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# saratogafalcon

Vo. 51 >> Issue 9 >> Friday, April 8, 2011 >> Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA >> saratogafalcon.org



LIFE | 12-13

He's creeped out by cotton balls... what are you afraid of?



SCHOOL SCOPE | 16-17

Watch out! Pitfalls abound at Saratoga High.

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POLICY CHANGES

## School tackles bullying

BY Michael Lee & Deborah Soung

Most students experience some degree of harassment or teasing from their peers, some much more seriously than others. In order to prevent bullying from spreading, assistant principal Brian Safine said that the administration has recently taken steps to open its harassment policy to include bullying.

In addition, the school has clarified what is considered bullying through staff meetings and e-mails in order to put a limit on harassment, according to Safine and assistant principal Kevin Mount.

"Part of what we're planning on doing in terms of bullying is really trying to work proactively, particularly with our ninth and tenth grade students as they come in," Mount said. "Everything out there for the most part is prevention—educating students, making it clear to students what bullying is and working to raise awareness so that students don't engage in that behavior."

According to Mount, the school defines bullying as recurring conduct that involves hostile actions toward one's peers.

"Regardless of where it takes place, behavior that denies the targeted individual access to the educational program [is bullying]," Mount said. "If it affects your ability to come to school and access the educational program, it's our responsibility to address it."

Read The Falcon's opinion on the school's new policy on page 8.

>> **BULLY** on pg. 5

>> **upcoming events**

**Apr. 9-17 Spring Break**

Enjoy your last break before summer! Alternatively, you could start studying for your AP tests.

**Apr. 20 Ceramics Souper Bowl**

Drink hot and tasty soup in handmade bowls while supporting the Ceramics program.

**Apr. 23 Junior Prom**

Juniors, pick your dresses, rent your tuxes and ties and prepare to have a blast!

inside **THE falcon**

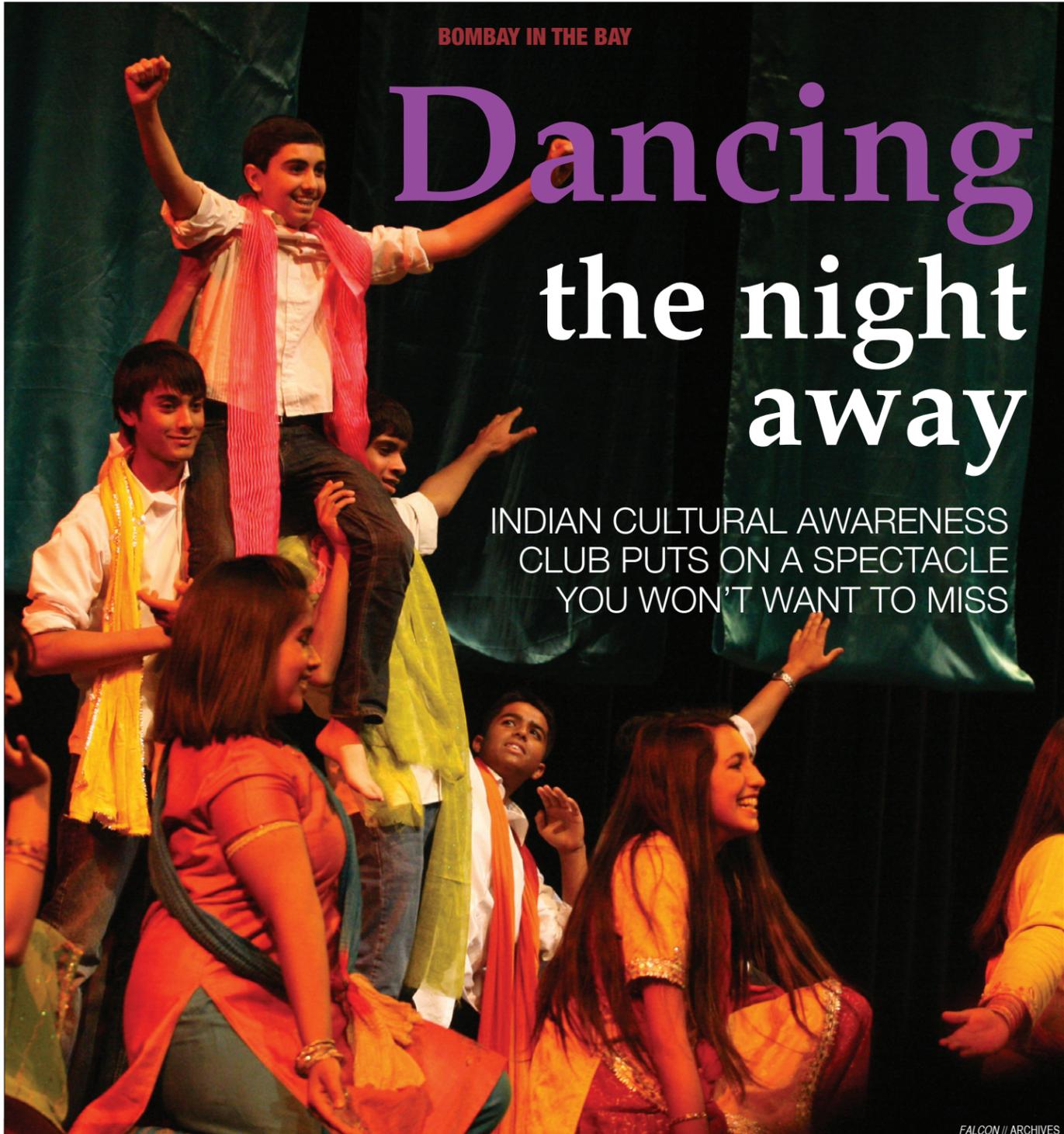
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>> **SCHOLARS** on pg. 5

BOMBAY IN THE BAY

## Dancing the night away

INDIAN CULTURAL AWARENESS CLUB PUTS ON A SPECTACLE YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS



FALCON // ARCHIVES

Hundreds turned out to watch students perform in Bombay in the Bay last year, above. Organizers are promising another entertaining show this year. "There's going to be great performances," said event coordinator senior Keerti Shukla. "People should come to support the community, support the charities that we're donating to, and of course to support the students."

>> **yougo**

**What:** Representing cultural pride and awareness, Saratoga High students perform lively modern Indian dances.

**When/where:** There will be two showings in the McAfee Center on April 9, one from 2 to 4 p.m. and one from 6 to 8 p.m.

**Tickets:** \$12 for afternoon and \$20 dollars for evening. Proceeds benefit the Bonnie J. Addario Lung Cancer and Suzie Nagpal Foundations.

CLASS OF 2011

## Chang and Zeng receive highest honors

BY Izzy Albert & Will Edman

The valedictorian and salutatorian of the Class of 2011 are Daryl Chang and David Zeng, respectively, according to the guidance department. Saratoga High's highest academic award are given to the senior students who have the two highest grade point averages spanning their entire high school careers.

"I was really surprised when I found out that I was valedictorian," Chang said, a sentiment that Zeng echoed. "Saratoga is really high achieving. I never even thought about winning."

According to assistant principal Brian Safine, every one of a student's classes is taken into account in order to determine their final GPA.

"Classes like freshman year PE can determine who's valedictorian and who's not," Safine said.

Because of Saratoga's competitive nature, the guidance department found that the top students in the senior class were separated by only the smallest amounts, such as the difference between

an A-plus and a flat A grade.

"[Chang] and [Zeng] were only separated by a few hundredths of a GPA point from each other and other students," Safine said. "It's tough for a student to set a goal from their freshman year to be valedictorian. Throughout your whole career, you have to get as many A-pluses and as little A-minuses as possible, and if you can accomplish that, it is a feat."



Chang



Zeng



**Students teach leadership to local kids**

Seventeen SHS students from ASB, commissions and leadership traveled to Argonaut Elementary School on March 3. At Argonaut, they met with 80 fourth and fifth graders from all three Saratoga elementary schools.

"I thought it was a really good experience to get to interact with people not from our school," said junior Claire Couch. "I enjoyed helping the younger students. We got to put the skills and techniques into practice to help the kids become leaders when they return to their campuses."

The younger students, who were selected for outstanding campus presence, learned how to become more confident, efficient leaders from their older mentors.

"Even though it was optional, I still wanted to do it," said senior Erin Wong. "I wanted to be able to do something with the community. It was a good opportunity to help someone other than the students at our school."

The grade school students were first led in an icebreaker activity. They then broke up into groups that attended four different stations on taking initiative, brainstorming, being a leader and time management. Although the high school leaders did their best to engage the students, Wong believes that some things could have been better.

"I think it was hard for them to focus and they weren't really paying attention at the end," Wong said. "I think it was a little overwhelming, but overall it was a really good thing to do."

—Christine Bancroft

**Music Department hosts Jazz Cabaret**

Saratoga's jazz bands and choirs again pulled off a successful Jazz Cabaret on March 19. The annual event, hosted by the music department, featured Jazz Band 1, Advanced Jazz Band, Concert Choir, Men's Choir, Women's Chorale, Redwood Middle School jazz band and the West Valley College Jazz Band.

"Jazz [Cabaret] was really fun this year," junior Ailene Nguyen said. "The music was really good. I think the bands and the choirs did really well."

This year, those who went were offered the option of purchasing tickets with or without food.

"It's good for those who just want to dance a little bit or came to watch people perform because they don't have to pay for food too," said junior Varsha Ramesh.

Despite the fact that the local chapter of the National Charity League held its graduation on the same night, roughly 500 people attended the event.

Since the choir went on a mini-tour only a week after, they did not much time to rehearse their songs but still performed at a high level.

"The songs were kind of rough, but we all did pretty well," Ramesh said. "Everyone really liked the last song, 'Shaboom,' and it went really well. I think the Jazz Cabaret went really well in general."

—Vivian LeTran

**Robotics team builds to win**

Although the current robotics team is only two years old, its members are confident and ready for the FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) this spring.

This year, the competition requires two robots. The first robot must pick up tubes and place them on a rack. The goal of the other mini-robot is to climb poles.

Because teams were only given a brief time slot of six weeks until the bagging date, members found planning to be a vital part of their building process.

"Planning is pretty important because, basically, if you stick to your plan, everyone can get working at the same time," sophomore Todd Nguyen said.

Out of M-SET's 50 members, 12 went to Seattle on March 17 to represent the team. The main robot performed well, earning the team 12th place. However, the team's mini-robot was unable to be deployed efficiently, dropping the team into 22nd place.

After rebuilding the mini-robot, senior Cordell Hollingsworth expects this next competition to fare better.

"We didn't do as well as we thought we would. We learned a lot of things we need to do well at the next competition," said Hollingsworth.

They moved onto the Silicon Valley Regional, which occurred from March 31 to April 2. Championships will take place in St. Louis from April 27 to 30.

—Deborah Soung and Kim Tsai

>> picturethis



FALCON // VIVIAN LETRAN

Junior Courtney Brandt eludes the senior defenders during Powderpuff finals on the evening of March 31 on the football field. Although neither team scored, the seniors won the tiebreaker by gaining more yards than the juniors.

falconfigures <<

Project Cornerstone survey responses >> See story on page 3

Asset	May 2007	Sept. 2010
A Caring Neighborhood	29%	45%
A Caring School Climate	26%	45%
Parent Involvement in Schooling	18%	33%
Safety	66%	63%
High Expectations	32%	58%
Time at Home	66%	87%
Achievement Motivation	70%	87%
School Engagement	56%	77%
Bonding to School	56%	78%

—Arnav Dugar

Source: Cornerstone Survey '07 and '10

>> falconfocus

Jordan keeps athletics running

BY Evaline Ju

From working in an underwater salvage company to being the athletic director at Saratoga High, Peter Jordan has always been willing to take on a big challenge.

His daily list of tasks is lengthy. In his third year as athletic director, Jordan communicates with nearly 100 coaches throughout the year, a staff larger than the school's faculty. He hires, trains them and makes sure they are properly certified.

Even with the overwhelming numbers, interacting with the coaches is Jordan's favorite part of the job.

"They are for the most part terrific people," he said. "They work long hours for little money and have to deal with many of the same frustrations I do, but they do it out of a passion for the sport and a desire to give our student athletes a good experience."

Jordan's list of responsibilities includes coordinating athletic schedules, maintaining facilities, writing letters of recommendations for athletic scholarships and helping select athletic award recipients.

He acts as the league representative for track and field

and is on the Sports Boosters Board. This year he also teaches two PE classes. Like many other staff members, he also answers phone calls and e-mails.

"Sometimes when people call me or write to me it is because they are unhappy about something, and that is challenging," Jordan said.



>> Athletic director Peter Jordan

But Jordan didn't start off as an athletic director; he dreamt of different jobs when he was young. He wanted to be a professional baseball player in the summer and an astronaut in the winter.

Jordan first held a teaching job in 1979 before graduate school. He received his master's degree in speech pathology in 1982 from Northwestern University. However, in the difficult economy, he became a bartender and restaurant manager and worked in underwater salvaging in Marina Del Ray while living in Malibu.

"[It] sounds pretty cool, but mostly consisted of hand-scraping barnacles and algae

from the hull of boats while breathing air out of a can all day," Jordan said.

In 1985 he helped open the California Café in Los Gatos and moved to working in public schools in 1989. Prior to coming to Saratoga High for the 2000-2001 school year, Jordan worked at Gavilan View Middle School in Salinas as a

speech therapist and a part-time French teacher.

"[When] Saratoga had an opening for a full-time French teacher, I jumped at the chance to work at such a great school,"

he said. He has taught for 25 years in total. In his free time he likes to stay active with CrossFit, traveling, cooking and reading.

Saratoga's athletics have given great memories to Jordan, namely football, basketball, lacrosse and soccer teams' victories against Los Gatos.

"These victories are helping to change the way Saratoga students think about themselves," he said. "I used to hear students talk about how much we suck at sports. I think that is changing for the better."

In the future Jordan expressed his desire to write a book about his experiences as an athletic director. ♦

## DISTRICT BUDGET

## Students take action for parcel tax measure

BY Deborah Soung

Imagine a school where budget cuts have begun to limit students' learning, where students outnumber teachers 40 to 1 in typical classes, where textbooks and resources are lacking quality and electives such as band, orchestra and drama are no longer offered or greatly reduced.

In an effort to limit the impact of budget cuts, juniors Mac Hyde, Anshu Siripurapu and Varsha Ramesh have become student liaisons to an organization called the Saratoga Measure A Committee, which seeks to pass a parcel tax in May to keep Saratoga and Los Gatos High School operating at a high level. The tax needs a two-thirds majority from district residents to pass.

Requiring residents under the age of 65 to pay \$49 a parcel annually for six years, the parcel would provide \$800,000 in revenue for the district per year, according to Siripurapu. Siripurapu joined the committee when he was offered the position of student liaison by Sharma.

"I was moved to join the committee because I feel it is necessary as students that we help support our school and make sure that SHS retains its top quality education," Siripurapu said. "Both I and the committee strongly support the parcel tax measure because it is necessary to secure much needed funds for our district."

The Measure A Committee is a primarily parent-driven organization, headed by co-chairs and parents Shinku

Sharma and Cathie Thermond. The organization's goal is to preserve the district's quality of education.

"[The student liaisons'] energy and enthusiasm is encouraging," said Sharma. "Like any volunteer for the campaign, they may help get the word out about Measure A by phone banking or precinct walking."

Phone banking is the task of calling members of the community in order to advocate for Measure A. Precinct walking is going door-to-door in order to accomplish the same goal, according to Siripurapu.

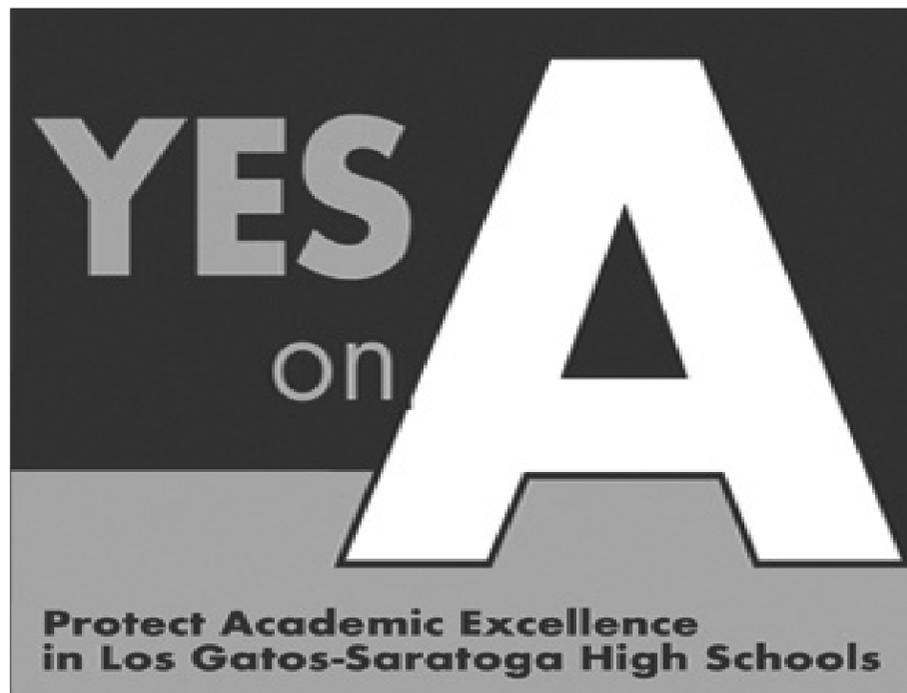
In addition to these jobs, student liaisons also gather additional student volunteers for the phone banking and raise student awareness, according to Ramesh.

"Right now we have about 20 [volunteers]," Ramesh said. "It's just people from the leadership class, but we want as many as possible. The committee offers community service hours for it, and I think it's really great to be part of a campaign."

Volunteers began communicating with voters mid-March, with students meeting once a week for phone banking and precinct walking.

"It's basically our other role to publicize about Measure A," Ramesh said, "because most people around here don't really know anything about it, and it directly influences them."

The committee believes that most voters will support the parcel tax once they learn about the reasons for it, according



The student commission mailed out this pamphlet to the Saratoga community.

to Ramesh. Furthermore, informing voters about the tax is the most unrestricted part of the committee's campaigning.

"It's really tricky with our roles because of all of the school rules," said Ramesh. "It's a campaign, technically, so we can't always necessarily advocate for it, but sharing information is always completely OK, so that's our main goal right now."

The dedicated student liaisons hope to see the parcel tax pass in order to keep Saratoga High's academic standards from falling.

