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CHECKMATE WITHIN REACH



SENIOR CHARLES SUN, CAPTAIN OF THE DECORATED CHESS TEAM, DELIBERATES HIS NEXT MOVE.

Jordan Waite

Little-known chess team aims for sixth straight state championship in April

by David Eng and Anna Shen

Question: What is the school's most dominant team or program? Among the many possible answers: the girls' tennis team, which won the CCS title this year and took second in the Northern California Tournament; the boys' swimming team, which set a national relay record last spring, or the marching band, which ranks as one of the top in the state in its division. These are all good guesses. But another, lesser known group has set the standard for excellence on campus: the chess team, winner of five straight state championships. Meeting once a week during Thursday

lunches in teacher and adviser P.J. Yim's room, the chess team certainly does not get as much attention as its stellar performance deserves. "We've learned that chess doesn't get a lot of attention," said sophomore chess member Evan Ye. "Of course, more attention is nice but not critical in terms of success." Most students aren't aware of the chess team's remarkable streak or the history of the chess team. "I honestly didn't know much about the chess team," said junior Walter Hsiang, "but I believe that the chess team deserves a lot more recognition, since it is so dominate and the game of chess requires a lot more cognitive skills than

most people think." However, winning is not everything. Not only is the chess team a dominant powerhouse in the state, but also it is a team of "close-knit" friends including seniors Charles Sun, Rolland Wu; junior Amol Aggarwal; sophomores Brian Wai, Ye, Sankash Shankar; and freshman Kevin Garbe. "Because we spend so much time with each other during tournaments, we know each other pretty well," said team captain Sun. "I think these experiences really bring the team together because they are memories that will stay with us for the rest of our lives." see SHS CHESS, p. 5

VALEDICTORIAN, SALUTATORIAN ANNOUNCED

by Albert Gu and Karen Yang

After four years of taking rigorous classes and balancing schoolwork with other activities, senior Ashwin Siripurapu was recently named the valedictorian for the class of 2010, and Malika Kumar was named salutatorian.

"I think it represents, being at Saratoga, a tremendous amount of hard work to have the top two GPAs in the senior class," said principal Jeff Anderson. "It's pretty impressive given all the great students we have. To be the top two, they've obviously put in a lot of time and dedication to do that well."



Siripurapu

Siripurapu and Kumar both had GPAs of over 4.5. Both have taken numerous AP and honors courses over the years.



Kumar

"I haven't really taken [AP and honor classes] with the goal of getting a really high GPA; that really isn't the reason that I take the classes," said Kumar. "Any classes I've taken is just because I'm interested in them, and I want to take a level of a class that will really challenge myself."

The seniors were thrilled to hear the news.

They said being crowned valedictorian and salutatorian was not their only incentive for working hard in school.

"Honestly, I couldn't believe it at first," said Siripurapu. "Secretly, I had been hoping for this, but I didn't want to get my hopes up. Even now, I still have to replay that conversation in my mind to convince myself that, yes, I really am the valedictorian."

Kumar said, "I'm still in shock. I totally wasn't expecting it, so it came as a really big surprise, but I'm really happy to know that my efforts paid off."

In addition to keeping up their

see VALEDICTORIAN, p. 4

MAP invites Rhode Scholars back to SHS

by Anna Shen

Few—or perhaps no other—high schools in the country can boast of having had four graduates go on to become Rhodes Scholars in the past decade. As a way of learning from these graduates' experiences, the Media Arts Program (MAP) will be hosting a panel discussion with them on April 8 in the McAfee Center. Through this event, MAP hopes to not only provide the community with an exciting and motivating event but also raise

money and awareness for the MAP. It will be the first of a series of events hosted by the program. "I just hope that the public can come out," said English teacher and MAP coordinator Kerry Mohnike. "The community can see what's going on in the MAP program to raise awareness about the kind of work we're doing in the MAP program." Rhodes Scholars Ankur Luthra (Class of 1999) from UC Berkeley, Betsy Masiello (Class of 1999) from Wellesley, Chelsea Purvis (Class of 2001) from Yale Univer-

sity, where she is attending law school, and Henry Barmerier (Class of 2006) from Princeton University will all be available to talk during this event. Barmerier and Purvis will be live via webstream from their homes, while Luthra and Masiello will be at the McAfee in person. Luthra, who attended Berkeley, Oxford and Harvard, worked as a program manager at Microsoft, and vice president of Summit Partners and is currently working as the associate at

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NEWS BRIEFS



Bombay in the Bay pushed to May

Unlike previous years, Bombay in the Bay, the Indian Cultural Awareness Club's (ICAC) annual show will be pushed back to May 1.

The date was changed because the McAfee Center was accidentally double booked in March for the intended date of Bombay in the Bay. The ICAC officers also felt that the show could be better if they had more time to prepare for the show.

At least 10 acts will be performing, including several dance numbers, acapella singers and various instrumental pieces.

Senior Hashim Hyder, who will be performing at the event for the first time, is looking forward to participating in the show.

The open quad dance and dinner, which is after the show, will be moved to Foothill Elementary School this year because the quad will be in use for drama club activities.

ICAC is expecting a wide turn out due to the soldout show over the past two years as more than 500 people are expected to come.

"I'm extremely nervous and excited for the show to happen because we have to match up to last year's amazing show," said senior co-president Divya Singh. "But, I'm going to try my hardest to make Bombay in the Bay worth remembering this year as well."

-by Grishma Athavale

Coffeehouse event to fund drama

The annual Coffeehouse fundraiser for the drama department will be held tomorrow at 7:30 p.m. in the Little Theatre.

"Coffeehouse is a variety show set in a cafe atmosphere," said senior Lauren Henderson, who is organizing the event. "It's a great, laid back, evening that showcases a lot of talent which will range from comedic to instrumental."

Tickets are \$5 and will be sold at the door. In addition, food and beverages will be sold at an additional price.

Henderson intends for the evening to be atypical from a standard sit-down concert, and plans to have some tables, bean bag chairs and couches.

"I'd say that the evening is going to be a really fun, laid-back thing," said Henderson. "I want it to feel like an actual coffeehouse."

Coffeehouse is unusual in the versatility of talents that are able to be showcased. Two weeks prior, Henderson held non-cut auditions in order to get a feel for how the night is going to turn out.

If all goes as planned, performances are to include a few comedy routines, a mock acapella group, numerous bunch of talented musicians, and even a mock game show "Newly-weds."

Henderson hopes that Coffeehouse will prove to be an entertaining evening for everyone who can make it.

"First off, it's a great way to support the drama department. Second, it's a great way to support fellow students," she said.

-by Mary Mykhaylova

Jazz Cabaret unites young and old

Young and old came together on campus for an evening of dancing and live music during the annual Jazz Cabaret held March 6 in the Large Gym.

The Redwood Middle School Jazz Band, SHS Jazz Bands I and II, the Los Gatos-Saratoga Big Band and the SHS Choir all performed while people from all throughout the Saratoga community swing-danced to the music.

"The music was beautiful and fun to dance to," said sophomore Alison Knysh. "I was happy with how it complemented the atmosphere of the night perfectly."

Every year parent and student volunteers dedicate hours of their time to make sure the night is perfect, and in the end attendees said it is all worth the effort.

The gym was transformed into a "jazz club," making people who attended forget that the large room is usually full of athletes.

From the dessert buffet and punch fountain to the decorated bathrooms and lighted canopy, parents created an ideal setting for an evening dedicated to celebrating the music of jazz.

"When we were on the stands getting ready to sing, the music had only started for about half an hour," said sophomore Rebecca Chen. "There was only one couple dancing on the dance floor and it was an elderly couple. It made me so happy to see them enjoying the music."

Jazz Cabaret is also a chance to introduce the jazz and swing genre to the music students and the younger generation. Students also got a taste of the early American culture that their parents and grandparents grew up listening and dancing to.

-by Serena Chan and Aanchal Mohan



Grishma Athavale

Junior Brandon Pierce takes home first place at Saratoga Idol, singing "Fireflies" by Ron Pope and "Apologize" by Timbaland on March 9 at the McAfee Center.

Toga Idol wows crowd

by Karthik Annaamalai

The crowd exploded into applause on March 9 in the McAfee Center as junior Brandon Pierce was crowned the winner of Saratoga Idol in front of an audience of over 150 students, friends and family.

Pierce stole the show as he sang "Apologize," originally sung by Timbaland, while playing the keyboard. Pierce's sweet melodic tone won the crowd's heart. Pierce is part of a screamo band "Revive the Lifeless," a type of music which is typically defined by screaming vocals, with a few of his friends.

"Winning Saratoga Idol was amazing," said Pierce. "Everyone sang really well and I congratulate them. I auditioned to have some fun but I never thought that I'd win the whole thing."

Seniors Lauren Henderson and Bryant Bae placed second and third.

"I usually don't get nervous, but Saratoga Idol was super

stressful," said Henderson. "If the music stops, it's dead silent with only me onstage."

To ease the audience into the show, juniors Jay Lee and David Mandell entertained the crowd as emcees by telling pun-filled jokes to provide transitions between performers.

Mandel and Lee introduced the judges: SHS grad Juliana Lustenader, last year's Saratoga Idol winner; Spencer Sands, who works with the school's technology; and cheer coach and math teacher Laressa Ridge. Lustenader served as a guest judge because history teacher Kim Anzalone could not attend the show.

Lustenader performed first, singing "Shame" by Aretha Franklin.

"I felt honored to be asked to come back to perform and to hand off the crown to the winner," said Lustenader. "It felt natural being on the McAfee stage because I performed on it for my entire high school career.

I'm definitely going to miss it."

The 12 singers, seniors Connor Clarke, Eric Sun and Erin McCroskey; juniors Taara Rangan, Esha Roy and Alana Rossip; sophomores Katie Cummins and Anika Jhalani; and freshman Sanjana Shukla, in addition to Pierce, Bae, and Henderson, performed their songs, each hoping to make it to the finals.

Roy sang "I Turn To You" by Christina Aguilera, astounding the crowd with her sweet voice. During intermission, the audience voted by placing their ticket in their favorite singer's box.

The crowd saw a variety of songs in intermission, from Iyaz's "Replay" by seniors Annie Lee, Jan Iyer, Eric Jung and sophomore Eric Wang to Keshia's "Tik Tok" by junior Jason Shiuan's a capella group, the Ritards.

"Being a part of an intermission act was really fun," said Jan, "and since Eric and I were in it last year, it was great to bring more people into the act with us." ♦

Budget deficit forces English to delay considering electives idea

by Vivian LeTran
and Emily Williams

As a result of the district's budget woes, the English department has decided to temporarily postpone the idea of adding an elective-based curriculum at the junior and senior levels.

The reason is that the department is still not sure of how many of its current 13 teachers will have jobs next year or the year after in order to take on this challenge.

"While it is something we would like to revisit, right now it definitely has to take a backseat," said English department chair Jason Friend. "Our biggest concern at the moment is that the budget crisis could result in a potentially

significant increase in English class sizes, which would make it much harder to give students the individualized help that they need."

The English department has been hit especially hard since in November when they surveyed students about possible English electives for juniors and seniors as an alternative for taking regular English classes.

Since then, the district has announced that the department will have larger English 9 class sizes for next year and some teachers may be laid off.

"I honestly don't know [how soon we can bring this back.] The budget situation looks pretty bleak for the foreseeable future," said Friend. "I'm not sure that we will be able to move forward

until a solution is found to stabilize the district's budget over the long term."

After the English department received a good response from a survey in November, the department was exploring the idea of starting the new curriculum the year after next.

Other challenges needing to be worked out include which classes would be offered, how honors credit would be awarded and who would teach the various classes.

Though the idea of English electives is not entirely dead, Friend said, "I feel very disappointed since we had put a substantial amount of work into it and had received such a positive response to the idea from students." ♦

Truths, myths explored at annual Challenge Day

100 STUDENTS COME TOGETHER TO SHARE THEIR PAST EXPERIENCES IN AN EMOTION-FILLED DAY

by Grishma Athavale and Anoop Galivanche

When junior Esha Roy received an enigmatic note in her third period AP U.S. History class regarding an event called Challenge Day, the only thing she knew about it was that she would miss an entire day of school if she chose to participate.

"That was basically my only incentive to go," Roy said.

Roy and 99 other students, many of whom entered under the same pretenses as Roy, soon discovered that Challenge Day would be something entirely different and more profound than a missed school day.

"I won't be forgetting it anytime soon," she said.

Twenty-five students each grade entered the gym to a round of high-fives and hugs from teacher chaperons.

"It was just a very welcoming environment," sophomore Megan Kao said. "I don't think anyone ever felt out of place."

Students participated in introduction activities with faculty and other students—effectively breaking out of their comfort zones, and establishing a

unique rapport with one another that Kao described as "the kind I thought only family members could have."

Many of these activities had both physical and emotional components, such as running around trying to hug as many people as possible and a Challenge Day version of musical chairs.

After a lunch period, things became more serious. Students were separated into groups of six with an adult facilitator and spent time talking about personal challenges and hidden qualities about themselves.

"A lot of people broke down because everyone was so nice," said Kao.

The students also participated in a "cross-the-line" activity where the Challenge Day hosts asked the students to cross the line if they had been affected by a particular experience such as teasing, family issues or personal problems.

A seemingly trivial game soon became an intensely emotional experience.

"It was really the crux of the day," said Roy.

The day culminated in an activity where a microphone was set-up and students were given the opportunity to discuss how social barriers at school affected their lives.



Kevin Hollinson

Senior Karen Lyu, junior David Mandell and French teacher Kim Bergkamp get ready to dance in the center of the Small Gym for a Challenge Day activity on March 10.

"Whether it was apologies, gratitude, or a personal anecdote, everyone learned from the experience," Kao said.

But the greatest task, both Kao and Roy acknowledged, is sustaining the impact of

Challenge Day.

"The repercussions of Challenge Day can't end here," said Roy. "The real challenge is continuing the love and kindness that the day brought out." ♦

Parents tackle budget crisis

by Rebecca Nguyen and Anna Shen

The Saratoga community expressed its concern over the district's budget crisis during the Feb. 25 town hall meeting at the SHS library. Several dozen parents, students and teachers all voiced their worries over the future quality of education at the school and proposed possible solutions, such as community donations and a parcel tax.

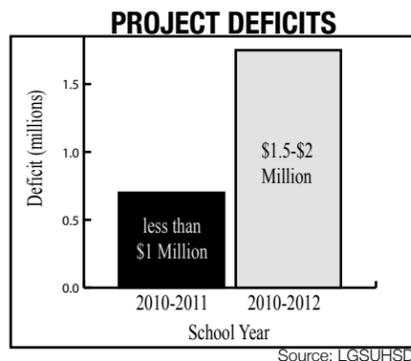
"I believe that the SHS parents, staff, and community will do whatever is necessary to uphold the quality of education at our school," said parent Shinku Sharma, who is also co-president of the PTSSO. "We all value good education for our kids and that has to continue."

The meeting was led by superintendent Cary Matsuoka, who explained the causes of the worst budget crisis in Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District's (LGSUHSD's) history.

Although the district's worries for the 2010-11 year are slowly decreasing because of a salary freeze, employee layoffs, larger class sizes and pulling money from an emergency fund, its worries for the 2011-12 year are increasing. If property values remain the same, the deficit is projected to be \$2 million for 2011-12, and the district would have to consider cutting more deeply into school programs.

This is the first time the district has seriously considered a parcel tax to support programs rather than facilities. This proposal could appear on the November 2010 ballot and would need a two-thirds majority to pass.

"A parcel tax spreads the solution over the whole community, and I think that's fair," said principal Jeff Anderson. "People might ask, 'If we don't have a kid going to school there, then why should we pay?' But a good school helps the whole community. People want to live and pay the extra money to live in a community where the schools are well-funded. So [a parcel tax] trickles down to being a very real value for someone in this community, even if they don't have



a kid in this school."

After the superintendent asked the community for suggestions, parents proposed fund-raising, local donations through a foundation and alternate energy sources.

Despite being in the worst budget crisis in LGSUHSD's history, many parents continue to remain optimistic and said they want to preserve the education at Saratoga and Los Gatos.

"Parents give their time and talent for the benefit of the school," said Sharma. "They do their best to support and will continue to do [so]."

However, the parents' major concerns lie mainly in maintaining a high-quality education for the students. According to Sharma, parents want to "keep cuts away from the classroom" by looking for "other areas that cuts can be made" that do not impact the classrooms.

The district is also trying to further parental involvement by recruiting parents to join a budget advisory committee, which is a committee solely created for the purpose of tackling the budget crisis.

"The main reaction [of the parents] was one of concern about what budget deficits might mean as far as their children's education and class size reduction," said Anderson. "I think there's a willingness on a part of the school community, meaning the parents, to tackle the problem and figure out a way to solve it; that is a very positive thing."

The most recent district board meeting was held in the SHS library at 6:30 p.m. on March 16. ♦

SCHOLARS | Return to SHS

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Ziff Brothers Investments. Masiello, who also attended MIT, currently works at Google. Barmeier, the newest member of SHS' elite group of Rhodes Scholars, plans to continue his majors in public food and agriculture policy at Oxford University for the next two years after graduating from Princeton this spring.

"I am, of course, thrilled to be a part of this discussion," said Barmeier. "As the 'rookie' of the group, I am most excited to hear what the other Rhodes Scholars have to say about their time at Oxford."

"I hope that the audience understands that there is no 'track' to becoming a Rhodes Scholar. That said, I think if there's one thing Rhodes Scholars have in common, it is passion and commitment to whatever it is that they do."

Funded by the estate of deceased South African businessman Cecil Rhodes, the Rhodes Scholarship brings 32 exceptional, devoted, passionate and moral students from across the world to Oxford University each year for post graduate studies.

