



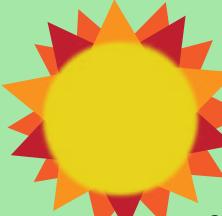
Saratoga High School | Saratoga, CA

An Independent School Publication

ONLINE

Photo Gallery:
Grease musical
Valentine's Day

LIFESTYLES



NEARBY
PLACES TO
GO FOR A
DAY TRIP

SEE PAGES 12-13

FEATURING

OPINION: CommonApp bug
SCHOOL SCOPE: Teacher love
IN-DEPTH: Religious students
ENTERTAINMENT:
Romantic flicks
SPORTS: Girls' lacrosse
BACKPAGE: Newspaper award

the saratoga falcon

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Friday | February 13, 2009

Vol. 49, No. 7

Budget cuts hit home



DUI trial at SHS

by Gautham Ganesan
and Kevin Mu

Friday, March 13th will prove to be a lucky day next month for 12 students of the government classes, who will be afforded the rare opportunity to be the jury in the real trial of an accused DUI offender. To make matters even more unusual, attorneys will present their cases not in the courtroom, but in the McAfee Center.

During the trial, 12 student jury members and a 250-300 person audience made up of students from the government and health and drivers' education classes, in addition to the mock trial and speech and debate teams, will witness a Santa Clara County judge make a verdict and pass a sentence on the offender. The 12 jury members will be allowed to discuss the case and confer with the judge in order to help them decide on the verdict; the judge, however, makes the final decision.

Senior Paul Stavropoulos, who is applying to be a jury member for the case, believes the experience will "provide insight" into the inner workings of a DUI trial.

"I'm anticipating [the trial], but I'm not sure what to expect," Stavropoulos said. "It's kind of interesting to see what will happen."

The trial is a part of the "DUI Court in the Schools" program, which is sponsored by Santa Clara County, the Traffic Safe Communities Network (TSCN) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). According to the NHTSA

English teacher Judith Sutton's ninth-grade class works quietly. Small classes like these may increase in size next year because of budget cuts.

Class sizes, school resources affected

by Tiffany Tseng
and Jenny Zhang

As part of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposed budget plan, the Los Gatos-Saratoga High School District (LGSUHSD) may soon be forced to cut its budget mid-year by 4.6 percent, or \$1.3 million, according to superintendent Cary Matsuoka.

Although this is a significant sum, students will not be affected much during the current school year if this plan is passed by the state legislature.

For the next school year, however, Schwarzenegger also proposed another 2.2 percent cut, or \$756,000, that will affect Los Gatos and Saratoga High. This may result in a slight increase in class sizes and not replacing some retiring

teachers. However, teacher layoffs are not expected, Matsuoka said.

As a response to this proposal, the district has frozen all categorical spending, which consists of money the state gives to the district to spend in specific areas, like school textbooks and smaller ninth-grade English and algebra classes. He said these ninth-grade classes, which are currently staffed at a

20-1 ratio, could go to 25-1 next year. Categorical funds comprise \$2.5 million out of the total \$35 million district budget.

"Categorical programs are those that are discretionary," said assistant superintendent CBO Tom Woodruff. "Freezing these funds would affect specific areas such as the smaller sizes of ninth-grade classes."

see BUDGET, p. 4

Los Gatos High has already approved the switch to a full block schedule next year. "There must be momentum to change," said Safine. "The staff would need to come to an agreement on exactly what the schedule would look like." Assistant principal Joe Bosco believes that the advantages of the new schedule include "relieving some pressure for the students," "making the schedule more understandable" and the embedding of four tutorials per week. Also, the addition of an eighth period would mean that

see TRIAL, p. 3

SHS considers implementing full block schedule next year

by Vijay Menon
and Karthik Sreedhara

A schedule that would make every day a block day and eliminate the "Monday problem" is under consideration for next year.

A draft schedule being discussed, according to assistant principal Brian Safine, is an A/B system where students would alternate between periods 1, 3, 5 and 7 and periods 2, 4, 6 and 8 on consecutive school days. Every other week a class would meet three times, and for the next, it would meet twice. The periods would

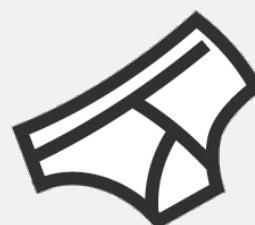
continue to be 95 minutes long, and a fourth tutorial would be added.

Many students say Mondays under the current schedule create too much work to do over weekends.

"I would prefer the full block simply because it reduces the weight you have to carry on Mondays and creates more freedom for your classes and more time on the weekend

to do your recreational activities," said sophomore Vance Lindholm.

According to Safine, teachers are still debating the pros and cons of a full block schedule. The next step will be to bring the topic to the department chairs and then seek support from the teachers' union. If 60 percent of the school staff votes for the schedule, the new system will likely be implemented. Nearby

NEWS
BRIEFS

Cookie dough recall affects SHS fund-raising effort

Hundreds of boxes of fundraising peanut butter cookie dough were recalled due to the possible risk of salmonella infection in late January.

The cookie dough, which was sold to many students, teachers and parents as a way for the SHS music department to raise money for their upcoming tour to Europe, was manufactured by Dough To Go, a company that had a batch of peanut butter contaminated with bacteria that cause salmonella.

However, the peanut butter that was incorporated into the fundraising cookie dough was from a different batch of peanut butter, hence running an extremely low risk of containing the bacteria.

"I think every time there's a health concern, it worries people, particularly with there being so much in the news about lead paint and this kind of food and that kind of food, so of course it's better safe than sorry," said music director Michael Boitz.

Although the risk of Salmonella contaminated peanut butter cookie dough may have worried many bakers and cookie lovers around campus and the neighborhood, the act of baking eradicates the possibility that the dough would make people sick.

Salmonella bacteria is killed at any temperature above 170 degrees and on the box of the cookie dough, the instructions suggest that customers bake at approximately 350 degrees, well over the maximum tolerable temperature of any strain of Salmonella bacteria.

"Bottom line is if anybody has cookie dough, you just bake it," said Boitz. "Don't eat it raw."

So far, no cases of infection have been reported.

Custodian suspected for alleged child molestation

Long-time custodian Juan Edmundo Morales Jauregui has recently been charged with alleged child molestation, pedophilia and possession of child pornography. As of early February, Jauregui was on the run, and his whereabouts are unknown.

"The district will continue working with law enforcement as this investigation proceeds," wrote superintendent Cary Matsuoka in an e-mail. "We want to reassure our community that we remain vigilant about the safety and security of our students, staff and campuses."

Jauregui, known as Juan Morales around campus, is not suspected to have molested any students at Saratoga or Los Gatos High School.

His alleged victim is a 7-year-old girl, but police suspect he molested several others as well.

He worked at Saratoga High for over 13 years without any criminal record or on-the-job misconduct. He is currently on administrative leave and most likely "will not be allowed back onto any district facility until this situation is resolved," according to Matsuoka.

Mock trial competition heats up

All dressed and ready to go, the Mock Trial team met up in front of the Santa Clara Superior Court Office in Downtown San Jose on Feb. 5 to compete in the annual Santa Clara County Mock Trial Competition.

The Defense team competed against Monta Vista's Prosecution team. The teams simulated an arson trial and were judged based on the performances of the attorneys, the witnesses, opening and closing statements and witness examinations. Based on the scoring, Saratoga beat Monta Vista by 34 points.

Two days earlier, Saratoga's prosecution team faced Prospect's Defense team. The competition was tough, with Prospect being one of the league's toughest competitors. Prospect managed to come out ahead with a close 244-225 victory.

In order for the team to advance to the next round of competition, the team must have a record of 3-1. Having already lost a round, the team must win both of their next two matches in order to advance.

"Our final two rounds are going to be crucial," said team captain Rishi Taggarsi. "But we know we can beat almost any team when we compete at our best."

—by Annie Lee, Saniha Shankar, Anna Shen and Abhishek Venkataramana

CORRECTIONS

- Junior Maddy Renalds was incorrectly spelled as "Maddie Renalds" on the front page of the Jan. 30 issue.

Debate prepares for State Quals

by Saniha Shankar
Abhi Venkataramana

As the speech and debate season comes to a close with only two tournaments left before the State Qualifying Tournament in early March, the team competed at the prestigious Stanford University Tournament on Feb. 6-9, squared off with hundreds of the nation's best debaters and speakers.

In Varsity Parliamentary Debate, five teams from Saratoga High competed. Two teams of sophomores Abhishek Venkataramana and Vijay Menon and seniors Connie Shang and Adeeti Aggarwal advanced past elimination rounds.

In Individual Events, sophomore Vance Lindholm advanced to semi-finals in Impromptu and Extemporaneous speech. Freshman Michael Chen also advanced to semi-finals in Extemporaneous speech.

In Student Congress, freshman Anoop Galivanche, sophomore Keerti Shukla, and juniors Varun Parmar and Saniha Shan-

kar broke to finals in Congress. Parmar placed fifth.

The team was proud of the results, especially since this tournament is one of the "hardest tournaments of the year."

"I think we did a great job this year," said team captain Farid Jiandani, "especially considering the fact that a lot of the competitors are from the nation's top teams."

Before Stanford, the team competed at the Novice League debate tournament at Prospect High School on Feb. 1. The whole team went undefeated during the tournament.

Freshmen Sankash Shankar and Vineet Jain, Galivanche and Vishal Goel, Hansen Qian and Walter Hsiang all went 3-0 in their debate rounds.

"It was great to see our whole team do so well," said head coach Erick Rector, "especially since it was the first time competing for one of our teams."

The League's Winter Individual Events competition was held at Evergreen High School on Jan. 31. Although this was a

smaller tournament, the competition was stiff with a bid to the State Qualifying Tournament at stake. 14 students from Saratoga competed.

Jiandani placed fourth in Impromptu speech, earning a bid to the State Qualifying Tournament. Lindholm, Galivanche and Chen advanced to semi-finals for Extemporaneous speech. Sophomore David Mandell advanced to semi-finals in Humorous Interpretation.

"The competition was really intense because almost all of the people at the competition were really good at what they did," said Jiandani. "We're in the peak of the season and everyone is trying to do their best."

With exceptional performance from the novice and varsity teams, the team is preparing to head for the State Qualifying Tournament right around the corner in March.

"We have definitely made a lot of progress this season," said Jiandani. "All the work the team has put in will hopefully pay off during State Quals." ♦



Theresa Yeh

Junior Steven Lee, sophomores Aditya Dev and Jason Shiuan along with freshman Kelsey Owyang celebrate Chinese New Year inside Chinese teacher Miriam Fan's classroom, each with red envelopes in hand.

Chinese culture hails new year

by Kevin Mu
and Anna Shen

Characterized by deafening firecrackers, *hong baos* (red envelopes) stuffed with money, delicious food and the color red everywhere, Chinese New Year, also called the Spring Festival, is the most important holiday in Chinese culture, symbolizing a fresh start and a new beginning to one's life.

At the stroke of midnight on Chinese New Year, the atmosphere is ablaze and filled with life. The holiday may not be as tangible in Saratoga, as Chinese New Year isn't even an official holiday in the United States, but many students and their families have found ways to make this holiday special by spending it with their loved ones.

Sophomore Gavin Chu's family celebrated the start of the lunar year, the year of the Ox, by having an enormous dinner at a restaurant with his extended family. His grandparents even traveled to Saratoga from Taiwan for the festivities.

"We have really big dinners [to bring in the new year]," said

Chu. "My grandparents came over, so we had a big celebration. It's really crazy but at the same time a wonderful experience to get to reunite with everyone."

A favorite part is receiving money-filled *hong baos*, a tradition in the Chinese culture.

"The best part of it is getting red envelopes," said Chu.

Sophomore Alison Shen commemorated this holiday by preparing a gigantic meal with her family. Afterwards, they celebrated by playing "Guitar Hero." Shen believes that people don't necessarily have to follow tradition to celebrate a great Chinese New Year.

"Chinese New Year is a great way for my family and I to get together and just have a fun time," said Shen.

The Chinese department hosted a week of games, artwork and appetizing dishes during lunches to celebrate.

"Last year, whenever we had food, people would just stay there to eat," said Chinese teacher Miriam Fan. "We want people to join more activities."

Chu, who attended the event, feels "it was a lot of fun" spend-

ing the whole class period with his classmates.

On Feb. 6, the Saratoga staff gathered in the cafeteria, which was decorated with red lanterns and tablecloth, for a taste of the festivities. A Chinese New Year luncheon, organized by parents, consisted of Chinese dishes such as walnut shrimp and egg rolls.

English teacher Erick Rector enjoyed the feast and believes that food is a great way to experience a different culture.

"I think the best way to share a culture is through things like festivals and special holidays, and a key component of that is food," said Rector.

Science teacher Lisa Cochrum looks forward to the luncheon every year. To her, Chinese New Year is a time for everyone to celebrate or learn about another culture.

"I think it is extremely important for our students to be exposed to the numerous cultures around the world, and this is one way to increase their knowledge," she said. "It is particularly important since we have so many students who have a Chinese heritage." ♦

BLOCK | Changes debated

continued from pg. 1

student athletes with seven periods would not have to miss any class time. Teachers have raised concerns, however, about the potential disadvantages of implementing such a schedule, including only seeing their students twice every other week.

"Some teachers are adamantly against it and some have good talking points for it," said Bosco. "It depends on who you talk to."

According to principal Jeff Anderson, the foreign language and performing arts departments traditionally oppose the full block, although some teachers in these departments may be supportive.

"Languages and math usually want shorter classes and as many contacts per week as possible," said Spanish teacher Bret Yeilding. "I personally taught in the full block schedule, and I would prefer it, but there are plenty of teachers in my department who would not."

Teachers have mixed feelings about moving to a full block schedule. According to administrators, there is no general consensus on the new schedule and opinions vary widely.

"I'd like the consistency because the times are all even and I'd also like the four tutorials," said history teacher Matt Torrens. "But I don't like the fact that it's less time with students on some weeks, so it may not be convenient to some teachers."

Safine said the likelihood of a switch to the new schedule is still unknown and the school might stay with the current schedule. He also said the conversation about a new block schedule is nothing new and something that has been occurring for the past couple of years. ♦

Proposed SHS schedule

"A" Day	
Period 1:	7:50-9:20
Break:	9:20-9:30
Tutorial:	9:30-10:00
Period 3:	10:05-11:35
Lunch:	11:35-12:15
Period 5:	12:20-1:50
Period 7:	1:55-3:25
"B" Day	
Period 2:	7:50-9:20
Break:	9:20-9:30
Tutorial:	9:30-10:00
Period 4:	10:05-11:35
Lunch:	11:35-12:15
Period 6:	12:20-1:50
Period 8:	1:55-3:25
Wednesday collaboration A/B	
Collaboration:	7:50-8:45
1st/2nd:	8:45-10:15
3rd/4th:	10:20-11:45
Lunch:	11:45-12:25
5th/6th:	12:20-1:50
7th/8th:	1:55-3:20

TOGATALKS

What do you think of a total block schedule?



You don't get to see all your teachers and all your homework from your classes is due.

freshman Ruchie Bharadwaj

I think it'd be great because we'd have less weekend homework.



junior Sawan Shah

I think Mondays are good the way they are already.



junior Shawna Shirazi

--by Grishma Athavale and Nandini Ruparel

Library offers new research tools

by Shannon Galvin
and Apeksha Sharma

With a recent \$5,000 grant from the School Site Council, librarian Kevin Heyman is determined to bring the school into the 21st century. The library is introducing two new online databases called OPAC and a bibliography generator as part of its mission to improve its resources.

The new databases have been used by many other high schools for about 10 years. Students can also use these systems to familiarize themselves with other databases. This will allow for preparation for research at the college level.

Students can also use these systems to familiarize themselves with other databases.

information, they also have research not otherwise available on the Internet for free.

"When you find yourself in college, in the next two or three years," said Heyman, "you find that there are dozens—if not hundreds—of databases that you are going to have to know how to use from the university

libraries, and so this is the time to learn how to start using them."

Not only do these databases give access to huge amounts of scholarly

access to these databases than that they do at the public library because they only need a student ID card."

In addition to the databases, the school has also added a program to help students create works cited pages. The program, NoodleBib, allows students to easily enter the information of their sources into the generator to format bibliographies.

"My plan is to create a library that has all of the resources students need in order to complete their assignments," said Heyman. ♦

Students will have easier



Librarian Kevin Heyman poses for a quick photo in front of a computer.

Los Gatos to implement block schedule next year

by Ben Clement

After months of research and consideration, the administration at Los Gatos High School has announced the school's switch to a full block schedule for the 2009/2010 school year.