"Our students are caring and passionate about many causes around town and country," said Sharma. "They have expressed an interest in getting involved in a campaign to help their school. Their voices are important." ♦

## ACADEMIC COMPETITIONS

## History Day qualifiers to contend at states

BY Justine Huang

Thirty-one students from Saratoga High School have moved on from the Santa Clara County History Day that took place March 19 to qualify for the State History Day, which will take place from April 28 to May 1.

The number of qualifiers increased significantly from last year, which had 12 students move on from county.

Librarian Kevin Heyman attributes the jump in qualifiers to the time spent prepping for History Day.

"We encouraged more people to participate," Heyman said. "I was more involved this year than before. It makes it easier for Mr. Torrens."

Students had to pass a preliminary school competition before becoming eligible for the county competition. With the exception of freshman Anushree Dugar, all of the qualifiers are juniors.

The five possible categories to enter under were: exhibit (group or individ-

ual), paper (individual), documentary (group or individual), performance (group or individual), and web site (group or individual).

"After the school competition, we got feedback from the judges about improvements to make on our documentary," junior Sanjana Chetia said. "We made the changes, and it really helped us in the county competition."

The participants chosen from the county History Day will go on to the California History Day competition from April 28 to May 1 in San Jose.

"It's exciting to get to the state level. We never expected to advance beyond the county level, so it's a bit of a surprise," Chetia said. "We're going to keep improving our project for the state competition, and maybe we'll have a chance at making it to nationals."

If chosen to compete at the National History Day competition, students will travel to the University of Maryland from June 12 to 16. ♦

## PROJECT CORNERSTONE

## Student survey results reveal positive trends

BY Giulia Curcelli

Students are generally feeling more positive about their well-being at school, at home, and in their community, according to recently released Project Cornerstone results from last September's survey.

Project Cornerstone was created by the Youth Alliance, a partnership between the YMCA and YWCA of Silicon Valley, Boy and Girl Scouts and various other community organizations. Administered at schools across the country, the survey seeks to evaluate how many assets, or positive qualities, students possess in order to monitor students' ability to thrive in their school environment. Thirty-one of 40 assets are generally present in successful students.

According to September's results, Saratoga High students possess an average of 22.9 assets, an increase of 3.4 assets from May 2007.

"That's a pretty good jump," said principal Jeff Anderson. "Obviously, it's good that it's positive as opposed to feeling like we're going backwards."

Anderson is most proud of significant increases in the percent of students who perceived experiencing the assets of a caring school climate, school boundaries, high expectations, school engagement and bonding to school.

After the release of the 2007 Project Cornerstone results, the school completed a self-study to determine in which areas changes should be made, and Anderson thinks changes made to the school are reflected in the results.

Caring school climate increased significantly from 26 percent in 2007 to 45 percent in 2010, and though Anderson acknowledges that this percentage could be higher, he is pleased that results are heading in the right direction.

Sixty-two percent of students said the school provides clear boundaries through rules and consequences, a gain of 18 percent from 2007.

"We want people to feel like they know where the boundaries are," Anderson said.

Additionally, 58 percent of students reported that their parents and teachers have high expectations of them, while only 32 percent of students felt this in 2007. School engagement went up from 56 percent in 2007 to 77 percent in 2010.

"[School engagement] means students are engaged in learning and not just sitting there and taking tests," Anderson said. "They are actively engaged in trying to get something out of education instead of just trying to get a good grade."

Finally, bonding to school—having students care about the school—increased majorly from 56 percent in 2007 to 78 percent in 2010. After the assessment of the 2007 results, improvement in this category was made a strong priority.

"We really emphasized things that we thought would help kids feel more connected to school, feel better about the school and just overall want to be here more," Anderson said.

However, slight decreases were also seen in the percentages of students participating in community service, reading for pleasure and doing creative activities such as music, theater, or other arts. Anderson attributes these decreases are more due to students' busy school schedules than a lack of interest.

Anderson thinks the Project Cornerstone results should be used to continue improving students' lives.

"The report is designed for families, the community and the school to look at these things together," he said. "Everybody needs to try and do their part to make [students' lives] better." ♦

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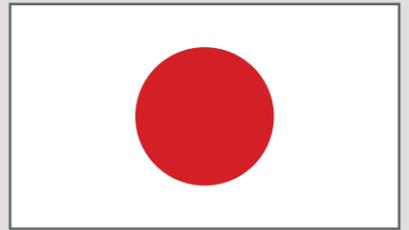
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# AID TO JAPAN



Junior Kim Tsai, treasurer of Red Cross Club, counts donations for Japan on April 1.

## Clubs raise funds for disaster relief

BY Justine Huang

On March 11, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake and ensuing tsunami devastated the Japanese coast, leaving in their wake a death toll of about 9,700 people and a missing persons count of about 16,500, with figures that continue to rise. The disaster caused damage to buildings and factories as well as worries about nuclear radiation.

As part of a worldwide effort to help Japan, numerous organizations on campus have banded together to raise money for the victims of the natural disaster.

Junior Kim Tsai, treasurer of the school's Red Cross Club, helped coordinate a fundraising event on March 17.

Tsai and other officers placed envelopes in which donations could be placed in each teacher's box to pass around their third-period classes.

"100 percent of what you donate will go to helping people in Japan," Tsai said. "It's not one of those things

where you pay for a muffin and maybe 50 cents of that will go to Japan. Whatever you put in will help someone."

One of the difficulties Tsai said her club faced was a lack of coordination with teachers.

"Many teachers did not pick up envelopes from their boxes even though we had them in there since Tuesday afternoon," Tsai said. "So that was very frustrating. Still, I'm just glad we were able to make the donations possible."

The school's Red Cross Club raised over \$715 during the fundraiser event.

Other clubs at Saratoga also raised funds or donated items for Japan. Tzu Chi Club and the overall Tzu Chi Organization has been providing hot meals to survivors, and Interact is sponsoring Shelterbox, an organization providing essential items for all the victims of the earthquake and tsunami.

To donate to Japan through Red Cross, visit the web site at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org), or talk to one of the clubs' officers. ♦

## Quake, tsunami effects felt locally

JUNIOR RELIEVED THAT FAMILY, FRIENDS ARE SAFE AFTER DEVASTATING QUAKE

BY Evaline Ju

The 9.0 earthquake in Japan sent shock waves not only through East Asia, but to the rest of the world as well. In a city like Saratoga, with strong Japanese ties, many relatives that are overseas have worried about finding

and communicating with their family members.

Junior Lisa Asai was shocked to hear about the earthquake, especially because she has relatives and friends in Japan.

Her father was also on a business trip there at the time of the earthquake. At first she thought this was another one of the minor quakes that occur often near the island nation.

News soon poured onto the Internet about the damage and the ensuing tsunami in the Iwate, Akita and Miyagi prefectures.

"I could not imagine this was actually happening to Japan," Asai said. "I was so shocked that I started crying. I finally learned how scary natural disasters are. I still cannot believe how many people are missing, how many dead bodies are found or [that] there are people still without electricity."

**"I could not imagine that this was actually happening to Japan. I was so shocked that I started crying."**

>> Junior Lisa Asai

Asai's friends and family were luckily not in the areas directly affected by the earthquake or the tsunami. One side of her family resides in Kamakura, Kanagawa, which is an hour away from Tokyo. However, her grandfather, uncle and dad were working in Tokyo and were not able to find transportation home as the trains and roads out of the city were closed. Her friends in Kanagawa had to sleep at school.

"My friend told me how people were crying during the earthquake because they never felt one so big," Asai said. "She said, 'I thought I was going to die.'"

Asai has also heard about her friends' relatives, whose houses in Sendai collapsed. Fortunately, they did not live on the coastal side of Sendai where the tsunami hit. Asai feels lucky that all of her family members and friends are safe.

"[But] I am very sad that there are so many lives that were taken away by this big tsunami," she said. "There is not much that I can do but donate money and clothes and pray for them." ♦

### >> falconfigures

**9,700** The death toll following the 9.0 earthquake in Japan

**16,500** The number of missing or unaccounted for persons

**\$715** The amount of money the Red Cross Club raised for relief

### LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE

## Junior wins writing competition at state level

BY Deborah Soung

On March 18, during the beginning of second period orchestra, junior Akash Kar was checking his e-mail on his BlackBerry phone when he saw a message that English teacher Natasha Ritchie had sent him earlier in the morning. After a brief "be right back" to orchestra instructor Michael Boitz, Kar dashed to his car, drove home, printed out the e-mail, stuck it on his dash and read the message as he drove back.

He had just won first place at the state level for Letters About Literature (LAL), a national literature-based competition in which students from grades 4 through 12 submitted letters addressed to authors whose books had significantly impacted the students' lives.

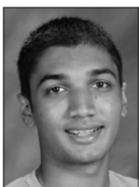
"I got an e-mail from Mrs. Ritchie at 5 a.m.," Kar said, "and it was titled 'Super yay,' and I believe—I think I remember; I've read it about 20 times—it said, 'Um, you've just won for state,' and there was no other way around it. It was a big shocker, and I never really expected to

win it. It's a state level thing, it's a big deal, and it's a huge honor."

Another student of Ritchie's, junior Michael Chang, also placed in the top 10 for California.

The program, sponsored by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, intends to promote reading and literature in the lives of students with the competition. The winner for each state has the chance to win on a national level and have an LAL Reading Promotion Grant distributed to a library of his or her choice, according to the LAL web site.

Kar had first written the letter as a practice write, a bi-monthly assignment for English 11 Honor students to hone their writing skills. For that particular assignment, students had a choice between a prompt related to the book they were currently discussing in class or the



"It was a big shocker, and I never really expected to win it. It's a big deal, and it's a huge honor."

>> Junior Akash Kar

LAL prompt, according to Ritchie. She and English teacher Suzanne Herzman submitted their students' letters to LAL.

"I must admit the news of Akash winning made my day and brought a few tears," Ritchie said. "I can't say I was surprised, as the letter is terrific."

Akash was hesitant about submitting his letter at first, but encouragement from his peers and mentors eventually convinced him to join the competition.

"I turned [my letter] in as a practice write, and I showed it to some friends, and they said, 'This is really good, you should turn it in [to LAL],' and I was like, 'No, I can't, I can't,'" Kar said. "I emailed it out to Mrs. Ritchie—she was out on maternity leave, and she sent it back, saying, 'Akash, I have tears in my eyes right now. Don't change a thing,' and I was like, 'Oh, shoot, that means

I've got to turn it in."

In his letter, Kar wrote about "The Namesake" by Jhumpa Lahiri, a novel detailing the relationships between an immigrant Bengali couple and their son, Gogol, who is caught between living life as an American and adhering to his family's native traditions.

"The Namesake" by Jhumpa Lahiri is by far my favorite book," Kar said. "[Lahiri] really did change my life, and her book moved me in so many ways I couldn't begin to describe."

Ritchie commended Kar's writing style and approach to the assignment. "Akash's letter is amazing; it is very well written and quite moving," Ritchie said. "He uses a variety of writing techniques to create a moving piece."

No matter the outcome of the competition, Ritchie will have pride in Kar's stellar achievements.

"I think Akash has a strong chance at the national level; I am proud of him no matter what," Ritchie said. "It is not really about 'winning,' but being recognized for great writing." ♦

## BULLY >> Change in policy

continued from pg. 1

Despite the administration's efforts, some students believe that the school has not done enough to combat bullying. Junior Megan Kao has a friend who originally attended Saratoga High but was bullied on Facebook to the point where he transferred schools.

"[A student] made a Facebook group mocking [the victim] and bullying him," Kao said. "They invited all of the school, all of their friends in Saratoga to see. Pretty much the entire school thought that, 'Oh, this guy's a joke,' so he left to another school. It's really sad because he was one of my good friends."

Kao feels that the school did not prevent bullying or interfere when it escalated.

"They've told us 'don't do this, don't do that,' but I don't think the school really cares that much," Kao said. "I was really surprised by the school's lack of interference because they did nothing, and that other student who started the group? He's still fine; he's still going to school as happy as ever."

Mount said that bullying cases, like the one involving Kao's friend, often go "under reported" and thus are not dealt with appropriately.

"My hunch is, from the student perspective, it's probably more of an issue than what the adults of the school know," Mount said.

Last year, Kao attended Challenge Day, a program designed to discourage bullying through celebrating the differences that make each person unique. During freshman year, she took the mandatory Health/Driver's Ed course, which also paints verbal and physical abuse in a negative light. Kao, however, believes that neither program effectively helps to prevent bullying.

"They gives us a sense of unity with people we normally don't talk with," Kao said, "but after a while, that feeling of intimacy slowly fades away."



Kao

As if bullying peers were not terrible enough, there have been reports of students teasing special education students.

"[Students] will make comments and say something 'funny' about my students," said special education teacher Courtney Crase, "which, in the end, is not funny. It's teasing, and not bullying, because my students don't understand. It's beyond their control."

Regardless of how trivial calling somebody a bad name can seem in high school, the consequences of it can carry on far into the future.

"Bullying really hurts people," Crase said. "Some carry that for life, and others get over it, but you always look back at how you were bullied. If you become a better person, you think about the way you bullied others." ♦

## SCHOLARS >> Seniors receive highest honors

continued from pg. 1

The valedictorian and salutatorian are determined from the cumulative GPA points from the students' first seven semesters. Taking this into account, according to Safine, their and many other students' GPA points at the end of high school will probably be higher. Chang ended the seventh semester with a 4.6435 GPA point, while Zeng finished right behind with a 4.6364.

Safine also noted that 94 seniors ended their seventh semesters with a 4.00 GPA point or above, which will qualify them for very various honors.

Outside of school, Chang volunteers at the San Jose Tech Museum and the gift shop of Good Samaritan Hospital, plays the violin in California Youth Symphony and does science research, while Zeng's activities include Saratoga High's marching band and math club.

Although Zeng admitted that his interests outside of school are often more compelling than schoolwork, Chang

said that his success resulted from his interest in his classes.

"Across high school, I was always pretty interested in what we were learning," Chang said. "If you like what you do, then it always comes more naturally to you."

Despite Chang's and Zeng's obvious natural smarts, they agreed that even they felt stressed at times during their Saratoga careers.

Christy Cali, Chang's counselor, got to know Chang well

over the course of his high school career and commented on his "wonderful ability to teach, as well as learn."

"[Chang] had challenges that most students aren't aware of, but still took the most rigorous classes and did exceptionally well," said Cali. "However, [Chang] also took the time to teach and help others, which caused many of his classmates to always want to be in his group."

As of late March, Zeng had not yet chosen a college to attend, while Chang decided to commit to Stanford. ♦

"Chang had challenges that most people aren't aware of, but still took the most rigorous classes."

>> Counselor Christy Cali

### COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

## 'Dream schools' send good, bad news

BY Rebecca Nguyen & Karen Yang

Since she was a child, senior Keerti Shukla has gone to MIT a countless times when visiting her aunt and uncle, who both work at the school. Although she had walked through the pristine hallways of MIT on multiple occasions, Shukla's desire to attend MIT became concrete once she decided to pursue a major in engineering.

"It became my dream school after the fact that I wanted to major in something science or engineering related," Shukla said. "Then it was like, MIT would be an awesome place to go."

Shukla applied to MIT early for chemical engineering, but was deferred

in December.

"I didn't expect to get in, so I was relieved I didn't get rejected. But at the same time I wish I got accepted because then it would have been a lot less stress until now."

Having gotten deferred, Shukla was forced to wait another three months for her admission status.

"MIT sent me an e-mail a week before saying it's coming out at this time on this day, so up until then I was waiting because I knew exactly when it was coming out, so that was very stressful."

Berkeley, who in past years was known to be much more exclusive than the other UCs, accepted many students who were rejected by UCLA or even UCSD. Top-tier private schools, particu-

larly the Ivy League, have increased selectivity with soaring application rates and record low admission rates.

For Shukla, her stress was slightly alleviated when she received an e-mail from UCLA notifying her of admission into the school a few days before MIT released its email.

"I had gotten into UCLA, and that relieved the pressure a little bit because I would have been more than happy going to UCLA. It wasn't that stressful when I was checking MIT, because if I don't get in it's not like I don't have anywhere to go."

On March 14, at exactly 9:26 p.m., Shukla checked her e-mail and found in her inbox the much anticipated letter from MIT. As she opened the e-mail,

she saw the words she had been waiting to hear: "On behalf of the Admissions Committee, it is my pleasure to offer you admission to the MIT Class of 2015!"

"All that stress paid off junior year and senior year," Shukla said. "Even though school is still stressful—whoever said second semester was easy, they lied—it's like part of the stress is relieved. I don't have to worry about college anymore."

Although Shukla has heard from other private schools, MIT is still at the top of her list. After going through these arduous process of college admissions, Shukla advises juniors to remain optimistic.

"Don't stress if you're a junior because everything works out in the end. Work hard, but don't stress out too much." ♦

### MUSIC TRIP

## Students perform at Carnegie, thrive in New York

BY Ashley Tang

On March 8, the school's String Orchestra and the Symphonic Wind Ensemble walked on stage into the bright lights of Carnegie Hall, nearly shaking with apprehension.

After playing pieces by Ginastera, Mahler and a solo accompaniment of Mendelssohn, proud faces beamed as an audience consisting of band ensembles, parents and teachers gave the young musicians a standing ovation.

"Everyone was pleased with the results, as the performance went really smoothly," said concertmaster junior Daniel Hsu. "Most of us were glad to play at Carnegie Hall because of its great resonance and clarity of sound."

The evening performance was the highlight of a five-day tour in New York City which also included a dinner cruise, a Manhattan tour and the Broadway musical "Spiderman: Turn Off the Dark."

"The music sounded great and the audience liked it so everything went re-

ally well," said sophomore Melodie Bellegarda.

Around 140 students were immersed in the busy New York culture while they stayed at Sheraton Inn, only two blocks away from Times Square.

"We had a lot of free time to do stuff on our own so we got to explore much of New York City," said sophomore Maya Nag. "I love New York! The trip definitely seemed too short."

After getting a taste of life in New York, students had a hard time adjusting to life in Saratoga.

"In New York, you can practically go anywhere within walking distance," said junior Peter Chen. "But in Saratoga, we live in a suburban area so there's not really much you can do here."

Although students greatly enjoyed their stay in New York, the trip did have a few downsides.

"We didn't get that much sleep and we missed a couple of days of school," said junior Mason Lee.

After a five hour flight from New



Courtesy of HANSEN QIAN

String orchestra and symphonic wind ensemble members gather by a monument in New York's Washington Square Park for a picture during their trip from March 8 to 13.

