

**LIFESTYLES**  
**ARE YOU GOING TO WINTERBALL?**  
 READ THESE TIPS TO HELP YOU ASK AND DRESS TO IMPRESS  
 pg. 12-13

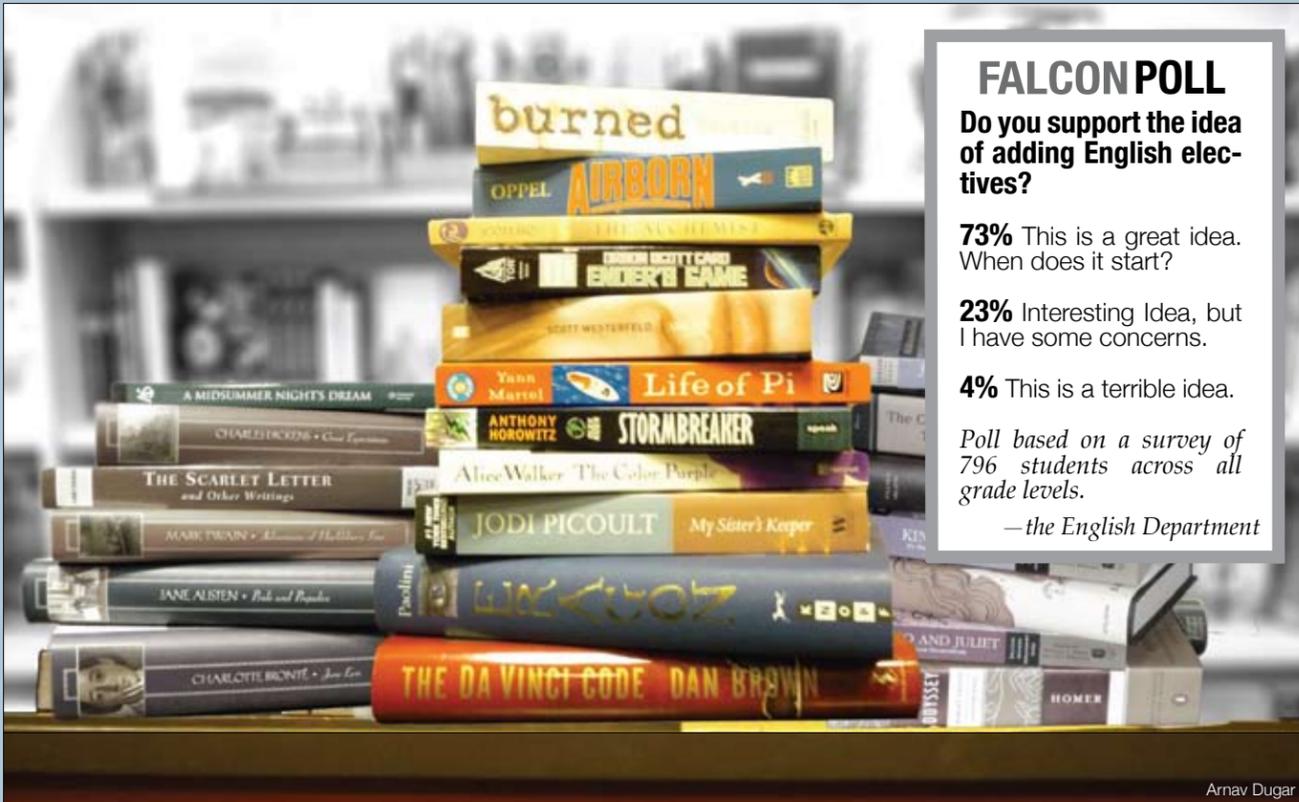
Non-Profit Organization  
 U.S. Postage PAID  
 Saratoga, CA  
 Permit No. 41

Saratoga High School | Saratoga, CA  
 An Independent School Publication

saratogafalcon.org

Friday | December 4, 2009  
 Vol. 50, No. 4

# New electives, new books?



## FALCON POLL

Do you support the idea of adding English electives?

**73%** This is a great idea. When does it start?

**23%** Interesting Idea, but I have some concerns.

**4%** This is a terrible idea.

Poll based on a survey of 796 students across all grade levels.

—the English Department

## ENGLISH DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS NEW ELECTIVES-BASED CURRICULUM THAT WOULD OFFER A VARIETY OF LITERARY GENRES FOR UPPERCLASSMEN

by Vivian LeTran and Emily Williams

This year the English department decided to explore the idea of adding new English electives to the curriculum as an alternative to the current courses available for juniors and seniors.

English department chair Jason Friend said the proposed electives would include semester-long classes that focus more on specific subjects, increasing the options for students and teachers. The classes would be an alternative choice for students who prefer specific genres of literature, such as non-fiction or fantasy, to the standard

English curriculum.

"They wouldn't actually be electives that you would take in addition to your regular English classes; they would fulfill your English requirements for your junior and senior years," said Friend.

If the department does decide to go

see ENGLISH ELECTIVES, p. 3

## DISTRICT BUDGET

# DEFICIT TO REACH \$1.6M

by Rebecca Nguyen and Anna Shen

Saratoga and Los Gatos High Schools will be facing at least a \$1.6 million deficit during the 2010-2011 academic school year and are looking for ways to solve the problem during the next few months. Potential changes include larger class sizes, staff layoffs, pay cuts and furloughs, fewer instructional supplies, reduced options and a schedule alignment between the two schools.

"[Los Gatos Saratoga Union High School District] is a very fiscally sound district," said principal Jeff Anderson. "We get audited every year, and our [accounts] are always in good shape. [The deficit] is really related to the state budget; this is the effect that we're feeling."

Although the 2009-2010 budget will be balanced, the budget for 2010-2011 continues to look grim because of cuts in state categorical funding and less revenue from local property taxes, according to district superintendent Cary Matsuoka.

Because of California's budget crisis, many districts within the state are again receiving fewer funds. As the state cut educational funding, it imposed a 20 percent cut across most categorical funds in all school districts. Basic Aid districts such as LGSUHSD receive all of their general funding from local property tax and avoided some of the cuts that affected non-Basic Aid districts this year.

see BUDGET, p. 5

# Girls' tennis beats Monta Vista to win CCS, Norcal runner-up

by Lauren Kuan and Denise Lin

After winning CCS for the first time in school history, the girls' tennis team managed to end its season with a second-place finish at the CIF/Norcal Team Tennis Championship on Nov. 22. After beating longtime rivals, Monta Vista, to win CCS on Nov. 18, the Falcons weren't able to come away with a repeat victory against the Monta Vista Matadors, who changed

their lineup this time around, and lost 4-3.

"It was a close battle, but they pulled out in the end," said head coach Tom Uyehara. "The difference was the fact that we got off to a slow start and played very flat compared to when we played them in CCS."

Although the team placed second, the Falcons had to overcome many obstacles during the tournament, including the loss of No. 1 singles player, senior Mika Padmanabhan, who had to forfeit her match after suffering from a high fever. Strong winds and heavy rain added to the

Falcons' problems.

After a rainout, the Falcons faced St. Francis from Sacramento in the second round on the second day.

"[They were] a tough team that had strength up and down their lineup," said Uyehara. However, the players were able to pull out a 5-2 win. Later, they lost to Monta Vista in the championship round.

On the first day, the Falcons had a bye and they faced Pleasanton Valley, easily beating them 5-0.

"We had a great season winning the

first CCS Girls' Team Tennis Championship in school history, winning the CCS Scholar Athlete Award and finishing as finalists in the CIF/NorCal Team Tennis Championship," said Uyehara.

The CCS Scholar Athlete Award is given to the competing team in CCS which has earned the highest collective GPA.

"I think our team did really well and the season overall was very good," said junior Mary Edman.

see TENNIS, p. 23

**OPINION**  
 Balloon Boys' parents sink to new lows  
 pg. 8

**SCHOOL SCOPE**  
 pg. 14-15  
 We are the Champions

**IN-DEPTH**  
 Don't... Follow the rules?  
 pg. 16-17

**ENTERTAINMENT**  
 pg. 18-19  
 SINK-O-METER

**SPORTS**  
 What's up with that sports rule?!  
 pg. 20

NEWS BRIEFS



MAP building to be completed in May

The construction for the 4,800-square-foot Multimedia Arts Program (MAP) building located behind woodshop and the weight room began early September and is making progress. The \$2.2 million project's most current milestone has been the completion of the electrical work.

"We had a few hiccups," said media arts teacher Tony Palma. "In the process of the work, the equipment failed and there were some expenses in fixing that."

This first problem arose when the construction workers re-routed the primary PG&E electrical line for the MAP building. Another minor incident triggered the school's fire alarm system Oct. 22 during first period. Some students were puzzled by the unexpected and unexplained fire drill.

"I was in chem class when the alarm went off," said sophomore Megan Yen. "It was confusing because nobody really knew what was going on."

Bosco confirmed the false alarm resulted from MAP building construction.

"[The construction workers] got too close to one of our sensors and actually bumped into one of them," said Bosco. Other than these relatively small issues, construction on the building has been going smoothly.

Bosco said, "These little issues may have set us back a few weeks, but we're still pretty much on target for our completion day in late May [of 2010]. I think we've made it through the rough patch and I don't have any concerns at the moment."

—by Serena Chan

English teacher hosts a Motif Fair

The English department has often found that students do not read the literature that they are assigned to read. In attempt to combat this lack of reading, new teacher Suzanne Herzman had her English 11 honors students participate in a Motif Fair, which took place from Nov. 10 to 13.

Herzman learned about the Motif Fair at a teachers' conference called National Counsel for Teachers of English. Ever since, Herzman has done the Motif Fair every year and tries to "bring different kinds of learners into literature"

"The book became a school tradition and now the students [at my old school] still do it. So it's great. I think more kids are reading the book and I was pleased with the results."

In attempt to bring the similar success to Saratoga High, Herzman had her students create visual and interactive aids to help their peers understand the Scarlet Letter better as well as to encourage more students to read the novel. Groups were evaluated by anonymous judges on content as well as creativity.

The winners of the Motif Fair were juniors Jay Lee, Nick Renda, Chris Lui, Rohan Marathe, and Emma MacNaughton.

"The Motif Fair was something different," said Lee. "I have never done an artsy project like this ever in English. Also, it helped me look at the words on the page and analyze."

—by Karthik Annaamalai

Saratoga Library debuts new teen center

Dozens of Saratogans gathered in the Saratoga Library on Nov. 3 to celebrate the opening of its new teen center.

The new center, located in the adult section of the library, boasts all new furniture, including distinctive desks and tables, swivel chairs and red leather sofas. Its \$60,000 cost was funded entirely by the Friends of the Saratoga Library (FSL), a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting the Saratoga Library.

To thank the Friends of the Saratoga Libraries, the library held an official ribbon-cutting in the new teen center, where FSL members and librarians expressed their care for the community's youth.

"We [librarians] may tell you to be quiet, and we may tell you to get your feet off the furniture, but we love you and that's why [this center] is here," said community librarian Barbara Williams.

According to Williams, a change was necessary because the library's original teen center was too small to accommodate the large number of teens and preteens who flood the library every day after school. That change has been met with the collaborative efforts from FSL, librarians and teens from the community as well.

"I think it's gorgeous," said FSL president Terrie Creamer. "I would love to come here and just curl up on the sofa with a book."

Besides accommodating the large number of youth, the library's other main goal in creating the new center was to share its myriad of resources.

"We wanted to build this new center to promote information literacy, whether it be voter literacy or media literacy or parent literacy," Williams said. "The library is the center of our community, and by improving it we are making our society better as well."

—by Kevin Mu



Grishma Athavale

Seniors Annie Lee and Trevor Teerlink dine at the Hunger Banquet hosted by the leadership class on Nov. 18. The cranberry juice they are holding symbolizes the meal of the higher class.

Hunger banquet opens eyes, raises awareness

by Lauren Kuan

Every five seconds, a child dies from starvation and 9.7 million children die before they reach their fifth birthday. Fifty percent of the people in the world go to sleep hungry and 85 percent of the world live in low-income households.

These issues and facts were discussed during the Hunger Banquet that took place Nov. 10 in the cafeteria and was organized by the leadership class. The Hunger Banquet, a simulation to display the hardships of poverty, had a turnout of 50 very surprised students, who were originally told they were invited to a special charity dinner.

Everyone gathered into the cafeteria and was handed a piece of paper saying which social class they belonged to: high, middle or low income. Students were handed food that represented the meal portions people actually receive in their income class. The high-income

class received a full three-course meal complete with salad, pasta, dessert and cranberry juice; the middle class got a small bowl of rice and beans and a cup of water; and the low-income people received a handful of rice and a cup of water.

Students from each class moved up and down, showing the instability of each person's place economically. A few people from the upper class tried to transport their food to the poorer people, but it was all thrown away to represent corrupt governments. A shocking video that contained facts and pictures of poverty was later shown.

"Pictures are worth a thousand words and the pictures that were chosen definitely made everyone realize that hunger around the world is a problem, and we tend to brush it off and don't really realize it," said junior participant Arianna Paranzino. "But when you see pictures the problem becomes much more real because you see actual kids

starving."

Afterward, students discussed their feelings about the issue. The banquet ended on a high note with a raffle of gift baskets created by leadership students. The tickets sold at the raffle generated money that will go to Oxfam, an organization that works to end hunger around the world.

"The sharing was touching and impressive and the concept of the Hunger Banquet was extraordinary," said assistant principal Karen Hyde.

Senior Natalie Tkalecivic was the head coordinator while the leadership class helped her with the planning.

"I think the simulation was effective because it's not every day where we're put into a position where we have to see the distinctions between countries and classes," said Paranzino.

Hyde is curious to see if another Hunger Banquet can happen next year without it being a "surprise" but still being effective. ♦

Oncologist educates students in advances in cancer research

by Sarah Hull and Vivian LeTran

Many students' lives have been or will one day be affected by cancer since one in every six Americans will be diagnosed with some form of it within their lifetime, according to oncologist Manish Bhandari.

Bhandari discussed the recent advances in cancer research and detection during his after school presentation in the Library Research Center on Nov. 6. This discussion was the first of what a new club hopes will be many upcoming speakers who will speak on a variety of subjects.

These speakers will be part of the Industry and Academia Connections Program, founded

by sophomore Arnav Dugar. "The purpose is to bring people from either industry or academia to school so we can introduce what is going on in the real world to students," said Dugar.

Dugar has had this idea for over a year but finally put it into effect this year with the support of assistant principal Brian Safine.

"There are many things that we do learn in school that get outdated because as things progress, the textbooks are not able to keep up with it," said Dugar. "This [program] is one way to get around this issue and show students what is really going on."

The scientific world, including, cancer, is one example of how information is constantly

changing. Bhandari spoke on how the cure for cancer must be found in a series of small steps over a long period of time.

This talk, which was attended by 17 students, covered the progress of cancer research and where it could lead to in the future.

Dugar has already contacted possible future speakers who may speak about topics such as 3D television and flip phones. He hopes that they will be as successful as the first and more students will attend.

"I've already seen that there are a lot of people who are interested in coming to high schools and speaking to students," said Dugar. "There's such a wealth of knowledge out there that I don't think we'll run out of speakers." ♦

Band marches to sixth place in championships

by Vivien Lu and Ashley Tang

The marching band placed sixth in the Western Band Association Class Championships in Clovis on Nov. 22.

In total, there were around 90 schools from all over the state at the band competition, according to band director Duane Otani.

Most schools in Division 5A consist of at least 2,000 students or more; however, Saratoga only has 1,350 students, making the Saratoga band the underdog in the division.

Even so, this disadvantage did not and could not affect the overall performance of the band.

"I think it went very well and I'm really proud of them," Otani said. "The trip went smoothly, and this year, the WBA even treated everyone to a fireworks display."

On the day of the championships, while all the bands were being recognized

**"Things really changed because of the new band director, Mr. Otani. He pushed us to work harder during rehearsals, which is the main reason why I think we did better than last year."**

—sophomore Cecilia Hollenhorst

on the field, the WBA announced to the estimated 10,000 people there to "look skyward."

Freshman flutist Cathy Han said, "There were a whole ton of fireworks and it went on for what seemed like forever; I don't know how they could have afforded all that, but I really enjoyed it."

However, not everyone was as pleased with the unexpected experience as Han was.

"Some of the people in our band were scared by the fireworks because they were so loud and continuous," said junior tenor saxophone player Darren Sun, "None of that scared me though."

Generally, the whole trip was very demanding on the students.

On Saturday, they arrived at 9 a.m. for rehearsal, then left at 1 p.m. for Clovis, arriving there at 4 p.m.

"Pretty much there was no much time for homework; it was like band, band, band, eat, and then band again," said senior drum major Flora Chang.

After the banquet awards brunch on Sunday morning and then a final performance, the students arrived home at 11:30 p.m.

"The whole thing was definitely tiring, but a lot of fun," said Chang.

The WBA Grand Championships was unlike any other competition this year because it was the last tournament of the season.

"It was dynamite," said music director Michael Boitz. "We had a totally new theme, both musically and visually. This year was very exciting because we tried some things that we've never done before."

Students also performed better and with more enthusiasm this year, due to many different reasons.

"On our final run through, we were really pumped because it was our last one. It was really obvious that they [the students] were really energetic and into it while I conducting," said Chang.

During the final performance, the students' energy showed through, leading the band to beat rivals Homestead and Amador.

"This time was different because the crowd was a lot larger than usual, which hyped everyone up."

Han said. "Even though it was an exhausting two day trip, it was worth it when we beat our rivals."

The marching band wrapped up a memorable season.

"We had a really good performance this year," said sophomore Color Guard member Cecilia Hollenhorst. "Things really changed because of the new band director, Mr. Otani. He pushed us to work harder during rehearsals, which is the main reason why I think we did better than last year."

Some students had other reasons to explain why they had performed so well at Clovis.

Sophomore trumpet player Thomas Ishikawa said, "We played better this year because we were more together as a group, more like family." ♦



Photos by Jordan Wai

Clockwise from top: Freshman Madison Buchanan twirls her flag at the Homecoming football game during halftime; sophomore Matt Opatry waits for instruction from the drum majors; and Vivian Liao stands at attention with her mellophone.

Guidance department makes scholarship applications easier

by Lauren Kuan

The world of scholarships is so vast that every high school works to find the best way to get information out to its students. This year, the guidance department has made some major changes such as reorganizing its webpage on the school's website and making the process of applying for scholarships easier.

The department has changed the webpage so that all the scholarships that have to do with the school, the outside world and ones for which the student needs a nomination are located all in one place. It is more user friendly and systematic with the scholarships organized in chronological order by deadline.

"We're trying to make things much clearer because without that, students would be looking at maybe 15, 20, 30 different places. The website now can point you to a specific website and now all the scholarships are listed in an organized fashion," said assistant principal Brian Safine.

Guidance has also created an application that makes it easier for students to apply for all scholarships by filling out a universal scholarship application. It will be the first one counselors look at when deciding who gets which scholarship, and Safine urges all seniors to fill it out.

"I think the universal application is a great improvement because the counselors who do the nominations have all of the students' information right in front of them. It is a big help for us and the students because it simplifies and standardizes the whole process," said college and career center coordinator Bonnie Sheikh.