The scholars will talk about everything from their experiences at SHS, their passions, what led them to apply for Rhodes Scholarship to what they are doing now in their future life.

Mohnike believes that the community will have a chance to get a better sense of what kind of students and people SHS produces for society.

"I hope that [the community] will see

not only the academic scholarship of these students but [also] that the students [who] are being accepted from SHS are being accepted because they're extremely passionate people and that they're 'do-ers,'" said Mohnike. "They care about what they're doing and they're good at what they do. I just hope that people will understand the caliber of [students] coming out of SHS in a different way."

Admission to this conference is free and open to the general public, but there will be a donation box that will be passed around the audience with the recommended donation being \$10. Proceeds will go to the funding of new technological equipment for MAP.

"What we're really trying to do is establish an activity or event that is an ongoing revenue string for the MAP program," said Mohnike. "Because funds are limited and we won't get any state funds, we're really trying to support the MAP program."

Hoping to get a large turnout, Mohnike believes that this panel discussion will be educational, motivating and inspiring for the community.

"This is a great opportunity for Saratoga to look back on their experiences to kind of get a sense of students who have come from this school in the last 10 years and to look at the kind of people that are being selected for these great honors," said Mohnike. "These people are just dedicated, passionate people; they're not just people who are interested in what their grades are." ♦

MEET THE SCHOLARS



Elizabeth Masiello class of 1999



Ankur Luthra class of 2000



Chelsea Purvis class of 2001



Henry Barmeier class of 2006

Dances over the decades: Prom bids once \$4

by Robin Liu
and Tiffany Tung

\$4 might not seem like a lot, but when used wisely, it can go a long way. Go back 45 years to 1965. Junior-Senior Prom bids were only \$4.

The theme? A Knight in May.

Besides the huge increase in cost to around \$90, today's junior and senior proms are held separately, unlike years ago.

Dances have come a long way since 1959. Marry 'n Sam booths were always present at Sadies for those who wanted to get "married", but from a time when sock hops and fox trots were popular, similarities to today's dances still existed.

Parent Amy Williams, who graduated from Saratoga in 1982, remembers the way dances were back in the day.

"Dances were popular social events. All types of people attended, from the nerds to the jocks to the druggies," said Williams, whose daughter, Emily, is a sophomore. "I think the majority attended, even if standing around and not dancing happened more times than not. We had [dances] in the gym and it was always very crowded and dark."

The misdemeanors that plague dances today were emerging during the 1980s.

"Teenagers will always find a way to misbehave and we were typical teenagers," said Williams. "We don't recall inappropriate dancing, but people would

make-out while slow dancing to 'Stairway to Heaven' and there was definitely some hiney holding, but no freak dancing."

Although there were dress code issues, they were much different 20 years ago.

"One [of my] friends remembered dressing up with her date as a stalker," said Williams. "They wore clothes but decorated themselves with inappropriate fake body parts and got kicked out."

Of course, dance styles have completely changed since the 80s, a time when school dances looked like a scene from the movie "The Breakfast Club." The robot was a

common dance, along with dorky dancing with a white man overbite. In addition, bands always supplied the music.

"We were terrible dancers, but we would always have fun," said Williams. "'Stairway to Heaven' by Led Zeppelin was a song that was

played at every dance."

Going into the '80s, a regular dance cost between \$3 to \$5, while the Senior Prom was between \$40 to \$50.

"Guys always wore tuxes with ruffles, mostly colorful ones [like] light blue burgundy to match the girls' dress," said Williams. "The boys always gave us a corsage—either on the wrist with elastic or pin on to the dress; we always got them a boutonniere."

Themed dances often led to funny costumes at a time when everyone dressed up. In 1982, the Mediterranean Fruitfly threatened the fruit industry in northern California.

Helicopters would occasionally fly all



One in an occasional series



courtesy of Amy Williams

Four Saratoga High alumni, Janis Stivers, Corey Kliman, and Amy and Dave Williams pose for a group photo at the Sadie Hawkins Dance during their senior year in 1982.

over the area in the middle of the night, making it sound like a war zone, and sprayed malathion (a toxic chemical) to eradicate the fruitfly. Williams and her eventual husband Dave, who also attended Saratoga, got creative for a Sadie Hawkins dance during their senior year with another couple.

"My husband and his friend wore gas masks, wings, and army fatigues, and my friend and I obtained the chemical make-up of malathion," said Williams. "[We] blew up balloons and put the chemical compounds on the balloons and attached them all over our bodies with the slogan 'Catch the Medfly.' Kooky but fun!" ♦

GPA | Top Students Announced

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grades, the two also participate in multiple extracurricular activities. Siripurapu is involved in the marching band, math club and Spanish club, while Kumar interns at two research labs at Stanford, participates in science fairs, plays the violin in the orchestra and volunteers at Good Samaritan Hospital. She was also involved in student government for three years.

"Somebody on the outside might think, they're just these little machines that go home and study all night long and don't do anything else," said Anderson, "but when you get to sit and talk with them and get to know them a little better, it says even more about Saratoga High School, that we have a lot of great students that also are pretty well rounded."

While earning the top GPA obviously shows his skills in all areas of learning, Siripurapu still enjoys some subjects more than others.

"Coming in from middle school, I had this idea that I was totally a math/

science person and that English was not my cup of tea," said Siripurapu. "But later, I realized that English classes were interesting, challenging and, yes, fun. Nevertheless, I remain passionately interested in the sciences." Although the valedictorian and salutatorian are both determined solely by GPA, assistant principal Brian Safine extremely appreciates their great personalities.

"That's what I really appreciate about this year's two honorees," said Safine. "They seem appreciative of what has come their way; they seem appreciative of the good teaching that's come their way; they seem appreciative of being recognized for their accomplishments. Those are the things that have struck me—their hard work and their humility, in both cases."

Said Kumar, "It's kind of one of those things where it could have been a margin of 0.00001, so I don't feel like I'm better than anyone else. It's nice to get the honor, but I think I'm still the same; I'm still a student, just one of those who has worked hard and is glad that her efforts paid off." ♦

Potential 'Fitness and Food' class in search of funding

by Cullan McChesney

As students make their schedule choices, incoming juniors and seniors have a new option for physical education next year called "Fitness and Food," but much doubt remains over whether the class will actually be offered.

Athletic director Peter Jordan hopes to teach this class next year; however, whether the class will be taught at all is still in question as Jordan will have to raise the funds himself through grants because of the district's budget deficit. The cost of a single class at the school is roughly \$25,000. He will also need to have a minimum of 25 students sign up.

"The goal is to offer an opportunity for kids to get fit and learn a little more about food and nutrition," said Jordan.

The class targets upperclassman who might have an unscheduled first period.

"I wanted to create the class for kids who would otherwise be home sleeping or watching TV," said Jordan.

The curriculum will involve intense physical activity and the opportunity to learn more about nutrition and eat a well-balanced breakfast on block days. According to Jordan, the course outline emphasizes "the basics of food preparation, food safety, nutritional influences on athletic and academic performance and psychological and sociological influences on food choices and body image."

The class will count for PE credits so seniors who have not yet fulfilled all of their PE requirements will be able to do so without taking a class with mostly freshmen.

"I know that it can be awkward for seniors to take a mostly freshman PE class," said Jordan. "I wanted to give them the opportunity to take a class with their own age group." ♦

Shakespearean expert visits classes, teaches close reading

by Lauren Kuan
and Karen Yang

During a visit to Suzanne Herzman and Natasha Ritchie's English 11 Honors classes on March 2, professor Michael Warren, a renowned Shakespeare text expert, aided students in examining Shakespeare's play "Hamlet."

Warren was invited to come and study the text carefully with students in an effort to show them how to decode Shakespearean language with the third-

and seventh-period classes. In the end, students said Warren's visit proved to be extremely helpful especially with the following reading quizzes.

Junior Chris Chung said, "I thought it was really cool to experience a college leveled professor come and speak to us; his level of intellect was so broad yet so simple. He used really simple techniques that people would most often overlook and forget in order to break down Shakespeare's words and analyze them."

The two English teachers had already known Warren prior to his visit. Herzman

had met him in 2002 when she went to Ashland, Oregon to attend the National Endowment for the Humanities Seminar for high school teachers. He was the text expert for her group and he has also spoken to her previous International Baccalaureate students when she taught in Santa Cruz.

"It is always a pleasure to be invited by friends to visit their classes to talk about Shakespeare with their students, and my visit to Saratoga was no exception," said Warren. "Talking about Shakespeare is always a delight."

Warren's next project is focusing on being the dramaturg for this summer's production of *Othello*. Although Herzman hoped that more students would have participated in the discussions, she agreed that the event was a success.

"I was hoping it would be more interactive, and I think professor Warren may have hoped it was a little more interactive," said Herzman, "but in talking to all my students afterward and looking at some of the work they've done afterward, I think they got the idea of close reading." ♦

NCL honors 17 girls for years of charity

by Sophia Cooper

Six years, 5,117 philanthropy hours and enough memories to fill a library of scrapbooks came to a close on March 6 as the Saratoga-Los Gatos Chapter of National Charity League (NCL) celebrated their annual Senior Recognition on March 6. This year's ceremony, themed "Pearls of Hope," honored 27 girls, 17 from Saratoga High, for their work in the group.

"At first I was worried that there would be too many people, but it worked out well," said senior Sammi Lotti. "The dancing was really fun and everyone looked beautiful."

The evening consisted of a program, dinner and dancing with more than 500 attendees. Each girl was presented while a previously recorded remembrance played and pictures from their youth, family and NCL years were shown. The girls wore all-white dresses, symbolizing the new beginning high school graduation brings and chose a song to play as they were met by their parents and given a medallion by their mothers to commemorate their time in NCL.

"I thought [the program] went really well.

All the girls' speeches were very nice and the moms looked like they were all going to cry with joy," said senior Natalie Riccomini.

The evening wrapped up with a recognition dance where the honorees and escorts did a Foxtrot to "Because you loved me" by Celine Dion. After a long six years of teas, meetings and cultural outings, many of the girls were sad to see their NCL experience end but were happy to have it end in such a perfect night.

"I'm sad that NCL is all over and I'll miss the girls, but I'll mostly miss the community service," said Lotti. "Because of NCL, I'm definitely going to get involved in community service in college because it makes me happy."

The Heritage Oaks Chapter of NCL also had their Senior Recognition on March 13.

In addition to Lotti and Riccomini, seniors Ally Doles, Madeline Rothenberg, Emily Baba, Maddy Renalds, Courtney Chaffin, Jordan Leonard, Nicala Pedicini, Anna Schroeder, Nicole Gagnola, Natalie Tkalcevic, Samantha Tsang, Melissa Archer, Sonja Brenner, Tanya Valluri and Sophia Cooper were all recognized. ♦



courtesy of Ally Doles

Senior Natalie Tkalcevic dance on March 6 at the Villa Regusa in Campbell.

CHESS | Going for 6th title

continued from page 1

Ye credits years of playing competitively for the players' high skill.

"Every member on the team is extremely gifted," said Sun. "The team that we have now is almost a direct result of the individual effort that each person has put into the game. We push each other to the best of our abilities. When we see that someone is improving, our innate competitive nature tells us to work harder."

While some members have private coaches for their training, others simply practice their chess skills by playing online.

"Chess is one of those things that practice helps a lot," said Ye. "Our chess team is composed of many science-oriented people because they like the analytical thinking chess requires. From that point on, it's practice and playing, practice and playing."

It also helps that all of them really love the centuries-old board game.

"My favorite part of chess is the exhilaration of a good game," said Sun. "I always get a good kick out of playing a

formidable opponent, who can seemingly read my thoughts and vice versa. The game is as much mental as it is psychological and I love intellectually tearing my opponents apart."

After winning the state championships five years in a row, the chess team is hoping to capture another victory on April 17-18 to extend its streak to a state-record sixth title in a row.

Standing between them and the state title is some tough competition, though, including a Monta Vista team that edged Saratoga 4-3 at the Santa Clara League Face-off in January. The team's primary rival, however, figures to be Mission San Jose, which also traditionally has had a strong chess program. Sun sees this year's state championships essentially as a face-off between Saratoga and Mission San Jose, although he acknowledges anything can happen.

"I wouldn't say that we are 'anticipating' another win," said Sun, "but we are going to do everything in our power to make sure we win. I'll be really bummed if the team lets down on a sixth consecutive title the year I graduate." ♦

Winterguard performs in winter conditions

by Vivien Lu
and Ashley Tang

Even pouring rain could not drown out the spirit of the winterguard at the WGI San Diego Power Regional at Rancho Bernardo High School on Feb. 27.

The competition featured 42 guards from several states around the country, including Arizona and North Carolina. Out of those groups, the JV guard placed second in the regional A division. Varsity guard placed ninth.

"I think we did well given the situation because it was pouring rain," music teacher Duane Otani said. "What was so hard was that we had to get the props from under the bus and take it about half a mile away to the competition site. We had to wait outside before we could go into the gym because other winterguards were inside performing."

Because of the excessive rain, their warm-up was interrupted.

"Everything and everyone was getting drenched," Otani said. "We couldn't finish our warm-ups and the whole day was kind of crazy." ♦

The weather conditions made a huge impact on the team.

"It was really rainy the entire day, and that took away time to prepare because everything was wet," junior Nina Mohanty said. "It was difficult to warm up with the rain because later on, the floor became completely wet along with other props. We spent most of our time wiping things with sweatshirts and rags. We didn't perform as well as we could have and I think the rain was partly to blame."

However, winning was not the guard's main reason for traveling nine hours by bus to San Diego to perform. The guard wanted to be educated from the experience of observing the skills and the techniques of other guard to improve themselves.

"I think it was a really educational experience for everyone," Otani said. "They had to learn how to work as a team and deal with the rain because we had to adjust our plans to accommodate to it. Plus, it was really beneficial because everyone got to see some of the best winterguards in the world competing at that regional; it was good for them to learn from watching other groups." ♦

THIEVERY AFFLICTING STUDENTS ON CAMPUS

ADMINISTRATORS MAKE EFFORTS TO INCREASE SECURITY

by Aanchal Mohan
and Emily Williams

Sports bags lay in piles outside the girls' locker room while students are in class, bikes sit on the bike racks unlocked and everywhere there are stories of a stolen iPods and cell phones.

Over the past few years theft has continued to a problem despite the school's reputation for being a safe place. The most popular items to steal are cell phones, iPods, wallets and backpacks, although this year, larger items such as instruments from the music department and sports equipment from the team room have also gone missing.

"We have people who see an opportunity to make an easy dollar by stealing something," said assistant principal Joe Bosco. "I get the reports that someone left their stuff out." Bosco said the problem is carelessness, not widespread break-ins.

Bosco encourages both staff and students to lock up all personal belongings. And in some cases he has even removed students' unlocked bikes from the bike rack to show them how easy they are to steal when unlocked.

"We are still very trustworthy, which is great, but don't trust people so much that you just leave stuff inviting people to take because people will take it," said Bosco. "If everyone locks up their stuff, it will supply me with more time to focus on getting the people who are doing it."

Despite his warnings, students continue to leave their things unlocked and personal items continue to be stolen. Sophomore Danielle Savage was one of many people to get her iPod stolen from her backpack in the locker room after school.

"For the first time of my high school career I decided not to leave my backpack locked in my locker so it was just sitting out underneath the bench in the locker room and [my iPod] was in my front pocket," said Savage. "[The thieves] took it out and they left the case and the headphones, which was

THE BIG IDEA

Theft at SHS

POPULAR STOLEN ITEMS: Cell phones, iPods, wallets, and backpacks

STAY SAFE: Use lockers, always keep an eye on valuables; don't use cheap locks, report any suspicious activity

WHAT'S NEXT: Administration to re-key locks, improve security camera system

really odd."

According to Bosco, these thefts are more concerning than the bigger ones from the school because the school can't replace a student's belongings. However, he is confident that the thieves will be caught and he already has some ideas of who may be behind these incidents. He believes that people may be coming in from the outside because of the openness of the campus.

"I think it's just people with time on their hands because maybe they're not working, and they're walking around looking for stuff," said Bosco. "I don't think it's the same person every time, but I have ideas about who did this and who did that. But as far as time and place, there is no pattern."

While in most cases the stolen items have been left out by the owners, there have been some more concerning cases such as the stolen PE items that were locked up inside a storage closet. The administration is concerned that someone other than the staff has had a key for some rooms.

For all of these problems the administration is looking into re-keying and possible improving their current system of security cameras around campus. They are also tightening security by rotating around and spot-checking areas where theft occurs more often than in the past.

"It's definitely something that we take very seriously and it concerns me whenever anything gets stolen," said Bosco. "It means we have dishonest people and I definitely want to get to them to educate them on the wrongs of what they are doing." ♦

Princess Project collects dresses for less fortunate

by Lauren Kuan
and Karen Yang

The Princess Project ended on March 9, collecting new or slightly used Prom dresses and accessories to donate to girls around the Bay Area who otherwise could not afford these pricey items. Ever since this program was started eight years ago by two graduates from Saratoga High, SHS has implemented this program every spring.

Alumni Laney Whitcanack and Kristi Smith Knutson, who both graduated in 1991, founded the Princess Program in 2002 after one girl told them that she could not afford a prom dress. They sent out an e-mail asking for used prom dresses for this girl, and after receiving an overwhelming number of donations, they established a non-profit organization to help less fortunate girls around the

Silicon Valley. The organization has since expanded to San Francisco, East Bay and San Diego.

In total, the leadership class collected approximately thirty dresses.

"After the positive responses we received last year, we decided to do the drive again this year," said senior Rebecca Amato, head of the leadership class. "It is great that this program exists."

Since many students own dresses that they will only wear once in their lives, these donations attribute to much of the success of the program.