York, many students arrived home at around 11 p.m. on a Wednesday night and had to get ready for school the next day.

"It felt like the wrong time because it took place at the end of a six-week

grading period, so everyone had a lot of work to make up and many people fell behind," said Nag. "But since the trip couldn't really be moved, it was worth it because playing at Carnegie Hall really is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." ♦

## DID YOU KNOW?

# Memorial garden honors Helen Oreb

FOURTEEN YEARS AFTER DEATH, 'TEACHER, MENTOR, FRIEND' STILL REMEMBERED

BY Emily Williams

Every day hundreds of students pass a small plaque in a flower bed planted with cabages on their way to the main office that reads: "Helen Oreb / for 31 years / Teacher, Mentor, Friend."

This small memorial represents a time in the school's history that is remembered by select few at Saratoga High.

Oreb taught here from 1965 until 1996, when she retired. In 1997, she died of cancer at age 59. The plaque and garden were dedicated in her honor.

Oreb was hired as a physical education teacher, and she soon became head of the department. Always an innovator, Oreb then became the journalism teacher and adviser.

She improved the program and made it the award-winning program that continues to the present day. She then moved on to become a counselor.

In 1993, Oreb turned the continuation school called Mark Twain for at-risk students into an alternative school called NOVA.

NOVA provides a low-key, supportive learning environment for students who were not faring well at the district's two schools. Oreb dedicated the rest of

her career to the NOVA program where she inspired her students.

"Helen endlessly planted and tended seed of confidence and hope in our hungry hearts, letting each of us know that we had something of unique and abiding value to contribute to the world," wrote Annie Jenkel, a former student and 1981 alum, in memory of Oreb. "She would hone in on a person's unique qualities and relentlessly hold a mirror in front of them until they saw it and felt it."



Oreb

According to assistant principal Karen Hyde, the NOVA program encompassed what Oreb was all about.

"She was really a character," said Hyde. "She was one of those really spontaneous, really creative people. She took things to a different level."

Retired English teacher Genevieve Palace fondly remembers Oreb, who was her colleague and good friend, as a valuable member of the school district.

"At each place she very much liked creating a new path, starting something new that hadn't been in PE or in journalism or counseling," said Palace.

Oreb is still fondly remembered, and every spring someone leaves a glass of wine and a vase of daffodils on her me-

Oreb is still fondly remembered, and every spring someone leaves a glass of wine and a vase of daffodils in her memorial



FALCON // SARAH HULL

Most students are familiar with the plaque and garden honoring Oreb outside the office.

memorial. According to Hyde, the school has no idea who does it, but this mystery visitor has been paying tribute to Oreb every year since she passed away. ♦

## CHEER



The cheer team performs in the gym during a basketball game. At the national competition in the Anaheim Convention Center on Mar. 25, the team placed sixth in their division.

## Team excels at nationals

BY Anika Jhalani

This year's competition cheer team excelled at the United Spirit Association Cheerleading Nationals in Anaheim, Calif., placing 6th among 21 teams in their division. The competition was held on March 25 in the Anaheim Convention Center.

"This was one of the most interesting competitions I've ever been at," said senior Erin Wong. "We were less than half a point from making the final round, which was kind of frustrating, but totally commendable considering the number of changes our team went through in the week before competition."

The team was altered and narrowed a week before competition, meaning that alternates needed to quickly learn material to keep the routine Nationals-ready.

"When I found out I would be in the routine instead of being an alternate, I was definitely very nervous," said freshman Libby Rourke. "It felt great to have learned the material, and I was so excited to have participated in the competition."

The routine consists of two 45-second dance sections and a 1 minute cheer section. The routine, which included stunts,

jumps and dance sections, is the cheer team's chance to show everything that they worked on throughout the year to be judged professionally.

"I think Nationals is a great opportunity to get a lot of the newer girls on the team exposed to what other teams out there are like," said senior Talia Balma. "At our own football game we focus on stunts we can improve on, but at Nationals we observe the strong points of other teams to try to make our own performance stronger."

The team received top scores in choreography, tumbling, spirit and overall appearance.

"I am very excited with all the work we did this year," said junior Rebecca Smerdon. "When comparing this year to last, we did great considering the amount of new girls we have on the team. I am very impressed with our performance despite so many newcomers."

Cheer coach and math teacher Laressa Ridge agreed that the performance was noteworthy.

"Statistically, we performed as well as we did last year in comparison to the competition," Ridge said. "I am very proud of the work we did this year and look forward to tryouts." ♦

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# Wherefore art thou, summer break?

SCIENCE PROGRAMS, SUMMER COURSES SAP STUDENTS' SUMMERTIME

BY Evaline Ju & Vivian LeTran

Remember those summer days spent lazing around, going to the beach or the mall every other day? Or when our parents signed us up for those one-week long horseback riding and overnight nature camps?

Students nowadays spend their summers researching at internships, taking classes at community colleges or attending SAT prep classes. For more and more students every year, summer is a time to get ahead.

Where did our summer "break" go?

Through the years, academic competition has increased, motivating students to find more ways to pad their college applications. As spring arrives, teachers have already become bogged with requests for recommendation letters for summer activities.

While a small fraction of students truly enjoy the internships or classes they sign up for, the majority merely think to themselves how these new opportunities will look to admissions officers.

For example, a sophomore may apply for an internship to study astronomy despite having no real interest in the science. Even if these students

find their activities tedious or disheartening, they will attempt to struggle through.

As important as the SATs are during application time in senior year, preparing for it should not ruin an entire student's summer. High school life should not revolve around aiming for that 2400 or breaking down if it is not achieved.

Down the line, hardly anyone will care or even remember that incorrect critical reading answer. Additionally, since colleges value normal school grades over the SAT, students should not always depend on the one test to determine their future successes.

With such academic activities, summer break becomes less fun, and each day stuck in a boring classroom or research center can be as dreaded as much as the normal school year is. This seems pointless as it defeats the purpose of summer. The break is intended as more than just a break from school, but a time to heal and recharge for the new year.

Students should utilize the time to relax, go on a vacation or just laze around. The stress load of a school year is strenuous enough without an additional rigorous workload over the summer.

Of course, there are several weeks of breaks scattered throughout the school

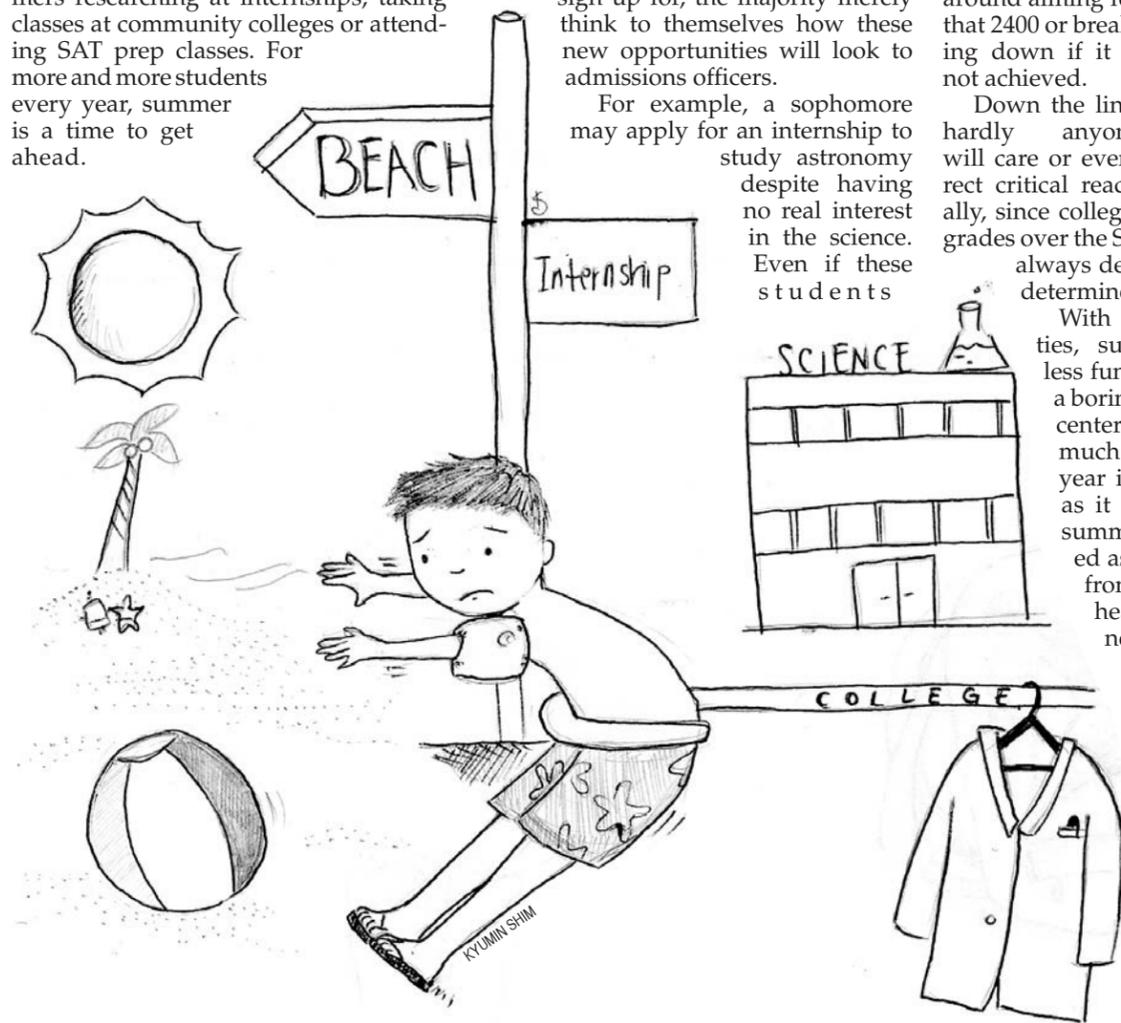
year, but is that really satisfactory? How many students honestly wish for those meager one or two weeks to end?

Swimmers can't keep swimming with only a few breaths of air. They need to get out of the water and take a nice long break before diving back in. Likewise, students can't keep working forever. They need time to relax before they re-enter the world of sleepless nights

and constant studying. Parents likewise should understand how their children's worlds should not be focused on their academic summer activities or the colleges they decide to attend. Despite their high expectations, parents should not push students to do things for the sake of college applications.

As you begin to develop your plans for the summer, be honest with yourself. How exactly do you want to spend your summer this year? Stuck in a stifling SAT prep class or relaxing on a warm beach? ♦

As you develop your plans for the summer, be honest to yourself about how you want to spend those blue skies, sunny days.



## >> THE bigidea

### The Lost Summer

**Trend:** More and more students are spending their summers working for pay or performing internships rather than relaxing and enjoying a well-deserved break.

**Reasons:** Students cite academic pressures and college aspirations as primary reasons for this growing trend in summer habits.

**Dilemma:** Students are faced with a choice between work and play. What will they choose?

# Bullying needs strong yet cautious regulation

Administrators have begun to crack down on bullying with a new policy. The document outlaws "unwanted conduct that takes place over time, and that comprises of serious incidents that are severe, pervasive and involve negative actions."

Such policies are a step in the right direction. The administration must be given due credit for its attempt to foster a healthier school environment, a campus where no student must worry about his or her physical or emotional well-being.

Bullying is on the rise—not just at Saratoga High, but throughout the nation. In particular, the medium of the Internet has facilitated the rise in bullying.

With web sites such as Formspring

and Facebook that enable anonymity, students become easy targets for ruthless cyber bullies. In the fall, this paper extensively covered the impacts of cyber bullying: These include the invasion of privacy, access to personal documents and even the transfer of some student victims out of the school.



STAFFEDITORIAL

With the implementation of this new policy, the district has demonstrated its understanding of the potentially serious threat that cyber

bullying poses to students. However, curbing bullying requires more than just policy change. In order to further support the policy and bring about its intended effects, the administration should continue to move in the right direction by taking additional steps to back it up.

Some suggestions include the facilitation of teacher mentors and the extension of Link Crew activities in order to check up on possible targets. Victims of bullying must feel comfortable confiding in their mentors if change is to be properly effected.

There must also be an emphasis on promoting class and peer unity—something that has been absent, particularly within the freshman class. This has led to more reported incidents of misconduct, bullying and fighting among younger students. Additional steps must be taken to ease the transition into high school for these maturing students.

At the same time, school officials must strive for caution in their application of the statute. As bullying is a somewhat vague and undefined gray area, administrators have to remain judicious in doling out punishments to students.

The school certainly cannot hope to police the entire state of high school student affairs; thus, it must tread a fine line in upholding its responsibility to legitimate victims of bullying while keeping its hands out of most student interactions.

According to assistant principal Kevin Mount, prohibited actions include those that are "objectively offensive to the average person." However, the standard of objectivity varies greatly between a teenage high school student and a middle-aged adminis-

trator. In this case, who would be considered the "average person"?

Therefore, the administration should be careful to not use the policy as an excuse to punish students simply for disagreeable, but hardly illegal behavior. If it chooses to apply the statute in an overly broad manner, it could perpetuate the unintended and negative consequences that it set out to eliminate with the adoption of the new policy.

Nonetheless, this paper strongly praises the administration for recognizing the importance of fighting bullying and implementing the new rules.

The Falcon suggests that additional steps also be taken to combat the problem—but in a wise and judicious manner. ♦

## >> THE bigidea

### Bullying

**Problem:** Bullying is a growing problem at Saratoga High, especially with the spread of online bullying via websites like Facebook and Formspring.

**Bottom Line:** The school's new anti-bullying policy is a worthy cause; however, more steps, such as the promotion of school-wide unity, must be taken to further limit bullying.

>>Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Opinion Editor  
Vijay Menon  
Editor-in-Chief  
Shannon Galvin

The Saratoga Falcon  
voted 37-0 in favor of the  
anti-bullying policy.

# Guns at school? Not the best idea

BY Roy Bisht

Go back 12 years to Columbine High School in Littleton, CO. Two high school students unloaded multiple shotguns on innocent students at Columbine, killing 13 and injuring eight more in one of the most devastating school shootings of all time. With such a horrific incident involving guns taking the lives of so many innocent students, it would make perfect sense to permanently ban guns from school campuses, right?

Well, according to both Texas and Utah, no. Both states are in the process of approving bills that would make it legal to carry firearms not only near, but also on a high school or college campus. Allowing such bills to pass would be nothing short of ridiculous, as it imposes much more of a hazard to students than a weapon of protection.

Honestly, there is practically no scenario in a high school environment where a gun would be used as a valuable

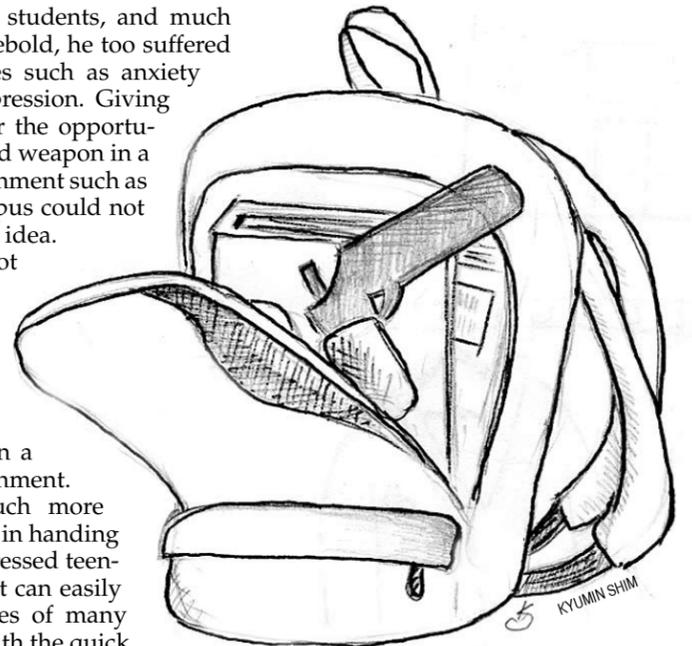
means of protection. Rarely do intruders roll into a high school campus with any intentions worthy of being shot at by an armed student. Giving students the opportunity to bring weapons to a campus causes an utmost amount of danger to the rest of the students and teachers on the campus.

A high school is probably the worst environment possible to allow guns, as students are developing emotionally and struggle with their emotions at times. A decent amount of students are mentally unstable and battle depression; the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center found that almost one in six teens had made plans for suicide. This was the case with Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, the two delinquents responsible for the horrid Columbine massacre.

Columbine was not the only tragic school shooting within the past decade—there is also the Virginia Tech shooting in 2007. In this shooting, Seung-Hui

Cho murdered 32 students, and much like Harris and Klebold, he too suffered from mental issues such as anxiety disorders and depression. Giving a suicidal teenager the opportunity to carry around weapon in a stress-filled environment such as a high school campus could not be any worse of an idea.

Students do not need guns to protect themselves; students often practice drills involving barricades, making guns useless in a scholastic environment. There is also much more danger than safety in handing a emotionally distressed teenager a weapon that can easily take away the lives of many innocent people with the quick pull of a trigger. ♦



# U.S. military should not interfere in Middle East

BY Izzy Albert

“It is imperative that the nations and peoples of the world speak with one voice,” President Obama said in an interview about the uprising in Libya.

Obama’s strong support for the Libyan protesters is worrying many Americans into thinking that our troops will be sent to help.

With the increasing number of revolutions occurring throughout the Middle East, the difficult decision that the U.S. has to make remains the same—to intervene or not to intervene?

Before we let our humanitarian emo-

tions form our opinions for us, we should take into consideration where that has led us before. In Afghanistan, for example, the U.S. sent troops over to help civilians and establish a democratic government. Ten years, thousands of U.S. casualties, and billions of dollars later, we now find ourselves mediating a civil war in Afghanistan as well as involved in a conflict in Iraq. Initially going into these nations with good intentions, we are now stuck in situations where we do not belong.

Politically, the U.S. made the right decision by staying out of Egypt during its revolution. The citizens were ultimately

successful in causing their president, Hosni Mubarak, to resign without any of our military support. Our moral support seemed to suffice, as it similarly would with the current situation in Libya.

However, as these revolutions become increasingly violent and even genocidal, the U.S. tends to feel an obligation as the world’s “big brother” to step in and mediate the brewing civil war. These notions, despite being good intentioned, are dangerous—we need to get out of the mindset that every country needs our assistance. Sending humanitarian aid to support the revolutionaries and the idea of democracy is all that the insurrection-

ists need anyway—not our military to help fight their battles for them.