A leading figure in the deliberations was Los Gatos assistant principal Markus Autrey, who witnessed the implementation of the block schedule while working at Saratoga High.

"A combination of factors influenced the decision," said Autrey. "We began by looking at the data we put out as a school such as testing scores and rank as well as our student population, and brainstormed ways that we, as a faculty, could better meet the needs of this large variety of different students."

The administration then began to interview faculty and students from various schools, including Saratoga High, that used different types of block schedules to learn the benefits and drawbacks of the variety of models. From there, the school looked at its student population and the areas in which the students were lacking. They then built the block schedule in a way to best make up for those deficits.

Although opinions at Los Gatos have never been unanimous, Autrey believes that tensions will begin to settle now that the decision had been made.

"Now that we have decided in the switch to the new schedule as a school, the staff is committed to making it successful," said Autrey.

Unlike Saratoga High, the Los Gatos block schedule does not have a day in which the students attend all of their classes, but is instead broken up into "A" and "B" days that alternate from school day to school day. The reason for this is that the majority of the staff wanted to have fixed times for classes,

break, tutorial, and lunch every day, instead of varying from day to day, according to Autrey. Also, the staff wanted to be "fully immersed" in longer class periods so they could adopt and refine new teaching strategies.

Autrey maintains that the students really will not know how to feel about the schedule until they have experienced it.

"Change is difficult for everyone, and it really is an unknown, however, [with this new schedule] there is definitely more time for the students to do their work and meet with their teachers for extra assistance," said Autrey. ♦

Adopted schedule for Los Gatos High School

"A" Day	
Period 1:	8:00-9:30
Tutorial:	9:30-10:10
Period 3:	10:10-11:45
Lunch:	11:45-12:25
Period 5:	12:25-1:55
Period 7:	2:00-3:30

"B" Day	
Period 2:	8:00-9:30
Tutorial:	9:30-10:10
Period 4:	10:10-11:45
Lunch:	11:45-12:25
Period 6:	12:25-1:55

TRIAL | Student jury

continued from pg. 1

website, 14 similar trials have taken place in schools all across Santa Clara.

For students, it is an invaluable and interactive educational tool; they will learn about the court system and experience the real pressures and decision-making of being in a jury, as well as the severe penalties of drinking and driving.

"I think it's a really educational experience," said sophomore David Mandell, a member of the events commission in charge of organizing the trial. "A lot of people [will] go to a court and witness the consequences that people get for breaking the law, especially for drunk driving, which can often happen at high school."

The trial also serves as a continuation of the "Every 15 Minutes" program held at SHS last year, a simulated drunk-driving accident held to warn students of the dangers of drinking and driving.

"It's kind of like '[Every] 15

Minutes,' where any education is worth its weight in gold," said assistant principal Karen Hyde.

Defendants participating in the school trial "waive rights to a jury trial and accept a bench trial" where the judge makes the final verdict instead of the jury. In exchange, defendants' DUI fines are usually lowered and the sentence reduced because participation is considered "a public service to the student and community," according to NHTSA's website.

To select jurors for the trial, the events commission interviewed government students interested in becoming jury members and eventually selected 12.

The trial will not be open to the general public because the main goal of the event is to educate students, said events commissioner Maddy Renalds.

"I think it's really exciting," said Renalds. "It's great that people who are interested in government or law get to participate in a real trial." ♦

'Court of dreams' to become a reality

by Abhi Venkatarama
and Jenny Zhang

After years of lacking courts during the off-season, basketball players will finally be able to play year-round on a brand new outdoor court to be installed by the end of the year. The idea, nicknamed "Court of Dreams," was introduced by girls' varsity basketball coach Mike Davey last year.

"Ever since I've been here," said Davey, "we've always had a problem finding a place to practice during the off-season when everyone is trying to use the gym at once, so this is something we really need."

The new court will be located on the east end of the track, behind the football goal post and next to Herriman Avenue. The district has already approved funding for a cement slab that will cover the area for two basketball courts, and Davey has raised the necessary \$100,000 to build one court, a cost significantly lower than that of building a brand new gym. He is still hoping to raise enough money for a second court, since building two courts at one time will cost less.

The "Court of Dreams" has already been approved by the District Selling As-

sociation, an organization that overviews safety for facilities. This process alone was a big hurdle, but the fact that the court was approved much more quickly than upgrades to the gym raised hopes that the project can be completed by the end of this school year.

According to Davey, the school is in a bidding process, where companies who build sport courts make offers as to how much it will cost. Under state law, the company that bids the lowest price must be chosen.

"The problem with bidding is that not a lot of [companies] install these sport courts," said Davey, "so it can be a tedious job."

Despite minor complications, this new project is likely to solve many problems, including training for teams during both the off-season as well as the transition between seasons, when many different athletic teams need to use the gym at the same time. Basketball players can practice outside when the gym is unavailable.

When the weather permits, not only will the basketball teams benefit, but also other sports teams that require use of the gym as well, because the court will function both as a basketball and volleyball court. The new court will also be open to the general public when school hours

"Having this court will definitely be beneficial for us. We won't have to wait forever and hold up our practices."

— sophomore Alex Chan



Courtesy of SHS Administration

The above is the proposed plan for the court of dreams, to be located next to the Benny Pierce Field.

are over and teams are not using it.

"I think having this court will definitely be beneficial for us," said sophomore basketball player Alex Chan. "We won't have to wait forever and hold up our practices until gym space is available."

Davey's dream first started materializing when he went to the Final Four in April of 2007 and got to see all the sports equipment being used by various teams. "Sport Court" basketball courts are made of a composite material, softer than cement, and are able to last through most weather conditions. Davey felt the material would be perfect for Saratoga High,

which "lacked the funds and property space for building another gymnasium."

"I saw this 'Sport Court' material and I knew it would be perfect for our school," said Davey. "It's inexpensive, good on the knees and easy to install."

Davey has been hoping for better facilities since the first year he started teaching at Saratoga High, and he hopes that with its installation, the basketball team's skills will improve much more quickly.

"Practice moves you towards perfection," said Davey. "The more practice we can get in, the better we will be as a team." ♦

FALCONFOCUS

Spanish teacher bonds with students over coffee

by Tiffany Tseng and Theresa Yeh

While many classes are taught only through lectures, homework and occasional projects, Spanish teacher Alberto Rodriguez is known to take his teaching outside of the classroom with his weekly "café socials" and an annual Mexico trip.

Rodriguez has been teaching in the district for the past 35 years, and has been having "café socials" with his students for as long as he can remember.

These occur almost every Friday after school, and are usually located at Peet's Coffee Shop. During the socials, students practice conversing with each other in Spanish outside of the typical class setting.

"It's hard learning a foreign language, so the more practice the better," said Rodriguez. "I like these socials because the students can have conversations in Spanish that are not restricted to the classroom or to the specific section we are learning at the moment."

This unique method of learning allows the students to practice Spanish while enjoying the Friday afternoon with friends.

There is no pressure or competition for students as there usually is at school, so they can truly enjoy the learning experience.

"Students are welcome to come and go as they need," said Rodriguez. "The whole point is just for them to be able to practice in a casual environment."

Rodriguez has also been planning the annual trip to Mexico for the past 20 years for his Spanish students who are interested in experiencing a real Spanish-speaking environment. When he first started teaching, Rodriguez



Rodriguez

originally took his students to Costa Rica, but eventually switched to International University in Mexico.

This year, the trip is from Feb. 12 – Feb. 21.

"I have been organizing this trip for a very long time because I think it's such a good opportunity for my students," said Rodriguez.

The students stay with a Mexican family and take classes six hours a day. Evening activities include movies, bowling and going to restaurants, and on the weekend the students go on tours to important sites in Mexico.

"We recommend students in Spanish levels three through five participate in the trip because students tend to have a more positive experience if they have a background in the language," said Rodriguez. "However, we do not deter students in levels one and two if they are interested."

Besides the Mexico trip, six of Rodriguez's students have also been given the chance to host Costa Rican students in their homes.

Rodriguez plans this for his students every two to three years, but stresses that the parents of the Costa Rican students are exceptionally helpful this year.

"The Costa Rican parents have been phenomenal," said Rodriguez. "They are so eager for the students to experience the Silicon Valley as well as the Saratoga lifestyle."

Having taught for so many years, Rodriguez appreciates being able to interact with his students in Spanish and even jokes about how he will "keep going until the battery dies," while imitating the energizer bunny.

"I enjoy transferring knowledge and, in this case, helping students learn a foreign language," said Rodriguez. "It's a great tool for students to have." ♦

BUDGET | State cuts funding

continued from pg. 1

Out of California's \$110 billion state budget, 50-53 percent goes to public K-14 education, which covers kindergarten through community colleges. Both the state and every school district within the state have planned their spending based on this budget. Because of the current state of the economy, few tax revenues are expected, and the state budget for next year is now projected at \$90 billion. Matsuoka said that the state legislature must now take immediate action to provide a solution, so districts across California can adjust their budget plans.

"This is problematic state-wide, and there's no way that the state can solve the budget crisis without touching education. We're too big a part of it," said Woodruff.

Even though the governor has only recommended this proposal, Matsuoka believes that actions must be taken as soon as possible to deal with this crisis.

"I definitely think some form of this proposal will go through. It's hard to tell how it's going to play out," said Matsuoka, "but they definitely needed to do this five months ago. Every week they don't decide on a plan of action, they keep overspending based on the \$110 billion budget."

This problem could potentially lead to a \$2 billion deficit every month for the state of California, and the longer it takes for the decisions to be made, the more

the budget cuts will affect the schools. As for now, though, the budget cuts are not expected to affect Saratoga High's classrooms except for a cut-down on conferences for teachers and administrators and special equipment for some classes.

Matsuoka said he hopes the students in the district's two schools will not be greatly affected by this budget cut because of the help of block grants and district resources that may be used for categorical spending.

"With categorical funds frozen, block grants allow for us to spend the money we receive in these areas in a flexible manner in order to cover everything we need funds for," said Woodruff.

The districts are preparing for a tough upcoming year, but they are expecting a better financial situation by 2010.

"This is probably the hardest recession I've experienced since I was a citizen," said Matsuoka. "It won't be until around 2010 before things start to bottom out, but things will come back. History tells us that." ♦

THE BIG IDEA | Budget Cuts

MORE CUTS: An extra 2.2% cut on top of the already proposed 4.6% for next year

HOW IT'LL AFFECT US: Increase in class sizes, all categorical spending frozen

POTENTIAL PROBLEM: \$2 billion deficit every month for California

Saratoga High School Hall of Fame

Please nominate any alumni who you feel contributed to our school while they attended. All nominations must be emailed to shsevents@gmail.com by April 1, 2009. If you have any questions, call (408) 867 3411 ext. 208.



courtesy of Jon Hurrell

Seniors Wesley Kim, Chris Campbell, John Gifford and Alex Shebanow, junior Jon Hurrell and video teacher Tony Palma display their awards.

Students show talent at Bay Area film festival

by Rebecca Nguyen

Many students have entered. Only one can be chosen. Out of 100 students across the Bay Area who entered the second Annual Social Issues Documentary Film Contest (SI DocFest) in San Jose, two SHS films have qualified to be in the top 10, one group ranked 12th and one group received an honorable mention.

For this contest, Students were to create eight- to 10-minute documentaries highlighting local non-profit organizations focused on working with social issues. On Feb. 8, the semifinalists' films were screened at the Camera 12 Cinemas in downtown San Jose and the winners were announced.

"BORP" by senior Alex Shebanow received second place and \$5,000. Shebanow's film gave information on BORP, the Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program which provides and promotes recreational sports activities for individuals with physical disabilities.

Also, seniors Chris Campbell, John Gifford and Wesley Kim received the sixth place award and \$750 for their film "Sacred Heart: Welcome the Stranger."

"Empowering Women, Eliminating Racism: The YWCA" by junior Jon Hurrell came in 12th and won \$500 for his non-profit organization, the YWCA of Silicon Valley. An honorable mention was given to senior Alexander Ren and juniors Christopher Cha and Kevin Benzing for

"Innvision," which is a homeless shelter and homeless advocacy group based in San Jose.

After being required to participate in this contest by video teacher Tony Palma, Hurrell began to work on the film after December break. Following much hard work and anticipation, Hurrell was relieved when he saw the semifinals results.

"When I got home, I went on and I saw that I was a semifinalist," said Hurrell. "I was actually kind of surprised because this was the first time I ever entered a contest and it's good to see your name on the semifinalist list."

After finding out the wonderful news, Hurrell was greeted by proud friends and teachers.

"A lot of teachers congratulated me which was kind of scary. I didn't really know how they knew, but an email got sent out," said Hurrell.

Not only were students recognized for their films, but Palma received the honor of being the first recipient of the Terry McElhatton Memorial Award, which honors a teacher who has inspired students in video work.

Being at the awards night was a thrilling experience for everyone.

"They went through the rankings and the closer to the top six you get, the more exciting it gets," said Palma. "To have one of our students rank second place was outstanding. I was really impressed with the work that they did. I really was just overwhelmed with just how incredible the films were." ♦

Bollywood Berkeley reunites SHS alumni

by Neyha Bhat
and Aditi Jayaraman

Those who know of "Bombay in the Bay," the Indian Cultural Awareness Club's (ICAC) annual Indian culture show on campus, know that members take it very seriously. What most of them do not know, however, is that many former ICAC members and Saratoga High alumni continue the tradition of Indian dancing in college. At this year's "Bollywood Berkeley" dance contest held by UC Berkeley, nine Saratoga alumni will compete with teams from their respective universities for the first place prize of \$2,000.

SHS '07 alumni Rohit D'Costa, Devi Narasimhan, Kavan Sabnani, Varun Sivaram, and Nickesh Viswa-

nathan, along with '08 alumni Elli Rezaii, Sabrina Rohatgi, and Nikhil Sheel will be a part of the competition on Feb. 27. D'Costa, Narasimhan and Sabnani will be performing with UC San Diego's "K.Y.A", Sivaram with Stanford's "Dil Se", Viswanathan with UC

I'm looking forward to seeing my friends who performed in 'Bombay in the Bay' back on stage together again, even if they're competing against each other."

—senior Kushal Shah

Berkeley's "Ishaara" and Rezaii, Rohatgi, and Sheel with UC Davis's "Toofan".

They will also be up against teams from UCLA, UC Irvine, USC and Northwestern University.

The winner of "Bollywood Berkeley" will receive a bid to compete against the best teams in other genres of Indian dance at the "Best of the Best" dance competition in San Francisco later this year. The student-run Indus Coalition which oversees all South Asian events held at UC Berkeley expects over 2,000 people to attend "Bollywood Berkeley" this year.

"I'm looking forward to seeing a bunch of my friends who all performed together in 'Bombay in the Bay' last year and years before, back on stage together again, even if they're competing against one another," said senior Kushal

Shah, who plans on attending the show. "It should be pretty interesting to watch." ♦

Tickets can be purchased at <http://bollywoodberkeley.uberkeleyindus.com/home.htm>.

Is it OK to leave campus during tutorial?

by Grishma Athavale
and Nandini Ruparel

For many students, the tutorial bell often signifies the mark of "freedom" from the classroom.

While many students use the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday tutorial sessions to talk to teachers and put finishing touches on their homework, others use it like a second lunch period, with all the usual lunchtime privileges—the most important being the expectation that they will get to drive off campus.

However, the administration has emphasized that this is in fact a false privilege. Students are actually not allowed to go off campus during any time other than lunch. Despite what many students think, it is against state law to have students off campus during these times.

Although this rule may aggravate many students, the administration says the reason for this is that tutorial time is reserved teaching time for stu-

SCHOOL RULES
School policy on going off campus during tutorials

dents. If students go off campus at tutorial, they don't get the number of learning hours that the school is required to provide.

Assistant principal Joe Bosco said that students should use the tutorial period to get concepts clarified and to work on homework instead of going off campus.

"Students shouldn't abuse the tutorial privilege to go off campus and waste this instructional time; instead, they should get the help they need," said Bosco.

To enforce this rule, campus supervisors have been placed on the school exits to make sure that nobody tries to leave during tutorial. If these stu-

dents are caught, they will be given an immediate Saturday school.

But not all students agree with the restriction.

"[The rule] corrupts, because it keeps students confined to the school campus in an enclosed space," said senior Daniel Shepherd.

Another questionable area is the Wednesday after-school tutorial. It is unclear whether students have to stay on campus or can leave during that time.

Bosco said that technically students are not supposed to leave the school campus even then, but since it is at the end of the day, many students decide to go home at the end of sixth period.