"I think the Princess Project is great because it provides girls who have an extra dress or one that no longer fits the opportunity to give it to a girl for Prom," said Amato. "The second girl then gets the opportunity to wear a lovely dress to prom that she may otherwise not have been able to afford." ♦



Jordan Waite

Students donated around 30 dresses and accessories to provide girls around the Bay Area who cannot afford prom dresses.

Benefit hopes for larger turnout

by Nathan Kim

Last year, the Benefit Commission hosted the Benefit Fashion Show for the organization, Invisible Children. But last minute publicity endeavors resulted in few people coming to it.

This year, the commission hopes to garner a larger turnout by increasing campus publicity.

"We are hoping to expand the event this year," said senior Head Commissioner Paxton Barco. "The most important goal of the show is to spread awareness for a cause, and the best way to do so is by drawing in a large crowd from local communities."

A relatively small crowd of about 200 attendees last year was a disappointment, so the commission's goal is a group of at least 350 members of the community.

This year's Benefit Fashion Show, themed "A Midsummer Night's Dream," will take place in the quad at 7 p.m. on Saturday, April 24.

Benefit has been duly named because the group's mission is to raise money for an organization in need.

This year, the beneficiary is the Tim Griffith Memorial Foundation in San Jose, which provides support services for the underprivileged youth of San Jose.

All of the proceeds made during the event will be given to this organization. "One of the best parts about that show

is that every model is an SHS student," said Barco. "We have nearly 120 students participating. Also, this year, we organized a 'toddler' category, each little kid in the show is a child of an SHS teacher!"

Debuting in the toddler part of the Benefit Fashion Show are the children of math teachers Kelly Frangeih and Kristen Hamilton and Spanish teacher Sarah Voorhees. There's a lot of work put into preparing the event.

Stores must be called for clothing and local companies are called to donate to the raffle.

The commission has been working diligently to get stores that have not participated in the past, including stores such as Northface and True Religion Brand Jeans.

Numerous practices and fittings also occur right up to the night of the show. Publicity is a key factor in getting decorations for the show and finding hair and make-up artists among many other details.

The hair stylist for the event is Michael Anthony Salon, a company that just opened in downtown Saratoga.

Among the salon's clients are economics teacher Todd Dwyer, art teacher Steven McCue and statistics teacher Rema Dwyer.

"I really have learned a lot from putting together the show," said Barco. "It's really stressful but I know it will be so rewarding!" ♦

Advanced drama students learn to write screenplays

by Mary Mykhaylova

Setting aside their acting and directing endeavors of the past, advanced drama students are becoming playwrights this semester, taking a stab at producing their own individual screenplays.

Though still under the supervision of teacher Christopher Mahle, the class is mostly being taught by Dan Moyer, a representative from TheatreWorks, a regional theatre company based in Palo Alto.

"The goal is to have each student write a short play," said Moyer. "A few of them will be selected and have staged readings at TheatreWorks using professional actors."

The drama students have in essence been given unlimited freedom in the creation of their pieces.

"It's impossible not to write about things that are on your mind or that affect you so it is really nice to be able to get it out on paper," said senior Natalie Riccimini. "It's a great creative release."

Settings range from modern Saratoga to WWI Europe, and conflicts span from family feuds to battles between pirates and space pirates.

Moyer's class periods with the students have included a mix of different approaches to prepare them for their playwrighting project.

"Some of the class is devoted to theory stuff, such as status change and subtext," said Moyer. "Meanwhile, other exercises are intended to generate actual material for the students to use."

The playwrights whose screenplays are taken to TheatreWorks will have the opportunity to work with a director who will block the show and offer feedback.

This experience is an opportunity for the playwright to actually see his or her play in order to notice any necessary changes.

"The focus here is on the text," said Moyer, "not the lights or costumes or anything but the words, and only the words."

Moyer hopes that this process will prompt each student to become a playwright, or at the very least, learn a little bit more about analyzing theatre and film.

"I still don't think quite think of myself as a playwright, but learning about writing has introduced new ways to think about examining characters and portraying them," said junior Jay Lee. ♦

24 National Merit Finalists are eligible for scholarships

by Tiffany Tung

Out of the 1.5 million high school juniors who take the PSAT every year, the top scoring 16,000 students are given the status of Semifinalist. From there, based on academic achievement and other factors, these 16,000 students are whittled down into 15,000 students, or the top 1 percent, who are then named National Merit Finalists.

Of this year's 300 or so graduating seniors, 27 gained the status of Semifinalists. To be a

Finalist, Semifinalists must also send a recommendation letter from an administrator or counselor and write an essay.

During late February, 24 of the Semifinalists were notified that they had become Finalists, making them eligible for one of the many scholarship awards offered.

"When we got the Semifinalist notification, we had to fill out forms saying our top choices out of a list of colleges," said senior Stephanie Tung. "I put USC as my top choice, and since I'm a finalist, if I get in, I get a scholarship

for half the tuition, which is basically equivalent to the cost of going to a UC."

Aside from the college scholarships, each Finalist is also put in the running for \$2,500 single payment scholarships, which are rewarded by each state individually.

"Saratoga High School is fortunate to have a number of students who strive to perform at their best. We are also fortunate to have a number of families who appreciate the value of education and talented teachers who impart that education," said assistant

principal Brian Safine. "When family and peer expectations are set at a high level, the measurable academic results are high."

This year's National Merit Finalists are: Steven Hong, Vivian Hsiao, Vickie Huang, Rishabh Jethanandani, Eric Jung, Annie Lee, Steven Lee, Tammy Lian, Maggie Lin, Diana Lu, Vicki Ni, Varun Parmar, Edward Saavedra, Alice Shen, Sonia Siganporia, Ashwin Siripurapu, Joseph Stevens, Charles Sun, Stephanie Tung, Rolland Wu, Brandon Yang, Kevin Yao and Erika Ye. ♦

TOGATALKS

How did you react when you found out you were a National Merit finalist?

I was excited about all the opportunities and scholarships that come with being a finalist.



senior Kevin Yao

I was happy because just being a finalist opens up a lot of opportunities for scholarships from different colleges.



senior Sonia Siganporia

Since none of the colleges I'm interested in are sponsor colleges, someone else could have needed it more than me.



senior Joe Stevens

The Saratoga Falcon

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

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Laptops in schools: study aid or spy tool?

WITH THE ADVENT OF HIGH-TECH SCHOOLS, PRIVACY MUST BE PROTECTED

by Sophia Cooper

They're in many students' bedrooms. They hide under piles of clothes, sit atop desks, lie in between blankets on beds. No one suspects a thing.

That's how the students of Harrington High School in Ardmore, Penn., viewed the school-issued laptops they received freshman year. That is, until they discovered the school can remotely access the webcams installed in the MacBooks and

see what the student is doing.

A lawsuit against the high school was filed on Feb. 11 by a sophomore's family, saying the student had been approached by school officials three months earlier and was critiqued for "inappropriate" behavior in his own home. How did the school have this information? Through "indiscriminate remote activation of a webcam" and "intentional interception of ... private webcam images" by the school, in which they alleged turned on the student's webcam while he was in the privacy of his own home.

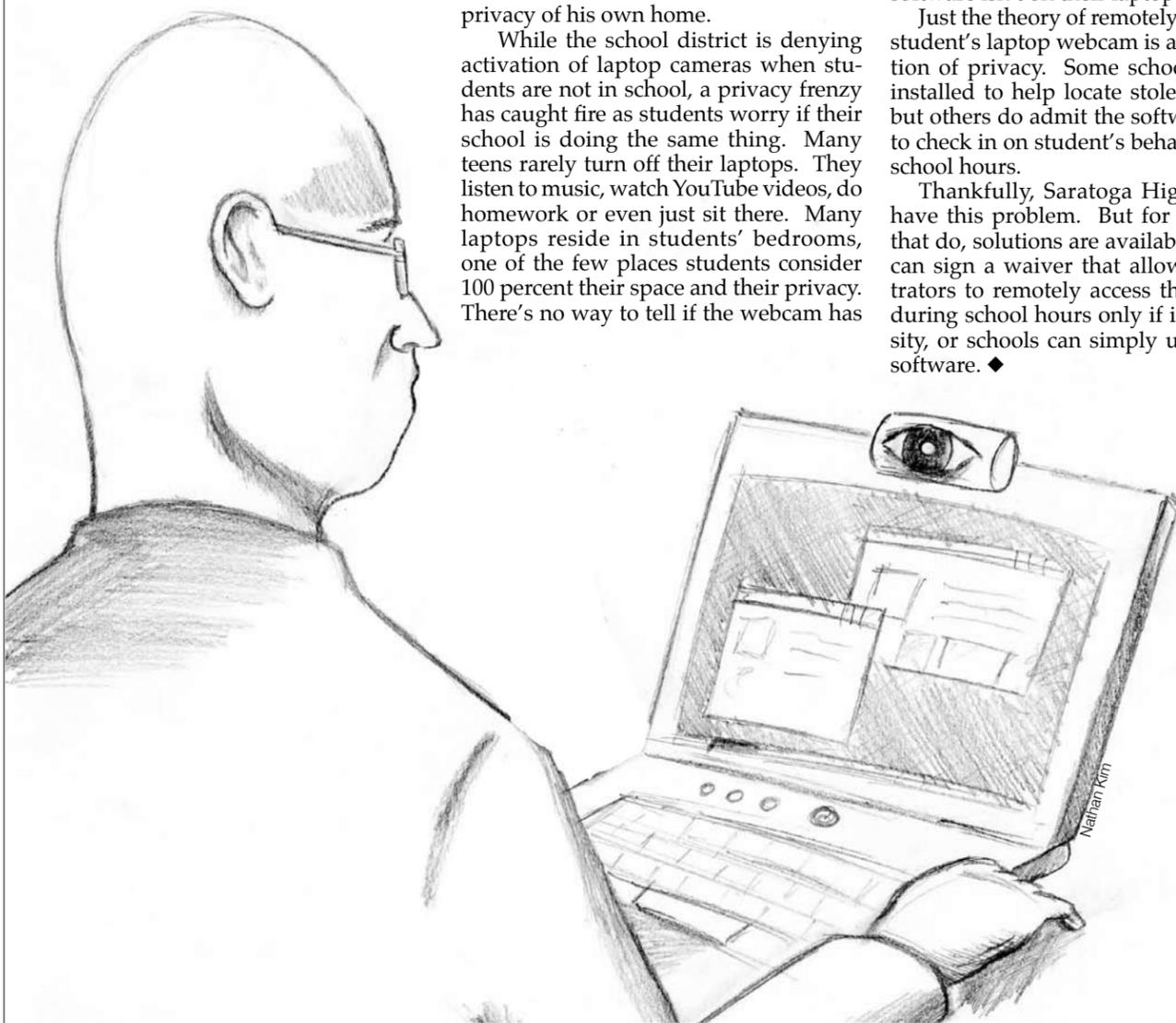
While the school district is denying activation of laptop cameras when students are not in school, a privacy frenzy has caught fire as students worry if their school is doing the same thing. Many teens rarely turn off their laptops. They listen to music, watch YouTube videos, do homework or even just sit there. Many laptops reside in students' bedrooms, one of the few places students consider 100 percent their space and their privacy. There's no way to tell if the webcam has

been activated, so how can the students know whether or not the school has crept on them while they are in their bedrooms?

The laptops are a beneficial study aid, but this new flux of security concerns may change people's view of the technology. Schools can protest the installation of remote access for the webcams, a common feature on newer laptop models, all they want, but unless students are computer geniuses, they won't be able to prove the software isn't on their laptops.

Just the theory of remotely accessing a student's laptop webcam is a clear violation of privacy. Some schools say it is installed to help locate stolen products, but others do admit the software is used to check in on student's behavior during school hours.

Thankfully, Saratoga High does not have this problem. But for the schools that do, solutions are available: Students can sign a waiver that allows administrators to remotely access the webcams during school hours only if it is a necessity, or schools can simply uninstall the software. ♦



Gap year a productive alternative

by Grishma Athavale
and Robin Liu

As seniors end their last year of high school, what comes ahead is the next big step: college. Students leave for a new place, somewhere with no one they've known for the past 18 years. It's a serious transition that determines your future, but what if you're not ready?

Fortunately, high school graduates do not all have to take that path. For those who aren't ready for college, there is something called the gap year, a 12-month break before making the transition to college. More and more students are choosing to wait a year before college, and it's no surprise why.

Perhaps a student has no idea what he wants to study. Rather than spend the first year of college completely unsure of what educational path to take, having a gap year would leave plenty of time to explore interests and find a possible major. The student could do philanthropic work in this time by traveling to a third world country or even remaining here

in the U.S and help out in hospitals and educational facilities.

This will allow students to discover how they want to spend the rest of their life. Many students nowadays don't declare majors when they enter colleges and those that do often change them after a year or two into college. Gap years allow students to discover themselves and see what they want to devote their time to.

With the ever-increasing costs of tuition, it's important for students to be completely prepared before entering college.

In addition to being academically ready, students may wait until they feel ready to take on the responsibilities of being independent. Not all people are mature by 18, and putting off college may be beneficial. Students can spend the year learning basic skills such as how to cook and do the laundry in order to have the knowledge of accomplishing daily tasks. Or maybe

after going through four stressful years of high school, students may want a year off to prepare for the academic challenges ahead. With the ever-increasing costs of tuition, it's important for students to be completely prepared before entering college.

Taking a year off doesn't always mean you need more time before college. Maybe there's something that you've always wanted to try before going to a university, but there was never any time during high school. Gap years allow students to take on jobs, community service or activities to gain experience and confidence. These experiences will make the students a well rounded and knowledgeable person, experienced in a variety of different fields and situations.

Numerous programs exist for those interested in taking a gap year. Students can apply for internships and explore possible career paths, or travel and gain the experience of living on their own. Although it may seem like just a year to relax and escape school work, gap years can make all the difference in getting a worthwhile college education. ♦

Think before adopting

TAKING CHILDREN AWAY FROM THEIR HOMES ONLY CONTRIBUTES TO THE PROBLEMS IN HAITI

by Arnav Dugar

Imagine being a child in many parts of Haiti today. You leave the orphanage to look one more time for your parents. What once used to be the street you lived on is now an expanse of rubble. As you climb onto one mound, you realize the place you once called home is gone.

Your parents are nowhere to be found. Perhaps they are looking for you, or perhaps their remains are just below your feet. With over half of Haiti's population under age 21, you are just one of the countless youth searching for life as it was before the Feb. 12 earthquake.

Images such as these have sparked sympathy in many rich families, spurring on a new desire to adopt cute Haitian toddlers. Whatever the motive, whether it be philanthropic or for a quick, economic adoption, the influx of requests has upset the process with which children are removed from the country.

Although the would-be adopters may indeed be loving parents, it is not right for them to rip these children right out of their natural environment and immerse them in an entirely new culture just because no one had the time to search for their closest relatives.

Not only do these children have to overcome the trauma from this earth-shattering event in their lives and the

loss of everything that was dear to them, including their families and personal belongings, but then, they also are impressed with replacements, which may not even suit them, all in such a small period of time that they cannot comprehend the drastic change.

It is as if after an earthquake in the Bay Area, a student whose parents cannot be found is adopted by an Indian family that has never been to the U.S. before. So 24 hours later, he finds himself in a small Indian village learning how to eat with his hands and use the toilet without toilet-paper while his grandparents in Sacramento, whom he visited occasionally, think he died with the rest of his family.

This doesn't mean people don't have the right to adopt Haitian children or that their intentions are bad. It is just that the adoption system, the process of verifying the background of the new parents and ensuring the child is truly an orphan with no close relatives, is not being followed.

Blindly adopting children is only a temporary fix and does not target the root of the problem. The Haitian government can only spend less every year than the U.S. government spends every three hours. In a situation like this, donations to help support these children in their homeland to rebuild the nation are much more important than relocating the future of Haiti away from their homeland. ♦

Globalization further weakens U.S. economy

by Izzy Albert
and Emily Williams

In America today most products bear the tag "made in _____" or "imported from _____." The blanks can be filled with any industrial labor-oriented country. From clothing to out-of-season fruit to electronics, the exportation of jobs from America has become so regular that companies now boast of American manufacturing. In the economic crisis today, many people criticize companies' practice of foreign manufacturing, known as globalization. With so many Americans unemployed, it appears ludicrous to send jobs overseas. But what critics don't realize is most Americans looking for jobs aren't willing to take on unskilled labor.

The fact is Americans have become too picky about the jobs they are willing to take. We also have labor unions and legislation that expect benefits like health care and retirement, while in developing countries, people will work for close to nothing and without any benefits. Some companies treat their workers well, but many others do not.

In addition to ethical issues, globalization has contributed to the disappearance of the middle class since so many decently paying jobs disappeared. The lack of a middle class—and the increasing gap between the poor and the wealthy—is becoming a bigger issue.

This may seem like a small problem compared to other politically hot issues today, but the long-term consequences may be severe. Many historians have compared the United States to Roman Empire. Ironically, they also attribute the fall of Rome to among other things, the loss of the middle class and the huge gap between the rich and the poor. Is America the next Rome?

We hope not. From a historical stand

point it is easy to see that we need to stop taking care of everyone else and instead take care of our own economy first. By bringing jobs back to the U.S., we can rebuild our own infrastructure before we help other countries. That action alone will boost the international economy because we have such a big hand in it.

It could take years to make our economy stable again, but when the time comes, it is important we continue to trade and even sponsor foreign manufacturing, just on a smaller scale.

It should be the goal of companies and the world community to assist less developed countries. This can be accomplished through promoting equitable standards for all factory workers so they would be paid enough to live comfortably.

It should be the goal of U.S. companies and the world community to help less developed countries catch up.

It is easy to blame companies who outsource labor for the lack of jobs and the disappearance of the middle class, but in reality the burden of responsibility is much too large to fall on a single group. It is every American's responsibility to help bridge the gap between the rich and the poor.

