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**SPORTS** | 23  
Girls' tennis finishes 25-0, winning the NorCal Championship.



**LIFE** | 14-15  
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# THE saratoga falcon



Vo. 51 >> Issue 5 >> Friday, December 17, 2010 >> Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA >> saratogafalcon.org

**SCHOOL SPIRIT**

## Freddie Falcon: tales of a missing mascot



>> **David Eng**

2 Deng Good

My quest began because the school's most iconic sports fan of

years past—scarlet-feathered mascot Freddie Falcon—seemed to be missing in action this year. He was AWOL from the football team's thrilling 21-17 victory over Los Gatos on Oct. 22 and seemingly camera shy from all of this year's spirit days.

And so I set out to find Freddie, on a mission of grave importance to both the success of sports teams and my sense of investigative prowess.

12:35 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 7. I

start at teacher and cheer coach Larissa Ridge's doorstep. Earlier that day, I received an anonymous tip from a cheerleader who claimed she saw Freddie rooting for pee-wee cheerleaders at the halftime of an Oct. 29 game vs. Wilcox.

Somewhat doubting the reliability of this source but acknowledging it as my only lead, I head for room H01.

>> **MASCOT** on pg. 8

**Freddie Falcon is missing in action! Can our reporter/detective find Freddie to save our school spirit?**



**ELECTIVES**

## School to say 'sayonara' to Japanese

BY Justine **Huang** & Vivian **LeTran**

Several students of the graduating class of 2012 are unique in one respect: These students will be the last to take Japanese at Saratoga High.

"I'm really sad that the Japanese [program] is ending, but I'm happy they promised to offer AP until I graduate," said junior Heather Persson, who takes Japanese 3.

The end of the Japanese classes results from the requests for Japanese 1 dropping drastically, leading to Japanese 1 not being offered as a class.

The current Japanese classes being offered are Japanese 3 Honors and Japanese 4 AP.

"What has happened is that the enrollment has declined in students wanting to take Japanese," said language department chair Arnaldo Rodriguex.

>> **JAPANESE** on pg. 7

**upcoming events**

**Dec. 18 Shootout Basketball**  
Saratoga is hosting a girls' basketball tournament at the gym. Go and support the Falcons!

**Dec. 20 Start of Holiday Break**  
Enjoy your two-week vacation!

**Dec. 25 Christmas in the Park**  
Join your peers in downtown San Jose at the Plaza de Cesar Chavez Park for holiday festivities.

**Jan. 3 Back to School**  
Hope you studied for your finals!

**PARKING LOT**

## BUILDING FENCES AND BURNING BRIDGES



After school on Dec. 7, maintenance man Robert Delfino motions for senior Clarence Le to cross the crosswalk. A new fence was installed in early December to prevent traffic backups and increase student safety.

FALCON // VIVIAN LETRAN

### ADMINISTRATORS HOPING TO KEEP KIDS SAFE IN THE PARKING LOT SPARK HEATED DEBATE IN THE PROCESS

BY Christine **Bancroft** & Mac **Hyde**

Starting Dec. 6 many students were surprised when they pulled into the parking lot in the morning, only to find their usual parking spaces cordoned off for the construction of a new fence.

In addition to newly painted crosswalks, the construction represents the school's efforts to improve the parking situation and increase safety in the lot.

The fence and crosswalks were intended to stop backups in the drop-

off area in the front and keep students safer while using the crosswalk in the morning. However, some students say the fence has contributed to tardiness and the backups on Saratoga-Sunnyvale and Herriman Avenues. Other students have not been directly affected, but are still unclear about the purpose of the fence.

"I think they put it there to stop people from crossing the [drop-off zone] in front of cars without looking,"

sophomore Yifat Amir said. "It makes the flow of traffic smoother. I don't get dropped off in the parking lot so the fence doesn't bother me at all."

This decision to install the fences dates back to almost a year ago. The need for a fence arose out of talks concerning the school's horrendous traffic and parking. It was recommended that, in order to eliminate the risk of

What do you think of the new fence? Vote in a poll at [saratogafalcon.org](http://saratogafalcon.org)

>> **FENCE** on pg. 3

**REDUCING STRESS**

## New finals schedule approved for next year

BY Michael **Lee**

The Board of Trustees approved a new calendar on Nov. 16 for the 2011-12 school year. Exams will take place during the week of Dec. 19, 2011, completing the first semester just before the holiday break (Dec. 23-Jan. 8).

In Los Gatos and Saratoga alike, parents, district staff and students have given this proposed schedule generous amounts of support.

"There is an overwhelming amount of support for [this change]," said assistant principal Brian Safine. "It has been unsettling and awkward for students to have a break, then go back to school for finals."

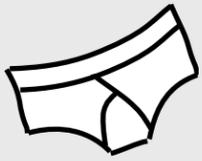
Traditionally, students have taken their final exams two or three weeks after the holiday break. According to Safine, the idea of holding finals before the two-week vacation was pro-

>> **FINALS** on pg. 7

| December 2011 |                            |    |    |               |                  |    |
|---------------|----------------------------|----|----|---------------|------------------|----|
| SUN           | M                          | T  | W  | TH            | F                | S  |
|               |                            |    |    | 1             | 2                | 3  |
| 4             | 5                          | 6  | 7  | 8             | 9                | 10 |
| 11            | 12                         | 13 | 14 | 15            | 16               | 17 |
| 18            | 19                         | 20 | 21 | 22            | 23               | 24 |
|               | Finals Week                |    |    | Semester Ends | Start of Holiday |    |
| 25            | 26                         | 27 | 28 | 29            | 30               | 31 |
|               | Holiday Break Until Jan. 8 |    |    |               |                  |    |

**inside THE falcon**

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## news >> briefs

### Two teachers welcome new babies

The fall season is an exciting one for two teachers who recently gave birth. Between the end of October and beginning of November, guidance counselor Frances Saiki gave birth to a baby girl, Mirai Faith Saiki, and math teacher Jennifer Mantle welcomed a boy, Dylan Mantle, into the world.

Saiki's baby was born on Oct. 30 at 3:37 p.m. She weighed in at 6 pounds and 3 ounces and was 19 inches and thriving.

According to guidance counselor Alinna Satake, Mirai is a big eater but is doing well.

"She doesn't sleep much at night, so Ms. Saiki has been on a tough schedule lately," Satake said.

Saiki is tentatively expected to return on Jan. 31. Until then, guidance counselor Dina Cunha-Lee has been filling in for her.

Mantle gave birth to baby boy Dylan Mantle on Sunday, Nov. 7 at 1:30 a.m. He weighed in at about 7 or 8 pounds, math teacher Kristen Hamilton said.

Hamilton said that mom and baby are doing well, and Mantle is expected to return to school in mid-January. Her replacement has been former teacher Larry Bingham, who retired two years ago.

English teacher Natasha Ritchie also returned to school in late November from her maternity leave.

— Shivani Chadha

### Breakfast at Hyde's unites old with new

With the holiday season fast approaching, two generations of a Saratoga High School family are preparing for their annual tradition, in which they welcome an array of students and alumni into their home.

Since 2000, assistant principal Karen Hyde has hosted Breakfast at Hyde's, a yearly gathering of up to 60 students at her Woodside home, in which students from ASB, Leadership and school commissions gather. Recent alumni who have graduated up to four years ago also attend.

"It's been going on as long as I can remember," said junior Mac Hyde, the son of the assistant principal. "It's a good chance for students to get together in a way that they aren't used to." This year, the event is planned for Dec. 22. Students bring food with them to the potluck event, while Hyde makes waffles. In the past, students have brought Chipotle burritos, Chinese take-out or even pizza to the early morning gathering.

Attendees are encouraged to wear pajamas in keeping with the breakfast theme, although some have stayed until late in the afternoon.

"Breakfast at Hyde's is a long-held tradition for students who toil in the office to improve the school," Senior Kent Paisley said, who attended the event last year. "Many people got lost on the way and the parking was impossible, but I had a great time. I wouldn't miss it for the world."

— Christine Bancroft

### Speech and debate team shows promise

After strong showings at the past several past league tournaments on both the novice and varsity level, the Saratoga speech and debate team will get a chance to see whether its success in league tournaments can translate into success at some of the more competitive invitational tournaments, including James Logan on Jan. 14-16 and the Stanford Tournament on Feb. 12-14.

On Dec. 5, the team hosted the league's final novice debate tournament at Saratoga High School. Saratoga sent ten teams in Public Forum. On Nov. 14, the team competed at the League Debate Tournament at Milpitas.

"It was a bit disappointing that we weren't able to go undefeated and earn a bid to the State Qualifying Tournament," said Karthik Annaamalai.

At the Individual Events tournament on Nov. 13 at Leland High School four students made it to final rounds, earning bids to the State Qualifying Tournament in March.

"We've been doing really well, but there's always room for improvement," said Lindholm.

The team competed in its first invitational tournament of the year at Santa Clara University on Dec. 11-13; however, due to printing deadlines, the results could not be published.

— Vijay Menon and Abhishek Venkataramana

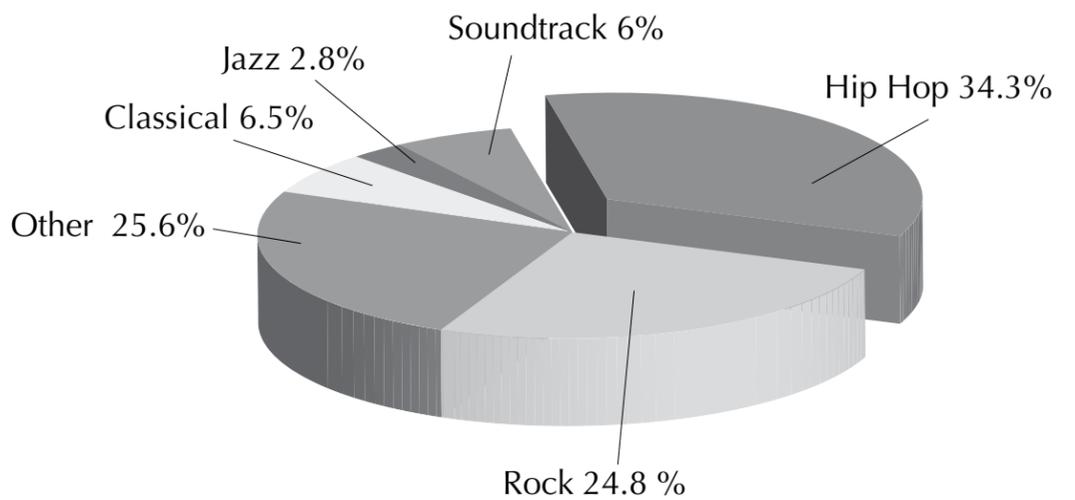
## >> picturethis



Seniors Brandon Pierce and Jay Lee cross dress as they flaunt their holiday spirit at the rally on Dec. 10.

## falconfigures <<

### Saratoga's Favorite Music Genre



Based on an online survey of 398 students.

—Emily Williams

## >> falconfocus

# Mock trial coach used to be teacher

BY Deborah Soung

Remember dreaming about future careers as a child, struggling to choose between becoming a teacher or a doctor of philosophy or an author or a lawyer? How about choosing all four?

Dr. Hugh Roberts taught at Saratoga High from 1959, the year the school first opened, to 1979. He holds a bachelor's degree and Ph.D in Educational Social Psychology from Stanford, co-authored four paperback books for high schools and ran his own law office from 1984 until 2006. Roberts, now happily retired, coaches the school's mock trial club.

In the late 1950s, Roberts was hand-picked by Dr. Vernon Trimble, the first principal, to be one of become one of the school's first teachers. Trimble was Roberts' English teacher at Los Gatos High.

"When Dr. Trimble was selected to be the first principal, he sought out ex-students to help open it," Roberts said. "It is hard to describe what it felt like for us all to come back together and have the chance to create a school together."

At Saratoga High, Roberts taught world history, speech and debate and drama. He still fondly recalls the first play that his students put on in the school library: Ayn Rand's "The Night of January 16th."

"It was a court room drama with the jury selected from the audience each night with two endings based on their deci-

sion," Roberts said.

At the time, Roberts did not know that he would one day be a lawyer at an actual court instead of just a bystander in a fictional court during a few late nights in the school's library.

In 1978, California's Proposition 13, which lowered property taxes, threatened to drastically cut the amount of money spent on public schools, and Roberts feared that if the proposition was passed, the school he knew and loved would be destroyed.

"All counselors would be eliminated. Most electives, including all social studies electives, would be

eliminated, and all the great young teachers would be terminated—I did not want to preside over a wake," Roberts said. The proposition did pass, and though it wasn't as devastating as he feared, it did greatly reduce money available to public schools.

In the meantime, Roberts decided to leave his teaching career to try his hand at law because he "was the most expensive teacher [the school] had."

"If I left, I could save two young teachers' jobs," Roberts said. "Thinking about it, I thought I would love to try law: a win-win for everyone. The principal, Tod Likins, said he would schedule things to make it work for me, and it did."

Roberts studied "an old style 'general practice,' beginning with mostly criminal law and, after a few years, was dominated by civil litigation, wills,

trusts and probate."

The first judge Roberts appeared before, Judge Wayne Brazil, was a graduate and ex-student body president.

"That night [before I appeared in court] I rewrote my brief for fear he might red pencil it and ask me to resubmit," Roberts said.

Although Roberts "loved every minute of the practice of law," his first love remained teaching, and he was always eager to go to school. Even in retirement, Roberts teaches students in the mock trial program, a program he organized here in 1984, the year the National High School Mock Trial Championship began.

Since Roberts started the club, he has coached it on and off, depending on whether or not other faculty were able to assist coaching. Unfortunately, Roberts thinks that mock trial may not last much longer. As long-time leaders of the club begin to hand over the reins to new coaches and coordinators, few adults are up to volunteering their time for the team.

"No full-time faculty member is interested in assisting so the prospects for next year are quite grim," Roberts said.

Despite doubts about mock trial's future, Robert's retirement is active and engaging.

"Between trying to spoil my grandchildren, pro-tem judging, two regular golf foursomes, competitive national bridge tournaments, and restoring the library of Senator Phelan at Montalvo, my wife and I have a very active, happy, full life," Roberts said. ♦

CHRISTMAS TRADITION

# Faithwalk puts on annual Christmas play

BY Jackie Gu

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," proclaimed junior Brandon Pierce, clad in billowing printed robes in front of the room.

It was a Friday lunch in science teacher Lisa Cochrum's classroom, and the audience of 60-some students tried to eat their food (the evidence of which was apparent in the empty pizza boxes stacked nearly 3 feet high) without disturbing the performers. After all, a prophecy concerning the impending birth of a Messiah had just been announced, and no one wanted to miss a second of the story of Jesus' birth.

Faithwalk, one of the school's most prominent Christian clubs, holds an annual Christmas play that depicts the Nativity story. The play was split into two parts, performed at the lunchtime meetings on Dec. 3 and Dec. 10.

"It's a nice tradition that we keep annually," said sophomore Priscilla Chu, one of the unofficial officers of Faithwalk. "We want to show people who are interested in coming to Faithwalk what Christmas means to us."

This traditional holiday play began

with a reenactment of the prophecy declaring the approaching birth of the Messiah. It then followed the story of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, ending with Jesus' actual birth. Mary was played by sophomore Megan Doles, Joseph by senior Tim Rollinson and the angel Gabriel by junior Deborah Burger.

"We take the scripts of the play out of a book, but we have to shorten them and narrow them down," Chu said. "They're pretty much the same every year, though. Not much about the plays has changed."

Because of the length of the story, the officers decided to split the play into two parts. This decision was made to accommodate all the scenes they wanted in the skit and provide more incentive for the audience to return for the next show.

"We end part one right before Mary and Joseph leave for Bethlehem," sophomore Stephanie Payne said. "In part two, there's the actual birth of Jesus and some other holy shenanigans."

Because of the time restraints, the performers were unable to delve deep into the Nativity story. Instead, they summarized the basics of the story to interest the audience without forcing too much information on them.

"[The play] is basically an introduc-



FALCON // VIVIAN LETRAN

Sophomore Stephanie Payne, senior Brandon Pierce and sophomore Priscilla Chu act as prophets in Faithwalk's production of the Nativity story on Dec. 3 during lunch.

tion," Payne said. "We try to make it interesting enough so that people would want to learn more about Christianity and maybe even go to church or something, but it's definitely not an in-depth look into our religion."

Although Faithwalk does not have official officers like many other clubs, they

have leaders that organize events and herd student activities. Participation in the play is not mandatory for the leaders, but encouraged.

"We all love to do the play, so pretty much everyone is a part of it," Chu said. "It's just a really fun tradition that everyone likes to participate in." ♦

STUDENT BUSINESS

# Catering business shut down by administration

BY Brandon Judoprasertijo & Paul Jung

After three and a half weeks of running a successful food catering business, seniors Brian Vo and Jesse Yung were faced with disappointing news: Their business was in violation of a school contract with the cafeteria and they would have to stop immediately.

The seniors were unaware of the contract, which states that no outside vendors are allowed on campus during school hours. After they returned from a particularly busy trip to In-N-Out on Nov. 7, principal Jeff Anderson and assistant principal Karen Hyde sent them to the office after lunch ended.

Yung felt it was unfair for the busi-

ness, which had developed from an economics class project, to be shut down.

"We believe in a balanced economy where one side doesn't monopolize the market," Yung said.

"We learned in economics that that was the way America was run."

Sophomore Eric Tang, who had ordered an In-N-Out burger from the pair, disliked the school's decision.

"I feel it was a bad decision to shut them down because Jesse and Brian's business represents teen entrepreneurs," Tang said. "By closing them down, the school is discouraging teen entrepre-

neurs."

The business, which delivered food from unusual places such as Lee's Sandwiches and Pho Saigon, is missed by many students who enjoyed the meals. Freshman Stephanie Chu, who had ordered a strawberry milkshake from the pair, said her lunches will not be as interesting without having catered food.

"The business was cool because they delivered to my classroom," said Chu. "I really liked it."

Vo and Yung said the best parts about running the business was getting re-

quests from people that they had never even talked to or heard about before.

"It made us feel like we were doing something that was really appreciated," said Vo.

Although the business was at first only known to a few of the duo's close friends, it soon grew to the point where the two could earn up to \$70 in one day.

"I think the business was a success," said Yung. "We got hands-on experience and a little profit along with it."

Even though the business only lasted three and a half weeks, Vo and Yung enjoyed their taste of being entrepreneurs.

"It was fun being your own boss and managing your own thing while making money," said Vo. "Business is probably going to be my backup major now." ♦

"We believe in a balanced economy where one side doesn't monopolize the market."

>> Senior Jesse Yung

# FENCE >> Fence draws ire

continued from pg. 1

a student being hit while crossing the drop-off zone, that a fence be installed, according to plant supervisor Brian Moran.

"Instead of having kids coming off the front parking lot and crossing at all areas all the way along, the fence makes it so that they have to go to a crosswalk and then cross," Moran said. "[It's] a total safety related issue."

Construction of the fence is ongoing, as the final sections and the landscaping, which will be mostly trees and shrubs, still need to be put in place.

The project's total cost will be about \$42,000, \$30,000 from the school and a further \$11,000-12,000 from the Saratoga High Foundation, a parent-based fund-raising group.

This cost includes pavement work for new curbs and speed bumps, landscaping and other various improvements.

Although the long-term effects of the fence have yet to be seen, the new construction is successful in its ultimate goal of preventing students from being hit by cars during peak drop-off periods. However, many students and some staff remain critical of its effectiveness.

"It's kind of useless," junior Sophie

Kang said. "I don't see the point of it. The only reason I think it's there is to make people stop walking across, but I didn't know that we really had a problem with that before."

MAP Government and World History teacher Mike Davey has been especially vocal on the flaws of the fence, even worrying that the fence may be causing more safety issues than it is helping to remedy.

"I think the administration created it with the goal of increasing safety, which is a good goal," Davey said. "I have some concerns with it. The fact that students are now walking through the lanes where students are driving rather than those where parents are driving can create some safety issues."

Davey suggested placing a crosswalk near the gym entrance since it is an often used building on campus. He also feels that at a time when funds are minimal, the school should not be spending money on ineffective fences.

Junior Penny Burgess called the fence "annoying" but added, "I hope that it will eventually be changed or adapted to help safety, and I can understand why they put it in, but it seems a little passive-aggressive. It also seems like a waste of money as it is now." ♦

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

# Leadership hosts Culture Day

BY Karthik Sreedhara

To showcase its rich cultural diversity, the school held its first Culture Day on Nov. 19 during lunch.

"The goal of culture day was to recognize and appreciate the diversity on campus," said junior Viraj Parmar, who helped organize the event along with the rest of the leadership class.

Juniors Dominic Guercio and Anshu Siripurapu also helped organize the logistics of the event.

"It really all came down to the culture clubs and [foreign language] classes," Guercio said. "They really charged and made the day a success."

The Spanish and Indian clubs and the Chinese classes contributed by dressing up in traditional clothing from their culture. Each group created a station and decorations in the quad that "reflected something special about their culture." The Indian club entertained the crowd with a coordinated dance in the quad during lunch.

Junior Cynthia Huang, a student from the Chinese class, thought that the day was a "great chance to learn more about different cultures." The Chinese

booth served food and participated in activities such as calligraphy. She hopes that next year's Culture Day will be able to represent even more cultures.

According to Guercio, Culture Day was organized in response to recent events. The rivalry between Saratoga and Los Gatos sparked racist comments on a Facebook event page created for the football game.

"Recently there had been issues with [cultural understanding] between people at our school as well as the controversy surrounding the Saratoga vs. Los Gatos football game," Guercio said. "We worked to promote cultural awareness and cultural tolerance between students."

Parmar thought the event was an overall success, though with some difficulties. He said that it was hard to coordinate with several different clubs and classes and to get students interested.

"It was supposed to be a fun event, with good food and interesting activities to bring together students of different cultures," said Parmar. "Hopefully those who attended this year can generate more enthusiasm for next year's Culture Day." ♦

## EXTRA-CURRICULARS

## Science Bowl in the making

BY AnnaShen

On Dec. 7 at tutorial at the library, 14 students furiously scribbled away on their papers, nervously watching the clock tick down in front of them. However, they weren't struggling the finish a last-minute homework assignment or study for a test. Instead, they were trying to answer questions including, "What is the most common name for the polymorphonuclear leukocyte?"

This was just one of the questions of the timed 20 question exam, which students took to try out for the school's first official Science Bowl Team. Eight students will be chosen to participate on the Science Bowl Team, hosted by the Science Club.

"There is such a high level of interest in science in our school," said senior Science Club co-president Daryl Chang, "but there aren't too many ways to get involved in science outside of class. Science Bowl is a really popular event at most schools so we wanted to create a team here."

Chang, along with co-president senior Abhishek Venkataramana, first contacted AP Chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu, who had previously coached the Science Bowl Team at Monta Vista High School, to coach the team.

Science Bowl is a nationwide quiz competition sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, in which students must answer a wide range of science-related topics.

After tryouts, students will start preparing for the team's first tournament on Feb. 27 at Stanford University. Students will attend weekly practices coached by Nakamatsu.

"Science Bowl is basically a competition of knowledge, so a lot of the preparation involved self-study and



FALCON // SARAH HULL

**Junior Alissa Zhang works on Science Bowl questions in the library.**

learning," Chang said. "However, the knowledge isn't useful if you don't have speed. We need to think fast on our feet."

