You've probably done it too. Whether or not you know the person is irrelevant; reading three pages of even a close friend's wall-to-wall is still kind of sketchy. The point is, everybody does it.

If people truly are disturbed by the fact that random people can access their photo albums and wall posts, then it is up to these individuals to program their privacy settings accordingly.

Facebook has done an admirable job at ensuring that people can only access the profiles of others in their own network, and this is an effective internal block at protecting the privacy of its users. Ultimately it is the responsibility

of each individual to determine what is safe and appropriate for them, and make sure that they are filtering the people that they befriend anonymously on the internet.

For all my slightly shameful talk about how I do "stalk" others on Facebook, I am aware of the appropriate limits. I don't friend someone I've passed once in the hallway just to gain access to their profile, even if they go to my school and are considered part of my network, and I certainly don't accept friend requests from people that I don't know.

Just because the requester goes to a neighboring school like Lynbrook doesn't mean I want that person to be able to access my private information, and so I exercise my ability to block her from doing so. It's just a matter of common sense.

Since I don't really know what the point of this personal column was besides to shamelessly expose myself and my embarrassing methods of procrastination to the entire school, I'll leave you with this thought: Next time you're Facebook stalking someone (because I know you do) and feel a bit shady about it, remember, you're not alone. Now we both feel a bit better. ♦

# Pham's hero collection grows to an epic size

by Mira Chaykin

Admit it. At least one time in your life you have succumbed to a superhero fantasy. You know, the ones where you can fly, or don a much too tight super suit, or just happen to get bitten by a radioactive spider. Most of us tuck these fantasies away, dismayed at the eventual realization that we are mere mortals with no real means of achieving our desired super status. Sophomore Jeremy Pham, however, has a different way of coming to terms with his lack of superhuman ability.

Pham is an avid collector of superhero memorabilia, including a sizable comic book collection.

His fascination with superheroes began when he was 10 with a set of Spider-Man comic books he received from his friend's dad. After that he was hooked.

"My tiny pile in the corner of my room slowly grew to a mass of comics about 4 x 4 feet. And by now, it's taking up multiple boxes in my garage," said Pham.

It would be a misrepresentation to claim Pham only collects to fill the void left by his childhood dreams, as he draws crucial life lessons from the comics.

Spider-Man, for example, is a favorite of Pham's because Spider-Man is independent, rather than relying on a partner, and the comic book focused more on the believable human Peter Parker rather than the fantastical Spider-man, rendering him more relatable.

"Unlike other comic books, Spider-Man's issues focus on how his Spider-Man ego conflicts with Peter Parker's interests. It taught me that personal sacrifice was needed for greater good," said Pham.

Despite his more sophisticated motives for collecting, he still marvels at the incredible powers of those he reads

about, especially the villainous Hulk.

"His superhuman strength, speed, stamina and durability are second to none," said Pham. "His regenerative abilities even surpass those of Wolverine."

Besides being drawn in to the thrilling adventures of these heroes (and villains), which Pham says is a "good escape from this boring and stressful world," there are other perks to comic book collecting.

"At the last San Diego Comic Book Convention, I saw Samuel L. Jackson, and at the Con before that, I got Jessica Alba's signature," he said.

In addition to picking up autographs, Pham also picks up merchandise at these conventions. He hopes to find a life-size replica of Ultimate Thor's hammer at next year's convention.

Maybe by then he'll also happen to stumble into a vat of toxic waste and star in his own comic book. Jeremy Pham by day, superhero by night. Hey, anything's possible. ♦

# If only Clark Kent were on the Falcon newspaper staff



Sophia Cooper

## Story of my life

Four shirts, three key chains, two sets of matching PJs, two posters: \$120.

A sweatshirt, a bath set, a loofa, a towel set, a CD of all songs Superman, a bag: \$100.

A backpack, a costume, a lunch box, a book, one action figure, various tattoos and stickers: \$75.

My obsession with the world's first superhero: priceless.

It all started in seventh grade when my friend and I started watching

"Smallville,"

which tells the story of a teenage Clark

Kent before he embraces his destiny and becomes the Superman that we know and love. That one episode snowballed into a complete obsession over the next four years.

The summer before eighth grade, I went to see the movie "Superman Returns" with my friend. Then, we saw it a second time. Then, I convinced my sister to see it, bringing my total theater views to three. Clark Kent's,

played by Brandon Routh, washboard abs gave me a reason to see the Superman logo over and over again. His perfect ringlet of jet black hair, which miraculously stayed in the middle of his forehead while fighting off the evil Lex Luthor, drew me back to the movie theater, much to the chagrin of my parents. Besides all this eye candy, Superman's dedication to saving the world, despite the possible consequences for himself, strikes a chord for a model Girl Scout like myself.