Sheikh said that they have worked hard to customize the webpage this year and they are trying to make it more intuitive for students to find the information they need. Students have seen the improvements made and the clarity in the information.

"I like the quick links in the middle of the page that link us to important information. It makes browsing easy and accessible and almost all the other links are located conveniently to the right so users don't have to scour through a million sites to find what they want," said senior Jonathon Chen.

The guidance department is always updating the site with application deadlines and new scholarships, so students should check it often.

"My feeling is that you can put as much information out as possible but the students still need to be proactive and use the information to their advantage," said Sheikh. ♦

ELECTIVES | Changes possible

continued from, p. 1

the electives route, students still have the choice of taking honors and A.P. classes at the junior and senior levels.

To assess the student interest in the idea, the department conducted a survey in English classes.

"We are just throwing around the idea right now," said Friend. "It would be a way to teach literature and non-fiction that we don't get a chance to talk about in traditional English classes."

If the English department gets a good response from students and parents, the new classes might be offered as soon as two years from now, though the district's shrinking budget could derail all plans.

"We want to do it right, so if everybody's on board, it is going to take at least a year for us to really get the curriculum together," said English teacher Valerie Arbizu. "We don't want to do anything hastily."

The results for the survey will come out sometime in the next couple of weeks, but so far students seem to have responded favorably to the idea.

"I think it is a good idea because it lets students take what they want if they have different interests, such as Renaissance or Shakespeare," said freshman Stephanie Payne.

The idea, already adopted by other high schools such as Palo Alto, Gunn and Bellarmine, is based on the college model in which English is offered through specific classes, not just the broad English curriculum.

Although nothing has been set in stone, many of the English teachers are excited about possible new classes.

"When [the teachers] were coming up with topics, we were like kids in a candy store," said Friend. "Personally I would be happy to teach about 20 out of the 40 ideas."

Arbizu thinks this new model would not only cater to students' interests but also tap into each teacher's passion and specialty, creating a better learning environment.

"When a teacher is teaching a subject, they are passionate about what they are doing," said Arbizu, "and then students tend to enjoy and like the class a little bit more." ♦

**"It would be a great way to teach literature and non-fiction that we don't get a chance to talk about in traditional English classes."**

—English teacher Jason Friend

# CHEER FINISHES FIFTH

Securing place in nationals gives girls reason to celebrate

by Sarah Hull

The cheer team took home fifth place and qualified for nationals at their first competition of the year on Nov. 8, despite only practicing their entire routine the morning of the competition.

This competition also marked the first occasion that only some members of the team performed competitively. Previously, the entire team had participated in competitions. This year, members who were not interested in the competing aspect of cheer or who could not make the necessary time commitment were given the chance to opt out. The remaining 15 girls, who were willing to put in extra time and effort, formed the competition team.

"The girls who are on the competition team are the ones who really want to do it," said cheer coach Laressa Ridge. "The attitude of everyone on the team is phenomenal and I think that has a lot to do with why we had such a good performance."

While preparing for the first competition, the team did face some bumps in the

road as the routine was not complete until three days before they performed at Washington High School in Fremont. Because of this, most team members were anxious about how they would do. This was also the first time many of the cheerleaders had ever participated in a competition since they had no previous cheer experience.

"When I first got there, I saw all the other teams and they were like [the movie] 'Bring It On,'" said sophomore and first time competitor Anika Jhalani. "That made me feel like we weren't totally prepared for this, but I knew that in the end we would be able to pull together as a team."

The group's initial worries were alleviated after they competed. They performed a solid routine, only dropping one stunt sequence.

"[The team] had lots of energy and everything we did well, we did really well," said Ridge. "Overall, we were very successful and everyone did a great job."

The primary goal of the competition, however, was to receive feedback and constructive criticism from the judges as well as their reactions to the routine.

"We got lots of good comments from the judges," said Ridge. "They gave us some areas where we can add difficulty, so now we'll change those parts. We can only improve from where we are now." ♦



Clockwise from top: cheer team performs at the October rally; the girls execute a lift maneuver during the halftime show of the Homecoming football game; Senior Paxton Barco is lifted during a practice on the football field.

Photos courtesy of Carolyn Doles

# 'Toga drastically different in '60s

GIRLS WORE SKIRTS; EVERYONE WORE WHITE TO RALLIES

by Robin Liu and Tiffany Tung

Most students today would never imagine being able to buy a yearbook for \$4 or listen to Duke Ellington and his jazz orchestra live for even less. For students here 40 years ago, such occurrences were normal.

"I remember that there was a very friendly atmosphere at the school," said alumna Sue Simpson, who graduated in 1968 and is happily married to her high school sweetheart, John Simpson. "There were of course, cliques, but it seemed to be a pretty carefree time."

The decade following the start of Saratoga High in 1959 was marked by rising enrollment and a more diverse population. Popular icons during that time included musicians such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. From music to movies, teenage entertainment was much different from nowadays. For example, today students rave about musical variety shows like "America's Got Talent" and "American Idol."

Back then, students loved TV shows like "Shindig!" and "Bonanza."

As for rallies and other school events, students used to wear white as the official color instead of the red that students wear now.

"We did have a playday one year, where the whole school was out on the football field, participating in egg races, tug of war and lots of those kinds of games," said Simpson, who now lives in Aptos. "That was fun."

While teachers worry about the amount of clothing worn during dances today, dress code problems back then involved finding an appropriate length for pant dresses for girls. During the '60s, wearing a "skort," shorts with a flap of fabric in front, instead of a skirt to school could send a girl home.

"Girls could not wear pants to

school or to any school functions," said Simpson. "No pants at all, skirts or dresses only. I was kind of mad that they changed that rule the year after I graduated from SHS!"

Other problems included smoking, which was much more widespread in the '60s. Perhaps as many as half of students smoked, said a 1969 Falcon paper.

Already, many traditions were being established during the '60s as well, such as senior ditch day and Powder Puff. Furthermore, students were also more involved in politics, with students participating in the Vietnam Moratorium, a protest against the Vietnam War.

Numerous activities that were popular at the time don't take place anymore today. For example, there was a fencing team and even a mariachi band on campus, and every year, a carnival was held on campus.

Toward the end of the decade, the school considered instituting an open campus policy during lunch because there was finally an interstate running through Saratoga, and there were more places to go.

The classroom setting was also very different. Instead of calculators and computers, students used adding machines and typewriters to do their work.

As for sports, in 1964, the San Francisco Examiner named the varsity football team the No. 1 Class A football team in northern California, a title that would tough to imagine achieving today. School spirit was aplenty during the 1960s, especially before football games when rallies were held before every game.

"There was an actual rooting section at the football games and a lot of students followed the cheerleaders' cheers. Later, I noticed that the 'rooting sections' sort of gradually disappeared over the years until they were gone," said Simpson. "Kids nowadays are more interested in visiting with each other and being 'seen.'" ♦



Fourth in an occasional series

# Students and teachers join to become 'secret pals'

by Maggie Lin

"Pumpkin stress balls? That is so cool! My secret pal is awesome." This was just one of the excited responses from the first Secret Pals event held on Oct. 30.

Secret Pals is a year-long event hosted by the ASB that is open to all students and teachers who want to exchange gifts at designated times of the year.

ASB President, senior Haley Zarrin said, "It's a chance for students and teachers to get to know each other on a more personal level instead of only on an academic level."

**It was pretty neat seeing all the gifts piled up in Ms. Hyde's office. It felt like Christmas."**

—ASB secretary Cindy Chang

Secret Pals is similar to Secret Santa in almost every way but one. Instead of being completely anonymous, it is only anonymous to the teachers as the students chose the teachers they wanted to be "Pals" with.

"We got the idea from previous ASBs and thought we should do it to improve ASB-staff relations," said Zarrin.

Senior ASB secretary Cindy Chang, the main coordinator of the event, worked closely with assistant principal Karen Hyde to make sure everything ran smoothly. Chang's job was to send out slips to teachers asking if they wanted to participate and for them to fill out the attached form. After compiling the list,

students signed up and Chang was in charge of typing them up and distributing all of the slips.

"Coordinating who gets what teacher was hard because not a lot of people signed up at first," Chang said. "It was also difficult making sure all the kids had slips from their teachers and vice versa. We wanted it to be as secret as possible so we had to type everything out or copy the slips over to disguise students' handwriting."

The event had a rough start due to miscommunication concerning the dates and where to drop off the presents, but was a success.

"The best part was seeing it actually work," said Chang. "It was pretty neat seeing all the gifts piled up in Ms. Hyde's office. It felt like Christmas."

It was just as successful from a "Pals" point of view.

Zarrin said, "It's fun finding them a gift and also how we know who they are, but they don't know who we are. It makes it more interesting."

Upcoming gifting times include Christmas and Valentine's day.

"I'm excited about figuring out a gift to get and seeing what the teacher gets. It's a good bonding experience," said Zarrin. ♦

# Guaranteed admission to some UCs brings little comfort to top seniors

by Anna Shen and Karen Yang

The top 4 percent of seniors who have been academically consistent and successful throughout their sophomore and junior years of high school received a letter in the beginning of the school year that congratulated their automatic admittance into a few UCs, including UC Davis, UC Merced, UC Riverside, UC Santa Barbara and UC Irvine, for certain majors. Despite the success, however, this has brought little comfort to these students.

Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC), which is calculated from a student's GPA, guarantees students who have been ranked as the top 4 percent of their class admission to at least one of the nine UC schools. More prestigious UCs such as UCLA, Berkeley and San Diego, however, do not participate in ELC.

"I think [making ELC] is a major accomplishment and a nice reward for the work I've done," said senior Ashwin Siripurapu, who was accepted by UC Davis. "That is a relief for me; it feels good to know that I'm going to go to college."

Despite an automatic admission, many seniors find that ELC brings them little comfort in college applications and decisions, mainly because they are hopeful of attending private colleges instead of UCs.

"[Davis] is not where I really want to go," said Siripurapu. "I prefer to go to a private school, but I'd rather go to a first-rate UC than a second-rate private."

Although ELC offers little help to students seeking a prestigious education in the Ivy League, ELC offers at least one safety school for eligible students.

"If you know you're going to get into a UC, it's comforting [knowing that] despite all the budget cuts and tuition increases, you have a spot," said senior Priyanka Hardikar, who was accepted into UC Davis, Irvine, Santa Barbara

## THE BIG IDEA

### Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC)

**GUARANTEED ACCEPTANCE:** The top 4 percent of seniors receive guaranteed admission into some of the UCs.

**BRINGS LITTLE COMFORT:** Most of these students have these UCs as a fallback, not a first choice.

and Santa Cruz.

Compared to last year, the guidance department has seen a trend of more broad applications, more early applications and more private school applications, according to Brian Safine, the assistance principal in charge of guidance. He said 74 seniors have applied early this year compared with 59 last year, and he anticipates that roughly 230 seniors out of the 330 in the class will apply to private universities, up from 215 last year.

"Students were initially concerned from '08-'09 because there were cuts at the UCs; [however], we increased the number of students at private schools and UC [acceptance rates] stayed the same," said Safine. "If this year is anything like last year, our students are going to have many choices for schools to attend." Safine said that 39 percent of last year's class ended up attending a UC.

Letters from the UC offices were sent at the end of last year informing them prospective seniors whether they belong within the top 15 percent of their class. In the beginning of senior year, students were informed whether they made the top four percent, automatically making ELC. Despite having been guaranteed admission, ELC seniors were still required to submit a full application to those UCs.

"I'm not sure how carefully [Davis' admissions office] will scrutinize my essay. They said I was guaranteed admission in my first choice major, so I suppose I could just smash the keyboard on my essays, and they'll still accept me," said Siripurapu. "I'm not going to take that chance though." ♦



Jordan Waito

Sophomore Anika Jhalani and junior Talia Balma audition for tap dancing roles on Nov. 18.

# STUDENTS TAP AWAY FOR 'ANYTHING GOES'

by Mary Mykhaylova

After a mere three weeks in between productions, the drama department promptly cued the auditions for winter musical "Anything Goes" two weeks ago.

This Cole Porter show is different from the usual repertoire of annual musicals, all due to one unique addition: tap dancing. Susan Dini, the principal's secretary and an avid tap dancer, has stepped up to take the lead as choreographer for the show.

She has taken time out of her schedule to attend lunch meetings in the weeks leading up to auditions in order to give the actors a strong foundation in tap dancing. With most auditioners not knowing the difference between a shuffle and a flap, her expertise has played a significant role.

"I have never felt less coordinated in my entire life. But it's all about embracing the experience with our fellow performers," said junior Jay Lee, who will be playing the lead, Billy. "I love the lessons because I'm not the only one who's struggling through the process."

After emphasizing the basics for the first several lessons, Dini went on to teach the actual audition routine in advance.

"Tap is very difficult, since it's really fast and you have to be precise and perfect

in your movements for it to be done correctly," said junior Abby Frankola.

Though most actors have never tap danced before, they have been attempting to practice together in order to pick it up as quickly as possible.

"A lot of the musical experience has to do with embracing our lack of skill in various areas together as an ensemble," joked Lee. "I've always wanted to learn how to tap, and what better way to learn than by doing a musical?"

Auditioners agree that musicals are a lot of fun, since by the end of a show, the cast gets really close, having bonded over those many hours of singing and dancing incessantly.

"[Musical theatre] is the best part of drama because it incorporates all three elements: singing, dancing and acting," said sophomore Anshu Siripurapu. "It appeals to a wide variety of people and anyone can be involved in the show in some capacity."

Cast members are excited about the prospects of "Anything Goes."

"I was really glad to see some new faces at the auditions. You can never have too many people participating in these shows," said Lee. "Hopefully, next time we can get some more people from the athletics departments to join our festival of fun and foolishness." ♦

# BUDGET | Budget deficit hits district, solutions to come

continued from pg. 1

The categorical funding for the LG-SUHSD—which finances specific programs, such as guidance counselors, instructional materials and the GATE Program—has been reduced to zero as a part of the Basic Aid "fair share" negotiated in the state legislature this past summer, said Anderson. Categorical funding for the district was \$2.1 million in 2008-2009 and \$1.47 million in 2009-2010.

History teacher Matt Torrens, who heads the School Site Council, said the group last year distributed \$100,000 in categorical money to various programs and projects in the school. He said the council be distributing \$40,000 this year—with all of money coming directly from the district rather than the state.

"We sort of streamlined how money is getting out," said Torrens. "[The budget deficit] has forced us to streamline and organize ourselves; so even though we have less money, it's clear how that money will be spent."

Another factor in the district's deficit is an anticipated decrease in this year's local assessed valuation numbers—property value—which means that the district is

collecting less money from property taxes than usual because of a falling real estate market.

"[The local assessed valuation numbers] are not confirmed yet," said Anderson. "They might be higher; they might be lower. Where we need it to be, to keep the \$1.6 million deficit from getting bigger, is a 3 percent increase. If it goes down, then the \$1.6 million deficit gets bigger; if it goes higher, then the deficit will be lower. That's key."

Because of the overall downturn of the state and national economy, it is not likely the staff will be receiving a raise in their salaries in 2010.

Students who have heard of the potential cuts feel that their education and extracurricular activities could be affected. Along with a the possibility of having fewer teachers and less instructional material on campus, expenses, equipment and trips for the athletic and music departments may also diminish.

"From the music departments perspective, I know we've been cutting back on [equipment], such as not riding lavish buses," said junior Neyla Vishwanath. "Just from little things like that, I can see [the financial deficit] taking place."

In addition, electives with few sign-ups will most likely be cut in order to conserve money.

"[The school] is thinking of re-doing the entire senior English curriculum," said senior Allison Wustrow, "but that would be bad for the budget, because you have to buy all the new textbooks and train the teachers on the new topics."

Because of the current nation-wide financial crisis, many students feel that the district's deficit was inevitable and not to be blamed on district officials.

"We're not going to solve [this problem] really soon, because it's the whole country, the state, and everything," said Vishwanath. "If the economic issue is resolved outside of school and we cut back within the school, that would help."

District officials are deciding whether to extract some money from the district's \$3 million emergency strategic reserve—a rainy day fund to help weather financial crises. Other ideas the district brainstormed during a recent meeting of the committee to help tackle the problem were the alignment of Saratoga and Los Gatos High School's schedules in order to reduce the hiring of new teachers; and a decrease in supplies, staff and construc-

## THE BIG IDEA

### Financial Crisis

**PROJECTED DEFICIT** \$1.6 million

**CATEGORICAL FUNDING** Will be significantly cut, thus restricting instructional materials and specific programs such as the GATE Program

**PROPERTY TAX** Due to the falling real estate market, there will be a decrease in property values, contributing to the deficit

tion contracts.

"As much as it is possible, we want to keep everybody on the job and make sure that we have people to serve [the students]," said Anderson. "[Students] can go without a new textbook next year, but people are what make schools go. That's what our priority will be: to maintain the folks that could serve [students]."

A Budget Advisory Committee meeting will be held in December to discuss plans for minimizing this deficit.

"This will be an interesting winter," said Anderson. ♦

**YOU PASSED!**

**DMV-Approved Driver Training**

- Adults & Teenagers from 15.
- Personal/Private Lessons.
- Free Pick-up & Delivery.
- Dual Control Cars.
- Permit Assistance.

**Court-Approved Traffic School**

- Flexible Schedule.
- Comfortable Classrooms.
- Day /Evening /Weekends.
- Instructor Training Program.

**\$5 off regular price with ad!**

**Ali Driving & Traffic School**

**408-370-9696**

AFFORDABLE RATES!

3084 Driftwood Dr. San Jose 95128

DMV License #3876 Bonded & Insured

# TEA PARTY PUSHES FOR GREEN

by Emily Williams

Faculty members, administration, students and city council members from Saratoga and Los Gatos all met on Oct. 14 at the Los Gatos Neighborhood center for a "Green Tea Party," to brainstorm ways to make Saratoga and Los Gatos High more eco-friendly.

The "tea party" was organized by district superintendent Cary Matsuoka along with senior Natalie Tkaleciv, the student representative for Saratoga on the board, and Los Gatos senior board representative Jenny Heath.

According to Tkaleciv, both she and Heath found the subject "near and dear to [their] hearts."

They first brainstormed the idea of putting this group together when they addressed Matsuoka about getting involved with the environment. Together the three of them planned the entire party: from hand-picking 10 students from each school to making biodegradable invitations.

"I've always been really passionate about being environmentally friendly and going green," said Tkaleciv. "It's really exciting to see that people are interested in this and they are becoming passionate as well."

There were many ideas discussed at the party, including getting new water fountains, installing solar panels, making the school more paperless and getting more recycling bins.

"It was good that we brought up the water fountains because the water fountains are the same as they were when the school was built 50 years ago and they're kind of disgusting," said junior Kent Paisley, one of the students invited to the meeting. "Hopefully these reforms will be enforced in the near future."

The school board has looked at these ideas and is planning to fix the water fountains and bringing additional recycle bins into every class room.

Tkaleciv and the board are getting started right away. They have already had a meeting on Nov. 10 at lunch, and Tkaleciv spoke at a PTISO meeting in hopes of raising money.

They are also planning on starting a group called The Green Team which will go to elementary and middle schools to educate kids about the importance of going green. In addition, they hope to coordinate a green week some time next semester.