The school has not, however, tried to stop the massive flow of students who simply leave school following sixth period on Wednesdays.

Even so, Bosco said, "[The Wednesday tutorial] is still part of the school day, and students should be using the tutorial. The teachers are here." ♦

48 embark on Spanish immersion trip to Cuernavaca

by Abhi Venkataramana

For Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguez, culture is not something that can be just taught through books and lectures. So for the 25th year in a row, Rodriguez will be leading a group of 48 Spanish students to Cuernavaca, Mexico, for a one week study abroad program that he hopes will allow the students to completely "immerse themselves in the Mexican culture."

"You can only learn so much from the textbooks or from the internet," said Rodriguez, "but when you're actually there and you see it, smell it, touch it and experience it, you get a better

understanding of the Mexican people and their culture and language."

The students left for Mexico on Feb. 12 and will be returning on Feb. 22. The trip, which was offered to

students in Spanish 3 and above, will allow students to live with a local family, attend classes during the morning and participate in activities during the rest of the day.

When you're actually there and you see it ... you get a better understanding of the Mexican people."

—Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguez

Some of the activities include sightseeing, salsa dancing, games with local high school students, going to the mall and spending time with the local families with whom the students will be living.

"By staying with the families, students are able to learn more about the way the people of Mexico actually live," said Rodriguez. "They eat the same foods, do the same activities and just experience how people live in

Mexico."

Rodriguez first learned about this program when he went to Mexico more than two decades ago and visited Universidad Internacional, the same university at which the students will be studying during the trip.

"One year I went to Mexico and I went to this school and I really liked it," said Rodriguez. "I thought it would be a good place to take the Spanish learning students to have a total immersion experience of the Mexican Culture."

The trip has received great praise over the years. Many students have enjoyed it and have recommended it to other

students.

"A lot of my friends told me that the trip was one of their favorite parts of high school," said junior Nihal Ruparel, who is currently attending the trip, "so I knew it was something that I couldn't miss."

Although he has gone on the same trip for a quarter-century, Rodriguez said he always enjoys it.

"My favorite part about this trip is the joy of seeing my students having a wonderful time," said Rodriguez. "It seems that across the board they enjoy the activities, the learning that takes place, and the experience of living in Mexico." ♦



Theresa Yeh

Senior Kristy Lam and junior Madeline Rothenberg shape clay with teacher Leah Aguayo.

District art show to restart

by Alicia Lee
and Lyka Sethi

The Museums of Los Gatos will be hosting the Annual Juried High School Art show from May 7th to the 29th, presenting the artwork of students from both Los Gatos High School and Saratoga High School. For the two sister schools, this will be a very momentous event in more than one way.

Saratoga Ceramics and Art 1 teacher Leah Aguayo hopes that the event will bring the two schools together, "without rivalry," for the common goal of just presenting artwork.

Although the show is juried with awards for winners, it is not a real competition between schools and neither school's staff will be judging. Instead, the art commission of the Museums of Los Gatos will evaluate the pieces. On May 14th at 6 p.m., the judges will present the winners at a reception and awards ceremony and offer prizes to the first three places in each of the five categories of work including ceramics, drawing, painting, photography and sculpture. Aguayo and Art and Digital Photography teacher Steve McCue will be hand picking student work to be displayed at the museum based on the criteria of "originality, creativity and superior craftsmanship."

This will also be the first year in which

the two schools will be getting back together to coordinate the art show. In the past, the district held the joint art show for 18 years, but there has not been one in the past nine years. This year, the schools will finally rekindle the tradition and hopefully continue it for years to come.

To commemorate the reception, the selected students of the ceramics departments from both schools will join together as one and make a sculpture piece for the museum.

"It will be a permanent installation at the museum. They're hoping that every year we do the show together, we can add a small art installation to the museum," said Aguayo.

Aguayo and McCue strongly encourage all Saratoga students to visit the reception and support the effort of the art department.

"We hope that hundreds of people come to view the art," said McCue. "It's a big deal because the Museum of Los Gatos is very well-known throughout the country so for us to have an art show there is a reflection of Mrs. Aguayo and I getting our student work out into the community." ♦

For more information about the Annual Juried High School Art show and the Museums of Los Gatos, visit: www.museumsoflosgatos.org.

Aeries grading system includes new features

by Elizabeth Lee

All students who have experienced the eagerness and anxiety associated with checking their grades are familiar with the Aeries interface. These students may also have noticed that Aeries has been evolving slowly—right under their eyes.

Most of these modifications were undetected by students because they were either not visible or were very trivial. The most significant change was that of the grade book tab.

In the past, when students clicked on the grade book tab, they were transported immediately to their first period grade summary, with a dropdown list at the top with which to change classes. Now, they are taken first to an overall summary page giving all of their classes and respective grades, and

they click on the class they want for more detailed assignment grades.

Other differences students and parents should note is the function of uploading files onto the digital locker and digital backpack feature as well as a drop box where students can turn in assignments to teachers online.

"There is probably more [benefit] to the teacher's end of it," said Julianne Yeaman, Application Support Analyst of the Los Gatos Saratoga Union High School District.

With the new changes, teachers can run reports, sort their rosters a little bit differently, and be able to look at student attendance and information more easily.

Some instructors don't necessarily

view these new features as significantly as others do.

"The changes don't affect me [so much, as I don't really use the new tools]," said English teacher Jason Friend.

These changes would not have happened, however, without the requests of parents, students or teachers.

Aeries programmers make three to four updates a year to improve the system, but they usually tackle minor issues such as bug fixes and security problems that are unnoticeable to students and parents.

"Aeries is our student information system," said Yeaman. "The programmers are always doing updates to meet reporting requirements or just to improve the program so it is more useful to people."

According to Yeaman, the programmers frequently encourage Aeries users to request changes or attention to a certain problem. The programmers go through reports of all the schools in California that use Aeries, which is about forty-five percent, in a meeting. Because the state requires a lot of data reporting from schools, the programmers are always up to date with modifications or new requirements.

All school districts using Aeries have the right to request changes, including students, parents and teachers. Yeaman, who receives the requests from the school, forwards them to a committee, which discusses the requests and prioritizes them.

In the future, students and parents can expect more updates and even make a difference in the system by submitting their own requests. ♦

"[Aeries] programmers are always doing updates to meet reporting requirements or just to improve the program."

—Support analyst Julianne Yeaman



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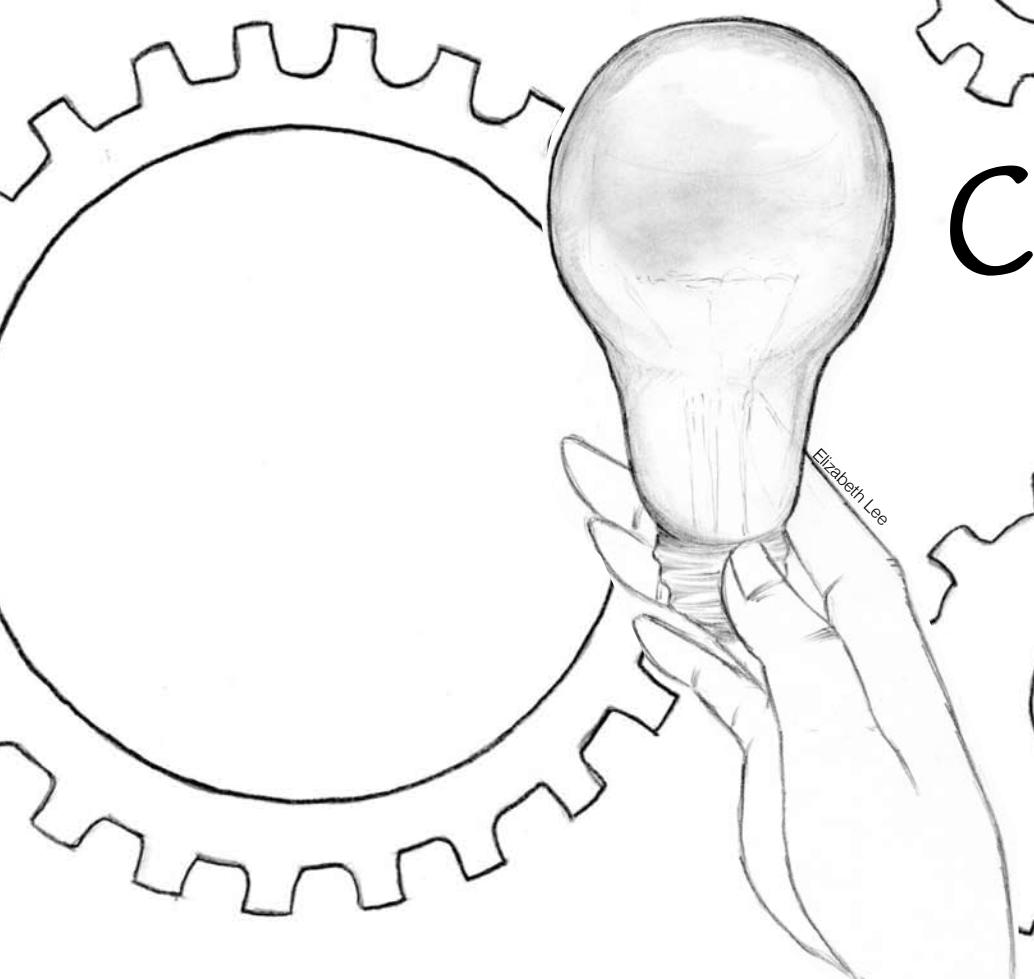
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INNOVATION IN THE CLASSROOM



Even with small budgets, schools must keep kids learning

by Ren Norris

There is no doubt that the growing financial problems that President Obama recently inherited have an effect on education all over the nation. Many schools are living with tighter budgets and insufficient funding for public schools. With less money for extra activities and programs, Saratoga High needs to be effective in innovating the classroom and other activities to launch students to college, jobs and other opportunities after high school.

Extracurricular activities are an area where many students here excel. Through the school's strong programs and departments, students can follow their interests that can lead to other opportunities, even if they are unrelated to academics.

Senior Aaron Garg is one example. Among other things, his love for music

and his experience with Saratoga High's band took Garg all the way to Beijing, China, to perform with a Bay Area Orchestra group for the Olympic countdown in the summer of 2007.

The orchestra combined western music with Chinese to celebrate the coming Olympics the next year.

Garg recognizes Saratoga's music program as being what sparked his interest in music.

"Without [the music program], I wouldn't have gotten where I am because the department is so good and I get to play with other great musicians," said Garg. "We're exposed to really high level, college level, music."

Saratoga High has provided many chances for the students to thrive and use Saratoga as a springboard to a successful future. The school is developing an outstanding media arts program that will be housed in a state-of-the-art facility, and more than 70 campus clubs and organizations allow students to explore interests outside of the classroom.

Despite good opportunities provided

by Saratoga's extracurricular activities, classrooms also need more innovation to aid students in achieving their goals, whether that is to get into a prestigious college or just to graduate from high school. The school's budget will be cut next year as part of the state's larger problems.

For now, students can anticipate larger class sizes. This is tough for everyone, and in a class of 35 or 40, some students are occasionally left in the dust. Even so, each teacher needs to look at those not up to the speed of the rest of the class and try to give the help to allow them to improve as a student.

Even money for new technology may become scarce, putting even more pressure on the existing technology that teachers use. With the economy the way it is now, many of the activities that boost students into greater opportunities could

get cut short in the future. This means that every teacher needs to be effective with the resources they have. Classes should focus on not only learning the required material, but also teaching students how to apply what they have learned to situations outside the classroom.

With so many students on the road to college and beyond, Saratoga High has one goal—to help every student on campus fulfill their potential and achieve success. This is accomplished through dances provided by Saratoga that lead to opportunities later on in life.

With the changing economy and cuts to education, the school needs to improve on making every classroom efficient to provide a strong base that will not only help students pass tests, but also guide them to a successful future. ♦

Dance Commission efforts unfairly criticized

INSTEAD OF WHINING ABOUT NEW SADIE HAWKINS DATE, STUDENTS SHOULD APPRECIATE THE EVENT

The Sadie Hawkins Dance has always served as the cherry on top of the delicious treat that is Spring Fling Week. For most students, it is the part of the spirit-based week that they enjoy the most.

This year, however, many have raised unnecessary complaints about the change of date for the annual Sadie's dance: it will be held on Feb. 27, departing from its usual slot as part of the week-long celebration in March. The change, which was made by ASB in order to provide the school with another informal dance, is a positive one and should receive student support.

Students say holding Sadie's early breaks timeless tradition. The Dance

Commission, however, has taken steps to ensure that much of what is appreciated about the Sadie Hawkins Dance remains the same. Girls will still be the ones asking their dates, and those who attend are welcomed to dress to the theme, "Opposites Attract."

In addition to keeping with past unwritten regulation, the Dance commission is also beginning new traditions, including encouraging stu-

dents to come without a date. In the past, many students have not attended Sadie's because they did not have a date and missed an important experience at Saratoga High.

This year, the commission is widely advertising Sadie's as an informal dance, where students may come with or without a date and still enjoy good music. Prices are also more affordable this year, with only one set bid price. This reduces student stress about buying bids in time by removing the deadline.

These changes to the annual Sadie Hawkins Dance are all beneficial to students, who will still be able to enjoy Spring Fling's main attractions, including Powder Puff football and the Battle of the Boom. Students attending Saratoga High last year when Sadie's was cancelled due to inappropriate conduct at an earlier dance know that Spring Fling Week can be fun without the dance at the end of it. They should be especially grateful to have the dance at all this year.

With more time to focus on other events, and no extra stress regarding dates and an imposing formal dance, students should stop complaining and start making plans to attend. ♦

STAFF EDITORIAL
Opinion of *The Falcon*
editorial board

Drug testing causes concern

SOME SCHOOLS' METHOD TO CUT DOWN ON DRUG-USE IS FUTILE, WRONG

by Alex Sclavos
and Ketaki Shriram

In recent years, drug testing has become a fact of life for athletes, both on and off the professional field. New programs, however, are attempting to force mandatory drug testing on non-athletic students in public high schools across America. This is both a violation of privacy and an ineffective way of monitoring students on the part of administrators.

According to the *New York Times*, schools in New Jersey have taken this invasion of privacy to a whole new level. At one high school, if random drug testing were to be permitted, students would have to submit to a test to join a sport, club or even to obtain a parking permit.

According to Chad Gilikin, a Ridge High School counselor who told the *New York Times*, "[At] schools we've visited that do random drug testing, it's very impressive. They say it's changed the youth culture in their communities."

Although Gilikin may claim that drug testing at public schools across America has changed youth culture in various communities, it would not be effective in a school like Saratoga. Most students, even if tested at school, are unlikely to change more than their behavior when

on campus. This renders the program ineffective and harms students more than it helps, due to its violation of their privacy.

To counter this remark, many parents have brought up the fact that drug testing in sports has become mandatory in some professional sports, as well as in high school leagues. Athletes, however, sign waivers that allow for any drug testing they may be subjected to during their time on a given

school sport. Although parents may hope for confirmation that their student is doing drugs, it is not the responsibility of the public school to test, even if they have reasonable suspicion.

Adult support of school-sponsored drug testing is further weakened by a study conducted in 2003 at the University of Michigan of 900 schools. This study, according to the *New York Times*, affirmed that there was no medical proof that drug testing lowered teen drug abuse. This, according to the *Times*, was further supported by a survey of physicians, 83 percent of whom opposed drug testing in public schools. These statistics show that while drug-testing students

may allow adults to more carefully monitor teen behavior, there is no real benefit to the overbearing program.

Some students at Saratoga High also disapprove of the idea of random drug-testing.

"I feel that this decision provides the administration with too much power," said an anonymous junior.

With both statistics and professional opinion against them, public schools cannot randomly drug test because it is ineffective and an invasion of students' privacy. Teenagers will make mistakes no matter what, but it is their parents' responsibility to counsel them, and not in the school's jurisdiction to regulate adolescent behavior. ♦



Closing Guantanamo is not enough

Shutting down the prison is only the first step in saving America's image

by Gautham Ganesan

It didn't take President Barack Obama long to begin righting the myriad wrongs committed by the disastrous regime he is thankfully replacing. Just 12 hours into his tenure as the 44th president of the United States, Obama signed a bill to shut down the controversial Guantanamo Bay prison, notoriously used by the Bush administration to torture suspected terrorists, by the end of the year.

The move is refreshing to say the least, instilling confidence that the Obama administration is every bit the human rights proponent it billed itself as during the campaign. The stench emanating from the ethical and legal quagmire that is Guantanamo Bay, however, only grows more pungent in the aftermath of Obama's veritable admittance that the events occurring in the prison directly violated the Geneva Convention.