In addition to Science Bowl, the Science Club is also participating in several science fairs. In November, club co-presidents Chang and Venkataramana were named Regional Finalists in the 2010 Siemens Competition in Math, Science and Technology.

Venkataramana traveled to the California Institute of Technology on Nov. 14, for the Regional Finals Competition, where he presented his research on the regulation of autoimmune diseases and was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

On Nov. 21, Chang presented his research on dental pulp stem cells at the Regional Competition at Carnegie Mellon University, where he was also awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

"We have many participants this year, I think we will do well in the science fair and Science Bowl," Chang said. ♦

## FALCON FOCUS

## Senior builds computers

BY JenniferJin

If you're ever in need of a new computer, ask senior Arthur Chang to build you one, from scratch.

Chang became interested in building computers in 2005, when he got his first computer to mess around with, an AMD 3700+.

"I like taking things apart and the idea of modding. I think it was the nearly limitless possibilities [that got me interested]," Chang said.

He is a modder, someone who modifies a piece of hardware or software for aesthetic purposes or to perform a function not originally intended by the designer.

With the skills he learned in computer-aided design class, Boy Scouts and off the web, he has steadily increased his knowledge.

Known by his username, anachlores, Chang is a member of *www.xtremesystems.org*, a community for computer enthusiasts where they can share ideas and fill in gaps of knowledge. There are computer modders like Chang, photography buffs, programmers and many other different types of technology junkies.

His first computer that he built from scratch was started in April and is not done yet, but so far it can do what other computers can do, and has been modified to be able to handle multitasking well.

"It really helps to have a machine that can handle the strain when I have 10 or 12 Firefox windows [open] with 20 or 30 tabs each," Chang said.

In addition to building computers, Chang also makes computer cases, the containers that hold most of the components of the computer.

The case that he crafted for his first creation is made of red oak, Russian birch plywood and acrylic. It weighs about 50 pounds empty and has an art deco-inspired paint job.

As of now, Chang has built one case from scratch, one regular computer from scratch and currently maintains two other computers.

He keeps them running and upgrades them when he has the chance, with an occasional RAM upgrade, a GPU swap once in a while and occasional monitor repairs.

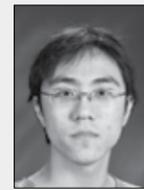
Although Chang has only scratch built one case so far, he plans to build another after college applications are due. His next project is a computer for college, as the one he just built is too big to take with him.

"It's a design I've been working on [that] I think is an incredible leap from your normal computer design," Chang said.

For the past five years, Chang's family has watched him grow in his hobby and is always there to support him.

"My family probably thinks I'm a bit nuts, but they support me a lot," Chang said. "A lot of what I do is possible because my parents like seeing me do things I enjoy."

Chang always stays positive and continues to chip away at his current project, never giving up and relentlessly pushing to improve. ♦



Chang

## Deathly Hallows: best Harry Potter movie yet



&gt;&gt; Aashna Mukerji

LOLdemort!

It's the beginning of the end. After a decade of heated duels, rule-breaking and the ultimate struggle between love and hate, Harry Potter's adventure is finally coming to a close.

The early hours of Nov. 19 were bittersweet to Potter's faithful fans, marking the end of a world that has been with them for 10 years. I've been glued to Harry Potter since I started elementary school, but it only just dawned on me that I've been a part of the Potterverse for more than half of my life.

The midnight release of "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part One" fell on a Thursday night, crushing the dreams of countless fans whose parents wouldn't allow them to stay out until 3 a.m. on a school night. Although I had a test to take and an in-class essay to write on Friday morning, my parents learned years ago never to argue with me when it came to Harry Potter. I wasn't about to let anything ruin the my experience with the magic of the final film.

Dressed in all of our Hogwarts gear (hats, scarves, cloaks and anything else that happened to include the letters "HP" in addition to fake wands and eyeliner-scars) and equipped with enough food and supplies to last about a week on the run from Voldemort, my friends and I arrived at the theater at 6 p.m.

All of the lines to enter the theaters at

AMC 16 were already over 30 feet long. By 7:30, the whole lobby was flooded with Potterheads.

"People wrapped around pretty much the entire [AMC Mercado] theater," junior Penny Burgess said. "It was freezing outside, so everyone was completely bundled up in sweaters and scarves and hats. Some people even brought tents, and beach chairs or blankets."

Burgess offered cupcakes to her fellow fans in line, but was politely declined until people realized that they were Dark-Mark cupcakes, which brought about an enthusiastic change of heart. Burgess also met a woman in line who had read Rowling's books in her high school years.

"It was so cool to see all sorts of different people from different generations coming together over one common love of Harry Potter," Burgess said.

"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part One" was deemed to be a definite success by the thousands of fans who saw it on opening night, myself in-

cluded. Compared to its predecessors, this movie included much more of the series' original story line, sometimes taking dialogue directly out of the book. The movie's highlights include an impressive animation sequence, an impromptu dance between Harry and Hermione, and various word-for-word exchanges.

Dividing the seventh book into two films turned out to be a positive marketing decision. In addition to increasing profits, the split allows more time for the intricate story to unfold, rather than unceremoniously smashing it into less than three hours and cutting out integral plot twists, in the sixth movie.

Extra bits of comedy helped to lighten the mood, in addition to a fair amount of heart-wrenching puppy-dog looks in Hermione's direction from Ron.

If you aren't distracted by Emma Watson's constantly twitching eyebrows, you'll also find that she is no longer the annoying little girl from the older movies.

**All of the lines to enter the theaters at AMC 16 were already over 30 feet long. By 7:30 the whole lobby was filled with Potterheads.**

## &gt;&gt; togatalks

## What did you think of Deathly Hallows?

I thought it was too overhyped, but it's probably because I'm not a big fan. I didn't read the books.



junior Lawrence Chen

It was great. My favorite part of the movie was when Hermione was telling the Tale of the Three Brothers.



junior Anna Zhang



FALCON // JORDAN WAITE

Code Red member senior Brandon Pierce leads the crowd in the "Hey Toga" cheer at the Los Gatos football game on Oct. 22.

# Seniors lead recent trend of renewed school spirit

BY Roy Bisht & Dylan Jew

The Saratoga-Los Gatos football game on Oct. 22 was one of the most exciting events in years. With packed bleachers and a roaring crowd, the atmosphere at the game was electric. In front of the bleachers, a group of bare-chested, red-emblazoned students led the crowd in cheering by chanting and yelling, encouraging fans to get into the game.

Named Code Red, this exuberant club was created by seniors Greg Johnson, Kevin Darchuk and alumnus Alex Wokas in late 2008. With its 162 members, the group epitomizes the school spirit formed by the senior class, who have been bringing passionate ideas to the school for the past three years.

Guidance counselor Eileen Allen, a Saratoga High alumnus who went here a decade ago, commended the group for its ability to inspire fans.

"We didn't have anything like that when I went here," she said. "Especially at the LG game, they were able to pump up the crowd and get everyone on their feet."

Code Red member Tim Lycurgus thinks the class of 2011 is the most spirited class at Saratoga High in years.

"Many seniors go to the sporting events and are much more into school events," Lycurgus said.

Not only has the senior class produced Code Red, but they also pioneered the now-extinct Thursdays, a tradition where one day of the week

**"Our legacy will last a long time because we've started a trend of school spirit."**

>> Senior Tim Lycurgus

participants would dress according to a weekly theme. At the LG Game, the group of students painted letters on their bare chests, spelling out "BEAT LG!" and "LETZ GO TOGA," influencing some sophomores and juniors to join them.

Sophomore class president Amin Mirzadegan, one of those who joined the seniors in chest-painting, agrees that the seniors are a big contributor of

the renewed school spirit.

"We see them doing that type of stuff, and they've always been spirited and it has definitely rubbed off on us," Mirzadegan said. "I admit that last year we didn't have much spirit, but we improved a lot this year by following in the seniors' footsteps."

The sophomore class isn't alone in admiring the senior class' spirit. Freshman Tony Capek came to Saratoga without true first-hand experience of school spirit. After experiencing his first Homecoming, however, Capek is trying to make his class more spirited, thanks to the senior class.

"We weren't really sure what to do before seeing the seniors' Homecoming," Capek said. "I think now we are going to have a lot more spirit and we're going to step it up."

The seniors believe their strong spirit will continue to influence the school for the next few years.

"Our legacy will last a long time because we've started a new trend of school spirit. I think the sophomores this year in particular are going to follow our lead and bring a lot of spirit to SHS in the future," Lycurgus said. ♦

ACADEMIC HONORS

# Alumni becomes Rhodes scholar

Varun Sivaram becomes fifth Saratoga High grad to study in prestigious Oxford program

BY Megan Benzing

For the fifth time in eight years, a Saratoga High graduate has been awarded the Rhodes Scholarship. 2007 alumnus Varun Sivaram, currently a senior at Stanford, is one of 32 Americans who received the award this year. He will continue on to study energy policy and materials science at Oxford University in England.

Widely considered the world's most prestigious scholarship, the Rhodes gives its recipients the opportunity to study any postgraduate discipline at Oxford for one to three years, funded by grants of \$50,000 to \$75,000 a year and a generous stipend for living expenses. According to the Rhodes Trust, 1,500 students apply nationwide for the scholarship; after that, 800 are selected by their universities to move on, 200 make it to final rounds, and 32 are selected.

"I really was just thankful to have made it that far," Sivaram said.

Sivaram was watching the Big Game football contest between Cal and Stanford this past weekend while waiting for the committee to make its decision.

"I was in utter disbelief when I heard the news," Sivaram said. "It's an honor, and I know it reflects more on the Saratoga and Stanford communities that have helped me discover my passion for energy policy and instilled in me strong academic values."

Sivaram was the valedictorian for the class of 2007, marking the second straight year a former SHS valedictorian has won the award. Last year Henry Barmerier, the top student from the class of 2006, also received the Rhodes while finishing his final year at Princeton University. Other SHS graduates to receive the Rhodes Scholarship are Ankur Luther (class of 1999), Betsy Masiello (class of 1999) and Chelsea Purvis (class of 2001).

If all goes well, Sivaram plans to go into energy policy after Oxford. He believes that policymakers need a strong technical as well as practical background, and hopes to represent a dual track approach for international climate negotiations and domestic electricity grid policies.

Sivaram, however, has not forgotten his roots in Saratoga.

"Sure I'm one of 32, but Saratoga, over the last 8 years, has picked up 5 Rhodes Scholarships. Since there are 2 available to NorCal students each year, that means we picked up 5/16, 31 percent of the available Rhodes," Sivaram said. "That's pretty cool."

Last year Sivaram won another coveted award called the Truman Scholarship, along with 60 other students in the U.S. The Truman honors students who plan on playing an active role in public service, offering up to \$30,000 for graduate study. ♦



Sivaram

QUIZ KIDS

# With little preparation, seniors win first round in local TV quiz show

BY Karen Yang

Seniors Shannon Galvin, Vijay Menon and Jeremy Pham appeared on the set of "Quiz Kids" with almost no preparation, no coach and only two fans. Their competitors from Terra Nova High School, which has competed in "Quiz Kids" for 12 years, sat poised in color-coordinated uniforms with study guides in hand and almost 30 supporters behind them. Somehow, the Saratoga team still defeated Terra Nova 340-130.

"I just got in their heads mentally," Menon joked.

"Quiz Kids" is a high school academic tournament that airs on KRON-TV and is on its 12th season. Competing schools in the Bay Area send three students to vie for an all-expense paid trip to a location not yet selected. Questions cover a range of topics, including history, literature, math, science, geography, fine arts, sports and current events.

The game started out poorly for the Saratoga team. In the first round, Galvin, Menon and Pham worked together to answer three questions out of seven, tying Terra Nova 30-30 by the end of the round. By the end of the next round, a lightning round, the team trailed Terra Nova by 30 points, 100-70.



"We had two fans; they had 30. We didn't want to tell anyone because we thought we were going to lose."

>> Senior Vijay Menon

However, in a turn of events, Menon led the team to victory in the final lightning round, for a final score of 340-130.

Menon, who had participated in the show last year, recruited Galvin and Pham to join the team only a week before their first game. The Saturday be-

fore their first game, Galvin, Menon and Pham prepared by watching old "Quiz Kids" videos for an hour.

"We didn't even have a coach," Galvin said. "We had Vijay's [21-year-old] sister pretend to be our coach."

Slightly intimidated by Terra Nova's overwhelming number of fans, the team only had support from Galvin's mother and Menon's sister alongside a random Boy Scout troop.

"We had two fans; they had 30," said Menon. "We didn't want to tell anyone because we thought we were going to lose."

Despite winning their first game without much preparation, the team plans to practice for future rounds. For the upcoming round in December, they hope to improve by practicing with Menon's buzzers.

"I think we're actually going to try to prepare for those," Galvin said.

The show will broadcast on Feb. 12 on Channel 4 at 2 p.m. ♦

## FALCON FITNESS

## P.E. for adults and teachers, too

BY Samika Kumar

Four Indian mothers lifting weights to the rhythm of Indian music under the supervision of athletic director Peter Jordan is the last sight a student would expect to see while passing by the weight room on a Monday evening. Yet this six-week adult fitness program has found its niche on Mondays and Wednesdays, mornings and evenings, for almost a dozen grown-ups.

The idea started out on Back-to-School night, when many parents showed interest in adult classes, so Jordan and world geography and P.E. teacher Richard Ellis conducted a two-week trial to gauge participants' attendance and interest.

"Offering the class to adults in the community seemed like a natural extension of what we were doing during the day," Jordan said. "We like teaching this, and we enjoy seeing others make prog-

ress and feel good about themselves."

Several adults showed an interest in continuing the classes, so Jordan and Ellis agreed upon a six-week course.

The classes started Nov. 8, and participants paid \$150 for the entire session.

Jordan teaches the evening classes, 5:30-6:30 p.m., while Ellis maintains morning classes, 6:15-7:15 a.m.

"We have three to five [participants] in the morning, and about the same in the evening," Jordan said. "We were hoping for more, but it is a fun, hard-working group. The numbers allow us to give lots of individual attention."

The adult fitness program follows an outlined schedule similar to that of students' P.E. The beginning warm-up is followed by a skill and strength, both of which relate to maintaining form and learning new concepts.

The workout of the day spans the remainder of the hour.

One such workout includes three repetitions of five clean-and-presses, 25 singles under jump ropes and 15 sit-ups.

Music from the '70s plays in the background, and Jordan's stop clock hangs on the wall above, flashing the progressing time in blaring red numerals.

As the mothers finish the workout, they stop to stretch and chat. A couple of them already knew each other, but all have bonded over the several weeks.

"It's nice to work out in a group with people you know," participant and mother Sushama Thakker said.

The school's official physical fitness program is called CrossFit Sawmill, derived from the program's affiliation with the conditioning program, CrossFit.

"CrossFit essentially licenses the use

of [its] name to gyms who meet certain criteria," Jordan said. "All of the [SHS] P.E. teachers have one or more certifications in CrossFit methodology."

Often times, regular P.E. classes, after school conditioning and the adult classes coincide with their daily activities.

"We adjust our instruction to meet the goals and ability levels of our participants," Jordan said, "but all of our students are learning functional movements that we use in everyday life."

The mothers in the evening class squat and lift medicine balls from the ground. Jordan paralleled this activity to lifting heavy everyday objects.

As the adult classes develop alongside P.E. courses and conditioning, Jordan hopes to mold Saratoga High into a more athletic environment.

According to Jordan, the ultimate goal is to build Saratoga High into the community's ideal sports environment, or as Ellis put it, the "hub of fitness." ♦



Jordan

## MUSIC

## Marching band rained out in championships

BY Anshu Siripurapu &amp; Justine Huang

The show must go on ... unless there's rain, that is.

The marching band participated in its final tournament of the season on Nov. 20 in Fresno. They placed in semifinals and would have competed in finals, had they not been cancelled due to the unfortunate rain.

The more than 200 members of the band competed in the two-day Western Band Association Championship semifinals, placing sixth out of the 10 competing bands in the 5A division with a score of 88.7.

The band was set to compete the next day at WBA Finals, but were disappointed when the finals were cancelled due to a downpour of rain that made marching on the competition field too dangerous.

"I don't think we realized that our semifinals performance was the last time we would ever perform," said

junior Christine Liu. "But all in all we made major improvements throughout the season and didn't place too badly."

Saratoga placed third in the music category, eighth in percussion, and seventh in auxiliary, or Color Guard.

The competition was the last time that the band performed their 2010 show, "Thoughtcrime," and many members were disappointed about the cancellation of finals.

"I felt kind of disappointed because we didn't get a second chance at getting a better score," said sophomore Justin Hang. "Still, during championships, we got to spend lots of time with friends and bond within our respective sections."

Instead of competing on Sunday, band members were given the opportunity to go to a shopping mall or stay in the hotel to study.

A banquet for the marching band members on Nov. 21 was celebrated with awards and videos recounting memories from the year. ♦

## MOCK TRIAL

## Veterans take on more work after roster changes

BY Vijay Menon &amp; Abhishek Venkataramana

With the first invitational only a month away, the mock trial team is undergoing its final preparations before a busy season of competition begins.

In recent weeks, a couple of roster changes have forced some veteran team members to take on added roles. After junior Anoop Galivanche could not participate because of other commitments, several tasks had to be reassigned.

Deviating from the standard of three attorneys per side, the prosecution will now rely on only two members. Seniors Navneet Ramesh and Shannon Galvin are taking on added responsibilities.

"It's tough to deal with these changes, but I think it's best for the team," said Ramesh. "We're both ready to take on the added roles and do our best to help the team succeed."

On defense, the attorneys remain unchanged with sophomore Ashwini

Velchamy, junior Michael Chang and senior Vijay Menon retaining their roles. However, freshman Jennie Werner was added to the cast as an expert defense witness to replace one of the vacancies created by the departure of another member.

Despite these changes, the team has continued to work toward improving and meeting their goals for the season. The squad conducted its first uninterrupted run-through on Nov. 30 after several weeks of practice.

"I think we are in decent shape," Ramesh said. "The run-through went without problems, for the most part."

The team will now practice with weekly Tuesday night run-throughs until the preliminary competition in January. The real tournaments begin in February, when the team will travel to a Santa Clara County courthouse to compete against other local schools.

"We will definitely be prepared by the time competition rolls around," Ramesh said. ♦

## School psychologist helps struggling students

BY Sarah Hull &amp; Parul Singh

The thought of a school psychologist might conjure up images of therapy sessions, with ink-blot tests and probing personal questions. But Mark Atkinson, the school's hard-working school psychologist and Link Crew coordinator, doesn't perform that kind of therapy.

Atkinson is not a licensed therapist. He works with students and helps intervene and respond to situations of crises, but he doesn't do therapy.

"It's kind of a misnomer because when you hear school psychologist you assume therapy, but in most schools psychologists don't have that kind of credential," Atkinson said.

Atkinson mostly administers assessments to determine how a student learns. This information helps Atkinson devise a helpful educational plan for the person.

His main job is to assess learning styles and ability and to do cognitive testing. He also does consultation, which supports a team of special edu-

cation teachers, department chairs and assistant principal Karen Hyde.

"I spend a lot of time in meetings and help to facilitate special education services," said Atkinson.

If students face other problems such as drugs or alcohol, they are usually referred to a guidance counselor.

Atkinson is somewhat of an unknown on campus since most students are unaware that the school employs a full-time psychologist. Nevertheless, Atkinson stresses that his doors are always open to any student in need of help.

"Students can absolutely contact me by themselves, but typically my points of contact are through the guidance department so usually a student will go to a guidance counselor and be referred [to me]," said Atkinson.

Although he is not well known, Atkinson has a great impact on the students he works with. Every month he directly interacts with about 20 students but indirectly he works on 40 students' cases.

Atkinson feels that his main impact on students is helping them identify how they learn and hopes that he has had a positive influence on students.



School psychologist Mark Atkinson works busily at his desk between appointments.

Atkinson got his degree in Boston and then moved out to California where he started working as a school psychologist in the Central Valley. After working there for a couple of years, he came to

Saratoga High in 2006.

"It really is a team effort to help these students out," said Atkinson, "and hopefully our work here makes a difference." ♦

# FINALS >> New calendar adopted for next year

continued from pg. 1

-posed two years ago. It reached no consensus at the time, but the proposal made a reappearance this year due to an increase in popularity.

The school district, however, has made some necessary adjustments. The school year will begin on Aug. 22, a week earlier than it did this year.

The summer of 2011 thus will be one week shorter than normal, which could potentially disrupt fall sports or other extracurricular activities.

The largest issue, though, involves semester-long courses. The new calendar shortens the first semester to 83 days

long, leaving the second semester a full 14 days longer.

For most classes, this will not be a problem, as teachers can shift first semester lessons into the second half of the year.

But the teachers of semester-long courses, such as government or economics, don't have two semesters to work with.

Most likely, they will have to shorten their curricula to accommodate for the 83 day-long first semester.

"It would be great if we could get the kids tested before the winter break, so they could go home, relax and not have to worry about taking a semester final

when they come back in the new year," said economics teacher Todd Dwyer. "However, I would also like to see some equity between the number of teaching days."

Nonetheless, the consensus has been that the beneficial possibilities of this new calendar overwhelm the drawbacks.

According to the district website, a district-wide survey "overwhelmingly showed support for the proposed change."

Most teachers and students appreciate the value of a break without books or test preparation.

"[If students study over break], then

it's not a break," said Spanish teacher Gina Rodriguez. "I think kids here are way too stressed out. I don't want to do work [over break] and don't expect my students to."

Safine, Dwyer and Rodriguez, along with many others, agree that a break should relax students, not create more stress.

These people hold high expectations for the next year's calendar.

"I think having a break at the end of finals week will optimize performance and mental health," Safine said. "Parents, students and teachers all have recognized the need of a true break from school." ♦

# JAPANESE >> Classes to be eliminated in two years

continued from pg. 1

"You have a declining enrollment, it leads to reduction of the language and, in this case, elimination of the language, which is pretty unfortunate."

Generally, it is the incoming freshmen who take Japanese 1. However, with a low enrollment and a tight district budget, it becomes difficult to support classes with lower enrollment such as Japanese 1.

Furthermore, more students are inclined to take Spanish and French since they are offered at Redwood Middle School.

"The disadvantage we have with Japanese versus Spanish and French is that Japanese is not offered in the middle school," said Rodriguez. "For [these languages] you start in the middle schools, you come to high school and continue here. Japanese is not offered in the middle school and kids have to start with level one."

The drop in enrollment could be attributed to the majority of students taking Chinese as their language, rather than Japanese.

Japanese was first offered in the

school in the 1990s, while Chinese was offered in 2000.

Because so many students are Chinese or Taiwanese-American, enrollment in Chinese has quickly risen, leading to a gradual drop in Japanese enrollment.

Current Japanese students will be given the opportunity to continue learning Japanese until the end of high school.

**>> THE bigidea**

**Japanese Classes**

**Problem:** Decline of incoming freshmen choosing Japanese 1

**Why it's happening:** Chinese is more popular, and Japanese is not offered at Redwood

**What's next:** Japanese will be eliminated after 2012

"It's not fair that the incoming students don't have the opportunity to take Japanese," said Persson. "Maybe if [they] take the initiative and tell the school that they really want to take the language then maybe that kind of enthusiasm could get it reinstated."

Japanese teacher Yuko Aoki currently teaches Japanese 3 Honors and Japanese 4 AP, as well as several P.E classes. She hopes to keep teaching all the classes she currently has.