"It's such an important subject, especially for schools since that is where we become educated," said Tkaleciv. "If we start here, then our generation will be a lot more aware and eco-friendly." ♦



Amanda Yi

Seniors Andrew Hsieh, Andy Johnson, Trevor Teerlink, Casey Dalbeck and Dale Everett perform on Nov. 6 before a roaring crowd.

## Seniors save best performance for last

### Seniors place first and Homecoming week wraps up with a clean dance.

by Christine Bancroft, David Eng and Karen Lyu

The 2009 Homecoming week will certainly be one remembered for changes, as it came to a close with a senior quad day, a football game and an unusually clean dance in the gym during the Homecoming week.

Members of the Homecoming court were presented at halftime during the Nov. 6 football game against Cupertino High School.

Homecoming king and queen were seniors Guillaume Bellegarda and Rita Chen, accompanied by princes Kevin Rollinson and Trevor Teerlink and princesses Annie Lee and Jordan Leonard.

Junior Homecoming prince and princess were Ren Norris and Jason Shuiang; the sophomore class was represented by Annie Barco and Eric Wang; the freshman class was represented by Stevie Berman and Courtney Lee.

Nearly 24 hours after the Homecoming court was announced, hundreds of students slipped into the Saratoga gym to participate in the Homecoming dance.

The administration recently cracked down on inappropriate dancing and

dress, notifying the students that they would be pulled out of dances for disregarding warnings. If a second offense occurred during the dance, the student would be sent home following parent notification.

"We can see that trying to end [the dance style of] 'freaking' is not going to work," assistant principal Karen Hyde told one English class. "All we want is to make things more appropriate."

Hyde obviously was successful getting this message across to students, calling the Homecoming dance "fabulous" and describing the students as being "extraordinarily responsive" to guidelines issued throughout the week.

Administrators and teachers circled the gym throughout the night with flashlights to look for inappropriate dancing. The semi-formal dress code of the Homecoming dance as opposed to previous years' casual dress, also added to a cleaner atmosphere.

"It was not gross and disgusting," said Hyde. "I think kids really heard the message."

In addition to approval from the administration, student reception of the dance was generally positive.

"I thought the dance was pretty good. For me it started off slow, but then it picked up," said sophomore Annie Barco. "The DJ played most of the songs that are really popular right now, but he

left out a few too." Barco believes that students followed the administration's regulations and said students were "better than usual."

The compiled results of the Homecoming competition were also released, as the senior class dominated the competition with 633 points. Juniors placed second at 467 points, while sophomores scored 348 and freshmen tallied 171.

One of the huge controversies regarding the week's festivities involved the judges' decision to rank the sophomores' decorations higher than the juniors'.

Guidance secretary Sharon Fong, one of the decoration judges, attributed the sophomores' one-point victory to their detailed kitchen but added that the juniors did a good job as well. ♦

**THE BIG IDEA**

**HC Final Scores**

**SENIORS:** Class of 2010 goes up, up and away with 633 points

**JUNIORS:** "Nemo" finds 467 points

**SOPHOMORES:** Stole away with a ratty 348 points

**FRESHMEN:** Dinosaurs go extinct at 171 points



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TOGA SPIRIT

### FOOTBALL WON'T GIVE UP

"Never, never, never quit." – Winston Churchill  
The November 6, 2009 issue of The Saratoga Falcon included an opinion article about our rivalry with the Los Gatos football team. The piece conveyed some truths in a comparison between Saratoga and Los Gatos athletes.

**The article failed to take into account the passion and precision that a winning squad must play with.**

Sure, players from LG are traditionally bigger than the ones in Saratoga; however, while superior physical ability provides a team with a slight advantage, it hardly determines the outcome of a football game. The article failed to take into account the passion and precision that a winning squad must play with.

The piece also implied that people can only be either academically or athletically talented, but not both. There is no reason why accomplishment in one area should preclude excellence in the other. As a matter of fact, it does not on our team.

Many of our most prominent leaders distinguish themselves both academically and athletically; many members of our football team are no exception.

As a team, we felt both baffled and disheartened by other concepts portrayed in the piece. Our own newspaper suggested that we simply "give up." Our esteemed band attends California Finals each year; they are frequently defeated by their rival Logan High School. Last year, our band placed 13th in the contest, but they were back at it again this year with another shot at victory. Now, back

to football. Rather than focus on the frustration that this lack of support and school spirit causes us (the varsity football team), let me enlighten everyone as to why we are undeterred in our rivalry with Los Gatos.

I have two words: Red Pride. Red Pride is a Saratoga Football tradition. Red Pride is the belief that you have failed unless you have played 48 minutes of "balls to the wall" football; that despite the numbers on the scoreboard, there is nothing better than toiling with your blood brothers on Benny Pierce Field. It is displaying admirable character both on and off the field through work ethic and sportsmanship.

On the Saratoga High School varsity football team, we practice what we preach. We advocate Red Pride. I do not expect two words to possibly win support for our team, but rest assured we will never change our stubborn beliefs. So, why not help us to achieve something great? Why not root for the upset of the century? Understand. We cannot give up. We will not give up. We must beat Los Gatos. The time will come, whether within 5 years or 50. Fair weather fans need not attend; we will play just as hard for our school, even if the stands are empty. ♦

– Peter Auwil and the rest of your Saratoga Falcons

## Veterans Day: Not just another day off

by Sophia Cooper

Many students came to school Thursday, Nov 12, complaining about how horrible Veterans Day was. The day before, they had homework to do, tests to study for, college applications to fill out.

But we don't have Veterans Day as an excuse for students not to have to go to school or catch up on homework. We celebrate it to honor all of those who have served in our military and to thank them for their service.

The true meaning of Nov. 11 has sadly gotten lost among the bustle of people's busy lives—even at a time when we're fighting wars in two countries.

It's vital for us to remember why we celebrate Veterans Day. Our veterans make significant sacrifices to help secure our freedoms as American citizens and those of all world citizens.

They fight on the front lines of battle, standing tall while the artillery hits around them, keeping their eyes on the American flag flying high, defending our American ideals of the natural rights life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

They have watched the enemy advance. They have watched their comrades fall. They have watched us win.

It isn't hard to honor our veterans once a year. Simply flying an American flag in front of your house can be a good start. Wearing red, white and blue that day is a good start. Putting a "Support our Troops" sign in your front yard is another great



Cullan McChesney

choice. But the best way to honor vets is to say thank you. By thanking a veteran for their service, you show that you appreciate the sacrifices they have made.

Personally, both my father and my grandfather are veterans of the Vietnam War and World War II, respectively. My family makes

a point of celebrating both of them.

We make Nov. 11 their special day, do a project they want (this year it was tiling our bathroom) and have dinner together. It isn't nearly enough to truly express our gratitude,

but it's a start. So for the next national holiday, don't just think of it as a day to do work or do absolutely nothing. Memorial Day and Veterans Day alike, think of or thank of a veteran.

Without their courageous contributions, we wouldn't be able to enjoy the freedoms that we do. ♦

## Electives idea: a big step forward for the English department

by Kevin Mu



Nathan Kim

When students think of novels read in an honors English course, their minds don't often jump to mystery novels or adventure stories, but that may soon change.

In recent weeks, students took a survey that attempted to gauge their interest in having English literature electives available in their junior and senior years. These electives would focus on a specific genre of literature such as science fiction or horror/suspense and would aim to increase students' interest in literature.

By adding these electives, the school would take a major step toward making literature more accessible and fun for upperclassmen. Many students comment that books read in regular English are boring or feel that the novels' themes don't apply to their lives. While certain standard books are useful for developing skills in literary analysis and critical thinking, for some students it

does nothing to boost their level of interest in reading and can even turn students away from books. By incorporating new classes and letting students choose what books they want to read, the school is helping to get students interested in reading again.

The electives also offer the opportunity for students to appreciate different types of literature. In designing a normal curriculum, the school must be very selective in the books they choose and, as a result, leave out many other brilliant works of literature. Although there are many, many more books that are worthy of being in an honors curriculum, time constraints simply don't allow for them to be taught by teachers.

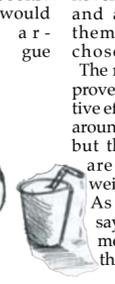
Adding electives would expose these less conventional books to students and broaden their views of literature. Logically, it's impossible to cover the entirety of literature in just four years or even in a lifetime of learning; literature is an immensely broad topic that contains the different experiences and viewpoints and stories of people from all different walks of life. So why should studying literature be limited to a narrow range of books?

Some people would argue

that such electives are frivolous and unnecessary, but the reality is reading books from different genres is just as valuable as reading classics.

Not only do they allow for deep literary analysis and critical thinking, but they also provide a more conducive environment for class discussions. It's because all the students in the class are more likely to be interested in the novels themselves and actually read them since they've chosen to be there.

The new program, if approved, would take a collaborative effort by English teachers and around two years to implement, but the benefits for students are endless and far outweigh the work involved. As a junior, I'm sad to say my only disappointment is that they didn't think of it any sooner. ♦



**新學友 ShareWorld Learning Center**  
www.shareworld.org (408) 446-1956

**Free SAT & College Essay Workshop**  
12/06/2009 Sunday 1:30pm

**New College Essay Writing / Editing**  
Write into College

• **Intensive SAT I / II Preparation Class**  
Available NOW for 12/5/09 Test  
Starts 10/31/09 for 1/23/10 Test  
Starts 12/12/09 for 3/13/10 Test

• **Homework Help - GPA Improvement**  
English, Math, Science, Languages, etc.

\*SAT Scholarship available \*Free Simulation Tests \*Free SAT Seminar

21601 Stevens Creek Blvd. Cupertino, CA 95014  
Highway 85 Stevens Creek Exit Turn West

(408) 867-9028

**SARATOGO'S**  
For real.

In the Argonaut Shopping Center

**ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, FAMILY, AND STAFF:**

**Sandwich! Chips! Drink!**

Any cold family sandwich + 4 chips + 4 drinks

Original price: \$27.85  
Saratoga High: Only \$19.85

Combo only \$5.99

**ALL CATERING \$50 OR MORE: 10% OFF!!!**

Congratulations!! to ShareWorld Students  
Accepted by Top Colleges - Harvard, UPenn, Stanford, MIT, Princeton, UC Berkeley, and UCLA, and Scoring 800 on SAT

# ZERO TOLERANCE EQUALS ZERO THOUGHT

by Jordan Waite

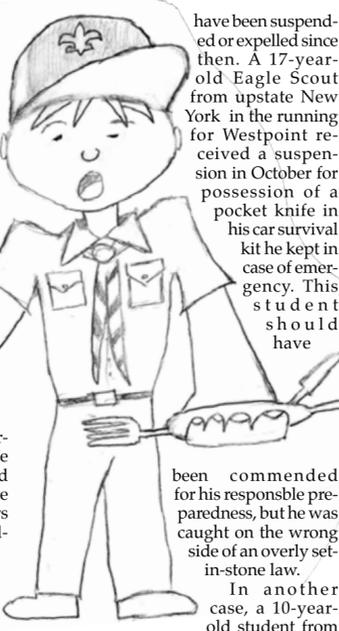
Six-year-old cub scout Zachary Christie sat down to eat his home-packed lunch at Downes Elementary School in Newark, Del., on a day he thought was an ordinary day in Oct. He took out his camping eating utensil—which contained a fork, spoon, can opener and small knife—and was immediately sent to the principal’s office for being in possession of a dangerous weapon. Christie’s initial punishment was a mandatory 45 days of reform school before returning to first grade. In no way does a 6-year-old deserve such a harsh punishment over a harmless camping tool.

Though the school board quickly overturned the initial decision and allowed the boy to return to school, poor Christie said that he felt like he didn’t fit in anymore at school because of the mob of reporters and photographers that constantly followed him.

It is a disgrace that the school system even considered sending the boy to reform school, where he would have spent every day around actual delinquents.

This case is just one of many that have occurred in an era of “zero tolerance” against weapons, which has been enforced in many public schools since the Columbian shootings in 1999.

Many obviously innocent students



have been suspended or expelled since then. A 17-year-old Eagle Scout from upstate New York in the running for Westpoint received a suspension in October for possession of a pocket knife in his car survival kit he kept in case of emergency. This student should have been commended for his responsible preparedness, but he was caught on the wrong side of an overly set-in-stone law.

In another case, a 10-year-old student from Longmont, Colo., was suspended in 1998 when she was found with a small kitchen knife in her lunch box. Her mother put the knife in her lunch that morning so the girl could cut her apple; she clearly didn’t intend to use it in a dangerous way. In yet another case, a third-grader

received suspension for having a knife her grandmother sent to school along with the birthday cake for her class to share.

What has happened with this policy is that school officials sometime don’t even consider the circumstances of individual cases. Any student in possession of what could be considered a weapon, no matter their age or record, is punished as if they had the intent of harming their classmates.

Officials who enforce the “zero tolerance” policy are effectively treating every case the same and therefore not putting thought into the situations. If a boy has a butter knife in the back of his pick-up truck, does that mean he was going to stab another student with it?

Another issue that needs to be addressed in cases involving possession of weapons is the definition of a weapon.

Knife is a very broad term. Clearly, a case involving a butter knife should not be handled in the same way as a combat knife, but under the “zero tolerance” policy, they are sometimes treated equally. Pens and scissors are both arguably more dangerous than a butter knife, so what’s next? Are school districts going to ban scissors?

It is certainly necessary for schools to be cautious about weapons on campus, but each accused student should have his or her individual circum-

stances considered. Every citizen of the United States who is accused of a crime has the right to a trial by jury.

A fair hearing is the least students should expect. In fact, students deserve even more consideration than a grown adult, because events like being suspended and places like reform school have long-term and possibly irreversible effects on a child’s growing mind.

After many cases like Christie’s, where an innocent student was wrongly punished due to the “zero tolerance” policy, the government should have figured out that their thoughtless approach isn’t working.

The “zero tolerance” policy needs to be altered so that school and district officials can treat each individual case differently and actually think about the circumstances surrounding each accusation. ♦



Jordan Waite

## ‘Balloon Boy’ parents in search of publicity

by Izzy Albert and Tiffany Tung

The artist Andy Warhol once said, “In the future everyone will be world famous for 15 minutes.” As for the Heene family, 15 minutes of fame is just not enough.

On top of appearing on two episodes of “Wife Swap,” a show on ABC Family, the Heenes were in the process of developing their own TV series.

In an effort to secure this deal, Richard Heene, the father, planned the “Balloon Boy Hoax” to get the media’s attention. And the media’s attention did he get, but not the attention that he was expecting.

When the youngest son, Falcon revealed that the family had “done it for the show,” the family’s plans for a television show blew up in their faces, and America learned that television is not what it should be.

Is it really worth gambling away one’s pride in order to achieve fame? The over-reported “John and Kate Plus Eight” situation is a prime example as to why one should put one’s private life out in the world as entertainment, especially that of a reality show.

It’s not worth it. And still, the Heenes were willing to ask their children to lie for them so they can get their own television show.

Then again, the parents did meet each other at an acting school. Although building a balloon and saying that a child was in their was quite an ingenious idea, tricking America for one’s own selfish motives is just wrong.

Because of the disturbing length



Tiffany Tung

Richard Heene went to try and achieve fame, and forcing his children to lie to the police and nation, Child Protective Services has been contacted. This is both good and detrimental for the children; good because their father is psychotic, and detrimental because their lives will never be the same, and all hopes of staying a happy family are likely to be gone.

Parents are supposed to care for their children. Exploiting them and tricking the public eye is not only misleading, but also illegal, and since the incident occurred, the Heenes’ case has been sent to their district attorney. Unfortunately, with the media coverage of the hoax, America will still be staying tuned regarding the results of the case and whether charges will be filed.

The Heenes got the media that they were looking for, but they must be regretting their decision now. ♦

## Pushing children too early academically unnecessary

by Albert Gu

It is no secret that in the past few years, the competition to get into first-class universities has escalated. High school students burden themselves with extra classes and extracurricular activities in order to give themselves an edge over their peers. Their parents are no less obsessed—they often attend getting-into-college seminars and enroll their children in expensive prep classes. Many expensive private schools have sprouted all over the country. All this is understandable; after all, getting into a good college can be the gateway into a high-quality life. However, the craze has to stop somewhere.

Private elementary schools have existed for decades but kept a low profile. In recent years, more parents have been pushing their precocious youngsters to apply to these elite schools. Demand has been growing, so new schools have been founded, the most recent of which is the Speyer Legacy School in west Manhattan, which opened its doors this year with a ridiculous admission price of \$28,500 for kindergarten.

While the desire of parents to provide the best possible education for their children is understandable, putting such young children through elite schools is just absurd. They are subjected to a rigorous academic curriculum with set standards for each grade. This type of education is completely pointless when given to any child below middle school.

Elementary schools need to focus on exploring rather than learning concrete facts and trying to reach set goals on what children should know by a certain age. For instance, students at Speyer are told they are discussing meteorology rather than the daily weather, and that they are

learning about entomology rather than insects—pointless terminology that obscures the fact that they are just learning about every day matters, not researching a scientific field. This rigorous “studying” of certain subjects in fact hinders children’s ability to be creative by laying out facts in front of them and preventing them from actively questioning the world by themselves.

Another negative aspect of private elementary schools is that it can hinder the children’s social abilities. Most obviously, such expensive schools usually have minimal class sizes, and the small student-to-teacher ratio is not necessarily beneficial because children get fewer chances to socialize. In addition, educators often view recess and exercise as mandatory but pointless activities to keep kids fit, not as a vital element to their social and physical development. Expensive schools try to appear better than their public school counterparts by developing extensive physical fitness programs, but no fitness regime can compare to letting the children roam free by themselves.

Parents fret over their bright children not getting the high quality education they deserve, but pushing them through expensive, elite private schools may not be as beneficial as they think, if at all. The focus of educating young children should be on exposure, which any school can do, not teaching them more advanced facts. Most successful students pull ahead during middle and high school as a result of personal interest and exploration in a subject, not their parents’ prodding. The best solution is that if parents feel like public school is progressing too slowly for their child, they can let him play with friends at school and teach him themselves at home. ♦

## The Saratoga Falcon

### 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.

### MISSION STATEMENT

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.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Saratoga Falcon welcomes all signed letters of opinion, which are subject to editing for length, accuracy and grammar. Please send them to editor@saratogafalcon.org. For ad information, call (408) 867-3411, ext. 222.

### 3RD PERIOD STAFF

- Editor-in-Chief**  
Alex Song
- News Editor**  
Annie Lee
- Opinion Editor**  
Mary Mykhaylova
- Lifestyles Editors**  
Maggie Lin  
Rebecca Nguyen
- Entertainment Editor**  
Nathan Kim
- School Scope Editor**  
Karthik Annaamalai
- In-Depth Editor**  
Kevin Mu
- Sports Editor**  
Sophia Cooper
- Backpage Editor**  
Ren Norris
- Web Editor**  
Brian Kim
- Webmasters/Layout Editor**  
Karthik Sreedhara
- Head Art Editor**  
Cullan McChesney
- Graphics Editor**  
Albert Gu
- Assistant Graphics Editors**  
Arnav Dugar
- Design Editor**  
Tiffany Tung
- Head Photographers**  
Jordan Waite
- Photographers**  
Grishma Athavale, Karen Lyu
- Head Copy Editors**  
Robin Liu, Anna Shen
- Copy Editors**  
Serena Chan, Vivian LeTran, Karen Yang
- Head Business Manager**  
Kavya Nagarajan
- Assistant Business Manager**  
Lauren Kuan
- Reporters/Layout Artists**  
Isabelle Albert, Serena Chan, David Eng, Sarah Hull, Vivien Lu, Aanchal Mohan, Ashley Tang, Emily Williams
- Adviser**  
Mike Tyler

Printed by FolgerGraphics in Hayward

Printing is paid for by advertising and a PTSO donation.