Globalization itself is a good idea, but we've been going about it is all wrong. It is currently an excuse for companies to send labor overseas, but it should be a way to share the wealth of larger countries with smaller ones. In order to make this work Americans need to be willing to let go of their egos and sense of entitlement and do these jobs that are being sent to other countries. The first step to catching up is through education and letting some corporate jobs go to smaller countries so that the extra revenue can boost their economy.

By doing this we can change the way the world views us by gaining their respect instead of their ridicule. This seems like a lot to ask, but it is necessary for our system to last for generations to come. ♦

CANDID CARICATURES

by Arnav Dugar



Democrats and Republicans butt heads in Congress

by Karthik Annaamalai

When a branch of government is defined by its ability to systematically withhold and stall major legislation, it is apparent that there is a flaw in the system.

Negotiation is needed for the government to be successful in fulfilling its duties. In the status quo, politicians are so divided into their two strict parties, Democrat

and Republican, that they vote against bills proposed by the other side simply because they are from the other side. This presents a major problem because Congress has not been effective the past few months thanks to the filibuster, a form of obstruction in legislature.

The filibuster, originally created in order to protect the rights of the minority and to galvanize debate, has become a method to delay a bill from being passed. In past examples, politicians just read from a phone book to waste time rather than generating debate, which is the true, original purpose of the filibuster. In the 21st century, senators simply send the bill back to the drawing board without any meaningful collaboration or discussion.

The root of the problems lies in the fact that Democrats and Republicans are not compromising. For example, the recent health care bill has been stuck in Congress for the past few months but has not made any progress because Democrats and Republicans refuse

to find middle ground.

A key flaw in President Obama's proposed health care bill is that more Americans are against the legislation than for it. During George W. Bush's presidency, he

Democrats and Republicans vote against bills proposed by the other side simply because they are from the other side.

fell in the same hole as Obama, failing to reform pensions. Yet once Bush learned the advantages of cooperating with the Democrats

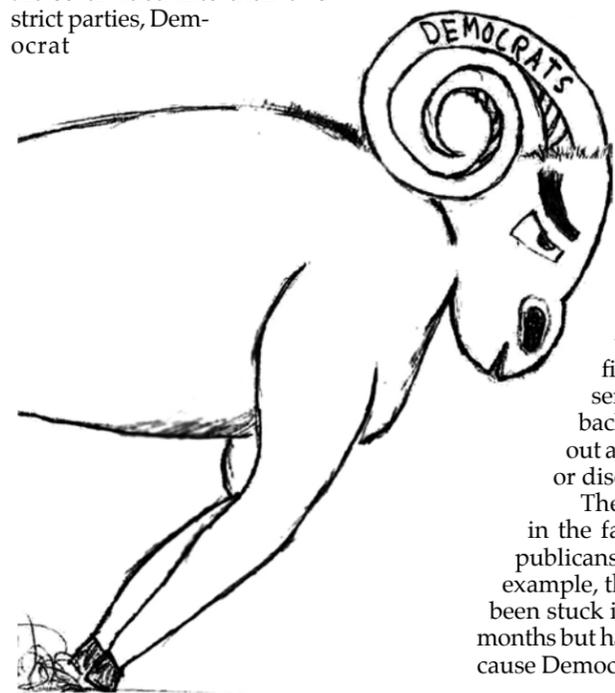
and the people, he was able to pass many more bills, such as the "No Child Left Behind Act," which was the biggest change to the school system for over 40 years.

As can be seen in the case of Bush, in order to combat this major flaw in Congress, politicians need to take further measures in attempting to cross party lines and reach a common ground.

Although the health care plan has been circulating in Congress for the past few months, the government has not been totally ineffective. In the beginning of Obama's presidency, when the nation needed another economic stimulus package, the Republicans and Democrats showed signs of negotiations and passed

the TARP bill within a few weeks. This quick action led to the prevention of a higher unemployment rate and helped stabilize the economy.

When the situation is dire enough, members of Congress seem to be able to work together. With that said, politicians still need to take steps toward striking a balance and crossing party lines in order for Congress to become a functional branch of the government once again. ♦



Cullan McChesney

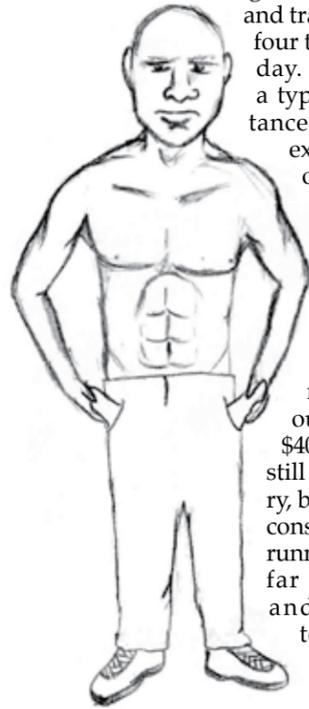
Pro athletes' salaries don't reflect effort put in

PLAYERS IN MORE UNKNOWN SPORTS DON'T RECEIVE ENOUGH RECOGNITION FROM GENERAL PUBLIC

by Cullan McChesney

Today's headlines proclaim the insurmountable debt, soaring unemployment rates and the general state of disorder this country is in. Yet in spite of all of this, athletes in the NBA, NFL and MLB are still making inordinate sums of money.

The average baseball player makes roughly \$3 million a year (not including endorsements) and trains between four to six hours a day. In contrast, a typical pro distance runner can expect to make only \$20,000-\$40,000 from sponsors and winnings, with the absolute top runners maxing out at around \$400,000. This is still a good salary, but when you consider that pro runners workout far more often and more intensely than most others, it seems un-



fair that athletes in some sports get paid more than others.

The simple explanation is market appeal. Obviously, millions of more people watched the World Series than watched the Ironman World championship last year (it's likely that relatively few people even know what the Ironman is.) And even though the gap in salaries is outrageous, it is the gap in respect that is the biggest problem.

Pro runners, bikers and swimmers get far less recognition than someone like Alex Rodriguez, yet they work infinitely harder to achieve their goals. We as a country idolize stars like A. Rod and Tiger Woods and without a doubt they are exceptional athletes, yet the amount of blood sweat and tears they put in pales in comparison to those who do endurance sports.

There used to be a time back in the '60s, '70s and '80s when more Americans idolized someone like track star Carl Lewis or runners like Bill Rodgers or Steve Prefontaine. No doubt, the number of people who still know any of those names is dwindling. It's almost as if hard work doesn't mean anything anymore and the only thing that matters is appearance and how "marketable" someone is regardless of their morale fiber.

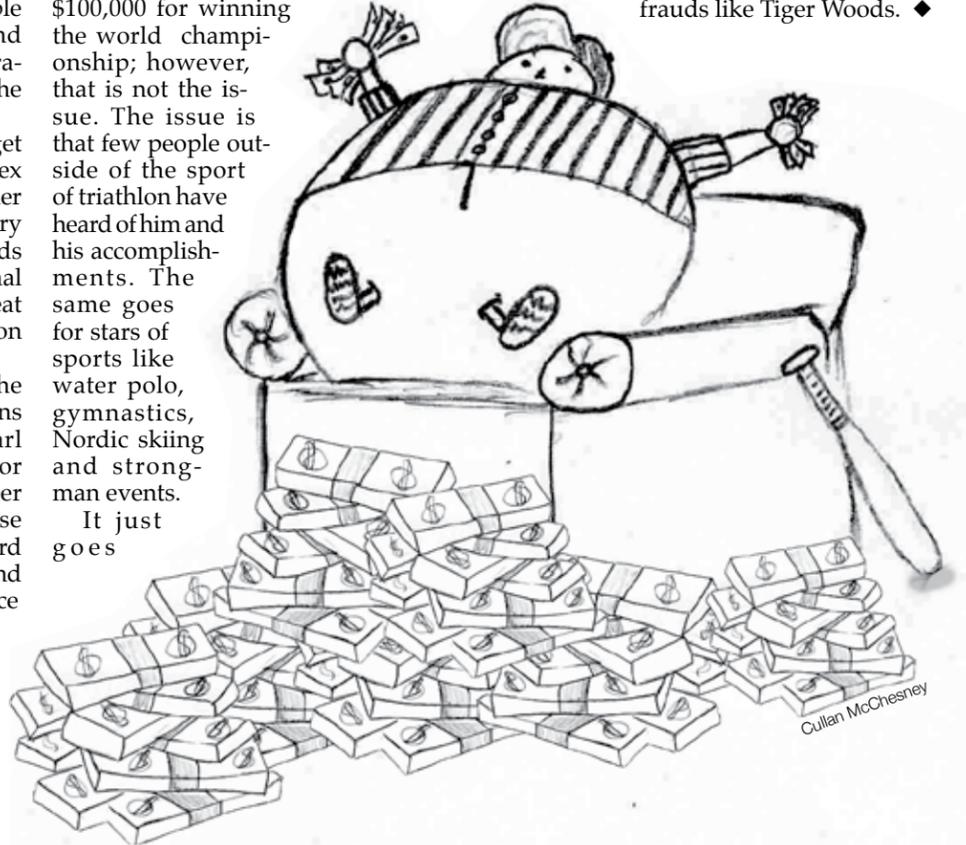
Case in point: Tiger Woods. Woods, at his peak, was making over \$100 million a year. Now all of America knows that he crashed his SUV and cheated on his wife countless times, but at one time, everyone thought Woods was the

ultimate athlete, dominating, kind and charitable.

I consider two-time world Ironman champion Craig Alexander to be one of the best athletes walking the face of the earth today. Sure he won \$100,000 for winning the world championship; however, that is not the issue. The issue is that few people outside of the sport of triathlon have heard of him and his accomplishments. The same goes for stars of sports like water polo, gymnastics, Nordic skiing and strongman events.

It just goes

to show that the number of sponsors and the amount of money one has does not reflect on the character of the athlete. If companies had an ounce of character, they would put deserving athletes like Alexander on billboards rather than frauds like Tiger Woods. ♦



TOGATALKS

Which professional sport deserves the most respect?

Football. There are a lot of skills required and a lot of pressure is on them because it's the most popular sport in America.



sophomore Varsha Ramesh

Gymnastics. They had to start training when they were really little and they have to be super strong and flexible.



sophomore Crystal Yen

Rowing. No other sport requires you to work out for three hours every single day with muscles you never knew you had.



teacher Erick Rector

Juniors do not deserve senior parking spaces

by Karen Lyu

True or false? The two front parking lots are reserved for seniors, with the exception of the last row of the second lot. The answer—at least in the past few months—is false, despite popular belief.

When the word "senior" comes to mind, most think of respect and the rights that are automatically granted to the wisest, most experienced and coolest kids in the school.

These rights, unfortunately, do not include what has long been regarded as a natural right to the senior class: priority in the parking lots.

The class of 2010 has seen the front parking lots under senior domination for their entire high school career.

This rule used to be strictly enforced until this year; seniors pulling into the parking lots before school and after lunch are finding that their supposedly reserved spots are being taken by the rule-bending juniors, who not only have taken over more than the back row in the second parking lot that was so generously given to them, but the first row in all the parking lots.

At the beginning of the year, the administration tried to make juniors adhere to the parking lot boundaries through

morning announcements but when more and more juniors started to just ignore the rules, the administration seemed to give up. According to campus supervisor Jeanine Sevilla, who usually tickets the students for parking violations, the lots are now first come, first serve.

Because of this, frustrated seniors are then indirectly punished and have started to end up being late to class, especially since none of them were made aware of this new rule.

Seniors deserve the same treatment and privilege that the senior classes before them were given.

It's disturbing that such a change in policy were enacted at the cost of the senior class.

The eradication of the seniors' domination of the parking lot is a change that does not have any verifiable positive impact on either the traffic or the lives of the repressed seniors.

Underclassmen spend years looking up to the senior class, pining for the day where they finally can gain the respect and privileges to which they are entitled to.

Seniors deserve the same treatment and privilege of reserved parking spots that the senior classes before them were given.

This means there should be absolutely no juniors and no sophomores parking in senior spots and tickets for those who choose to break the rules. ♦

Direct democracy destructive

by Karthik Annaamalai

With just 8 percent of the state's signatures, anyone can get his or her own proposition on the California ballot. These propositions, called initiatives, mean any citizen can submit their own "law" because of California's direct democracy.

This presents a problem because, although 56 percent of Californians like the initiative method, a number estimated by The Economist, people are often unaware of the economic impact. For example, in the past ballots, California passed a proposition that would create a new high-speed railroad from San Francisco to L.A. Although the benefits of the train are straightforward, many did not consider the cost of building the railway, especially in a time when California's budget deficit has been one of the largest in its history.

Legislators are forced to fund bills passed by people, which only places a greater burden on the budget. These initiatives crowd the ballot, especially since the number of propositions that have been qualified for the ballot has been getting larger; over 70 initiatives have passed the 8 percent minimum signatures in the past two months.

The initiative system also creates an unwanted source of illegality. Weeks before the propositions are sent to the voters, "bounty hunters," roam the streets paying people to sign the propositions.

Moreover, Californians do not always make the morally correct decisions. In the previous 2008 ballot regarding the

THE BIG IDEA

California Initiatives

WHAT IS IT: Any citizen can propose a passable "law"

TO QUALIFY: 8% California signatures to be on ballot

PUBLIC OPINION: 56% Californians support Initiatives method

propositions about gay rights and chicken coops, Ronald George, the chief justice of the California's Supreme Court, said, "Chickens gained valuable rights in California on the same day that gay men and lesbians lost them."

In order to combat this flawed approach, the government can take two approaches: a radical one or a conservative one. California could rescind the initiative process as a whole, which would outrage many Californians but would solve many of the state's problems. On the other hand, the state can raise the standard for an initiative to qualify for the ballot. This would decrease the total number of initiatives as well as serve as a strain, allowing only the most approved propositions to be voted on.

Both methods would effectively solve the dilemma of California's initiative process, the latter pleasing the state's citizens. The fact remains, however, that the system is flawed and that something needs to be done in order to combat this problem. Does anyone want to start an initiative to fix it? ♦

THE ARTIST OF THE ISSUE: Patrick Lee

Superman, Batman and Spiderman. Many people have grown up with these comic book action characters as their heroes. But for senior Patrick Lee, these characters served as more than heroes. They were inspiration. Lee has been drawing comics for nine years and talked to *The Falcon* about his hobby.

Q: What are your favorite types of comics to draw?

A: I really like doing comics about battles, especially World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Some kids need to understand what happened and what the men went through. They were fighting, risking their lives, sacrificing, and many lost their family. I also like language, and many characters speak Korean, Russian and others around the world. My favorite comic is the old "Pikmin" [his original comic based on the videogame] because it is my favorite game.

Q: What inspired you to start drawing comics?

A: I always liked cartoons that were about friendship, and I liked the old action cartoons like Spiderman. I started drawing them for myself when I was 11. My first comic was called the "FTFW" which was "Freedom to First War: Rise of the Soviets." It was a make-believe war. Some

[of the comics] are history and some are make-believe. Sometimes my brain just tells me information [for comics].

Q: What do you do with your finished comics?

A: I have given three to my friends, as presents, but I keep a lot for myself too. When people see my comics, they say "that is very cool" or they say "how did you draw that?"

Q: Have you received support from family and friends for your comics?

A: Yes. At home, my parents will say 'finish your homework or tests and then take a break and finish [the comics] then'.

Q: How many comics have you done in total?

A: I do comics as episodes for different wars, and I have about 50 episodes in total. I try to do them once a week, or finish most of it.

Q: What are your plans for the future after high school?

A: I am going to West Valley College next year. I really want to be an animation director in the future, and I could use my comics in that job. I really want to pursue my passion and follow my dreams.

—by Ren Norris



Senior Patrick Lee displays his comic drawing talent in his original series, "Freedom to First War." In this series, Lee practices a diversity of languages and artistic technique.

Class Time Super Quiz

by David Eng

Answer the following nine questions to test your knowledge. Scoring is as follows: one point for freshman level questions, two points for honors level questions, and three points for AP level questions. Tally up your points at the end to see where you fall! All correct answers have the word "class" in them.

FRESHMAN LEVEL

1. Name for students who are learning together
2. Period of music falling between the Baroque and Romantic periods
3. Elegant and stylish

HONORS LEVEL

4. Withheld from general circulation for reasons of national security
5. A hierarchical arrangement of people in society
6. Primary division of a larger group

AP LEVEL

7. System invented by Carolus Linnaeus (Hint: Domain, Kingdom, etc...)
8. Another name for the Baseball World Series
9. To surpass decisively

ANSWERS

1. Classmates
2. Classical
3. Classy or high class
4. Classified
5. Social class or class system
6. Subclass
7. Biological classification
8. Fall orclasssification of organisms
9. Outclass

0-2 Go back to school, freshman! 3-7 Cancel your weekend plans and pack your bags for Saturday school 8-12 You're plenty smart, but no grind 13-17 Solid B-plus! Pretty good, at Los Gatos. 18 Congratulations, you put the A in AP

AUDIO



FILES

Subject: Annie Ting, 12
Weapon of Choice: iPod Video
of Songs on Device: 2,311

Songs of the Moment & Memorable Lyrics

1. "Closer": by Goapele
I'm getting higher, closer to my dreams...
2. "Cayman Islands": by Kings of Convenience
Holding onto you, I never thought it'd be this clear.
3. "Videotape": by Radiohead
You are my center when I spin away out of control on videotape.

Tidbit: I don't listen to country, but I like classical, as well as anything else with a catchy beat.



Karen Lyu

Bored? Restless? In need of a little excitement? Whichever the case, it's time to whip out the iPhones for a little bit of:

FRIENDLY COMPETITION

'WORDS WITH FRIENDS' TAKES SCRABBLE TO-GO

by Ren Norris

Qi. A Chinese word meaning the vital force inherent in all things, and for many, not a word used in everyday vocabulary. But for junior Kathryn Nobles, this word has been proven vital in her numerous games of "Words with Friends."