"I am very much hoping the school will let me have Japanese AP next year because this year's Japanese 3 should have a last class of Japanese to go into," said Aoki. "Two years from now, there won't be any Japanese class, so I will be a full-time P.E teacher." ♦

## FIRST SEMESTER

# 2010 finals restricted to designated week

BY Samika Kumar

Though students will take all finals before winter break next year, principal Jeff Anderson has directed that teachers only give their finals during the designated week in January this school year.

Anderson imposed this policy in order to keep all classes more organized.

"It's simpler," Anderson said, "as opposed to trying to organize and find out who's doing what." A few teachers have been giving finals before December break. Over the years, these teachers switched inconsistently between placing finals before and after break, which led to confusion on Anderson's part and phone calls from parents.

"I would get phone calls from parents, saying, 'Why are [some students] getting finals before the holiday break?'" Anderson said. "And I'm going, 'Who? I didn't know that.'"

AP Environmental Sciences and Biology teacher Kristen Thomson is one teacher who varied yearly between setting finals in the appointed week or before break. She preferred giving her

students finals before break to reduce stress over the holidays, but her testing schedule became inconsistent due to two pregnancies in the past several years.

"The students were happy to have their finals come before [break]," Thomson said, "but if [staff and teachers] think [the new rule] is best for the overall student body, then I'm more than happy to go along with it. We're a team."

Beginning with the 2011-12 school year, the school will implement a new calendar, approved at the Nov. 16 board meeting, where finals week will be before December break. School will start earlier in August to accommodate the change, Anderson said.

But Anderson's main mission for this year is to have all finals during a set week that teachers agree on.

"Having these things all out of whack is not good policy," Anderson said. "Good policy is when we do things as consistently as possible, and if we make a change, it's a change that everyone agrees to and buys into. Here, that wasn't happening." ♦

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# MASCOT >> The mystery of the fantastic Freddie Falcon

continued from pg. 1

Ridge is there to greet me.

"What can I do for you?" she asks. I just want to know where Freddie is, I say. She chuckles. "Freddie has headed south for the winter and will probably not be back for a while," she says. "You might catch up to him at a few basketball games."

"Are you serious?" I reply. I don't think she understands the gravity of my situation. She chuckles again and confirms the cheerleader's account that Freddie indeed attended the game against Wilcox.

"So where is he?" I ask, more desperately this time. "Like for real?" she inquires. Yes, I'm dead serious, I say. (Who jokes about this kind of stuff anyway?) She directs me to a modest room less than 10 feet away: assistant principal Karen Hyde's office.

## Investigating at Hyde's office

12:46 p.m. I have most definitely ascertained Freddie's whereabouts, or at least cornered the person who does know. But my quest is not yet complete—I must ID Freddie in the flesh, or in this case, in the feather.

My travels bring me to her doorstep. She's tied up with another matter, so I sanitize my hands with the automatic Purell dispenser just outside her door.

When Mrs. Hyde's prior engagement exits, I bombard her with my crisis regarding school-spirit upper management. Mrs. Hyde gets enough of this kind of schlock from parents, you know.

She gestures for me to enter, nearly

hacking up a lung. I probably gave her a funny look as she promptly explains that "the Hydies have a cold."

I ask where Freddie Falcon is.

"He's in storage because we don't have a Freddie," she says, almost in tears (I'm not sure if that's from her emotional ties with a mascot, her cold or just the poor quality of my recorder).

"I want Freddie to come back," Hyde says. "But Freddie right now stinks. Literally and figuratively. He needs to be cleaned. So many years of blood, sweat and tears, more sweat than anything."

She picks up her walkie talkie. BEEP BEEP. (I haven't used a walkie talkie since I was 5 but I suppose this is a more practical mode of communication for the maintenance staff than texting during class is for my classmates.) "Can somebody get David Eng to the closet, the closet behind Julie [Grenier]. He needs to see Freddie Falcon," Hyde broadcasts.

"Meet him there in a few minutes," a male voice echoes from the walkie talkie. As I'm leaving, I thank Hyde and tell her how cool this is. "Do you know how odd you really are? If this is cool, you're really odd," she says.

I've learned a few important things: Mrs. Hyde knows my name. And now she thinks I'm odd. All in the name of Freddie, right?

## Storage closet hell

I skip over to the Tech Guru/Xerox room/storage wing of the school. A mustached man driving a golf cart is waiting for me.

"What are you trying to see?" he

asks. I have no clue who this guy is, but he's probably a maintenance guy judging from several keys hooked on his belt. I tell him I'm trying to find Freddie.

He opens a closet and we enter. It's really sketchy in there, almost something out of a Scooby Doo episode. After opening the external cobalt blue door, we must also unlatch a transparent door about 10 feet into the room.

"Uh...do you see it in here?" he asks. I look around. Nothing but racks and racks of fluffy dresses. "Freddie Falcon ... didn't know we had a name for him," he mutters.

We continue to ruffle through the piles of clothes. I step backwards, a move that seals my fate as I nudge the ajar creaky inner door and SLAM! It locks shut. We're stuck.

The maintenance guy (at this point I still don't know his name) proceeds to jam each of his keys into the lock, hoping one will work. I ask him if he actually knows which key goes with which lock. "I don't," he says. "I usually keep certain keys in certain places of my key ring. Master keys and stuff like that." Obviously he doesn't have a master key for this lock because none of them work.

"Hey Bart, this is Mike, copy," he says into his walkie talkie. Silence. The man's name is Mike (I later find out it's Mike McQuade). Moments pass. Maybe we're in one of those lead-plated mouse-traps which bounce back radio waves.

After anxious seconds slip away, someone responds (presumably an

associate), "Hey Mike, he was having trouble with his radio a few minutes ago. Let me see if I can find him."

It feels like several minutes fly by and Bart doesn't respond.

"Hey Brian," says Mike, resorting to another option. "Could you come over to that room where I was gonna let that kid in? We're locked in here." Oh. Now I'm "that kid." I'm cool with that.

Just then a man wearing a black colored Comcast shirt passes by and saves us. Apparently, the creaky inner door to this closet is locked from the inside and unlocked from the outside.

"Thank you for saving our lives," says Mike to the Comcast Guy. "I was starving. I was freezing. Panic set in."

## Lost and found

We strut over to the Tech room and share our account with everyone there (Grenier, technical assistant Spencer Sands, June Lamm from the Activities Office and The Comcast Guy). Sands tells us that he's been locked in that same room before, but no one offers any thoughts on Freddie's whereabouts.

McQuade and I pay our regards and start opening random blue doors in the wing. Behind cobalt door number 1? A furnace. Behind cobalt door number 805? A Freddie Falcon!

Finally we uncover the whereabouts of Freddie Falcon, stored in a closet labeled 805. A feeling of satisfaction rushes into my heart—I guess this is my Sherlock Holmes moment. I thank McQuade for his help and return to the journalism room at 1:13 p.m., having accomplished my mission. ♦

## CHARITY

# Holidays bring goodwill

BY Christine Bancroft

As the winter holidays near and the weather turns cold, many student organizations are beginning to share their time, money and possessions with the needy by putting together various charity events and drives.

The ASB ran the Second Harvest Food Bank canned food drive, which ended on Nov. 23, as a class competition. There were two barrels for food donations per class, one for each class in the office lobby, and one barrel in each class adviser's room.

The hope was that the competitive spin put on the annual food drive would be an incentive for students to donate; however, students only donated 835 pounds, a historically low amount compared to the average 2,000 pounds, leaving organizers disappointed with turnout.

"We are so fortunate here in Saratoga," said ASB vice president Nina Mohanty. "We should give back to our community, and hopefully the class competition will be an incentive to give what we can to those who need it."

However, due to the low amount of food received from the first Second Harvest drive, Leadership, ASB and the Spanish Club will try once more to push students to donate as much as possible.

Aside from the Second Harvest Food Bank drives, the ASB is also hosting the One Warm Coat drive, beginning Dec. 6, in which new or used coats are donated to those in need.

The Giving Tree holiday drive is for students of ASB and the Leadership class, where members will "adopt" a family in need, to purchase gifts and other items for the holidays, but all students and fac-

ulty are welcome to participate in the activity.

"It's even more personal," says Mohanty. "You hear the names and age and what they want. We hope everyone will pitch in and help someone have a happy holiday when they wouldn't otherwise."

A drive that will continue through this year's holidays includes this year's Princess Project, which will begin following Winter Ball, continue until the end of February and will be ran by the Leadership class.

The Princess Project, based in the Bay Area, gives prom dresses and accessories to underprivileged young women for proms and quinceañeras, 15th birthday parties for Latina girls, similar to the sweet 16 celebrations.

"We are starting earlier than usual this year because we hope to get many dresses left over from Winter Ball," said Mohanty. "Some girls would like to go to prom but can not afford their dresses, and many girls here don't use the dresses more than once. This way, the dresses can go to those who need them."

In order to raise money for the junior class and the Make-a-Wish Foundation, the juniors hosted a holiday boutique on Dec. 4 in the cafeteria and Little Theater.

Although the juniors sold poinsettias to customers who pre-ordered the flowers, outside vendors paid the class for space to sell their wares, including clothing, food and jewelry.

With all the different fundraisers, like the drives and charity events aiming to benefit the community, many students from all kinds of groups hope to benefit hundreds of people in the surrounding community and all over the world, for the nearing holidays and upcoming months. ♦

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# Authorities set tone with their comments

BY Lizzy Albert

When you see a Middle Eastern man in an airport, how do you react? Does it make you feel safer when you see a man with a turban going through extra measures of security? If so, why? What does that tell you about yourself? Isn't it ridiculous to fear all Germans because of Hitler, Russians because of Stalin, Italians because of Mussolini?

## Modern-day discrimination

So then what justifies the assumption that all Middle Easterners should be feared because of Al Qaeda and Bin Laden? Such ill-informed feelings can easily be deemed as racist and judgmental. Because of hysteria and such racial tensions, genocides have been a significant part of history.

The Holocaust, for example, eradicated 6 million innocent Jews because of one man's hatred for a culture and his ability to brainwash others into feeling the same way. Even more inappropriate than these tacit notions are authority figures encouraging the prejudgments, assuring that it's natural for people to succumb to hysteria.

## FOX comments

Recently, Juan Williams, an esteemed analyst for National Public Radio, was fired for remarks he made on the FOX News Channel about Muslims. Williams stated, "When I get on the plane, I got to tell you, if I see people who are

in Muslim garb and I think, you know, they are identifying themselves first and foremost as Muslims, I get worried. I get nervous."

NPR was right to fire Williams, in the process drilling into Americans' minds that these comments are not only unreasonable but also unacceptable. Especially with authority figures like Williams, there is a fine line between freedom of speech and unnecessary racist comments.

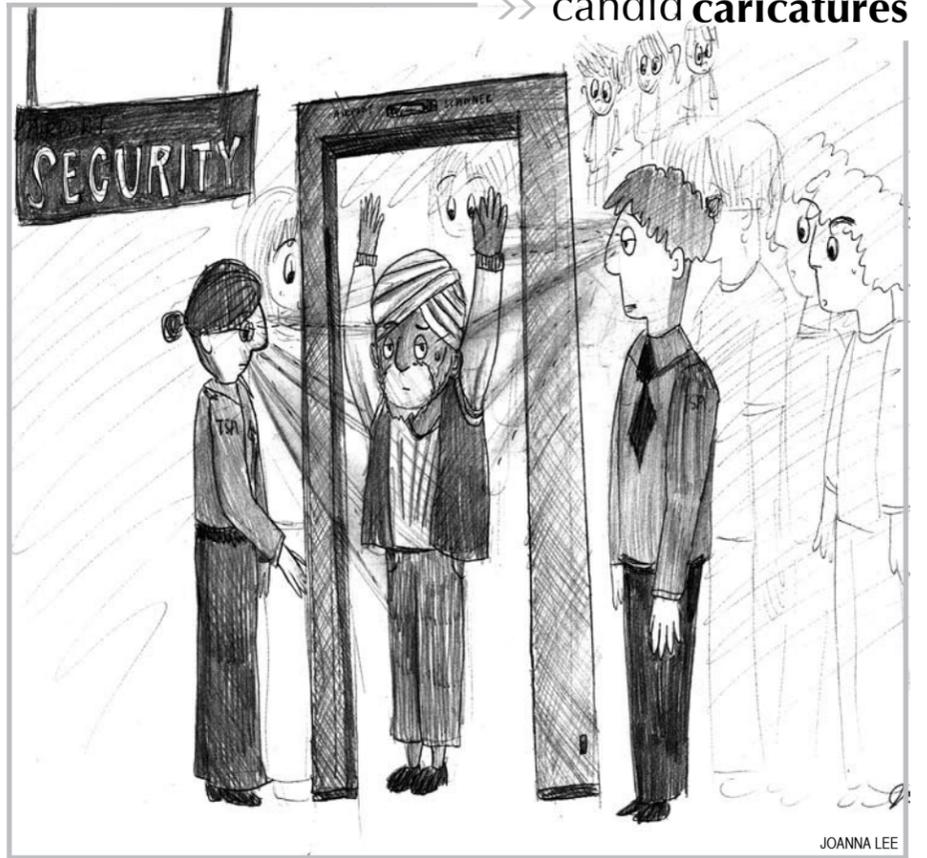
## Classroom connection

Williams' controversial statement brings up the debated topic of teachers bringing opinions regarding race and religion into a classroom. For example, it crosses the line for a teacher to use "seeing a Muslim in an airport" in a classroom to explain the concept

of hysteria. What happens if this teacher takes the hypothetical situation too far? Does it make it all right if they assure the class that the justification for their thoughts lies in humans' natural instinct to think the same way as everyone else, to assume the worst of people?

The pathetic excuse of succumbing to hysteria in fearing Muslims should not be any more pitied than a rebellious teenager's falling into peer pressure to do drugs. In a classroom, students must be educated, not brainwashed. As soon as teachers attempt to influence their students' opinions and views, society will become corrupt.

The fate of America and the ridding of the racism lies in the hands of the young generation.



JOANNA LEE

## Ending stereotypes is our responsibility

The fate of America and the ridding of the racism lies in the hands of the young generation. However, with these authority figures influencing notions similar to those of many white Americans leading up to the Civil Rights Movement, racist tensions won't ever disappear. Strict rules and proper consequences must be implemented to maintain order in society and allow people to feel comfortable in an accepting environment.

## Discrimination must end

As Elia Kazan, a Greek-American

movie director, once said, "Whatever hysteria exists is inflamed by mystery, suspicion and secrecy. Hard and exact facts will cool it." The bottom line is that teachers and commentators (and all authority figures for that matter) should stick to teaching and reporting the "hard and exact" facts, leaving opinions and irrational thoughts to themselves. This seems unrealistic yet so reasonable at the same time. It's obviously tough to be completely opinionless, but when it comes down to race, religion and politics, such blatant prejudices should be kept to oneself. ♦

# Fence fails to enhance lot safety, angers students

In recent weeks, students walking onto campus from the parking lot may have noticed a curious new obstacle—a black railed fence obstructing their path. The fence extends across the division between the parking spaces and drop-off area in order to force students to walk around it and, theoretically, through the white pedestrian walkways before crossing into the school.

While the school's efforts to promote safety are indeed admirable, going as far as to put up a fence is an overbearing and unnecessary approach. Unsurprisingly, many students seem to dislike it.

From early on in the year, it became clear the school would take a stance on forcing students to pay closer attention to the rules while crossing the road. The school even directed campus supervisors to watch students as they crossed the road during the morning drop-off period to ensure that they walked be-

tween the white walkway.

This process seemed to have gone without incident, leaving us to wonder why the school would feel the need to implement further restrictions such given that a supervisor is always on site during rush hour.

The fence is undoubtedly an inconvenience to students, making them feel trapped upon entering the school and adding to the already notorious prison-like aesthetic of the campus.

One of the most notable flaws of the fence is the lack of entrance near the gym; instead, gym users will now have to trek to the complete ends of the parking lot to reach their cars which might only be parked several feet away.

While administrators argue that safety trumps convenience, there simply is not a pressing need to install a fence when there is already a responsible adult to oversee the crossing process.

Furthermore, high schoolers should be given more credit as to their abilities to make safe decisions. An elementary school might require officials to guide students across the road and a fence to ensure a lack of rules violations, but

teenagers are smart enough to cross the road without having their hands held.

These issues aside, it seems that the fence fails in entirely covering the potential safety issue it seeks to address. Short of spanning a fence across the entire school, there is no way to ensure that students are always going to take the time to walk between the designated crossing walkways.

For example, students walking from locations such as the McAfee Center or the sophomore lot can cross the road freely without being impeded by the fence and may choose whether or not to cross through the designated walkway. Students parking in the sophomore lot do not have to deal with a fence when crossing the road, so why should such impositions be placed on those parking in the junior or senior lots? In fact, traffic congestion near the swimming pool and sophomore parking lot creates one of the most dangerous areas in the entire lot.

The reality is that a fence cannot force students to follow the rules. That is the precise purpose of having a staff member around to watch and enforce those rules.

Beyond that, the implementation of a fence is simply uncalled for, ineffective in practice and an unwise use of money. In a time of tight budgets and increased class sizes, the money that paid for the fence—whether from public or private funds—could be best

spent in other areas.

Perhaps the most puzzling aspect is that there does not appear to have been much dialogue prior to the implementation of the fence. An administrative decision resulted in the fence being put up without major student or faculty input. If there was indeed a compelling reason for its construction, it remains unknown to the student population.

If the school really wants to show that it cares about student safety, a fence is not the answer. Other more pressing safety issues raised previously by this newspaper remain to be addressed, such as how parents pull into the parking lots during morning drop-off, even more endangering the safety of students. Yet, there is no fence—let alone strict supervision—to curb this practice.

While the administration should be praised for trying to promote a safe environment for its students, the Falcon is convinced that a fence is not the best means of going about this. ♦

While the school's efforts to promote safety are admirable, going as far as to put up a fence is overbearing and unnecessary.



STAFFEDITORIAL

>> Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Opinion Editor  
Vijay Menon  
Editor-in-Chief  
Shannon Galvin

The Saratoga Falcon  
voted 34-3 in opposition  
to the fence.

## >> THE big idea

### The Fence

**Problem:** No compelling reason given for construction, adds to prison-like atmosphere, fails to entirely solve the safety issue

**Bottom Line:** Though the school should be admired for trying to promote safety, this particular measure fails to do so

# Dependence on electronics afflicts teens



>> Mac Hyde

Mad Machinations

Take a walk down a typical high school's hallways today and you will find more students using iPods and cellphones than those holding an actual conversation. It's part of a disturbing trend amongst Millennials.

The New York Times recently published a survey, "If Your Kids Are Awake, They're Probably Online", reporting that the average teenager spends over eight hours a day connected to the electronic labyrinth. Add in the fact that most teens are multitasking during their long stays online and one comes up with a total of nearly 11 hours of media per day.

While it is grand that we have access to all of this wonderful technology, at what point do we say enough is enough? College counselors are finding feuds between roommates more frequent and escalating in magnitude

simply because they don't know how to talk face to face and work things out. Teachers are finding that students are more often plagiarizing and instead of acting truly repentant, they act defensive about their admitted copying.

Even here at Saratoga I've noticed a change in the student body. Whereas years ago one could stroll down the halls and start a conversation with relative ease, today many of the students are far too busy texting or listening to music to be bothered.

While there is nothing wrong with listening to music, is it truly worth the bother to fetch one's iPod, choose a song and navigate the halls listening to just one song? I think not. Human contact is something that should be treasured. The wealth of information that can be exchanged in just a single glance can't even begin to be replaced by a whole conversation worth of texts.

When in our lives did we decide that we needed to be constantly connected to our closest 500 "friends." Heck, I don't even talk to all of my Facebook friends. The idea of being able to be contacted at anytime truly is a horrid one. Why do you need to know the answer now? Will it

kill you if you find out 30 minutes from now?

Wait, some of you dear readers might be saying, You, my good sir, are constantly attached to that contraption named Geoffrey (my laptop). What right do you have to be criticizing us on our usage of technology? Well, none really, save for three things. First, I probably send four text messages a week, if that. Secondly, I spend less than find hours attached to Geoffrey and that is due to my wonderful (editor's note: atrocious) handwriting. Third, my dealings with the online world are rather legal, in fact the only method I know of to "download" music for free involves a phonograph, two cassette players and an inordinate amount wires.

What ever happened to our sense of wonderment? Instead of imagination, we prefer to spend our lives online. Gone are the days when people looked up at the stars and wonder what could be out there. Gone are the days when a summer afternoon was spent just watching the clouds go by. We no longer find value in face to face contact. Call me old fashioned, but if the future is destined to be an antisocial one, count me out. ♦



JOANNA LEE

## You can't take a fangirl out of the fandom



>> Deborah Soung

Dangerously Debbie

It disappoints me that Microsoft's spell check does not recognize "fangirl" as a correctly spelled English word. It is the word that my life has revolved around since I discovered the magnificence of the Internet in middle school, and it sums up who I am in a neat seven letters, much to my parents' disdain.

I would describe fangirling as extensively burying oneself in an area of interest casually referred to as a fandom, usually via Internet

on a laptop. My particular territories of intense obsession cover Harry Potter, British rock bands (including the Kooks, the Arctic Monkeys and Muse), and manga. Unfortunately, my parents and a few of my friends seem to think that fangirling is hardly a good use of my time, and the amount of time I spend on my laptop and the Internet is probably considered unhealthy by most.

To my parents, "the Internet" translates to "the seed of all evil." They allow me to dote on my laptop when I tell them I need to use it for schoolwork—but otherwise, they try to limit my time with my mechanical lap-warmer as if it were a flea-ridden alley cat and I were a child exceedingly susceptible to disease. But my laptop is my precious kitten who perches on my stomach and keeps me company during the cold winter days. More importantly, my laptop is the portal into my fandom, which has undoubtedly shaped me over the years.

In my parents' rulebook, fangirling leads to unhealthy habits, such as cosplaying Hogwarts students whenever possible, and incessantly whining when

prohibited from going to the midnight premieres of Harry Potter movies. The question is: Are these habits really unhealthy? Probably. But fangirling also has an abundance of positive side effects upon starry-eyed little girls with penchants for spending entire days surfing Harry Potter-related Tumblrs.

My love affair with writing stories has only grown deeper since I began writing fanfiction, or works of fiction by a fan containing characters from a published work. I believe fanfiction has helped me improve my writing, especially in the area of structuring short stories. Furthermore, fangirls in tightly knit Internet communities often beta-read, or proofread, each other's stories,

which helps me practice my grammatical skills.

Though my parents acknowledge the English practice I get and agree that my grades are good

enough, they believe I spend too much time on my laptop (4-6 hours per day). According to the parental units, spending too much time on the Internet limits my awareness about the real world where people grow old and not every boy has perfectly drawn, sparkling eyes. I log more hours on my electronic kitten than most people my age, but that hardly means I am clueless about what goes on outside of my room.

I acknowledge that I may not recall the number of votes Prop 19 lost by or the current unemployment rate down to its hundredths place; however, this does not mean I am living under a rock. Scanning the headlines on CNN.com before I go off to LiveJournal is enough for me to keep up with major news.

Therefore, despite how much fangirls may seem like strange females partially disconnected from current events and school life, we do care about the world we live in, even though we sometimes need to escape to a different world to prevent mild depression. But seriously, one more insult to my fangirling habits, and I will troll your blog. ♦

More importantly, my laptop is the portal into my fandom, which has shaped me greatly over the years.