Freshman year, I had a Superman birthday party. My mom and I searched every Diddams, Party City and Party America store in the south bay to find enough Superman items to make it a party celebrating an obsession. We found Superman invitations, thank you's, plates, cups, napkins, bags, party favors and games. Of course, it was all with the Batman and Spiderman party items for boys five and under.

At my super-mature-for-my-age party, we played "pin the super symbol on Superman" and had a Superman-shaped cake. I also received many gifts following along with the theme. My friend made me a copy of the "Superman Returns" soundtrack, I got a poster from the movie and two of my friends made a Superman card that told of my future life with Superman and our children SuperGirl and Superman, Jr.

Even now, my eyes automatically search for Superman stuff whenever I go shopping. It's a compulsion to say "Superman!" and beg my mom to buy random items for me, including a hairbrush, CD player and boxers.

So if you ever see something Superman related, don't hesitate to buy it for me. It'll help take me up, up, and away with my future love. ♦

# Men In Tights

THECRITIC

## 'Watchmen' graphic novel soars as psychological thriller

by Brian Kim

Minutes prior to screenings of last year's epic box-office hit "The Dark Knight," audiences viewed a peculiar trailer that marked an affiliation to DC Comics. This film, however, didn't revolve around world-renowned superheroes like Superman or Batman. Director Zach Snyder of 2006's "300" presents a motion picture adaptation of a bestselling comic book series from the '80s called "Watchmen." The series continuously outsells new releases to this day and poses as a challenge for the film's March release.

Writer Alan Moore's "Watchmen" comic presents a tale far more compelling than his previous film-adapted works, "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen" and "V for Vendetta." Readers follow the lives of outlawed vigilantes pinpointed in a series of murders taking place in an alternate history. In a sense, Moore rewrote history as if it included caped crusaders, which presents a far more compelling story than one would expect from a classic comic book.

The story is highly acclaimed for its

subtle yet powerful interpretation of its main characters, which sets it apart from the typical Saturday-morning superhero series. Moore writes his main has-been heroes to have radically different views on society, each molded to give readers a range from optimistic to ruthless perspectives on a single corrupt world. He brings out the psychological and emotional backdrop to lives of heroes that

have seen the best and the worst, while keeping a modest portion of roof-jumping and crime-fighting.

"Watchmen" is the only graphic novel to make TIME Magazine's ALL-TIME Novels list and has been noted as a heavy influence on the writers of ABC's Emmy-winning thriller "Lost." As much as it is praised, however, the instant classic may not be suitable for all audiences. It contains mildly graphic imagery but does so in a respectable manner. The graphic accompaniment brings chills down the spine at times, but the book remains as something readers cannot put down until they reach closure toward the end of each of the 12 chapters.