“We need somebody to come to at least give us some things to protect ourselves, to protect our families, to protect our children,” a Libyan citizen said in an interview with Anderson Cooper.

The Libyan citizens merely want our support and aid, since their fighting stems from a fiery passion for a democratic government and a disgust with their leader. If we sent our troops to help them, we would, in effect, be taking away from what the victory would mean to their country. Realistically, it wouldn’t help our country in any way either. ♦

# Early Action mostly benefits well-off

BY Vijay Menon

In late February, Harvard and Princeton made an announcement that certainly turned heads among the Saratoga High junior crowd—both schools would be bringing back Early Action starting with the Class of 2012.

While most seniors and savvy tiger moms are probably familiar with the term already, it is worth explaining again. Many competitive colleges institute Early Action (EA) or Early Decision (ED) programs to attract talented students to their respective institutions. While students are expected to complete their applications at an earlier deadline, they also hear back from their schools in December, four months before regular decisions come out.

The early admissions process is a boon for many well-off students, especially like those at Saratoga High. The process of gaining early admission is generally less competitive and statistically easier. Many schools admit 30 to 40 percent of their classes early, leaving significantly fewer spots for the regular pool of applicants. Furthermore, the promise of early admission significantly relieves stress for those who are lucky enough to earn it.

## Egalitarian spirit missing

However, there is a problem with early admissions—it inherently discriminates against poorer students. Most schools insist that students may

apply to only one institution (or at most, a few) EA or ED. Furthermore, some early programs are binding; accepted students must attend that institution.

This poses a serious problem to students who require financial aid. If money is not an issue, applying early is almost certainly a blessing. Unfortunately, many poor students do not enjoy this same advantage.

Most of the economically disadvantaged cannot afford to apply early and are instead automatically relegated to the regular pool.

On the one hand, this allows them to compare financial aid offers from a variety of schools without being bound to one institution. On the other hand, it means that they are automatically placed into a more highly competitive pool of applicants. Already underprivileged on the monetary front, they are again disadvantaged on the admissions front.

This is precisely the rationale that Harvard and Princeton cited when they axed the EA process back in 2007. These schools stood by their belief that one regular decision round of evaluation would not only simplify the convoluted college admissions process, but also level the playing field.

Today, that same egalitarian spirit is missing. Part of the reason that Harvard dean of admissions William Fitzsimmons cited for the change is that the other six Ivy League schools had not followed in Harvard’s footsteps. Fitzsimmons said, “We started to

hear that more and more people were applying early across the country.” It hardly seems like fair justification to bring back a program that will effectively eliminate fairness in the college admissions process.

## The greed of Ivy League schools

Harvard and Princeton have sadly succumbed to the bandwagon effect. If these schools wanted to change their policies based on principles, that would be one thing; but to change it based on what everyone else is doing? That is a pathetic and measly cop-out that both schools should be ashamed of.

Furthermore, this move reeks of greed. Both schools are willing to abandon the concept of equity simply in order to yield more talented students from the early crop.

It is certainly true that Harvard and Princeton were losing out on some potential students to the other Ivies because of their lack of early programs. But the notion that these schools could not attract equally talented students through a normal regular decision program is simply absurd. Both schools are magnets for talent.

One thing must be conceded. This decision will positively impact the typical Saratoga student. In addition to our quality academics, environment and socioeconomic background, we will be the beneficiaries of yet another advantage. But are we really the ones who need another leg up?

Juniors, rejoice. This move likely means that a couple more of you will find a home in Cambridge or Princeton the following fall. Just know that it is coming at the expense of talented but economically disadvantaged students without the same resources. ♦

**This move reeks of greed. Both schools are willing to abandon the concept of equity simply in order to yield more talented students from the early crop.**

## THE saratoga falcon >>

### THIRD PERIOD

### STAFF POLICY

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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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# Planned Parenthood should not be aborted

BY Christine Bancroft

On Feb. 26, thousands of men and women from all over the United States poured into the streets of cities nationwide. They blocked traffic, joined together and carried a variety of witty and colorful signs.

They were protesting the recent House of Representatives bill that, among other things, would effectively shut down Planned Parenthood facilities nationwide by cutting funding.

The "Walk for Choice" was held in 55 American cities and many attending were protesting the bill that would defund the \$317 million Title-X program that supports Planned Parenthood facilities and similar programs.

The H.R.3 bill, which was passed 235-187 by the House on Feb. 19, prohibits any federal funding to "foreign non-governmental organizations that promote or perform abortions."

Bills H.R.3, H.R.217 and H.R.358 aim to place more funding restrictions on abortions, such as permanently limiting funding except for cases involving rape and incest on a female minor.

Hospitals would also be allowed to refuse to provide training or perform abortion.

The Republican-held House will meet well-deserved antagonism from the Senate, which has a Democratic majority. Planned Parenthood and similar organizations help over 5 million women, including 3.2 million who live below the poverty line, according to the Planned Parenthood website.

Not only are Republicans aiming to limit the rights of women nationwide, but could be endangering the lives of women who have relied on medication for sexually transmitted diseases, birth control, rape counseling and abortion services.

Apparently, it doesn't matter that only 3 percent of the total budget of Planned Parenthood goes to performing

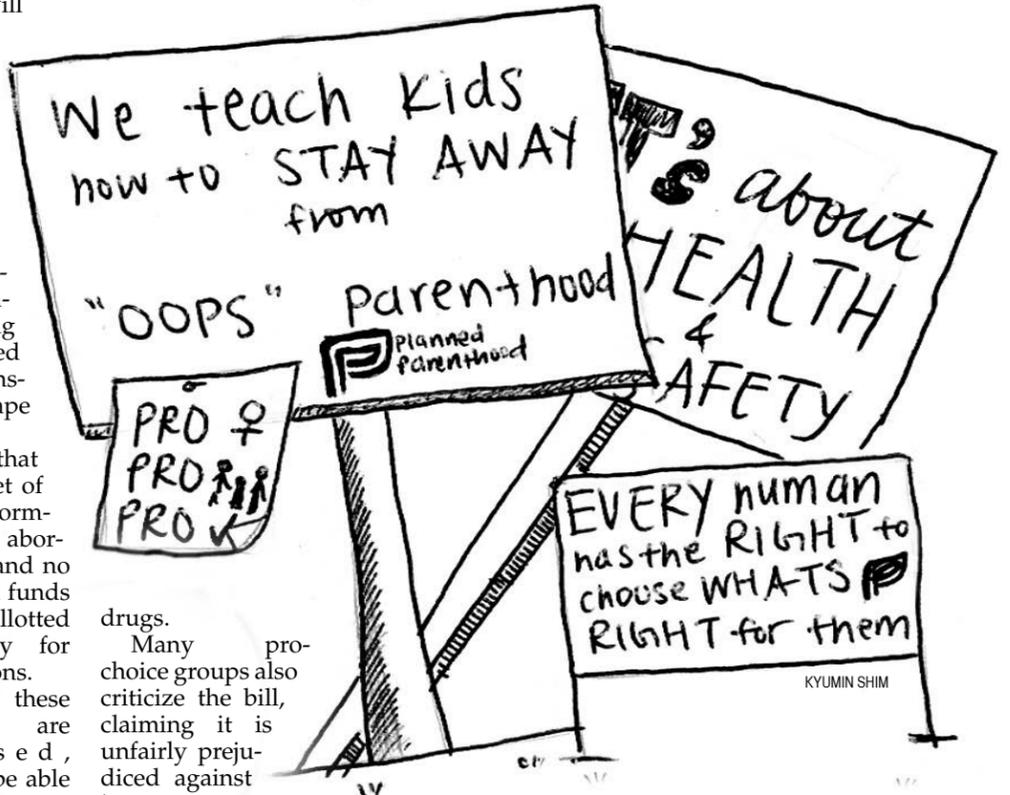
abortions, and no federal funds are allotted to pay for abortions.

If these bills are passed,

women who are raped may not be able to get free and anonymous counseling or receive abortions if they conceive.

The bill also changes the definition of rape itself, to "forcible rape," excluding same-sex, statutory or in the case of impaired judgment, such as when a victim is under the influence of alcohol or

**Planned Parenthood and similar organizations help over 5 million women, including 3.2 million who live below the poverty line.**



drugs.

Many pro-choice groups also criticize the bill, claiming it is unfairly prejudiced against low-income clients.

If this bill passes, statisticians expect a major strain on the foster care system, as well as a rise in back-alley abortions, which are dangerous and can lead to a massive increase in abortion-related

complications, injuries and deaths.

What happened to "Don't Tread on Me"? What happened to America, Land of the Free?

No one should have their rights taken away, especially not to their own bodily health.

No one who claims to be protecting the public should allow this damaging bill to pass.

Low income women already have enough to worry about without the added pressure of finding cheaper clinics.

Republicans can hide behind their faith and Tea Party outrage all they want, but if they attempt to take away people's rights to remain healthy and take care of their own bodies, then they should expect a fierce battle. ♦

## >> togatalks

**How do you feel about the possibility of Planned Parenthood closing?**

"I think it would be a huge loss for the female community if Planned Parenthood is closed."



junior Danielle Savage

"Personally, it doesn't affect me, but I feel that this closing would have a harmful effect on the lives of low income women."



junior Anjalika Goyal

## Fresh coat of paint will help SHS lose jail-like appearance

BY Giulia Curcelli & Jennifer Jin

The first impression, the most repeated descriptor, the one phrase most often used by students to characterize our school's appearance might just be: "It looks like a jail."

With the district now hurting from budget problems, remedying the school's appearance may not seem like a top priority. Yet simple changes such as landscaping and repainting the school's exterior can do much more than just fix how students see the school.

Painting and landscaping the school not only make it more visually pleasing but also create a healthier, less stressful atmosphere.

The USDA Forest Service has reported that workers and students with a view of natural elements feel more relaxed. Additionally, the presence of plants has been known to increase positive feelings and reduce fear and anger.

According to the organization Partners for Livable Places, "plants are the fastest, most cost-effective agents for changing negative perceptions of an area, enhancing the economic and social conditions and improving the psychosocial health."

In addition, not only do plants help students feel more relaxed, but they also improve the environment.

When plants take in carbon dioxide, they reduce greenhouse gases and therefore make the air cleaner. According to NASA and Associated Landscape Contractors of America, many plants such as gerbera daisies and chrysan-

themums are effective at removing benzene, a human carcinogen that can cause leukemia.

Painting the school is not only an aesthetic improvement, but it also protects the buildings from the elements and would reduce future repair costs.

Personally, we prefer the combination of tan walls, grey doors and deep red accents. The more updated look makes the school feel modern, and the earthy tones make the campus seem warmer and more welcoming.

Keeping the district's deficit problems in mind, the school is first trying out colors on the art building using extra paint they already own, a relatively inexpensive process. Only when the economic situation has improved will the school begin to set aside money for painting the school.

We hope these changes come sooner rather than later since a fresh coat of paint and a few new flowers can only be an improvement. ♦

### >> THE bigidea

Repainting SHS

**New plants:** Many more plants are expected to appear on campus next semester

**New color:** Administrators are looking at earth tones with bright colored accents

**Benefits:** Decreased carbon dioxide and happier students

## School in need of more earthquake preparation

BY Giulia Curcelli

It's tutorial on Monday morning. Barely alert masses of people are gathered in hallways and classrooms. Everything seems perfectly normal. Suddenly, however, a powerful earthquake strikes. One student darts into the nearest classroom. Another takes cover in a doorway. A third sprints to the quad. In all the chaos, what would you do?

With the recent disaster in Japan, Californians are now asking how prepared they would be in a similar situation. Though the school has a safety plan for such circumstances, not a single earthquake drill has been held this year, and few students actually know what to do if an earthquake were to occur during tutorial or lunch. Such large holes in an exceptionally important plan are dangerous and must be remedied as soon as possible.

Fortunately, the school has plans to improve the current safety procedures, according to assistant principal Kevin Mount. After a basic duck-and-cover drill this spring, the district will evaluate the situation and plan for a larger simulation next fall. This could potentially include having obstructed hallways, students role-playing as the injured, a hypothetical chlorine leak at the pool and communication with the police and fire departments.

Such a simulation is exactly what the school needs. Not only would staff get to rehearse emergency plans, but students would have the opportunity to learn what to do in a real emergency.

In addition to helping students and staff deal with hypothetical situations, earthquake drills and all safety drills,

**With the recent disaster in Japan, Californians are now asking how prepared they would be in a similar situation.**

for that matter, make participants feel more prepared and less likely to panic if an actual earthquake were to happen. Drills can also point out flaws

in plans, possibly making an actual earthquake less disastrous.

These precautions should be the district's first priority. The protection of students' lives and the ability to feel safe at school are crucial to one's education and health. A relatively minor disruption to classes is insignificant in the long term, especially if it can save the lives of students and staff.

In the end, though, the school can only have so many drills, and they can only be so effective. Yet despite the thousands of lives lost in the Japan earthquake, there is no doubt that their preparedness for such an event saved that country from an even more tragic disaster, and Californians should make the same efforts to be just as vigilant. Through rehearsal of emergency policies, staff and students will have a better idea of what to do in a catastrophic situation. ♦

# MAN vs. Food

Three boys test their appetites against Falcon-sponsored food challenges at local restaurants, ranging from chicken wings to giant burgers.

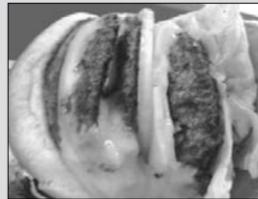
## Meet the Challengers

### MEN



Juniors Salmaan Javed, Viraj Parmar and Brandon Pak

### FOOD



Giant Burger



Spicy Wings



Chicken Nuggets

Where  
What  
Results  
Thoughts

### In-n-Out

604 East El Camino Real  
Sunnyvale



#### Burger Challenge

- Eat five cheeseburgers from In-n-Out
- Eat them in one sitting without any breaks
- Finished the challenge in 15 minutes and still hungry
- Calorie Count: 1,240

Winner: Man



The sight of the monstrous burgers excited junior Brandon Pak at first, but they began to taste sickening after the first couple of bites. "It looked pretty good at first and didn't look too hard to eat because it was smaller than I thought," said Pak. "After the first bite it was pretty disgusting because there was so much cheese and that was all I could taste. Eventually, I finished the burger with ease and even ate some of Viraj's and Salmaan's leftovers from their challenges." ♦

### Wingstop

19620 Stevens Creek Blvd #190  
Cupertino



#### Wing Challenge

- Eat 35 spicy cajun wings
- No drinks or napkins (have to lick fingers)
- 5 minutes to feel the afterburn
- Ate 28 of wings in 30 minutes
- Calorie Count: 5,565

Winner: Food



Junior Viraj Parmar's true affinity for chicken wings was put to the test when he was challenged to eat 35 spicy wings from Wingstop. Slowly but surely, Parmar managed to finish all but seven of them. Claiming that the spiciness made the challenge even more difficult, Parmar's ability to finish almost all of the wings stunned even himself. "I definitely regretted ordering the cajun flavor. The fact that they even had a 35-wing option on the menu disgusts me," said Parmar. "Welcome to America." ♦

### McDonald's

18578 Prospect Rd  
Saratoga



#### Chicken Nugget Challenge

- Eat 50 chicken nuggets
- Must be eaten within 20 minutes
- Can eat with sauce
- Ate 41 chicken nuggets in 30 minutes
- Calorie Count: 2,300

Winner: Food



Junior Salmaan Javed took on the challenge of eating 50 chicken nuggets from McDonald's, a challenge he claims to be the most bland. "My challenge was the most repetitive, because after 20, it just became tasteless," said Javed. Javed was able to finish with some help from Pak and a whole lot of determination. The biggest challenge for Javed proved to be overcoming the tastelessness of the meal. "Never again," said Javed. "Never again." ♦

# FREAKISHLY FRIGHT

FROM SPIDERS TO CLOWNS  
BUT SOME STUDENTS REVEAL

Soorya Rangan

## Say 'Cheese!' Oh, wait...



FALCON // SARAH HULL

Senior Soorya Rangan hates the taste and smell of this cheddar dairy product.

BY Rohan Rajeev

Senior Soorya Rangan doesn't mind good food. He can eat anything, ranging from something as normal as a simple sandwich, to something as exotic as caviar. However, at the sight or smell of pizza, string cheese, nachos and even Doritos, he turns around in utter distaste. Why?

Rangan has turophobia—the fear of cheese. Since this fear is uncommon, his friends were mostly entertained by the phobia at first.

"The first idea of mine was to somehow play a prank on him," junior Harsha Murthy said on the first time he heard of Rangan's strange fear.

Rangan's fear is intense, if somewhat comical.

"I used to be able to eat cheese," Rangan said. "Now I shudder whenever someone even says that word."

Rangan had been fine with eating cheese until a fateful train ride 11 years ago changed everything.

"I watched as a guy next to me ate a pizza with gross-looking cheese on it," he said. "I can't really think about or even say the word 'cheese' without thinking about that guy and his disgusting pizza."

Ever since, Rangan has been re-

pulsed by all types of cheese—even common types such as mozzarella and cheddar—and sometimes even runs away from it.

"I get ticklish inside when I see it," he said. "I feel legitimately sick when I see other people eating it."

Even Rangan's friends had not known of his unusual phobia until recently.

Senior Deepak Sabada said he was eating a sandwich with cheese and he asked him—cautiously—if it had cheese in it.

Sabada couldn't believe that his friend was so uncomfortable around cheese.

"My initial reaction was 'This has got to be a joke,'" he said. "I didn't think it was possible to be afraid of cheese."

He soon learned, however, that it wasn't a joke. In fact, Sabada shuddered at the sight of a single slice of cheese.

"He doesn't like it at all when [our friends and I] have any cheese in our food, including pizza," Sabada said. "He doesn't even want it near him."

However, Rangan's phobia has provided many funny moments for his friends.

"Once he saw cheese on his sweatshirt," Sabada laughed. "He immediately freaked out and took it off as fast as he could." ♦

Maggy Liu

## Girl fears octopi



FALCON // SARAH HULL

Sophomore Maggy Liu had a hard time looking at the octopus picture.

BY Ashwini Velchamy

Sophomore Maggy Liu blames nature shows for a phobia she once had of octopi.

"I couldn't watch PBS shows that were on sea animals, because I didn't like seeing the octopus," said Liu. "I didn't even like the sound of its suckers—the weird popping noise."

She said that this fear began when she saw a nature show about an octopus. The footage showed an octopus killing a large fish.

"The octopus wrapped its tentacles around the fish, and the fish was flailing. And then there was a closeup of the octopus's mouth—it was so gross!"