"Words with Friends" is a popular game on the iPhone that follows the same rule set as "Scrabble," but repackaged for the iPhone's app system. The game allows iPhone owners to challenge friends to a "Scrabble" match, while also having a chat box to talk to friends while playing.

Nobles is an avid player of "Words with Friends" and can often be seen playing at lunch, after school or even glancing at her iPhone during class.

"I like the interaction with other people and seeing what words they come up with," said Nobles. "I learn new words, like qi, and I'm able to use them in my [other] games."

Nobles typically plays up to eight games of "Words with Friends" simultaneously, and each game lasts for three to four days (depending on the

response time of her challengers).

"The chat box makes the games more social," said Nobles. "[Words with Friends] is definitely more convenient and engaging than Scrabble."

Junior Kaitna Shankar plays with Nobles often and also shares the same love for finding new words.

"[Words with Friends] is better than Scrabble because you get to play with different people who have iPhones at anytime," said Shankar. "Games are also really competitive as to who can come up with the best words."

To some players, "Words with Friends" can become less of a game and more of a lifestyle.

"I've been playing non-stop since I downloaded the game three weeks ago," said Nobles. "I play everywhere I go: in class, while doing homework and even before I go to bed."

The growing fad of "Words with Friends" not only serves as a competitive game for friends, but also allows players to expand their vocabulary.

"[Nobles] once got 45 points for a two-letter word!" said Shankar. It seems qi can come in handy after all. ♦

'Eliminate' a forerunner of FPS gameplay on handheld devices

by Kavya Nagarajan

We've all heard of Call of Duty and World of Warcraft. Both are computer-based video games that are immensely popular all over the world. As of last December, Call of Duty had sold over 55 million units worldwide. But what exactly is it that attracts so many people to these franchises? These games are different than most in the way that a player can play with actual humans rather than computers. If they wanted to, someone sitting here in Saratoga can engage in player to player combat with someone sitting across the globe in Europe or Asia. Although these games were originally made for PC's, they have now expanded to gaming consoles and handhelds.

Obviously, it was only a matter of time before an application for a similar type of game appeared on the iPhone.

Senior Guillaume Bellegarda discovered the first person shooter game, called "Eliminate", and has been playing for several months now.

"At first, I was intrigued that a game like this could be free, which is why I started playing," said Bellegarda.

The goal of this game is to 'eliminate' the other players with different weapons. And as your level and rank increases, a wider variety of armor and weaponry become available.

"However, you have to wait quite a long time to get credits for playing between sessions," said Bellegarda.

"The game wants you to purchase cells to play for a longer time, and to upgrade weapons and armor."

And of course, like several other applications on iPhones and iTouch's, after a while it requires you to actually buy the game in order to continue playing.

"I used to play it a lot because it was pretty new, it was free, and it was a fun thing to do," said Bellegarda. "I encouraged other iPhone and iTouch users to play as well, and we usually played when we had downtime in class."

Although every game has its quirks, it is an easy and cost-free way to kill time, and it fits in your pocket. ♦

THE NUTSHELL



Words with Friends
COST: Free!
ITUNES RATING: 3.5/5
PRODUCER: newtoy, inc.

"I mostly play with alumni, since it's a good way to keep in touch while having fun. It also makes some competition between me and my brother."
 —senior Chelsea Sabella



THE NUTSHELL



Eliminate
COST: Free!
ITUNES RATING: 4/5
PRODUCER: ngmoco

"It's probably the best shooting game on the iTouch that's free. The graphics are decent, but the best part is that you can play with your friends online through wi-fi or 3G."
 —senior Victor Chan

WASTE NOT



Aditya Dev

A group of students enjoys lunch in the quad. Even though improvements are being made, many Saratoga students are still stumped when it comes to disposing of their garbage correctly.

To recycle or throw away?

DESPITE CLEARLY LABELED BINS, SOME STUDENTS STRUGGLE WITH WHAT TO DO

by Serena Chen and Sarah Hull

Freshman Francheska Palmer hesitated, holding the remains of her lunch above the two bins. Recycle or trash? For a second, her hand wavered back and forth before tossing her plastic pasta container into the recycling bin.

This short moment of uncertainty happened subconsciously, but it is an example of how most students are puzzled when it comes to what items are recyclable. Looking at the trash bins in the quad, about half of the garbage belongs in the recycle bin next to it and half of the recycling should be in the trash. "I always put my water bottles and anything plastic in the recycling bin," Palmer said. But not everyone is as environmentally conscious as Palmer is.

In fact, most students during lunch completely disregarded the recycling bins in the quad. They dumped the entirety of their waste, everything from plastic and paper to soda cans into the garbage.

"I don't recycle," said freshman Kevin Gasik. "Well, I recycle plastic bottles because I don't think you can throw those away in the trash."

Here are the basics to recycling:

- Toss anything soiled by food or grease into the trash bin; these can't be recycled.

- All clean paper products like the cardboard lunch trays and brown paper bags are recyclable.

- Many plastics can also be recycled, including the common water bottles and Ziploc bags. All of these items can be placed into the same recycling bin as they are sorted later by West Valley Collection and Recycling who picks up the waste from the back parking lot.

The school, as part of its beautification process, installed new trash bins conveniently paired with recycling bins in an attempt to encourage students to clean up after themselves. Nevertheless, many students cannot manage to throw away their trash correctly.

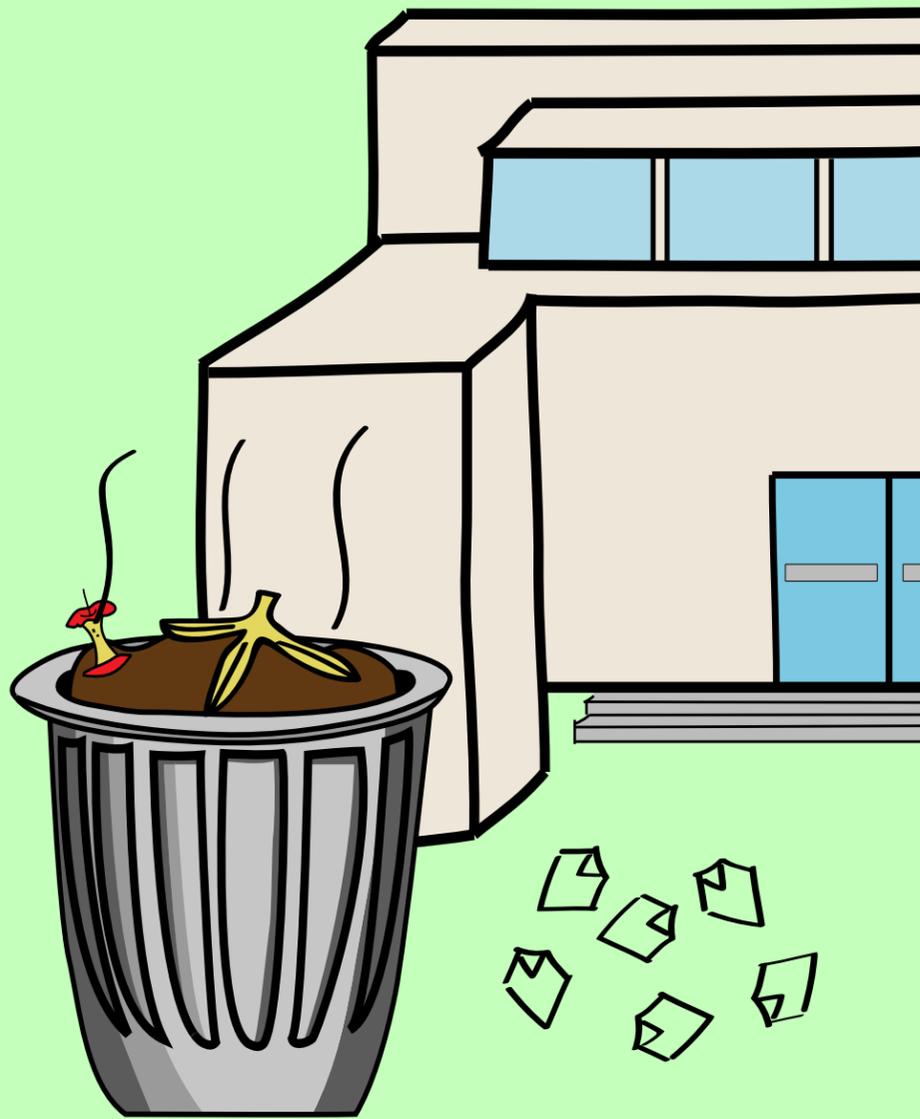
"Some people don't really care," said senior Sharon Kikinis. "I see a lot of people put recyclable items in trash cans."

And to make matters worse, some students just get up and walk away once the bell rings for class, leaving all their trash on the tables, said maintenance worker Andrew Hickey. It would be better to put it in the trash can than to assume the janitors will clean up after everyone, he said.

Despite the fact that students have much room for improvement the school has been much more trash-conscious for the past couple of years, according to maintenance worker John Berti.

"It's a big improvement from years ago," said Berti. "Trash used to be all over the place. [The students should] keep doing what they're doing. This has probably been the best year I've seen." ♦

In a nation built upon the idea of progress, it is not to get caught up in the idea of progress. Saratoga High is working hard



REVERSING A T

by David Eng

As one famous poem goes, "water, water, everywhere." Well, in our nation's case, the phrase should be changed to "garbage, garbage, everywhere."

According to www.greenwaste.com, Americans will generate an astounding 222 million tons of waste this year. In other words, America's total yearly waste would fill a convoy of garbage trucks long enough to wrap around the earth six times and reach halfway to the moon.

This outrageous amount of consumption dwarfs that of any other world power. By comparison, the average North American consumes 10 times as much as the average person living in China and 30 times as much as the average person living in India.

Perhaps this relatively low rate of consumption for the world's two largest nations is a good thing. After all, at the consumption level of the average Ameri-

can, at least four additional planets worth of resources would be needed to support the planet's six billion inhabitants.

The "nature" of garbage production

While this habitual production of trash does indeed put a significant dent in our planet's resources, the real problem emerges when we observe the harm done to the environment as a whole.

Extensive garbage production is a lose-lose situation. In addition to consuming resources, Americans produce trash as a harmful byproduct.

Let's examine this harmful effect with respect to timber products. Research by www.cleanair.org shows that 900 million trees are cut down each year to provide raw materials for American paper and pulp mills. In one lifetime, the average

Every three weeks we generates 30 compacted trash size of a student

A Lunchtime Guide to Recycling

To recycle:



Recycle all clean napkins, utensils, cans, bottles, and trays.

To throw away:



Throw away food and napkins or containers soiled with food.

WANT NOT

of consumerism, it's hard
a of extravagant wastefulness.
d to break the cycle.



Albert Gu

WASTEFUL TREND

American uses 18 tons of paper and 23 tons of wood.

In addition to this huge depletion of natural resources at the "wanting" end of the spectrum, the problem continues at the "wasting" end. Only about one-tenth of all solid garbage in the U.S. actually gets recycled. In fact, every year Americans trash enough office paper to build a 12-foot wall from Los Angeles to New York City. The Great Wall of American Waste, anyone?

Weeks, the school
cubic yards of
trash—the typical
student's bedroom.

Saratoga High's small-scale problem
Sure, we can chalk this large-scale problem up as everyone else's mess. However, the fact of the matter is, Saratogans contribute our fair share of trash, too.

According to maintenance head Brian Moran, the school's recently acquired 30 cubic yard trash compactor fills up in a

matter of three weeks.

That's 30 cubic yards of compacted trash—the typical size of a student's bedroom. In other words, the school contributes a heaping bedroom-sized block of trash to landfills every three weeks.

What's worse: Moran estimates that 25 percent of garbage in trash cans should actually go in a recycling container. An easy choice to recycle rather than drop in the trash can could translate to 25 percent less garbage for the school.

To the school's credit, however, students and staff have been improving over the years. Assistant principal Karen Hyde emphasized that since the installation of the new trash cans last spring, kids have been more conscious about throwing away their trash. Hyde stressed student awareness as a crucial factor to keeping a clean campus.

As student awareness continues to increase, maybe the basic idea of "waste not, want not" will not whizz by the heads of the next generation of Americans. ♦



Amanda Yi

Freshman geography student Amanda Chow works on an online geography assignment, that has replaced teacher Matt Torrens' previous paper map assignment in an effort to save paper.

SHS uses less paper to reduce waste, costs

by Karthik Sreedhara

THE BIG IDEA

A paperless classroom?

THE PROBLEM: Current paper usage in classrooms contributes substantially to the economic impact of the school.

WHAT SHS IS DOING NOW: Teachers like history teacher Matt Torrens are reducing the amount of handouts given to classes and even using online resources instead of textbooks.

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO: Recycle all past papers; a tree can be saved if each student recycles just 6 sheets.

Every year, the school consumes an enormous amount of electricity and natural resources. In turn, it produces tons of solid waste, and a substantial amount of that waste comes from the classrooms, where many tests, quizzes, projects and assignments done on paper are tossed in the garbage can rather than properly recycled. In the past few years, however, SHS has taken numerous measures to become part of the global trend towards going green.

In an increasingly technological society, there are several substitutes to using copious amounts of paper for classroom assignments. Reducing paper usage can reduce the amount of solid waste the school produces, and the amount of trees that must be cut to supply the paper.

"We're doing a lot more things online, as opposed to buying books," said principal Jeff Anderson. "That's also actually out of necessity, because our book budget got cut by the state. It would save money."

By converting to electronic documents, he said, the school can reduce a lot of solid waste because many students might not always recycle paper. Junior Daryl Chang believes that these changes are possible but still require student and teacher cooperation in order to create a successful effort.

"We still use lots of paper for tasks that could be done electronically," Chang said. "The school has already made the switch to online report cards and electronic attendance records, so why not classroom assignments and textbooks as well?"

Anderson said teachers are playing an integral role in reducing paper usage.

Social studies teacher Matt Torrens has successfully experimented with this switch to electronic resources this year. His world geography class has not used a textbook and has been using the textbook's website if needed.

"In the beginning of the year, we had to make a lot of photocopies of the material, during the transition between textbooks and online resources," said Torrens.

One example that Torrens gave about paper reduction is the usage of online quiz-

zes instead of the paper maps that students used to turn in during class. Last year, students were required to complete four maps and a couple practice maps. With about five pieces of paper per student, and two classes with an average of 25 students, the paper usage for just the map assignment would total 250 pages. Comparably, an average tree can be converted to about 8,000 pages of paper, according to www.conserva-tree.org.

Now, students complete all this online and send the results to Torrens.

"I've also been passing out very few worksheets, especially in my AP US History classes," he said.

Torrens also noticed that students have become more responsible in terms of recycling in recent years.

"Kids are more aware now about the effects of wastage," said Torrens. "They're recycling more, as opposed to five or six years ago, when kids would just throw almost everything into the garbage can. I just try to encourage students to distinguish between paper and plastic when they recycle."

Librarian Kevin Heyman said that the library has also made changes to save paper. It has reduced its paper magazine subscriptions from 45 to 20, the rest being available online.

In addition, instead of using books for research, Heyman has encouraged students to do most of their research on the online database on the library website.

"Using [the database] does not require paper, and it is a trove of constantly updated information," said Heyman. ♦

"The school has made the switch to online report cards, so why not assignments and textbooks as well?"

—junior Daryl Chang

WHAT SARATOGA HIGH THINKS

What is the meaning of life?

// Live to **love** (friends, family, and what you do) and love to laugh - that's the key to a happily successful life." - TEACHER **VALERIE ARBIZU**

"Find something you enjoy doing and then figure out how to make a living by doing it—you spend a lot of life working; it should be something you enjoy." - Teacher **KIRK DAVIS**

"Keep your eyes on the **big picture in life**, and continually be thankful for the blessings you have." - Teacher **CHERYL LENTZ**

"I am convinced that life is **10% what happens to me and 90% how I react.**"

-Stats teacher Seema Patel

"To me, life is about adventures and having fun. It is also about being caring and loving to your fellow man. Live life to the fullest."

- **SENIOR SAVAN PATEL**

"Every day is a racetrack set with a certain number of hurdles. Each day is spent trying to make it to the next track without breaking too many limbs."

- **JUNIOR DARYL CHANG**

"**Life = Success and Satisfaction.**

Live it up so I will never regret not doing anything."

- **SENIOR HASHIM HYDER**

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF ... LIFE HAPPINESS

"The purpose of life is living happily with my family and doing things you enjoy doing."



Mirzadegan

"Life is to be able to look in the mirror and tell myself that I have done my best."



Wang

For freshman Amin Mirzadegan, having a perfect life includes not only being happy with his job but spending time with his family as well. "My family means a lot to me," said Mirzadegan. "Some people think life is all about themselves being happy, but I think that being happy with family leads to a better life."

Freshman Alex Wang has a differ-

ent goal for life than Mirzadegan does, though the two share similar thoughts. "To me, life is about getting all the girls and making moolah," said Wang. "But jokes aside, every night, if I can look at myself in the mirror and tell myself that I tried my best without lying, then I would be happy with my life." Both freshmen hope to fulfill their dreams in the future. ♦

"Scientifically, it's a rapid release of serotonin between the neurons of the brain."



Chang

"It can be caused by something as small as candy, to something as large as marriage."



Lee

Junior Pamela Lee loves not only being happy herself, but making other people happy as well. "I have grown up with my parents constantly telling me that I must take care of others," said Lee. "However, I love putting a smile on other people's faces."

Junior David Chang, taking AP biology, attempted to explain hap-

piness through science. However, when thinking deeper, he came to the conclusion that "happiness is about looking forward to experiencing each day." "The best form of happiness," said Chang, "is being content with your relationship with the world." Chang said that overlooking imperfections is also another key factor in the happiness in his life. ♦

TOGATALKS

What are your life's mantras?