Redressing the innumerable crimes committed at Guantanamo under the

purveyance of such blatantly unlawful documents as the Military Commissions Act of 2006 will prove a long and arduous process for the Obama Administration, a process that the primary perpetrators of these crimes, George Bush and Dick Cheney, should

The Military Commissions Act is a flagrant mockery of the Geneva Convention and must be repealed immediately.

assume both a role in and responsibility for.

The aforementioned Military Commissions Act is a flagrant mockery of the Geneva Convention and must be repealed immediately to prevent Guantanamo Bay prisons from merely being relocated rather than expunged forever.

The act strips ambiguously defined

"alien unlawful enemy combatants" of essentially the entirety of their Geneva Convention rights and sadly retains legal validity even in a post-Guantanamo world.

In addition to repealing the Military Commissions Act to bring an end to the country's sordid interrogation practices, the government must deal with the logistics of unleashing the dozens of individuals being held at Guantanamo Bay. While none of them deserve the torture inflicted upon them during their stay at the prison, many of them are terrorists and therefore should be transferred to high-security facilities elsewhere. The government's apparent lack of a plan regarding this matter is extremely concerning.

While President Obama's shutdown of Guantanamo Bay was decidedly swift, it will take years for the U.S. government to absolve itself of the countless moral follies it oversaw over the course of the prison's existence and fully recover from this squalid chapter in its history. ♦

The Saratoga Falcon

STAFF POLICY

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i n Views expressed in *The Saratoga Falcon* are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the

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

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Schools should leave out religious debate

Controversy over origin of species unnecessary—just teach the facts, let students choose for themselves

by Kirstie Lee
and Uttara Sivaram

Whether man sashayed into existence pre-made and gift-wrapped or has monkeys for his aunts and uncles is an argument that has pitted die-hard scientists against the born again religious for decades.

A message to both of them: Leave it out of public education and let the poor kids learn science without snide remarks or objections from the opposing side.

According to *The New York Times*, the Texas Board of Education tentatively came together to discuss the controver-

sial aspects of science textbooks being used in that state's public schools.

The popular story of "Peter and the Wolf" comes to mind, does it not? A stir-up in Texas about intelligent design is a "been there, done that" sort of thing.

In fact, most people probably picked up their newspaper, glanced at the article about Texas, scanned through it and spotted two words—"evolution" and "creationism."

After that, they flipped the page to the entertainment section, where the daily lives of the Obama family were being documented in the form of cartoons and high-definition candids.

The Board voted eight to seven in fa-

vor of eliminating all language in school textbooks hinting at Darwin's mental instability and the inconsistencies of the evolution theory. Good for them.

It's no use handing out books to students when all they find inside is the equivalent of a squabble between atheists and conservatives.

Learning a biological theory is hard enough without having to double take on every postulate concerning common ancestry or natural selection.

Teaching evolution in science classes is not the problem. If students were taught the facts and not the controversial opinions surrounding the facts, there would be no problem.

Textbooks shouldn't force students to believe any one side. They should be presenting these hypotheses as the generally accepted scientific explanation that may or may not be true.

Let kids decide on their own whether

they are happier imagining their roots as a monkey or their God-fated appearance on Earth.

If they cannot be trusted to make these kinds of decisions on their own, leave it to their families, not to school textbooks, to influence them in the way they think is most appropriate.

Trying to implement religion and creationism in science classes is like suddenly introducing pottery in math classes. The two don't mix well, and usually produce students with a doubtful and uncertain understanding of the material.

A day where science teachers storm into religion classes ranting about the impossibility of phenomenon described in many religious texts is yet to come. So let religion be taught in religion classes and science taught in science classes without arguments about the overlap. ♦

If students were taught the facts and not the controversial opinions surrounding the facts, there would be no problem.

Untimely closing of Aeries increases student stress

by Gautham Ganesan
and Mary Mykhaylova

It's the day before finals and an anxious junior logs onto Aeries in hopes of checking her multitude of borderline grades.

The student attempts to calculate the scores she needs on her semester exams to see how she should balance study time for each of her subjects in order to secure grades that she finds acceptable. To her overwhelming dismay, the student discovers that Aeries is, in fact, entirely shut down.

The district has deemed it prudent to shut down Aeries one week before the end of each grading period, a decision that has led to numerous headaches and panic attacks, making it a dubious necessity at best.

Many students who enter finals with borderline scores are unable to check their grades and determine what score they require on any given final

exam in order to reach their standards and personal goals.

Unfortunately, despite numerous complaints, the school administration has been unresponsive to student angst regarding Aeries.

The untimely closing of Aeries also affects concerned parents. Although they were originally promised the ability to check their students' grades whenever needed, most parents, who are at times even more frantic than their students, are unable to look at grades when they matter the most: right before finals.

In addition to the loss of the ability to check their grades before finals, students are also unable to see their actual grade, something students should be able to access at all times.

In some cases, only percentages are shown, and students cannot see their letter grade based on the scaling of that particular class. Despite the many complaints that have been raised about this pressing issue, the ad-

ministration continues to display a surprising lack of concern.

The main argument for the shutdown is that teachers make last-minute changes to student grades that they do not want students to see.

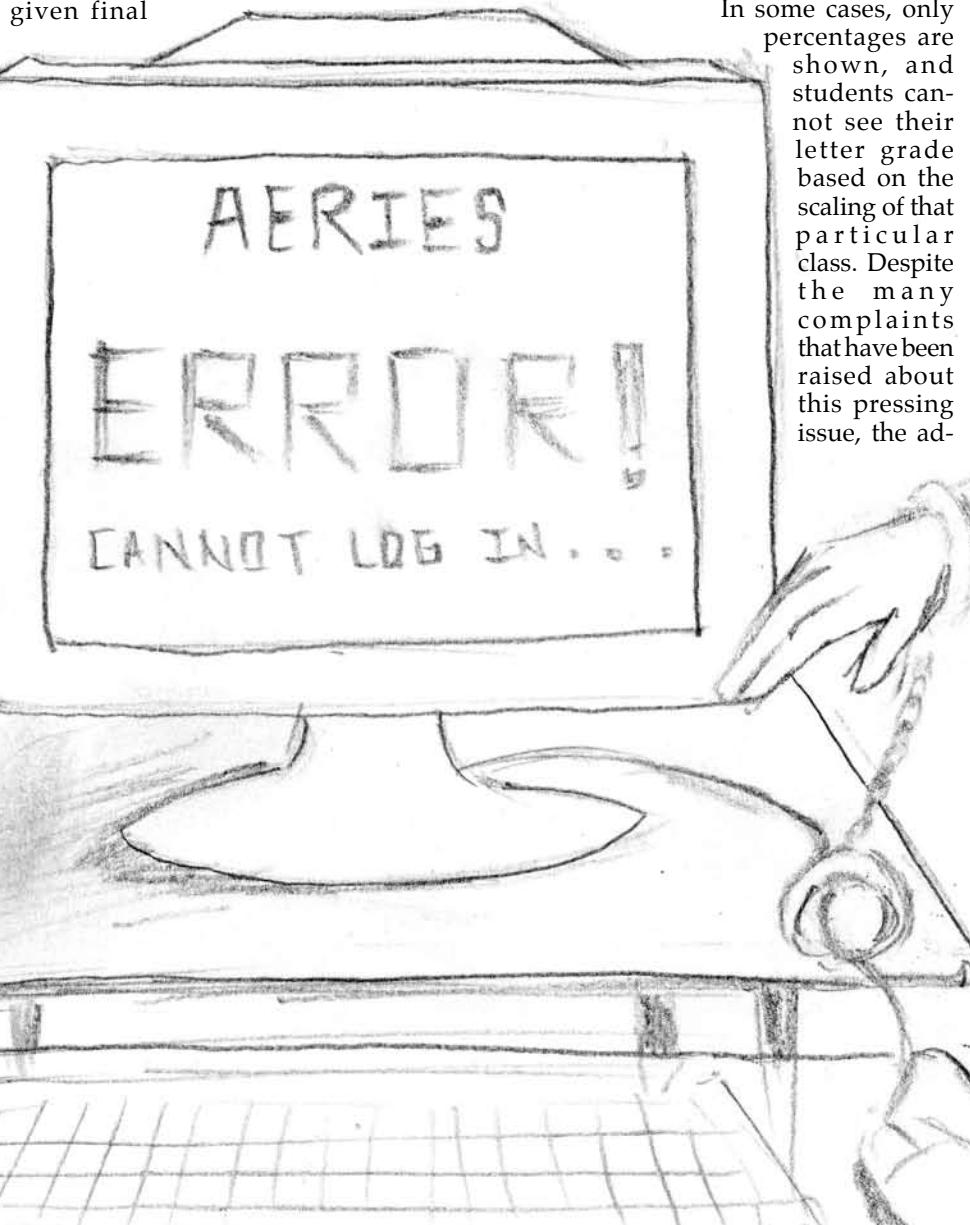
Teachers do not approve of the possible changed setup, mainly because they dislike the idea of parents and students viewing a veritable play-by-play version of an Aeries gradebook as changes are made.

Complaints would no doubt be generated from such a setup, making life far more difficult for them.

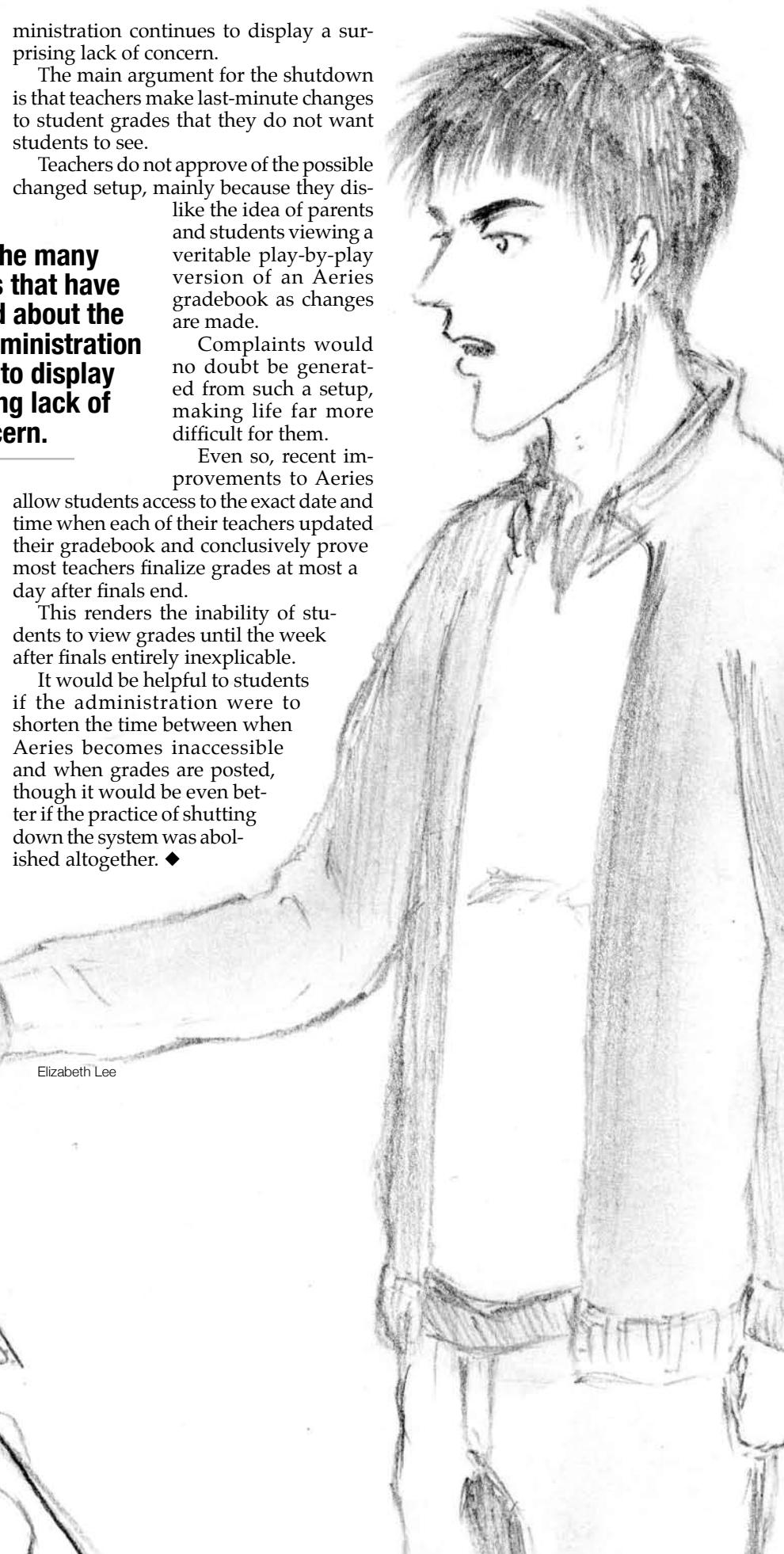
Even so, recent improvements to Aeries allow students access to the exact date and time when each of their teachers updated their gradebook and conclusively prove most teachers finalize grades at most a day after finals end.

This renders the inability of students to view grades until the week after finals entirely inexplicable.

It would be helpful to students if the administration were to shorten the time between when Aeries becomes inaccessible and when grades are posted, though it would be even better if the practice of shutting down the system was abolished altogether. ♦



Elizabeth Lee



Possible new schedule beneficial for SHS

by Alex Sclavos
and Ketaki Shriram

When originally implemented in the year 2005, block scheduling was met with enthusiastic reactions on the parts of both staff and students.

The new and improved schedule allowed more time for extracurricular activities, in-depth classroom discussion and easily met homework deadlines. Four years later, however, some teachers, students and parents would like to change to more effective schedules used at other schools in the Bay Area.

Los Gatos High, which recently decided to switch to block scheduling for next year, has chosen to act on a far more effective schedule than the one currently in use here.

At Los Gatos, students will never have to attend all their classes on a Monday;

A challenge that arises with an A/B schedule stems from the fact that every other week, classes will only meet twice.

instead, they are using a format known as the A/B block schedule, where there are only three classes on any given day.

Saratoga's schedule of having all periods on Monday means that students must do homework for every class over the weekend: double the workload of a normal day.

On weekends, a Saratoga student with multiple Advanced Placement classes has nearly double the homework load of a student at Los Gatos with the same classes. This could mean the difference between excess stress and a better high school experience that leaves a majority of the weekend free for extracurricular activities and spending time with family.

Private schools in the Bay Area including Castellja and St. Francis also use varied forms of the A/B block schedule, with no major problems.

This is not to say, however, that a different type of block schedule hasn't been

considered at Saratoga High. On the contrary, almost every year, staff and administration debate the positives and negatives that will accompany the implementation of an A/B schedule.

Surveys were handed out to a random selection of students as recently as three weeks ago in order to gauge student response to the possibility of a changed schedule.

The new schedule, as presented to staff by administration, has eight periods instead of seven and tutorial on four out of five days of the week.

The administration has admittedly taken necessary steps to better fulfill the needs of Saratoga High students and the surrounding community. With the addition of a possible eighth period, administrators will allow students a free period during the day, which will help them complete homework or utilize the time for other activities. Some may argue that this will further student procrastination, but it is in fact a positive step that will reduce overall student stress.

A challenge that arises with an A/B schedule stems from the fact that every

THE BIG IDEA | Block Schedule

CONCERN: Students' stress levels are determined to be too high with the current schedule.

PROPOSED CHANGES: Moving the Monday schedule to another day in the week or eliminating it entirely.

WHAT'S NEXT: Schoolwide surveys conducted by Saratoga High administration and school board to gauge student response to a new schedule.

other week, classes will only meet twice. This is a major concern for foreign language and performing arts teachers, who want to see their students more often.

Despite this flaw, a modified A/B schedule is still better than the current one overall. It would allow students to spread out the amount of time spent on classes over the weekend, resulting in overall better academic performance.

It is time for staff and administration to act: Saratoga High requires a better block schedule. ♦

College application website problems distress seniors with late submissions

by Lyka Sethi

As the first semester comes to a close, many seniors find themselves in a very dangerous situation: College application due dates approach as well as the dread of finals, filling their minds with misery, while the light at the end of the tunnel—second semester—serves as an enormous hindrance to productivity. In addition, college application websites crash as a result of last-minute crunches and complaints echo across the country. These types of difficulties, however, are easily remedied with better planning and organization.

Most supplements are made available over the summer. The latest any private college will post its application is early September. The UC application is no exception. Though released on Nov. 1 and due on Nov. 30, it provides essay topics in July. Thus, with nearly three months for writing, editing and submitting, no applicants should have to submit their application the night before it's due.