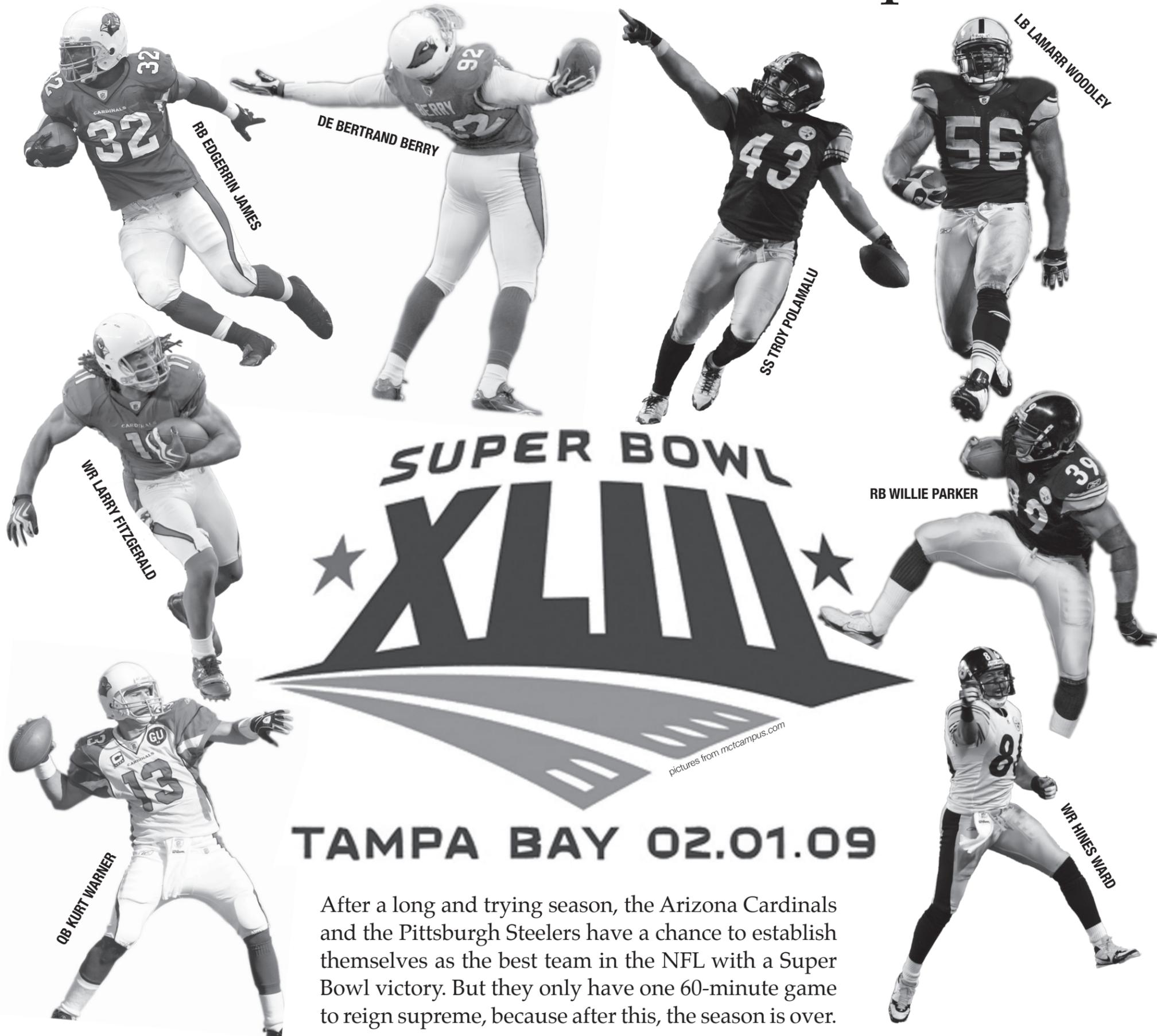
At the end of each section is a supplemental reading, highly relevant to the comic. Al-

though they can seem dragging, the short passages, excerpts from fictional documents by Moore, contribute to the full effect of the story and are worth paying attention to in the long run.

Redefining graphic novels, Moore has taken on the role of an artist as opposed to an author, as he draws out a striking portrait of a society hanging onto a collapsing world by its fingertips. "Watchmen" tends to be as abstract but induces a take on the humanity that even serious literature doesn't often explore.

From the intricately drawn setting to the minor personality glitches in some of the characters, every inch of detail has its own meaningful contribution to the story. As the novel unfolds into its riveting and shocking climax, readers will miss some of its underlying themes. "Watchmen" is a story that is more captivating the second time around. Not only as a graphic novel with a different edge, but as a 20-year-old unmatched classic, "Watchmen" is a highly worthwhile read, especially before the release of its anticipated motion picture version in March. No doubt fans will line up to see a movie that will be hard for any director to justly adapt. ♦





**TAMPA BAY 02.01.09**

After a long and trying season, the Arizona Cardinals and the Pittsburgh Steelers have a chance to establish themselves as the best team in the NFL with a Super Bowl victory. But they only have one 60-minute game to reign supreme, because after this, the season is over.

ARIZONA CARDINALS

PITTSBURGH STEELERS

The NFC champion Arizona is the clear underdog. To win their first Super Bowl in franchise history, they need to accomplish two things:

**Protect quarterback Kurt Warner**

Three Cardinal receivers gained over 1,000 yards during the regular season, leading the league's second-best passing offense. Gaining yards through the air will be a huge part of the Cardinals' strategy because the team was also ranked last in rushing. The Cardinals need to protect Warner long enough for him to get rid of the ball, especially in the face of blitzes the Steelers will send.

Warner does have experience under pressure, however, as he led the St. Louis Rams to a Super Bowl victory in 1999. He needs to get the ball into the hands of his star receiver Larry Fitzgerald, who has already broken Jerry Rice's record for most receiving yards in a single post season and has scored five touchdowns in the last three games. Fitzgerald has the size, the speed and the talent to make him a tough receiver to cover. If the Cardinals can get him the ball, he can take care of the rest.