"Do the thing you like to do. Be positive. There is something good in every situation."



sophomore Anthera Rao

"Try your best, even if you fail, try again and again. Always be the bigger person."



senior Courtney Murabito

"Live outside of the social levels and do what you can to acquire as many experiences as you can."



sophomore Eva Johnson

TRUTH IS ...

"Telling someone to their face, 'yes, those jeans make your backside look overly rotund'."



Shih

"Truth is the correct answer to anything, something people should have in life."



Chou

To senior Craig Shih, truth is based off of people's honest opinions. If someone asks him a question, he'll tell them exactly what he thinks, whether they'll like what he says or not.

"Truth is basing your opinions of an individual on personal interactions," he

said, "Not on gossip, rumors, or others' thoughts."

For senior Lawrence Chou, however, truth is what is correct. Being brutally honest isn't necessarily the truth, but rather having a more neutral perspective. ♦

SUCCESS IS ...

"Find what you love to do, do it as a career; find something else you like to do and do it as a hobby."



McIntyre

"The degree in to which you look forward to the coming day each morning; do something you love."



Nguyen

"Learn something new every day, make your work fun, do your best, keep a little fight in your soul, and look on the bright side."



Mohnike



Garcia

"My theory in life is to pursue your passion, not the money or the power. Good music and lots of chocolate certainly help. Spend some time being a kid while you're still able to."

FALCONPOLL

What is the most important thing to you?



- 25% Getting a high-paying job
- 33% Going to a good college
- 42% Being happy

The Falcon polled 100 students on March 11.



Maggie Lin, Rebecca Nguyen, and Alex Song

LIFE IS FULL OF THE UNEXPECTED. WHETHER EMBARRASSING, DIFFICULT, OR INSPIRING, THESE EXPERIENCES SHAPE WHO WE ARE. THE FALCON SHARES SOME OF THESE STORIES.

Gives Hope

Junior comes to terms with sister's 2007 murder

by Lauren Kuan

Summer was coming to an end in 2007, and junior Eric Chuang was at home playing video games when he suddenly heard his mom screaming for his dad. Soon after, he was stunned to hear his older sister Karen had been mugged, shot and killed by an assailant in San Diego. His sister was 27 at the time of her death. Her killer was never caught.

Eric was about to enter into eighth grade at Redwood Middle School. Karen's tragic death was devastating because in many ways he considered his sister to be his second mother.

"Since our parents were always working, she would always be the one to take care of me and also take me to school, feed me, buy me presents, take me shopping and those kinds of things," said Chuang.

Whenever his sister, a 1999 SHS alumna, had plans with her friends, she would always take

him along so much so that he practically grew up with her friends. Not only did his sister allow him to tag along, but she also always found herself talking about her brother.

"I couldn't ever understand how or why she could love me so much since no big sister is ever that good to their little brother. It was as if she saw me as a son; I was practically closer to her than anyone else in my family" said Chuang.

Although Chuang says he has overcome the shock and grief of the loss, he at first coped with it in an unhealthy way by bottling up all his feelings.

"I saw my family completely torn apart and broken down so I told myself to be the one to hold everyone up, but really I was just throwing the weight of the world on myself," said Chuang.

His biggest support system was his friends, who were there to give him hugs and shoulders to cry on.

"I used to put my feelings off as though I was OK, so when I finally came out showing the true pain inside, I guess that's when I started healing, and my friends were a big part of that as they al-



CHUANG

Junior learns that expressing feelings helps heal pain.

"The best thing to do is to hope and look forward."

— Junior Eric Chuang

ways made sure that I was feeling fine day after day," said Chuang. Chuang has also learned not to mourn when such a tragedy occurs, but to celebrate all of the accomplishments that person has achieved in life.

"I learned that death is never the end of a loved one because they always live in pictures, gifts and memories; and you should always appreciate it. That means not bringing pain upon yourself and tearing your own life apart in grief over death," said Chuang.

Chuang's story is just one of many tragedies that are going on in the world. How he handled and evolved from the experience is what is so inspiring.

"You can't mourn forever, and you have to accept what happened, so the best thing to do is to hope and look forward. Because things WILL become better; the sun will eventually rise...but you have to lift your head to see it," said Chuang. ♦

Tough Breaks

- Vivien Lu

What was your worst day ever?

When I walked in on my sister and her friend webcamming. I was only wearing boxers.



freshman David Zarrin

A tree crashed on my house. It was just horrible.



sophomore Annie Barco

In 6th grade, I tripped in the middle of the quad and the 8th graders were laughing at me.



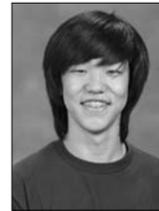
sophomore Talia Sisco

The day I tore my ACL because I had to get surgery on it.



junior Tim Lycurgus

I mooned the entire cast of Grease but I wasn't actually supposed to. It was in the song!



junior Jae Lee

Wake Up Call



Le

After a history of being late to school, sophomore Rachel Le's stepdad became fed up and decided to fix her tardy problems. Now, Le gets to school right on time. His technique did not involve any punishment. Instead, he took the approach in a much more clever manner.

As it turns out, Le's stepdad found a Spanish radio station channel that played very "obnoxious" music at times.

It was so annoying to Le that it would motivate her to get out of bed just so she could turn it off.

"It took me almost forever to find my favorite radio station," Le said. "My stepdad managed to ruin it in a few seconds by changing it." Although it may be a burden to Le, it has changed her habits.

Before, morning after morning, Le had been spotted sprinting down Herriman Avenue, sometimes even after the second bell had rung.

"I was always late for school in the morning," Le said. "It was because I was jamming to the music from my alarm clock; I had it on my favorite station, and I didn't want to get out of bed."

This meant she was frequently tardy and earned Saturday schools. "Now my radio station has been changed into something that I could never sing along to," she lamented.

Le has even tried several times to return to her favorite station but to no avail. Even the few times when Le did find it, her stepdad changes it back.

"I'm stuck with this and I have given up all hope by now," Le said. "I have never dreaded waking up even more." ♦

Awkward Moments

- Izzy Albert

Toilet Troubles

For girls, waiting in line for a public restroom can be tough, especially since most of the time the lines are very long and seem to take forever. For sophomore Olivia Chock, who was at a college campus in Canada over the summer, waiting was not an option.

"The line for the girls' restroom was way too long, and I knew I'd be quick. The men's restroom was empty, so I figured, why not?" said Chock.

Chock stealthily went into the men's bathroom at an isolated area of the campus. She first looked around to make sure the coast was clear, then hurried into a stall. Everything was going well ... until a grown man walked in.

"All of a sudden I heard a man walk in, and then he knocked on my stall to see if anyone was in the stall. I responded in a deep, sort of manly voice, but it wasn't very convincing," said Chock.

The man replied suspiciously by saying, "OK then..."

Chock then waited for the man to exit the restroom before she left. The whole time the restroom was filled with silence.

Maybe waiting in line isn't such a bad idea after all... ♦



Chock

A Bloody Good Time

Sophomore Anika Jhalani's life can be easily classified as awkward.

But during one school dance, Jhalani's definition of awkward was taken to the next level.

Jhalani was dancing with one of her guy acquaintances at the school's Sadies dance last year, when all of the sudden she felt a trickle down her nose.

"I knew what it was, but I didn't want it to come in my way of

having a good time and dancing," said Jhalani, "so I just ignored it."

Jhalani's plan of keeping her dance partner from knowing about her bloody nose was soon ruined when one of her friends loudly screamed.

"When the guy I was dancing with found out I had a bloody nose, things got really awkward," said Jhalani. "So, I just ran away." ♦



Jhalani

THE FALCON BOOK OF... SARATOGA RECORDS

Can you fit S'more?

1ST PLACE: TEACHER BOB KUCER



by Maggie Lin
and Rebecca Nguyen

"1...chubby bunny...2...chwubby bwunny...3...twubby bwunny...4..." All of the Chubby Bunny participants sounded exactly the same as they put one marshmallow in after the other. Chubby Bunny is a childhood past time in which people compete to see how many marshmallows they can put in their mouth before saying "chubby bunny" is incoherent. In the first showdown, seniors Mika Padmanabhan and Trevor Teerlink stuffed six and seven marshmallows in their mouths respectively. The marshmallows were not the average sized marshmallows but jumbo sized, around an inch and a half tall. Seeing the chipmunk-like cheeks of both contestants, we were skeptical that anyone was going to break seven. We were wrong. On choir break, seniors Victor Wong and Fred Chua, and Junior Pat Soung were strong competitors with Wong six, Chua seven, and Soung eight.

Freshman Cameron Perry impressively managed to shove ten marshmallows in his mouth. On the search for the last contestant, science teacher Kirk Davis referred us to science teacher Bob Kucer. Putting on a show for his students, he strategically place 12 marshmallows in his mouth, breaking not only our expectations, but the overall record.

Although chubby bunny is a fun idea, actually stuffing marshmallows in your mouth is not so pleasant.

"I felt like I was going to choke," said Soung, "but afterwards I felt accomplished."

Kucer, the current record holder did not share the same sentiments as Soung.

"[I felt] no significant changes in my religion or spiritual life. It didn't quite meet my expectations as getting a tin pie of shaving cream shoved in my face or getting a bloody nose," said Kucer. "It didn't help me be inspired to grade all my writing assignments in AP Biology." ♦

Potter makes magic

by Vivian LeTran
and Maggie Lin



Ceramics teacher Leah Aguayo has had over 30 years of experience working with clay. While her students toil away at throwing, taking an average of 10 minutes for advanced students, throwing a bowl is effortless for Aguayo. The Falcon timed Aguayo to see how long it takes for her to throw a bowl.

Although she rarely times herself, Aguayo did not feel the pressure and seemed completely at ease as she easily manipulated the clay. She bested her own previous record of 47 seconds with a new time of 44.995 seconds.

Since she is always up for a challenge, we asked Aguayo to throw blindfolded. Not only did she pass with flying colors, but she actually chose to throw a vase, a creation considerably more difficult to make than a bowl. While spectators giggled as she blindly grasped for the water bowl, she kept her composure feeling around for what she needed. She finished with a beautiful masterpiece in a speedy

2 minutes and 27.25 seconds.

"I was surprised at the shape after I [took off the] blindfold," said Aguayo. "I was going for a classical vase shape, which is narrow at the bottom going out at the top with a little rim. But in my mind I thought it was taller, so I was surprised that it was a little shorter than I had originally thought."

Aguayo finds throwing blindfolded to be a completely different experience that requires the thrower to be aware of their senses.

"It forces you to use all your senses. You have to get the feel of what you're doing and listen to the sounds of things," said Aguayo. "I could hear my wheel speed and feel the shape with my hands. You also have to organize your bowl of water and tools to know where they are."

Aguayo first tried to throw blindfolded a little over 10 years ago. On a television show called "That's Incredible," she saw a man with no arms throw a pot with his feet. Inspired by this amazing feat, she tried to imagine how a blind potter would feel by attempting to throw blindfolded.

"[Blindfolding yourself] makes you aware of how a blind person has to feel with everyday life," said Aguayo. ♦



Karen Lyu

ATHLETE OF THE ISSUE

Clarke pushes for CCS finals

by Izzy Albert

The common phrase "every little bit counts" is one that senior thrower Connor Clarke can truly relate to.

Last year, Clarke was less than an inch short of qualifying for CCS Finals in shot put, throwing 48'4". However, the fact that he was so close only makes Clarke hungrier for the upcoming season.

"I feel like I'm ready for the challenges this year," said Clarke. "I'm shooting for possibly a place in states, which can be done if I keep improving."

The process of shot put is to launch a spherical metal ball weighing 12 pounds as far as possible. According to Clarke, shotput relies on "raw strength and precise technique to package a great throw."

Clarke started shot put in the sixth grade because he thought it would be the perfect fit for his body type. Since then, the 6-foot, 3-inch 280-pounder has participated in shotput each track season, improving drastically every year.

"The way to improve is just practicing and figuring out what works," said Clarke.

Intense determination and focus are key characteristics of every shot putter. While many sports require high levels of stamina, the shot put depends on an athlete's ability to put everything

into a couple of seconds.

"I like shot put because for those three seconds you have to put in every ounce of power you have," said Clarke. "The results never lie."

Clarke has been a great inspiration to his teammates, always coming to practice with "a smile on his face and ready to go," according to sophomore teammate Brandon Oliveri O'Connor.

"[Clarke] really shows everybody that with a good attitude, we can bring out our best performance," said Oliveri O'Connor. "Shot put may be an individual sport but [Clarke] brings us all together as a team."

Along with shot put, Clarke has also been playing football for the last four years. While he does hope to continue sport at an undecided college next year, Clarke said, "[Football] is a fraternal team sport and [shot put] is more of an individual performance," adding that "the two sports are like apples and oranges."

Playing the position of left tackle, football has pushed Clarke to grow in many different ways over the years. However, shot put has taught Clarke self-confidence and focus.

"[Shot put] has taught me how to be determined to work towards being the best and reaching goals whether they are long term or week by week," said Clarke. ♦



Clarke



ProImage Studios

BOYS' GOLF

Youngsters start season on par

by Sarah Hull

The boys' golf team opened the season with an overwhelming win against Santa Clara with a score of 202-286 (lowest score wins) on Feb. 24. The team then took second in a three team match against Los Gatos and Monta Vista, who placed first and third, respectively, on Mar. 1.

"The match against both Los Gatos and Monta Vista was the biggest one of the year," said junior and second starter Kent Paisley. "It wasn't our best match but we're playing Los Gatos again later this year, so we still have a shot to beat them."

Los Gatos and Monta Vista are Saratoga's main rivals within the El Camino Division and the three teams are vying for the top two spots.

One of these two placements will guarantee advancement to the league tournament, where, if they make it, they will then face off against the top two teams from the other league in the South Bay.

"There isn't an upper and lower league in golf, they're balanced," said Paisley. "Because of this, there are really only three teams in our league [Los Gatos, Monta Vista and Saratoga] that compete for the top two spots every year and everyone else basically sucks."

The team members, while they still wish to finish in the top two, are also concerned with getting playing experience, as they do not have any seniors.

"Our goal for this year is to finish second in our league so we can get some experience playing in the league tournament," said Paisley. "It's next year when we can make a real run for the title because we don't have anyone graduating this year."

The team consists of six players who compete during matches, led by junior and No. 1 starter Andrew Cho, as well as eight additional players who practice with the team but do not get to compete during the matches.

To determine the team's overall score at a match, they add together five lowest scores out of the six who play.

"The higher level kids shoot around even par and when it gets down to the lower ranks on the team, they're shooting a little over bogey golf," said Paisley.

Their most significant upcoming matches are against Monta Vista on March 15, and Los Gatos, who are expected to finish first in the league, on March 29.

Due to printing deadlines, the results for the match against Monta Vista could not be published. ♦

"Our goal is to finish second in our league so we can get some experience playing in the league tournament."

—junior Kent Paisley



Girls' Soccer: Underdog bid falls short

The girls' soccer team had one goal for this season: to improve from last year. Not only has the team accomplished this goal but they have exceeded it by making it all the way to the CCS quarterfinals.

Saratoga, ranked lowest in CCS, lost a close quarterfinal game to No. 1 ranked Scotts Valley on Feb. 27. The teams tied 0-0 in regulation play, and the score remained tied throughout overtime.

The game went to penalty kicks, and since Scotts Valley scored all five of its penalty kicks, one more than Saratoga, they moved on to the semi-finals.

Despite a disappointing end to a close match, the Saratoga underdogs were proud to have kept such a close game to Scotts Valley.

"We couldn't have played better; it looked like the No. 9 team was going to upset the No. 1 team," said head coach Kim Anzalone. "These girls just played their guts out."

Scotts Valley had a strong offense but Falcon defense, headed by senior co-captains Sarah Guy and Sam Li, was able to hold them to few shots on goal.

"We kept up with and pressured a team that is used to winning and we had them nervous by the end," said Guy.

In order to make it to the quarterfinals, the Falcons defeated Santa Catalina in the first round of the CCS playoffs on Feb. 27 in Monterey.

Sophomore Courtney Brandt scored early in the first half off an assist from senior Adele Perera. Brandt also put in another goal in the second half off a pass from senior co-captain Jordan Leonard.

Senior co-captain and goalie Jan Iyer was a key player in preventing the attacking Santa Catalina from scoring with several big saves.

Despite falling just short to making the semi-finals, the girls gave Scotts Valley players a run for their money and completed a thrilling season.

"They put in everything they had," said assistant coach Brandon Chow. "You can't ask much more from the players." ♦

Girls' Hoops falls to V. Christian in Semis

While the Falcons may have lost their CCS semi-final game against Valley Christian High School on Feb. 27, they did accomplish something else. The 62-42 loss marked the furthest any Saratoga High girls' basketball team has made it in the CCS playoffs.

"I'm happy with our team's performance," said junior Arya Parhar. "Even though we lost, this is the farthest any SHS girls' basketball team has ever gone."

In order to make it this far, the team beat Prospect High School 44-34 on the road Feb. 25 and Seaside High School 52-45 at home on Feb. 23.

"We played great games in CCS, and we managed to stay in the lead throughout the tournament," said Parhar.

Senior Nicole Gragnola continued to be a power house in the tournament as she led the team with 19 points against Prospect and 22 points against Seaside. Other key players included senior Baylee Yates and sophomore Shriya Nagpal, who played tough defense and made many steals throughout the tournament. ♦

Boys' Soccer: Record breaking heart break

After winning the El Camino league and advancing to the quarterfinals in CCS playoffs after a bye in the first round, the Falcons' season came to an end on Feb. 27 in a 5-0 loss to Sacred Heart.