Senior Tiffany Wang was one of many students overloaded with work during first semester, but despite finding it difficult to balance everything, she managed to make time to work on her college applications.

"Throughout first semester, I was really worried that because of my workload, I wouldn't be able to get my applications done," said Wang. "But

since I was aware of how much time I had, I tried to start working early and get things finished on time."

Not all students, however, are so dedicated. Every student thinks that nothing will happen to him or her, but there is always a chance that an application will not make it on the deadline because of a website error. The only way to avoid this problem is to avoid procrastination and work diligently.

Although there is a lot for seniors to deal with during first semester, spending a little more time every day working on applications makes a bigger difference than one would think. Seniors who distributed application work over large periods of time have found continuously working more effective than procrastinating until the due date nearly arrives.

"There's always so much going on with

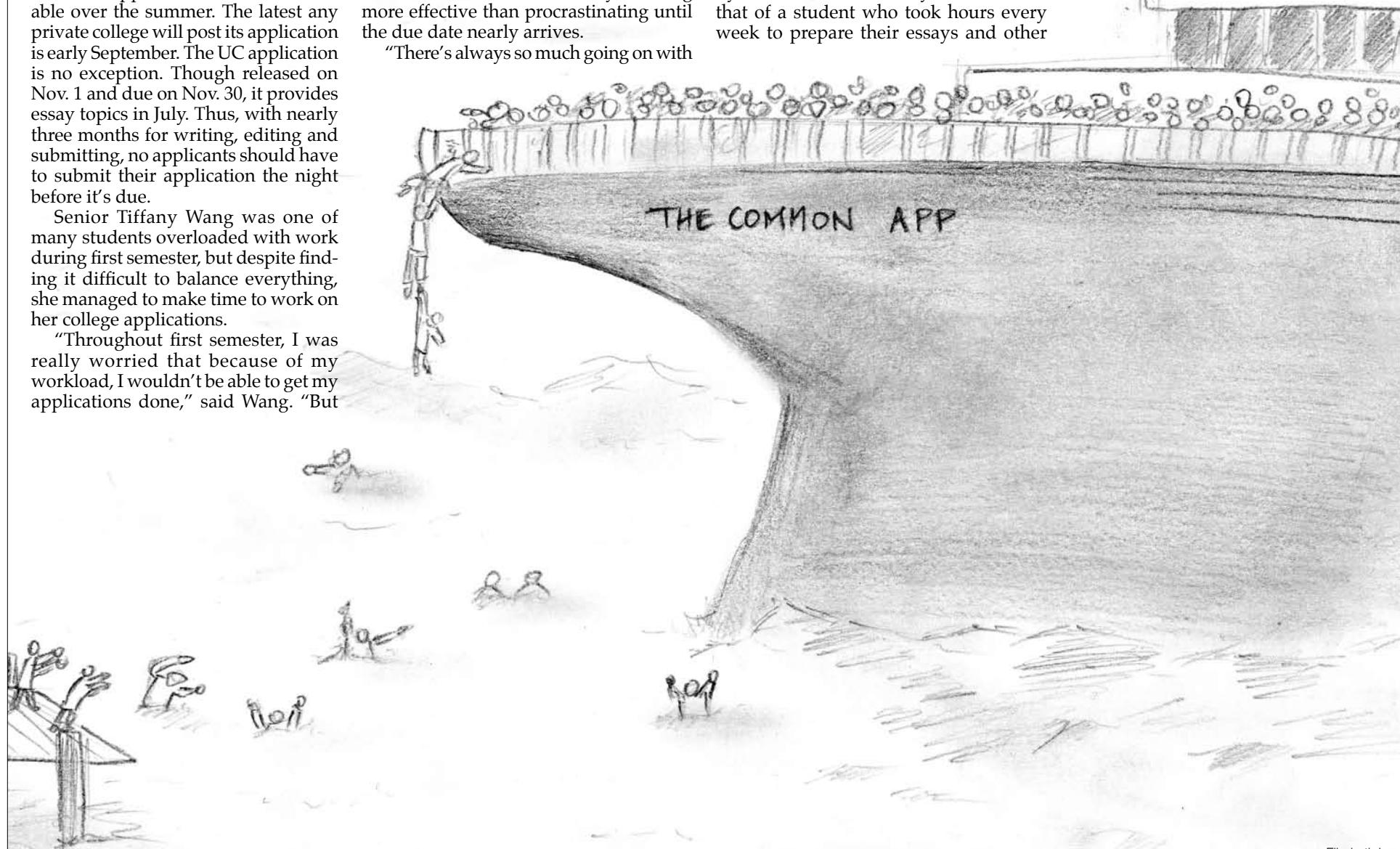
school and extra-curriculars," said Wang. "But I made sure I spent a little bit of time each day working on applications, so I got everything turned in on time."

All current juniors should also remember to follow this advice; when 2010 rolls around and the Common Application website is stalled on the date their applications are due, they will regret not spending more time on them weeks earlier like they should have.

Procrastination not only increases the chance of an application not being submitted but also decreases the quality of the applicant's work. Even if procrastinating students manage to turn in their applications on time at the last minute, the quality of work will noticeably be lower than that of a student who took hours every week to prepare their essays and other

supplemental requirements on the application.

Making sure there is enough time to go over college essays and supplements is vital to the application process. This lessens stress during the submission process and provides applicants with the confidence that they have done their best. ♦



Elizabeth Lee

TOP TEN

THINGS NOT TO SAY TO A COP

- 10 I thought you had to be in good physical condition to be a police officer.
- 9 Sorry, officer, I didn't realize my radar detector wasn't on.
- 8 I pay your salary!
- 7 You're not gonna check the trunk are you?
- 6 I'm sober and still can't do that.
- 5 Do they pay you to be a pain in my rump?
- 4 Sorry... I'm colorblind.
- 3 I was going to be a cop, but I decided to go to high school instead.
- 2 Oh, sorry, wasn't paying attention.
- 1 Everybody knows you can go 10 mph over the speed limit.

—by Sulmaan Hassan and Ben Clement



Kirstie Lee
A jar of pickles.

I would say that I'm pretty good at making most situations not awkward. I just talk incessantly, regardless of whether the other person can keep up with my fast-paced talking. If I'm placed in a situation where there are potential awkward silences, I'll talk myself out of them. But there are a few situations when I can't use words as my scapegoat.

Seeing teachers outside of school

Once I saw a teacher at Safeway and paused, wondering what I should do. I was alone, so I had no peer student to tag-team for a bit of small talk. I couldn't babble on about my current craving for Goldfish to a teacher, as I would have with anyone else, so I found myself deciding to avoid the situation altogether.

I saw which section she went to shop for groceries next, and then I steered myself in the opposite direction. I mean, what are you supposed to do in these situations anyway? "Hey Mrs. Smith, it's good to see you! (It's really not—stay in school, where you belong!) I'm so glad that test is over (not really, because I know I failed), now I have a whole weekend to myself (except not, thanks to your five-page

homework assignment)."

Elevator Rides

The whole affair is quite an uncomfortable experience. An excruciatingly long three minutes, trapped in a tiny, enclosed space with a stranger I'll never see again in my life, while I clear my throat both unnecessarily and uncomfortably, and wait until the elevator finally emits that "ding" of freedom, stepping forward, excited to leave the cage, only to find the other person stepping forward at the same time and so I pause, only to find him pause as well, so I step forward but find him stepping forward at the same time, and the dance continues until I finally decide to just be rude and cut him off.

Waiting for someone at a restaurant

When I arrived at a restaurant where I had planned to meet a friend, I saw that I had arrived first. So I sat myself down at a table far from other bodies in the restaurant, afraid for too close of a distance from people who were laughing and talking with friends—something I was lacking at the moment.

I take my phone out to have something to stare at when the waiter comes up to me and asks me if I'd like to order. "Oh no," I tell him, "I'm waiting for someone." He nods politely, but comes back 10 minutes later when I am still, quite alone. "He's still coming," I assure the waiter. Then, of course, my friend cancels on me, and I'm forced to walk out of the restaurant alone. As I open the door to let

myself out, I pause for a second, debating whether to stick my head back in there and swear in desperation that I am not the poor, friendless creature they perceive me as.

Walking toward an acquaintance

You know when you see someone you know down the hall, or run into someone at Blockbuster who you kind of know but aren't exactly friends with? Whether it be your lab partner in chemistry, your sister's best friend or your math tutor, you wave to them while you're both 20 feet apart and the other waves back. Then you pause for a second, wondering what to do next. Yelling "SO WHAT'RE YOU UP TO?" down the way is a bit out of the question, and you continue walking toward your destination, all the while knowing that you're only drawing nearer to the other person.

What are you supposed to do when you finally pass them? Wave again? Give them a hug? Ignore them completely?

My solution

But I've found an answer to all these situations. I bought extremely fat headphones that give me the appearance of being a bit on the antisocial side. What can I say, I like my music. However, it's proved more useful than merely providing good bass. It makes me seem like I'm in my "zone" (or whatever you call it), too absorbed in my music to notice anything that's going on around me. So, moral of the story: awkward situations? Avoid them altogether. ♦

THECRITIC
Icing on the Cake

'Cupcakery' serves to satisfy second semester

by Elizabeth Cheng
and Kirstie Lee

Icing on the Cake, a small bakery in downtown Los Gatos, served to quench two second semester seniors' sweet teeth that were painfully aching one lazy afternoon. The drive was quick and parking was convenient with a lot right behind the building.



Icing on the Cake
Drive from SHS 10 mins
Location: 50 W. Main St.
Los Gatos, CA 95030
Phone: (408) 395-3925

sat on the bench right outside the store and took a bite into the delicious goodness, we knew the money did not go to waste.

The cupcakes were delicious—my mouth is watering as I relive the moment. The cream cheese frosting (which tastes much better than it sounds), made it not too

overwhelmingly sweet. The cake part of the cupcakes themselves was also just right, with a moist and creamy consistency throughout. The cupcakes come in different flavors, including Pumpkin and Coconut, changed daily.

I preferred the Red Velvet over the Caramel, just because I prefer less sweet things, but Liz definitely enjoyed the luscious Caramel taste. Bottom line: Icing on the Cake will have a fitting dessert for any sweet tooth.

Liz's take:

Sitting on the street of downtown Los Gatos with its large window displays, Icing on the Cake is the quaint bakery you see in television shows, the one the heroine visits to get her sugar fix. Yes, I kid you not, it is that cute.

Inside, the pastel walls with a colorful display of 1950s advertisements puts a smile on your face as you look through precious gifts, which include some very adorable sock animals and



Downtown Los Gatos "cupcakery" provides cupcakes of different flavors to satisfy sweet cravings.

humorous old-fashioned cards. Of course, the real heart of the store is found in their display of cakes, cookies and cupcakes.

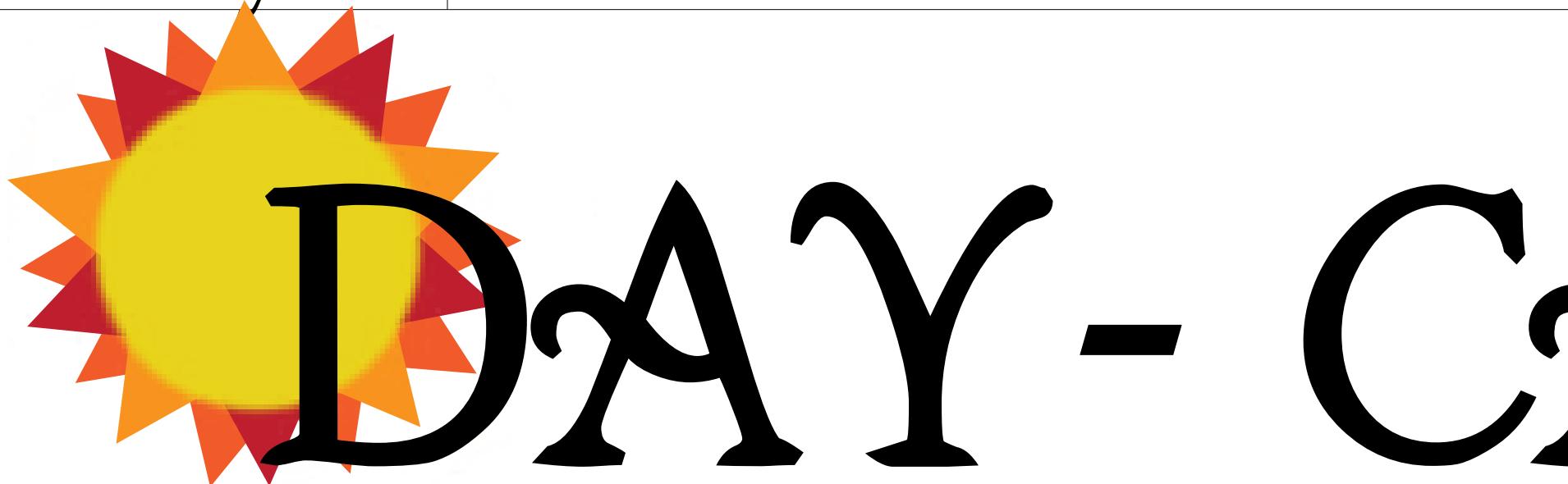
If the spectacle of desserts does not make your mouth salivate, there is something wrong with you. Each sweet looks and sounds delicious. From Luscious Lemon Cake to Smores bars, the store is filled with something for everyone. The pricing, however, may be a bit of a scare with cookies around \$2 and cakes at about \$3.

But do not let this deter you from trying the cupcakes! Though they also come at around \$3 apiece, you can opt for one of the day-old cupcakes, which cost only \$2.

I know that I'll be paying the place constant visits even as both my wallet gets smaller and my jeans get bigger. ♦



Delectable treats are offered on appealing stands along the walls.



DAY-C

For students in search of a quick getaway, here are some ideas.



A nature-filled daytrip

by Aditi Jayaraman

Loads of outdoor activities and stunning views within a historical setting are what can be uncovered at Point Reyes National Park, just 100 miles northwest of Saratoga.

Point Reyes, a 2.5 hour drive north from Saratoga, boasts relaxing and wide sandy beaches as well as numerous nature hikes that offer unparalleled panoramas. Visitors can also try their hand at horse-back riding and mountain biking, as the park provides fitting trails near the Bear Valley Visitor Center. Nature lovers also have the opportunity to observe elk at the nearby Tomales Point Elk Reserve. Although a day visit is adequate, Point Reyes provides campsites for those who desire to spend more time amidst the naturally awesome environment.

POINT REYES

Drive from SHS: 2.5 hours
Activities include: hikes, horse-back rides

A trip to Point Reyes would be financially affordable, as the park requires no entrance fee, and only charges for campsite rentals and shuttle bus travel.

Though temperatures at Point Reyes can plummet to extreme lows, its temperate weather between December and mid-April makes it the ideal getaway during February break.

The park also hosts the historic Point Reyes lighthouse built in 1870, which, although inactive, is a main attraction for tourists. Mondays through Thursday, visitors have the opportunity to explore the inside of the lighthouse and view the stairs, exhibits in the lower lighthouse chamber, the Equipment Building and Lens Room, which displays the Fresnel lens that was unique to the Point Reyes lighthouse. ♦

See <http://www.nps.gov/pore/> for more information.



The Point Reyes Lighthouse gives students a tour of its historical inside.

Soothing waves distract from stress

by Tiffany Tseng
and Theresa Yeh

While some vacations can be a hassle and too time-consuming to plan out, sparing a day or two for a fun trip with a couple of friends guarantees a relaxing break from school and other stresses. Camping out near the beach is a common destination of most students looking for a fun day. These stress-relieving trips usually leave people craving for a couple more hours instead of having to drive back to their mundane lives.

New Brighton State Beach, a popular California State Park, offers campsites for people looking for an overnight vacation to the nearby coast. Approximately a 45-

minute drive from Saratoga, the beach is located in a small town Capitola, just south of Santa Cruz. Students usually visit the Santa Cruz Boardwalk for a day at the beach, but they often find that there are many fun and unique activities, including making bonfires, to take part in at New Brighton Beach, which is less crowded than the Boardwalk.

Students who are more into the outdoor scene will find New Brighton Beach a great place to stay overnight with their friends. Those who are not comfortable with outdoor activities, however, might not find such a trip as

exciting. Overlooking the Monterey Bay, the campsite provides several scenic hiking trails, and also allows visitors to go kayaking, surfing and swimming.

NEW BRIGHTON STATE BEACH

Drive from SHS: 45 min
Activities include: bonfires, camping, surfing

Brighton Beach for its short travel distance, gorgeous views and variety of outdoor activities to participate in. ♦

VACATIONS

Some nearby vacation spots perfect for fun day trips.