# Copenhagen climate change circus

by Arnav Dugar

The international community is in concord over one statement regarding climate change: it is a problem that needs to be addressed. However, not much else is known about the issue.

By how much are emissions altering the atmosphere? What impacts will

plague future generations? When will it be too late?

Answers to these three questions seem as likely as a panacea for climate change. The only certainty is of some malady sometime in the future. So we have identified a problem we created for ourselves and are now trying to battle it blindfolded, without any substantial knowledge.

If some extraterrestrial civilization were to visit the Earth, they would see a political circus. Leaders are clowning around, trying to appear devoted to the cause without taking any action. Organizations are juggling ideas but are not settling on any. Only a few are truly concerned about the earth-shattering decisions and are getting drowned out in the ruckus.

## Cap and trade system throws US into disarray and chaos

Although the Waxman-Markey and its successor, the Boxer Bill in the US have both proven to be duds stuck in Congress, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) seems to be the remedy. The agency, empowered by the Supreme Court, has the authority to enforce its

own regulations without Congress’ approval.

The problem, at least for the US, seems to be solved, but the EPA has proposed somewhat of a two-faced solution, cap and trade.

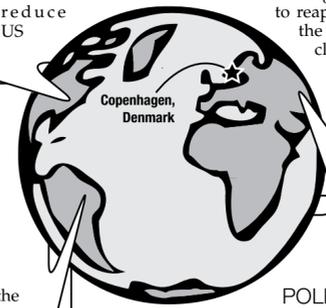
It aims to reduce US

emissions by 17% from 2005 to 2020 by setting a cap on emissions while giving credits for not reaching the cap. However, the trade of these credits puts a dollar value on carbon, making it another economic game designed to reap the benefits of the world’s fear of climate change.

It is already apparent from the disagreement within several trade or-

ganizations, including the Chamber of Commerce, that several businesses are looking to take advantage of the system. Companies like Nike which manufacture and pollute abroad favor the system since they will easily receive credits, while other companies are strongly against it and are threatening to sue the EPA.

Instead of reorienting the US in a positive direction, the EPA has created a repulsive cocktail of economics, politics, and science.



## Deforestation

In past climate change conferences, deforestation, accounting for 20% of global emissions, has been overlooked. In response, the UN devised a program to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD), but the solution unravels a host of new problems instead of solving them. REDD aims to achieve its goal by having developed nations bribe developing countries to not cut down forests. In return, developed nations spend from the national budget to get emissions credits to buy themselves out of pollution penalties.

Even if it seems to do its job, the aftermath paints a very different picture. REDD rewards the worst offenders while countries with low deforestation rates like Costa Rica do not benefit. Also forests gain an artificial value giving governments incentives to push the natives out.

Overall, REDD leaves developing countries addicted to the program since deforestation restarts when the cash flow stops. And without a standard between contributions, countries will hunt for the “cheapest” way to get credits, leading to a non-sustainable business rather than a program for environmental change. Regardless, there would be no method to measure the improvement, if any.

## China’s emissions policy

POLLUTING LESS BY POLLUTING MORE

A policy to reduce emissions that allows an overall increase in pollution seems counter-intuitive, yet China plans to adopt such a scheme. The proposal will mandate a decrease in energy consumption, which is directly related to emissions levels, for every unit of GDP produced.

At first glance, China seems to be making a constructive decision. However, according to their proposal, if China produces more units of GDP, which means the country’s total GDP

increases, then China can thus emit more. The GDP does have to increase more than the carbon emissions do, but it is certain since China’s economy is rapidly growing at a steady rate.

The policy is merely to please the world and to look pretty on paper at Copenhagen not to genuinely improve the climate. Such an obviously lax paradigm from the country with the highest emissions levels will not only cause dispute over the standards of other countries, but also hinder any progress.

## Procrastination until another Copenhagen

At the end of the day when this circus packs to leave for Copenhagen, it is unlikely that substantial progress will have been made. Those in power who run the circus rides, who design the policies and know how to take advantage of them, will end up richer. Meanwhile those who are genuinely playing the game have very little power to achieve anything.

With no specific goals set, countries such as China, are left to interpret the standards.

America’s goal also is to only look good at Copenhagen, and since the EPA guarantees this, little progress is being made.

There is even talk about a second Copenhagen since the expectations for the first one are already plummeting.

Some fear what the future may bring. Others are simply playing the game. Only time will tell if Copenhagen III will become a reality or if the world will give up on the idea altogether by then. ♦

# Iran's nuclear ambitions leave world in a bind

by Arnav Dugar

The current Iranian regime has consistently shown its intent to develop nuclear weapons. Iran has already shown sufficient progress on the three pieces of technology to create an effective nuclear weapon: uranium enriched to weapons grade, a missile capable of reaching Israel and parts of Western Europe and a warhead that will fit on the missile.

Iran’s clandestine nuclear program is a ticking time bomb and its well-advertised intent to threaten Israel makes it a real danger. Even so, when it comes to dealing with Iran, the world, particularly the U.S., is stuck between a rock and a hard place. Meanwhile, Iran seems to be betting it can deploy nuclear weapons while the world is muddling through inaction.

After much delay, Iran has adamantly refused the U.N. proposal in which the enrichment process would be outsourced

and impose its own sanctions against Iran even if the rest of the world does not fully support this action. If the European Union agrees to these sanctions along with the U.S., together accounting for over 30 percent of world oil imports, it should have significant impact on Iran’s oil and natural gas based economy.

Even if the Iranian regime continues its nuclear weapons program despite these sanctions, the people in Iran are likely to feel the economic impact and hence may demand changes from their government.

Iranians have already shown their displeasure with the government by taking to streets and protesting last summer’s elections. The time may be ripe to bring changes within the country while making the world safer.

Of course, such sanctions will likely result in higher oil prices, but it is better to pay that price now instead of taking chances with Iran’s nuclear ambitions. ♦

# Richmond case shows need for 'bystander' law

by Christine Bancroft and Denise Lin

In a famous 1964 incident, a New York city bartender named Catherine "Kitty" Genovese was walking home late one night after a day's work when she was attacked by a man. She screamed, pleading nearby bystanders for their help but the screams seemed to fall on deaf ears; the bystanders stood idly and later, Genovese's attacker came back to finish the job. Her murder—and the bystanders' indifference to her pleas—became a national outrage and the source of years of academic study. A similarly vicious attack occurred at Richmond High School Oct. 24, when a 15-year-old girl was raped and beaten by a group of young men and boys after her Homecoming dance. As many as 20 spectators watched and did nothing to aid her, despite the presence of police on campus performing routine drug and alcohol searches. The attack on the unnamed victim may have lasted anywhere from one to two hours and still no one called 911 until around midnight that evening. Seven suspects, some as young as 15 and 16, have been taken into custody.

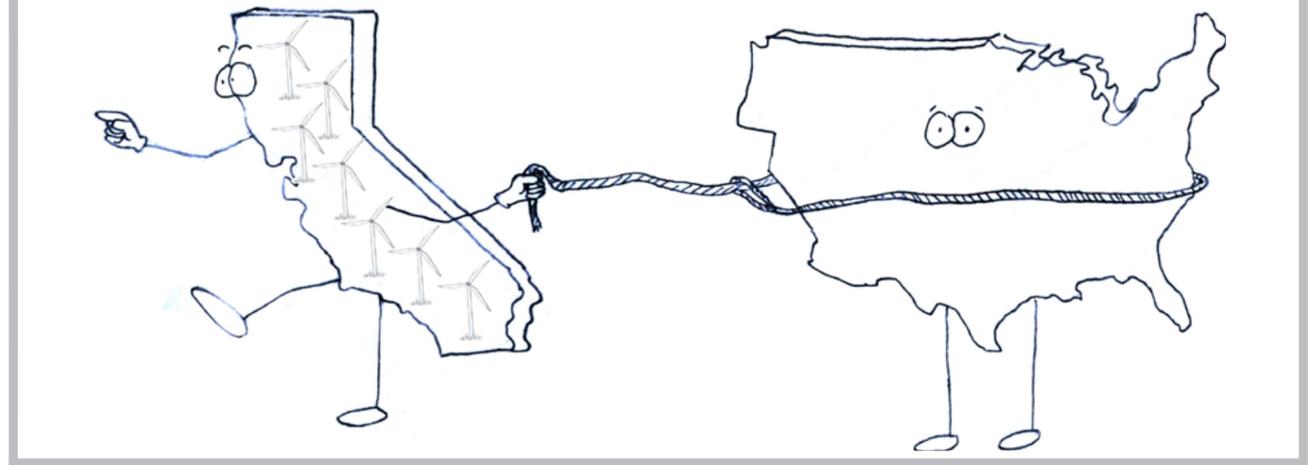
**The Bystander Effect**  
The spectators' disturbing lack of action in both the Genovese case and Richmond attack can be described by a social psychological phenomenon called the "bystander effect." Research shows that the more "spectators" witness a crime, the less likely that one will report it or attempt to intervene. Psychologists say this occurs because bystanders elude the responsibility in a crowd, believing that someone else will or already has taken the initiative to contact the authorities or medical services to help. A crime as horrific as the Richmond gang rape becomes even more appalling when it becomes clear that the victim's peers did nothing to help her—and even egged on her attackers—as this abuse persisted. Anti-bullying campaigns in schools have drilled the valuable lesson into students that there are two kinds of bullies: Those who directly harm others and those who observe crime or abuse but fail to act. It can be argued that the students

at the Richmond High campus were an escalated, more horrific equivalent of this second type of bully. Authorities are attempting to track down the many witnesses of the attack who did not come forward. But it is unlikely that they will be prosecuted due to a law created in 2000 that only makes not reporting a sex crime illegal if the victim is under 14. The law is named after 7-year-old Sherrice Iverson, a child who was kidnapped from a casino by an 18-year-old high school student and was raped and murdered, while several onlookers did nothing to help her, a situation unsettlingly similar to the Richmond case. **15-year-old girl out of luck**  
These laws that punish witnesses who do not report crimes to police are called "Bad Samaritan" laws, as opposed to "Good Samaritan" laws, which protect people who do intervene, or provide first aid to victims until authorities arrive. Of course, the Richmond High students who

did not stop the attack or contact police will most likely dodge any legal charges because the victim is 15, and the Iverson law applies to victims up to age 14. If the Sherrice Iverson law had been extended to protect all minors 18 or younger, then the girl at Richmond High might have been rescued sooner, more of her attackers might have been arrested on scene or later on with the aid of more evidence and those who stood by and allowed the horrific crime to occur would have to face serious penalties. Besides extending the Iverson law to protect all victims of sexual or violent crimes who are at or under 18, the state should make sure more schools teach students the importance of taking the initiative in dangerous circumstances. By doing so, students can protect themselves and prevent such crimes from occurring in the future. Even if an onlooker may not have directly participated in the attack, that does not mean he or she is necessarily innocent. By failing to intervene, the bystanders at Richmond High School allowed the course of unrestrained brutality to run wild at the expense of a defenseless, 15-year-old girl. ♦

## CANDID CARICATURES

by Cullan McChesney



# Time for Americans to switch off consumerist lifestyles

by Robin Liu and Cullan McChesney

**Excess.** This word has defined American culture since the inception of industrialization. No where else in the world exists a place where citizens consume so many manufactured goods. Many parents in Third World countries wake up worrying whether they can provide enough food to feed their children, while in America people are constantly subjected to mass production. Anyone who has sauntered down the endless aisles of Costco can only begin to grasp the overwhelming amount of energy and resources spent catering to the "American dream."

The average American will contribute 52 tons of trash to landfills by the age of 75. Out in the Pacific Ocean, an enormous garbage patch twice the size of Texas continuously circles between America and Asia—a floating reminder of America's excess waste. These days, people buy way more than what they need, and all the surplus ends up in the dump or as litter. The need for luxuries is high on the list of the average American's priorities. In many places, there are more shopping malls than high schools. In the fight against excess waste, California is one of the leading states and has taken the first steps in moving toward a sustainable society. While other states have been increasing their energy consumption, California has started a revolutionary system of rewarding those who cut down on their energy usage. This system encourages people to conserve energy and

experiment with new types of green technology. In addition, California is making electric utilities limit carbon emissions and increase the use of renewable resources. The federal government should use California as an example to bring the rest of the country in line. It should look for more diverse forms of green energy such as harvesting the by-products from Algae, which not only provides oil but ethanol gas. The consensus seems to be that wind and solar power are optimal but these technologies are still limited by production procedures and unattractive manufacturing designs. It's not like solar and wind are dead-end technologies; it's just that as a nation people need to be open-minded to diversity in the field of green technologies. As more resources are wasted, innovative technology may not even be enough, leaving it up to the people to adjust their

**THE BIG IDEA**  
**Going Green**

**NUMBERS:** Americans use 24 percent of the world's energy, and the average American adds 52 tons of trash to landfills by the age of 75

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Innovative technology and renewable resources can limit carbon emissions

## TOGATALKS

What changes are you making to be more green?

I try to turn off the lights in my house when they are not being used and I avoid using styrofoam.



sophomore Steven Sun

I recycle all the stuff that needs to be recycled and I turn off and unplug things when they aren't being used.



junior Victor Zhang

I started reusing bottles and paper instead of constantly wasting them in order to save energy.



freshman Shireen Kaul



...SKIP TV FOR A WEEK?

by David Eng

As I trudged about the room contemplating my next pursuit, I innately plopped down on the couch, reached out for the black button-laden remote control, fired up the flat panel screen and sat there mesmerized. In the ever-expanding age of technological advances, one generation-spanning activity has captured the eyes, and minds, of nearly every American—the TV. In my case, it's nearly an addiction. Perhaps some may criticize me for my affection for this mindless leisure pursuit. Others may question my commitment to school and time organization methods if I have enough time to indulge in several hours of simply zoning into "the tube." But somehow I seem to get away with watching the Warriors game while typing that essay for English. So it was then that I set out on a quest to test my own will power: Could I survive a week without TV? The experiment began Nov. 4 and five days later I still had not watched any telecasts. During that span, the weekend was easily the most straining on my self-values. What else is there to do on Sundays

besides watch football? Well, homework or Facebook would be what most high schoolers would answer and church is what my mom would say. Simply put, it was a struggle to steeer my fingers away from that remote control, but I did. My tactics included convincing myself they were getting destroyed with Alex Smith at quarterback and telling myself that watching the game translates into three fewer hours of sleep. Anyway, then Monday came, the night I typically devote to watching an hour of "Heroes." Tension built. My 13-year-old brother fired up the large screen that stood before me. I had finished all of my work and practiced the piano like a good boy should. Oh and I recalled this episode focused on Hiro medaling with the space-time continuum! *Who cares? You have nothing else to do* whispered someone on my shoulder. *No. Don't you want to show off your self-control to the people who will read your newspaper article* whispered someone on my opposing shoulder. One hour later I found myself sadly sliding into bed, considering what I had just done. Failure. I suppose I can not survive a week without watching television. I fell short, but perhaps you could succeed. Can you survive a week without watching television? ♦

**FALCON FIGURES**

<b>2.24</b> Number of TV sets in an average U.S. household	<b>250 Billion</b> Number of hours of TV watched annually by Americans	<b>\$1.5 Trillion</b> Value of that time with respect to wages (\$5/hour)
--	--	---

—by David Eng

...HAGGLE AT TARGET AND HOME DEPOT?

by Robin Liu and Kavya Nagarajan

In places like China and India, when people go shopping, they can get accessories for much cheaper than the price written on the tag. Most business owners expect to deal with haggling customers. But what happens when you try to haggle in America?

**Kavya: Target**  
"Eight dollars for this pair of earrings?" Kavya asked. "No, I'll pay you five." His expression was priceless. He looked at me, unsure if I was being serious. I tried my hardest to keep a straight face. I read the name next to the 'Target' symbol on his name tag. "Mark, do you really expect to sell these for eight bucks?" I asked. "Uh, I don't decide prices actually. But I can't give it to you any cheaper. It's sterling silver," he said, surprised by my odd behavior. "I know it's sterling silver, but eight dollars?" I said. He looked at me, not sure if I wanted a response. "Uh, I'm sorry. If it's not on sale, you can't get it any cheaper," he said, trying to hide his smile. I gave up. I couldn't fake it any longer. After I explained to him that I was doing an experiment for my school newspaper, he lightened up and began to laugh.

I was curious to know if that sort of thing works over here in America, but it clearly doesn't. So folks, don't bother trying to haggle for anything at Target or any other store for that matter. You are basically guaranteed to not get away with it, unless you end up with a confused and gullible salesman. **Robin: Home Depot**  
Home Depot claimed that it occasionally allowed customers to make pricing decisions, so I decided that I had a chance for a bargain there. I picked out a \$50 floor lamp and found the nearest store worker. "Excuse me, is it possible to get a discount on this lamp?" I asked. "I have a lamp just like this from this store a few years ago, and that one only costed \$20." He looked from me to the lamp and asked, "Do you remember what model it was?" "No, but I'm pretty sure it's the same lamp," I said. The store worker went on to explain that because he didn't have any evidence that the lamps were the same model, I couldn't get a discount. Perhaps if I had been more prepared, I may have reached a successful bargain. I know for a fact that people who have brought in prices off the Internet received discounts or even had their prices matched. With a bit of experience and evidence, a customer just may be able to get away with a sweet deal. Bargaining in America may not be accepted in most stores, but only a persuasive customer armed with information will have a chance at a discount. ♦

**His expression was priceless. He looked at me, unsure if I was being serious.**

I'm a break dancer

Brian Vo



by Vivien Lu and Ashley Tang

This year's junior quad day dance marked the debut of Brian Vo's no-longer-hidden talent: break dancing. All eyes were focused on him as he performed an elaborate windmill. "I was nervous before, but once I got out and finished my solo, I felt great to have represented my class," Vo said. Many people who have known Vo for a long time didn't realize he was a break dancer until after the quad dance. "When I saw him, I was amazed that he could do all that," said Jay Lee. "It's just weird how you can know someone for so long and then see them do all this crazy stuff that you've never seen them do before." Vo first started dancing the summer after freshman year because it was an invigorating way to pass time. He took each new move as a challenge he yearned to accomplish. "It takes a million mistakes before I can learn a move, but when I do, it's always so rewarding," Vo said. However, during sophomore year,

Vo was unable to set aside as much time to practice. "As the year progressed, the workload increased, so I didn't have much time to go out on the football field and b-boy with my friends." Even though break dancing is generally done alone, Vo has made many friends who share his interest. Juniors Sanjeev Srivatsa and Jeff Kuo are among some of the people who get together to practice their moves. "Throughout the year, I met a few people who also enjoyed b-boying, so I practiced with them," Vo said. "We would help each other with different moves and watch one another improve." However, it is hard to tell those who really enjoy dancing from those who enjoy the "cool" reputation that comes along with it. "I know a lot of people who try, but there's an ambiguous line between a



Jordan Waite

Junior Brian Vo showcases his impressive breakdancing moves during the junior Homecoming quad day on Nov. 5. Vo debuted his skills as an effort to support and represent his class.

dedicated b-boy and someone who's just in it for giggles," Vo said. Although Vo sometimes feels bad that he doesn't have much time to dance, he doesn't plan on dropping his hobby any

time soon. "I don't even practice anymore, since I'm a junior and have to put up with all my academics," Vo said. "To tell you the truth, when the time comes, I just dance." ♦

the falcon guide to:

# Winter Ball

## Dress to Impress

### BOYS

Let's face it: We are at an awkward age as guys—when clothes don't quite fit us right and we haven't quite developed a knack for purchasing formal wear. Even many adults have problems with dressing to impress. To set you on the right track, here are a few tips and tricks I have learned over the years.