## Full-body scanners are not the way to go

BY Aasim Naqvi

"If you touch my junk, I'm gonna have you arrested," said John Tyner, in response to a Transportation Security Aid (TSA) agent's attempt to further "pat-down" Tyner for a security check on Nov. 13.

Tyner's response is just one example of the negative feedback to the TSA's new November 2010 regulations for U.S. airport security checks.

The backlash is absolutely justified.

The new measures require fliers to pass through a back-scatter scanner. This scanner produces a nude image of the flier that shows the flier's full body including private parts.

Refusal to enter this full-body back-scatter scanner will result in the TSA personnel giving the flier an extensive pat-down of the full body, once again including private parts.

Public outcry against these new regulations has mostly revolved around the new rules' invasion of privacy. In a recent USA Today poll, results showed that the new pat-downs "bother or anger" 57 percent of adult fliers, and that the full-body scanning machines make 42 percent feel the same way.

American travellers have the right to be upset. The new regulations force people to allow random people to invade their privacy.

The TSA has stated that the new screening procedures were put into place in response to the attempted "underwear bombing" on a flight from Amsterdam to the U.S.

According to the official White House review of the terrorist attack, the bomber got onto the plane because of a "failure of intelligence analysis, failure within the counterterrorism community to assign responsibility and accountability for follow up of high priority threat streams" and "shortcomings of the watchlisting system."

The review also stated that the bomber was supposed to have been watchlisted, as he was on a list of known terrorist identities. Most surprisingly, it stated that "the U.S. government had sufficient information to have uncov-

ered and potentially disrupted the Dec. 25 attack—including by placing Mr. Abdulmutallab on the No Fly List." It does not mention the problem having to do with the security checking procedures. Abdulmutallab could have been watchlisted immediately. Additionally, if the attempted bombing was after the Nov. 1, 2010 rule changes, he still would not have been caught. Why? The flight wasn't even in the U.S.

Plus, the regulations could also be in violation of the Fourth Amendment, which protects against unreasonable searches and seizures. The rules may even be unconstitutional.

In fact, checking each person with nude scanners and intrusive pat-downs as if he/she is dangerous makes fliers seem "guilty until proven innocent," rather than the opposite.

Thankfully, there are alternatives.

After Abdulmutallab's bombing attempt, Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport installed several full-body scanners that produced mannequin figures that were not gender-specific. The system uses radiowaves as opposed to the back-scatter devices' X-rays. In May 2010, the TSA ordered less-advanced versions of the devices that didn't feature "automatic threat detection," which is referred to in the scanner's official name, "ProVision ATD."

In the future, the Dutch scanning device could be the answer.

As for now, if the new security regulations are for preventing terrorism, are they really working? Isn't the goal of a terrorist to terrorize people?

The fact is that there are people who are absolutely terrified of flying from their country's airports. That doesn't prevent terrorism. It fuels it. ♦

### >> **thebigidea**

#### Scanners Invade Privacy

**Issue:** TSA's full body scanners in airports show nude images, including private parts.

**Alternate option:** TSA personnel conduct full body pat-downs.

# Brown not perfect, but best for California

BY Emily Williams

California wanted someone who could balance the budget, create more jobs, cut spending and improve education without raising taxes, cutting programs or changing policies. In short, the California voters wanted Superman. Instead, they got Jerry Brown.

Post election, people are often disappointed by the newly elected leader when cold reality hits. Politicians can rally people, propose brilliant new ideas and criticize the current administration all they want, but when it comes time to make the hard decisions, there is no more hiding behind smoke and mirrors.

Brown will take office on Jan. 3 and the next four years will not be a walk in the park for him. Many Californians will not be happy with the tough decisions that he must make: cutting programs, addressing the massive debt of \$25.4 billion, increasing taxes and employee union benefits and pay. In fact, citizens will continue to criticize him until the economy turns around and they start to feel the benefits of his tough choices. There will never be a solution that will please every one, especially in the present predicament.

Yet Jerry Brown is the right man for the job. California chose wisely, even though Brown is far from perfect. He brings experience to Sacramento. At 72, Brown will be California's oldest Governor, but he was also one of the youngest when he served two terms as governor from 1975 to 1983.

During this time, Brown was a moderate Democrat, with ideas ahead of his time, but he was also blamed for the

subsequent debt that followed him out of office. During his early years in politics Brown was called "Governor Moonbeam" because of California's reputation as a free-thinking hippy state, and his resistance to conformity. His ideas of launching the state's own space shuttle and his relationship with actress Linda Ronstadt created his his easy-going reputation. But since then Brown has changed and matured.

When he was mayor of Oakland, Brown worked to stimulate the community's economy and combat unemployment and crime in the city by promoting businesses. His plan was successful and Oakland was much better off after Brown left office. However, one must

People must look past party lines and do what is best for California.

look at individual decisions and more importantly, motives.

Yes, Jerry Brown has made some political mistakes in his career. Yes, he is an old, white career politician who has been working the polls for years. But he also has great qualities of leadership and he knows how the government works. When he takes office, he will hit the ground running with the legislature on his side, things may finally be accomplished in Sacramento.

Jerry Brown's victory was an encouraging reminder that politics is more than just a contest of wealth. A refreshing truth.

Now people must focus on improving California. One man cannot solve the problems of a small country-sized state on his own. It will take work, patience and persistence; people must look past party lines and do what is best for California. ♦

# Campus passes need more information



>> Samika Kumar

Smiley Samika

It was a Tuesday morning a couple weeks ago, when I received my first yellow campus pass with a check mark by "Ass't Principal." I remember panicking when my teacher asked if I had done something wrong. As I sauntered down the hall to the office, I racked my brain for a reason for how I had earned this ominous trip to assistant principal Chris Cerbone's office.

I knew most people are called there for disciplinary matters, but I could not think of anything bad that I had done. To make the situation worse, the pass asked for me to come at the beginning of the period. I could not decipher the signature on the pass either, so I assumed it was Cerbone's.

On the contrary, the result was pleasant. A lady sitting in the attendance region of the office directed me to a group sending out invitations to Green Tea, a tea party on how to make the campus greener. The irony was that I had spent five minutes fearing a conversation with the assistant principal and a possible perma-

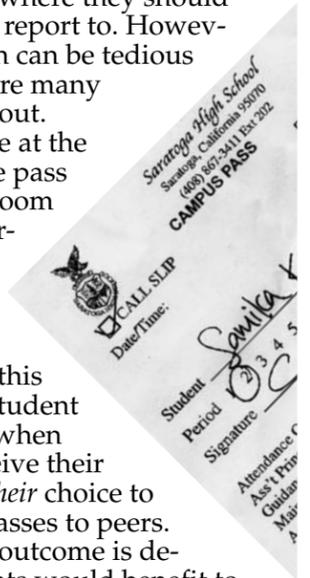
nent blemish in my future academic career—only to find that I had been invited to a tea party.

I am sure many students have faced similar worries since campus passes contain so little information. The pass has a section directing to where and to whom the student should report. An option to report to a fellow student in the office could help in a situation, like mine, where students are called out of class to meet peers in the office.

If the desired option is not on the pass, extra notes should direct the students where they should go or who to report to. However, this option can be tedious when there are many passes to fill out.

Extra space at the bottom of the pass could leave room for brief information regarding the situation. Some people may oppose this idea due to student privacy, but when students receive their passes, it is *their* choice to show their passes to peers.

Whatever outcome is decided, students would benefit to have more information on passes. This small change would not only reduce confusion but also decrease unnecessary stress. ♦



# Library enforces ridiculous rules



>> Ashley Tang

@ the library

One Friday tutorial, I hurried to the school library expecting a haven away from the cold for quiet study. Instead, as I opened the door, I was blocked by a giant crowd milling in front of the library detectors, waiting to be admitted. A campus supervisor guarded the entrance holding a bright yellow chain to keep students from pushing their way in, as if he were the bouncer for an exclusive club.

Since when did I have to wait in line for entry into a library, of all places? When I asked the librarians about this, they said that in order to ascertain that students are focusing on schoolwork, the number of students cannot exceed 150, which is the number of chairs present in the building. By ensuring that every student sits in a chair, they can keep track of how many people are in the library and how many open spots are left. If all the seats are taken, they don't let in any more students.

The problem with this rule is there are more students who need to use the library than there are seats. Judging by the academic nature of the school's students, if

studying needs to be done, it will be done regardless of distractions. Why should an arbitrary number of 150 determine the optimum condition for studying? The library needs to add more chairs and tables to make room for the students who need this vital resource, because a library should fulfill the needs of all students.

Now, students are finding that their education is hindered because they cannot depend on the library as a useful study location.

Even the students allowed entry are not let in without some restrictions. The library staff feels compelled to enforce some constricting rules: no food, no gum, no cellphones and no sitting on the ground. These rules bother me for a number of reasons.

First of all, when students need to cram before a midterm, they must choose between eating lunch and studying in the library. I understand that the library needs to be kept clean, but the school should designate an area in the library for eating similar to the tiled area of the Saratoga public library, where people are allowed to eat. Many students would appreciate an area like this, which would encourage students to study more.

Second, many students rely on cellphones to contact group members and to search for information online. When all the computers are taken, students must pull out their iPhones in order to translate a word or to research a topic for an essay. If students can use

## >> THE topfour

### Bad Library Rules

1. No food
2. No cellphones
3. No sitting on the ground
4. No gum

computers, why can't they use phones? The library takes away this essential privilege when students need it most.

The last rule that I mentioned takes away a person's basic privilege to sit down or stand up. In the library, the staff demands that students sit down in a chair. Students are yelled at if they sit on the ground, sit on the table, stand up, share a chair or even bring a chair to another table. This strictness is not only unreasonable but also ridiculous.

When students are working on a group project, it is necessary to bring a chair over for another group member. And if there are no other seats, it is only natural that a student will either share a chair with a friend or resort to sitting on the ground.

Doing so is certainly not a "fire hazard," because if there was a fire, the students sitting on the ground would simply get up and move.

Although some of these rules may be needed in order to maintain order, the library really needs to loosen up. After all, this is Saratoga, and the students here don't need to be told to focus on their schoolwork. ♦

## THIRD PERIOD

### STAFF POLICY

The Saratoga Falcon is published five times per semester by the Advanced Journalism classes of Saratoga High School, 20300 Herriman Ave., Saratoga, CA 95070. Views expressed in *The Saratoga Falcon* are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the administration, faculty or school district.

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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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# DUI = death under the influence

BY Michael Lee

Santa Teresa High junior Jordan West told her father Michael on Nov. 20 that she was going to see a movie that night. Neither of them thought anything of it. It was just another of Jordan's excursions with her friends.

Early the next morning, one of Jordan's friends woke Michael West and delivered a grave message: His daughter was dead, the victim of a DUI accident.

After she left her house the previous night, Jordan got in a Toyota with four of her friends, all of whom were under the influence of alcohol and/or marijuana. The driver, according to CHP Officer Jaime Rios, had drunk three shots

of brandy. On Highway 101, another car collided into the Toyota, propelling it off the road and into a tree. The CHP pronounced Jordan dead at the scene, and her friends were all hospitalized.

In San Jose—just 10 miles away from Saratoga—alcohol and drug use have taken the future of a relatively young teenager. Her death shows that the Silicon Valley is not the safe sanctuary most people believe it is.

The role of alcohol and other substances, however, does not negate the fault of the boys and girls involved in the accident. They ignored warnings against driving under the influence and paid a cruel price.

Now, the issue of the driver's punish-

ment remains for the District Attorney's Office. West's parents have requested mercy for the driver, saying that West would have wanted her friend to have a good life. The driver, they said, will be punished by the burden of her guilt. However, greater penalties need to be implemented to highlight the consequences drunk driving.

All people make mistakes, but a line is crossed when one's personal errors hurt others. The five teenagers were wrong not only for endangering themselves, but also for carelessly risking the lives of the other drivers on the road.

Unfortunately, most people are unaware of the consequences of their decisions. The "it won't happen to me" mind-

set plagues teens, making them more prone to substance abuse and other risks. Tragedies such as Jordan's death remind people that the dangerous side of driving is more tangible than they thought. Younger drivers need to be wary before eagerly grabbing their car keys.

At a mournful vigil for her daughter, Rosie Nevinger, Jordan's mother, noticed that several minors were under the influence of alcohol. Shocked, she gave the large crowd of teenagers a few emotional words of wisdom.

"Do not let Jordan Michelle West's name go in vain," Nevinger said. "Call your best friend's mom. Call your godparent. Call somebody. Anybody will pick you up. You don't have to die." ♦

## Colleges market falsely

BY Kim Tsai

In early December, junior Kellie Chiou rifled through her mail, placing junk mail in one pile and important mail in another.

In her growing pile of junk mail were several letters from colleges, all claiming how great each was. Among others, Carnegie Mellon, Northwestern University and MIT seemed to guarantee her acceptance into their ranks.

The problem was that the colleges were not in fact guaranteeing her acceptance. Like many other letters from colleges, the aim was to lure students like Chiou into applying. As many juniors are finding out, college marketing has become a big-time annoyance.

Why all the marketing? The goal is to raise the number of applicants and increase the selectiveness of the school.

But too often students misread the marketing as indicating a valid chance at acceptance at some elite schools.

Although the influx of applicants

provides colleges with more money, colleges should be genuine in their desire to improve their college, not just attract more students.

Frequent e-mails and mailings are sent to show how amazing schools may appear. This mild form of propaganda makes it difficult for future college applicants to determine how good a school actually is. What students should be doing is relying on truthful reviews, which are often hard to find.

Inter-college competition urges colleges to improve campuses and classes, but when colleges turn to easier, less truthful methods of improvement, their integrity drops. Are colleges trustworthy if all they are interested in is improving statistics and not actual classes?

Colleges should start cutting back on advertising the glories of their school. Not only does it bring them a negative image, but it also leads students to foster unrealistic expectations and dreams of acceptance. Students begin to apply to 15 or 20 schools, sending applications

>> candidcaricatures



unnecessarily.

If colleges continue to use untruthful methods to appeal to future applicants, who is to know what they will do in the future? Colleges should focus on improving their schools, thereby improving their stats.

This new way of improving statistics

misleads students into thinking colleges are better than they really are. Students should not fall into these advertisement traps.

Chiou has ended up ignoring advertisements from colleges and putting more and more brochures in the recycling bin. ♦

## How 'Christmas Creep' stole Christmas cheer

EARLY CELEBRATIONS OF CHRISTMAS TAKE AWAY FROM HOLIDAY SPIRIT

BY Vivian LeTran

It's nearing the time of the holidays again. Many of us are worrying about those just-before-break tests, planning our ski trip to Tahoe and, of course, starting our Christmas shopping. With the shelves decked with Christmas merchandise starting as early as right after Halloween, it should be a breeze. That's right: it starts before Thanksgiving or Black Friday.

The term "Christmas Creep" refers to how the Christmas season seems to

start sooner every year. By now, retailers such as Wal-Mart, JC Penney and Target have long begun advertising and those Christmas trees are starting to get dusty.

Their true motive is to lure shoppers into buying gifts as early as possible. The mentality is that many shoppers won't be able to resist when they spot a perfect gift even if Christmas isn't for another several weeks or months.

However, each year, when retailers compete for the earliest Christmas release, the Christmas Creep becomes

unreasonable.

Christmas Day doesn't happen until the end of December. There is no need for retailers to begin selling two months early. We shouldn't need to be worrying about whether we have enough pocket money yet; we need time to finish up the last scraps of our Halloween candy and actually enjoy Thanksgiving. The Christmas Creep and downplays its importance.

**The mentality is that many shoppers won't be able to resist when they spot a perfect gift even if Christmas isn't for another several weeks or months.**

Furthermore, the Christmas Creep trivializes Christmas itself. The holidays used to be heavily ornate, with

freshly cut trees and memories of family and friends, filled with laughter and gifts and holiday spirit.

With the extended holiday season, Christmas just becomes another commercialized holiday filled with consumerism. This isn't what Christmas is about and shouldn't be. The holidays deserve better than this.

So next year, slow down, relax, actually enjoy autumn and try not to think about getting a Christmas tree until the low-priced Black Friday shelves are completely empty. ♦

## BART officer deserves more severe punishment

BY Deborah Soung & Ashwini Velchamy

During the early hours of New Year's day 2009, Johannes Mehserle, a white police officer, mistook his gun for a Taser and fatally shot Oscar J. Grant III, a black man, at a BART station in Oakland.

This shooting sparked riots among the hundreds of outraged citizens of Oakland even before Mehserle's trial in July and has sparked even more protest after his sentence was recently announced. On Nov. 5, Judge Robert Perry gave Mehserle the shortest possible sentence: two years for involuntary manslaughter and credit for the time he has already served, meaning Mehserle could be out of prison in less than a year.

Most of the anger directed at Mehserle is the result of the belief that the justice system goes lightly on cases concerning the abuse of power by white officers against minorities. However, it is absurd to suggest that Mehserle would not have made the mistake he did if the man he was trying to detain was white, since the unfortunate incident could not have been predicted and stopped.

Regardless of race, Mehserle still made a horrible mistake for which he should be more seriously punished. As a police officer, Mehserle should have known that the safety of citizens lay in his hands, and he should have taken more precautions in differentiating between his gun and his taser. Just hol-

stering his taser for his left hand instead of his right could have saved a man's life.

In California, involuntary manslaughter can result in a sentence from two to four years; however, the maximum sentence for Mehserle, begged for by Grant's family, would have been 14 years, the four-year maximum for manslaughter with an extra 10 years for firearm enhancements.

The judge was fair in disregarding the firearm enhancement, since Mehserle had meant to use his Taser instead of his gun. Because Mehserle had not meant to use the gun, he had not meant to use the enhancement to hurt anybody, so the enhancement should not be taken into account.

However, even though the incident was an accident, Mehserle still deserves to be held accountable for his negligence. Mehserle's sentence is far too light since it includes the time he had already served during the trial. Mehserle should still hold responsibility for his inability to tell the difference between the two weapons.

Moreover, sentencing Mehserle to the lightest term possible was a slap in the face to the black community of Oakland. Mehserle should be treated in the same way anyone else who had committed involuntary manslaughter would be treated and thus receive the same punishment. Presenting him with the minimum sentence, plus taking more time off by doubling what he already served, remains unjust. ♦

# Bon Appetit!

## Holiday Recipes

THE HOLIDAYS ARE ALL ABOUT FAMILY AND, LET'S FACE IT, FOOD. HERE ARE SOME FALCON FAMILY RECIPES.

### Krumkake

BY Christine Bancroft

So my family makes these cookies each year around Christmas time, and a lot of times we give them out as gifts in big tins with lingonberry jam or cream. They're a traditional Scandinavian and German Christmas cookie, but a lot of people eat them year round. This is the recipe my grandma had, which makes 20 krumkakes. Unfortunately, you have to have a krumkake maker. Sometimes waffle makers work too, but it's hard not to burn krumkakes on waffle makers because they have to be thin and rollable.

1. Melt the butter, but don't overheat it. Mix the sugar into the butter thoroughly, stirring well. Add the two eggs, mix until the batter is light yellow.
2. Add the milk and the flour and continue to blend until the mixture is smooth. The batter should flow readily but slowly off a measuring spoon for a thin krumkake
3. You can add vanilla extract (1/2 teaspoon), grated lemon rind (1/2 teaspoon), almond extract (1/2 teaspoon) or ground almonds (1 tablespoon) for flavor, but this is optional. Mix well.
4. Using the krumkake maker or waffle maker, pour the batter onto the iron after it has been preheated. Do not grease or butter. For the krumkake maker, put the control to 2 1/2. For the waffle maker, put it in on lowest setting and take it out after 30 seconds.
5. One tablespoon of batter will make a 5" wafer.
6. Add the batter only when it is completely preheated. Put in for 30 seconds.
7. Inspect krumkakes for color and cook until golden brown. Remove from iron.
8. While still hot, roll into a cone form using a rolling pin (like an ice-cream cone in shape).

Tips:

1. Wait for it to cool and become crisp in the cone shape.
2. You can eat it plain or add whip cream, ice cream, marshmallows, traditional lingonberries (but any berries will do, as long as they are cut into small pieces) or jam. ♦

#### >>> Quick Fixes

What you'll need...

- 2/3 stick of butter
- 2/3 cup of white sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2/3 cup of milk
- 1 cup of flour

### Banana Cupcakes

BY Shivani Chadha

#### >>> Quick Fixes

What you'll need...

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour (spooned and leveled)
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter melted
- 1 1/2 cups mashed bananas (about 4 ripe bananas), plus 1 whole banana, for garnish (optional)
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Sick of the same old fruit cake? You don't want any more of that plum pudding? Try this unique recipe to spice up the holiday season.

"I love making these for the holidays because they're not your typical Christmas/Hanukkah/Kwanzaa food, and they're good year-round," sophomore Ankita Chadha said.

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a standard 12-cup muffin pan with paper liners. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt.
2. Add butter, mashed bananas, eggs and vanilla to the flour mixture. Stir to incorporate flour mixture. Divide evenly and spoon batter into muffin cups.
3. Bake until a toothpick inserted in center of a cupcake comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pan and cool completely. Spread tops with Honey-Cinnamon frosting.
4. To make Honey-Cinnamon frosting, beat 1 1/4 cup confectioners' sugar, 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature, 1 tablespoon honey and 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon for 4-5 minutes. Enjoy! ♦

### Lemon and Almond Cake

BY Rebecca Nguyen

My aunt began making a lemon and almond cake during the holiday season after my cousin came to visit from Paris. After they practiced, they were finally able to perfect this recipe. Follow these simple directions to make your own delicious lemon and almond cake!

1. Preheat oven to 356°F.
2. Beat butter and sugar until clear.
3. Add almond powder and mix well. Add eggs one at a time and mix well. Add lemon juice and zest and mix well.
4. In another bowl, mix flour and baking powder.
5. Add slowly the mixture from step 2 to step 1; mix until you obtain a mixture that is almost homogeneous.
6. Cut a sheet of parchment paper to fit the bottom of a cake pan. Butter the paper and the sides of the pan. Pour batter into the pan and then bake for 40 minutes.
7. Let cake cool in pan for 10 minutes. Invert the pan gently, lift the cake off the pan, then turn the cake over gently, right-side up.

Tips:

1. Sift the flour and baking powder so that your cake will be smooth.
2. When done, the cake will be a golden brown and a toothpick inserted near the center should come out cleanly. ♦

#### >>> Quick Fixes

What you'll need...

- 120g all purpose flour
- 200g almond powder
- 200g sugar powder
- 200g softened salted butter
- 3 eggs
- 1 lemon juiced and zested
- 1 teaspoon baking powder

### Pumpkin Cheesecake

BY Izzy Albert

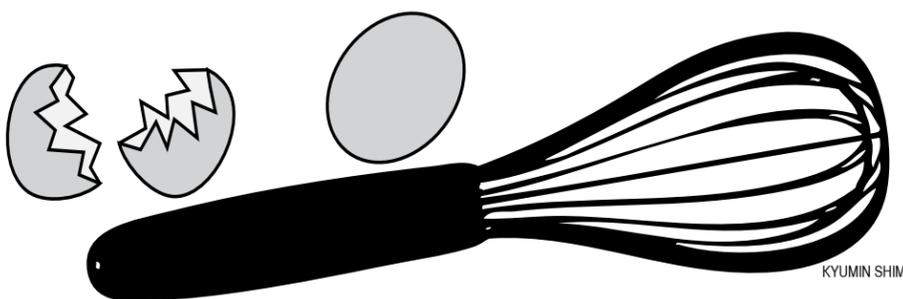
#### >>> Quick Fixes

What you'll need...