PLENTY TO EXPLORE



Michael A. Levin

Golden Gate Park's Stow Lake offers visitors a place to paddleboat, bike and relax.

by Grishma Athavale

With engaging activities, beautiful scenery and educational opportunities, Golden Gate Park is a great place to spend the weekend. The park offers many recreational spots, such as the Japanese Tea Gardens, where students can enjoy exotic tea, California Academy of Sciences, where those interested can learn about our universe, the Conservatory of Flowers, which boasts a wide array of beautiful flowers and Stow Lake, a scenic area full of water-related fun.

Stow Lake offers many activities for those looking to escape the monotony of Saratoga. There are paddleboats, electric powerboats and bikes for rent, and those who are not looking to spend money can simply stroll around the lake and enjoy the views.

With the latest media production, interactive technologies and multimedia displays, the California Academy of Sciences offers visitors a rendering of the universe, as well as virtual butterfly catching with a digital nets. For \$20-\$25 students can see its four-story rainforest, which includes exotic animals such as various monkeys, toucans and capybaras.

The most unusual feature of this museum, however, is its living roof, made up of two and a half acres of native species. Visitors can walk on the roof and peer down below into the museum through the glass cylinders looking into the different exhibits.

Senior Paari Kandappan visited this museum in his sophomore

year and enjoyed the interactive technology it had to offer.

"I was surprised at the sophisticated technology the museum had; some of the other ones that I have seen weren't as interactive," said Kandappan.

The Japanese Tea Garden, the oldest Japanese Garden in California, is one of the most unusual spots in the park. For \$3.25, students can enjoy the ambiance and tranquility of the pond while sipping tea and walking on the Moon Bridge.

The oldest conservatory in America, the Conservatory of Flowers shows off its diverse selection of 200 species of tropical flowers and trees. These include four exhibits: potted plants, lowland tropics, aquatic plants and highland tropics. These exhibits teach visitors about the different types of dying plant species in the world and what they can do to help. It also informs them of worldwide organizations that research new plant species.

For those bored with all that Saratoga has to offer (or a lack thereof), Golden Gate Park is the perfect escape. With more than 1,016 acres of a gorgeous park and various exhibits to visit, it is an ideal solution to any student's boredom. ♦

GOLDEN GATE PARK


Drive from SHS: 40 min
Activities include: sightseeing, exhibits

the Conservatory of Flowers shows off its diverse selection of 200 species of tropical flowers and trees. These include four exhibits: potted plants, lowland tropics, aquatic plants and highland tropics. These exhibits teach visitors about the different types of dying plant species in the world and what they can do to help. It also informs them of worldwide organizations that research new plant species.

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Brandon Yang

A taste of snow is only a couple hours away

by Alex Sclavos

Teenagers in California are blessed with close beaches and sunshine almost year around. Usually, this would be great, but when winter rolls around, many Saratogans find Tahoe's distance putting quite a damper on their snow filled dreams.

Boreal, located right on the outskirts of Lake Tahoe, about three and a half hours from Saratoga offers the excitement of a ski-resort with a minimum amount of time spent on travel. Some teenagers may say that if they are already traveling so far they might as well just continue onto Tahoe, to their favorite ski resort, but Boreal offers economic advantages as well.

Boreal sells a day pass that is much cheaper than any other ski resort. Its 13-18 age lift ticket is priced at only \$39 compared to that of the popular Northstar resort, priced at \$69. The savings don't end there, however, because due to Boreal's proximity there is no need for a hotel room, unlike at other resorts. This contributes to making Boreal much more affordable.

Great skiing and snowboarding are not the only aspects of Boreal that make the mountain appealing. The resort has lots of events and activities that cater to people with varying inter-

BOREAL


Drive from SHS: 3.4 hours
Activities include: skiing, snowboarding, tubing

ests such as snowboarding contests, dance-offs and tubing for only \$20.

For those who want to spend the day doing tricks, Boreal has four terrain parks, each pertaining to a different level of difficulty. The mountain also offers a park open at night for those who want to extend their day trip.

All said and done, there is something for everyone at this ski resort and it is extremely affordable. Although three and a half hours may seem long, the trip home will feel

short as visitors will reminisce about memories of a great day at Boreal.

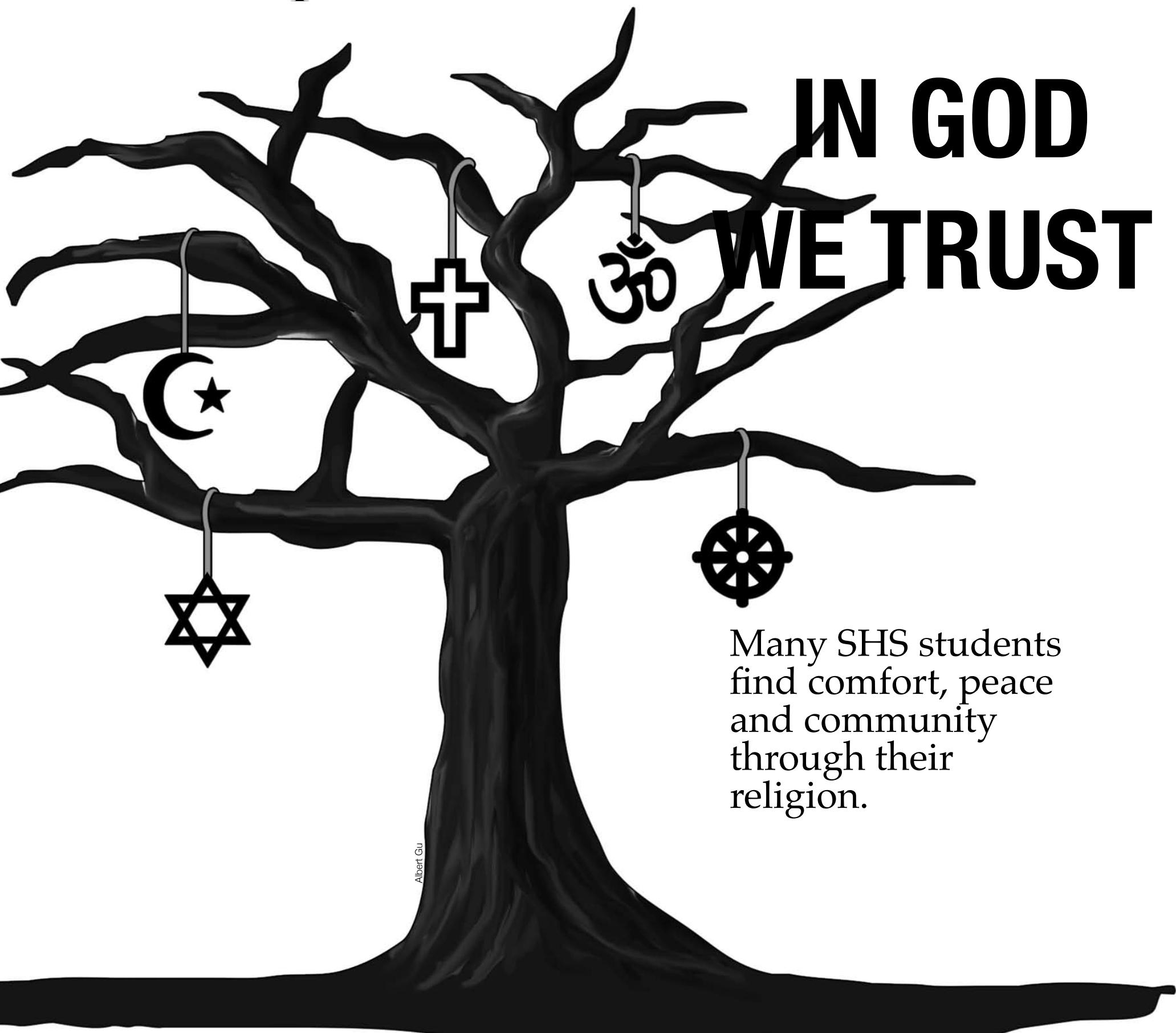
◆

Other* places to visit

Mt. Tamalpais State Park	Town Clearlake	Monterey Bay* Aquarium
Drive time: 1.5 hours	Drive time: 3 hours	Drive time: 1.5 hours
Activities include backpacking, hang gliding	Activities include fishing, camping	Activities include exhibits, tours, feeding sessions

*
Monterey Bay*
Aquarium

Aditi Javaraman



Many SHS students find comfort, peace and community through their religion.

Faith plays significant role in lives of students

DESPITE REPORTS TO THE CONTRARY, RELIGION STILL STRONG AMONG MANY TEENAGERS

by Robin Liu
and Amalie MacGowan

For sophomore Keerti Shukla, her religion, Hinduism, is more than a belief—it's an integral component of her life. She practices her faith by praying daily in front of a small shrine in her house, and often turns to her religion for comfort.

Despite the perceived departure of the younger generation from religion, there are still many students who remain devout in their faith. According to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 44 percent of young American adults agree that religion is a very important part of their lives. From school clubs to outside churches, students have been finding ways to actively practice their religion.

For these students, religion can provide comfort and support and also serves as something to turn to when looking for help or clarification.

Religion can also be a way to meet others who are similar and share the same beliefs, whether at church, temple or even online. Many Saratoga High students take time out of every day to practice their beliefs in prayer or other rituals.

The numerous religious clubs on cam-

pus are places where many students meet with those who practice the same faith. Living Waters president junior Angeline Lee said her club is a friendly environment for students who wish to expand their faith.

"Sometimes we invite speakers, sometimes we do worship and sometimes we go over a passage and discuss it," said Lee. "We're [currently] planning a prayer night in the McAfee and sometimes we have [activities] with other clubs."

In addition, many of the clubs are open when recruiting new members. Leader of Faithwalk junior Kevin Rollinson welcomes anyone who is interested in joining.

"Anyone can join [Faithwalk] no matter their religion or belief," said Rollinson.

With so much religious diversity on campus, most students are comfortable being open about their faith. Shukla feels that Saratoga has a positive environment that fosters the growth of religion.

"We are a very accepting campus when it comes to all different types of religions,"

said Shukla. "We have Jews, Hindus, Muslims, Christians and many others like Buddhism at Saratoga, but there's also the people who aren't tied to a religion and they don't feel any pressure either."

Religion can also be a place of comfort. For senior Chris Rea, his church, the Los Gatos Methodist Church, is a place to connect with those who share his faith. As a member of the church's youth group and hand bell choir, Rea appreciates the opportunities he has to work with other members of the church.

"My faith means a lot to me," said Rea. "The youth group I'm in is pretty big, but we're a tight-knit group. It's nice to surround yourself with people who hold the same values as yourself."

Still, there are common misconceptions that plague students with alternative religious beliefs. For senior Julia Glausius, being a Mormon typically elicits questions and misunderstanding.

"For one, we absolutely do not practice polygamy. If you do, you are

excommunicated," said Glausius. "It is really upsetting when someone finds out I am Mormon and the first thing they say is, 'Oh, so how many wives does your dad have?'"

Being a Mormon also includes abstaining from alcohol, drugs and caffeine. Staying away from these substances can be confusing to people unfamiliar with the religion, but it is a way of life for Glausius. Still, she is usually open to discussing her beliefs with others.

"Religion comes up often with my friends, and I am always open to discuss different views," said Glausius. "Since religion is such a large part of my life, it would be wrong for it never to be discussed."

The role faith plays in the lives of individuals varies greatly between different age groups, with a palpable generation existing in the way people perceive religion. From living in a spiritual household to long-standing cultural traditions, many students have been deeply influenced by their faith on a variety of levels. Contrary to commonly held belief, religion remains a very important part of the lives of the younger generation. ♦

"We are a very accepting campus when it comes to all different types of religions."

—sophomore Keerthi Shukla

to surround yourself with people who hold the same values as yourself."

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"For one, we absolutely do not practice polygamy. If you do, you are

Harter finds solace in embracing Christianity

MIDDLE SCHOOL TRIP TO HUME LAKE RE-IGNITED ARDENT FOLLOWER OF HER FAITH'S TEACHINGS

by Uttara Sivaram

You may be someone who goes to church every Sunday morning, stays there for a little while and perhaps sings along with everyone else in your pew. You'll listen to the pastor speak about what the Bible says and, more importantly, what it means. You'll watch the choir sing praises in a familiar tune. And you just might bump into a girl sitting next to you who seems deeply involved in what the pastor is saying.

She is smiling and seems at utter peace with the world. You wonder, who is this girl? It may very well be Hannah Harter, the girl who will be right there with you at church, through rain or shine, every Sunday morning.

Harter, a sophomore, enjoys the beauty of life through love for her religion.

"I love my Church," she said with emphasis. "I go there every Sunday. It's just so nice to be around people who share your faith and take pleasure in discussing it." She attends the Saratoga Federated Church, a fairly large church with multiple service times. Sometimes, the church holds special events targeting kids and teenagers.

"Recently, we had this event where there were stations to pray at," Harter said. "One was for the world, another for friends and family, for the church, education and change."

Each station had a prayer card with a different saying to be read and pondered. Some of the cards dealt with peer pressure and other contemporary issues. Others dealt with more traditional and basic values.



HARTER

Sophomore is heavily involved in Saratoga Federated Church and feels perpetually supported by her faith.

"It was awesome," Harter said. "It's great how sometimes things are switched around and we go about doing things differently."

On regular Sundays, however, Harter still enjoys the service and the opportunity to talk with her friends.

"We talk to each other most of the time," Harter said. "Sometimes we ask each other trivia questions. They can be absolutely ridiculous—my youth pastor has a great sense of humor."

Harter's commitment could be explained by the fact that she has been Christian for as long as she can remember and religiously involved ever since she was 6. "I remember accepting Jesus into my life as my mom was driving," she said with a laugh. Expecting a young child to accept

such concepts as "God" and "devotion" is, at best, unusual. But Harter's faith had strong beginnings, and it continued to be nurtured as she grew up.

"I was re-dedicated at a camp called Hume Lake when I was in middle school," said Harter. Hume Lake is a Cavalry Church camp where students from 6th to 8th grade can go to learn about Jesus. "It's one of the greatest camps I've ever gone to."

Clearly, her piety has not been diminished from her elementary school years. Over the summer, Harter switches her church activity into overdrive, participating in fundraising and countless other events. Last spring break, she went to Mexico for the first time to help build houses there.

"It was life changing," she said. "I felt God everywhere I went—in the markets, in the schools, in the slums, everywhere."

Harter and a team of 8-12 other members of her church built a house in four days flat. The hours were hard and the work was grueling at times, but for Harter, it was more than worth it.

"Seeing the look on the family's face was amazing," said Harter. "That's when I really felt it. Felt that I had accomplished something."

Building a house in four days is by no means a small achievement, but Harter felt the enormity of what she had done only after seeing the joy on the faces of the people she had helped. Her selfless-

ness and willingness to drop everything to help others is another facet of the powerful influence her religion evokes inside of her.

With her demanding schedule, it is hard to be active every day of the week. However, Harter accomplishes it in her own, unique fashion.

"I do pray every day," said Harter. "I like to get back into the groove, like 'OK, God, I want to show you who I am today.' Staying in touch with Him can be hard sometimes. But it's important to me."

Harter's devotion to staying true to her beliefs propels her through the school year. Occasionally, she has faced peers who do not understand her belief, her love for something so seemingly ungratifying.

"I'm not judgmental," she said. "But I love God, and I know He's there. I found Him in hard times and in good times. It's a good test for me, to see if others can change my views. But they can't."

With the news more and more frequently on everyone's TV screens and home pages, it is easy to lose faith in the purity of religion.

But the joy that can be seen on the faces of individuals like Harter is a reminder that there still exist those who continue to unconditionally hope and endure for their beliefs. So Harter will continue to be good and steadfast in her faith. She only asks for one thing in return. "I want to be able to say, 'Hi, God. It's a beautiful day outside and I'm glad to be with you.'" ♦

TOGATALKS

How has religion impacted your life?

I think religion has provided something for me to turn to when times are tough.



freshman Clara Chao

It helps when I'm sad and makes the good times better. Having faith is nice.

senior Andrew Buchanan

Religion is just so pervasive for me; it's my way of life.



junior Josh Liu



Junior Kirin Kumar addresses Faith Walk Club at a lunch meeting on Feb. 7 alongside fellow junior officers Sammi Lotti, Paxton Barco and Kevin Rollinson. Born Hindu, a Saratoga Federated Church-affiliated trip to Mexico convinced Kumar to convert to Christianity.