The Falcons (13-7-1) kept up with Sacred Heart (13-7-3) early in the game, trailing their opponents 1-0 through the first half but fell during the second half when Sacred Heart scored four goals to increase their lead to 5-0.

"We weren't playing the same that we had played the entire season," said sophomore defender and team co-captain Jonathan Junqua. "[Sacred Heart] was a very good opponent, to be honest, they wanted the win more than we did."

Even though the team's CCS title hopes were dashed, the Falcons did accomplish a lot this season. With the youngest roster in the league, they surprised many of their opponents this season by finishing first. After the success that the Falcons had with their underclassmen-filled roster, they are looking forward to the next few years.

"I'm looking forward to the next few years with our young team, because we can only get better," said Junqua. "After pulling off this kind of result, we are all hoping for a stronger result next year." ♦

by Izzy Albert, Roy Bisht, Olivia Chock, Aanchal Mohan, Ren Norris and Apeksha Sharma

BADMINTON

BACK TO
BASICSTEAM REFOCUSSES
WITH GOAL OF LEAGUE
CHAMPIONSHIP

by Kevin Mu

“One, two, swing! One, two, swing!” head coach John Phung repeats as he slowly circles the members of the varsity badminton team, who stand organized into rows and are practicing their racket strokes at the top of the quad steps.

In a departure from last year’s more free-form practices, Phung, who is returning to coach the Falcons for his second year, is focusing on improving players’ core skills through basic drills and more intense conditioning.

“My goal for the team is to finish in the top three or maybe to even win the league championship,” he said.

Last year, the team was unable to place among the top three teams in the West Valley League mostly as a result of the loss of many experienced players to graduation. This year, however, the roster boasts many more seasoned players who are ready to attempt to restore Saratoga’s dominance in the sport.

Look to sophomore and junior national player Jeff Kuo, who leads Varsity boys’ singles, to help Saratoga secure 3 points in nearly every game. Freshman Derek Chao is a newcomer to the team but not to the sport of badminton (he is also a national player); with him playing mixed doubles, expect Saratoga to have a substantial advantage against their opponents.

“We can’t control what types of players the other team has, so we just have train our own players to be ready.”

—coach John Phung

The Falcons soared through two scrimmage games last week against Homestead and Prospect High Schools. They defeated Homestead 26-4 and Prospect 24-6. But Saratoga will have to overcome some much tougher opponents to accomplish their goals; key match-ups to watch out for this season include games against Gunn, Wilcox and Milpitas.

“In order to beat them, I think we just have to push our players to do our best,” Phung said. “We can’t control what types of players the other team has, so we just have to train our own players to be ready.”

Many players on the team have noticed the training differences that this year’s coaches have instated.

“It’s a lot more physical work,” said mixed doubles player Jasmine Lee. “I think that’s good. It’ll help us get ready for intense games and it will help us win.”

One more change that Phung instated this year has been to make the sport non-cut. Anyone who was genuinely interested during tryouts was given a spot on the team, although members of the training team cannot participate during official matches.

“My philosophy of coaching is that I have been given an opportunity to train students to become athletes,” Phung said, “and I don’t want any student who wants to exercise and get healthy to miss out on that opportunity.”

With these changes in mind, Phung is determined to learn from last year’s mistake. Despite being uncertain of Saratoga’s chances in the league, he is still confident that his team will perform well.

“We have the personnel and have the players,” Phung said. “More team leaders have risen to the occasion this year, and I think that it is a great benefit for us.” ♦

GIRLS’ SWIMMING



Emily Williams

Senior Lauren Opatrny (left) and sophomore Serena Chen (right) “take their mark” in their meet against Homestead on March 10.

United by treats, candy, tangerines

by Serena Chen

The girls’ swim team hopes to dominate this season with the advantage of an extremely strong team led by seniors Elizabeth Murray, Megan Nolet and Lauren Opatrny.

Last season, the team placed eighth overall at CCS, ranking fifth out of the public schools, and the girls think they can compete with anyone.

“We should be placing in the top 10 at CCS,” said Murray. “We have done it these last couple of years, so it’s possible for us.”

“Paly and Homestead are our biggest challenges,” added Nolet.

The girls swam their first meet this season against Homestead at home on

March 10. Despite frigid weather that seemed to turn the girls into icicles, they had good swims. Because of technical difficulties, the coaches are still working out the final scoring.

“For a first meet I think we did pretty well,” said Nolet. “We won the 200 medley relay to start off the meet, so that was good.”

One main goal for the girls this year is to work on their team bonding. Since club swimmers do not actually practice with the school team, it is difficult for athletes to get to know each other on the team. The co-captains brought Rice Krispies, Clementines and fruit gummies for the everyone the day before their first meet to try bringing the group together over treats.

“We need to improve our unity as a team and this is how we’re going to start,” said Opatrny pointing to the heap of snacks. “We’re working on it.”

The co-captains see this year’s team as being similar to and perhaps even better than last year’s group.

“We lost some people from last year,” said Opatrny. “But I don’t think we lost anyone who went to CCS. So, we’re actually stronger this year.”

“I expect some of our non-club swimmers to be stepping up,” said coach Kristen Thomson. “Not only do we have a very fast group of seniors, we also have some strong sophomores that came in last year, including Natalie Cheung and Rebecca Chen. This is going to be a really fun season.” ♦

BASEBALL

Top league promises tough games

by Roy Bisht
and David Eng

Major League Baseball is a game of transactions.

The constant waiving, releasing and signing of players and coaches epitomizes the continual change of team sports.

This past off season, the Falcons’ baseball program underwent some major changes of its own. Among the changes were a league promotion, new coaches and roster swaps.

Movin’ on up

After posting a stellar 12-3 record last season in the lower El Camino Division, the young baseball program will face tougher competition this year in the upper De Anza Division.

Last year’s team outscored El Camino division opponents 105-46, an average margin of victory of nearly four runs per game.

The Falcons will have a tough time replicating that success this season, though, as last season they went 4-8 in non-league play, including an mediocre 0-3 record against teams they will play in league this year.

Saratoga lost those games by an average of over six runs per game. Tough opponents include Palo Alto, Wilcox and

Monta Vista.

“There are a lot of tough teams in our league, and if we compete, we can come out on top, but the league is pretty talented, so we will have to play at a higher level than last year to compete with them,” said senior outfielder and co-captain Grant Thomas.

Coaching staff shuffled

While second-year varsity head coach Manny Steffen and his assistant coach Earl Charles will be back for another season, not much else stayed the same on the coaching front.

Steffen hired a new set of assistant coaches for the varsity team, Anthony Siri and Matt Arensberg, to fill the void left by Travis Hatfield, who resigned from coaching Saratoga to pursue his own amateur baseball career at local West Valley College.

Even though it took some time to adjust to the coaching changes, players such as senior outfielder Jon Hurrell believe that the team is in good shape.

“Our coaches are very serious about winning. One advantage for our team is that we have a strong coaching staff, and they have the knowledge to help us win at the upper league,” said Hurrell.

The team will feature lots of new faces this year, with just five returning varsity players and seven new players, including

two new underclassmen, sophomore Roy Bisht and freshman Kyle Dozier.

Bisht will provide premier defense at the middle infield positions and Dozier will hit leadoff.

The team will also carry two new seniors, Andy Berman and John Chen, who did not play last season. Berman figures to be a huge power threat in the middle of the Falcons’ lineup and Chen will bolster the pitching rotation.

This major roster revamp came about as a result of seven graduating seniors on last year’s roster. For the Falcons to succeed, Saratoga pitching will have to regain its footing after the team lost five of last year’s primary seven hurlers to graduation.

Injuries prompt roster swaps

The Falcons suffered a major blow when projected ace senior Vinnie Carstens and freshman pitcher Stevie Berman each underwent season-ending surgeries to repair arm injuries.

Picking up the slack will be junior Dillan Pak, who will also play shortstop for Saratoga.

“We have a young roster this year, so we may have some ups and downs, but as the season goes on, we can only get better, and that shows that we have the potential for not only a strong season but also a strong future,” said Thomas. ♦

GIRLS' LACROSSE

Steep learning curve inhibits otherwise strong team

by Sophia Cooper

It's never easy to have a team without a coach.

This was the situation presented for the girls' lacrosse team until three weeks of season training had passed. Thankfully, three coaches came out of the woodwork and are now in charge of the second-season sport. Head coach Eleni Rodgers, former goalie at UC Santa Cruz, assistant coach and SHS class of '01 grad Lynn Chou, former goalie at UC San Diego, and JV coach Lauren Junker, who played at UC Davis, stepped up.

"The new coaches are great. They fit in really well with us girls," said sophomore goalie Megan Benzing. "I really like the fact that they have all played goalie before and they seem to all get along. They are going to help us so much this year."

The Falcons finished their first week of coaching by participating in the Menlo School Jamboree on Feb. 27. This tournament consisted of four 25-minute games for girls to get back into the flow of the sport and to help train new refs. With just under 50 girls on the JV and varsity rosters, Saratoga sent two teams to the jamboree with a mix of new and experienced players on each.

"[The jamboree] went relatively well and we got to know our teammates better," said freshman attack wing Jenny Guarino.

Two preseason games against Notre Dame and Sacred Heart Prep on March 8 and 10, respectively, broke the rust off the girls for full-length games. While it got the Falcons back into adrenaline rush of competition, the girls also learned to expect the unexpected when a hail storm paused the Notre Dame game.

"[Playing in the hail] was awesome, especially since I had all my [goalie] pads on and wasn't affected by it," said Benzing. "I had all my defenders behind me. It was immensely cool; I could just hear [the hail] hitting my helmet."

Both games ended in disappointing losses, 10-5 and 13-2, respectively. The losses underscored some areas where the girls say they need to get better: improving communication on the field, retrieving ground balls, and switching hands.

"I think our talented new coaches have been and will continue to provide us with new and interesting drills that can improve our game on all matters," said Benzing. "We'll probably do more things which give people the opportunity to try and get a ground ball with a bunch of people around."

Key players include first, second, and third homes (offense) juniors Vanessa Block and Cassie Tran and senior co-captain Jodi Huang, junior center Ren Norris, and senior point (defense) co-captain Sophia Cooper and senior defensive wing Lauren McInnis on defense. Benzing remains varsity's only goalie. Underclassmen run strong on the team with Guarino playing as a starter and many sophomores filling the roster.

"We are a great team and I think we can improve a lot this year by just trying our best and helping each other achieve our goals," said Benzing.

The Falcons played at Harker on March 15 and against St. Francis High School in Mountain View on March 17, but due to printing deadlines the results could not be published. They take on Palo Alto today at 4 at Palo Alto. ♦

"[Playing in the hail] was awesome since I had all my [goalie] pads on. I could just hear it hitting my helmet."

—sophomore goalie Megan Benzing



Amanda Yi

Freshman attack wing Jenny Guarino breezes past a Sacred Heart defender on March 10. They lost to the Gators 13-2.

WINTER OLYMPICS A SECOND OPINION

Luger's death preventable

by Christine Bancroft
and Roy Bisht

Since the opening of the Whistler Sliding Centre in 2008, many have called the luge track "too fast" or "unsafe." People believed that one day, the track would take the life of one of its competitors. But they never expected that a fatal accident would occur so soon, as Georgian luger Nodar Kumaritashvili was killed after losing control of his sled and slamming into a steel pole during a practice run on Feb. 12, the opening day of the Olympics.

Regardless of the many complaints about the track, no actions were taken to make track any safer until after Kumaritashvili's death, when they changed the ice profile and added a wooden wall where he lost control. Luges typically travel at speeds of 75-85 miles per hour, and, at the Whistler track, speeds of 95.7 mph have been reached. When Kumaritashvili made contact with the steel pole, he was traveling 89.2 mph.

Vancouver's officials, including the Coroner's Service of British Columbia and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), attributed the Kumaritashvili's death to "inexperience." Kumaritashvili came out of turn 15 too late and was traveling too quickly to compensate for turn 16, causing him to fly off the track. But Kumaritashvili had been lugging for almost his entire life and was internationally ranked 44th out of 65 world-class competitors at the Olympic Games.

This is lugging's first death since Dec. 10, 1975, and the first Olympic athlete to die at the Winter Olympics in training since 1992. It's not much of a coincidence that the first luge death in 35 years occurred on what has been considered the "most dangerous track on the planet."

After such a horrid incident, the Whistler track was updated in order to fall in line with safety regulations. The starting point for men's lugging was moved to the women's starting point; the ice profiles were changed to lower the speeds and for safety; and any unprotected steel support beams were covered.

But this tragic death could have been prevented had Olympic officials taken heed of the warnings and listened to the complaints of the public. Just before Kumaritashvili's death, Romania's Violeta Stramaturaru was knocked unconscious on the track. American luger Megan Sweeney, who slid just after Stramaturaru, went airborne on the final curve and crashed. Sweeney walked away, but was badly shaken. During the competition, Romania's Mihaela Chiras crashed during her second run.

The track was obviously far too slick and fast for competition. A crash was inevitable, and despite Kumaritashvili's experience, he still fell victim to the dangers of the Olympic board's authority. Wisely learning from these mistakes, Russia is working with the International Lugging Federation in preparation for the 2014 Winter Olympics, which are to be held in Sochi. No doubt the track will be much slower in speed, a safe yet challenging course for these world-ranked luges.

Kumaritashvili's death was tragic in itself, but the true tragedy lies in its easy prevention. If the Olympic committee members had only paid attention to the warnings and complaints of numerous experts and the general public, a death wrought by the ultimate celebration of a sport may have been avoided. Now, a promising young athlete is dead, an entire country is in mourning and an international sports festival was overshadowed by an avoidable accident. ♦

BOYS' TENNIS

Team ranks first in state

by Karthik Annaamalai

As of now, the boys' tennis team—maybe the best team in the history of the school—is the No. 1 ranked team in the state, having won the Wawona Peachtree Classic in dominating fashion earlier this month.

The undefeated boys' tennis team is back on a mission following last season's suspension from CCS due to the team failing to attend the NorCal competition in 2008. As a result, the players view this year as a rebound year, planning on winning not just the El Camino Division, the toughest public school league in the area, but also CCS.

To help their cause, the Falcons have many returning players, such as No. 1 singles player John Lambie and juniors Nikhil Jayashankar and Deepak Sabada, playing No. 2 and No. 4 singles. In addition, senior Eric Gast returns to the team as No. 3 singles.

The team surpassed the bar set by their coach by placing first in the Peach Tree Classic Tournament out of 108 teams on March 5 and 6, ranking them first in the state.

"We knew we were going to be a great team this year talent-wise, so it was really

all about executing," said Sabada. "The teams we played were pretty good, but we ended up coming out on top."

The Falcons won every match they played in the tournament, beating Dana Hills 7-0, Davis 7-0, Corona del Mar 6-1 and Monta Vista 7-0.

"Everyone on our team played really well because we only lost one match the whole tournament," said Sabada. "Corona del Mar was probably the toughest team we played because we hadn't played against them before."

After sweeping the Peach Tree Classic, the team looks to compete in the Newport National Tournament on March 20 and 21, which will feature the best teams from around the country, ranked as the No. 3 seed.

University High School, the defending champions of the nation-wide tournament from Southern California, will be the main competition for the Falcons as well as Menlo, the team's yearly rival.

"First, we're going to focus on the [Newport National]," said Sabada. "This tournament is really important to us because we haven't been invited in a long time and, with the talent we have this year, we know we can do really well in it." ♦

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BOYS' LACROSSE

New coach raises morale, changes game plan

by Parul Singh, Kim Tsai
and Jordan Waite

As the spring season begins, morale is high on the varsity boys lacrosse team. They have better players, a new coach and more effective practices.

"[Head Coach Larry Boehm] is a lot better motivator than our old coach was. Our stick skills are definitely a lot better this year than last year," said senior co-captain and midfielder Danny Baldwin.

According to Baldwin, not only is the new coach a better motivator, he is also knowledgeable about the game and is able to encourage the boys to try harder things to improve.

Another reason the team is much better this year is the addition of many valuable players, including freshman Pablo Parker and Chance Cox. Most players feel that they will be strong additions to the team.

"We have more experienced players this year," said junior midfielder Rick Wilson. "Last year, for most players it was their first year on the team."

"[Senior attackman] Andrew Lee is probably our best player and midfielder Eric Van Noorden is the best sophomore player. The two of them particularly know how to control the ball and they

do that really well," said senior co-captain and defenseman Adam Oreglia.

As of March 10, the boys had won one pre-season scrimmage and lost three games. Despite the 1-3 record, they remain optimistic about their chances in games ahead.

"Last year our goal was to pretty much win a game, but we are setting our goals a little bit higher this year. Our goal this year is to make the playoffs," said Oreglia.

Despite all the changes for the better, the boys still have some things to work on.

"We need to work more on the team communication especially on defense," said Baldwin. "In our last game [on March 5], there were times where no one was sliding to the ball and that was leaving guys wide open so we have to communicate so we can stop that from happening again."

Looking forward, the players anticipate the major games will be against Mountain View on March 16 and Los Gatos on March 26.

"[The game against] Mountain View was pretty evenly matched, but they beat us last year," said junior midfielder Trevor Combs. "Hopefully we will beat them this year." ♦



Jordan Waite

Senior Adam Oreglia runs past a defender in the game against Watsonville on March 9.

GIRLS' TRACK AND FIELD

Fresh start out of the blocks

Team hopes that change in coaching will facilitate improvement, bigger presence at leagues in May

by Aanchal Mohan

Two new coaches + a lack of experienced track athletes = a long season ahead.

This simple equation shows how challenging the girls' track team's season may be. For the past few years the ladies have proven to be strong, producing many athletes who have gone to compete at the college level, such as alumnae Katie Gasik (Chico State, hurdles) and Kiersten Dolbec (UC Santa Barbara, high jump). This year the girls are going to have to jump over many hurdles to make it to leagues.