To start off, decide whether you are on the slender side or if you have a larger build. If you are like me and most traditional dress shirts make you look like a pirate, try a shirt marked "slim fit" or "fitted." Shirts like these will give you a cleaner look and won't make it look like your clothes were an afterthought.

For those who have longer arms or a larger stature will do just fine with shirts marked "traditional" or "classic."

The shirt design and color can be just as crucial as fit but is largely based on personal preference. If you are not confident in your sense of fashion, ask a salesman or store clerk that is dressed well; a good percentage of the time they will be able to steer you straight and find the best fit for you.



The most important component to ties, tying the tie, is one of the most dreaded rituals and one that few men actually know how to do properly. See [www.tie-a-tie.net](http://www.tie-a-tie.net) and click on "Windsor knot" to learn how to tie one properly.



Pants or slacks, unlike the other items, generally need to be tailored. Go to a store like Nordstrom's or Macy's, which usually have a tailor on call to help you alter your pants.

As for the color, a pair of neat black pants will go well with most shirt-tie combinations as will a shiny black belt. If you are wearing pants that are not black, a brown belt might be better.



The right shoes can help your posture and can make you feel and appear inches taller. However, the wrong shoes can make your night a living hell. If your shoes are uncomfortable, try some Dr. Scholl's inserts.

Shoe colors are simple enough. Dark pants go with black shoes and tan or light colored pants go with brown shoes.



Sophomore Cullan McChesney poses in his well-tailored outfit

- Cullan McChesney

### THE "REST OF IT":

There are several other things that you can do to improve your appearance and the overall impact of your ensemble. Got facial hair? Great. Shave it off. Girls do not like guys who look like they've recently gotten lost in the woods. This includes those of you with the freshmen "fuzzstache."

The days of taking a bath in Axe body spray are

over, so invest in a decent cologne from Macy's or Nordstrom's. Contrary to popular belief, you are not fumigating a house so one or two sprays is all you need.

"The clothes make the man," said Mark Twain. However it also works both ways. Just because you have put the perfect outfit together does not mean that manners should go out the window. Remember to show common courtesy, e.g., opening the door for her and being nice, etc. and you will surely impress your date. ♦

### GIRLS

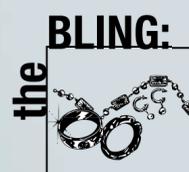
For girls, finding the perfect outfit is essential for any dance. Whether the dance is casual or formal, girls always strive to look their best. To help those who are stressed out and need some help with their outfits for Winter Ball, here are some tips.



The dress is the most important part of the outfit, so put some time into finding the right one. Try to wear colors like yellow or green; stay away from blue especially unless you want to look like everyone else. As for the style, we all know you want to feel like a princess, but there's no need to wear a full-length ball gown to this semi-formal dance. This isn't prom! However, that does not mean you should wear something too short. You don't want to be too revealing! If you want your date to match his tie, make sure you tell him the exact color of your dress beforehand.



Remember comfort! We know that high heels are fashionable, but there's no need to wear four or five inch heels. You probably don't want to be hobbling around the dance floor after an hour so try to get something comfortable and cute!



Try to go for jewelry that's simple and elegant. Extravagant necklaces, rings and earrings will just make you look like you're trying to show off and way overdressed. They say diamonds are a girl's best friend, but make sure your jewelry doesn't shine brighter than you and your date.



It's a good idea to put some makeup on but don't go overboard. No one wants to go to winter ball with a raccoon. Ask a couple of friends for suggestions. If you don't normally wear makeup, ask a friend who does to help you apply it.



No matter what you choose, keep these tips in mind to blow your date away! Get together with a group of your friends so you can get their feedback and help when you're going dress shopping or getting ready.

Sometimes hair is better left alone. But if you want to get all dolled up, go for some soft curls, you don't want your hair bouncing without you! Straightening your hair can also give you a sleek and shiny look. ♦



Senior Mary Mykhaylova sports an elegant Jessica McClintock dress.

- Maggie Lin and Rebecca Nguyen

**date: Dec. 12**  
**time: 8-11p.m.**  
**place: Big Gym**  
**initial cost: \$17**

## How to ask

WHETHER YOU ARE BOLD, SWEET OR SHY, THESE CUTE IDEAS AND TIPS ARE SURE TO MAKE ANY GIRL SAY YES!

by Serena Chan and Ashley Tang

With Winter Formal coming up, more and more people are racking their brains trying to think up a "good way" to ask their date to the dance. Most people don't have enough money to buy a private jet and fly it over school during lunch with a banner attached saying: "Will you go to Winter Ball with me?" For most of us who cannot afford such extravagance, here are a few priceless ways to ask your crush, whether a girl or a guy, to Winter Ball:

**The Bold:** Burst into her first-period class and attempt to serenade her. Have some roses in your mouth and bring a boombox playing cheesy music. It might be a good idea to check beforehand with the teacher and find out where she sits so you don't look clueless while you search for the right person.

**The Sweetie:** For each of her classes, leave some Hershey's kisses on her desk which spell out your message one word per class. Remember, chocolate is the key to success.

**The Shy:** Even if you are absolutely terrified, the least you could do is leave a personal note in her locker. Please, please don't text, IM, or Facebook it.

**The Creative:** Find an inside joke that you both share and incorporate it into your plan. (If you don't have any, she's not worth asking).

**The Cool:** Show up in a suit, tie and aviators, pull a James Bond move by asking her with style. Or, get Mr. Bosco to ask her for you.

**The Creeper:** Stalk her until you find her alone; then tap her on the shoulder and surprise her. This could go wrong; make sure your girl won't flip out.

**The Direct:** This one is both the simplest and the hardest, unless you have guts. Just look her in the eyes and ask.

No matter what your style is, make it personal. Know what your girl likes whether it's a public invitation, sweets or a secret note. Put time and effort into your planning; after she says yes, all you have to do is sit back and wait for winter formal to come around. ♦

**FALCON FIGURES**  
Winter Ball

**\$22**

Likely final bid price if you wait until the last moment

**\$150**

The estimated price of a girl's outfit

**\$100**

The estimated price of a boy's outfit

**250**

Attendance last year

**TOGATALKS**  
Thoughts on Winter Ball

"Of course you get nervous, especially if you like her a lot."



junior Brian Chiou



senior Elisabeth Bellissimo

"A guy made a shirt that said 'Will you go to Winter Formal with me?' I said no, but I like it when they ask in a sweet way."

I would want him to ask straight up. If he asks cutely and I want to say no, then it'd be awkward.



freshman Katherine Chang

# YEN PINNED DOWN BY STANFORD

by Aanchal Mohan

application] out and hoped for the best.”

Yen began to wrestle seven years ago and has been hooked ever since.

“It’s a rewarding win,” said Yen. “I get all the credit for it because it’s one on one.”

All of Yen’s hard work paid off when he was recruited by Stanford to wrestle in the 189-pound division. During the off season he practiced six days a week and took any opportunity that he could get to wrestle going as far as Half Moon Bay and Stanford when they held open mat sessions to show the coaches his talent.

“I think it’s all about [his] work ethic,” said assistant wrestling coach Kirk Abe. “Wrestling has been one of his central focuses along with academics.”

Even though Yen does not

have plans of continuing wrestling after college and hopes to become a doctor, he does have big dreams for his wrestling career in college.

“I hope to be a four-year starter,” said Yen, “and maybe I can be a NCAA champion my senior year.”

Along with Stanford, Yen also applied to Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania and was accepted by both schools for wrestling but chose Stanford over the other two. He is guaranteed admission to the school but whether he will receive any financial aid is unclear.

“I like Stanford’s team and their coaches,” said Yen. “I have gotten to know them pretty well since my junior year and since [Stanford] is so close I can train with them a lot between now and when I go there.” ♦

## THE PLAYER OF THE GAME

**Alan Yen**

**Event:** Wrestling  
**Experience:** 7 years  
**College Offers:** Stanford, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton

**College Chosen:** Stanford  
**CCS Appearances:** 2  
**Weight Class:** 189+ pounds  
**Potential Major:** Medicine



Jordan Waite

Alan Yen pins his opponent to the mat in his tournament at Reno.

# Pollack trots her way to championships

by Grishma Athavale

Junior Ashley Pollack excels in competitive horseback riding; she has won five world championships and two world grand championships in the past 10 years.

World championships pit horses from all over the world against each other in different divisions, while a world grand championship matches the best of world champions in smaller classes with combined divisions.

To prepare for such competitions, Pollack devotes her weekends to practicing on her ranch in Morgan Hill.

She shows horses, which is riding a horse in a class around a ring against other people in a certain division.

She annually attends The Celebration, a Tennessee Walking Horse competition, which takes place in Shelbyville. Pollack said The Celebration is equivalent to the Olympics for the Tennessee Walking Horse industry and is the most important competition in the walking horse world.

Every trainer, owner, exhibitor and fan works year round for the 10-day event.

“The celebration is what I look forward to most all year,” said Pollack. “I get to go to Tennessee, stay in our house there, and ride and show all my best horses, and see all my friends from around the country.”

Although she said she has won “way too many awards too count,” Pollack points to victories at The Celebration as her proudest achievements. She

has captured wins there in 2004, 2006, 2007 and 2009.

Pollack has been growing up with horses since age 3, and her family has owned and shown horses for decades. She loves the feeling she gets after her horseback riding practices.

“When I ride horses on trail rides I feel free, like there’s nothing else going on,” said Pollack. “But when I show horses I usually feel a rush and get anxious and aggressive during a competition.”

Pollack has no plans so far to pursue competitive horseback riding in college.

“After I am done with college, I will most likely still be riding horses every once in a while,” said Pollack. “It depends on where my life takes me at that point in time.” ♦

## THE PLAYER OF THE GAME

**ASHLEY POLLACK**

**Event:** horseback riding and show horse  
**Merits:** 5 world championships, 2 world grand championships

**Main Competition:** The Celebration takes place in Tennessee  
**Practice Location:** Morgan Hill  
**Experience:** 13 years



courtesy of Ashley Pollack

Junior Ashley Pollack not only displays her talent in showcasing her horse, but also proudly shows off years of training by posing with her beautiful steed in front of an admiring crowd at the Celebration competition in Tennessee in August 2009.

# WE ARE THE



Albert Gu

# Junior’s passion for math adds to success

by Kevin Mu and Anna Shen

For many students, math is painful at worst and tedious at best. Not so for junior Amol Aggarwal. The champion mathematician views mathematics as less as a linear subject and more as a series of dynamic and interconnected concepts, each of which he tackles with hours of problem-solving and learning.

“Math is a hobby for me,” said Aggarwal. “It’s a choice, not something burdened on my back.”

Before Aggarwal moved from New York to California in seventh grade, he

liked math but was not serious about it because of the lack of competition there.

“I used to actually be an avid gamer before I moved here,” said Aggarwal. “I didn’t feel any motivation to learn any extracurricular stuff.”

In California, Aggarwal at first struggled with MathCounts, a nationwide math competition for middle-schoolers, missing the qualifications for the state competition both years; he wasn’t a national champion yet.

But his passion for math manifested itself in his constant hard work and nonstop problem solving.

During the two summers before high school, Aggarwal studied math extensively

ly. And in high school, he would finally got the opportunity to show just how far he had come.

Aggarwal qualified for the selective United States of America Mathematics Olympiad (USAMO) competition in his freshman and sophomore years and got the highest score out of any freshman. He qualified for Mathematics Olympiad Summer Program (MOSP) by earning a top score in the USAMO in his freshman year.

In his sophomore year, he received the second highest score in the Bay Area Math Olympiad (BAMO), one of only two students in the competitive area to solve all five problems in four hours. He has also won a myriad of smaller regional competitions and gained a reputation in

the Bay Area math community.

“A lot of people don’t know this, but Amol is actually a lot better at math than I am,” said fellow mathematician champion Albert Gu. “I tend to do well on contests and get good results, but I don’t even compare to him in practice. He deserves a lot more than he’s given credit for.”

Aggarwal practices math whenever he gets the chance to. He frequently browses The Art of Problem Solving, an online forum where inspired students come together to discuss all aspects of advanced math. On the site, he is respected by mathematicians all around the world.

“Math is more interesting than any other subject,” said Aggarwal. “It requires more thinking, and it’s more mind-twisting and intuitive.” ♦



Aggarwal

## Swimmer aims for Olympics

After breaking 11 Pacific Aregon swimming records at the age of 12, sophomore Ian Burns has every right to claim the Olympics as a career swimming goal that is well within reach.

“I really found that I had talent and I started swimming full time year round,” said Burns. “I just got better from there.”

Burns currently swims for the national team at Santa Clara, specializing in butterfly and freestyle and practices with his team for 20 hours a week.



Burns

## Chess team tries to defy odds

Senior Charles Sun racked up his brain, digging deep for a move that would outwit his opponent, until he finally had a checkmate, resulting in a win for him. Then came the thrill of victory at the National Open tournament in 2006.

Flash forward three years and the chess team has only seven players, including Sun,



Sun

but the team is still going strong, and aims to win a sixth straight state championship this coming season.

## Science whizzes net hat trick

Seniors Malika Kumar and Haley Zarrin have competed together in the regional science fair, Synopsys-Silicon Valley Science and Technology Championship, every year since their freshman year. They finished first and qualified for the California State Fair every year.

“I was shocked when they announced our names at the ceremony,” said Kumar. “We weren’t expecting to place, much less qualify for the international fair.”



Kumar

# CHAMPIONS

SHS

1

2

3

Albert Gu

WHETHER ATHLETIC OR ACADEMIC, MANY STUDENTS REACH THE TOP OF THEIR FIELDS, COMPETING WITH THE CREAM OF THE CROP.

# SENIOR ON COURSE TO BROADWAY

CHRIS RENALDS ON THE ROAD TO REACHING GOAL OF PERFORMING ON STAGES AROUND THE WORLD

## THE PLAYER OF THE GAME

**CHRIS RENALDS**

**Event:** Musical Theatre  
**Experience:** 7 years  
**Drama Productions:** “The Music Man,” “Rent,” “On the Razzle,” “Romeo and Juliet” and “West Side Story”  
**Active Member:** Children’s Music Theatre, Vice President of the Glee Club, and SHS’ Drama Club  
**Goal:** to be on Broadway  
**Potential College:** University of Michigan  
**Summer Program:** New York University Tisch School of the Arts  
**Favorite Musical:** Spring Awakening

by Mary Mykhaylova

As a sixth grader, senior Chris Renalds was cast as Winthrop Paroo in his first musical, “The Music Man.” Little did he know that five years later he would go as far as attending a summer conservatory program at the NYU Tisch School of the Arts.

Now a Musical Theatre veteran, Renalds has truly embraced his talent, allowing the hobby to blossom into a serious aspiration. He has been taking voice lessons for six years, attends dance classes twice a week and rarely has downtime between productions.

“I hope to be a working actor,” said Renalds, “and not have to be a waiter all my life.”

Renalds aspires to someday be on Broadway or in the least be successful in some arena that falls into theatre.

“[Theatre] is a career that gives you a kind of immediate reward as the audience claps or laughs for you,” said Renalds. “That’s the emotion response that people do theatre for.”

Since his middle school de-

but, Renalds has worked many productions both in and out of Redwood and Saratoga High School’s theatre departments, including an appearance in Children’s Musical Theatre San Jose’s premiere production of “Rent” as Tom Collins.

This year alone, Renalds is vice president of Glee Club, was

“[Theatre] is a career that gives you a kind of immediate reward as the audience claps or laughs for you. That’s the emotion response that people do theatre for.”

—senior Chris Renalds

a lead in “On the Razzle” and plans to audition for “The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee” at CMTSJ.

Renalds anticipates the second semester of his senior year to be a busy one, and he will be juggling college auditions and two shows at once.

“It’s almost like I’ll be working, except for no pay,” joked Renalds. “Well, working to maintain my grades is more like it.”

As the curtains will soon be drawn on the final scene of his high school career, Renalds is pursuing his goals by auditioning for the musical theatre programs at numerous universities.

In preparation for his college audition for University of Michigan in Ann Arbor on Nov. 20, Renalds found himself having to prepare far in advance.

Aside from the expected songs and monologues, he anticipated the potential ballet and jazz auditions.

“I’m not a very good dancer,” admitted Renalds. “I have somewhat of a natural rhythm that springs me close to music, but otherwise, it’s something that I struggle with.”

Renalds has had to take many dance classes to get where he hopes to be: “a singer and actor who also moves well.”

According to Renalds, many overlook the hard work that goes into theatre.

“People don’t realize how much like a sport it is,” Renalds said. “If anything, it’s even more time-consuming, since you find yourself devoting your entire week to it. Regardless, it’s a lot of fun.” ♦



Jordan Waite

Chris Renalds stars as Christopher with Jay Lee in “On the Razzle.”

Every school has its rules. Students may hate them, but they have to live with them. So the next time you're feeling rebellious, just remember:

# DON'T...

**1. Ride that in here!** "Because of the potential danger in the use of skateboards, roller-skates, roller blades, 'razors' and bicycles, these items are strictly prohibited on campus. This includes parking lots, sidewalks and fields."

Sophomore Peter Hsieh, who regularly bikes to school, clarified the rule, highlighting the word "use." He recalls being told to walk his bike through the parking lot to the bike rack last year. Later, Hsieh mentioned that no one really pays attention to the rule pertaining to bicycles on sidewalks and parking lots because no one really enforces it.

"I've only walked my bike like twice," he said.

**2. Click that shutter.** We are all guilty of it. "When funny stuff happens, I take pictures," said sophomore Kushal Raj. Nobody bothers to obey the school rule written in the technology agreement, which states that students are not allowed to record teachers, staff or their fellow students in any form, which includes in photographs, without written consent.

Junior Shai Segal agrees the rule does have a logical basis since it protects students' privacy, but written consent still goes a bit too far.

"Having to get written consent to capture the moment would be absurd," said Segal.

And the consequence? Termination of your access the school's network; that's right, just for taking a photo, you can no longer use the school's computers or wi-fi connection. So keep a pen and pencil handy, just in case you want to snap that shot.