Although Liu has for the most part gotten over this fear of octopi, she still remembers some of the interesting experiences she faced because of her phobia.

Liu mentioned a time when she went out for dinner with

her family, only to find that the restaurant had an enormous plaster octopus hanging over the waiting area. When she looked up, she saw the sprawling tentacles and the mouth of the octopus.

"It was so awful!" said Liu. "The suckers were all painted in super fine detail, and the mouth was a gross beak shape ... I couldn't eat any seafood that night, because I would automatically think of octopi killing fish with their tentacles."

Liu said that she also used to harbor a fear of deep pools.

"I thought sharks would swim in from the gutters and kill me, 'JAWS' style," said Liu. "Since I'm on the swim team now, though, that fear kind of went away, but I'm still scared of sharks."

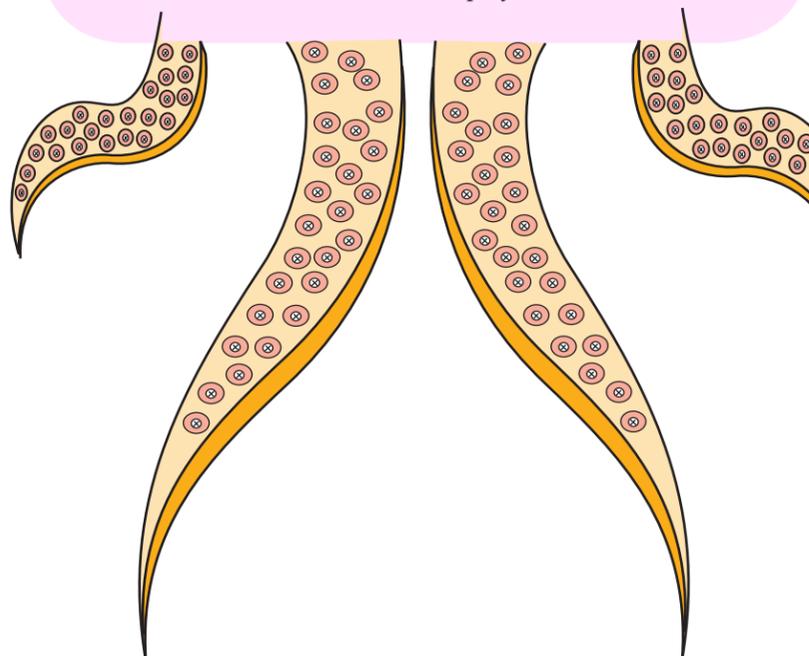
As for how her fears had influenced her, Liu said, "They haven't affected me in a big way. I just didn't like sushi bars that had octopus legs on display." ♦

### topten

#### STRANGEST PHOBIAS

- |    |   |   |  |
|----|---|---|--|
| 10 | <b>Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia</b><br>fear of long words | 4 | <b>Geniophobia</b><br>fear of chins  |
| 9  | <b>Didaskaleinophobia</b><br>fear of school                       | 3 | <b>Zemmiphobia</b><br>fear of the great mole rat                                     |
| 8  | <b>Nomophobia</b><br>fear of losing cell phone contact            | 2 | <b>Arachibutyrophobia</b><br>fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of the mouth |
| 7  | <b>Peladophobia</b><br>fear of bald people                        | 1 | <b>Papaphobia</b><br>fear of the Pope  |
| 6  | <b>Venustraphobia</b><br>fear of beautiful women                  |   |  |
| 5  | <b>Aulophobia</b><br>fear of flutes                               |   |  |

>> Synthia Ling and Rebecca Nguyen



2011

# IDENTIFYING PHOBIAS

PHOBIAS, FEARS EVERYONE HAS, AND THEIR NOT-SO-TYPICAL PHOBIAS.

## Senior cringes when squeezing cotton balls

By Karen Yang

One ordinary day in fifth grade, senior Adam Hinshaw discovered something out of the ordinary. For an arts and crafts project, Hinshaw was instructed to make clouds by pulling apart cotton balls, but that's when he discovered that he could not squeeze cotton balls without feeling pain.

"I couldn't do it," said Hinshaw. "It just hurt. That was my earliest memory of cotton balls. It's a bad feeling and it gives me the chills."

Hinshaw equates his fear of cotton balls with the feeling that people get when they hear the sound of nails on chalkboard.

"Whenever I squeeze a cotton ball, I get that," he said.

Luckily for him, Hinshaw has few experiences with cotton balls. He does, however, recall one time at swim practice when the team was playing a game that involved putting cotton balls over their eyes in their goggles.

"I couldn't do it. My coach excused me from the game."

Although people believe him and respect his fear ("Nobody tortures me," he said), Hinshaw finds it difficult to explain what it is about this seemingly innocuous object that scares him.

"The high quality ones are fine," said Hinshaw. "I can hold them in my hand, but once I start to squeeze them, the fabric rubbing together... it's hard to explain."

Hinshaw's condition is not unique. The fear of cotton balls is known as "sidonglobophobia."

"There's other people out there," Hinshaw said. "Look it up on Google."

Despite his rare encounters with cotton balls, Hinshaw finds



FALCON // SARAH HULL

Senior Adam Hinshaw turns weak when faced with cotton balls.

no need to overcome his fear.

"It's not that big of a deal; it's not affecting my life or anything," Hinshaw said. "There's substitutes for cotton balls out there." ♦

Adam Hinshaw

## Student avoids department stores

By Jennifer Jin

As a 3-year-old, Rohan Cotah went with his mother to shop at the department store Dillard's. But suddenly, the store was swarming with shoppers, and he quickly got separated from his mother. Only after two torturous hours was he able to find his mother again.

"It was so scary for me that I even threw up," Cotah said.

This incident caused seven years of turmoil for Cotah.

"I'm scared of places where it is really big and has a lot of people," Cotah said. "That makes it easy for people to get lost."

Until Cotah was 10, he tried to avoid going to department stores. However, his friends started to go to the mall without him so he began to feel left out. As a result, he started hanging out at the mall with his friends and began to overcome his fear.

"It was something I had to overcome in order to fit in," said Cotah.

Additionally, he started to go to some department stores.

"I kind of overcame it the last couple years because I can contact my parents if I need to [with my cell phone]," said Cotah.

Even so, Cotah tries to avoid going to department stores as much as possible.

"I like to order online," said Cotah. "I already know my sizes and everything, so it's easy and convenient for me."



FALCON // SARAH HULL

Sophomore Rohan Cotah hates entering cramped department stores.

One store that he avoids the most is Macy's.

"Anytime you go there, it's really crowded," said Cotah. "I just can't deal with it."

Although Cotah has mostly overcome his phobia, it leaves a painful past.

"It's a really silly phobia," Cotah said. "But it's something that did affect me." ♦

Rohan Cotah

### >> togatalks

What's your biggest fear?

"I'm afraid of broken glass in my face."



senior Chris Liu

"After watching Jaws in elementary school, I had my grandma wait in the bathroom while I showered out of the fear a shark would come out of the drain."

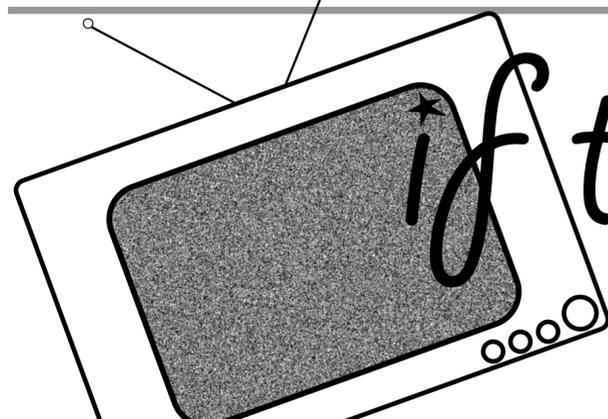


junior Samantha Hoffman

"My biggest fear is losing all of my friends and being alone in the world."



junior Vineet Jain



# Saratoga were

From Top Chef to Project Runway, students show what it's like to be the best at reality shows.

## Saratoga Idol tries out for real show

By Shivani Chadha



It was the summer of 2009. Senior Brandon Pierce was in a never-ending line in front of the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, cringing at the discordant sound of a fellow singer belting songs left and right. Pierce tapped his foot nervously as he thought about his mission: to stand out in a crowd of 11,000 people who wanted to be the next American Idol.

Pierce tried out for Idol between his sophomore and junior year because of his love for singing and curiosity for the unique experience. Though he didn't reach his American Idol dream, Pierce did manage to win Saratoga Idol in 2010.

"I've been singing practically my whole

life," Pierce said. "I've done solos in church since about kindergarten and really started to get serious about singing at the beginning of high school."

Pierce auditioned for season nine American Idol, in which Lee DeWyze was the winner.

Pierce's audition day was the day the largest number of people ever showed up to try out for Idol.

Pierce said he had to prepare two songs for his audition and worked on the songs with his voice teacher, who is also the music director of his church.

Pierce began practicing four to five weeks before his audition.

Pierce performed "Wait for You" by Elliot Yamin in his 30-second time slot in front of the show's producers.

Had Pierce gotten further along in the

audition process, he would have met the real judges, but producers judge the first few rounds.

Although Pierce didn't get too far along in the auditioning process, he enjoyed the experience and was glad that he at least tried.

"I was really nervous, but it was so much fun," Pierce said. "There were some crazy people who were both amazing at singing and just hilarious to watch."

However fun the audition was, there was much waiting before.

Pierce had to wait in line from 3:30 a.m. until noon to register on one day, and once again from 4 a.m. until noon on audition day.

"All that waiting for only 30 seconds of singing is kind of ridiculous, but, it was definitely an experience." ♦

**"All that waiting for only 30 seconds is kind of ridiculous, but it was definitely an experience."**

>> Senior Brandon Pierce

## Top chefs cook up fruity specials

By Evaline Ju

In a twist on the reality series "Top Chef" on Bravo, the Cookie Monster and Elmo were treated to cookies on the Feb. 16 episode. Determined to seek out culinary talent in Saratoga, I devised my own challenge by asking three students to create baked goods of their choice.

### Meet the competitors

The first contestant junior Megan Yen began cooking when she was around 7 as she helped her mother by doing basic activities like washing and chopping vegetables and beating eggs.

As she grew older, her mother trusted her with more work around the kitchen.

"In fourth grade, I got really interested in cooking when I started watching Food Network," said Yen. "That's where I started to explore cooking different things."

Yen is currently the president of the school's Culinary Club, which allows students to come together at 'cooking nights' to share ingredients and cook.

Second contestant sophomore Caroline Chou began cooking at 6 also by helping her mother. She enjoys using spices and herbs to make soups and cakes.

"I love experimenting with foods and finding combinations that go well together," Chou said.

Third contestant senior Carolyne Kobara began cooking when she was 8 because she did not like the

way her father cooked eggs.

Kobara works with her cooking partner, senior Benjamin Hoerber. "I invited him over to dinner a few times, and we both expressed an interest in cooking with each other," Kobara said.

"Then after a few tries, we decided it was a win arrangement."

### >> THE best recipe

#### Pumpkin Cheesecake

- 2 cups finely crushed gluten-free gingersnaps
- 1/4 cup finely chopped pecans
- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- Filling:
- 1/2 cup canned pumpkin
- 1 tablespoon gluten-free flour
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 24 oz softened cream cheese
- 1 cup sugar
- 1.5 teaspoons vanilla
- 3 eggs

### The Competition

One weekend, Yen, Chou and Kobara got together to have a friendly and competitive cook-off. Yen decided to make mini apple pies and asked her friends junior Jocelyn Takahashi and freshman Casey Takahashi to help her.

"It look a really long time," Yen said. "For each of the [pies] we had to roll out individual circles."

Chou wanted to use this challenge to allow herself to experiment with more food. She first baked a beet chocolate cake.

"I thought it tasted funny when it first came out, but I had it [one] morning for breakfast, and it wasn't that bad," she said.

Chou then decided to make a second dish—peanut butter banana bread.

"I wanted to mash something, and so I mashed bananas," she explained.

She realized that she did not have butter left but found applesauce and peanut butter. Then she decided to add some chopped chocolate to personalize her creation.

Kobara and Hoerber teamed up to bake a pump-

kin cheesecake, a recipe for which they tried for the first time. Kobara, who has a gluten intolerance, used gluten-free gingersnaps and flour to match her needs.

"We were in the mood for cheesecake, and it is very visually appealing," she said.

### Judgment Time

Instead of judging myself, I employed the help of two fellow Falcon staff members, sophomores Jackie Gu and Ashwini Velchamy, in hopes of reaching an absolutely unbiased decision.

Both tried all three foods and ultimately ruled that they liked Kobara's pumpkin cheesecake the best.

"The cheesecake part was soft and creamy, and the crust was delicious," Gu said. "Overall it tasted like heaven, and I would eat the entire pie if I could."

She added, however, that more pumpkin flavor would have been nice. The two offered critiques for each product.

They thought that the mini apple pies looked appealing but tasted slightly bland. For the peanut butter banana bread, Velchamy enjoyed the strong flavor.

"It was a nice blend of so many tastes," she said. Gu found the bread a little too sweet and advised that the banana and chocolate chunks be more uniformly distributed.

We enjoyed having quality brunch. I realized it's time to learn how to bake well with flavor. ♦



Kobara

### >> online extra

For directions on how to make the best pumpkin cheesecake, visit:

[www.saratogafalcon.org/features](http://www.saratogafalcon.org/features)

# a reality show...

## Wong wins the heart of bachelor

### FOUR GIRLS COMPETE FOR THE HEART OF SOPHOMORE BOY

By Dylan Jew

What is your favorite farm animal? What type of deodorant do you use?

These are just a few of the questions that sophomore Amin Mirzadegan would continue dating them in SHS' own version of the popular reality TV show "The Bachelor."

#### THE BACHELOR

AMIN MIRZADEGAN  
Age: 16  
Qualities he looks for: Caring, funny, independent.  
Pet peeve: When girls bite their nails  
Favorite farm animal: Goat  
Deodorant: Old Spice  
"I enjoy riding small ponies on the moonlit beach along with candle lit dinners under the stars."

In "The Bachelor of Saratoga," Mirzadegan dated four different girls—freshman Maddie Kingston, sophomore Megan Doles, junior Nicole Shadman and senior Erin Wong. As each girl went on a five-minute speed date in the quad during lunch with Mirzadegan, they all competed to win over his heart by telling him about themselves and answering a few questions he had for them.

The speed dates were a good way to get exposed to different opinions, according to Mirzadegan.

"I actually learned a lot of new things about each person," Mirzadegan said. "I learned about the different cultures and opinions of each one."

In the end, Mirzadegan chose Wong as the winner of the competition.

"She was nice and seemed the most interested," Mirzadegan said. "She was the only one who had questions to ask me." Wong was prepared beforehand, and asked Mirzadegan questions such as his ideal second date.

It was a very close choice, said Mirzadegan, making small details such as each girl's favorite farm animal a factor into his decision. The difference between a four out of five and a five could be whether a girl's preference is a cow or a goat.

In general the girls found Mirzadegan to be an enjoyable and funny guy. "He's hilarious," Doles said, "and he always keeps me laughing."

Unlike the real Bachelor, Mirzadegan did not continue dating any of the girls.

"All the girls were really sweet and funny," Mirzadegan said. "But someone had to win. That's how 'The Bachelor' goes." ♦

	Maddie Kingston	Megan Doles	Nicole Shadman	Erin Wong
Favorite Animal				
Favorite Deodorant	Dove	Secret	Secret	Dove
Most attractive quality	Kingston had style, asked for Mirzadegan's soccer jersey number, and was funny	Doles has rally connections	Mirzadegan would get free food at the Bell Tower and she has over 25 soft Persian rugs	Wong can make blankets
Least attractive quality	Kingston seemed intimidated at first	Doles thinks she is better than Mirzadegan at everything	There was not much to talk about	The age difference
Overview from Mirzadegan on how the date went	"I felt a connection with Maddie"	"She tells jokes and laughs throughout the conversation"	"She's nice; we had a lot in common"	"She seemed the most interested in me because she asked questions"

## Fashionistas of Saratoga

By Aashna Mukerji

Many young girls dream about someday becoming a fashion designer. Though this fantasy is often considered unrealistic and far beyond reach, junior Kylie Tseng and senior Carol Wu are working hard to make this dream a reality.

In the Falcon's own version of Project Runway, I compared Tseng's and Wu's sketches against each other based on my own preference. I'm no Michael Kors, but I found both designs to be incredibly elegant and creative.

Judging only their designs side by side, Tseng's evening gown provides fierce competition to Wu's chic blouse-and-capris ensemble. Tseng's off-the-shoulder dress is simultaneously edgy and classy; Wu's more casual outfit is fresh and summery.

The attention to detail present in both designs is impressive. Wu's blouse, coupled with a tasteful cardigan, is paired with sunny-yellow shorts that cut off just above the knee. Tseng's floor-length prom dress flows beautifully. While their styles are strikingly different, both artists show remarkable talent and innovation. Borrowing Tim Gunn's favorite phrase, they definitely "make it work."

Despite the incredible potential both designers hold in their art, Tseng would be behind Wu simply

because of experience level. While Tseng has a notebook filled with sketches of clothes, Wu has gone on to design and create different items of clothing.

For Tseng, getting involved in the design industry is somewhat of a family tradition.

Tseng's mother helped her daughter realize her interest in fashion at a young age when they went shopping together. "I've always liked fashion. My mom has a lot of interesting clothes from the '80s, and she got me interested," Tseng added.

Wu was first inspired by fashion on a trip to fashion store BCBG Max Azria in seventh grade.

"I saw the beautiful dresses and I was amazed at how creative the designers were and how some dresses flowed like water," Wu said.

After doing some research and looking at different sorts of designs, Wu began to seriously consider entering the design industry. In eighth grade, she participated in a fashion show for the Organization of Chinese American Women, sponsored by Group USA.

"It was a great experience, and I realized I enjoy the design of the dress more than actually wearing it," Wu said.

In order to pursue a more focused path, Wu attended the California College of Arts during the summer after her junior year.



Tseng

Wu

Wu took figure drawing, life drawing, sewing and designing courses during her stay. She was grateful for the opportunity of a real hands-on experience, saying that although it was tedious at times, she "enjoyed every minute of it."

Tseng takes a different approach to her passion for design. Though she would pursue a career in fashion with her parents' consent, Tseng is on the path to becoming a graphic designer in the future.

Both Tseng and Wu have potential and are on the right track to becoming successful designers.