- Pre-made crust
- 4 8-ounce packages of cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 2/3 cups of sugar
- 1 1/2 cups canned solid pack pumpkin
- 9 tablespoons of whipping cream
- 1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon
- 4 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon (about) purchased caramel sauce
- 1 cup of sour cream

This is my Grandma's original Pumpkin Cheesecake with caramel recipe—she makes it every year at Christmas time, and it's been a family favorite for over 15 years!

1. Beat cream cheese and sugar in large bowl until light. Transfer 3/4 cup of the mixture to small bowl; cover tightly and refrigerate to use for topping.
2. Add pumpkin, 4 tablespoons whipping cream and ground cinnamon to mixture in large bowl and beat until well combined. Add eggs one at a time, beating just until combined.
3. Pour filling into crust. Bake for about 75 minutes until cheesecake puffs, top browns and center moves only slightly when pan is shaken.
4. Transfer cheesecake to rack and cool 10 minutes. Run small sharp knife around cake pan sides to loosen cheesecake. Cool. Cover tightly and refrigerate overnight.
5. Bring remaining 3/4 cup cream cheese mixture to room temperature. Add remaining 5 tablespoons whipping cream to cream cheese mixture and stir to combine.
6. Press down firmly on edges of cheesecake to even thickness. Pour cream cheese mixture over cheesecake, spreading evenly. Spoon caramel sauce in lines over cream cheese mixture. Using tip of knife, swirl caramel sauce into cream cheese mixture. (Can be prepared one day ahead. Cover and refrigerate.) ♦



KYUMIN SHIM

# CHRISTMAS

HAVING TROUBLE FINDING THE PERFECT GIFT FOR  
SEASON'S HOTTEST GIFTS FROM VIDEO GAMES

## CDs & DVDs

### Toy Story 3: \$13.49

Woody and Buzz are back again to save the day in this timeless classic from Disney. "Toy Story 3" provides humor, adventure and emotion all packed together in this final adventure of the "Toy Story" series. The heartwarming storyline of "Toy Story 3" is perfect for the holidays. It brings back childhood memories that will make you both laugh and cry. This DVD is an essential addition to any movie collection and a perfect gift for anyone who grew up in love with the series.



"I would like it because I have all the other ones, so it would complete my collection."

>> Junior Angie Chang

### Glee Christmas Album: \$10

The Christmas album of the Glee Cast from Fox's hit series features 12 songs, each with an original twist. The renditions are modern and festive and include several group numbers as well as a few solos and duets. The CD contains a mix of traditional Christmas songs such as "O Holy Night," popular jingles like "Jingle Bells" and lesser known carols like "Merry Christmas Darling." "Glee: The Christmas Album" is a must-have for all Gleeks and music-lovers.



"That would be good because I watch the Glee series, so it would be concurrent with my interests."

>> Senior Dorothy Tan

## Homemade Gifts

### Baked Goods: prices vary

A homemade gift such as cupcakes, brownies or even a knitted scarf can be a more thoughtful way to celebrate this Christmas due to the amount of time and effort the giver invests. This holiday season might be the perfect time to hone baking or knitting skills to provide thoughtful gifts for friends and family.



"I would want a gift that has a lot of love and care put into it. It's pretty important to me."

>> Senior Alison Shen

### Arts and Crafts: prices vary

Getting a mug with someone's name printed on it isn't personalized enough, mugs should be personally decorated. Then, if you want to make it even more special, you can put a hot cocoa kit inside the mug so that you will be sure that he or she will have something to use it for!



"I would like a homemade hot chocolate mug because I could enjoy hot chocolate while recalling memories of the person who gave it to me. Things that are homemade are more sentimental."

>> Sophomore Maya Nag

## Books

### "Millennium" Trilogy by Steig Larsson: \$50

This series contains the international bestsellers *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl Who Played with Fire* and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*. Published posthumously, these addictive novels are crime thrillers that take place in Sweden. Larsson developed fascinating characters and exciting plots that are guaranteed to be page-turners.



"I enjoyed it thoroughly; it was a nice mixture of fiction and non-fiction—relevant and concerning issues were broached along a thrilling plotline."

>> Senior Uttara Sivaram

### "Earth: The Book" by Jon Stewart: \$14

The world's going to end, and someone needs to record human life and culture for aliens who come to our planet after we become extinct—who better than Jon Stewart and the writers of "the Daily Show?" For those who hate text-heavy books, this book is ideal with its multitude of funny pictures and short blurbs. This witty, satirical book will have readers smiling and laughing.



"I ordered the book. I'm an avid Jon Stewart fan because his political commentary is hilarious."

>> Senior Anthony Sutardja

# GIFT GUIDE

FOR FRIENDS OR FAMILY? HERE'S A LIST OF THE GAMES AND MOVIES TO BOOKS AND CLOTHES.

## Video Games

### Call of Duty: Black Ops: \$60

Fly in a helicopter, shoot enemies and journey across snow covered terrain. The seventh installment of a first-person shooter series set in the Cold War era, "Call of Duty: Black Ops," combines everything people love about the traditional Call of Duty series while offering new weapons and first-person character scenarios. "Call of Duty: Black Ops" includes online co-op and multiplayer modes that only enhance the gaming experience. With its cinematic quality and interactive story, "Call of Duty: Black Ops" will enliven any Christmas.



### Xbox Kinect: \$150

Xbox Kinect is the perfect gift to get anyone moving. Easy and fun to use, Xbox Kinect uses advanced technology to sense a player's movements, making the player the controller. Xbox Kinect has a 802.11n Wi-Fi built-in which makes the connection to Xbox LIVE faster and easier. Play sports and go on an adventure in the comforts of home with the help of Xbox Kinect! However, it is pricey! A new Kinect with Kinect Adventures game included runs for \$150.



"I would love it. I'm a guy, and all guys like Call of Duty."

>> Junior Shaun Chung



"If I got an Xbox Kinect, I would like it and I could replace my Wii."

>> Senior Gavin Chu

## Clothes

### Slippers: \$7

Slippers are comfy footwear that you can wear around the house or even outside when it's not wet. Soft, fuzzy slippers are affordable presents that can be worn by both boys and girls for those lazy days when it gets really cold.



### Scarves: \$6

Scarves are fashionable, affordable accessories for boys or girls that brighten any outfit. Keeping you warm through the winter, scarves can be worn as accessories year round to add a special touch to a plain outfit.



"I would love to receive slippers as a gift because I wear them every day and get good use from them. They are very warm, comfortable and soft."

>> Sophomore Jennifer Miller



"I love scarves more than all other winter clothes because they come in beautiful colors. It would be the perfect gift, and I would give it four out of four stars."

>> Junior Ruchie Bhardwaj

## Miscellaneous

### Holiday Silly Bandz: \$4.89

As its popularity continues to grow exponentially, the Silly Bandz manufacturers have been making sure to create every type of Silly Bandz possible. These fun silicone shapes have become a trend among kids and teens nationwide, becoming an exciting accessory to trade and show off. For this holiday season, stock your friends' stockings with holiday shaped Silly Bandz!



### Sour Patch Kids Candy Canes: \$3.79

First they're sour, then they're sweet. Sour Patch Kids Candy Canes are the ultimate stocking stuffer this holiday season! Tasting just like the delectable Sour Patch Kids candy, these candy canes will have your taste buds screaming for more.



"I think Silly Bandz would make a wonderful gift, especially for the easily amused. They are so fun to show off to your friends and be like, 'That's no blob, that's a unicorn!'"

>> Junior Penelope Burgess

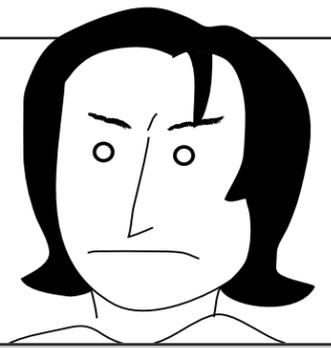


"It's two great things put into one. You've got a colorful candy cane that tastes like Sour Patch Kids. What more could you want?"

>> Junior Christopher Vu

# Falcon Faves

It's human to have preferences, particularly for students in high school. What are some favorites at Saratoga?



## >> Which do you prefer?

The age-old debate over pirates and ninjas has been nitpicked to pieces. The time has come to find better, even more trivial subjects to argue about. Which side of these popular topics would you be on? —by Jackie Gu and Jennifer Jin

### James Potter The Super Quidditch Star

James is popular, good-looking and not to mention a super Quidditch star, traits that make him an automatic win. Plus he is the father of the hero, Harry Potter. Yes, James was mean to Snape, but Snape was also mean to James. Also, remember that James was a teenage boy, and like many teenage boys, he liked to tease others and be immature. In the end, Lily married James, which shows that he had matured a bit. Even though James hated Snape, James still saved Snape from being ripped to shreds by Lupin in his werewolf form. Additionally, Snape was a Death Eater, working for the evil Voldemort. The only reason that he switched sides was for Lily; he didn't care if anyone else died, as long as she didn't. And even though Snape loved her, he still called her a mudblood. What cold-hearted person would use such an offending word?

This OR That

### Severus Snape What a Standup Guy

Severus Snape isn't usually the first name that comes to mind when people are asked about their favorite Harry Potter character, but come on—what other character spent his entire adult life straddling life and death, his risk of death every day at the hands of Voldemort even greater than the chance of the weather man being wrong tomorrow? What other character was so perpetually heartbroken, his motives so misjudged? Perhaps he would lose to James in a battle of wits, but that's simply because James spent half his time thinking up degrading insults to throw at people he didn't like. (The other half he spent either preening himself in front of a mirror or getting rejected by Lily Evans, maybe simultaneously.) Despite James' superiority in physical attractiveness, there's no question about it—in a competition of sheer character nobility, Snape would easily take the cake.

### Telepathy Creeping out your Friends



Even if you may outwardly deny it, you know you want to read other people's thoughts. Not only that, but telepathy also means you can communicate with others without verbally expressing yourself. You can gossip about that new guy who just moved here and how hot he is without any chance of being heard. If you're not interested in hot guys or what goes on behind your back, then you can always have fun by scaring your friends. What's more fun than creeping them out by saying what they're thinking?

This OR That

### Invisibility Endless Stalking Possibilities

For starters, imagine all the events you could stealthily sneak into. Feeling stung over a lack of invitation to something? No problem! Just tag along invisibly, and if you're feeling especially spiteful, wreak havoc on those who left you out. Also, the stalking possibilities are endless. Forget cyberstalking—now you can do the real deal, whenever and wherever you want. You're not likely to be caught eavesdropping, stalking or even committing crimes (although this is not condoned in any way). At any rate, it's a more useful superpower than telepathy, because with the power of invisibility, you'll always be the best at hide and seek (although you might make games a little boring). After all, there's a reason that only Ignotus Peverell, who chose the cloak of invisibility, outlived his two brothers by decades.

### Princeton Review An Accurate Model

Everyone hates the SAT for the ridiculous amount of stress it causes, but SAT prep books often offer a warm welcome. One brand, The Princeton Review, is far superior to the rest. The Princeton Review is known for its tips and tricks for excelling on the test. Because the writing style is more casual, like a friend giving advice, it is easier and more comfortable to read. Although it stresses less on material (like Barron's) and more on guessing, that's not to say that it doesn't have an information section. The practice tests are also modeled very well after the actual tests, so students can get a good feel for questions. Barron's prep books are often harder to understand and give obscure and unnecessary information. Remember quality over quantity—it's not about which book has more information, but which has richer information.

This OR That

### Barron's Making the SAT a Breeze

SAT prep books: Despite the rough abuse these books usually suffer (really, who hasn't wanted to chuck them against a wall, burn them or inflict other permanent injury to them?), they are undeniably helpful in preparation for the standardized test. Barron's is one brand of SAT prep book that prepares you far better than many others. Despite the somewhat notorious reputation the prep books have earned for providing practice tests more difficult than the actual test, this is actually helpful to students in the long run. This way, students will have thoroughly prepared, stressed over, and memorized everything in the book by the time they take the real SAT. Better to be over-prepared than not enough.



## >> Pop-Culture Grid: Teachers in the Mix

| What's your favorite... | Chris Cerbone<br>Asst. Principal                                | Kerry Mohnike<br>English 11 MAP<br>Drama | Brian Safine<br>Asst. Principal | Ken Nguyen<br>AP Language   |
|-------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|---|
| Superpower              | X-ray vision. <Wink>  | Immortality                              | Immortality                     | Telekinesis   |
| Board game              | Battleship—I like blowing stuff up                              | Apples to Apples                         | Scrabble                        | Scrabble  |
| TV show                 | The Shield  | 24                                       | The Office                      | Sportscenter  |
| Exotic Pet              | I already have two wolves but how about taming a mountain lion? | If I could tame it... a racoon?          | If I had space, a buffalo       | I can barely keep myself alive and all my plants die, so I don't need pets. |
| Subject in School       | PE  | Biology                                  | History                         | English   |

# >> Toga, what's your favorite...

### >> Standardized Test?

|        |       |
|--------|-------|
| ACT    | 12.9% |
| CAHSEE | 28.0% |
| SAT    | 10.7% |
| STAR   | 48.4% |

**STAR Test 48.4%**

"My favorite is STAR because it's relaxing. There's not really any stress because it doesn't count for anything."  
 >> Junior Vivian Tsai

### >> English 9 Literature?

|                    |       |
|--------------------|-------|
| Cyrano de Bergerac | 6.2%  |
| Romeo and Juliet   | 31.4% |
| Of Mice and Men    | 39.8% |
| Great Expectations | 22.6% |

**Of Mice and Men 39.8%**

"Of Mice and Men because it was just a powerful piece and it really touched me."  
 >> Sophomore Rohan Cotah

### >> Form of Extra Credit?

|                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| Bring in Food       | 7.3%  |
| Extra Test Question | 15.9% |
| Bring a Tissue Box  | 55.1% |
| Watch a play        | 21.7% |

**Bring a Tissue Box 55.1%**

"I prefer bringing in tissue boxes because it's easy and doesn't require any brain power. It's a win-win situation."  
 >> Junior Vineet Jain

### >> U.S. President?

|               |       |
|---------------|-------|
| A. Lincoln    | 29.3% |
| B. Obama      | 23.9% |
| F. Roosevelt  | 19.8% |
| G. Washington | 18.4% |
| T. Jefferson  | 8.6%  |

### >> Pencil Brand?

|                              |       |
|------------------------------|-------|
| BIC                          | 9.9%  |
| Pilot                        | 10.5% |
| Oxy-Gel                      | 24.4% |
| Ticonderoga                  | 16.8% |
| Whatever ends up in my hands | 38.4% |

### >> Computer OS?

|            |       |
|------------|-------|
| Windows XP | 55.4% |
| Linux      | 3.6%  |
| Mac        | 41.0% |

# >> Defying stereotypical favorites: I'm not your typical pretty pink princess



>> Evaline Ju  
 Ju Know That

From birth until I was almost 6, I could have been easily mistaken for a boy. My clothes consisted mainly of neutral colors because my mom believed that I looked horrendous in girls' clothing, especially with my chubbiness and baldness during my first few months. Even after my hair finally grew out, my mom insisted to have it cut a little shorter than shoulder-length, making me appear as a shaggy-haired kid. Growing up, I defied the stereotypical favorites of a little girl, as I did not play with dolls or dress in cute pink clothes, nor did I hug a stuffed animal wherever I went or watch "My Little Pony" cartoons. Sometimes I think my mom's ac-

tions had some effect in making me a little less "girly." While some classmates in elementary school played "house" under slides on the playground by using tanbark as afternoon tea and cake, I enjoyed running around. I never understood the appeal of pretending to be a family, and everyone ended up fighting over who would have to be the father anyway. At home I found comfort in playing with stuffed animals and Legos. I domesticated penguins, whales and seals in little cells in zoos created by giant Lego pieces. Instead of having dolls talk to each other over tea, I made my stuffed animals crowd under the table of the living room. After stocking pillows around the table, I pretended I lived in a cave with many wild animals. The first Barbies only appeared in my house years later courtesy of my younger sister, but then I decided to declare the dolls only useful as my zookeepers. Possibly due to my strange mindset about fun, I was not the popular girl in kindergarten

who had twenty best friends and changed one every week. In fact, I felt like a loner half of the time up until first or second grade. Consequently in preschool I convinced myself that invisible monsters were attacking the school and that I should fight to save the world from them. Looking back, I'm positive that my teachers thought I would grow up to become a crazy, antisocial person. Some movies depict little girls as children who love to watch shows about pink ponies or princesses. Though I watched many Disney movies while growing up, I did not imagine myself falling in love with Prince Charmings the way the princesses did. I admired some more minor characters, like Sebastian the hermit crab from "The Little Mermaid" and the mice Gus and Jaq from "Cinderella," who managed to defeat the fat cat named Lucifer. Even by second grade, I did not quite understand the "girlier" Disney Channel's shows, like "Lizzie McGuire" and "That's So Raven."

The supposed heroines always managed to accomplish ridiculous feats, like get blue paint spilled all over themselves or accidentally bring a live snake into the house. One of my favorite shows turned out to be PBS's "Dragon Tales," a show about two siblings and their adventures with three dragons. Still, for years, I felt disappointed when they never showed the faces of the dragons' parents nor the other rooms of the siblings' house. For Halloween, unlike many girls, I never dressed as a princess, fairy or cheerleader. Even for my first Halloween when I was still unable to walk on my own, my parents dressed me as a little bear. Through preschool and kindergarten I wore costumes of a dinosaur and a doctor. Don't misunderstand me. Though I did not have most of the stereotypical favorites of a little girl, I did not act like a boy (despite looking like one for a while). I did possess a wild imagination, but that made my childhood all the more interesting. ♦

# 2020 Vision

*The Falcon* takes a look 10 years back, at the turn of the century, and 10 years forward, to 2020, from technology to politics, from expectations to reality, from the past to the future.

## What the future holds... in politics

9/11, the market crash, Obama's election: all of these have changed this decade, but how will they shape the next one?

BY Michael Lee

Explosions of cheering resonated across the streets of Washington, D.C., when Barack Obama took the oath to become the 44th president on Jan. 20, 2009. Obama was the first Democratic president since Bill Clinton and the first African-American president ever. Most Americans were eager for change.

This support, however, lessened with time. Obama's popularity loss can be attributed to numerous problems—particularly continued war and a bad economy. The "time for change" did not satisfy liberal and conservative cravings.

Looking ahead, some people are doubtful about the next two years under the Obama administration and beyond. Government and MAP world history teacher Mike Davey said America's decline began

with 9/11 and will continue.

"It has not been a great decade for America," Davey said. "Now that we have started a pre-emptive war [in Iraq], all bets are off."

Also, some Americans have reservations about the nation's ability to solve current problems. Will gay people, Muslims or other minorities eventually be accepted? Will the growing amount of liberal support shift views on marijuana, abortion and stem cell research?

As for solutions, Davey emphasizes bipartisanship, increased taxes and continued innovation. He never-

theless admits he is pessimistic about the future.

"I think [America] is going to get more negative than positive," Davey said. "The decade began with someone losing the popular vote and becoming president and ended in the worst recession since the Great Depression."

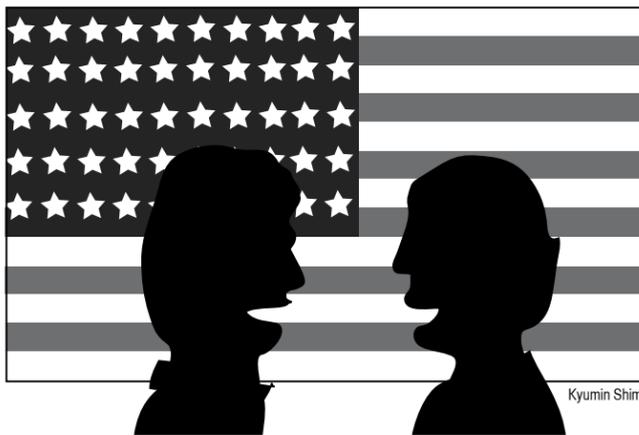
Senior Amol Aggarwal, too, is uncertain of the government's ability to solve problems. He, nonetheless, retains hope for the future of himself and his peers.

"We've had this sort of situation a million times before, and we've always gotten through it," Aggarwal said, "so I don't really see any reason why they won't this time."

World history and government teacher Jerry Sheehy said he thinks America will clear its political hurdles.

Some would say that America doesn't have much in the past decade to be proud of. Many argue that the 2000s, however, are not so much a failure as a lesson. Aggarwal, Sheehy and Davey agree that every citizen needs to make sacrifices and hope America is going to climb out of its economic and political rut.

"I think we can overcome anything as a country," Sheehy said. "I'm encouraged by students in my classes. I see these bright minds; I think that you guys are on your way to becoming the generation that leads our society and country. That gives me confidence." ♦



## What the future holds... in technology

Technology will advance further and broaden horizons in the coming decade

BY Dylan Jew & Justine Huang

While walking through the halls, students are constantly plugged in: listening to music on iPods, texting friends and wrapping themselves in their own world of electronics and technology. Most of the popular technological appliances have appeared over the past 10 years, and more will be coming in the future.

Technological advances are being made everyday. Students are always using cell phones and iPods, which have become necessary in daily life. It's also moving closer to the stereotypical future world envisioned by sci-fi writers. Things that once seemed impossible, like flying cars, are finally becoming reality.

Terrafugia, a personal aviation company near Boston, Mass., founded in 2006, has created a small airplane capable of driving on roads and flying in the air. It is considered the first reasonable "flying car," and will be available for delivery some time next year.

However, with its fold-up wings, it is better classified as an

airplane than car.

Cellphones received Internet capabilities at the start of the 21st century and are continuing to provide more services with every generation.

"We should develop even more complex cell phones," sophomore Eric Tang said. "We can make them easier to use and have more Internet capabilities."

Most companies that make smart phones have already begun incorporating Internet, e-mail and music into their products. Recently, it has been announced by Visa that future cell phones may even replace credit cards.

Technology has allowed for faster communication of ideas. It has made it possible to do multiple tasks at once. With devices such as Apple's iPhone, people can check their bank account balances, contact friends, take and post videos and pictures to the Web, play games, access the Internet and many other activities.

"All this new technology has made us more efficient," said Tang. "We can do almost anything with our phones now, instead of having to wait until we get home on the computer."

Due to massive amounts of online information accessible to the everyday student, research papers are expected to be loaded with information.

Apple's new iPad is a good example an all-in-one super-device that has revolutionized the tech industry. This new product is essentially a mix of a computer, an iPod, and a portable video player, all in a lightweight package. Not only has this allowed people to be more productive, but it has also made long distance communication more convenient.

Facebook, founded in 2004, is a popular social networking site. It has given people an option to share information and documents instantly and with massive amounts of people.

Facebook is a great way for people to stay close to friends in distant countries. Freshmen Jeffrey Chen has friends that live in Taiwan, who he rarely gets to visit.