**3. Get any funny ideas, mister.** "Pranks or streaking are strictly prohibited," the school says, and violating this rule can have serious consequences. In fact, "students who participate in pranks or streaking prior to their senior year will be suspended for up to five days." But can the threat of suspension stop what was once an age-old senior class tradition? And is this rule actually fair?

"Just as long as it's not harmful, I don't think it should be against the rules because it's all in good fun," said senior Lauren Boden.

**4. Park in my spot, underclassman!** According to the school, underclassmen, even if they are old enough to drive, cannot park in the school parking lot until Jan. 4.

"You've got to be kidding me!" said sophomore Roman Balogh, who celebrated his 16th birthday Oct. 14. "I would have to find somewhere else to park."

With an unfortunate Homecoming quad day routine and now this, it seems as though the sophomores are just getting the short end of the stick this year.

**5. Play hooky.** Before you decide to pull a Ferris Bueller, you might want to watch out for the serious consequences of ditching class. If an absence is not excused, then it will be marked on the student's attendance record as a cut, and after three cuts, a student is required to attend a Saturday School. After 10 cuts in one class, a student is forced to drop that class with a withdraw/fail grade.

More than absences, tardies are a common phenomenon in the morning and can still have consequences if they become a recurring problem. A student will receive a Saturday School upon his or her sixth tardy of the semester, according to attendance technician Anna Ybarra. Everyone is occasionally absent or tardy, but most students find the tardy policy a relatively easy rule to abide by.

"I think it [the school tardy policy] is reasonable because five minutes passing is a lot of time to get to class and the only real tardies would be your first class of the morning," junior Daryl Chang said.

**6. Gamble away your lunch money!** According to the student handbook, "The Law of the State of California prohibits gambling. Therefore, students are expected to refrain from gambling activities which involve exchange of money or items of monetary value." Better stop all of those Fantasy Basketball Leagues with some money involved. Right? Wrong.

As sophomore Jimmy Zheng puts it, "When they say gambling, I think they mean more money than \$5. It should be a considerable amount."

**7. Make plans for the weekend.** Saturday school, otherwise known as detention, is administered as a punishment for a wide array of rule violations, including excessive tardies and unexcused absences, cell phone violations, defiance, disruptions in class, leaving campus without permission, parking violation and skateboarding on campus.

Junior Adam Essertier was given Saturday school this year for being tardy to school on several occasions. Suffice it to say that he has set his alarm clock a few minutes early to make sure it doesn't happen again, but nevertheless Saturday schools are not always an effective prevention for miscreant behavior.

"Many students who tend to get Saturday school sometimes don't process the consequences," said Essertier. "For some people, getting Saturday school goes in one ear and comes out the other."

"Many colleges allow bikes and long boards, but they are not allowed to do tricks. Our school should utilize the same rules."

—junior Alison Shen

"It's a pretty silly rule. I understand why it's here, but the rule is kind of useless because it can't really be enforced."

—junior Jesse Yung

"Senior pranks used to be a tradition, and it's a pretty harmless way for seniors to have fun."

—senior Karen Choi

"Most sophomores can't drive anyway, but I think it's unfair for the ones that can or will be able to in the near future."

—sophomore Amanda Olson

"Some people take excused absences so they can study for a test or something, but I don't think it's a smart idea to skip class for any reason."

—freshman Jackie Gu

"Not allowing gambling is reasonable because not only is it illegal, it's also a bad habit to get in high school."

—sophomore Brian Leung

"Saturday school is really boring. You're forced to just sit there and do your homework for a long time."

—junior Adam Essertier

—by Grishma Athavale, Arnav Dugar, David Eng and Karthik Sreedhara



Tiffany Tung

## TOGATALKS

What do you think about Saratoga's school rules?

I think that the school's rules are pretty much all reasonable and logical, and people should do their best to follow them.



junior Srinadhi Ragavan

I get that we need rules, but some of the rules that the school comes up with are kind of unfair or unnecessary.



junior Christina Wu

## The Super Quiz by David Eng

Answer the following nine questions to test your knowledge of the rules of the school. Scoring is as follows: One point for freshman level questions, two points for honors level questions, and three points for AP level questions.

### FRESHMAN LEVEL (TRUE/FALSE)

1. True or False? The school is allowed to search any student's locker with probable cause.
2. True or False? Underclassmen can park their cars on campus right now.
3. True or False? Voice recording teachers or students in on-campus buildings without written consent is punishable by Saturday school.

### HONORS LEVEL (MULTIPLE CHOICE)

4. What is the speed limit on campus for all vehicles? A) 10 mph B) 15 mph C) areas may have different speed limits D) there is no official speed limit.
5. Students must attend how many class periods in order to participate in or attend a student activity that same day? A) 0 B) 2 C) 4 D) attend all classes.
6. During the school day, the parking lots are A) areas to eat apple pie B) places to relax in cars C) off limits with some exceptions D) places to hang out.

### AP LEVEL (MULTIPLE CHOICE — CAN BE MORE THAN ONE ANSWER)

7. Students who attend school dances must be A) younger than 21 B) younger than 20 C) older than 11 D) attending high school.
8. Posters may be posted only A) on concrete walls B) on tiled walls C) on painted walls D) with consent from an Assistant Principal.
9. What is the penalty for seniors who participate in a prank or streaking? A) it depends on how much people saw B) same for all other unsightly streakers C) not allowed to participate in graduation activities D) it depends how many people saw it E) No penalty.

Answers: 1.True. 2.False, sophomores may only park on campus after Jan. 4. 3.True. 4.B, 15 mph. 5.C, students must attend four periods. 6.C, loitering in the parking lots is not allowed. 7.A and D, Students who attend school dances must be in high school but not over 21. 8. A and D, Posters may be posted only on concrete walls with prior approval of an assistant principal. 9.C, Not allowed to participate in graduation activities.

Scoring: 0-1 Go back to school, freshman! 2-5 Cancel your weekend plans and pack your bags for Saturday school. 6-9 You should hit the books harder. 10-13 Impressive... handbook nerd. 14-17 Congratulations, rule freak. 18 Do you read student handbooks for fun or something?

# BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL JOE BOSCO EXPLAINS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A STUDENT IS EXPELLED

by David Eng  
and Karthik Sreedhara

Drugs. Weapons. Harassment. It's not a good thing to be sitting in assistant principal Joe Bosco's office for any of these disciplinary reasons. The administrator may give a student minor penalties like a suspension, but in some cases, he is not as lenient. He has the power to recommend expulsion. But what really happens when he opts to enforce these extreme measures, whether it be a suspension or expulsion, and just how effective are these methods in stopping teens from causing trouble?



Bosco

### Suspensions vary in effectiveness

When Bosco encounters a suspension situation, he sends home a letter in addition to meeting with the student and the student's parents. After the student spends anywhere up to a week away from school, it's back to the books. However, suspensions can produce varied results among

different students.

"Suspensions are not always effective, it's individually based," said Bosco. "For other students, being suspended has a lot of repercussions because of college and issues with that."

### Expulsions are "last resorts"

The repercussions of a suspension, although admittedly detrimental to one's high school career, are nowhere near the life-altering effects of an expulsion; in the event of an expulsion verdict, the prosecuted student is forced to attend a different school. Of course, expelling a student is no easy decision, and the school administration takes careful measures to ensure that any accused student receives a fair punishment.

After Bosco "lays out the facts" of the transgression, a three-person panel comprised of district administrators and office personnel make the final decision. Many different circumstances are

taken into account.

"The panel is seen as an impartial entity, and they make a ruling on what's best for the student and the school," said Bosco. "I try to make these options last resorts when I do my job, but it's not always about me."

Although each case of severe rule-breaking is handled on an individual basis, some transgressions can almost certainly spell out an automatic expulsion.

"Basically it boils down to bringing a knife to school, selling drugs, bringing guns, bringing weapons [to school], harassment, sexual crimes, arson and explosives," said Bosco. "Those are the main things that usually get you expelled. [There are] a lot of other circumstances which are all individually based."

### A bit of good news

Fortunately, Bosco noted that serious disciplinary issues are not as prominent here compared to other schools in the area.

"We average one or two expulsions at the most [annually]. Some-

times we go without any—we don't have a whole lot of expulsions," said Bosco. "Suspensions, 30 or 40, maybe [a year], depending on the class and depending on the other issues that are going on."

For most students, the threat of expulsion and other punishments is effective in keeping them out of trouble.

"[The offense] obviously goes on their permanent record, so it's an incentive to not do whatever they did again," said senior Laura Boden.

Like some, Boden also believes that sometimes the administration goes overboard with its punishments.

"I think they were obviously a little hard on the drug dealers from the incident last year," she said, referring to last year's scandal in which several drug dealers and users were either expelled or left for another school.

But the administration is doing a good job in enforcing the rules, she said.

"Teenagers are naturally rebellious and it's really hard to control them," said Boden. "But I think the school is doing its best." ♦

# THE ARTIST OF THE ISSUE: Jackie Bae

Junior Jackie Bae talks about her passion for drawing and why she has been committed to this hobby for 11 years. Using different types of media, mainly pencil, Bae expresses herself through this type of art and will begin to prepare for a portfolio due in November to showcase her artwork in preparation to show colleges next year.

**Q: What types/kinds of art do you do?**  
A: I do mainly drawing. I basically draw anything I'm capable of drawing: people, animals, objects, and scenery. I use many different types of media, but I like to use pencil and paper most often.

**Q: What age did you start drawing seriously?**  
A: Well, I drew stick figures and happy faces since I was a toddler and doodled all over my homework in elementary school. I guess that's not really "art," but drawing has always been my favorite hobby ever since I was able to hold a pencil.

**Q: Why do you like this type of art?**  
A: Simply put, I like drawing because it's enjoyable. If there's something on my mind, I'm able to put it on a piece of paper and show it to the entire world. It's a creative and fun form of expression that I can do for hours and hours without

any restrictions. When I'm having a bad day, drawing whatever comes to mind cheers me up.

**Q: How does art make you feel?**  
A: Well, basically, when I draw I can convey messages that sometimes I cannot express in words. Some people write poetry, while others just like to talk, but for me the best way to express myself is through drawing. It's nice to know that I'm talented in something—and this gives me a greater motivation to keep on trying, regardless of the constant erasing I end up doing.

**Q: How do you get inspired?**  
A: Anything that leaves an impression on me inspires me to draw, I guess, anything from a song to a dream to a novel. Other times, I get my inspiration from how I feel. If I'm happy, that's the mood I'll go for when I'm drawing. If I'm sad, I'll draw something sad.

**Q: What is the favorite type of art you do?**  
A: I love to draw cartoons. It's something I learned to do by myself, and it doesn't require too much preparation. All I need is a pencil, a piece of paper and my brain. It's fun to exaggerate the gestures and expressions of everything. I suck at picking out birthday presents for my friends, so I always make them



Grishma Athavale

Jackie Bae displays her latest painting, done in pastel at the Sunflower Art Studio.

a birthday card or draw them a picture as a present. They're totally legitimate, 'cause I put time and effort into them! I most often use a pencil or pen or a tablet to draw on the computer.

**Q: Do you want to be an artist when you grow up or is this more of a hobby?**  
A: Drawing had always been a hobby for me, but it wasn't until pretty re-

cently when I decided to pursue art seriously. I'm actually working on a portfolio now so I can apply to art colleges next year. I want to major in art.

**Q: Are you in the art program here?**  
A: I'm currently in Art 3 with Mr. McCue. I'm also in the Expressions Club.

—by Grishma Athavale

# I'M BEGGING YOU FOR 'MERCY'

by Ren Norris

Medical trauma, the complicated love lives of several doctors and a ridiculously crowded hospital provide plenty of opportunities for drama. I'd bet you that was the pitch for the new NBC drama "Mercy." I also bet that was the pitch for the tons of other medical shows that have already been made. My point? We've seen this all before.

"Mercy" follows the life of Veronica Callahan, played by Taylor Schilling, a tough-as-nails but brilliant nurse who returns to work at Mercy Hospital after a tour of service in Iraq. Flanked by Sonia and Chloe, two other nurses from Mercy Hospital, Veronica sets out to show off her superior medical knowledge gained in her Iraq experiences. Throw in a love triangle and a hunk like Dr. Sands (James Tupper) and you've got one melodramatic love life. So basically, it is Grey's Anatomy with nurses. Yawn. NBC seems to be trying to replace the successful "ER," which ran for 15 seasons on NBC before ending last year. But this attempt to revive enthusiasm for a

new medical show has failed, as it seems there is just no room in viewers' minds for another show about the lives of hospital staff. NBC even got rid of the show "Medium" to make room for "Mercy," which back-fired as "Medium" is now stacking up the ratings for competing network CBS on Friday nights.

Though "Mercy," currently in its first season, does seem to have witty dialogue and some traumatic scenes that have kept me on the edge of my seat, it lacks originality to set it apart from the other medical shows. I know this seems harsh for a new show still trying to find its footing, but it is so easy to compare "Mercy" to other medical shows that it makes it difficult for "Mercy" to ever live up to the high standards of shows like "House" or "Grey's Anatomy." Viewers need a breath of fresh air every

so often to keep the audience interested, but that is not found as there are even parallels drawn between "Mercy" and Showtime's "Nurse Jackie" that sparks the idea that "Mercy" is a ripoff. The main characters of both of these shows, Jackie and Veronica, are the tough girls with attitude, both women are married but are having affairs and even supporting characters are mirrored like the bubbly character of "Zoey" from "Nurse Jackie" that is almost identical to the cheery "Chloe" in "Mercy." Need I say more?

All grounds have already been covered in the medical show department, yet new shows are still being created with only slight variations. I guess the major networks don't get the picture that medical shows are overworked. It's not that "Mercy" is a terrible show—it is just not



**STINK METER**  
STINK-O-METER: 4

Lacking original material on the hospital scene, you just can't give this show any mercy.

as good as the other medical shows out there. "Mercy" is attempting to play in the big leagues of medical shows, but it has to face the facts that it just isn't original enough to be on the same playing field. The trend of medical series may allow "Mercy" to ride the coattails of previous successful shows, but it won't be long before "Mercy" watchers realize their case of déjà vu—or at least see the need to spend their time watching a better medical drama. ♦

# The STINK-O-METER

When A-list entertainment doesn't live up to the hype, the Falcon is here to measure how bad the stench is

## Ponyo simple and disappointing

Despite a star-studded cast, Ponyo fails to impress

by Vivian LeTran

The first movie I watched by director Hayao Miyazaki was "My Neighbor Totoro," a 1988 Japanese animated film. "My Neighbor Totoro" was a cute and audience-friendly movie about two sisters' magical adventure with Totoro, a spirit from the forest behind their house. I felt a connection with the characters and enjoyed the way they captured what it's like to be a child. For this reason, Totoro was one of my favorite movies. When I heard of Miyazaki's new movie, "Ponyo," I anticipated something as extraordinary as (or better than) "My Neighbor Totoro".

However, I found "Ponyo" to be a huge disappointment. The whole movie was unbelievably absurd. [Spoiler Alert!] "Ponyo," a mainstream Japanese animated film, is about a goldfish named Ponyo who wishes to become human after meeting a human boy, Sosuke.

At one point in the movie, Sosuke's mother, Lisa, opts to drive home through an approaching hurricane, merely telling the 5-year-old boy to hold on as she flooded the gas pedal. Unbelievably, Lisa later leaves Sosuke home alone during the hurricane to rush back to her workplace.

Traditionally, children aren't trusted to be left home alone because they can get themselves into dangerous situations. Such was the case with Sosuke and Ponyo. A storm caused the sea to rise to an unrealistic level, seemingly submerging the whole world while leaving only the tree tops and Sosuke's house above the waterline. Sosuke and Ponyo promptly decide to set off on a mission to find Lisa, armed with only a tiny boat and a candle. The ending was frustrating as well. It

**STINK METER**  
STINK-O-METER: 3.5

The voices of a star-studded cast are lost amidst a poor excuse for a storyline.

was extremely anti-climatic, considering the dangerous hurricane, the sea rising to inexplicable heights and the promise of the world's destruction. In the end, everything was resolved with Sosuke's verbal promise to love Ponyo. All he did was say, "Yes, I will take care of Ponyo." But Sosuke was only five. What could a 5-year-old know about promising love for the rest of his life?

Although adventure and simplicity can be enjoyable, these elements seemed excessive in "Ponyo." The plot plodded along slowly and was littered with boring scenarios. On top of that, the simplicity was more superficial than cute. What can explain how a 5-year-old's love for a fish saves the world? The story was shallow and disorganized. It only scraped the surface of deep matters that might've been better if they had been more developed.

Perhaps the movie would appeal to younger children who simply enjoy the animated portion of the film, but this movie has nothing to offer to any person hoping for a profound and practical storyline. ♦



## THECRITIC More than a Game OST More than a soundtrack

Combos of beats and vocals are sure to inspire

On Oct. 2, King James (aka, LeBron James) had his acting debut in the movie "More than a Game," based on his high school basketball team's rise to greatness. The movie soundtrack was released Sept. 29. Showcasing a range of artists, such as Kanye West, Lil Wayne, Mary J. Blige, Jay-Z, Omariion and Chris Brown, the album is a vocal powerhouse. The variety of artists makes for an interesting blend of rhythm and beat.

Mary J. Blige and the Pussycat Dolls jump start the track-list with "Drop it Low," a debut single by songwriter, Ester Dean. Second up is "Forever," which headlines rising star, Drake, and features Kanye West, Lil Wayne and Eminem in a song about endurance and power. "Forever" is a remake of last year's song, "I Want this Forever." Featuring the wheezy Lil Wayne, egotistical Kanye West and fast-talking Eminem, the song is a rich blend of rap and Drake's smooth tones.

Earlier issued from the album was the heartfelt and richly textured ballad, "Stronger," from Mary J. Blige. Other tracks include "History," produced by Kanye West and "I'm Ballin'," by young sensation Soulja Boy Tell 'Em. This album will draw in a quick audience with its emotional depth. "Forever" dishes out lyrics about endurance and the power to achieve, while "Stronger," by Mary J. Blige fits the movie's theme of individuals standing out and coming together as one.

The "More than a Game" soundtrack pulls from a wide pool of genres and creates a flow between songs. Easy to listen to and exploding with emotion, "More than a Game" is a record for the ages. Listeners will get a lift from the inspiring lyrics and get pumped up by the powerful tunes. ♦

—by Nathan Kim



- TRACK LIST**
1. Drop it Low: Ester Dean ft. Chris Brown
  2. Forever: Drake ft. Kanye West, Lil Wayne, Eminem
  3. King on Set: T.I. ft. Young Dro
  4. Stronger: Mary J. Blige
  5. History: Jay-Z
  6. Top of the World: Rich Boy ft. Chili Chil
  7. I'm Ballin': Soulja Boy Tell 'Em
  8. We Ready: Ya Boy
  9. Go Hard: Hayes
  10. Frozen: Jared Evans
  11. If You Dream: Omariion, Jojo, etc.

## THECRITIC Jaicko Caribbean debut falls short

Despite promo song success, album doesn't impress

Jaicko Lawrence, who recently signed with Capitol Records, is an up and coming artist from Barbados. Singing since he was 9 at local performances in Barbados, Jaicko brings a different perspective to pop music. He mixes his Caribbean roots with modern pop to create a new genre in the music industry.