"Since there are a lot less of us, we're going to have to work a lot harder to make [an impact at] leagues," said senior thrower Baylee Yates. "We have a lot of potential; it's just going to be a challenge."

Compared to previous years, participation in girls' track has declined, and the team has mostly underclassmen. While many of these underclassmen have proven their skill, including freshmen distance runner Courtney Schlossareck and sprinter Melodie Bellegarda, their lack of racing experience could prove to be problematic. With the help of the new sprint coach Michael Xiatory, however, they hope to be able to prove otherwise.

"The new coach works us a lot harder than previous coaches," said senior sprinter and co-captain Danielle Conway. "He works more on strength and technique [compared to others]."

Another change in the team this year, besides the lack of upperclassmen, is the addition of three new coaches. After head and throwing coach Andy Arnez and sprint coach Dave Li didn't return this season, jumping coach Archie Ljepava stepped up to the plate and took on the role of head coach.

"[Ljepava] is definitely stepping up



Kevin Rollinson

Sophomore Michelle Cummins flies high on a long jump during track practice.

his authority," said Conway. "He's doing a great job at taking control of the team."

Besides the addition of Xiatory, throwing coach Jason Nelson has also joined the track family.

As the new coaches begin to familiarize themselves with their respective athletes, they will soon have to take into

consideration who will be running varsity and JV. As of March 8, no one has officially been informed of their positions except for returning varsity athletes such as senior sprinters Conway and Sarah

Guy, thrower Yates and senior distance runner Karen Wai. The mock meet on March 4 helped decide where each person would be placed.

The Falcons officially started their season with an away meet at Wilcox, one of Saratoga's toughest competitors, on March 11 and then at home against Monta Vista on March 18, but due to printing deadlines results could not be published. ♦

"Since there are a lot less of us, we're going to have to work a lot harder to make [an impact at] leagues. We have a lot of potential."

—senior thrower Baylee Yates

SOFTBALL

Cinderella story in the making

by Olivia Chock
and Vivian LeTran

Coming off a losing season, junior pitcher Megan Brading knows the softball team will have an uphill climb as they head into the new season. As a result, improvement is the main goal for the team this year.

"Our goal is to work together because we have a lot of new people moving up to varsity," said senior third baseman/outfielder Stephanie Borsum. "For now, we're trying to learn where we are and improve from there."

The team hopes winning the first pre-season game against Prospect on Feb. 25 marked a positive sign. The team, coached by Ray Sisco for a second year, is currently in the El Camino League. Key players include Brading and seniors leftfielder/second baseman Emily Baba, catcher Cathryn Paolini, third baseman Nicole Gragnola and pitcher/second baseman Kritika Patil.

"We all contribute to the team a ton and since [a lot of us] are coming back from being on varsity this year, everyone is important to the team," said Paolini.

With five players lost from last year, the girls hope the team will remain strong

and aid them during the games.

"This year, the team is mostly juniors and seniors, so [the team] is still pretty close," said Paolini. "We're probably going to do a lot more bonding this year, which is going to help us do better."

Despite the team's optimism, reaching CCS still seems like an impossible goal for many of the girls.

"It would be amazing if we make it to CCS, but I don't think CCS is really a goal for us at this point. We didn't really do that well last year, so this year, we aren't expecting to get that far either," said Brading. "We just want to see how many games we can win this season."

Tough opponents include Los Gatos, Lynbrook and Gunn.

"The games are usually really close," said Borsum. "We don't really have any big rivals except maybe Los Gatos, but LG is a rival for everyone [at Saratoga]."

Although hopes of winning more games this year than last are high, Borsum said the team is just going to try their best and enjoy the season as much as they can.

"I'm really looking forward to this season because it's my last year," said Borsum. "No matter what, it'll still be fun. We'll see what happens." ♦

Memorial Day Speech Auditions

Juniors and Seniors

Theme: Service Without Reward

3 to 5 minutes

Presented at the annual Saratoga Memorial
Day Observance at Madronia Cemetery in
SaratogaAuditions: Wednesday, April 21 Starting at
4:00. Email Anne Kolb at kolb.anne@att.net to
reserve a time.

BOYS' SWIMMING

Swimmers hope to match last year's success

by Tim Rollinson
and Emily Williams

"Step up." Eight swimmers step on to the white starting blocks. "Take your mark." They bend down, fingers and toes curled around the edge of the block, poised for action.

"Go!" Bodies explode off the blocks in a tight streamline and they are off, swimming the first 100 of varsity boys' swim coach Christian Bonner's dreaded test set.

This test set consists of 10 100m freestyle, with every odd 100 at an all-out sprint for time and even 100s providing much-needed recovery. This brutal test is a way for Bonner to measure the fitness level of his swimmers so that he can create the best possible line-up for meets.

According to Bonner, the line-up plays a huge role in the outcome of meets. He said he spends roughly three hours every meet on just making out the line-up, where he tries to match up his best swimmers against the other team's best swimmers and gain an advantage against the competition.

Touch competition this year is expected to come from Gunn, Palo Alto and Los Gatos. Of the three, Los Gatos, who finished fourth at CCS last year, will be the toughest to beat because very few of their fast swimmers graduated last year.

"We have a chance [of beating them] if we make the line-up good," said junior

Adam Hinshaw.

The team isn't as strong this year as it was last, when swimmers broke five CCS records, set a national record in the 4x100 relay and were named the *Swimming World Magazine* national champions.

Key swimmers from last year who graduated include Brad Murray, Ben Hinshaw and Matt Murray, who are all swimming at Division I schools.

Despite these losses, Bonner thinks the team can be strong with sophomore Ian Burns and Hinshaw, both national level swimmers, leading the way. After finishing as the runner-up at CCS for two consecutive seasons, the team will attempt to maintain its elite status.

"The team is still strong this year, just not as strong as last year's team, so we are just trying to maintain our current second place position."

—junior Adam Hinshaw

again in CCS, but I don't think we will be able to win this year," said Hinshaw. "The team is still strong this year, just not as strong, so we are just trying to maintain our second place position."

Hinshaw is expected to break his brother Ben Hinshaw's, class of 2009, 500 freestyle CCS record of 4:25.72. He also is within seconds of the 200 freestyle CCS record.

"I'm two and a half seconds away in the 500 right now and if I work hard and work on my turns, I'll be able to get it," said Hinshaw.

Bonner thinks the team may have a chance at winning the De Anza League, the upper league.

In addition to Hinshaw and Burns,

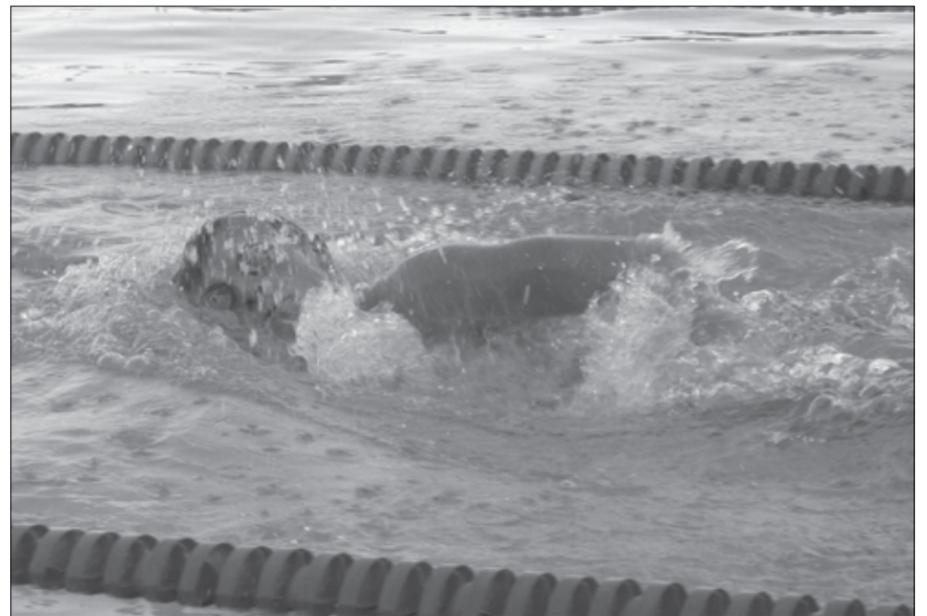
other returning CCS qualifiers include senior Kyle Borch, juniors Justin Chung and Tim Rollinson and sophomore Mac Hyde.

At their first meet against Homestead on March 10, the team dominated. Hinshaw won the 200-yard freestyle and the 500-yard freestyle, Kyle Borch won the 100-yard freestyle, Rollinson won the 100-yard breast, Ian Burns won the 200-yard individual medley and the 100-yard butterfly, and Justin Chung won the 100-yard backstroke. In addition the Hinshaw, Borch, Chung and Burns won the 4x100 freestyle relay. Times could not be published due to printing deadline. ♦

Junior Ben Hoeber gets ready on March 10.



Emily Williams



Emily Williams

Senior Kevin Rollinson races in the first home meet versus Homestead on March 10.

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL

Team struggles to convert enthusiasm into results

by Cullan McChesney

The Falcon volleyball team got off to a rough start this season with back-to-back losses against Sacred Heart and Leland on March 4 and March 10. These disappointing losses came along with an injury to one of the team's best hitters but allowed newer players to get used to varsity-level competition.

The team will be starting this year with returning coach Brad Fredrickson and with several key players like senior hitter James Kim and sophomore setter Brandon Pak, who is new this year.

They will be supported by new players juniors Brandon Pierce, James Huang, Jessie Rogan and Salmaan Javed. The team will be challenged by both control-

ling their own enthusiasm and also by key match-ups in Los Gatos, Harker and Willow Glen.

In the season's first game against Sacred Heart, the team was not able to get into good form and consequently lost all three games in the match.

Outside hitter Pierce attributed much of the team's struggles to poor connections in passing.

"Our passing just wasn't there," said Pierce, "but we've really worked on it since that game. Many of the passes were too low to set up a good set."

The match was also difficult for the team due to lack of substitutes for the starting six throughout the match. Although the loss was surely a detriment to the team's morale, spirit still runs high.

This needs to be kept in check, though, because it seems spirit running too high could be a developing problem.

"Sometimes we get too pumped up and forget what we learned," said sophomore opposite hitter Steven Sun. "We need to practice being more relaxed during games."

However, the team was not able to keep calm during the March 4 game at Leland and ended up suffering a second three-game loss.

The team gave several early leads in the beginning and were not able to close in the closing points. A major factor was the early loss of key hitter Kim, who dislocated his right thumb early in the first game of the match.

"It really sucks because I'm not able to

do normal things like put on my socks, and obviously I won't be able to play as well for a while," said Kim.

The team again failed to get into their groove and came into the game a little too pumped up. The boys did not hit their stride until late in the games, but by then it was too late to make a comeback and they were therefore disappointed in their performance.

"We played poorly and were definitely better than that, so it was difficult to see the game go the other way," said Pak.

Although the team wasn't able to close in either of their games, they hope that these first few games don't set the tone for the season and hope to work on both their passing and keeping calm during matches. ♦

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The Skinny

What's Hot Online
saratogafalcon.org

Opinion: "Georgian luger's death prompts concerns about track safety" by Christine Bancroft and Roy Bisht

"A silver medal by any other name..." by Nandini Ruparel and Christine Tseng

TOPTEN

WAYS TO ANNOY SOMEONE

- 10 Grossly exaggerate anything.
If you want to be roasted over a spike and then eaten alive, then go ahead.
- 9 Talk about snow.
It just rubs in the fact that Saratoga snow days are non-existent.
- 8 Talk about Shakespeare in regular conversation.
Thou has enough in thou English class.
- 7 Step on someone's white Nikes.
That smudge mark never comes off...
- 6 Take away someone's Internet access.
You may just be taking away their sanity.
- 5 Claim that you got nine hours of sleep.
Look, we all know you're lying, OK?
- 4 Ask them 20 form-spring questions a day.
It's not like they know its you...
- 3 Mention the SAT.
Like we haven't heard that acronym enough from, well, everyone.
- 2 Claim that Pluschenko rather than Evan Lysacck should have won the figure skating gold medal. He's just a sore loser. Get over it.
- 1 Say you hate basketball.
Feel the wrath of March Madness fans.

—Grishma Athavale and Nandini Ruparel

THECRITIC

The 82nd Annual Oscars
March 7

The 82nd Academy Awards show was a year of firsts; the first female to win best director, the first African-American to win best adapted screenplay and the first time there were 10 nominees for best motion picture. It was also the first time the Oscars had two hosts, Alec Baldwin and Steve Martin, who were very entertaining with their back-and-forth comedy. Although there was speculation that "Avatar" would take home the most awards, "The Hurt Locker" stole the show with wins in both Best Director and Best Motion Picture. ♦

—Cullan McChesney

Saratoga Snapshots



Grishma Athavale



Vivien Li



Jordan Waite

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: LOTTERY LUCK SENIOR AMEEKA SHENOY AND SOPHOMORE ALI KOTHARI SELL RAFFLE TICKETS FOR A FUNDRAISER AT LUNCH ON MARCH 10. SMOOTH JAZZ THE JAZZ BAND PERFORMS AT THE JAZZ CABERET ON MARCH 6. LOOK OUT SENIORS MADELINE ROTHENBERG, ELIZABETH MURRAY AND ANNA SCHROEDER VIEW WILDLIFE AT THE AÑO NUEVO FIELD TRIP ON MARCH 12. SHOW OFF JUNIOR WILL TANG AND SENIORS TAMMY LIAN AND CAROLYN CHEN ATTRACT INCOMING FRESHMEN TO THE ORCHESTRA TABLE AT ELECTIVES NIGHT ON MARCH 8.



Reri Norris

buzzworthy

'Molar Mass' wins chemistry contest

Over February break, a week typically devoted to family outings, junior Will Tang spent time with his mother a little more unconventionally.

"In the span of two hours, my mom turned me into a professional seamstress," said Tang. "I learned how to use a sewing machine and now I'm really good at it."

No, Tang was not preparing for a stint as a fashion designer. In fact, he and his mother were sewing together a mole to compete in chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu's annual contest. In the optional assignment, Nakamatsu asks students in her Honors and AP Chemistry classes to design a mole (usually a unit of measurement in chemistry but in this case a stuffed animal) with an appealing incentive: five extra credit lab points.

While some students sew a plain mole to simply obtain the extra credit points, most students, including Tang, dress their mole up for the actual contest based on a mole pun.

After a mole army from each of Nakamatsu's five periods was accounted for, teachers voted on the mole they deemed the best. The five

moles that we a s e l e d into the final round were sophomore T i f f a n y Tu's "Molympics," sophomore David Eng's "Mole B. Bryant," Tang's "Water Mole," junior Daryl Chang's "iMole" and junior Arthur Chang's "Molar Mass."

"I have never seen any of these before. They were all new and great," said Nakamatsu.

To determine the grand-prize winner of a \$25 gift card to Target, Nakamatsu held a blind vote for each of her five periods. By the end of the day, only one mole reigned supreme: Chang's "Molar Mass." Chang accessorized his fluffy white mole to represent the pope, holding a "molar mass."

"It's just a fun contest," said Nakamatsu. "I get to see a side of students I normally don't get to see." ♦

—David Eng



Emily Williams

The five moles in the final round.

Be the Change:
Help Chile

"Whether it's through awareness, monetary donations or sending supplies, Chile needs our help."

Sophia Cooper



San Francisco Bay: home of the Hyphy movement, Silicon Valley and fault lines threatening massive earthquakes every day.

Since kindergarten, we've learned how to duck under a table and cover our heads if the ground starts shaking. (My sophomore English class with Mr. Peck can sing the "Duck and Cover" song from a 1950s safety video by memory.)

We know where to meet our families in case of an emergency and what should be in our emergency-aid kit (canned foods, water bottles and first aid in case you're slacking).

Tragedy in Haiti and Chile

One area where we can still improve, though, is our response to others' earthquakes. We jumped into action when the Haitian earthquake hit, dedicating profits from Sadies to the cause and donating our own money to the American Red Cross. News flew fast as aid flew faster to help the victims.

But what about Chile?

When the South American country was rocked by a quake on Feb. 27, relief efforts were still concentrated in Haiti and many were unable to transfer the aid south. That 8.8 magnitude earthquake is the fifth largest in recorded history.

Then over 50 aftershocks hit within the next 24 hours, wreaking more havoc across the small nation than anyone can imagine. Over 200 were dead and 2 million missing after one fateful day.

The quake legitimately moved several cities, including Concepcion at least 10 feet to the west.

Even looters have given back their taken goods, feeling remorse for their actions and doing anything possible to help find their neighbors.

It could happen anywhere

Two of my friends who I have known for over 12 years were adopted from Chile. The agency that facilitated their adoptions no longer exists. Many of their friends and family are still unaccounted for, bringing a dreading sense of worry to their Saratoga home.

A family at my church immigrated from Chile, and while their relatives are thankfully doing fine, the fear they experience waiting for any news is unimaginable.

It easily could have been our own Bay Area that got hit by these recent earthquakes. There goes the Golden Gate Bridge, Villa Montalvo, the Oakland Coliseum.

There goes our lives.

It's up to us

Whether it's through awareness, monetary donations or sending supplies, Chile needs our help. If it's possible for us to create a worldwide telethon with celebrities for the Haitian relief, we can do the same thing for Chilean aid.

People can joke about surviving 2012, the Aztec apocolypse. They've lived through the Y2K scare, 9/11, SARS and swine flu epidemics.

But for the Chileans, that apocolypse came early.

Their livelihoods destroyed, their friends and family temporarily, or permanently, lost, their homes gone.

You can help by visiting www.habitat.org, www.redcross.org, www.savethechildren.org or www.worldvision.org to make monetary donations.

It's time for us to make a difference. ♦