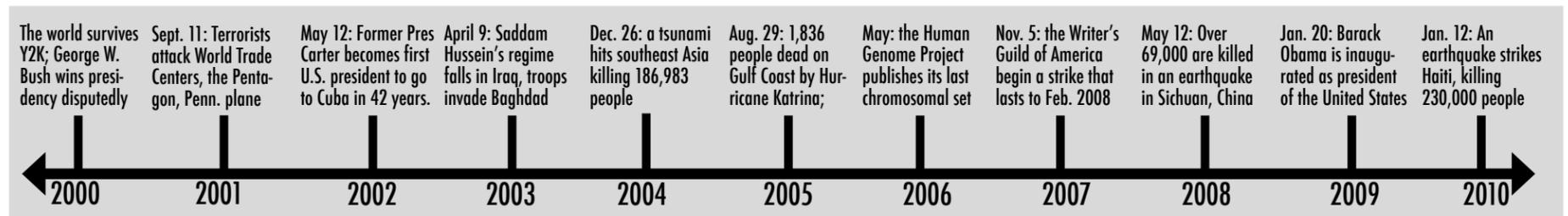
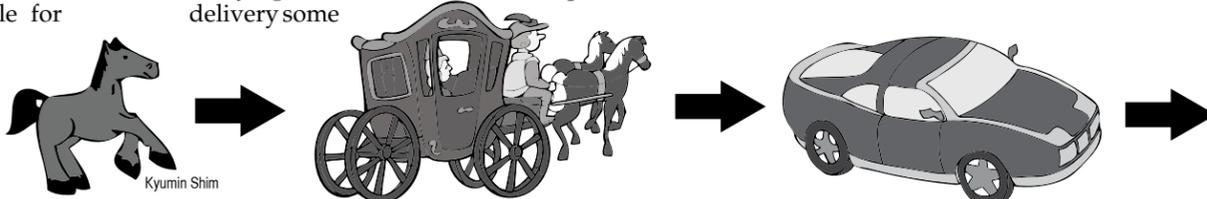
"Social networking sites allow me," said Chen, "to stay in touch with my friends overseas."

People now take quantity over quality due to multitasking. People lack patience because of the expectation of instant gratification resulting from the speed of devices. People have shorter attention spans since there are so many distractions going on at one time. "With the rapid advances in technology allowing

us to get more quickly," said b e -



done conveniently and Chen, "the world is coming much more fast paced. The future is going to be crazy if we keep increasing our speed and keep advancing our technology. We will be able to make great leaps ahead." ♦



# What the future holds... in research

BY Kevin Mu & Karthik Sreedhara

Jet packs, hydrogen-powered cars, virtual reality and a cure for cancer are some examples of the scientific advancements students believe society will have achieved by the year 2020. Although more cautious in their predictions than students are, many researchers are also confident that science will make great impacts on society in the coming decade.

## What we'll learn about our genes

Rob Furrow, a graduate student at Stanford University who studies the ways in which genetics and the environment interact to cause diseases, believes that the most significant advancement in his field will be "improved understanding of how our genes behave differently, in different cells in our body and in different environmental conditions."

Scientists currently believe that genes play a major role in disease risk but are unsure of how this risk is affected by other environmental factors such as air pollution or diet. Furrow is attempting to remove this limitation but remains cautious about the pace of his research.

"In the next 10 years I think we will have a good understanding of what role genetics plays in disease risk," he said. "But I'm not sure that we will have gotten much closer to understanding how our genomes interact with the environment to produce our overall risk of many diseases."

Nevertheless, Furrow believes that his research "could provide new insights into disease treatment and prevention. It will improve our ability to relate our genetics and lifestyles to the way we look, feel and act."

## Meet my robo-maid

But biology won't be the only field of science making leaps in the coming decade, according to professor Ruzena Bajcsy, who does research at UC Berkeley on "how to use technology for improved communication amongst people with different cultures."

Bajcsy predicts that the "miniaturization" of robots and wireless technology with low energy consumption will bring these technological innovations to a broader audience.

In 10 years, she also foresees "robots co-existing and even cooperating with people." Increased artificial intelligence can potentially give the robots more useful roles in society such as in-home care robots.

**Many researchers are confident that science will make great impacts on society in the coming decade.**

Nanotechnology is one prospect she enthusiastically looks forward to because of its myriad of applications in medicine, electronics and space.

"If the robots are cost efficient, people can do the things they want to do instead of cleaning or ironing clothes," said junior Michael Chang. "Some of these skills would become dormant."

## Sleepy physicians: practical research to change the system

But many areas of research also deal with more practical areas such as how to improve outdated or unsafe policies. Professor Rebecca Smith-Coggins hopes that her research will be able to do just that within the next ten years.

At Stanford University, Smith-Coggins studies the effect of sleep deprivation on physician performance.

"There has been much discussion of duty hour limitations for resident physicians who are in their training years of their education," Smith-Coggins said. "All residents must have one day out of seven free from medical duty; all residents must not work more than an 80-hour work week. These limitations were [put in place] to

improve resident physician wellness and there were hopes that it would improve patient safety."

This is important, because it can determine the effectiveness of current policies and will continue to make jobs safer and more effective in the next decade.

"There has been much written and studied about [the effects of sleep deprivation of physician performance] since then, and I think the discussion and impact will be felt for years," Smith-Coggins said.

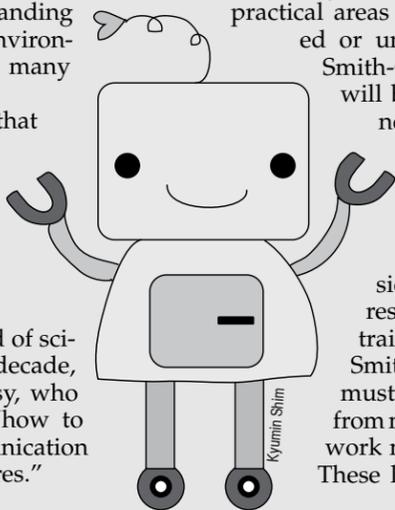
## Planes, tanks and automobiles

As the world's major countries develop, so too will their military defense systems. Silicon Valley engineer Chaumin Hu, of BAE Systems, develops software for U.S. combat vehicles, like tanks. He says, that with advancements in the coming decade, computers will revolutionize national security.

Hu says that by 2020, an increased number of U.S. fighting vehicles will be equipped with more advanced technology and power systems, which will allow for better communication between deployed vehicles and base stations.

Hu believes that better equipment and technology, as well as training with the aforementioned products, is integral for the safety of the country.

"With newer and advanced technology deployed on the U.S. fighting vehicles, the security and safety of the country and society can be better ensured." ♦



## >> thebigidea

What the future brings

- In genetics:** Scientists will try to learn how genes help influence diseases with other factors, such as diet or sleep
- In robotics:** Robots and wireless technology will continue to get smaller; it is a distinct possibility that robots could eventually complete common household chores
- In medicine:** Reforms to limit doctors' work hours to prevent human error
- In military defense:** Computers will revolutionize national security, vehicles will have better weapons, communication and power systems

# Optimistic columnist predicts cloudy future



>> Sarah Hull

The Hull Story

**17.** For me, this used to be a golden number, the age I craved to be. Though it holds no particular real world value (it is neither the driving age nor when you become a legal adult), I would always try to imagine what I would look like, and how I would act when I finally reached this magical time in my life.

As my 17th birthday draws closer, I cannot help but wonder if I have lived up to all the expectations I had for myself. Have I stayed true to who I am? Have I always made the right choices? Or have I completely changed?

I know that in some regards, I have become a different person, as we all do when we grow up. I

am not as shy as I used to be and am able to open up to people more easily. I no longer rely so heavily on my parents and have become my own person.

However, I have been heavily influenced by the world around me, more so now than ever before because of the wealth of information I am able to reach through the Internet, television and radio. I feel as though this gravitation toward new technology and advancements typifies my generation and will continue to play an important role in the future.

Growing up with the privilege of having this technology at my fingertips has left me with an unfortunate dependence on it. There is rarely a day that goes by that I don't use my computer or cell phone, and I think that this will only get worse as more resources and utilities are available via the Internet.

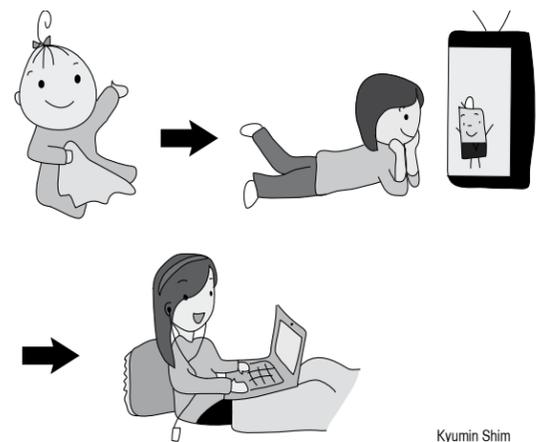
Today, I still harbor many feelings of nostalgia for the past, wishing for a simpler time when I didn't need any technology at all, when I could have fun by merely

coloring in a sketchbook or playing with stuffed animals. Nevertheless, it's not beneficial to linger in the past or to dwell on what could have been; instead, I now must look ahead to what the upcoming years of my life will bring.

At a younger age, I could have told anyone precisely which direction my life was headed and exactly where I would be in 10 years' time. Though my desired career path changed from artist to teacher to veterinarian and so on, I always had a clear vision of what my future would entail.

Now, however, that vision of the future has been blurred, distorted by the approaching reality of actually leaving for college and fending for myself. I no longer have a career choice in mind and, truthfully, cannot see my future at all.

As it becomes more imperative to make these decisions about where my life is going, I just become more and more indecisive. Whenever I am asked simple ques-



tions like where I want to attend college and where I see myself in a decade, I feel a momentary sense of panic. I have no idea how to answer them.

Though I have an infinite number of concerns about the future, I hope when the time comes to make those life-changing decisions, I will make the right ones for myself, the ones that will lead to my happiness. There is only one thing I know for sure about where I will be in 10 years: I will be living the life best for me. ♦



# So You Think

For students, dancing is a way to express emotion and release stress from the school's competitive academic atmosphere. From the Argentinian tango to tap dance to even Irish dance, there is a large diversity of dancers who spend hours practicing and devoting their time to their passions outside of school.

## >> togatalks

**What kind of dance do you do and what do you enjoy most?**

"Ballet, jazz, lyrical, hip hop and modern. It's a good stress relief. You get to have your mind distracted and it's fun."



senior Shir Nehama

"I dance to hip-hop. I really enjoy it because it's a good way to have fun at the end of a stressful day."



senior Brian Vo

"I like that ballet is a sport, but it's also an art form. It's technically challenging, but it's also a way to express yourself."



sophomore Meghan McGinnis

## Dance taps its way into junior's heart

BY Aasim Naqvi



It's Friday night, but Rachel Le can't stay up too late. As it's been for so many years, she has tap dancing classes an hour away first thing in the morning.

"I started when I was three because my parents randomly decided to sign me up to see if I'd like it," Le said.

Le's parents also signed her up for ballet. Le later decided that she preferred tap dancing.

"I didn't like ballet so I stuck with tap and joined jazz later," she said.

Since then, Le has attended tap dancing classes almost every Saturday morning.

Though Le lives close to the high school, she attends dance class in San Francisco. Despite having to make a long commute, Le doesn't see herself

**"I became a family with my class and teacher and I didn't want to replace them."**

Junior Rachel Le

choosing a closer studio anytime soon.

"I've been dancing with my classmates for so long," she said. "It's part of the reason why I didn't want to find a more local studio. I basically became a family with my class and teacher and I didn't want to replace them."

The teacher at the dance studio started teaching Le along with 15 other students, Le said.

Le leaves her house at 8 a.m. on Saturday to reach the 9 a.m. tap dancing class in time. Because she takes two classes, she spends a lot of time each weekend in San Francisco: each one lasts an hour.

Besides just having class in San Francisco, the studio has recitals and shows a few times every year with all of the other classes who practice in the studio.

Le still enjoys tap dancing enough that she plans on continuing the activity until her se-

nior year.

But still, she acknowledges that there are some downsides to tap dancing.

"It's a hassle sometimes because I have to drive to San Francisco a lot for class, pictures, rehearsals or performances," she said. "I don't get to sleep in on Saturdays after a long week of school."

Even after more than a decade of tap dancing, Le isn't ready to talk about her talents in any way other than modestly.

"I think I'm all right," she said. "There are definitely a lot of people out there who are better than me." ♦

### >> the dancefloor

**Rachel Le**

**Type of dance:** Tap dance

**Number of years:** 13 years

**Hours practiced every week:** 2 hours

**Where she practices:** San Francisco

## Tango, cross-step, polka... oh my!

BY Vivian LeTran

Tango, swing, modern, salsa, cross-step, polka, flamenco, Argentinian tango, African jazz, ballet, tap and hip-hop. For junior Valerie Peterson, it is all part of her weekly routine.

Peterson takes private Flamenco lessons in Bonny Doon, a small community in the mountains near Santa Cruz.

She also does ballroom dancing, which encompasses a variety of these social dances.

"Ballroom dancing is really fun because you meet new people of all ages. [For example,] there's my friend's 10-year-old brother who's really cute when he gets serious and there's my mom who dances," said Peterson. "It's like a big family. I have about 10 friends who dance too and we all go together."

Peterson enjoys attending elaborate balls and finds that it is the best part of ballroom dancing. The most recent ball she attended was the Vampire Ball for Halloween.

"The ball was [held in] a huge, two-story building. It lasted probably until midnight and was just amazing," said Peterson.

"There was also a costume contest and some people came in really eccentric costumes. This lady had a 19th-century dress complete with a corset and a train made

out of actual peacock feathers."

Although Peterson's dancing schedule varies from week to week, she generally dances only on the weekends due to her homework. One regular event she attends every week is the Friday Night Waltz held at Palo Alto Presbyterian Church.

"It really depends since I'm only dancing [for fun.] For example, one time I had [so much going on], that I definitely danced over 10 hours," said Peterson.

"But there's always time for homework; there's always time for dancing. In my opinion, if you really want something, you [can do it]."

With so many dances to choose from, Peterson said she does not have a favorite type.

Peterson started dancing early in her life, beginning with tap dance at age five and flamenco when she was seven. In fact, her first steps were on the dance floor, Peterson said.

Peterson enjoys dancing for a variety of reasons: the workout, the stress relief and, most importantly, the fun.

"You're working out, but you don't have to run a mile or do any push-ups. It's a great way to relieve negative feelings and you can let it out without yelling or anything," said Peterson. "Also, it's really fun. The feeling you get when you're [dancing], everyone's watching you, and then your partner lifts you up in the air is just



"The feeling you get when everyone's watching you and then your partner lifts you up in the air is just amazing!"

>> Junior Valerie Peterson

### >> the dancefloor

**Valerie Peterson**

**Types of dance:** Tango, swing, modern, salsa, cross-step, polka, flamenco, Argentinian tango, African jazz, ballet, tap and hip-hop

**Number of years:** 9 years

**Hours practiced every week:** 4 hours

**Where she practices:** Bonny Doon, near Santa Cruz

amazing!"

Besides events such as Dicken's Fair, a re-enactment of Victorian London, Peterson doesn't like to perform in public and performs only for her close family and friends.

"For Dicken's Fair, we have fezziwigs, which are big dance parties, and people just come and dance with us. It's more that I'm a character in the fair than them sitting down and watching me," Peterson said.

For the future, Peterson is considering competing in ballroom dancing if she has enough time and, in the long term, she is considering teaching dance. Although she is still unsure about teaching, she has little doubt that dancing will always remain a huge part of her life.

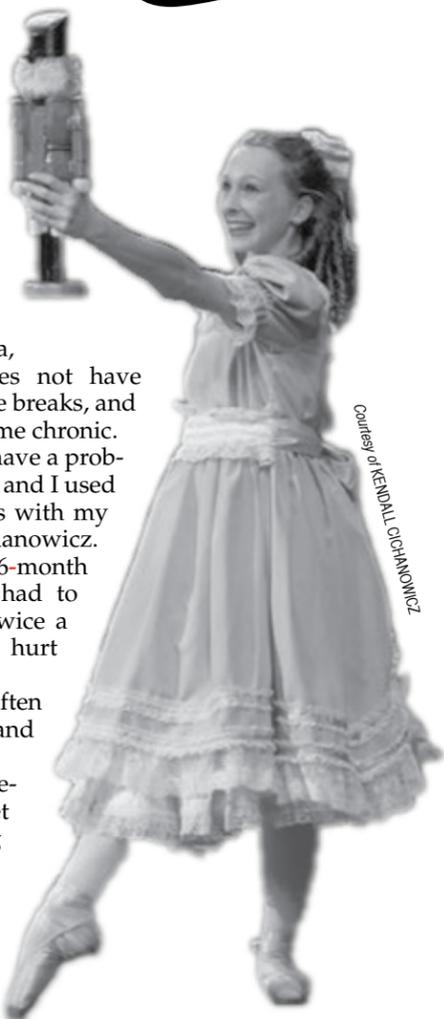
"I know I will always have dancing in my life as it's a huge part of my family," said Peterson. "I'm going to dance until the day I die. No question about it." ♦

# You Can DANCE



Courtesy of KENDALL CICHANOWICZ

## Sophomore pointes those toes



Courtesy of KENDALL CICHANOWICZ

BY Kim Tsai

Sophomore Kendall Cichanowicz spends most nights in a leotard spinning around the floor of a Los Gatos studio.

As a ballerina, she must practice constantly to stay strong and limber. Ballet is a dance that requires discipline and precision.

But the one and half hour practices are not something she regrets. Far from it. Ballet is her passion. Many students do not know what they want to do with their future just yet, but Cichanowicz does. She wants to be a professional ballerina.

"My mom put me in [ballet] when I was 3 years old like how most parents put their children into ballet," said Cichanowicz.

"Most of the girls got sick of going, but I always wanted to keep going back."

Cichanowicz started dancing when her mother decided to have her take a class with various styles in it. During middle school, Cichanowicz decided she wanted to solely dance ballet. Soon after, she entered

Los Gatos Ballet.

Earlier this month, Los Gatos Ballet performed "The Nutcracker" six times on Dec. 4 and 5. Cichanowicz played various roles such as "Snow," "Flower," "Spanish dancer" and "Mirliton dancer."

The week of the performance, Cichanowicz had "theater week" and was required to run through the performance 3:30 to 9 p.m. from Tuesday to Friday.

Even attending rehearsals and classes so frequently does not dampen Cichanowicz's love for ballet.

"Sometimes, just like with anything, I get sick of going, but there isn't anything I really dislike about it," Cichanowicz said.

Cichanowicz said there can be a lot of competition between ballerinas, but at Los Gatos Ballet, ballet is more of a passion than a competition.

"I really like the music too," said Cichanowicz. "You get to let go."

Cichanowicz hopes to audition for companies such as San Francisco Ballet or New York Ballet.

However, injuries are common within ballet and

can derail careers.

As a ballerina, Cichanowicz does not have much time to take breaks, and injuries can become chronic.

"Right now I have a problem with my hip, and I used to have problems with my ankle," said Cichanowicz. "There was this 6-month period where I had to sit out of class twice a week because it hurt so much."

Cichanowicz often bears the pain and keeps dancing.

"I love ballet because I just forget about everything else while I'm dancing," said Cichanowicz. "It's how I let go." ♦

>> **the dancefloor**  
**Kendall Cichanowicz**  
**Types of dance:** Ballet  
**Number of years:** 12 years  
**Hours practiced every week:** 10 hours  
**Where she practices:** Los Gatos Studio

## Living in the world of poodle socks



>> **Giulia Curcelli**

Giulia Gulia

I don't know how many times my friends have flailed their legs around, swinging their arms, claiming, "Hey, look! I'm Irish dancing!"

Now, I know that this looks a lot more like an intoxicated leprechaun or my parents' friend Colman after he's had a few pints of Guinness than what you may call Irish dancing. But after five and a half years of Irish dancing myself, I've learned to roll my eyes and ignore it.

I entered the world of spray tans and poodle socks two years after my younger sister Cristina did.

I figured if I was being dragged along to competition after competition, I might as well start dancing myself. So after three months of dance classes, I was ready for my first competition.

After spending more hours of my life in jam-packed ballrooms having incessant reel music blast out my eardrums than I've spent tying my shoes, I've learned that Irish dance is an incredibly biased sport, which I guess should be expected from any sport in which a table of judges sits in front of kids and tells them they don't dance as well as their competitors.

Yes, it's discouraging, especially when the judging these days is more about who your teacher is friends with than who's a better dancer, but really it's not about winning. It's about enjoying yourself and being surrounded by wonderful, partially insane friends like Mikhaela, who's practically my twin separated at birth, and Molly, who loves making a joke out of everything and eating sheets of seaweed.

Yet, there is no sane person in the world of Irish dance. Who would want to spend the night sleeping on foam curlers? Who would want to have millions of bobby pins stuck on their head just to hold up a wig that looks more like a wild animal than actual hair? Who would want to toe walk in hard shoes with absolutely no cushioning for your toes (although that is incredibly fun)?

However, the parents are the craziest of all. Only someone completely and truly insane (or exceptionally generous) would be willing to spend thousands of dollars on a dance dress only to step back the next day and realize it's already gone out of style.

They must not think about how they are gluing socks to their kids legs or smothering their daughters' faces with unbelievable amounts of make-up only to hear the teacher tell them it's not enough.

You've got to give them credit, though, for things like flying you halfway across the country to compete.

To a random stranger, my dance friends and I might appear delusional and crazy for discussing things like "biddy bumps" and "The Drunken Gauger," and our hands may appear spastic while we hand-dance.

In reality, though, it doesn't matter. In the end, it's all worth it.

Every inch of insanity, every inch of duct tape, every rolled ankle, every new shoe that needs breaking in.

Every time my teacher shoves me and tells me I'll give him a heart attack if I don't move faster, everything ultimately pays off because I'm spending time with some of my best friends. ♦



Courtesy of GIULIA CURCELLI

>> **the dancefloor**  
**Giulia Curcelli**  
**Type of dance:** Irish dance  
**Number of years:** 5½ years  
**Hours practiced every week:** 4 hours  
**Where she practices:** San Bruno

“Baby, baby, baby, oh!” Are you getting sick and tired of constantly hearing the same mainstream songs played over and over again on the radio?

# THE SOUND OF MUSIC

↑

## too much

## YouTube: a hub for underground music

BY Ashley Tang

Turn on the radio to Wild 94.9 and chances are that “California Gurls” by Katy Perry or “DJ Got Us Fallin’ in Love” by Usher will be blasting away. Although these songs may be catchy, some students delve deeper into the music world to download songs from underground artists who are not quite as well known.

“I think the major difference between mainstream and underground music is that mainstream music is overplayed,” senior Cid Diaz said.



“Underground has lyrics that actually mean something. Beat plays a huge role too—a good beat mixed with good lyrics makes a perfect combo.”

>> **Junior Carolyn Choi**

Of course, mainstream music comes up on the radio so much because listeners love the songs. However, sometimes the music is popular only because of the celebrity status of the artist. Although these songs have a memorable tune, they also tend to be more meaningless. For example, many students believe that lyrics of popular artists like Ke\$ha and Lady Gaga lack a deeper meaning. On the other hand, underground music is often recognized for its quality and not necessarily for the person who sang the song.

“Usually, underground has lyrics that

actually mean something,” junior Carolyn Choi said. “Beat plays a huge role too—a good beat mixed with good lyrics makes a perfect combo.”