"Fashion design is more than just making pretty clothing," said Wu. "It's like a painting you can wear." ♦

# togga Pitfalls



Saratoga is widely regarded as a safe school in terms of academics and security. But watcho<sup>u</sup>t!

## Why we should walk around in ponchos all day



>> Jackie Gu & Aashna Mukerji  
Escape from Guano-mo Bay

It's a bird! No, it's a plane. No, wait, it's a flying rodent festering with disease and liquid feces. Oh wait. That's a bird. It's the end of lunch, and most students would like nothing better than to take a leisurely stroll through the quad to their next class. But alas, this cannot

be, thanks to the avian dwellers of Saratoga High who take it upon themselves to wreak havoc upon all who dare cross their path, which unfortunately includes every student who ever ventures outdoors.

The end-of-lunch bell triggers a Pavlovian response from every winged creature within a 100-yard radius. They swoop down with a vengeance from every angle, having lurked in the corners of the quad rooftops for the entirety of lunch, waiting for their meal.

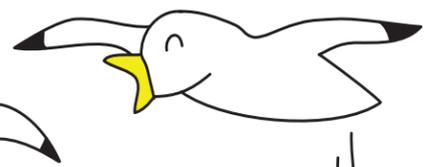
This unfortunate scene repeats itself every day without fail, but the outcome is inevitable. Unless people finally decide to start using the trash cans instead of the nearest flower bed to dispose of their trash (unlikely), these scavengers will continue to infest our campus for years to come.

Aside from birds, however, there are plenty of other dangers from the sky to be aware of. For instance, whenever it rains, students become the inadvertent

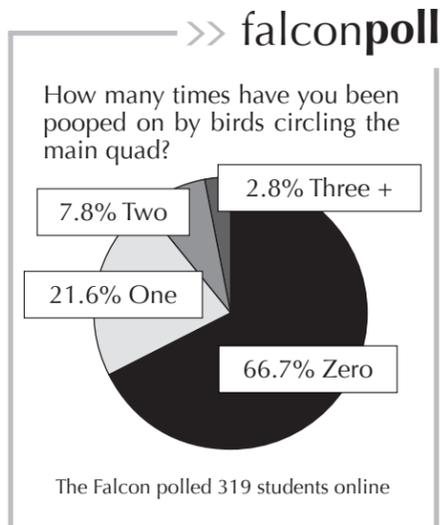
victims. Despite the many well-intentioned overhangings located around the school, such as outside the journalism room or in between the 600 and 800 buildings, steady streams of water still manage to soak students thoroughly on their way to class.

The fortunate ones are only drenched from ankle down, thanks to the giant puddles that seem to materialize spontaneously in the middle of protected hallways. The unfortunate ones, however, get to look like they just showered in dirty gutter water. In order to avoid these steady streams, make sure to keep your eyes open when turning corners—use a mirror if you have to.

The birds are truly the most bothersome in the realm of dangers from above. The worst part, though, is not their mere existence—students could handle it fine if the birds would skulk quietly instead and just keep to them-



selves—but no, they choose to swoop down at the same time and unleash their primal offerings all at once. That hundred feet or so across the quad sure seems a lot farther when you are attacked by flying vermin every step of the way. ♦



topthree

THINGS TO AVOID AT SARATOGA HIGH

3	Puddles. Try opting for thigh-high wellies; the knee-high ones are about as effective as socks.	1	Bird excrement. It's worse than lightning: you can be hit more than once.
2	The sky. Maybe Chicken Little wasn't crazy; you can never be too careful.	>>	Jackie Gu & Aashna Mukerji



## Overdue textbooks yield fines, parking violations don't

BY Sarah Hull & Parul Singh

The parking violation: a five by three inch, neon yellow, highly adhesive sticker. The library fine: a seemingly mysterious dollar amount that just seems to keep increasing. But according to school officials, these notorious fines often evoke misplaced fear in students.

Campus supervisor Jeanine Sevilla said parking violations are typically issued to students for missing parking permits, parking on top of the curb, parking in the visitors' spaces or the staff lots or for parking

backwards.

After a student receives three violations, he or she usually faces the penalty of Saturday school, but there is no monetary fine.

Junior Ali Kothari received a violation for parking backwards into a space, which is a common cause of parking lot accidents, said Sevilla. However, since it was only his first violation, he did not face any penalty.

"I was mostly angry because I didn't know it was against the rules," said Kothari. "I was also annoyed because the sticker was really hard to get off."

Usually, Sevilla checks the parking lot during the morning and carries a chart with her to record car information.

"If a kid is in the parking lot without a parking permit, I get all their information, like what kind of car it is and its license plate, and then I put this lovely sticker on their car, which is unfortunately very hard to get off," Sevilla said.

Sevilla did say that with the use of products such as WD-40, a cleaning

lubricant, and baby oil the stickers can be removed.

While there are some consequences for parking violation, Sevilla feels that students should not be too concerned.

"This year has been one of the best years and the kids have been wonderful. If they get a violation, they're usually [in the office] buying a permit the next day," she said.

Library fines can be more serious in comparison as students are required to actually pay money in order to clear any items returned late or damaged.

For library books, there is a five-day grace period where no fine will be administered, but after this period students are fined 25 cents per day until the book is returned. However, there is a \$5 cap on the fine amount per book.

Any textbook returned over three weeks late is fined a flat rate of \$5. Due to this policy, fines can add up quickly if a student is not paying attention.

"It is not uncommon for me to [clearing] for someone who has three overdue textbooks and three overdue library books," librarian Kevin Heyman said.

Junior Vineet Jain received a \$3 fine for turning "The Bean Trees" late as well as an \$18 fine for losing "Lord of the Flies." Though he had to pay a considerable amount, Jain feels that the fines were deserved.

### falconfigures

**\$5.00** Fine for a textbook returned at least three weeks late

**25¢** Fine assessed per day for an overdue library book (\$5 cap)

**30** monthly average of parking violations issued by the Saratoga High administration

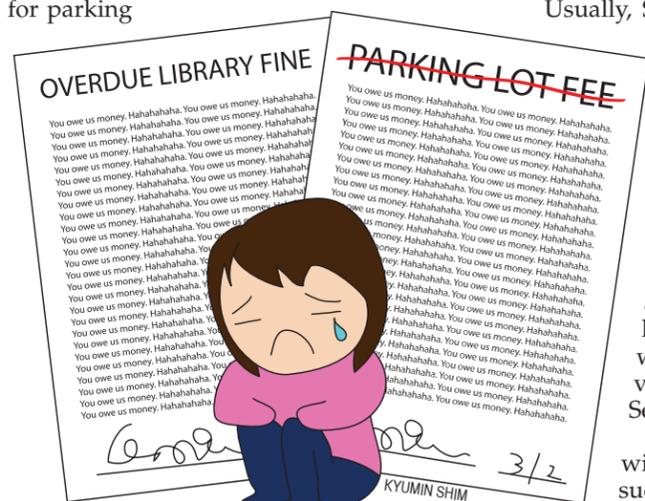
>> Sarah Hull and Parul Singh

"I was satisfied with how much I had to pay," said Jain. "My parents got mad, but I thought [the fine] was reasonable since I was responsible for the books."

Library fines can also be issued for damage to textbooks, including water damage, marks or ripped pages. Anything beyond normal wear and tear can be fined, according to Heyman.

Students who fail to pay their fines or to return overdue library books are sent e-mail notifications and may face more serious consequences.

"The administration can put a hold on a student's transcript [if they don't pay a fine]. We do our best to collect it, but when students don't pay their fines, then the administration imposes the penalty for it," said Heyman. ♦



# Guidance Dept: Missing credit plagues students

BY Michael Lee

Guidance counselor Christy Cali sits at her desk in the Guidance Office, her eyes fixed on her computer screen, which displays student schedules for the 2011-2012 school year. From Aeries, she checks if all of her students, particularly incoming seniors, have fulfilled their requirements for the upcoming year.

Cali's alarm bells go off after about 15 minutes of searching. She locks in on her target: Rebecca Chen, a junior who lacks her Applied Arts credit. Cali immediately makes a note to herself to call Chen into her office.

"I plan on taking psychology over the summer at a college because I would have to take seven periods if I didn't," Chen said. "[Before], I didn't really have time to fit it in my schedule."

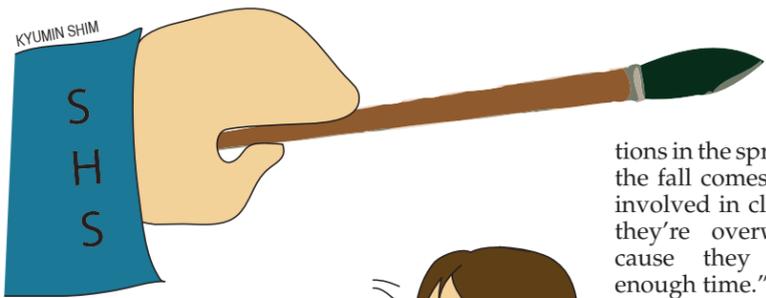
Cali and her fellow guidance counselors find many students with these schedule mishaps.

"[A common mistake] is probably leaving the P.E. requirement to the senior year," Cali said. "Students not paying attention to the Applied Art credit and having too many classes to fill it in is another one."

Senior Uttara Sivaram fell into the pitfall that Cali describes. Sivaram has taken journalism during her four years at Saratoga High, but did not complete her Visual/Performing Arts credit, as she did not have enough space in her schedule to fit in another elective.

"I tried to make it up the summer after my sophomore year," Sivaram said. "I went to De Anza and I took an art class. Unfortunately, De Anza runs on a quarter system, and their three credits weren't equal to 10 high school credits."

Sivaram is currently taking an extra art class at De Anza to make up for her missing credit. She insists that students should "avoid the hassle" by fulfilling their credit issues early in their high



"They have good intentions in the spring, but when the fall comes and they get involved in clubs or sports, they're overwhelmed because they don't have enough time."

school career.

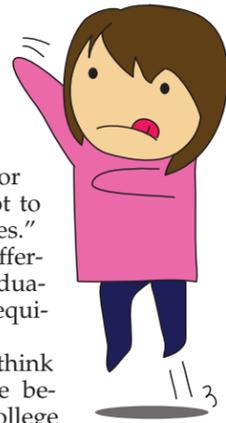
"As advice to other people, if you're in journalism, just have seven periods for a year," Sivaram said. "Try not to resort to the community colleges."

Cali also emphasized the differences between high school graduation requirements and the prerequisites for colleges.

"The biggest error that I think people make is the difference between what's eligible for college and what's needed for graduation," Cali said. "To graduate, all you need is a D-, but a D- in an English class is not acceptable for college. Students forget to repeat it during the summer in order to improve their grade, and then they get to their senior year and they're not qualified."

Of all of the guidance-related issues she encounters, Cali said that one of the most common occurs when overambitious students bite off more than they can chew during their junior and senior years.

"[Students] don't estimate the time that they want to put in," Cali said.



Students need 220 credits total to graduate from Saratoga High, where a semester of a class is worth five credits. This 220 requirement includes 10 credits (one year) of a Visual/Performing Arts class, five credits of an Applied Arts class (in addition to the five credits granted by the required Health/Driver's Ed course) and 20 credits (two years) of P.E., Cali recommends summer classes at the community colleges, for those students who are missing the Applied Arts or Visual/Performing Arts credit.

Finally, Cali and the other counselors understand that there is no "one-size-fits-all" advice that they can give to all students.

"You have to [choose courses] individually," Cali said. "Nothing at this point can be done with scheduling as a group, even as a junior group, because every person is different, and every person struggles differently. [My biggest advice is to] talk to your counselor if you have a problem." ♦

## >> Ask a Counselor

**Q:** What would you recommend to students aimed at avoiding credit pitfalls?

**A:** During the summer after junior year, take Ceramics or Art at De Anza or West Valley Colleges if your senior year is booked. Otherwise, we'd put off the needed course to senior year.

Christy Cali >>



# Academic perils: What APs are really worth

BY Deborah Soung

Junior Amanda Wu had never planned on taking two AP courses during her junior year in addition to her two honors courses and extracurriculars, which include badminton, soccer and SAT courses. However, because of the constant pressure from her parents and tutors, she reluctantly signed up for AP Environmental Science and AP US History.

"My parents were always talking to me about how my brother took 'this many APs,' and then my SAT teacher told me that I should take APs to get into a good college," said Wu.

She finds herself a victim of lack of sleep for much of the school year, especially around the AP testing season, and often feels exhausted during school days.

Wu feels that her parents pressured her to sign up for AP classes, and she is only one among several students who feel the same way.

"[Being pressured into taking AP courses] is so common here, and I think it makes the school more competitive," said junior Jennifer Yang, "but sometimes people take more than they can handle or more than they want to handle."

Though taking challenging courses is a healthy habit, there is a fine line between taking a suitable amount of challenging courses and overloading on those too difficult, said assistant principal Brian Safine.

"It's very healthy and very appropriate for students to pick classes that fit their interests and fit their talents," Safine said. "It's unhealthy to blindly accelerate across the board with AP classes regardless of interest."

Last year as a sophomore, Yang,

who currently balances three AP courses, chose to sign up for AP U.S. History because her friends told her that "everybody" took the course.

"I wasn't going to take AP US History at first because I'm not a history freak," Yang said, "but then I asked one of my friends if it would be weird if I took US History regular, and she was like, 'Take AP. I'm taking AP. Everyone is taking AP.'"



Wu

Although she does not feel particularly overloaded by her classes, Yang admits that there is a difference in difficulty between sophomore year, when students rarely take AP courses, to junior year.

"Everything is harder than it used to be," Yang said. "You definitely need to spend more time reading your material and knowing it before you get to class."

Another junior, who currently takes English 11 honors and AP US History and dropped AP biology, agrees with Yang.

"It's a lot of stuff to know in biology since it's so comprehensive," she said. "There's so much stuff, there's lots of reading, and you spend a lot of time on AP Bio. It kind of cuts into everything you do because you spend so much time on the class."

The junior did not feel pressured to take AP courses by



## >> falconpoll

**Q:** How do the number of AP/Honors courses "overload" students?



On a scale of 1-5, how "overloaded" do you feel with your course load? (0 = not overloaded, 5 = very overloaded)

	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
0 to 2 AP/Honors	2.21	2.73	3.03	2.12
3 to 7 AP/Honors	2.55	2.89	3.68	3.04

\*sample size of 75 students per category

**A:** Yes, an increased number of AP/Honors courses results in a greater feeling of "overload."

her parents, who actually discouraged her from signing up for AP biology, but she did feel slightly pressured by her peers to take the course.

Because extra time must be spent preparing for AP courses, students who take multiple APs have to plan their schedules more carefully in order to study well for standardized tests.

Safine encourages students to challenge themselves with their courses, especially since the pass rate for AP scores has gone slightly up in the past years

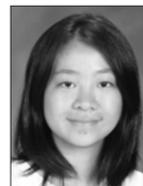
even though the school implemented an open access policy in English, history and science in 2004. Unfortunately, in the competitive environment of this school, taking too many AP courses can become

a serious problem.

"The potential for [overloading on AP courses] definitely exists," said Safine. "We've seen situations where students take four or five APs and then talk about the stress of completing that curriculum while applying to colleges as a senior, or completing that curriculum while taking standardized tests as a junior."

Taking an AP course just for its extra GPA point is not a positive way for students to choose their classes, according to Yang.

To underclassmen planning to take an unreasonable amount of AP classes, Yang offers a piece of advice: "Don't do it. Just don't. You think you can handle it, but you can't." ♦



Yang



# Mythbusting Los Gatos High

Falcon reporters investigate the infamous history between Los Gatos and Saratoga High by shadowing and collecting data to crack the rivalry.

## Los Gatos holds top spot in sports

BY David Eng

When senior Kevin Smith dropped to his knees in the waning seconds of an Oct. 22 football game versus Los Gatos, it was not a kneel of humility by the Falcon quarterback. Instead, he was taking a knee to run down the final 30 seconds of the game clock. With Saratoga's 21-17 victory over Los Gatos, the Wildcats' dominance of the crosstown football rivalry had at last ended. Elated Falcon fans stormed the field to the fire-truck wail of the end-of-game buzzer.

The Los Gatos-Saratoga athletic rivalry has long been dominated by the Wildcats. While Saratoga has flourished in racket sports like badminton and tennis and contests like chess tournaments and science Olympiads, the Falcon's underwhelming athleticism has been marked by years (and even decades) of football, basketball and baseball defeats.

### The facts

Athletic director Peter Jordan, who has been involved with the Saratoga High athletic program for 11 years, offered background on the issue.

"I know that Saratoga has had a much longer history than I've been here. There were periods in that history when Saratoga was an athletic powerhouse. But when I got here in the early 2000s, even then we had a

long streak of losing the big football game to Los Gatos," Jordan said.

When students poured out from the bleachers following the end of the Falcon's 27-year losing streak, football coach Tim Lugo finally realized how much pressure was on the team to succeed.

"The game to me really wasn't that important," Lugo said, who was hired prior to the 2008-2009 season. "As far as I'm concerned Los Gatos is a league opponent—it's no different than playing Milpitas or Wilcox or Palo Alto. But to see the reaction of the community and how much it meant to them, I think I finally get it. To see all of those years of frustration lifted off people's shoulders was something I'll never forget."

Football is not the only sport in which Saratoga has won against Los Gatos this year. Boys' basketball beat Los Gatos 57-47 on Dec. 23, breaking a losing streak dating back to 2007. The boys' soccer team defeated the Wildcats 2-1 on Jan. 14 and 1-0 on Feb. 4, breaking a three-game losing streak lasting back to 2008.

Despite these Falcon victories, a perception regarding the athletic talent of each school still pervades the community.

### The theory

Much of this athletic success may be derived simply from Los Gatos's sheer student body population. Statistically, Los Gatos is nearly 1.5 times more likely to spawn a decent athlete, as its student body is 1.5 times larger than Saratoga's. This ratio holds constant particularly when comparing rosters.

This past season, the Wildcats' football team featured 53 players while the Falcons numbered 34. Last season, the Wildcats' baseball team featured 22 players while the Falcons only consistently played 15.

### The verdict

"The fact that Los Gatos may defeat Saratoga isn't the point to me," Jordan said. "The point is that athletics are part of the high school experience."

Jordan acknowledged that his job is not solely dependant on "beating Los Gatos" per se, but also said that watching his sports teams defeat their rival is exciting.

"I don't think it's fair anymore to say 'We suck at that. It doesn't matter,'" Jordan said. "It does matter. We're not going to lose them all to Los Gatos anymore. We're going to win some, we're going to lose some. I think it feels different now—I think everybody will take us more seriously." ♦

### >> togatalks

What do you think about the Los Gatos-Saratoga rivalry?