Kumar experiences religious transformation

by Sulmaan Hassan

Gazing through the stained glass window of the Saratoga Federated Church, junior Kirin Kumar recounted the day he left his native Hinduism and converted to Christianity.

"[The Christian community] just consists of really friendly people, good friends and something that really just spoke to me," said Kumar. "I found something to believe in that wasn't only interesting, but it really meant something to me."

Kumar made the conversion after witnessing "many good and happy people all united by Christianity" while building houses in Mexico last summer with the members of Saratoga Federated Church.

Most young adults who develop strong ties to the religion they inherited at birth

don't tend to stray away from that religion. In Kumar's case, however, he was raised a moderate Hindu but broke away to a religion to which he felt a stronger connection.

"My family has always been Hindu, but we never really partook in anything so it just became a title," said Kumar.

Kumar's family was surprisingly supportive of his conversion.

"At first [my parents] were skeptical, and they told me not to get too carried away," said Kumar. "But now I think they are proud seeing how serious I am about it."

Kumar claims that his current ties to Christianity are far stronger than the ties he previously had to his former religion Hinduism. Rather, to make his decision final he "accepted and announced [his]

belief in Jesus Christ."

Kumar's heavy involvement in his newfound faith is exemplified by the multitude of activities and events he participates in at his church.

"I go to church every Sunday," said Kumar. "I read the Bible on my own for fun, I have done community services like going to Mexico to build houses with my church and I take part in a bunch of the high school activities."

Kumar has no regrets about his shift in religious beliefs.

"I would do this all over again because of all I have gained: friends, faith and happiness," said Kumar. "I think I'm happier now, not because I look to my religion as a crutch, but because I believe that in times of turmoil, I always have something to fall back on and look to for support." ♦

FALCON FIGURES

Religion

3 The number of religious clubs on campus: Living Water Christian Club, Faith Walk Club and the Muslim Student Association

4,200 An estimate of the number of recognized religions in the world; the exact number is dubious

10 The number of churches in the Saratoga area, including Saratoga Federated Church, Immanuel Lutheran Church and Saratoga Presbyterian Church

1.84% The percent increase of Muslim individuals in the world between the years 2000 and 2005

20,172 The number of Mormons in Santa Clara County, the third largest faith group in the area

54,000 The number of Jewish people in Santa Clara County, the largest non-Christian Religious contingent in the area

—by Grishma Athavale

A Lesson in Love

Valentine's Day is tomorrow, but not only the students will have dates. Many teachers around campus have long been celebrating the occasion with those closest to their hearts.



Albert Gu and Brandon Yang

Aguayo



LG, SHS ceramic teachers met in high school

by Jenny Zhang

Do you believe in soul mates? It may be just wishful thinking for most of us, but there are actually people out there who seem to be made for each other. Two such people are ceramics teacher Leah Aguayo and her husband of 27 years, Rafael Aguayo, the ceramics teacher at Los Gatos High School.

Their story goes back to kindergarten, when Mr. Aguayo had to join then Miss Chavez's class because of reconstruction in his school.

"We remember our kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Pearl, and we both vividly remember Halloween and the parades," said Mrs. Aguayo. "But we don't [remember] each other."

It wouldn't be until the summer after their freshman year at Nogales High School that the two saw each other again in a pre-algebra class.

"We were eyeing each other," Mrs. Aguayo said fondly.

As time went on, the two began to see more and more of each other, often thrown

together when their older brothers, who were in the same grade as well as on the same football team, would hang out.

The two brothers loved to cram as many people as they could into their Volkswagens, so they would often take their younger siblings with them to places like the movies. It soon became natural for the young sophomores to spend time together.

Although the pair never officially asked each other out, they have been together since they were 15, in their sophomore year at a high school on the east side of Los Angeles. Mrs. Aguayo's father taught English at the school and served as the JV football coach.

"My husband was on the JV football team and always got teased that he was dating the coach's daughter," said Mrs. Aguayo.

The couple ended up staying together through high school, and college as well, with no break-ups and never a time when they were apart. They even attended the same college and majored in the same subject.

"We came up to our college, UC Santa Cruz, in a silver and turquoise '56 Volkswagen van. It was the most beautiful car," said Mrs. Aguayo.

As one of the original camper Volkswagens, the Aguayos' van had an icebox, a table, bench seating, a bed, a closet and an 8-track music player. It had all the necessities of a miniature home. Unfortunately, the Volkswagen had to be sold in order to provide the money to put the two through their courses.

"We were the perfect description of starving students," said Mrs. Aguayo.

After 10 years together, the two finally got married at 25 years old, on Sept. 5, 1981, at a 200-guest wedding at Saint Michael's Church in Boulder Creek.

"What's interesting is I interviewed for my job at Saratoga High on Thursday morning, was hired Thursday afternoon, married on Saturday, and started teaching on Monday," said Mrs. Aguayo. "They hired me as Leah Chavez, but I started working as Leah Aguayo."

The couple couldn't have asked for anything more, as they were finally mar-

ried and doing what they loved most. They were again blessed on Nov. 1, 1995, the day their son, Gabriel-Ray Aguayo, was born. It was also the same day Mr. Aguayo's mother was born.

"Before I had my son, we both spent extra time getting the two schools together making pottery and doing raku firings," Mrs. Aguayo said. "Raku firings are a Japanese firing technique that produces a metallic or cracked glaze surface."

With the birth of their only child, the Aguayos had less time to invest in projects outside of school. And although the couple teach at rival schools, there has never been any competition between them.

There may not be another pair that could be so perfectly matched as Leah and Rafael Aguayo. They have grown up together, gone through adolescence and adulthood together and are now living their lives together.

"I believe in soul mates," said Mrs. Aguayo. "And I believe that things will happen if they're meant to happen. How else can [two people] be together for so long?" ♦

Recently hit by Cupid's arrow:

Love is clearly in the air—the following teachers have taken their relationships to the next level.

Chemical attraction

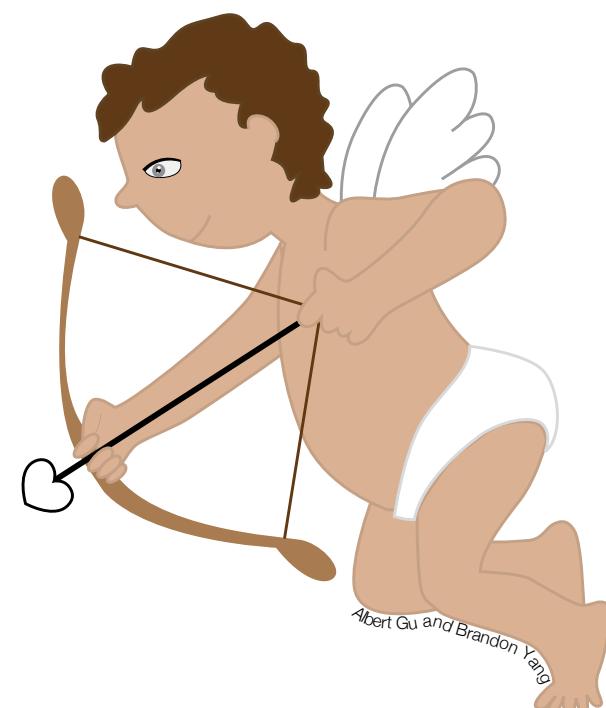
Kathy Chang, chemistry teacher, accepted a proposal from pianist John Nakamatsu on New Year's Eve.

Supply meets demand

During winter break, economics teacher Todd Dwyer heard wedding bells with his girlfriend Lupita Chavez.

Music to their ears

About a month ago, music teacher John Zarco became officially engaged to the love of his life, Jessica McKinney.



Thomson



Long distance love

Science teacher Kristen Thomson and her husband courted each other from halfway around the world for over four years.

by Amanda Yi

Long-distance relationships can be tough, but try having a relationship from 3,000 miles.

No one understands this better than Earth science and biology teacher Kristen Thomson, who, for four years, lived on the other side of the world from her boyfriend Barry Thomson, a native of Scotland.

"I was on a trip to Ecuador with my college roommate in 1999 when I first met my [future] husband," she said. "We had an excursion in the Amazon Rain forest and he was our naturalist guide."

The two started dating and with Thomson back in the United States, she and her future husband would exchange letters every week or so.

"We relied on writing a lot. It was kind of romantic. I tried to make sure he got a long letter once every week," said Mrs. Thomson, whose maiden name is Ho.

Thomson's future husband had no access to a telephone or the Internet when he was in the rainforest, which was for about three weeks every month. On Mr. Thomson's week off, they were finally

able to call each other.

"He would try to visit me for three months a year and I would go to Ecuador over the summer," said Mrs. Thomson. "I was also able to visit him in Scotland when he went home to see his family."

While vacationing in Death Valley, Mr. Thomson finally proposed while the couple was hiking on sand dunes. Thomson agreed, and the couple got married at Stanford Memorial Church on Aug. 3, 2002.

Following the marriage, they would switch off where they would spend their summers. One year with Mr. Thomson's family in Scotland, and the next on a big trip somewhere else. Since the birth of their son Spencer Thomson in 2008, however, they have not been able to take any large summer trips.

Although Mrs. Thomson had a happy ending to her story, she admitted that while dating, it was difficult being in a long-distance relationship but worked out in the end.

"It was difficult not being able to see him a lot or not be able to call him if I had a bad day," said Thomson, "but because we were able to survive the long distance, that's one reason why we have such a strong relationship." ♦

Anzalone



Teacher falls for rocker from her past

Old middle school friends meet through bands, sparks fly

by Kelly Lamble

Most people remember middle school as a time they'd rather forget, a time of catty teenagers and awkward phases, of long school days and boy-girl division at dances.

History teacher Kim Anzalone, however, remembers middle school as the first time she met her would-be husband, Russell Anzalone.

"He used to call me 'Goobs with no boobs' [a play on her maiden name Gebrassi]," said Mrs. Anzalone. "I guess the joke's on him now."

Although the two knew each other from an early age, their relationship didn't evolve into anything beyond casual friendship until years later.

"I actually went out with one of his close friends," said Mrs. Anzalone, "but we broke up before the end of high school."

The pair lost contact as college and the rigors of life after high school demanded their attention. It wasn't until a chance reunion at a concert where Mrs. Anzalone was singing that the pair met up again.

At the time, Mrs. Anzalone was fronting a country rock band, called Gold Rush.

"I remember seeing him in the audience as I was singing, and then rushing offstage to find him as soon as I finished," said Mrs. Anzalone.

Mr. Anzalone, who at the time played drums in a soul and rhythm and blues band called Sage, was impressed by Mrs. Anzalone's singing abilities while she was fascinated by his easy charm and rocker look.

The two bonded over memories of their middle school and common passion for music, quickly realizing they were meant for each other.

It didn't take long before Russel Anzalone could be seen attending most of her shows; Mrs. Anzalone even guest-starred as part of Sage several times.

As the couple grew up and moved on from rock n' roll, their relationship stayed strong.

Today, Mrs. Anzalone coaches Saratoga's girls soccer team in addition to her duties as history teacher and department chair, while he teaches at Ida Price Middle School; in addition they are busy raising their teenage kids, Kaitlin and Kaegan.

Although their rock n' roll days are mostly behind them (Mr. Anzalone still performs occasionally), the couple still has fun reminiscing about their past adventures.

After 28 years of marriage, they still find the same comfort and happiness in each other's company as they did at that first reunion in the 1980s.

"He makes me laugh. I'm goofy and he lets me be myself," said Mrs. Anzalone. ♦

Ritchie



Coffee shop romance continues to blossom

by Karen Lyu

English teacher Natasha Ritchie often spent time at a small coffee shop in Santa Cruz as a college student and later when she became a teaching assistant at UCSC as well. She never thought that sparks would fly between her and the manager of the coffee shop, the very same man to whom, four years later, she would be saying her vows.

"I noticed him and he noticed me. Sometimes he would sit down with me and we would just talk," she said.

On her birthday, Aaron Ritchie brought her a cupcake with a candle and a birthday card.

"That was pretty much the beginning of our relationship," said she said.

The two had their first official date at a

San Jose Sharks' hockey game, completed with dinner and time to bond.

"We both really liked hockey so it was a good experience," said Mrs. Ritchie.

They dated for a while and he popped the question four years later. Their wedding day and ceremony were untraditional but intimate. The Ritchies rented a small area with three houses (one for each of their families, and one for their friends) in Santa Cruz, with a little stream and pond. They were married under a gazebo in the backyard.

"It was just our families and closest friends. One of my teacher friends from my old school was the one who married us," said she said.

The reception took place at another city park in Santa Cruz. The happy newlyweds hosted a family style barbecue

in a pretty redwood grove with several barbecue pits. To top it off, friends of the Ritchies, who were in a band, played music and it was "just really casual," according to Mrs. Ritchie.

Four years later, the couple is still going strong.

"We try to have a date night [every weekend], just for us. Sometimes we just stay in, make dinner together and watch a movie. [Other times,] it's a game or a museum," said Mrs. Ritchie.

The story comes to a happy ending and Mrs. Ritchie leans in and confides one last detail.

"For me, I knew after only six months, we would probably get married. We were super compatible and we were best friends. And [I know that] after 50 years, we will probably still be happy." ♦



Courtesy of Natasha Ritchie
Natasha Ritchie and her husband Aaron chaperoned last year's junior prom.

Romantic Reels

Make your Valentine's Day
one you'll never forget
with these fun flicks.

Brandon Yang

SEAL THE DEAL WITH A BLOODY VALENTINE

by Alicia Lee
and Maggie Lin

Dying for a new date movie experience? Looking for another reason to get tight with your boy-toy? Or, is the thrill of a heart-wrenching, suspense-filled movie just for you? Then head on out for the night and watch "My Bloody Valentine 3D." What better excuse is there to snuggle up close to your significant other than to witness a movie filled with hearts and romances?

Whether it's the bumpy relationship between old high school sweethearts or simply the downright scary and unprecedented moments that make up the classic horror movie, "My Bloody Valentine 3D"—billed as the ultimate date movie—will surely keep you on the edge

of your seat.

Advertised as a movie with romance, tension, terror and deceit, the film is a remake of the 1981 movie of the same name. It has the added bonus of having been filmed in 3D, making everything seem all the more real. As the effects get more life-like, it becomes practically necessary to have a companion to hold on to throughout the movie.

In the small mining town of Harmony, all seems peaceful until a freak accident in the mines results in the death of five workers, all killed with a pickaxe, and one survivor, Harry Warden, who is left in a coma. A year later, Warden wakes up on Valentine's Day, goes on a grotesque killing spree with his pickaxe and ends the night getting shot to death. Ten years later, it seems that Warden's ghost has returned,

but with twists in the plot including gory surprises along the way, the story of the comeback killer eventually dissolves.

The movie had an average plot, but it was the unexpected turn of events that kept the audience engaged. With the sudden attacks and brutal murders in 3D, the story became more unpredictable until the very end. But before taking a date, think twice, because the movie does get pretty gruesome at times.

"It was disgusting," said junior Jennifer Li, who watched the movie with a date. "Some movies are scary, but this was just gross."

Although most would say that gore and mayhem are not parts of the typical date movie, Li disagrees.

"The guy can cuddle and cover the girl's eyes at the scary parts," said Li.

Rather than assuming that this movie is just another horror film with blood and guts, think of it in a new light as the next kind of date experience.

Because any movie allots for the shy glances at each other or the awkward yawn into the arm on the shoulder move, those cliché gestures do not mean much anymore. Instead, during "My Bloody Valentine 3D," couples will become more comfortable together as they cling onto each other for their lives, dodging the 3D effects that shoot out of the screen. Plus, this could possibly relay into more discussions after the movie, leaving lasting impressions of the date even when it's over.

Besides, as the movie slogan says, "Nothing says date movie like a 3D ride to hell." ♦

'WALL-E': Bonafide robot love



James Jiang

Hopeless Romantic

Guys are definitely freaking out tomorrow about how to spend their Valentine's Day, but fear not, I come to the rescue with the perfect last minute save: a movie. But not just any movie; it's the greatest love movie of all time: "WALL-E."

Sure, some of the classics come close to achieving that "perfect movie status," but none comes close to the level of WALL-E. What other movie can describe such a range of human emotions using only three words, "WALL-E," "Eve," and "directive?"

Movies like "The Notebook" and "A Walk to Remember" come close, but they're too cliché. "The Notebook" is no more than an overdone plot of a love triangle and "A Walk to Remember" is merely a tear-jerker novel made into a movie to launch pop-star Mandy Moore into Hollywood. How lame. It's been 65 years

since Warner Bros came out with "Casablanca," and in 65 years of filming, screen writers can't come up with a more creative storyline than boy+girl+love=heartbreak?!