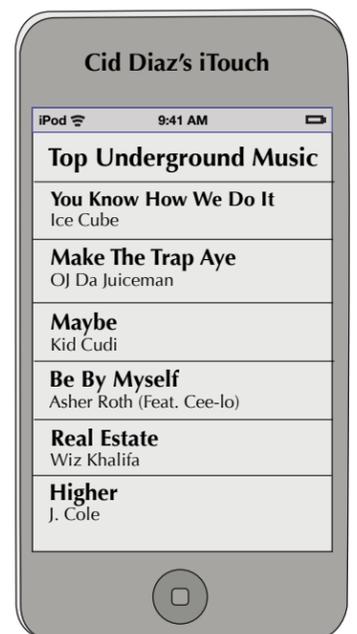
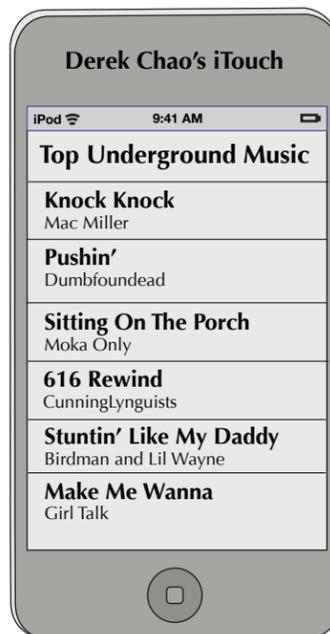
Because students do not often hear underground music, it is much harder to find these songs. Many students rely on YouTube, music sharing sites or their friends to find and download this type of music.

“In freshman year I started C-walking and because many C-walking videos use underground music, I was exposed to a lot of new

songs,” Diaz said.

Even though a large number of students listen to underground, many of these artists lack the connections needed to get record deals. Because of this, they gain fans and popularity by attracting attention and making their music available to everyone.

“Most of the time, underground artists give their music for free—not because they don’t need the money, but because doing so establishes a more personal connection with their small fan base,” Choi said.



CULLAN MCCHESENEY

As these artists become more popular with their fans, they also get more views on YouTube.

“In order to advertise their music, underground artists have to rely solely on talent,” junior Daniel Hsu said. “With underground, there is a variety of new artists with much more potential, so it’s actually worth listening to.” ♦

## Overplayed Songs: ‘It’s like my iPod is stuck on replay’



>> **Kim Tsai**

My name rhymes with Tim

As I headed to my car on a sunny Saturday morning, I was singing the lyrics to “Like a G6” by Far East Movement. I turned on the radio, and the same song blared through my speakers. Oddly enough, I was not too surprised.

Everywhere I turn, the same song seems to be playing over and over again. Overplayed songs seem to be everywhere. I get that there are times when a song is suddenly popular, and there will be a huge craze over it. Sometimes, it spreads like a disease. However, is it really necessary to keep that song on loop for five hours?

For instance, Justin Bieber has some decent songs—for a 16-year-old boy, that is. Still, we need to put an end to this “Bieber fever” hype. Really now. This summer when I was at the Incheon International Airport in Korea, I suddenly found myself listening to Bieber’s “Baby” song (as if hearing it in the U.S. weren’t enough). I can’t tell you how many times I’ve heard someone singing it or seen the lyrics posted up as someone’s Facebook status. The same goes for other songs.

“Airplanes” by B.O.B. ft. Paramore’s Hayley Williams has thankfully been playing less on the radio stations. There was a time when I felt all Facebook statuses were: “Can we pretend like airplanes in the night sky are like shooting stars? I could really use a wish right now.” It became aggravating because I can

honestly say I’ve never pretended airplanes were shooting stars, and I doubt people have either.

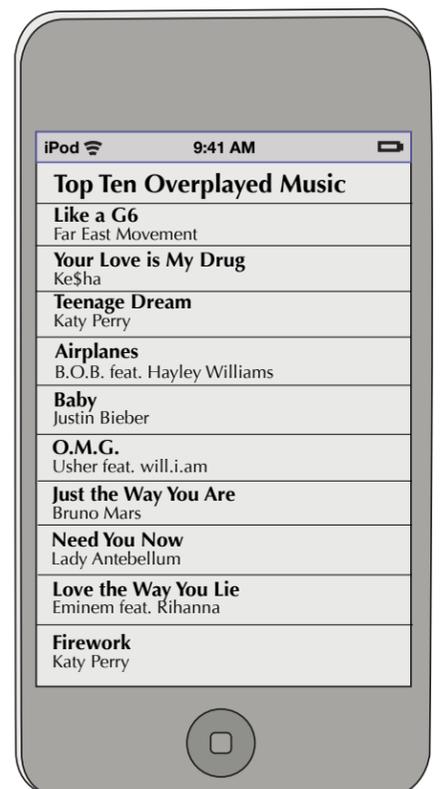
People need to learn to expand their tastes in music. Radio stations are especially at fault. They seem to keep the same playlists over and over and over again. Everyone likes the song “Like a G6,” but it gets old.

Sometimes I’ll even listen to underground music just to get away from all of the overplayed songs that everyone listens to. Listening to the same mainstream artist’s voice gets on my nerves when I hear him or her on four different radio stations.

Ke\$ha, Rihanna, Justin Bieber, Katy Perry and many others all need to take a break from their singing careers. I love them and their songs, but enough is enough.

I’d rather not have my iPod stuck on replay. ♦

**Sometimes I’ll listen to underground music to get away from all of the overplayed songs that everyone listens to.**





## Swimmer & polo player transitions from pool to pitch



>> **Tim Rollinson**

"I miss my Speedo."

Since freshman year my niche has been the pool. I have long been defined as an aquatic creature and my athletic career has (until this point) been contained within the lane lines and the water polo cage.

This reputation is likely the reason it seemed like so many people were staring at me when I showed up for soccer tryouts. Or it may have been the baby blue socks that had clearly become obsolete since my days as a youth on the soccer field. The question accompanying the stares: "You play soccer?"

The best response I could muster was, "It's been a while."

Some of my earliest memories are on the soccer field. I played for the first time when I was 5 and fell in love with the sport. Of course, at that point, it was more similar to kickball than actual soccer. I stuck with the sport through eighth grade, but, coming from an aquatic lineage, I chose to leave the pitch for the pool.

I never quite gave up my love for soccer, but among my many activities, I never thought about returning until earlier this year.

It started as a joke with the water polo team. One day, dribbling a water polo ball on the deck, I told my teammates I was going to try out for soccer. The joke grew and grew until eventually my mind was set. The more I thought about it, the more it made sense. I figured senior year is the time to tie all loose ends. I figured it was better to try and fail then to regret never even trying.

Some friends got me in contact with the team captain and star, junior Manish Raghavan. Not only was he extremely helpful and encouraging in my odd venture back into soccer, he astonished me with his game skills on the field and his leadership skills off it. Once I had the support of Manish, the choice was simple. I was trying out for soccer.

I showed up to the first day of tryouts ready to burst from excitement and nervousness. Some of the fear faded when I met the coach, Adam Clarke, who seemed to appreciate my character. Within the first 10 minutes of being on the field, I was exhausted. I figured the best way to impress the coach was running until I dropped. Unfortunately, I wasn't in the best shape for that much running and I started to wear down very quickly. I left the tryout anxious and fearful of the embarrassment of failure.

The next couple of days went better. I was becoming better on the ball and more acclimated to the motions and skills. During a scrimmage at one of the tryouts, a ball was played to me in the air. I took a swing at the ball with my right leg before it could hit the ground and the ball floated over the keepers gloves. This goal was not only the confidence booster I needed but also probably what saved my spot on the team.

Did I mention I made the team? ♦

### GIRLS' TENNIS

# The Perfect Season: 25-0

TEAM BECOMES NORCAL CHAMPS FOR FIRST TIME EVER

BY Evaline Ju

The fifth time was the charm for the girls' tennis team. After four rain delays and four location changes, the team's 12 members won the final round of the CIF NorCal Championships for the first time in school history 4-2 against Monta Vista on the afternoon of Dec. 11.

They finished the season 25-0.

"Winning NorCals was just like the cherry on top of the whole season," No. 3 singles senior co-captain Catherine Nguyen said. "It just felt like wow, I can't believe we won all three titles and are undefeated." Besides NorCals, the girls also won CCS and the season-opening Peachtree Classic in Fresno, which included more than 100 teams from across the state.

This game marked the fourth match-up of the Falcons versus their longtime rival this season. It was set to begin the morning of Dec. 11 at Cupertino High but was moved to Mt. Pleasant High in San Jose in the afternoon after the Cupertino courts failed to dry. This delay caused No. 1 singles player junior Crystal Yen to forfeit her match because of a prior commitment to play in the Herb Cup in Berkeley.

Though this forfeit gave Monta Vista an early 1-0 overall lead, Nguyen and No. 2 singles player senior Srinidhi Raghavan stepped up to win their respective matches easily.

The No. 2 doubles team of senior co-

captain Mary Edman and sophomore Niharika Bedekar won for the fourth time against the same Matador opponents, this time with a score of 6-3, 6-4.

The rest of the doubles lineup had to be changed for the final two rounds of this tournament after the absence of junior Lisa Asai for family matters. Sophomore Evaline Ju replaced Asai's No. 1 doubles spot to play with junior Sarah Lum, losing a hard-fought match 7-6, 6-2.

Senior Lauren Kuan, who had been an alternate for most of the season, teamed up with junior Tiffany Tu to compete in the No. 3 doubles position, adding the necessary fourth win 7-6, 6-3.

No. 4 singles player freshman Kalyani Narayan was behind 2-3 in her third set before referees declared conditions too dark to continue play, but by then the overall match was decided.

Adding to the team's dream season, Yen won the CCS Individuals tournament on Dec. 6, beating sophomore Mariska Chamdani from Archbishop Mitty 7-6, 6-2 in the semifinal round and sophomore Giannina Ong from Menlo 6-1, 6-1 in the finals.

"It was an awesome way to end the tournament," said Yen, who has also been selected as the San Jose Mercury News High School Tennis Player of the Year.

The semifinal round of NorCals had been postponed to Dec. 2 in Walnut

Creek, where the team beat Redwood 6-1, a repeat of the second round of the Peachtree tournament.

Early in NorCals in Sacramento on Nov. 19, the team easily defeated Chico 7-0 before rain began to fall.

On Nov. 17 the girls' tennis team closed out the final round against Monta Vista with a 6-1 win to repeat as CCS champions.

"After winning I felt a sense of relief," Uyehara said. "It is never easy to live up to expectations, but the team pulled through with a convincing win."

Nguyen and Narayan contributed significant wins early in the afternoon to take pressure off their teammates. Yen won easily 6-1, 6-2 over her opponent senior Sylvia Li, who plans to play for Harvard next year.

"It was a multitude of emotions [after the match]: relief, happiness, pride, mostly joy though," said Bedekar, who with Edman won an arduous match in the second-set tiebreaker.

The coach has attributed this season's success to the girls' teamwork.

"Everyone supported each other on and off the court," Uyehara said.

After more than three months of teamwork plus three weeks of delay, the team can finally bid farewell to a long but perfect season.

"This season made me feel so complete because we won everything, so I loved it, and it made it easier to move on to college," Nguyen said. ♦

### GIRLS' SOCCER

# Falcons get ball rolling

WITH MEDIOCRE PRESEASON, GIRLS LOOK TO IMPROVE LATER ON

BY Shivani Chadha

The Falcons were off to a slow start this preseason but are progressively improving as the girls' soccer team gets used to playing with each other.

After tying 0-0 against Homestead the previous week on Dec. 1 and losing 2-0 against Monta Vista on Nov. 29, the team finally won its first game against on Dec. 8 against King's Academy.

Junior center midfielder Kari Clark scored the first goal against King's Academy early in the game from 40 yards outside of the goal box. Freshman forward Stephanie Ho added with a second goal off a cross. The defense was able to contain the King's Academy offense, resulting in a 2-0 win.

Despite difficulty getting started, players feel confident that the team is on its way to improvement.

"We haven't had enough time on the field together to understand everyone's unique style of play," junior forward Courtney Brandt said. "It's always a little rough starting off the season, but we'll definitely be better prepared in a few weeks."

Senior co-captains, defenders Laura Mighdoll and Ren Norris, have stepped up to leadership roles during the first few games of the season.

Co-captain McKenzie Crase, who plays forward, was out with a back injury after a soccer accident and car crash last year on top of a rigorous fall water polo season. However, Crase is now able to practice and will be able to play in games soon.

Against Homestead, the girls struggled offensively. The team had a chance



FALCON // SARAH HULL

Junior Sneha Shivkumar sprints after the ball in a Dec. 8. game against King's Academy.

to score after freshman Lindsay Webster was fouled near the goal box, but they couldn't convert. Brandt's free kick was deflected by the Homestead goalie.

"During the first game we were not tactically prepared," coach Molly Flannigan said. "Against Homestead we were much better defensively, but were just unable to transition to offense."

After their loss against Monta Vista, the team felt that they improved during their game against Homestead.

"We all come from different soccer backgrounds, but after the Monta Vis-

ta game we worked on positioning in practice," Mighdoll said. "In the Homestead game we improved a lot on that and played better with each other."

Team members said that the new underclassmen additions are contributing greatly to the team.

"Our freshmen and sophomores are playing great and are all really skilled," Brandt said.

The Falcons played a game against Westmont on Dec. 10, but due to printing deadlines, it could not be covered in the print edition of *The Falcon*. ♦

## BOYS' BASKETBALL

## Coach urges seniors to step up game

BY Roy Bisht  
& Karthik Annaamalai

"Team unity!" bellowed boys' basketball coach Trevor Naas as members of his team passed the ball to each other during an afternoon practice in the gym. "It's all about team unity, and that's how we're going to play!"

Team unity is certainly the new motto of the Falcon boys' basketball team, who after a 9-15 season last season, decided they needed to improve on their team chemistry. In order to do so, Naas has begun to greatly encourage teamwork, and the five seniors on the team have stepped up to fill leadership roles.

"[Seniors] Jasneil Nat and Alex Chan have really stepped up for us," said senior point guard Tyler Jew. "They have set our goal to win league."

In order to win league, the Falcons have resorted to basketball fundamentals—playing hard, executing plays, recovering loose balls, and always hustling.

"Coach Naas has really inspired the team to play basic basketball in a successful manner," said sophomore center Stevie Berman. "He says that if the starters play hard and if the bench is ready to step up and play, then we'll be a very strong team."

Even though they have played for coach Naas for all four years, the seniors are still learning new ways to play the game.

"We've been playing for him for a few years," said Jew. "But even as seniors, we're still working to play better as a team."

The starting five consists of Chan, sophomore guard Kyle Dozier, senior forward Chris Guengerich and Berman, all returning varsity players.

The seniors, however, are not the only players who Naas has influenced with his style of coaching.

Junior center James Huang finds the approach this year much more encouraging than in past years.

"Last year there was some

doubt in ourselves before each game," said Huang, "but now we expect to win every game."

On Dec. 2, the Falcons narrowly lost in double overtime 84-82 to South San Francisco. Guengerich played an integral role in the Falcons' offense as he put up a game-leading 33 points.

The team's confidence was very clear in their first game of the season on Nov. 30, where they burned Live Oak 61-32. Nat and Dozier led the offense with 12 points each, with Guengerich adding 10 points as well.

"We played well cause we jumped off to a really quick start," said Huang. "Coach Naas has really emphasized playing well throughout the whole game, and the seniors really pumped us up beforehand, so I think those were contributing factors to how well we played."

The Falcons will test their team chemistry next on Dec. 7-10 at the Los Gatos Tournament. ♦



FALCON // SARAH HULL

Sophomore Kyle Dozier works his way to the hoop for a lay-up during the first basketball game of the season on Nov. 30.

## WRESTLING

## Team makes up for youth in attitude and enthusiasm

BY Brandon Judoprasetyo  
& Deborah Soung

"Keep calm and carry on" was the British motto during the beginning of World War II, when invasion was imminent. Through the hectic beginning of the wrestling season with a new coach, injured captain and an extremely young team, the wrestling team has also lived by this motto, managing to pull through with surprisingly strong results.

"I think the team did well considering this was a varsity tournament and most of the team is freshmen," freshman Charles Li said.

Because the wrestling captain, junior Alfred Murabito, has been injured since the beginning of the season, other members are stepping up. Murabito strained his back during a practice and is working with a personal trainer separately from the rest of the team, so several other members of the team are acting as "stand-in" captains of the team.

Coach Joe Pele has not yet picked set captains, but after every practice, he chooses a varsity sophomore or junior to "break the practice off and say a little something," sophomore Bryson Yates said.

"Team captains just run practice, like overseeing stretching and breaks, nothing big," said sophomore Henry Wei, one of the substitute captains.

Wei said the season's outlook is still murky, since the one of the team's major wrestlers last year, alumnus Alan Yen, has graduated and is now wrestling at Stanford.

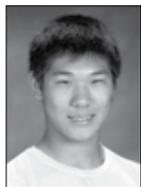


FALCON // PARUL SINGH

Sophomore Jon Olsen tries to pin freshman Jason Li during practice.

"We have a lot of young guys on the team without much experience, so we need some people to step it up," Wei said.

On the other hand, sophomore Zachary Hansen, also a stand-in captain, thinks the team's prospects look positive,



"We have a lot of young guys on the team without much experience, so we need some people to step it up."

>> **Sophomore Henry Wei**

even with such a young team.

"[The team is] at least twice as big or three times as big as last year's," Hansen said. "I think we're going to do pretty well. Most of our wrestlers are pretty good in varsity; we even have a few freshmen wrestling varsity."

Shown at the wrestling mat

on Dec. 4 at Peninsula Invitational at Half Moon Bay, the wrestling team is still staying strong despite its young members.

Li wrestled his way to 6th place, Wei to 5th, Hansen to 4th and freshman Graham Grant to 3rd.

"It was a good meet," Wei said. "Definitely not one of the hardest tournaments, but it gauged where we were and where we needed to improve."

"Now, there's not much to improve," Pele said. "We're just refining technique, sharpening the tip of the spear."

Wrestlers had a chance to show improvement on their last match on Dec. 16, but due to printing deadlines, the match could not be covered in the print issue of *The Falcon*. ♦

## GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

## State hopes fall short

BY Emily Williams

Running conditions were perfect at Toro Park in Salinas on Nov. 13—60 degrees outside with clear skies. The girls' cross country team was pumped and ready for CCS.

The girls' team had high hopes of qualifying for state, but their times fell just short. Sophomore Maya Nag fell one place short of qualifying for state individually, and a few others were close as well.

Both boys and girls trained hard throughout the season for CCS, considered the most important varsity race of the season. The 3-mile course at Toro Park is fast with a set of killer hills and mouth-fulls of dust.

"CCS was the event that the whole season was leading up to, I felt like it was a chance for me to give my whole effort and run my best race," said Nag.

According to Nag, both teams ran well. All seven girls got significant personal records.

The girls placed 5th with 127 points out of 13 teams in Division 3 and placed 17th out of 63 teams over all.

Nag came in 12th out of 95 runners with a time of 20:01, followed by junior Emily Williams, who placed 14th at 20:13.

Sophomores Courtney Schlossareck and Caroline Chou placed 19th at 20:36 and 29th at 21:11, respectively. Junior Kristine Johnston placed 55th at 22:32, senior Mansie Cheung placed 73rd at 23:17 and junior Michelle Cummins placed 82nd with a time of 23:57.

"I could not have asked for anything better than to peak in the CCS meet like they did," said girls' coach Danny

## falcon figures

**127** The number of points that the girls gained to place 5th in Division 3

**17th** The rank that the team placed overall out of 63 possible places

**12th** The place that sophomore Maya Nag placed against 95 runners

Moon. "I am very proud of our team."

The girls echoed that sentiment.

"I was a little disappointed [about not qualifying] but I was happy that I even made it that far," said Nag. "From the beginning I improved a lot through the coach's support and through my fellow teammate's support. When all your teammates who aren't racing are there cheering you on, it just makes you go that much faster."

Moon said he is optimistic for next year, when most of the team will be returning for another shot at state.

"The great thing is that we keep improving so I know that next year is our year," said Schlossareck.

Injuries were persistent this year, and Schlossareck's knee injury slowed her down near the end of the season. But Moon says that injuries were not the deciding factor at CCS.

"[Throughout the season] injuries certainly can make a difference, but since we all compete as a team we are able to have our athletes step up and fill the spots when we need to keep an athlete out of competition due to injury or to prevent an injury," said Moon. ♦

ATHLETE OF THE ISSUE

# Varsity athlete juggles 3 sports

BY Roy Bisht & Dylan Jew

As junior Troy Doles intercepted and closed his hands over the football in the most crucial play of the Saratoga-Los Gatos game on Oct. 22, not only did the junior defensive back help end the 27-year losing streak to Los Gatos, but he also engraved himself into Saratoga football history.

The interception was not the only positive note of Doles' night—he also had 58 receiving yards, 109 rushing yards and a receiving touchdown. Even though he was a key contributor in ending the 27 years of losses, Doles was adamant in stating his belief of the importance of teamwork over his individual play.

"I couldn't believe it, I was just going crazy after the game," said Doles. "It was awesome, just awesome. I felt like I played great, but definitely our teamwork was why we won that game."

As the football season wound to an end, most of the players on the team hung up their cleats and began conditioning for the next season. However, Doles just strapped on his shin guards and grabbed his soccer cleats, heading straight to the upper field for soccer try-outs. Last year, as a starting sophomore forward on varsity, Doles scored 17 goals, the second most on the team.

Doles' prowess in sports doesn't stop in the winter, however. He also competes in varsity track, running the 100- and 200-meter races and doing the long

jump. Although Doles can't put as much time into track because of his commitments to his other sports, he is very competitive and focused during meets.

"Since football and soccer are my two main sports, I don't really have much time to prepare for track when it's not the spring," said Doles, "but I still try my hardest during all track events."

Doles did not become a three sport varsity athlete overnight. It took years of practice and hard work for him to get where he is right now in all three sports. As of now, Doles dedicates roughly two hours each school day to sports.

"Sports take up about half of my time; I'm either practicing or doing homework," Doles said.

This extreme athletic load makes it challenging for Doles to find time for homework. In order to succeed with such a heavy burden, Doles focuses on each sport during its specific season.

"Obviously by playing three sports, I get burned out a lot because I'm playing year-round and I never get any rest," Doles said, "but even though it's going to be even harder in college, I want to keep playing sports at the next level."

Doles attributes his motivation to hard work to his father, who taught him to keep working hard, no matter the degree of the challenge.

"I approach each practice with a game mentality," Doles said. "The way I practice is the way I am going to play in a game, and I know that working hard will really pay off." ♦



FALCON // JORDAN WAITE

Junior Troy Doles plays in a home match against Lynbrook on Oct. 8. His interception in the Oct. 22 game against Los Gatos helped the team overcome its 27-year losing streak.

## Orange Bowl preview

COLUMNISTS PREDICT STANFORD WIN



>> Kevin Darchuk and Tim Lycurgus

All Things Considered

Bowl season is just around the corner, but the Bay Area is represented by just one team this year. On Jan. 2, the Orange Bowl pits the fourth-ranked Stanford Cardinals, led by Heisman Finalist, and likely No. 1 pick in the 2011 NFL draft, QB Andrew Luck, against the ACC Champion Virginia Tech Hokies captained by ACC Offensive Player of the Year QB Tyrod Taylor in a crucial game for both teams.

The Hokies, after winning the ACC four of the last seven years, looks to improve the ACC's 2-10 record in major bowl games. As for the Cardinals, they make their first appearance in an important bowl since 1999, just four years after a 1-11 season. A win would cement Stanford as a power in the years to come. Here are three keys to a Cardinal victory:

### 1. Establish the run game

With Andrew Luck running the Stanford offense, the Virginia Tech

defense is going to be key on the pass, especially after leading the NCAA in interceptions this season. However, Stanford has a big, physical offensive line and, by establishing the run game in the first quarter, the play action pass will open up, leaving receivers down field for Luck to hit for big gains.