Jaicko often compares his music with that of Akon because Akon inserts his African heritage in his music; similarly, Jaicko uses his Barbados background in his music. He is also a frequent observer of the tunes of the late Michael Jackson.

Jaicko will be releasing his first album titled "Can I" in Dec. The feature song "Oh Yeah" will instantly find a place on many people's playlists. The song's lyrics are about Jaicko's rise to fame from being a small-town singer to



a nationally recognized star. Ironically, he makes fun of how one song makes him millions of dollars. In the beginning, the catchy tune is fun to listen to but becomes annoying too quickly for the song to become a true hit.

The other songs on the album are too similar to the feature song and do not provide the listener with anything new. The repetitive beat makes listeners feel as if they've been listening to one song on repeat.

Jaicko will never have a top album because his songs are too similar for the album to be a true hit. He will, however, have singles that will be on the top of future charts but Jaicko will never reach the status of the legends in his singing career.

Look for Jaicko, though rough around the edges now, to be a top pop singer later in his career. Although his roots are in the Caribbean style, he will consistently produce music that the American music society will listen to. ♦

—by Karthik Annaamalai

- TRACK LIST**
1. Will You Be There
  2. About You
  3. Perfect
  4. Name and Number
  5. Not Trying to Fall in Love
  6. Caribbean Girl
  7. Can I
  8. Air
  9. Dreaming About Me
  10. Two Piece
  11. Oh Yeah

## Brown needs to lose thesaurus

Heavily stylized writing kills already mediocre plot

by Tiffany Tung

Clearly one of the most successful writers of this century, Dan Brown has been revered, worshiped and loved. But, truth be told, Dan Brown is in many ways a horrible writer. His stories, as reflected in "The Da Vinci Code" and "Angels and Demons," are exhilarating to read, but when taking into account the stylistic choices that Brown makes in his works, the results are actually quite devastating. With the release of Brown's new book, "The Lost Symbol," the internet has been abuzz with articles criticizing his technique.

Websites like UPenn's "Language Log" reflect some of the questionable aspects of Brown's works. On the first page of the book, we get this: "A voice spoke, chillingly close. 'Do not move.'" First, voices don't speak. And the sentences that follow are full of contradictions (but make for delightful reading), as shown in the following example.

"On his hands and knees, the curator froze, turning his head slowly. Only fifteen feet away, outside the sealed gate, the mountainous silhouette of his attacker stared through the iron bars. He was broad and tall, with ghost-pale skin and thinning white hair. His irises were pink with dark red pupils." Apparently the definition of chillingly close has become 15 feet. However, that's besides the point. Once you freeze, you don't move. You don't turn your head. You're stuck until you unfreeze. Furthermore, if one can only see the silhouette of one's attacker, how can the curator know that the attacker had ghost-pale skin and thinning white hair, not to mention pink irishes with dark red pupils. It's a bit strange, actually.

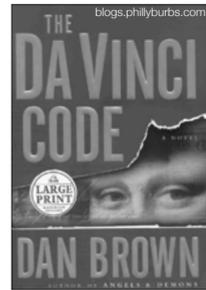
**STINK METER**  
STINK-O-METER: 2.5

Clinging to his thesaurus, Brown provides readers with exhilarating yet illogical novels.

These examples are not just evident in Brown's more popular works; his earlier books also include jarring contradictions. Although some argue it's a stylistic choice, his strange use of vocabulary and contradictions regarding certain facts occur too often than to be just a "style" of writing.

In chapter 8 of "Deception Point," Brown writes, "Overhanging her precarious body was a jaundiced face whose skin resembled a sheet of parchment paper punctured by two emotionless eyes." So, is he saying that "Suspended above her insecure body was a yellowed face whose skin resembled a sheet of parchment paper punctured by two emotionless eyes." I don't know, but this doesn't seem right to me, but to those who don't recall their 10th grade vocab lists, it's perfectly acceptable.

The stylistic choices made in his novels seemingly reflect the tone of one of those essays students write when they press shift+F7 (thesaurus) every other word to make themselves sound more intelligent. I don't understand it either, but it sure sounds nice, and technically that's what Brown does in his novels. ♦



# Suit rules add costs

by Serena Chan

As of Oct. 1, the swimming world cleared out all technical suits to the dismay of many swimmers. The International Swimming Federation (FINA), the governing body of swimming, held meetings around the world to define what kind of racing suit will be allowed during competitions.

Speedo's LZR Racer and the J01 made by Jaked are only a couple of the first-class suits that have been banned from meets. Here are the rules according to a letter sent out by Bruce W. Stratton, Chair, USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee:

For guys, the suit cannot extend above the navel and below the knee. For girls, it cannot cover the neck, extend past the shoulders or below the knee. For all swimmers their suit must be made of a textile material, which means no polyurethane. This plastic-like material is used to mold the swimmer's muscles to reduce strain

and to create a streamlined body. As well, no clips, zippers or other fastening devices are allowed other than the waistband string in men's suits.

This news caused reactions across the globe and the web. It affects swimmers not only during USA Swimming meets but also during high school meets. During CCS last spring, the majority of Saratoga's swim team competitions

## Swimming

was decked out in suits that would have broken most, if not every one, of the above rules.

"I think this is really stupid," said sophomore Rebecca Chen. "I just recently bought a tech suit and now I basically have to wear it every chance I get, even at lesser meets. They only gave us a couple months notice."

But by enforcing these guidelines, FINA is trying to even out the playing field so that swimmers can't buy their speed. Regulations are necessary when people start wondering whether it was technology or true skill that have been breaking world records lately. ♦

INSIDE: Seniors sign letters of intent to three top colleges, p. 22  
Girls' tennis wins CCS championship, p. 23

The Saratoga Falcon  
December 4, 2009

# Loose hair bands? Get on the bench!

by Serena Chan

Think of all the ways a hair tie could be used as an advantage during a sport. Maybe while a girl is running her cross country race, she'll slip off that black elastic and snap it at another runner. Or maybe

**"[Referees] just don't want anyone to be able to grab [the hair ties]. It's for the athlete's own safety."**

—sophomore Alison Knysh

Officials don't want to test athletes' creativity by thinking of new ways to use hair bands as a weapon, so hair ties around the wrist are banned from most girls' sports including track, water polo and soccer to name a few. However hair ties are still allowed in the hair.

"The referees do checks before the game and they make you take off any jewelry or hair ties you have around your wrist," said sophomore JV water polo captain Alison Knysh. "They just don't want anyone to

be able to grab it. It's for the athlete's own safety."

This policy of no hair ties may seem extremely trivial, but competitive girls can be vicious.

"A referee told us that last year at CCS one girl found out that another girl was wearing a belly button ring and she pulled it off," said Knysh.

Although the tug of a hair tie is not much compared to that of a belly button ring, officials have made it simple by saying: no jewelry or accessories other than the required uniform.

This is all to try to prevent bloodshed and tears during high school games and meets.

"You're not going to hurt anyone with a hairclip," said senior cross country runner Molly Jordan. "In cross country, you're not next to other runners for very long, so there won't be any contact with them." ♦

# Wrangling with the Rules

Athletes can't see point in pointless regulations

## Sunglasses ban clearly ridiculous

by Cullan McChesney

Any optometrist or pediatrician will agree that eye protection against the sun is crucial to maintaining good eyesight through out life. So why do Central Coast Section (CCS) cross country rules ban non-prescription sunglasses in competition?

Much of it has to do with what could be considered a strategic search and elimination for anything and everything that gives competitors an advantage. But what makes sunglasses so different from the shoes that competitors wear? Some competitors wear better shoes than others, so by CCS logic, all runners should compete barefoot to level the playing field.

That may not be rational, but how is it different from eye protection? Sunglasses may give an

advantage over competitors by allowing them to see better and keep he glare and dust out of their eyes, but is it right to deny competitors protection from solar radiation? According to MayoClinic.com, "UV radiation from the sun can damage not only the skin of your eyelids but also the clear outer parts of the eye—the cornea and conjunctiva."

## Running

Many competitors also feel the same

**Many runners do not see CCS's rationale in eliminating a small performance advantage that makes a big impact on eye health.**

way. Boys' cross country captain Joe Stevens, who is rarely seen without a pair of his signature Oakley shades, said, "The ban on sunglasses is totally stupid. Athletes should definitely be al-

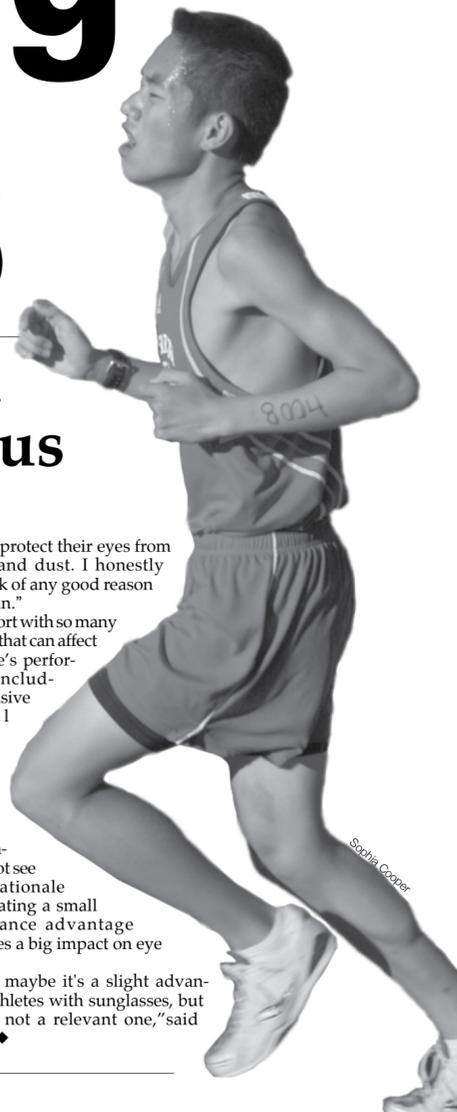
lowed to protect their eyes from the sun and dust. I honestly can't think of any good reason for the ban."

In a sport with so many variables that can affect an athlete's performance, including expensive special shoes for different terrain and events, many runners do not see CCS's rationale in eliminating a small performance advantage that makes a big impact on eye health.

"Sure, maybe it's a slight advantage to athletes with sunglasses, but certainly not a relevant one," said Stevens. ♦



Pictured are juniors Megan Benzing and Garrick Chan.



Sophia Cooper

The Saratoga Falcon  
December 4, 2009

## GIRLS' BASKETBALL

# Davey to focus on defense

by Izzy Albert and Apeksha Sharma

As the girls' basketball season commences, the players plan to work on certain weaknesses but overall have high expectations on how they will do this season. Coach Mike Davey is shooting high, aiming for the girls to "play as hard as [they] can, win as many games as possible and to have fun."

The team is steadily working to overcome early detected issues, such as talking to one another on defense.

"Improving on communicating on defense is important," said sophomore guard Shriya Nagpal. "But we have some amazing shooters and a lot of posts, so this will be a good season."

Making it to CCS will come with a lot of hard work on the girls' part as the team is in the highest league possible.

"We would like to win league, but we are in the toughest public school league in the whole section," said coach Davey, "so you have to be realistic, too." The team will be facing tough school such as Valley Christian and Wilcox.

The girls do have their work cut out for them.

"Our offense is strong, but our defense is pretty weak," said senior captain and post Baylee Yates. "In order to do well, we're really going to need to improve our defense."

Becoming close is also vital for the success of the team, which has been a bit of a problem in the past. In addition, Yates added, "Everyone needs to work together because we've had teams in the past where the girls didn't like each other, so working together and getting along will help us a lot this season."

Reaching CCS is the hope for the team but is unpredictable based on the previous years' results from past league champions.

"Last year, the representative for our league lost in the CCS finals," said coach Davey, "and the year before that our representative won in the CCS."

Along with improving their strengths, the girls need to work on their weaknesses to place at CCS.

"Our defense [needs improvement], because



Emily Williams

Senior captain and post Baylee Yates dribbles down the court at the varsity practice on Nov. 17.

our offense is pretty good," said Yates. Yates as well as the rest of the team hopes all varsity players from last year will be returning. Key players include senior post Nicole Gragnola, Yates, senior guard Anna Schroeder and Nagpal.

The team will be depending on experience and the girls' ability to lead them to the finals.

"We are a senior league team, so we have a lot of experience and our main thing is that we have a lot of depth and a lot of girls who play different positions," said coach Davey. ♦

## BOYS' SOCCER

# New coaching, fresh feet hope to overcome all odds

Falcons want to improve on 7th place in league

by Aanchal Mohan

As the boys' soccer team kicks off the 2009-10 season, they seek to build off last year and win with the help of a new coach and young spirit.

"I think we have a pretty good team this year," said sophomore defender Manish Raghavan. "We don't have that many seniors but I think that we'll be fine."

The team has only two seniors, a couple of juniors and mostly sophomores. Some new key players are sophomore Rajiv Ramakabir and sophomore midfielder Manuel Stimmer. At the moment, the only seniors on the team are outside midfielder/forward Dale Everett and Sawan Shah.

This could become a problem during the season when the young team is put up against the tough competition from other schools such as Mountain View and Los Altos. Team

captains had yet to be decided as of Nov. 19.

"It's going to be a hard season because we're really young and inexperienced," said sophomore center-defender Jonathan Junqua. "If we start working together more than [we did] last year, then it shouldn't be a problem."

The team hopes to get over this with the help of the new

**"We're going to have to try and play our best to make up for the loss [of our core players]."**

—senior Dale Everett

head coach Adam Clarke.

"[Our new coach is] a lot more relaxed than the last coach," said Everett. "He has a more hands-off approach, whereas the last coach was more hard core."

Players hope Clarke's different approach to coaching will help the boys do better in the season and help them rebuild off the last season.

Last year, the boys placed seventh overall in the El Camino

league out of 10 teams.

Even though they are playing in the same league, the graduation of star player Chris Chung, who now plays at UCSC, Hoffman Hibbet and senior Sean Ashe's decision not to return to the team has left the Falcons' middle with large gaps to fill and will make it harder for the team to place higher up in the ranks.

"[Chung, Hibbet, and Ashe] were our core players," said Everett. "We're going to have to try and play our best to make up for the loss."

The boys are going to have to face some tough competition early on as they play last year's CCS champions, Bellarmine and Palo Alto who tied, in their pre-season.

"Our pre-season games are pretty tough," said Raghavan. "Hopefully, people won't get discouraged by that."

The Falcons kicked off their pre-season competitions with a game against Los Gatos on Dec. 1 at home and will later on play in the Homestead Tournament on the weekend of Dec 5 but the results of these games could not be published due to printing deadlines. ♦

## WRESTLING

# 15 frosh join team

by Tim Rollinson and Jordan Waite

After nine months away from the wrestling mat, many of the team members were rusty at the start of the new season. The first step of developing a successful season is to reteach the basics and get the athletes back into the wrestling mindset.

"The tough thing at the beginning of the season is that we have to break people of their bad habits," said head coach Gabe Tseng. "Then, we can go forward from there."

Previous head coach and history teacher Kirk Abe stepped down to assistant coach and is still very much part of the program while Tseng moved from assistant coach to head coach.

As the new head coach, Tseng is making slight changes to the practices as opposed to previous years, developing endurance and strength in the first part of the season and then changing to more concise practices near the end.

Tseng wants to avoid the conflict of over-training early in the season on the squad while still strengthening the team for the season ahead. The practices this season will incorporate situations that are common in matches and focus on mastering the basics.

"Wrestling isn't a marathon, it's a sprint," said Tseng. "If we become experts in the basics then we'll be good."

Another common problem in high school wrestling is excessive weight cutting. Contrary to many coaches who encourage lengthy dieting and fasting in order to have wrestlers compete in the lowest weight class possible, Tseng wants his wrestlers to "grow into [their] weight classes by building muscle so everyone stays stronger."

Many top wrestlers graduated last year, but over 15 experienced freshmen joined the wrestling program this year. According to Tseng, the influx of underclassmen on the team will create a deeper lineup than previously.

"We have more talent than we have had in past years," said senior captain Alan Yen, "but we lost two senior wrestlers, so some of the younger wrestlers are going to need to step up."

Thanks to the year-round Chimera Wrestling Club at Redwood Middle School, there is an abundance of freshman talent.

Some key first year additions include Bryson Yates, Henry Wei and Anthony Bilic.

"This is the first year [of the Chimera program] and the success shows," said Tseng. "I expect some CCS placers from some of these freshmen." ♦



Jordan Waite

Sophomore Tyler Borch wrestles during practice on Nov. 17.

Planet Juice

Smoothies  
Keeping it real  
Keeping it cool



Buy one delicious stuffed pretzel and get another one free!

Expires 12/18/09. Bring Student ID.



Niki Farsio

Seniors Alan Yen, John Lamble and Elizabeth Murray sign their athletic agreements for next fall to Stanford, Santa Clara and Loyola Marmount Universities, respectively, on Nov. 12.

## THREE SENIOR ATHLETES SIGN LETTERS OF INTENT

by Karthik Annaamalai and Cullan McChesney

With friends and family in attendance in the faculty lunchroom, three members of this year's senior class signed a letter of intent Nov. 12 stating which college they will be competing for next year: wrestler Alan Yen will go to Stanford, swimmer Elizabeth Murray will attend Loyola Marymount University and tennis player John Lamble will go to Santa Clara University.

Yen's dedication in all areas of his very busy life.

"He is extremely determined not only on the mat, but in the classroom as well," said Abe. "He is a real student-athlete." (For more coverage on Yen's accomplishments, refer to page 14-15 in the School Scope section.)

Assistant principal Karen Hyde helped congratulate swimmer Murray on her acceptance to Loyola Marymount by saying a few heartfelt words.

"She is really the heart and soul of our swim team," said Hyde, "and Loyola will

be happy to have her, not only for her leadership, but her determination."

Murray will be one of the top recruits to the LMU swim team, where she will be able to compete at the top level in both the butterfly and 500yd freestyle swimming events.

Lamble will be attending Santa Clara University next year and is excited to be able to play on the SCU tennis team. He received offers from many other colleges including USC, Notre Dame, UCLA and Michigan, but chose to stay closer to home because he felt more comfortable with the

coaches. "I think I'll be able to contribute more to the team at SCU as opposed to the other colleges," said Lamble. He will be joining his older sister Kelly at Santa Clara next year, where she is also playing tennis.

Assistant principal Brian Safine is proud of Lamble's success and his dedication to the school.

"What sets John apart from the rest is that he is not just playing for himself, but for the school," said Safine. "It's remarkable how much he has contributed to this school both athletically and academically." ♦

### BOYS' BASKETBALL

## Fewer seniors, young team supply new energy on court

by David Eng and Jenny Zhang

As the 2009-10 winter sports season kicks off, the boys' basketball team has high aims, despite having only four returning seniors.

The Falcons will look to improve on last season's 11-15 overall record (4-7 league finish) under the direction of second-year varsity coach Trevor Naas. They also have hopes of trumping last year's first-round CCS playoff exit.

To achieve these goals, they will strongly rely on three of their seniors for leadership on the court.