**Defense needs to step up**

The Cardinals have shut down three top running backs in their last

three games: Michael Turner of the Atlanta Falcons, DeAngelo Williams of the Carolina Panthers and Brian Westbrook of the Philadelphia Eagles. Arizona will face another challenge in the Steelers' Willie Parker, but if the defense can limit Pittsburgh's ground game, they can capitalize on quarterback Ben Roethlisberger's mistakes.

The AFC champion Steelers are under even more pressure because they are expected to win. To ensure this happens, they need to:

**Force turnovers**

The Pittsburgh defense, ranked first in the NFL, is known for shutting teams down, but the Cardinals have

been playing exceptionally well the past couple of games, so that might be easier said than done. The Steelers need to force turnovers, something they struggled with all season, to keep the Arizona offense off the field. Safety Troy Polamalu did return an interception for a touchdown in the Steelers' last game, but the Ravens' rookie quarterback Joe Flacco is far less skilled than the veteran Warner, and Arizona running backs Edgerrin James and Tim Hightower are also unlikely to cough up the football.

**Establish the passing game**

The only way for the Steelers to take advantage of Arizona's weak run defense is to set up their air attack first. Roethlisberger has to be on the same page as his favorite receiver, Hines Ward, with whom he has connected 81 times this season for over 1,000 yards. If healthy, Ward should outplay rookie cornerback Dominique Rogers-Cromartie, who is fast but prone to getting beat deep. This will allow Parker to step it up as he did in his first playoff game, when he rushed for 150 yards and two touchdowns against the San Diego Chargers.

**Prediction:** Cardinals: 27, Steelers: 21

**TOP FIVE**

**BEST THINGS ABOUT THE SUPER BOWL**

**FOR GUYS...**

- 5 **Watching your team win.**  
You'll get paid if you bet on the Cardinals.
- 4 **Showing off how good cheerleaders look on your HD TV.**
- 3 **The Patriots aren't playing.**  
It's too bad no Tom Brady means supermodel Gisele Bundchen, won't be in the stands.
- 2 **Playing your own competitive game at halftime.**  
Whoever wins gets the couch.
- 1 **The hilarious commercials.**  
Don't wet your pants...

**FOR GIRLS...**

- 5 **All the hot players.**  
Huge guys in spandex... enough said.
- 4 **Guys like guys more...?**  
It's the only time guys are distracted more by other guys than hot girls.
- 3 **Seeing guys dressed up in jerseys and face paint.**  
Halloween was in October, guys.
- 2 **Pretending to follow the game.**  
How many points is a home run again?
- 1 **Food: \$170; HD TV: \$3,500; face paint: \$9.99**  
Watching your boyfriend cry when his team loses: priceless

—by Synthia Ling

—by Karthik Annaamalai

# Lady Falcons lose starting point guard to ACL injury



Kevin Rollinson

Senior point guard Ashley Cole dribbles down the court on a fast break. Cole took over the position when starter senior Sheeva Hamidieh suffered from a torn ACL.

by Uma Sambasivam

Last year, senior forward Alex Sclavos tore her ACL and couldn't play during CCS. This year senior point guard Sheeva Hamidieh suffered the same injury during a practice just before winter break and had surgery on Jan. 27. Hamidieh will not be able to play any sports for at least the next six to eight months.

"It sucks that not playing anymore was not a choice; it was made for me," said Hamidieh. "Being on the sideline is hard, but I will always be there to support my teammates. When I am off the court, I feel almost helpless knowing I can't do anything."

When Hamidieh fell, she had been leading the Lady Falcons (9-9) in points, shooting percentage, assists and steals. Coach Mike Davey predicted she would be "very hard to replace." Senior shooting guard Ashley Cole has since practiced at the point guard position and has taken Hamidieh's place.

With Cole in the unfamiliar leadership role, Saratoga headed to Wilcox on Jan. 23 to challenge the defending CCS champions. The defense held the Chargers to just 38 points, but the Falcons shot poorly and managed just 26 points of their own. Still, Davey called the game "encouraging," saying the girls "put out a tremendous effort."

When Saratoga faced Lynbrook on Jan. 16, the girls took a five-point lead into the final period, but the Vikings—with the help

of some controversial calls by the referees—came storming back with a 51-44 victory.

Davey said the referees' calls were no excuse for the loss.

"When we play on the road, we can't expect the referee to make all the calls," said Davey. "We could have executed better to make sure we came out on top."