### 2. Contain Tyrod Taylor

Tyrod Taylor developed into one of the premiere threat quarterbacks in the nation this year and could give a slow Stanford defense trouble. To stop him, the Cardinals need to be disciplined and bring pressure. New defensive coordinator and former NFL coach Vic Fangio will have Cardinal defenders in the right spots to be successful. They need to keep their assignments and bring pressure to force Taylor to pass.

### 3. Start fast

The Orange Bowl is played in Florida, much closer to Blacksburg, Va., than to Palo Alto, so the Hokies should

have a sizable home field advantage. On top of that, Stanford fans are notoriously bad travelers so most of the crowd will not be wearing Cardinal Red.

A quick start will quiet the crowd which should help Andrew Luck in his play calling and lead the Cardinals to victory.

Predicted Score: Stanford: 35, Virginia Tech: 24. ♦

**Stanford has a big, physical offensive line and, by establishing the run game in the first quarter, the play action pass will open up.**

## GIRLS' BASKETBALL



TALISMAN // ADITYA DEV

Junior Shriya Nagpal takes a jumpshot over junior Campbell Oreglia at a Dec. 7 practice.

## Team trains new players

BY Justine Huang & Parul Singh

Girls' basketball co-captains senior Amber Arroyo and junior Shriya Nagpal form the backbone of this year's team. Their goal: more consistency.

Nagpal and Arroyo are the team's top scorers, with Nagpal scoring a total of 20 points in the past two games and Arroyo scoring 14 points. Their success can be attributed to the experience they have gained from being on the team for three years. Despite their strong leadership, the team lost its first game against Mission San Jose 54-23, but won the second game against Leigh High School 51-36.

Nagpal attributes this inconsistency partially to the loss of some key players from last year such as top-scorer Nicole Gagnola. But the bigger reason may be adjustment of new players into their roles.

"Last year we had a lot of seniors so it's kind of hard this year because we lost all of them," Nagpal said. "So now we don't have a lot of experienced players because everyone is coming from JV, so we're still trying to learn plays."

Sophomore Michelle Won, one of the youngest members of the team said, "Varsity is a lot more intense, with a lot more commitment, and every game counts so you have to do well or it's really bad for your record."

The team is focusing on basics, hoping to train the new members early on.

"We just need to work on our fundamentals because it's a really young team," said Arroyo. "We have a lot of potential, but we just need to learn the fundamentals and we'll have a really good season."

Junior Campbell Oreglia feels that the seniors such as Leah Capek and Allison Buchanan, who joined the team this year after taking a year off are a positive influence.

Sophomore Kim Chou said the team needs to learn to work together. The young point guard has contributed significantly to the games against Leigh and Mission High School, scoring 17 points total.

The girls' next game is on Dec. 18 at home against Prospect and league games begin on Jan. 5 with a game against Fremont High School. ♦

# COLLEGE BOUND

STUDENT ATHLETES TAKE THEIR GAMES TO THE NEXT LEVEL

## Recruiting 101: Demystifying the process

BY Evaline Ju & Samika Kumar

Recruitment: the goal of all high school athletes who aspire to compete at the college level. As fall draws to a close, students from all over the country begin to choose their desired colleges. Beginning Nov. 10, athletes could sign their National Letters of Intent to Division I and Division II schools, committing to participate on the schools' teams next fall.

The recruiting process can be difficult, but "great test scores and a great work ethic" can differentiate a good athlete from an outstanding one, said former Stanford and NFL player Julian Jenkins at an Oct. 6 speech to prospective college athletes of Yosemite High School in Oakhurst, Calif., according to the Sierra Star.

Jenkins recalled visiting 25 colleges during his senior year of high school. He only started receiving scholarships from universities like Stanford after placing on *scout.com's* list of the top 50 football players in his home state, Georgia.

Jenkins' best advice is to start early. A high school athlete should make a video that highlights athletic skills and ability. These videos can be e-mailed to coaches and programs or streamed online. Such a video can serve as a primary evaluation that advertises the student's potential.

Senior Lauren Gardanier, who was recently committed to Yale University

for diving, made a video of her main talents and accomplishments in the sport last spring. She then sent it out to about 20 colleges before she was accepted to Yale. If Yale had not recruited her, she would have applied to about 15 more schools.

Ultimately, each athlete is responsible for making sure that college coaches know about him or her. Sites like *berecruited.com* and *scout.com* allow students to create profiles with statistics and information that recruiters can use to make selections.

"You can't sit and wait to be discovered because top-line athletes get scholarships that way," said *recruit-me.com* founder John Fugler.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) places many limits on contacts between coaches and prospective players throughout

the students' high school careers to make the recruiting process fair. During sophomore year, the athlete can call coaches, but the coaches cannot return any messages. By July 1 after junior year, coaches can call up to once a week but cannot contact or evaluate the student more than seven times for Division I schools.

Fewer than 1 percent of high school athletes receive Division I full-ride scholarships, Jenkins said. He suggested students contact many athletic programs and remain realistic about prospective colleges.

The NCAA allows 85 scholarships



FALCON // JORDAN WAITE

Senior Lauren Gardanier explains how recruiting websites allowed her to network to different schools as part of the recruiting process. Gardanier recently committed to Yale and will be diving there next fall.

per school for Division I football, meaning about 2,200 out of a million high school seniors, 2.2 percent, receive the financial aid. Recently in these harder economic times, colleges have cut down on their athletic scholarships, creating more competition.

Having support during the recruitment process is crucial.

"You need to continue to become better, and that takes hard work under the direction and help of a coach or instructor," said Fugler. High school

coaches or private ones can provide advice on where an athlete's abilities stand. Parents are urged to step in to offer encouragement as well.

The recruitment process can be stressful, but in the long run, the end results are rewarding.

For Gardanier, the most stressful aspect was after she sent her application to Yale. "It was a bunch of waiting and hoping that they liked [me]. But in the end everything turned out well." ♦

### >> alumnitalks

#### What is college athletics like?

"Swimming in college is much more pervasive in your life since you spend most of your time with your teammates, they become like your family."



Class of '08 Hayes Hyde (Yale)

"College baseball is very different from HS baseball. The speed of the game is much faster; every player in the lineup can hit and hurt you."



Class of '08 Blake Paisley (Williamette)

"It feels great to be part of a college swim team, but sometimes the balance between school and sports is tough. So far it has been rewarding."



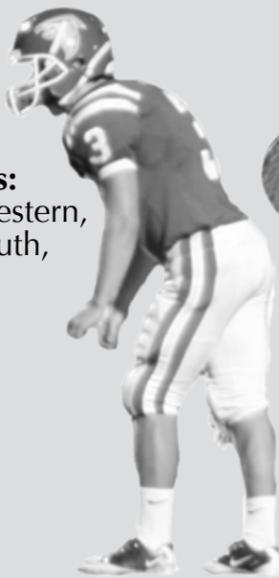
Class of '09 Guy Quanrud (Albion)

### MovingOn



**Colleges:** Cornell, UPenn, Dartmouth, San Diego, Brown, Princeton

Chris Guengerich



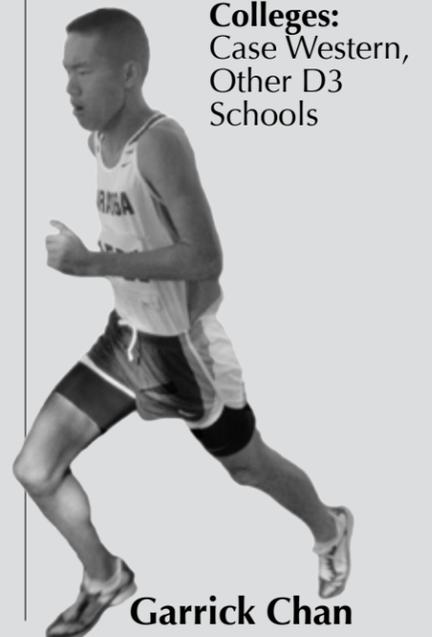
**Colleges:** Northwestern, Dartmouth, Brown

Peter Auvil

**Colleges:** UPenn\*



Srinidhi Raghavan



**Colleges:** Case Western, Other D3 Schools

Garrick Chan

# Tennis star smashes his way to Northwestern

BY Anna **Shen** & Abhishek **Venkataramana**

After hours of training for his next national tennis tournament last May, senior Nikhil Jayashankar drove home on what seemed like a normal Saturday afternoon. As he logged onto his e-mail account, little did he know that a surprise awaited him. The tennis coach of the prestigious Northwestern University Men's Tennis Team had contacted Jayashankar, expressing interest in recruiting him for college tennis.

Sacrificing mornings to work out, nights to hone his skills and many weekends to play tournaments, Jayshankar has trained long and hard for tennis. All his dedication paid off when he was recruited as the only U.S. recruit to Northwestern for his tennis profile and academic achievements.

"I really like playing tennis

and have always wanted to play Division I collegiate sports," said Jayashankar. "I've known for years that college tennis was a path that I'd follow."

During the summer before Jayashankar's junior year, the Northwestern tennis coach Arvid Swan contacted him. Since then, they have been in contact by e-mail and phone. After the coach watched Jayashankar play a few national tournaments throughout the year, Jayashankar took an unofficial visit to Northwestern.

"When I visited [Northwestern], I really liked the campus, the people I met and the support the school provides for athletes," Jayashankar said.

In October, Jayashankar took an official visit to Northwestern, where he met and stayed with the team. A day after his visit, he gave the coach a verbal commitment to attend Northwestern. A month later, Jayashankar was of-

ficially recruited when he signed a National Letter of Intent, committing himself to Northwestern while receiving a full scholarship to attend.

"I ended up choosing Northwestern because I liked the coach and the guys on the team the best [out] of all the schools," he said. "Northwestern [has] a really good team that competes in the Big 10, which is one of the best conferences in the nation; I wanted to be a part of a team that could win a Big 10 championship and do well in the NCAA tournament. Also, it's one of the best schools in the country."

Other universities Jayashankar considered were UCLA and Yale. However, the bond Jayashankar shared with the Northwestern tennis team was influential in his decision to attend.

"I met all the guys on the team during my official visit and stayed with them for a couple days," he

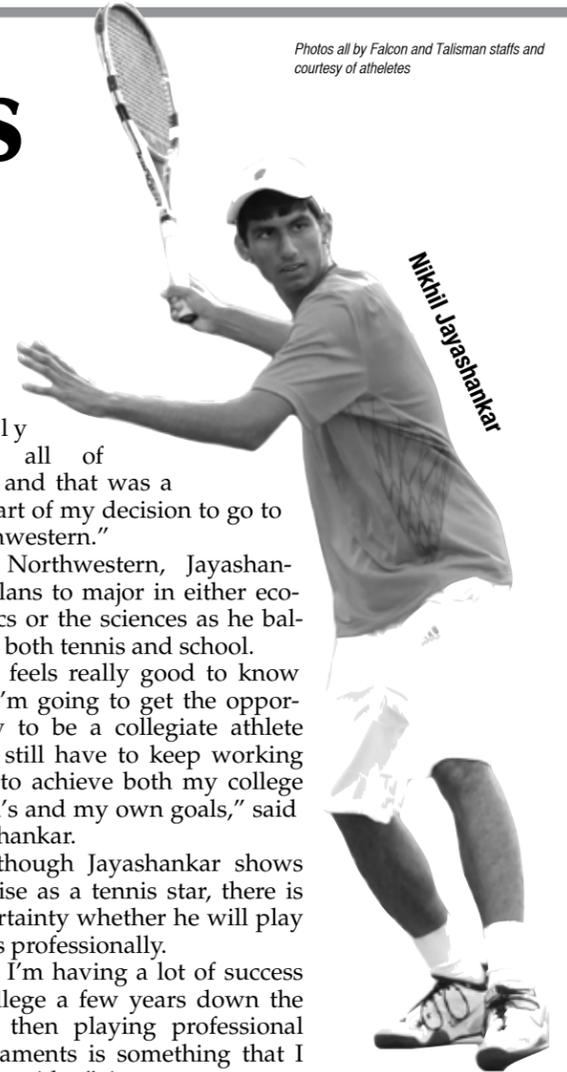
said. "I really liked all of them and that was a big part of my decision to go to Northwestern."

At Northwestern, Jayashankar plans to major in either economics or the sciences as he balances both tennis and school.

"It feels really good to know that I'm going to get the opportunity to be a collegiate athlete but I still have to keep working hard to achieve both my college coach's and my own goals," said Jayashankar.

Although Jayashankar shows promise as a tennis star, there is no certainty whether he will play tennis professionally.

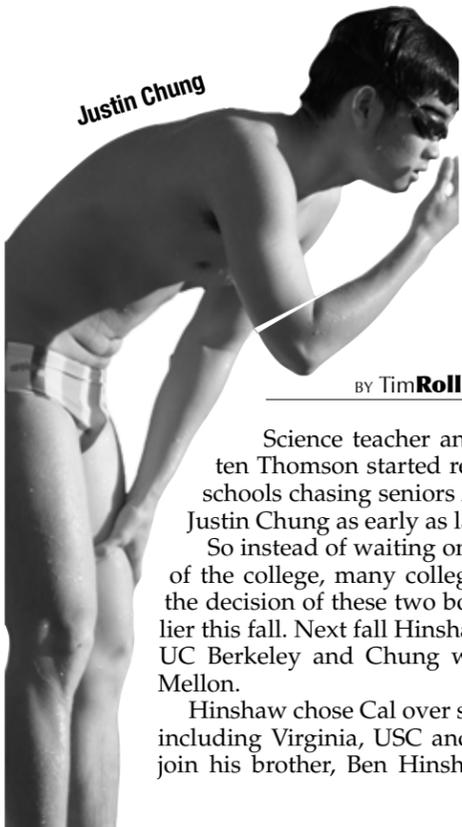
"If I'm having a lot of success in college a few years down the road, then playing professional tournaments is something that I will consider." ♦



Nikhil Jayashankar

Photos all by Falcon and Talisman staffs and courtesy of athletes

# Superstar swim duo gets recruited



Justin Chung

BY Tim **Rollinson**

Science teacher and swim coach Kristen Thomson started receiving letters from schools chasing seniors Adam Hinshaw and Justin Chung as early as last winter.

So instead of waiting on the fateful decision of the college, many colleges were waiting on the decision of these two boys, and it came earlier this fall. Next fall Hinshaw will be attending UC Berkeley and Chung will attend Carnegie Mellon.

Hinshaw chose Cal over several other options including Virginia, USC and Stanford, and will join his brother, Ben Hinshaw, who graduated

in 2009 on the Cal swim team. Chung had narrowed his choice down to Pomona College and Carnegie Mellon.

"Adam and Justin are two of the most talented swimmers I have ever worked with," said coach Christian Bonner. "I have no doubt both will flourish in collegiate swimming."

Although the interest came early, the NCAA prohibits coaches from talking directly to athletes until after their junior year. When the deadline passed, calls came in from all over the nation.

"I never knew so many schools had interest until I started getting contacted," Chung said.

Both athletes have been swimming since early childhood and the college decisions marked a huge step in the future of their respective swimming careers.

Hinshaw, a distance freestyler, has had major success with Saratoga High as well as with his club team, Palo Alto Swimming Association, or PASA. He won the 500-yard freestyle at CCS last year, his first individual victory after five top-10 finishes.

Chung, who specializes in the breaststroke and backstroke, swims with Hinshaw at PASA and has also had great success in his Saratoga High career. His fifth place finish in the 100 yard backstroke at CCS last year was a major accomplishment for Chung.

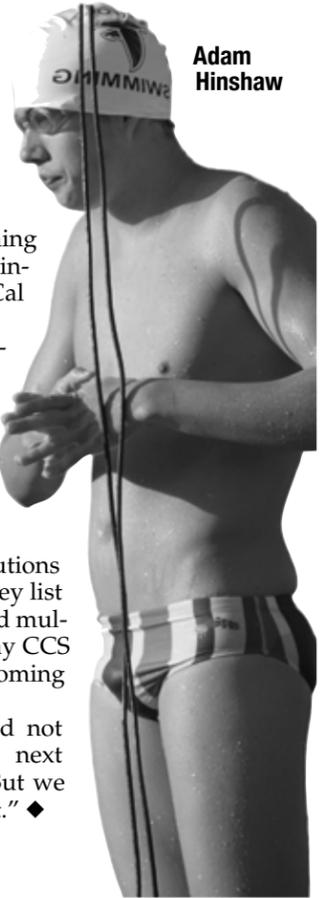
Hinshaw chose Cal for the prestige of the program, the educational opportunities and the overall feel of the campus.

"I want to be swimming with the best," said Hinshaw. "And I will be at Cal next year."

Chung received interest from several coaches but was sold on Carnegie Mellon after visiting the campus.

The two may have college in their grasps but they still feel they will have huge contributions to the team this year. They list a top five team finish and multiple individual and relay CCS titles as goals for the coming season.

"It's going to be odd not swimming with Justin next year," said Hinshaw. "But we still have one season left." ♦



Adam Hinshaw

**Colleges:** Wisconsin, SMU, Michigan, Northwestern, Duke, Barnard



Lauren Mather

**Colleges:** Princeton, Harvard, Columbia, Yale\*



Lauren Gardanier

**Colleges:** UCSB\*



Hanna Nielson

**Colleges:** Occidental, Chapman, Linfield



Greg Johnson

**Colleges:** CSU Northridge



Dillan Pak

\*committed to attend

>> photoreel

# The Rhodes less traveled



>> Uttara Sivaram

Sivarambles

It's funny—I've spent these past three years trying to ignore the legacy that my brother, Varun Sivaram, left behind. I've gone to great lengths to make my own path and pioneer my own route to success, carefully avoiding all the activities he partook in (which, I assure you, did not leave many options).

But in light of his incredible accomplishment of becoming a Rhodes Scholar, the spotlight is most deservedly on him. So I've written a small piece about the brother who, I regret to say, I have spoken very little about.

My 11-year-old sister, Saya, and I retain a picture of Varun that is different from everyone else's. He is unquestionably an eloquent student leader, a passionate proponent of green technology and an occasional model for male undergarments (an undertaking in the name of charity that has resulted in blackmail-worthy photos and deeply disturbed parents).

But as a kid, he was a different character, an asthmatic, shy and painfully skinny boy with very little common sense—indeed, he believed himself to be vegetarian although his favorite food was pepperoni pizza. Additionally, he was terrified of the smallest

things. Once, at a restaurant, he had dropped his spoon on the floor. Too frightened of asking the waiter for a new one, he spent the rest of the night trying to eat soup with a fork.

And while I marvel at how much he has changed, I realize that in fact, he hasn't changed all that much. He has always been a brilliant academic; in fact, his elementary and middle school teachers once admitted to my parents that they would often have to re-read their textbooks at night to prepare for Varun's next barrage of questions.

He continues to pace while he thinks, chew his pencils to pieces, chase after girls incessantly, hide at the sight of a dog or cat and wear horribly mismatched clothing, often backwards or inside-out, usually because he was thinking of how to better mount two solar cells in a wafer or how to deliver a certain pick-up line.

No matter how many awards or distinctions he receives, he will always be the guy who could get lost between his room and the kitchen. He will always be the guy who hates when I wear short skirts or go to dances, stalks my Facebook wall in search of gossip and comes home whenever I need help on a test or midterm. He will always be my big brother.

So I can deny his presence in my life all I want, but in one way or another, I will forever be known as Varun Sivaram's sister. I'm hoping that some day, he'll be known as Uttara Sivaram's brother. But for now, all that matters is that he's off to Oxford, about to embark on perhaps the greatest academic experience offered to a student. So good luck, bro—I'm so proud of you. ♦



FALCON // Vivian LeTran



FALCON // Vivian LeTran



TALISMAN // SALMAAN JAVED



FALCON // ARNAV DUGAR

**CANE WE GET YOUR ATTENTION?**

FRESHMAN NIKKI THARAJA, EMILY NGUYEN AND ANNEISE NUSSBACHER SELL CANDY CANE GRAMS AT LUNCH ON DEC. 8.

FOR THE RED CROSS CLUB. **LAST-MINUTE TOUCHES** JUNIOR MADDIE EMERY WORKS ON HER PROJECT AT THE MOTIF FAIR ON DEC. 8 IN THE TEACHERS' LOUNGE. **JINGLE BELL ROCK RALLY** COMMISSIONERS SENIORS BRANDON PIERCE, CHRIS CHUNG, TIM ROLLINSON AND ADITYA DEV AND JUNIOR DOM GUERCIO STRIKE A POSE AT THE HOLIDAY RALLY ON DEC. 10. **NOT YOUR AVERAGE LUNCH** STAFF MEMBERS ENJOY THE BUFFET PROVIDED AT THE TEACHER LUNCHEON ON DEC. 10 IN THE CAFETERIA SPONSORED BY THE PTSO.

## 49ers award Guengerich

By Karthik Annaamalai & Abhi Venkataramana

While senior Chris Guengerich may be known for his stellar athletic ability on the football field, leadership as a captain, and success as wide receiver, Guengerich has also developed a reputation as a stellar student in the classroom. Guengerich was recently recognized by the San Francisco 49ers for both his achievements as an athlete and his academic accomplishments with recognition as the San Francisco 49ers High School Player of the Week for Week Five.

"Coach [Tim] Lugo told me about the award during practice," said Guengerich. "I didn't even know about it. I was pretty excited, but I didn't really know how prestigious it was at first. I went home and I found out about the award and was pretty happy."

Guengerich has not only managed his time commitments between football and a rigorous academic schedule, but also excels at both. Guengerich boasts a 4.2 GPA and is currently being

recruited to play football at several top-notch schools including The University of San Diego, Penn, Cornell, Brown and Princeton.

Guengerich, a two-time all-league receiver, finished his last season ranked second in the league in receiving, with 55 catches for over 750 yards and nine touchdowns.

Guengerich attributed his great success to senior quarterback Kevin Smith

"He is a really easy target to throw to because he gets off the line quickly, and runs his routes extremely well and crisp," said senior quarterback Kevin Smith, who has been playing with Guengerich for seven years. "He was always open, so it was great playing with him."

For his efforts Guengerich will receive a 49ers hat and T-shirt, a certificate signed by 49ers coach Mike Singletary and two tickets to a 49ers home game. Additionally, at the end of the season, he will be invited to receive a trophy at the 49ers training facility. Lugo also received a \$500 grant for his football program.

"I don't know how much [the honor] will influence my recruitment for football," said Guengerich. "But I'm hoping that it will help me to get into one of my top choices." ♦



Guengerich



### top ten

REASONS TO GET EXCITED FOR WINTER BREAK

- 10 Festival of Lights at Vasona Park. Oooh shiny!
- 9 You'll have an excuse to watch Elf. 55 times
- 8 More time to Facebook stalk.
- 7 25 Days of Christmas on ABC Family. There's nothing like a little Tim Allen to get you spirited!
- 6 Extra time to study for finals! Yay.
- 5 Maybe you'll get some candy cane grams this year! You go Glen Coco.
- 4 Cutting down a tree in the mountains. Seeing Dad in flannel yippee!
- 3 Starbucks holiday drinks for the win!
- 2 Heat vs. Lakers basketball game. Letz go!
- 1 Snow!!! Oh wait...

>> Izzy Albert