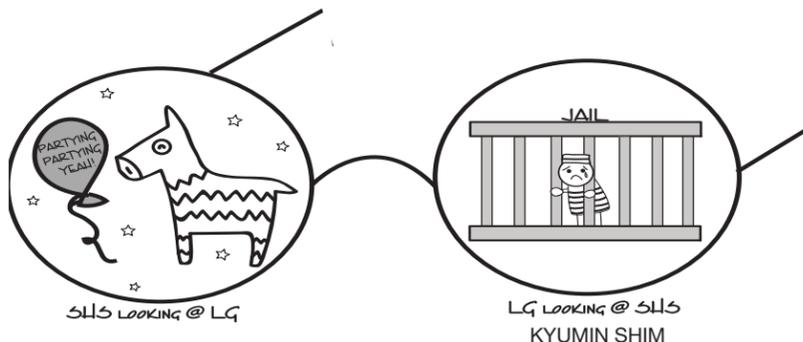
"It's really beyond me why there's so much discussion about it because we're so different, so you can't really compare us."

>> sophomore Ashley Joshi



"It isn't really as big a deal as people here seem to think it is. The only time it matters is during the big game."

>> junior Andrea Liu



SHS LOOKING @ LG

LG LOOKING @ SHS  
KYUMIN SHIM

## FACTORFICTION?

1. There are more Honors and AP classes at SHS.
2. 50% of LG juniors had a 3.0+ GPA in 2009.
3. School faculties have tried to downplay rivalries.
4. There is a home economics class at Los Gatos.
5. At LG, there is less diversity than at Saratoga.
6. Los Gatos students participate in roller hockey.
7. There is an organization at LG to alert students as to how inaccurate their perceptions are.
8. Los Gatos High was established after SHS.
9. *El Gato*, Los Gatos's newspaper, has 27 hand-picked students on staff.
10. In 2009, 75% of LG students went to college.
11. Los Gatos students can take AP Italian, AP German, AP Russian and AP Latin.
12. Los Gatos High was used as the front for "The Amanda Show" and "Saved by the Bell"

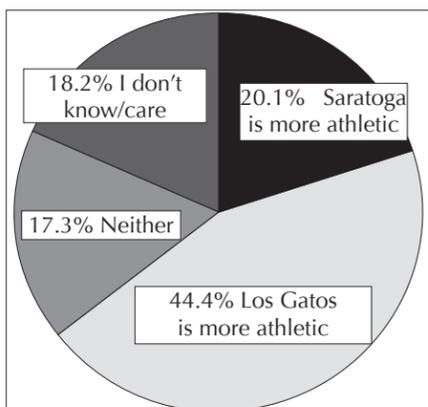
### ANSWERS:

1. Fiction, LG has more; 2. Fact; 3. Fact; 4. Fact; 5. Fact; 6. Fact; 7. Fact; 8. Fact; 9. Fiction; 10. Fact; 11. Fiction; 12. Fact

-Reporting by Ashwini Velchamy

### >> falconpoll

Between Los Gatos and Saratoga, which is the **more athletic** school?



The Falcon polled 313 students online.

— David Eng

# Academic disparity creates stereotypes about LG and SHS

BY Jackie Gu

Initially rooted solely in football, the simmering rivalry between the Saratoga and Los Gatos has evolved significantly in the past quarter century. As demographics of both schools transformed, the rivalry did too; now, the disparity in academics is another source of opposition.

Both schools continually perpetuate the stereotypes

**“Students here [at Los Gatos] generally seem to be a lot more relaxed, I think.”**

>> Los Gatos sophomore Kiana Fatemi

more,” said Los Gatos’ assistant principal Valerie Arbizu, who was an English

teacher at Saratoga last year. “It really all depends on the individual student.”

Students themselves agree that the stereotypes that Los Gatos students are “dumb” and Saratoga “smart” are largely untrue—the difference stems from student attitude rather than actual intelligence.

“Los Gatos kids aren’t dumb, I think Toga students are just obsessed with school,” Los Gatos sophomore Kiana Fatemi said. “I’m not super competitive and I thought it was annoying.”

This contrast in student attitude is often manifested in extra APs, honors classes and extracurriculars from Saratoga students. Safine said he often sees students enrolled in so many honors and AP classes that they don’t have time for other activities.

“I went to Los Gatos because grades seemed to be the only thing people think about at Saratoga,” Fatemi said. “Students here [at Los Gatos] generally seem to be a lot more relaxed, from what I’ve seen.” ♦

that Saratoga veers on academic obsession and Los Gatos the opposite. Because of this, students from both sides exaggerate the actual difference. In terms of raw data, both schools offer 17 AP courses; while Saratoga’s mean SAT reasoning score in 2009 was 1922, Los Gatos’ was 147 points lower at 1775. However, 91 percent of SHS seniors took the SAT in 2008, whereas only 75 percent of Los Gatos seniors did the same year.

“In terms of general student attitude [towards academics], I think our students are imbued from a very early age with the notion that college is the target,” said assistant principal Brian Safine. “Our students here are largely guided by parental expectation, and they become familiar with the big-name colleges from a very early age.”

The ambitious academic environment at Saratoga translates clearly in the data: In 2009, 82 percent of SHS graduates went on to 4-year colleges, while only 66 percent of Los Gatos graduates did the same. Although the



Courtesy of www.lghs.net

Columnist Emily Williams, junior, shadowed at Los Gatos High, pictured above. The picturesque school front has been used in several television shows, and the expansive front lawn is a popular meeting place.

## Columnist opens her mind to different side of Los Gatos High



>> Emily Williams

In Emily Territory

reotypical Los Gatos party girl that I had envisioned. Small and dark haired, Monahan takes AP and honors classes, she studies during tutorial and is a section editor on the school newspaper, *El Gato*.

Suddenly, I was introduced to a side of Los Gatos that I never knew existed. There were kids who focused on their education. They studied during tutorials, took advanced classes and did not party.

As I sat in advanced classes like AP Language, Spanish 4 Honors and physics, I noticed a different energy in the air. When someone didn’t understand a topic or made a mistake, no one laughed. When they took a quiz, kids weren’t predicting their own epic failures.

No one discussed grades, Aeries, SAT or college. Even though the classes seemed hard, people were more relaxed.

**“No one discussed grades, Aeries, SAT or college. People were more relaxed.”**

Some students who I talked to said that there is a sort of unofficial buddy system, where people at the top of the class will help those who are

struggling. They said that they feel like they have each other’s backs; there is no judgment if someone forgets their homework or bombs a test.

The *El Gato* newspaper staff is very different from the *Falcon* staff, which has two periods and 74 staff members. By contrast, the Los Gatos paper has only 27 staff members and each new member is hand-picked by the staff. Monahan told me that the staff is comprised of some of the most interesting people at the school and it is a great honor to be chosen for the highly competitive staff.

While there are people who are studious at Los Gatos, students said that there are definite cliques, with plenty of people who party.

Early in the day, the adviser of *El Gato*, Doug Garrett, had urged me to open my mind. At the time I thought nothing of it, but by the end of the day I had a new perspective on our sister high school. Turns out, it’s not so bad after all. ♦

I had always thought of Los Gatos High as uncharted enemy territory with a superior sports program and a rowdy student body. I envisioned it as a place where people were better looking and academics ran second to athletics and the social scene.

I guess we all could use a little wake-up call once in a while to disprove stereotypes and open our minds.

I got my wake-up call at 7:30 a.m. on March 10, when I arrived at Los Gatos High School and pasted a visitor’s badge on the front of my shirt. I was there to shadow, to go behind enemy lines and find out if my perceptions were true.

The first thing I noticed was the campus, huge and beautiful, with hallways that look just like a high school should look—with wide, indoor corridors lined on both sides by lockers. Yet for how big and crowded the school was, the office seemed surprisingly small and empty.

I was struck by the contrast to the office at Saratoga High, where students and adults mingle; there is always a crowd at assistant principal Karen Hyde’s office and a line in the guidance office.

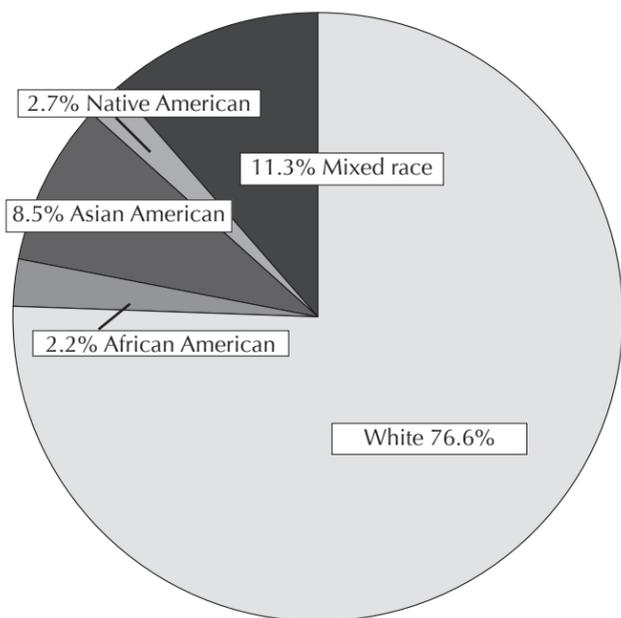
Although the office at Los Gatos may be more efficient and less chaotic, there is something about walking into the office and feeling welcome that cultivates close relationships between administration and students, as well as a sense of belonging.

When junior Isabelle Monahan, the girl that I was shadowing, arrived, I was surprised to find that she was not the ste-

### >> falcon figures

#### Demographic Distribution at LG

Out of Los Gatos High’s total 1,803 students



— Aasim Naqvi

BASEBALL

# Aces return to boost struggling team's hopes

BY Dylan Jew

The lack of two starting pitchers has contributed to the Falcons' losing their first seven league games of the season. But with the return of those two pitchers, the team hopes to start winning some games soon.

The Falcons struggled early in the season, losing their first seven league games. A major factor of their slow start is the absence of senior pitcher Dillan Pak and junior pitcher Will Dennis, both important leaders on the team. Now that these two pitchers are available again, the Falcons hope to improve their record.

**Key pitchers return**

Dennis transferred over from Woodside Priory at the beginning of this year. Because he played in a game there, CCS forced Dennis to sit out the first 10 games of the season. Dennis played his first game as a Falcon on March 28, as the starting pitcher against Homestead. Pak returned on March 16, pitching against Homestead as well.

The Falcons lost a recent game at home against Homestead, 5-3. Even with the team's boosted morale from the debut of starting pitcher Dennis, the Falcons fell short.

**Early league struggles**

Due to the late start of key players, they are behind their opponents in areas such as teamwork. However with the re-

turn of team leaders, the Falcons should gain more chemistry.

Earlier in the season, junior Brady Horn had to fill in the void left by the veteran pitchers.

"At first I was pretty nervous," Horn said. "I'm not as experienced as those guys in pitching."

Horn agreed that his relative lack of varsity experience was a challenge to overcome.

"When you pitch more often, you are used to tough situations," said Horn. "You know how to get out of them and feel comfortable. When I get into them, I get stressed and nervous."

Going 0-7 in the first half of league, the team did not have the outstanding start they were hoping to get. The Falcons have lost twice to Wilcox, 12-4 and 13-0, Homestead, 9-5 and 5-3, and Los Gatos, 4-2 and 4-1.

In their most recent game against Cupertino, the Falcons had a lead going into the fifth inning, but were unable to hold it, losing 13-9. However, with their team back at full strength, the Falcons are expecting an improvement in their record.

**New coaching staff, new strategy**

The addition of a new coaching staff this year will also help make the changes needed to turn the team around, said Pak. The new head coach, Adam Varteressian, also coaches for Kali Baseball, a local youth organization.

"A major difference between this year



FALCON // SARAH HULL

Junior Brady Horn delivers a pitch en route to a 12-9 loss to Cupertino on March 30.

and last year is the more experienced coaching," Pak said.

Varteressian is making a few necessary changes from last season.

"Defense is the key emphasis this year," Horn said. "It makes me much more confident when I know I can trust my teammates in the field to make plays for me."

The series against Palo Alto will be

two important games for the Falcons. The opener will take place at home on April 27, and the second game will be at Palo Alto on April 29. The team is hoping to make up for the shaky start with a strong finish to the season.

"As long as we clean up our defense and stay aggressive at the plate, I'm confident that we can compete with any team in our league," Horn said. ♦

BOYS' GOLF

## Falcons winning despite Cho's injury



FALCON // ADITYA DEV

Sophomore Oliver Chen drives the ball against Monta Vista on March 21.

BY Vivian LeTran

The golf team started its season with a record of 9-0 as of late March, including a victory in an important match against Milpitas that players won by 2 strokes.

"Milpitas is the [school] that we probably had to defeat in order to win our league," No. 2 player senior Andrew Cho said.

With all players returning, the boys' golf team has only improved in skill from last year.

"Since we didn't lose any seniors this year and gained a new player, [No. 5 player sophomore] Christian Galvin, we're a lot better this year," said sophomore Robbie Parden, the No. 1 player.

However, Cho dislocated his wrist while playing tennis on his own time three weeks ago. Cho believes the scores are a lot different without him.

He played in the match against Milpitas shooting only 2 over par despite his injury.

"Andrew at 100 percent would be shooting around even par or under every match," senior Kent Paisley said.

Although Cho is still injured, he played and helped Toga win in key matches against Milpitas and Los Gatos. Other schools that the team has defeated include Monta Vista, Lynbrook, Wilcox and Santa Clara.

"Los Gatos and Milpitas are both kind of our rivals," Cho said, "so I played in these matches even though I hurt my wrist really badly."

Despite losing one match to Milpitas and both to Los Gatos last year, the Falcons have defeated both schools this year.

"We're undefeated now and we are prime to go undefeated for the rest of the year," said Paisley. ♦

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL

## Search continues for answers

BY Will Edman & Cullan Chesney

>> scoreboard

March 21  
Monta Vista 3, Saratoga 0

After a close 26-24 loss in the first set, the Falcons suffered lopsided defeats in the next two sets

March 23  
Monta Vista 3, Saratoga 0

Junior Brandon Pak had 18 assists in the team's losing effort.

March 25  
King's Academy 3, Saratoga 0

Missing senior outside hitter Brandon Pierce, the team struggled offensively.

As the team enters the meat of the league season, players continue to hope for improvement.

"The team has not been doing so well recently, but we're staying tough and trying to keep ourselves out of a rut. Hopefully we can win a game in league play soon," Pak said.

The team played Homestead on April 5 and Los Gatos on April 6 but due to printing deadlines, the results of these games could not be printed. ♦

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BOYS' TENNIS

# Boys' tennis wins tournament, singles have a strong showing

BY Evaline Ju & Ashley Tang

Although the spring season has just begun, the boys' tennis team has already proved that it will again be a strong competitor this year, despite a recent loss to Monta Vista.

On March 31, the team lost 6-1 due to missing key players. No. 1 singles player senior Nikhil Jayashankar, was playing at a different tournament and No. 3 singles player freshman Kial Kaiser, had a back injury, forcing a different lineup to play.

However, on March 19, the boys' tennis team took first place at a tournament in Dana Hills, Calif., against eight other high schools.

"We prepared for the tournament by playing a lot of practice matches against each other and by doing many drills," said No. 4 singles player sophomore Andrew Lo. "It felt good to win."

The top seven players on the team traveled to Dana Hills to compete in the level B tournament that has a format of five singles matches and three doubles matches.

"I thought it'd be a good experience for the boys to travel down south and have the experience of playing both doubles and singles," said head coach Tom Uyehara.

Kaiser felt happy with how the tournament turned out.

"We were pretty confident," Kaiser said. "We were the one seat, so we were expected to do well, and we lived up to it."

Uyehara believes that the singles players are strong but the doubles teams still need some work, although both performed well at the tournament.

"I was impressed with the doubles since they haven't practiced much together as a team, so it was a little rocky," Uyehara said. "But using individual skill and talent alone, we were able to get it done."

The trip to Dana Hills also allowed plenty of time for team bonding, and Uyehara hoped that the good spirit will propel the team into more successful wins this season.

Saratoga played against their long-time rival Menlo on April 6 at the Menlo campus. Uyehara hopes that the two teams will meet again later in the season, possibly in the CCS finals.

"I know that [Menlo's] hungry to win, and they're going to want to show the Saratoga tennis team that they're the dominant team in northern California," Uyehara said.

Due to printing deadlines, the result of the April 6 match could not be reported or printed in this issue.



FALCON // JORDAN WAITE

Senior Sumant Sabada jumps to volley back to a teammate during tennis practice on March 29 after winning a competition at Dana Hills on March 19.

The team had a 4-2 record in the Santa Clara League as of March 31 after the Monta Vista loss and another one to Los Altos on March 28. The team has a 11-3 record overall, and the other loss

comes from playing Menlo down south in Fresno.

"I think we're living up to expectations," Uyehara said. "We're beating the teams that we need to beat." ♦

BOYS' LACROSSE



FALCON // PARUL SINGH

Sophomore Pablo Parker cradles the ball during practice on March 28.

# Football players add depth to young team

BY Emily Williams

The Falcons crushed the Los Gatos Wildcats in a 10-4 victory last month, marking their first league win of the season against one of their toughest rivals.

"Everybody came out excited and ready to go since it was against Los Gatos," said senior captain Marcus Hoffman about the March 23 game. "As a team, we played a great game."

In the following week, the Falcons continued their streak with a close victory led by freshman attackman Clark Rothenberg.

Zigzagging through five defensive players in the last minutes of the 7-5 victory on March 28, Rothenberg led the Falcons to success over Scotts Valley.

"[The ball] got hit in every which direction and some how I ended up with the ball," Rothenberg said. "It was pretty lucky, definitely not skill."

The team got off to a rough start. They had a 3-5 record in early April, which

partly resulted from injuries to key junior attackman Eric Van Noorden.

"We were plagued by injuries early on," Hoffman said, "[but] I think we have a pretty promising season."

Senior Rick Wilson said the team has "good chemistry" he hopes will translate on the field. The camaraderie among the players is strengthened since many players also play football.

The three-year-old lacrosse program has expanded and garnered the interest of athletes who want to stay in shape and condition for other sports. Many football players have joined the lacrosse team, such as Chris Borgia and Greg Johnson, helping contribute to the team's success; in fact, the team's defense consists of mostly football players, Wilson said.