Despite the heart-breaking defeat, Cole still expressed optimism, pointing out the team's strength during the first three periods of the game.

"We played hard and, for the most part, well even though we lost," said Cole. "Our defense fell apart in the fourth quarter. [The Vikings] started hitting their shots that quarter."

On Jan. 14, Palo Alto visited Saratoga. The Lady Falcons jumped out to a 15-9 lead in the first quarter and never looked back, winning the game 59-48 in front of the home crowd. Shooting guards sophomore Hanna Nielson and senior Katie Gasik each scored in double digits to lead the team.

The girls' first league victory came in dominating fashion, as the Falcons handily beat Milpitas 54-14 on Jan. 7. Two juniors, forward Uma Sambasivam and shooting guard Shannon Fung, paced the team with 16 and 10 points, respectively.

The Lady Falcons started league play on Jan. 6 at home against Gunn, the conference favorite after an undefeated preseason. The Titans controlled both offense and defense

## BOYS' SOCCER

# Looking on the bright side

Despite a 1-7 start to what seemed to be a promising season, the Falcons are refusing to give up hope.

by Lyka Sethi  
and Tim Tsai

After a 3-1 home win against Prospect to kick-off the season, the Falcons endured four straight one-goal losses, going 2-1 against Yerba Buena and Homestead, and 1-0 versus Menlo and Watsonville.

What once looked to be a promising season has now faded with a 1-7 record as of January 21.

"The losses got really frustrating because we kept making simple mistakes that would cost us the games," said senior captain Hoffman Hibbett. "The team didn't communicate well even though we kept working at trying to play together during practice."

Yet, despite its abysmal record and recent poor form, the team refuses to lose hope.

"We had high hopes for this season, but we're just lacking results," said senior captain Chris Chung. "We're going to try to turn the season around by staying positive and continuing to work hard."

After a disappointing 3-1 loss at Lynbrook and a 4-2 loss at home against Los Altos, the team tried a new formation at Mountain View, but the change led to confusion during the game and a disastrous 8-1 loss.

"We tried putting new people in different positions," said Hibbett. "And by the time we realized our game plan wasn't working, we were already down multiple goals."

The team tried to work through the formation change, but the Spartans continued to add on to their big lead and overwhelmed the Falcons.

"We hadn't practiced with the new formation enough," said Chung. "And we used it against a team that was playing much better than we were."

In order to bounce back from the crushing defeat, the team has set lower goals for the remainder of the season.

"We're going to try to get back to .500 and win the rest of our league games," said Chung. "Right now, we're just focusing on communicating better and finishing our shots." ♦

**"We had high hopes for this season, but we're just lacking results. We're going to try to turn the season around by staying positive and continuing to work hard."**

—senior team captain Chris Chung

## WRESTLING



Jordan Waite

Senior Jasper Loren pins his opponent at the Sierra Nevada Tournament in Reno, NV.

# As captain, Loren keeps team fighting for wins

by Guy Quanrud  
and Holden Sparacino

Senior Jasper Loren, an intimidating figure and one of the most dominant forces in the league, steps onto the mat.

Within a couple moments he reads his opponent, finds an opening and brings him down with a "whack." Just a split-second later he pins his foe and is announced the winner.

For the captain of the wrestling team, winning sometimes seems too easy.

"I have a love for the sport and I know I had to be top notch," said Loren. "I guess it's my determination that drives me to perform so well."

Last year he placed first in leagues then sixth in CCS, and as of Jan. 22, he has a 17-1 record this season.

Loren's hard work has made him a clear leader for his teammates.

"He really motivates us to do better," said junior Alan Yen. "He tries his hardest every day."

Loren said that he tries to stay disciplined so he can perform at his highest level; he eats right and follows a strict workout routine in

order to get stronger.

Not only does Loren force himself to train to the best of his ability, but he also tries to keep his teammates in line, every once in a while assigning pushups and "giving a hard time" to wrestlers who don't take practices seriously.

As for the future, Loren hopes to wrestle in college. He hopes to make the state competition this year and could be recruited or considered for a scholarship if he does.

Although Loren continues to thrive on the mat, the rest of the wrestlers have been struggling, falling to an 0-2 league record after their loss at Milpitas on Jan. 15.

Loren, Yen and senior Richard Macklin all recorded victories against the Trojans, but it was not enough to turn the match in the Falcons' favor.

These losses, Loren believes, could be attributed to the fact that this is Saratoga's first year in the upper division.

"We are in an upper league, so every match is going to be hard. Some people don't understand how much harder it is going to be this year," said Loren. "We need to work harder to do better."