Opponents will have their hands full trying to defend sharpshooting senior guard Daniel Chou, one of the team's primary scoring threats who averaged 9.9 points per game in his junior season alone. Skilled center Vincent Carstens will look to dominate the post and gobble up the boards this year with his strong inside presence. Versatile senior forward Andy Johnson will anchor both offensive and defensive units with his inside and outside presence.

"I will keep in mind] everything I learned in the last two years to succeed," said Chou, who has two previous years of varsity experience. "I played with two different coaches and two different strategies."

The Falcons will have to recover from last year's unusually large graduating class of nine seniors to win in the competitive El Camino Division. With just four returning seniors and even two freshmen, Stevie Berman

**THE SEASON**

**Boys' basketball at a glance**

**2008-2009 RECORD:** 11-15 Overall, 4-7 League

**COACH:** Trevor Naas

**KEY PLAYERS:** Senior center Vincent Carstens, senior guard Daniel Chou, senior forward Andy Johnson

**GAMES TO WATCH:** Jan. 2 vs. Los Gatos; Jan 22 vs. Lynbrook

and Kyle Dozier, on his squad, Naas figures there will be several new faces netting lots of minutes on the floor this season.

"Even though we have less seniors, I feel like it's better because there's no one fighting for that star spot," said Chou.

Naas noted three simple keys for his team's success: improving as a team every day in practice, "selling out" on the defensive end of the floor and limiting turnovers and stressing ball security on the offensive end.

The Falcons opened the season with a scrimmage at Westmont on Nov. 24 and will play their first home game versus Scotts Valley High on Dec. 22. Due to printing deadlines, The Falcon could not publish results. This year's traditional alumni game will occur Nov. 27.

"[The alumni game] is just a fun game for everyone," said Chou. "People who were on the team last year, and even people who are in their 30s come back [for this game]." ♦

### GIRLS' SOCCER

## New talent, coaches bring stability

by Olivia Chock and Ren Norris

The girls' soccer team has not had the best track record with stable coaches in recent years. This year, however, the team is trying to change that by having history teacher Kim Anzalone continue as head varsity coach, a position she took mid-season last year, with SHS alum Brandon Chow as assistant coach.

Returning players already see a difference that consistent coaches make to the team compared to last season.

"Last year we had a coach who said he was going to be there, but he was really inconsistent, which broke down the team," said senior co-captain Sarah Guy. "The fact that we're starting this year with Anzalone makes the coaching situation much more solid."

With tryouts having been held since late October, the new coaches have had time to witness the talent and hard work many new players bring to the team.

Since many of the varsity soccer players graduated last year, there are opportunities for other girls to join the team. In addition, sophomore Sloan Lewis, who was an essential part of the Falcon midfield last season, transferred to Archbishop Mitty. These slots will most likely be filled by underclassmen.

Key returning players include goalie Jan Iyer, who helped the team to several shutouts last season. In addition, the team will look to defenders and co-captains Guy and Sam Li to lead the team from the backfield, and senior Jordan Leonard and

sophomores Kari Clark and Courtney Brandt will be an important part of the offense.

However, a majority of the girls who planned on trying out were in fall sports that moved on to the CCS playoffs, which ran through the beginning of the winter season. Field hockey in particular held a large number of soccer players, including Li.

"When fall teams go to CCS, it cuts into soccer season and I'm torn between wanting them to do well in CCS but also wanting them for soccer," said Anzalone. "I go through that every year."

Once the team was formed after fall sport athletes joined, the girls had little time together before the first preseason Palo

Alto tournament on Nov. 30.

The El Camino league season begins Dec. 8 and the team will face tough opponents such as Cupertino and Santa Clara.

The players look to improve from last season, and to bond together as a team.

"High school season is always really fun because you get to hang out with a lot of different people," said Guy.

In order for success in the league season, Anzalone believes all "diva mentalities" need to be left behind and the team will have to work together.

"We've got the skill," said Anzalone. "We just need to maintain the positive attitudes." ♦

**NILE DRIVING SCHOOL**

SINCE 1993

**ONLINE DRIVER EDUCATION COMPLETE TEEN DRIVERS EDUCATION & TRAINING**

COURTEOUS, PATIENT INSTRUCTORS

State Licensed instructors  
D.M.V. License # E4372

**408 249-3186**

www.niledriving.com

# CCS Wrapups

### GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

## Wai runs PR at state finals

by Sophia Cooper



courtesy of Steve Hamrnack

Senior Karen Wai sprints to her 10th place finish at CCS.

With a perfect combination of warm sun and a cooling breeze, the girls' cross country team attacked the Crystal Springs 2.95 mile course at the Central Coast Section (CCS) finals on Nov. 14.

Led by senior Karen Wai, who placed 10th out of 99 runners with a time of 19:26, six out of the seven runners ran personal records, or PRs, on the course.

Wai cut her time down 12 seconds, followed shortly by freshman Courtney Schlossareck in 12th with a 31 second PR at 19:36.

"I'm pretty happy with my CCS results," said Wai. "Schlossareck] was really really close to making state, and

everyone ran a good race."

Finishing third and fourth for the Falcons were sophomore Emily Williams and freshman Caroline Chou, respectively. Also running were juniors Hannah Harter, Mansie Cheung, and sophomore Kristine Johnston. If the team's placing fifth wasn't enough, Wai placed 96th at her third state championships at Woodward Park in Fresno on Nov. 28.

"I'm pretty happy with my time and that I got a PR," said Wai.

That PR was 9 seconds faster than her last time on the 5K course, bringing her final time to 19:48, 6:23 mile pace.

"I had a good last race," said Wai. "I [wanted] to give it my all since it's my senior year." ♦

## TENNIS | First place CCS

continued from page 1

### Historic CCS victory

For the first time in school history, the girls' tennis team became the CCS champions. They defeated archrival and No. 1-ranked Monta Vista at the Courtside tennis courts by a score of 5-2 on Nov. 18. Keying the victory was the team's ability to win all of their first sets, except for one.

The No. 3 singles player sophomore Crystal Yen was the deciding match, winning 2-0. Padmanabhan also won 2-0 in a second-set tiebreaker. Meanwhile, all of the doubles teams won their matches. In the previous two matches this year against the Matadors, the Falcons lost 4-3.

The Falcons first received the No. 3 seed in CCS behind Monta Vista and Mitty.

"Our league is by far the toughest to compete in with three out of the six teams seeded top six in CCS. No other league has as many teams capable of quali-

fying for CCS as ours," said Uyebara.

In the semifinals on Nov. 16, the team defeated Mitty in a close match, 4-3. It was up to the No. 3 singles and No. 1 doubles match to decide whether Saratoga would move on. The team only needed one more match in order to win and in the end, the No. 1 doubles team of Annie Lee and Sarah Lum pulled out a win during a 10-point tie breaker 7-5 in the third set.

"It was a really tough match, but we were able to accomplish it," said junior Lauren Kuan. "Everyone is so ecstatic about finally defeating Mitty."

The team beat Homestead in quarterfinals 7-0 on Nov. 13 and defeated Sacred Heart in the first round of CCS 6-1 on Nov. 11.

The 12 players all contributed in one way or another and bonded with each other to create lasting memories," said Uyebara. "I look forward to defending our CCS title next season." ♦

The girls' tennis team poses after defeating No. 1 Monta Vista for the CCS Championship on Nov. 18. Back row from left: Samantha Tsang, Mika Padmanabhan, Mary Edmund, Christina Doo, Crystal Yen, Coach Tom Uyebara. Middle row: Carolyn Chen, Lauren Kuan, Lisa Asai. Bottom row: Catherine Nguyen, Annie Lee, Sarah Lum, Nikki Bedekar.



## SPORTSshorts



### Field Hockey dashed in quarterfinals

CCS expectations fell short for the girls' field hockey team as a devastating 3-0 loss against Presentation on Nov. 14 knocked them out of the playoffs in the quarterfinal round.

"The game was great in the second half since we came out the way we should have and we played really, really strong," said head coach Kellie York. "I'm just sad we couldn't play the whole game like that or else the outcome would have been a lot different."

Even though the team had a disappointing in their sixth place CCS finish, their win over North Salinas on Nov. 12, which had put them through to the quarterfinals, boosted their confidence. The game ended in a close 3-2 victory for the Falcons, but players thought their passing and teamwork helped to earn a spot in the quarterfinals.

"Although the score was close, as a team we really pulled through and held our own out on the field," said Li.

### Boys' cross country falls short at finals

As junior Kyle Fukui crosses the finish line of the 2.95 mile Crystal Springs course Nov. 14, he looked to the scoreboard for his time. Fukui saw he had taken 26th place overall, clocking in at 16:50. The end of the race was the end of a long but rewarding season for Fukui and his teammates as the squad competed in the CCS finals.

"I was pleased with the result because I ran a faster time than I ever have before," said Fukui. "Overall, the team had a great race."

The team was anchored by strong performances from Fukui and junior Garrick Chan. Chan was the second Falcon to finish, taking 42nd with a time of 17:25. Freshman David Zarrin was the third member to cross the line at 18:41. Also running were freshman Aasim Naqvi, sophomores Eren Veziroglu and Lawrence Liang, and junior Stephen Louie.

The team tied for 10th place overall in the final CCS standings, but lost the tie-breaker to Mills High School.

### Golf's Sivaram represents team at CCS

Along with the end of CCS rolled the eventual pit stop of a successful golf season. However, although the season stopped, the girls are by no means winding down. When they are not reflecting on the season as a whole, they are looking forward to next fall, when the seniors will depart to college, their places filled with rookies from this year.

"[The season] has been pretty demanding, especially since the switch to the Mt. Hamilton division resulted in more matches," said Hall. "The girls have worked hard. And I can't say I wouldn't enjoy a break from our usual, hectic golf schedule."

No. 1 junior Uttara Sivaram, who qualified for the Nov. 2 CCS tournament, drove down to Carmel to play 18 holes in the narrow Rancho Cañada course. Sivaram played through the thick rough and fast greens characteristic of challenging courses. While she didn't place as highly as she would have hoped, the well-aerated greens and pleasant weather contributed to a good end to Sivaram's competitive season.

### Volleyball spikes way to semifinal game

After obstacles during the season such as adopting new middles and tough league competition, the girls' volleyball team managed to pull themselves through, placing third overall in the De Anza League and qualifying for the Central Coast Sections (CCS) playoffs.

The Falcons started off CCS with a win (3-0) against Notre Dame-Belmont on Nov. 14 leading them to the semi-finals. They then went on to play Valley Christian and lost 4-1.

"We played them earlier in the season and it was our best game of the season and we beat them," said senior co-captain Nicole Gragnola. "We [the team] weren't all on together so it was a tough game."

If the Falcons had won the game against Valley Christian, they would have made it into the finals and possibly from there on to states.

"I think we had a pretty good chance [at going to state finals]," said junior middle Megan Brading. "Compared to the other teams, I think we were up there."

by Ren Norris, Synthia Ling, Jordan Waite, Vijay Menon, Uttara Sivaram, and Aanchal Mohan

### FOOTBALL

## Five turnovers lead to tough second-round CCS loss to Seaside

by Karthik Annaamalai and David Eng

When the fall sports season kicked off in early September, second-year football coach Tim Lugo had a vision for his team to play through Thanksgiving in CCS playoffs. Three months later, his vision was realized.

The Falcons earned a chance to play the afternoon ensuing Turkey Day with a hard-fought first-round 30-20 victory over

Burlingame the week prior. They were slotted to play the No. 2 seeded Seaside Spartans at Westmont High.

But a win was not in the cards for the Falcons, dropping their season-ending game 28-19. However, they certainly gave the favored Spartans a run for their money.

The Falcons' five turnovers ultimately overshadowed a huge game by senior running back Grant Thomas, who accounted for all of the Falcons' three touchdowns.

He racked up a pair of rushing touchdowns and scored on a deep pass from senior quarterback Vincent Carstens.

However, the football program stepped off the field into the muggy Friday night looking at the semifinal loss as more than just an "L" in the loss column. Finishing at 6-6 in one of the toughest leagues in the section and playing deep into the DIII CCS playoffs, the Falcon football players said they had a lot to be proud of.

"This season was a good transition

to what our program could be," said senior lineman Connor Clarke, who will play football next year in college. "I'm really happy to be a part of this."

A lot of the success the Falcons experienced this season can be attributed to the leadership of Lugo and the rest of his coaching staff.

"With coach Lugo, the attitude is a lot different for our team," said Clarke. "There is a lot more control for the team and I just like him personally as a coach." ♦

The Skinny

What's Hot Online  
saratogafalcon.org

**News:** "Tech room remodeled to have more suitable working environment" by Vivian LeTran

**Sports:** "Boys' water polo finish bittersweet season with solid league tournament" by Tim Rollinson

**Opinion:** "Anniversary of Berlin Wall's demise inspires conflicting emotions" by Ut-tara Sivaram

TOPTEN

BEST THINGS TO DO WITH THANKSGIVING LEFTOVERS

10 Make a Thanksgiving burrito. Everything tastes better in a tortilla.

9 Throw it all in a pyrex, add cheese and bake at 375° for 37 min. You can make a caserole out of anything.

8 Stuffing smoothie. Just ask planet juice for their Thanksgiving blend recipe.

7 Three packets of green jello and six cups of water mixed with your leftovers and presto! Turkey Jello. Why not?

6 Leave it in the refrigerator until it molds. It'll taste like chicken.

5 The sophomores might enjoy it since we can see they have bad taste... especially in quad days.

4 The economy isn't looking too good, so save a few bucks by vacuum packing and freezing it for next year.

3 Get connected with your French roots (even if you're not French) and try gravy creme brulee. It sounds fancy so it must taste good.

2 Start a food fight in the quad. Fifty points if you hit the golf cart with mashed potatoes.

1 ...or you could just eat it—don't be a sissy.

—Jordan Waite and Emily Williams

THECRITIC

Shwayze: Let it Beat

After releasing their self-titled debut album called "Shwayze," the group avoided a "sophomore slump" in their new release "Let it Beat." Shwayze and Cisco Adler combine rock, hip-hop and reggae genres into a new type of music. Shwayze's new album is widely popular as the group appeals to a variety of music tastes with their fusion-style singles, portrayed by one of their most popular songs on the album called "Get you home." ♦

—Karthik Annaamalai

Saratoga Snapshots

S'more please



Emily Williams



Aditya Dev



Michael Tyler



courtesy of Suzanne Herzman

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: HEARD AND NOT SEEN SOPHOMORE PATRICK SOBRACK-SEATON AND JUNIOR PARTH DHOLAKIA STARE INTENTLY AT THE INVISIBLE CHILDREN SCREENING ON NOV. 17. SCARLET "A" + JUNIOR ROHAN MARATHE OBSERVES ONE OF THE THEME POSTERS IN ENGLISH TEACHER SUZANNE HERZMAN'S SCARLET LETTER "MOTIF FAIR" ON NOV. 10. FARM-HANDS JUNIOR TREVOR WONG AND OTHER MAP ENGLISH STUDENTS WORK ON A DEMONSTRATION FARM ON THEIR STEINBECK FIELD TRIP TO SALINAS ON NOV. 23. COMIDA SABROSA SPANISH TEACHERS ARNALDO RODRIGUEX AND GINA RODRIGUEZ TASTE A GOURMET MEAL MADE FOR THE LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT BY ALUMNUS AND CHEF DANNY TAVIN ON NOV. 13.

"Oh yeah, I learned that in Girl Scouts."

Sophia Cooper



In first grade, it was the coolest thing ever. Everyone wanted to join, and you were uncool if you weren't in it. Now, it's laughed upon and considered dorky to participate in.

Oh yes, I'm talking about Girl Scouts. The coolness factor of being a scout wore off in middle school. In a time when girls are self-conscious, being a member of an organization that has vests as their uniform isn't exactly an appealing concept.

But what the other girls missed when they quit Girl Scouts is something that they will regret. They missed building friendships while eating melted marshmallows, attending a NASA conference to brainstorm our future with international delegates and having the pride of saying, "Oh yeah, I learned that in Girl Scouts."

Life-long Friends

Twelve years ago, my Girl Scout troop, Troop #473, bonded over making blueberry muffins in orange peels on a back porch. Sleepovers backyards were the extent of our camping experiences, until we took it up a notch and went beach camping. That was when the real fun began.

We did the usual camping stuff: burning potatoes in soup cans, making brownies, singing camp songs. But when it was time to head to our tents for the night, the sugar high from the brownies kicked in.

Personally, I never knew that third-graders had so much gossip. Yet that night of heart-to-hearts led to many years of Kiss, Kill or Marry, endless conversations on trips and high-energy pool parties.

I had the opportunity to be one of 13 girls from the Northern California council to attend the National Girl Scout Convention last fall. Throughout my six days there, I formed bonds with four of the other girl delegates who I now consider four of my best friends. The friendship we made from being on our own that week and having a blast remains. We've grown up and moved to Boston and Trinidad and remained in Marin, Sunnyvale and Saratoga, but we still talk once a week and keep each other updated on everything.

Once-in-a-lifetime opportunities

Girl Scouting isn't just selling cookies in front of Safeway and looking cute in our vests (and yes, we always look cute). Events provide girls with opportunities to do absolutely everything.

"Girl Scouts Save the Bay" is a program in which girls come together and work to clean various parts of the Bay, including docks, water shed and plant life.

"Lead the Way" is an annual, girl-planned conference for high schoolers, teaching the importance of leadership and life skills. The Northern California council's robotics team, called the "Space Cookies" is ranked nationally and one of the top all-girl robots teams.

These are all things that aren't available through most organizations. We may be dorks, but Girl Scouting presents us with opportunities and experiences, such as my trip to Indianapolis, that empower us and give us memories to last a lifetime.

Been there, done that

You need to light a campfire? Ask a Girl Scout. You need to fix your car? Ask a Girl Scout. You need someone to plan a weekend event? Ask a Girl Scout.

While the girls who dropped out of scouts were hanging out with friends, we were working on badges and setting up tents. As my years in scouting come to a close, I realize that the past 12 years of meetings and award ceremonies and "On my honor, I will try," were all worth it. I wouldn't trade my Girl Scout vest for the world. ♦

buzzworthy

'No Shave November' is razor-free

There is a trend growing among some boys this past month: facial hair. While the number of participants remains small, their beards are growing longer than ever. No this isn't some sort of infectious disease, it's "No Shave November."

Ever since alumnus Matt Pearce showed off his huge beard in November two years ago, senior Nathan Kim was inspired and decided to create his own Facebook group, "No Shave November," in which, as the name implies, participants don't shave for a month.

So far the group has 30 followers, most of them being upperclassmen. Competitors have been eliminated due to varying problems, from college interviews to embarrassing facial hair growth.

Kim had to forfeit due to family issues: His mother would not let him attend a college interview with USC sporting a chin full of

stubbles.

"I thought I had the edge because I'm Asian and we don't grow facial hair," said Kim. "I failed to account for my mom in the equation."

The group is planning to continue this hairy union throughout the year as well.

Future events include December, January and February.

Kim is thinking of charging a dollar for each member and splitting the prize among the victors, but for now the "grown out" contest is just a fun competition among classmates.

"I just thought it would be interesting to see how much I could grow my beard out in a month," said junior Parth Dholakia. ♦

—Grishma Athavale and Tim Rollinson



Salmaan Javed