"It's definitely our best year so far," Wilson said. "I'm excited to see where we go. Our team is starting to become a real program. Schools are respecting us now that we are getting better." ♦

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## SWIMMING

## Lack of depth in events stretches small team to max

BY Michael Lee  
& Ashwini Velchamy

At a glance, the prospects for Saratoga swimming do not look promising.

Last year's records of 3-3 for varsity girls and 1-5 for boys unfortunately did not foreshadow an amazing 2011 season. This year, the girls' team has only 27 athletes, the school lacks male divers and the whole swim team sometimes cannot accumulate winning point totals at meets, according to the coaches. However, varsity boys' swim coach Christian Bonner expects the boys and girls to have a strong year, despite the team's difficulties.

"The boys' varsity team is in a better position than they were in last year," Bonner said. "This is mainly because we did not lose any of our key swimmers and have gained some new athletes, or older swimmers have improved. Also, this year our JV boys [may] go undefeated."

Key swimmers for the boys' team include seniors Adam Hinshaw and Justin Chung and junior Ian Burns.

The varsity girls' team resurfaced with wins over Lynbrook and Homestead on March 25 and 17, respectively, after a loss against Gunn High on March 11. On the other hand, the varsity boys' team lost to both Gunn and Homestead, but grabbed a close, 3-point victory over Lynbrook. Regarding the varying success among the teams, Bonner mentioned a swim team's need for "depth,"

or diversity.

"If you have kids who can score and win events, that's fine and dandy, but the issue you have with swimming is it's a points game," Bonner said. "It's the same reason, two years ago, our boys were the national champions in swimming, but we lost at CCS to Bellarmine."

This year, 27 girls compose the girls' swimming and diving teams, compared to 30 to 40 girls of last year's team. Key swimmers include seniors Debbie Lin and Sophie Heyman, juniors Rebecca Chen and Natalie Cheung, sophomore Stephanie Chen and freshman Janey Heyman.

Stephanie Chen said that this definitely

makes it harder for both swimmers and coaches.

"Now, most swimmers have to swim four events, the maximum number you can do. Even with that, we don't fill up all the spaces for the events," Chen said. "This makes it harder to get more points, since the other team has more swimmers and thus more points."

Varsity girls' coach Kristen Thomson, however, is optimistic about the small team size.

"I can't run a full lineup. However, the small team size makes it so everyone gets to know who everybody is a lot easier," Thomson said. "At this point, to get the spirit, to get the tightness of the group, I think it's worth it, even though it means we might have lower scores.

"At this point, to get the spirit, I think it's worth [having a small team.] Swimming is not all about scoring."

>> Coach Kristen Thomson



FALCON // VIVIAN LETRAN

Junior Rebecca Chen swims butterfly in a meet against Homestead on March 17.

Swimming is not all about scoring."

Additionally, Thomson and Bonner see the value of diving in helping to supplement the teams' scores. However, Saratoga High has only two divers: senior Lauren Gardanier and freshman Maya Srinivasan.

"Our diving team has doubled. We went from one to two!" Thomson said. "This is the biggest team I've ever had."

Both coaches think more success lies ahead. "It's a young group. They've got lots of spirit," said Thomson. "I'm very happy that this season has started."

Due to printing deadlines, The Falcon was unable to print the results of the April 1 meet against Monta Vista. ♦

## &gt;&gt; scoreboard

Mar. 11

**B Varsity:** SHS 88, Gunn 95

**G Varsity:** SHS 60, Gunn 125

**B JV:** SHS 115, Gunn 61

**G JV:** SHS 34, Gunn 145

Mar. 17

**B Varsity:** SHS 68, Homestead 107

**G Varsity:** SHS 103, Homestead 80

**B JV:** SHS 104, Homestead 72

**G JV:** SHS 57, Homestead 110

## SOFTBALL

## Youngest Sisco a big hitter for Lady Falcons

BY Izzy Albert  
& Vivien Lu

Within just a few years of learning how to walk, freshman Tivoli Sisco was already throwing a softball around the yard.

Since age 6, Tivoli has been playing catcher for multiple recreation and club softball teams. Now she thrives in the competitive environment as one of the few freshmen on varsity with her dad, Ray Sisco, as her coach and her two sisters, senior pitcher Raven Sisco and junior pitcher Talia Sisco, on the team with

her as well.

"There is more expected of me as a player on varsity, so there are a lot of challenges," said Tivoli. "That's exactly what I love about it."

The upperclassmen on the team respect the younger players who, in many cases, have just as much if not more experience with the sport.

"Our team is definitely really young," said Talia. "However, many of our girls have played club softball, so we're technically more experienced."



Sisco

Being a freshman comes with many consequences, of course. The one thing Tivoli dreads about practice is being the one to lug all of the equipment back and forth.

"Being on the team itself is a lot of fun. The most difficult thing about being the youngest is probably the responsibility of getting all of the helmets," laughed Tivoli.

The Lady Falcons so far have a record of 1-5 as of early April.

They lost 11-8 to Cupertino on March 16. Earlier, on March 14, the team managed

to secure its first victory of the season against Scotts Valley on March 14, winning 3-1. On March 11, they lost 12-0 to King's Academy.

So far into the season, Tivoli is leading the team with a .367 batting average.

"We're playing teams that are better than us," said Tivoli.

Tivoli hopes the team improves on defense and will be able to compete with the tougher teams. For herself, however, Tivoli has a more of an ambitious goal.

"I want to be able to hit over the fence at our field this year," she said. "It's been a goal of mine for a really long time!" ♦

## BADMINTON

## Frosh newcomers boost varsity team's talent

BY Jackie Gu

Moving into the season, the badminton team is facing heavy competition from Gunn and Monta Vista High, which last year were ranked first and second, respectively, in the Division 1 League.

"I think Gunn is definitely our toughest competitor this year, seeing as how they were first in the division last year and Saratoga was only third or fourth," senior Gavin Chu said. "We have some prominent new freshmen this year, though, so I think we have a chance."

These new players include freshman Matthew Lee, Bryan Chow, Evans Ding, Jeffrey Chen and Alvin Huang, all of whom are on varsity.

Chow, recognized for being one of the strongest newcomers, started playing the sport only two years ago. He began in seventh grade because he "thought it would be a fun sport," registering at Bintang, a badminton academy in Sunnyvale popular among Saratoga students.

After realizing he had talent, Chow began to participate in various compe-

titions, including Junior National and International Trials. Last year he placed third in the international competition; this year he placed fifth.

"I was really hoping to make varsity this year," Chow said. "I guess I kind of expected to, though. But the other freshmen this year are really good too."

Lee, on the other hand, had next to no experience at competitive badminton before trying out for the school team.

"I played in the Bay Area Junior Open in 6th grade, but I did terribly," Lee said. "I didn't really take badminton seriously at first. It was just for fun."

Now, however, these new freshmen have proved themselves as valuable assets to the team: The varsity record as of March 31 is 8-1. Junior Jeffrey Kuo and sophomore Derek Chao, too, came through with victories, playing singles, doubles and mixed.

Their most recent game was on April 7 against Monta Vista. They will next play Monta Vista in the away game on May 5 and Gunn in the home game on May 12. ♦



FALCON // VIVIAN LETRAN

Sophomore Derek Chao smashes the birdie on a March 24 game against Los Altos High. Saratoga won 19-11. Currently, the Falcons' record stands at 8-1.

TRACK

# Team jumps forward amid changes

BY Arnav Dugar

Track athletes started the season off with a bang, securing victories against Fremont on March 10 and Homestead in the varsity boys and girls division on March 30, as well as multiple personal records.

"Our first three meets went pretty well; we had a lot of people [achieve personal records]. Usually no one PRs at the first meet, so it's going pretty well," junior Eren Veziroglu said.

Crystal Yen, Melodie Bellagarda, Michelle Cummins, and Allison Toh, the girls varsity 4x4 team, placed first against Homestead. Yen, who also runs the 100 hurdles and 300 hurdles, placed first in the events.

The team's effort during the practices as well as the inherent talent has set up the team for a strong year.

"Our training regimen has become a little more intense this year," sophomore Maya Nag said. Nag placed second in the varsity 800 meter with a PR of 2:33 in the March 30 meet.

Some felt disappointed, however, due to the close loss against Wilcox on March 17, one of the strongest schools in the league. The girls scored 57-68 and the boys scored 46-81.

"We lost by 9 points to Wilcox, so it was kind of sad," junior Ailene Nguyen said.

However, the results are an improvement from last year's

meet against Wilcox, whose athletes are "scary and big and strong," Cummins said.

**A strong start**

By winning more meets this year, the track team hopes to move up to the next division next year with tougher competition.

"The varsity girls' team is really strong this year, and the boys are doing really well, but we lost a lot of key players this year," Nguyen said. "We had a lot of seniors not come back this year and I think that really hurt us."

Nguyen placed fourth in CCS Finals in long jump last year at 17 feet 9 inches. She placed fifteenth in triple jump at CCS Finals with a distance of 33 feet and 8.5 inches.

Nag feels the difference in competition from participating in varsity this year as opposed to last year.

"I feel like it's a great honor to run with such fast people," Nag said. "The fastest members of the team inspire me to push harder."

**New attendance system**

This year, track coach Archie Ljepava has implemented a new system of monitoring attendance similar to time cards. At the start of practice every day, each athlete has to find his or her card from a pile and turn it in to one of the coaches to

earn credit for that day.

"We have to turn our cards into the coaches at the beginning to track practice," said sophomore Michael Bancroft, "and if we don't, we get an absence."

The athletes are forced to skip a meet after three absences and are removed from the team after six.

Despite numerous complaints, the new system has been successful.

"People used to ditch a lot last year, but since they use the card system, you have to give the card to the coach this year," said junior Ashley Tang. The athletes are obligated to attend practice, she believes. The team progresses well towards a successful season.

"In my perspective, [the team] is having fun and they are improving each meet," said distance coach Danny Moon. "The goal is to end the year with at least one PR." ♦



Freshman Eric Ringsrud competes in the long jump event against Prospect on March 10 in a home match.

>> scoreboard

March 31

**1600 Race**

Stephanie Ho 5:45.19 (1st)  
Allison Bruno 6:00.48 (3rd)  
Caroline Chou 6:11.19 (4th)

**800 Race**

Maya Nag 2:33.73 (2nd)  
Rachael Perera 3:00.36 (4th)

GIRLS' LACROSSE

# Many underclassmen help team roll along

BY Jennifer Jin

Although the girls' lacrosse team was formed only three years ago, the team has steadily been growing. With more interest in the sport, especially from underclassmen, coach Merryl Geisse believes that the team will become a force in the Santa Clara Valley League in the coming years.

"It's really encouraging to see the program expanding because I know when I started as a sophomore, there was a shortage of girls but now we almost had an excess [with 18 players] this year," said senior attack wing Vanessa Block.

Returning to coach the varsity team who coached during the 2009 season is Geisse

"She is doing a great job coaching—she works us from start to finish," said senior attack wing Ellen Scott. "After each game, I can actually see an obvious improvement in our skill level."

Senior defense wing Abby Frankola agreed.

"She pushes the team to work hard, not only during games, but also during practice," said Frankola.

This year, Geisse has stepped up the intensity of the practices, running the players a lot more and doing many drills.

"She really knows what she is talking about," senior defense wing Kathryn Nobles said. "I like that she focuses on

fitness and keeping us in shape."

With the added intensity comes with a greater drive to win.

"I think there is a much more serious mentality this year," Frankola said. "Everyone really wants to win."

Although they have only won one out of their four league games, the matches have been close. The team remains second to last in the league.

"We've lost some tough games," Scott said. "[However,] we've played 110 percent until the end of all our games which makes me really proud."

The team's first league game was at home against Los Gatos on March 17, a 14-10 loss to the Wildcats. The Falcons held the lead until the last 15 minutes when Los Gatos broke away.

Junior goalie Megan Benzing played a huge role in the game and saved over 75 percent of Los Gatos' shots. Nobles also held the defense together. Overall, the team managed to execute well on multiple break-aways, and made many cuts and picks, said Geisse.

The team had an away game against Leland on March 22, losing 12-8.

Although the team has had a rough start, they see reason for hope.

"The season so far has started off a little shaky if you look at the scores of the games, but I think each game we're improving skill wise as well as working better together as teammates," Block said. ♦

**"I think there is a much more serious mentality this year. Everyone really wants to win."**

>> Senior Abby Frankola

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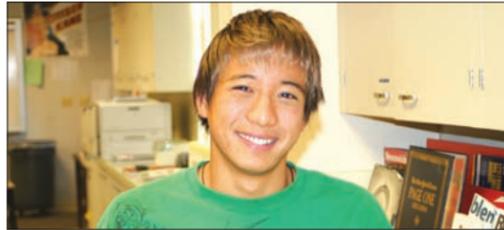
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# Pass the tofurkey, please

HEALTH-CONCERNED COLUMNIST TELLS HIS TALE



>> Michael Lee

Lee That's Me

Everyday, I see long lines snaking into the cafeteria. Some days, I join the crowd and wait. Other days, however, I stroll over to the "Salads" aisle, pick up a tray, and two minutes and \$3.50 later, I have my lunch.

No, I'm not an aspiring anorexic. Nor am I a Hindu, Jain or Buddhist. I'm also not a vegetarian of any sort. I just try (and occasionally fail) to be healthy.

All of this jazz about "health foods" and "half-an-hour of exercise a day" started in elementary school. I was not exactly the thinnest kid at Argonaut Elementary, and my parents had me start swimming to stay in shape in fifth grade.

Sometime in middle school, it dawned on me that all those labels and calorie counts on food packets mattered. In school, I learned about the (not so) wondrous world of carbohydrates, fats and proteins.

Then, I had an epiphany: Junk food is not healthy! I realized that there might be more wholesome things to eat than burgers, soda

and pizza. Throughout middle school, I made subtle changes to my diet.

One day, during my freshman year, I came home from school and told my mom and stepdad that I wanted to try a vegetarian diet.

Their response was immediate: "No." After the initial shock wore off, we talked rationally and they acted like typical parents. "You're a growing teenager," they said. "You need meat."

And so, I settled with simply limiting meat and egg yolks instead of completely eliminating them from my diet.

Then, a few months ago, something strange happened. My mother read a book entitled "The China Study," which described the benefits of avoiding animal products. In other words, she wanted to be a vegetarian.

Once I got past the irony of the situation, I rejoiced at finally succeeding in my year-long quest for semi-vegetarianism.

Meals at my mother's house now include tofu stir fry and meatless spaghetti, in addition to our usual, non-vegetarian dishes. She made me give up about 10 pounds of lactose-laced Muscle Milk and had me replace it with soy protein, but I think my well-being was worth it.

Unfortunately, this is probably as close to vegetarianism as I'll ever be. I'm into health, but I'm not sure about fully removing meat from my diet. My guess is that I'd only last a couple of days as a full-on vegetarian, maximum.

What can I say? I really, really like sushi. ♦



FALCON // Synthia Ling



FALCON // Parul Singh



TALISMAN // Salmaan Javed



FALCON // Sabrina Cismas

**BREAK A LEG** SOPHOMORE SASAN SAADAT AND JUNIOR JOSH HARRIS PRACTICE ON MARCH 31 BEFORE THEIR FIRST PERFORMANCE OF "THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE [ABRIDGED]." **RAIN RAIN GO AWAY** THE HALLWAYS ARE FLOODED DURING THE WEEK OF MARCH 28 AFTER A TORRENTIAL DOWNPOUR **STUNTIN LIKE MY DADDY** SENIORS KEVIN DARCHUK, KYLE FUKUI AND ETHAN CLEMENT POSE FOR A STUNT DURING THE SENIOR POWDERPUFF CHEER AT THE BLACKLIGHT RALLY ON APRIL 1. **IS THAT REAL GOLD?** JUNIORS ALEX MABANTA, ANSHU SIRIPURAPU, SABRINA CISMAS, SANKASH SHANKAR AND VISHAL GOEL POSE FOR A PICTURE AFTER A WIN AT THE SPEECH AND DEBATE TOURNAMENT HELD AT HARKER ON MARCH 5. COACH ERICK RECTOR LOOKS ON.

## Eng sews winning mole

BY Sarah Hull

"I gained a better appreciation for sewing and learned that a lot of things sound like 'mole,'" said junior Christopher Vu.

Though it may sound like it, Vu was not commenting on his experience at fashion designer boot camp. Rather, he was referring to the invaluable skills he obtained and the adversity he overcame to reach the final round in chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu's annual mole contest.

In the optional assignment, chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu asked students in her Honors and AP 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 sewed a plain mole to simply obtain the extra credit points, most students dressed their moles up for the actual contest based on a mole pun.

After a mole army from each of Nakamatsu's five periods were accounted for,

some teachers voted on whose moles they deemed the best. The top vote-getting mole in each period secured a bid in the finals and also earned its owner a \$5 gift card to Starbucks.

The five moles that weaseled into the final round were sophomore Stanley Yip's "Mole in One," sophomore Anjali Pradhan's "Mount Rush-mole," Vu's "Mole Train," junior David Eng's "Molar Mass," and juniors Antara and Meghana Rao's "Inter-mole-cular Forces."

To determine the grand-prize winner of a \$25 gift card to Target, Nakamatsu held a blind vote in each of her five periods. By the end of the day, only one mole reigned supreme: Eng's "Molar Mass."

Interestingly enough, Eng's mole shares the name of last year's winner, sewn by senior Arthur Chang. But unlike Chang, who accessorized his fluffy white mole to represent the pope holding a "molar mass," Eng's mole exploited the intrinsic pun in the chemical unit of measurement, grams (mass) over mole (of a substance). He represented "molar mass" by placing grandmother (grams) over his mole.

"It's just a fun contest. It's always interesting to see what my students come up with," Nakamatsu said. ♦



Eng



### topten

#### BEST SADIES OUTFITS

- 10 **Plumber.** As if the dancing isn't dirty enough.
- 9 **Suit and tie.** It's business time.
- 8 **Mathematician.** Just dress like Albert Gu and you're set.
- 7 **President.** Vote Anika Jhalani 2032.
- 6 **Pirate.** Don't worry, you look really nice in your mom's blouse.
- 5 **Police officer.** You have the right to remain scandalous.
- 4 **Judge.** Your date may freak out if you give them a life sentence.
- 3 **Astronaut.** Wearing a fishbowl on your head won't suffocate you. Trust me.
- 2 **Professional baseball player.** This may require a syringe full of "vitamins."
- 1 **Farmer.** Nothing gets ladies ready to boogie like the smell of fresh manure.

>> Izzy Albert & Tim Rollinson