Due to printing deadlines, *The Falcon* was not able to report on the wrestling team's matches against Fremont and Los Gatos high schools on Jan. 28 and 29, respectively. ♦



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# Who ever said girls can't love football?



Lauren Kuan

## The Lauren Kuanicles

Most people think that only boys could possibly love football because it is such a physical sport. They are always huddled together in the parking lot tailgating before a game or preparing to watch their favorite football team battle on Sunday. But, even though I am a girl, I am passionate about football, too.

When I was little, my older brother forced me to play and watch football with him, and as I grew older I began to like the game more and more. The excitement of scoring a touchdown or watching a running back sprint through the defense drew me to the sport.

The reason I love football is the adrenaline rush I get when a team makes a big play or tries to convert on fourth down. I never get bored because I never know what will happen next.

The game is fast and brutal; my favorite thing about it is the physicality. For some reason, I enjoy watching the scrawny refs trying to break up the rough fights, and the players tackle each other so hard their helmets fly off.

In football, the players have different skill levels, so the players are not matched up evenly. This leads to turnovers and game-changing plays. For example, one of the plays I remember most was Pittsburgh safety Troy Polamalu's interception during the playoffs. It was a miracle catch, caught on his fingertips, leading to a huge turnover against San Diego. Moments like these keep me going back to watch more football. The different plays and coaching styles of each team are also unique.

Another thing that draws me to football is discussing memorable players (Arizona receiver Larry Fitzgerald) or the latest football game with other fans, but it is difficult to talk to my girl

friends about football since they don't follow it. I always have to talk to guys who are usually more than happy to discuss it.

I especially love college football because the players put more heart into their games. Students don't get paid to join the team, so the only motivation they have to play is their passion. I find college football more intriguing than the NFL because there are fewer games and more stunning upsets in the NCAA. I eat, breathe and sleep USC football. I always know what is going on and I wish I could be in the stadium for all their games.

My obsession started a couple years back through my mom, a USC alumna. Oh, and my dad went there too, and two cousins, and my uncle, and two aunts, and even my grandpa went to school at USC! Anyways, my mom began to watch the games and she imbued in me a love for the team. All kinds of great players have emerged from USC—running back Reggie Bush (my favorite player of all time), quarterbacks Carson Palmer and Matt Cassel and, of course, Polamalu.

There were dramatic moments like the "Bush Push," when Bush pushed his quarterback Matt Leinart past the goal line during the last three seconds of the game so that the Trojans could narrowly beat Notre Dame, and funny moments like the time my mom decided it would be a great idea to arrive five hours before the Stanford game. They have all been fantastic memories that I had while watching USC play.

I follow the team devotedly and always get excited when the season is coming up. I go to games whenever I get a chance, and I have stuck with the Trojans through all the bumps in the road, whether a loss to Texas and quarterback Vince Young in the Rose Bowl or a humiliating defeat at the hands of Stanford, the worst team in the Pac 10.

See, I obviously know a lot about football, maybe even more than some of you guys reading this. So I'll keep fighting the stereotype that girls can't like football and keep my fingers crossed that my Trojans will "fight on." ♦

## GIRLS' SOCCER

# Anzalone to lead varsity in wake of coach's exit

by Aditi Jayaraman  
and Tim Rollinson

After leading the Lady Falcons to a 3-1-1 record in their first five league games, varsity girls' soccer head coach Tulin Mendoza was replaced by history teacher Kim Anzalone for the remainder of the season.

Anzalone was previously the girls' JV coach. Mendoza and the administration agreed it wasn't right that his busy schedule prevented him from fully committing to the team.

"Mendoza was spread a little too thin and he wasn't giving us his full attention," said senior captain Katie Marsh.

After Anzalone took over the varsity coaching duties on Jan. 14, math teacher Kristen Hamilton was appointed as the new JV coach and Eric Leonard, a team parent, was chosen as an assistant coach for varsity. The team, which has had four different coaches in the past four years, is beginning to feel its weaknesses lie in the inconsistency of its leaders.

"I think the transition between coaches has been pretty hard to deal with," said senior captain Hana Pruzansky. "The girls

are beginning to have trust issues with our coaches now because they're continuously changing, and I feel like this might be the root cause that's weakening the soccer program."

Anzalone's first game at her new position ended in a 2-2 tie with Milpitas on Jan. 14. Goals were scored by freshman Kari Clark and junior Sam Li. Anzalone was pleasantly surprised by the effort given by the team.

"I think the girls are playing better now that they are getting to know each other better," said Anzalone. "It also helps that they have more consistent positions."

Despite her initial concerns about the loss of Mendoza, Marsh expressed optimism about Anzalone's hiring.

"It's definitely a change having [Anzalone] as a coach," said Marsh. "She's really positive, and she listens to us more."

Anzalone said that the focus is going to shift from conditioning to ball work and chemistry.

The team was scheduled to play first place Gunn on Jan. 23, but due to printing deadlines, *The Falcon* was not able to cover the game. ♦

## BOYS' BASKETBALL



Uma Sambasivam

Senior center Christian Biederman drives to the hoop at Mountain View on Jan. 20.

# Falcons score 'big win' in nail-biter against LG

by Vijay Menon

Junior guard Daniel Chou hit six three-pointers and senior guard Jamie Turley anchored a stout defensive performance as the Falcons (8-7 overall, 1-1 league) knocked off rival Los Gatos 66-61 in the team's "biggest win of the year" on Jan. 2.

"The guys came out with a lot of energy and played very well," said coach Trevor Naas. "We shot the ball well from the three-point line and our post players dominated the glass."

Chou's 18 points led the team and the offensive effort while senior guard Ryan Pak and senior centers Alvin Hsia and Christian Biederman also contributed.

"I felt great," said Chou. "After I knocked down my first three, I could feel the spirit of the team rising."

After beating Los Gatos, the Falcons extended their win streak to four games with a 59-45 triumph at Milpitas on Jan. 6 before sustaining a 63-55 home loss to Homestead on Jan. 13. Naas welcomed the victories but said that the team still

has room to improve on the defensive end over the next couple of weeks.

"We need to continue to improve our ball pressure on defense and our ability to box out and rebound," said Naas.

The team also needs to play to its strengths on offense.

"So far, we have improved our transition offense and that has been a strength for us," said Naas. "The guys have bought into running their lanes and pushing the ball to get good looks in transition."

Naas said the team is playing its "best basketball of the season" right now as it pushes to win league.

"Winning league has been our goal since the beginning of the season," said Naas. "We know it is going to be hard and we are going to have to continue to improve, but if we make a commitment to playing with energy and effort on the defensive end, we've got as good a shot as anyone else."

Saratoga will play Santa Clara and Monta Vista before visiting Homestead for a re-match on Feb. 3. ♦

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**buzzworthy****Teachers around the school tie the knot**

Marriage hysteria has beset Saratoga High with one teacher getting married and another getting engaged. During winter break, economics teacher Todd Dwyer tied the knot with his girlfriend Lupita Chavez. Over in the science department, chemistry teacher Kathy Chang accepted a proposal from famed pianist and longtime boyfriend, Jon Nakamatsu.



With 50 people in attendance, including a few faculty members such as anatomy teacher Amy Obenour, Dwyer married Chavez at his sister's house in Los Gatos on Jan. 2. Dwyer couldn't have wished for anything more.

"It's always great when you find that special someone that you get along with personally and professionally, someone who just makes you better as a person," said Dwyer. "You become partners and teammates. You just become a team. Finding one's soulmate is like hitting the lottery — only better."

As for Chang, she feels very lucky to be marrying Nakamatsu. He fooled her with a fake break-up ending with a diamond ring and a proposal for marriage.

"We've been friends for 16 years, and started dating four years ago," said Chang. "He's been really good to me."

They will be getting married in Half Moon Bay in July.

**Friends and families travel to Tahoe together**

At the beginning of winter break more than 100 students and parents traveled to the top of Northstar Ski Resort to start their snowy adventure in the mountains.

The three-day trip started on the morning of Dec. 21 when the group left Saratoga in two full buses to the Sierras. They stayed at the casino resort Silver Legacy in Reno for two nights and took the buses to Northstar each morning to ski or snowboard.

At the end of each day, the buses took everyone back to the hotel, but the fun didn't stop. During the time they weren't snowboarding, they went to the Midway arcade at Circus Circus and watched circus acts or played fun games.

"The punching game is my favorite," said sophomore Brian Chiou. "It feels cool when you have the highest score out of all your friends."

Every year, the same giant group of friends and family, which now includes alumni, goes on this snow trip during the December and February breaks. The trip has been a tradition since 2004 when it was started by a few Redwood students' parents. This year, the snowy excursion was organized by parent Catherine Zhang and mother of a SHS alum, Huelling Su.

—by Guy Quanrud and Jordan Waite

**FALCON FREEZE FRAME**

photos by Melody Zhang



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: 'TIS THE SEASON** SEVERAL CLASSES AND STUDENTS SPONSORED LESS FORTUNATE CHILDRENS' CHRISTMAS LISTS. **LUB DUB** JUNIORS NIKKI FARSIO AND SONIA SIGANPORIA MEASURE THEIR PULSES DURING A BIOLOGY LAB ON DEC. 11. **COFFEE AND CRAM** LILLIAN CHEN FOCUSES WHILE SHE STUDIES FOR HER FINALS AT THE LINK EVENT ON JAN. 9. **WOOF WOOF** MRIDULA NADAMUNI SEWS A PIECE OF CLOTH TOGETHER TO MAKE A DOGGY BED FOR THE HUMANE SOCIETY AT AN ANNUAL ACTIVITY FOR PAWS CLUB HELD DEC. 11. **YUMMY** FRESHMAN KAZUSHI YAMAGATA SPREADS KETCHUP ON HIS BURGER AS HE PICKS UP HIS RED ROBIN'S ORDER ON DEC. 19 FROM THE LEADERSHIP CLASS.

**TOPTEN****WAYS TO KICK OFF SECOND SEMESTER**

- 10 Start collecting information for your cheat sheet to study for the spring final.
- 9 Convince your counselor that you are an aspiring Olympic curler to get into Independent P.E.
- 8 Finish the homework that was due in 2008.
- 7 Kidnap the mailman and burn the mail so your parents don't see your semester grades.
- 6 After the mailman escapes, change your password on Aeries.
- 5 Seniors, don't start slacking off. How's that for an ASB joke of the day?
- 4 Vow to yourself that you will get better grades this semester, then give up after your first math test.
- 3 Drive to Mexico during the four-day weekend after finals to improve your Spanish. If you are
- 2 Stock up on jumbo-sized diapers so you don't have to go to the bathroom during the Super Bowl; even the commercials are good.
- 1 Practice for Valentine's Day; it takes skill to get those store-bought brownies to look homemade.

—by Annie Lee and Tim Rollinson

**Columnist expresses her extreme knack for snacks**

**Annie Lee**

**In My Own Little World**

**M**y mom often jokes with me and asks, "Annie, do you eat to live, or live to eat?" I already know the answer, but do you? Step into my time machine and I'll show you.

Every night before I go to bed, I enjoy myself a little "Midnight snack." I'm sorry, that was a typo. "Midnight feast." When I first started this habit, my mom would try to discourage me from eating so late into the night because eating late supposedly makes you gain weight. But this didn't stop me. I continued snacking on cereal and Cup Noodles until finally my mom gave in. She now prepares food for my fourth meal of the day on a regular basis.

The ironic thing is that most of the time I'm not even hungry when I eat at midnight. I just miss the feeling of having food

in my mouth, so I go searching for a snack in my refrigerator.

Just a few months ago, we had our annual Code Red drill. We were told a couple days before to be prepared for it. Most of my class came prepared with laptops, GameBoys, pillows, etc. But leave it up to me to be the exception. I waltzed into the room with a Safeway bag overflowing with a family size bag of chips, a bag of sour tape and assortment candies and a large bottle of Starbucks' mocha frappuccino. In fact, I was so excited for my period of feasting that the night before, I barely got a wink of sleep.

**My passing period oasis**

Flash back to my freshman year when my locker was my sanctuary. On the top shelf (yes, I organize my locker), I had my binders and textbooks. This was normal for most students, but the bottom shelf was the secret ingredient to my heavenly locker. I had chips, candy, granola bars, gum, iced tea and bottles of water. But there's more! In my P.E. locker, I stored approximately 10 energy bars just in case I had sudden hunger pangs at practice.

**Middle school cravings**

During our Redwood fire drills, they would usher all the students onto the field and have us wait. When the blaring alarms turned on during class, most students walked quickly to the door eager to spend time missing class work. I, on the other hand, took the few seconds before to rush out the door as an opportunity. I immediately snuck snacks into my pocket.

Even when the fire drills were not planned and I didn't know if it was a real emergency or just a false alarm, I would repeat the same procedure. Looking back on it, I realize how reassuring it is to know that when posed with the threat of a disaster, my initial reaction is to eat food (if I remember correctly, they call this the food or flight response).

Ever since I was a child, food has been my security blanket. Whether it was my backpack, my duffel bag, my pocket, my hands or my mouth there was always food in it.

So to answer my mom's question, I definitely live to eat, and next time you're in class and you hear the sound of munching, it's probably me. ♦