Finally, after 65 repetitive years, a different plot emerged, one that combined cute childish cartoon robots with human feelings.

At first, even I was skeptical about the movie. From the commercials, it seemed like a simple movie about a robot that is left alone on earth. I thought it would be the first Disney movie that I wouldn't like.

I could not have been more wrong. The action in the movie is toned down (because it is a still a Disney movie after all), but the movie still retains a strong message.

SPOILER ALERT: In WALL-E, humans have over-polluted the world and so they must live in a space-ship colony. To ensure that one day the world would be clean again, the humans build a line of robots deemed as Waste Allocation Load Lifter Earth class (W.A.L.L.-E.) to clean up the planet. Decades later, all these robots have failed, except WALL-E, who now has grown a personality, and has a mission to single-handedly clean the Earth.

Then he meets EVE, another robot created to find life on earth. WALL-E falls in love with EVE and then proceeds to "woo" her. After WALL-E shows her a plant, EVE accomplishes her objective and shuts down, waiting for the ship to pick her up. WALL-E stays with her during this time, even following the ship into deep space.

Then follows a series of events where WALL-E causes only trouble, but their attraction only increases with each passing moment.

WALL-E then risks his life to rescue the plant that is essential to returning to the planet. Finally, they return to Earth, but WALL-E is on the brink of death. EVE finally realizes how kind WALL-E has been to her so she tries to save him, and then her "kiss" reboots him to his original self.

See? Most original story line ever.

I realize that WALL-E isn't everybody's kind of movie, but hey, a good movie is a good movie, and WALL-E fits the bill. Also, along with the themes of love and self-sacrifice, Pixar also adds in that extra message of keeping the world green. So sit down and watch WALL-E, and then go clean a park or something.

Now there, that's a good last-minute save. ♦

Classic flicks to woo her heart

THE NOTEBOOK

The classic storybook romance revamped for modern day teens.

TITANIC

The ultimate story about love in the face of tragedy.

A WALK TO REMEMBER

It's better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.

LOVE, ACTUALLY

The intertwining stories of different couples in England show all sides of love.

—by Maggie Lin
and Mary Mykhaylova

Dance shows dominate TV

by Ren Norris

The dance show phenomenon has officially swept the nation. A new TV show is created almost every month where competitors battle it out on the dance floor, one of the most recent being "Superstars of Dance," which features international dancers who go all-out like it's the Olympics all over again. This program is hosted by none other than the "Lord of the Dance" Michael Flatley. Has America had enough, or is this just one more show that will follow the line of success of many popular dance programs?

The dance show trend started with Fox's hit "So You Think You Can Dance," which included dancers of a variety of dance styles and backgrounds. Also, ABC's "Dancing with the Stars," where celebrities work with a professional partner to learn different types of ballroom dances, made a splash. Another popular show, MTV's hit "America's Best Dance Crew," features dance groups that perform hip-hop style routines and complete creative challenges along the way.

For some people, these shows are the perfect entertainment, but others feel that too many of these shows push dance competitions over the edge. One of these students is sophomore Arianna Paranzino, who thinks that all these programs trying to compete

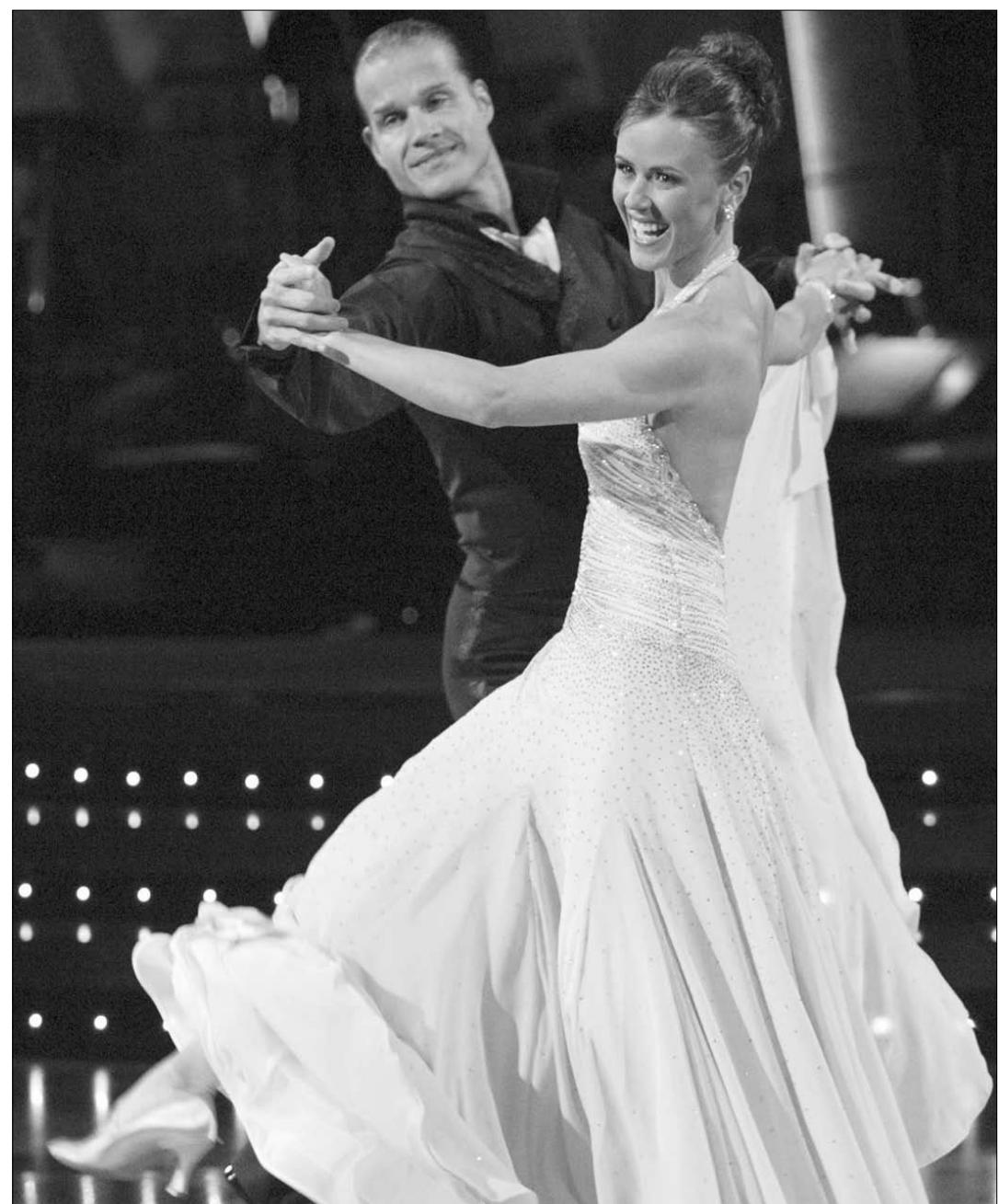
with each other result in variations on the same type of shows.

"They're fun to watch because you always wish you could be up there and dance with them," said Paranzino, "but with so many stations picking up ideas from other successful dance shows, it gets to be a little much of the same kind of show."

Sure, everybody loves a good performance show, but there is a fine line between entertainment and overkill. With television shows being such an important source of entertainment for the average American, it is no surprise to find stations fighting for the viewer's attention.

Right now, the interest of America is focused on the dance world. With shows like these being cheaper to make than having to pay actors, it's easy to believe that the surplus of dance shows are drowning out sitcoms and dramas that many find more interesting than watching judges critique a performance of yet another person trying to make it big in the entertainment industry.

But who knows? Maybe soon this trend will be over and another station will find an even less expensive and more compelling type of show that will be produced by every network. Until then, we are stuck flipping the channels only to find countless shows of someone doing the "cha-cha."♦



www.mctcampus.com

Star Trista Sutter and partner Louis van Amstel compete in the first round of the "So You Think You Can Dance" competition during Season One.

TOGATALKS

What is your favorite dance show and why?

So You Think You Can Dance, since it incorporates a lot of different dance and music styles.



senior Grace Wu

America's Best Dance Crew, since the performances are of groups, not just individuals.



junior Rita Chen

Dancing With the Stars, since it's fun to watch celebrities learn something new.



teacher Kathy Chang

THE CRITIC

Folie à Deux

Fall Out Boy's CD infects fans

by Mary Mykhaylova

"Folie à Deux" loosely translates to "a madness shared by two," referring to a rare psychiatric syndrome in which paranoia or delusion is transmitted from one individual to another, and is the title to alternative band Fall Out Boy's latest album.

Released on Dec. 16, it immediately sold over 150,000 copies to fans who must all be victims of this syndrome, so really, the album name should be "Folie a cent cinquante mille." The album went up as high as No. 8 on the Billboard 200, with over 500,000 copies sold so far.

The album kicks off with "Disloyal Order of Water Buffalos," a cliché "give up cause love sucks" track likely coined by bassist Pete Wentz while on the same substances he used when naming his son Bronx Mowgli. The rest of the album follows in a similar motif, though some songs are more nonchalant while others are assertive and upbeat. The beloved "I Don't Care" carries the message that, apparently, "the best of us can find happiness in misery." How comforting. "Coffee's for Closers" notes

apathy and the lack of desire to believe in anything, while "America's Suitehearts" talks of being in love with one's sins (whatever that may mean).

Self-centered lines such as "I don't care what you think, as long as it's about me," "Why won't the world revolve around me?" and "Hell or glory—I don't want anything in-between," really don't help Fall Out Boy's sold-out image.

Rolling Stone's review of the fifth studio album claims that the band "has an advanced case of ADD," a comment that is echoed back at the listeners of Folie à Deux, with its rebounds, going back and forth between clashing lyrics, tempos

and messages. The one thing all its songs agree on, however, is the lasting taste of the ever-popular rebellious style. In almost every track, Patrick Stump delivers lines degrading lies, claiming heartbreak and mental illnesses and boasting indifference.

Since "Folie à deux" sounds like nails on a chalkboard to those of us who have sanity, the band is lucky to have so many fans who have "fallen out."♦



WEB SPOTLIGHT

StumbleUpon.com

Stumble like it's hot!

by Holden Sparacino

Ever wonder how people "surf" the web? Google and other search engines are good if people know what they're looking for, but what if they don't? What if there is nothing better to do than go on YouTube and hope to click on something that's worthwhile?

There is a better way than just clicking random links. It's called StumbleUpon.com, and it is just what it sounds like: a way to stumble upon things on the Internet.

Upon stumbling upon StumbleUpon.com, the user is asked to install the Stumble tool bar, which includes the all-mighty "Stumble Button" (sorry, but it's not big and red).

StumbleUpon is like a search engine that's raging on 'roids (which is highly illegal when not used for medical purposes, by the way, and *The Falcon* does not condone the illegal use of any controlled substances). Over seven million users rate sites every day, and clicking the stumble button will randomly generate one of the top rated sites. Don't like the site? Click again. Within a few clicks it's guaranteed that you'll stumble upon

something great. Beware before you download this super time waster—I've had multiple people profess their hate for me after using the site for the sole reason that the download I recommended consumes so much time. In other words, StumbleUpon has a similar effect on people that Facebook has when it is first used: very interesting and very deadly if started at a busy time of life.

Want to search a specific subject? Sure! Type it into the search bar, and just like Google, StumbleUpon will go to a page tagged with whatever was searched. The only difference between this and a regular search engine is that StumbleUpon takes you to sites that are highly rated by thousands (if not millions) of users!

StumbleUpon also lets users stumble through only particular websites. Only want to watch YouTube videos? Go to YouTube, and clicking the Stumble button will only generate top rated YouTube videos.

But once again, beware, you'll find some really awesome sites while losing some really hefty time if you don't keep track, so Stumble responsibly!♦

Hockey player gains more ice, free time

by Amalie MacGowan

Sophomore Parth Dholakia was only five when he finished his first ice skating lesson at Logitech Ice Arena in San Jose. After stumbling off the ice and unlacing his skates, Dholakia saw the hockey players entering the rink with their large gear and formidable equipment. At that moment, Dholakia knew exactly what sport he wanted to play. He was impressed to say the least and made the decision to become a hockey player himself.

Ten years later, Dholakia is part of the San Jose Junior Sharks. For the past two years, Dholakia has also been part of the Independent Study P.E. program (ISPE). Hockey requires him to spend at least 12 to 15 hours every week practicing his sport at the Logitech Ice rink, leading to some academic disadvantages somewhat offset by ISPE.

"I think the ISPE program is great," said Dholakia. "I get a free period to myself, which allows me time to work on most of my

homework. It's sometimes hard to keep up with it, because of my hours at hockey."

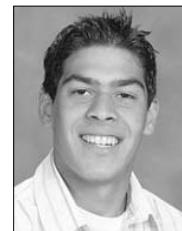
Frequently, Dholakia and his team will be gone the entire weekend for tournaments, sometimes forcing him to miss several days of school. He said that it is sometimes hard for him to get back on track because it gives him little time to finish his homework. So, to alleviate the stress, he has found suc-

cessful methods of managing his time, mainly staying focused.

"I don't usually get distracted," said Dholakia. "I work my hardest and my best in the time allotted to me, and then afterwards I have time for more social things."

When Dholakia is able, he appreciates the time to be able to sit back and watch TV, play video games or go on Facebook. He feels that the ISPE program has allowed him to "have more free time."

Despite the tough time constraints presented by competing in high-level athletics, Dholakia plans to continue playing hockey for the rest of his high school years as well as in college. He believes that the ISPE program is an



Dholakia

"ideal choice for people who take part in competitive sports."

"It gives a nice period of time to go home early, finish most homework and prepare for the upcoming practice," said Dholakia.

Hockey is not just a commitment for Dholakia. Even through all of the hours spent on hockey, he never grows tired of it. He finds that hockey perfect.

"Hockey is the perfect sport for me," said Dholakia. "For some reason, when I'm on the ice, I feel kind of free, like I don't need to think about anything else but hockey. It helps clear up my mind from problems, so that I just focus on the game."

Practices are usually anywhere from two to three hours long, starting with typical warm-ups, laps and drills. Dholakia also appreciates the exercise he gets from the practice each week. He never thought he would go so far with hockey, but has found it to be a sport that has far exceeded his expectations.

"My favorite part about hockey is the speed," said Dholakia. "I can't even explain that amazing feeling when you are going faster than humanly possible on the ice rink. It just makes me really appreciate all of the time I have put into practicing and playing hockey." ♦

FALCON FIGURES

ISPE

170 The number of hours required per semester for students to qualify for the ISPE program

21 The number of students enrolled in ISPE this semester

5 The number of credits a student receives for completing one semester of ISPE

10 The number of hours a student in ISPE must devote to their sport per week

—by Kelly Lamble

Requirements easy to meet for some, hard for others

Sophomore sailor Kaitlyn Baab appreciates the extra time the ISPE program allows her to spend on water

by Kevin Mu
and Anna Shen

Sophomore Kaitlyn Baab maneuvers her sailboat through the turbulent waters of the San Francisco Bay as the wind whips her sun-bleached hair into her face. This is where the avid sailor spends 10 to 16 hours a week practicing for her regattas, or sailing competitions. Regattas bring Baab to every corner of the country, leaving her less time to focus on schoolwork. For Baab, Independent Study Physical Education (ISPE) is a convenient option, allowing her more time to pursue sailing.

The district requires ISPE athletes to complete 170 hours of physical activity per semester (or 10 hours per week) in order to receive five credits and continue the program. Although the number of hours may seem daunting, it allows those who love their sport and rigorously practice and compete to focus more on their passion.

"The ISPE program has helped me increase my ability as a sailor," said Baab. "[Because of ISPE], I am able to put a lot of time into sailing even [when] I [have] a lot of school work."

Twenty-six students enrolled in ISPE in first semester; 21 students enrolled in second semester. Baab feels ISPE has benefited her greatly. Without it, Baab would be forced to fulfill her PE Credits by enrolling in PE classes or a school sport, thus making it next to impossible to finish all her schoolwork before the weekends, when she travels to the St. Francis Yacht Club in San Francisco to sail.

But despite the advantages of the ISPE program, Baab feels there are drawbacks to missing out on PE classes and playing school sports.

"Through school sport teams, you get to meet new people at your school that you may not regularly talk to," said Baab, who has made friends from all over the U.S. through her regattas. "School sports make students feel more connected to the school."

Baab finds it hardest to fill hours when she has a week off and easiest to fill hours when there are upcoming competitions. She tries to make up for the slow weeks by working out at the gym.

"The hours are easily filled," said Baab. "The only time I feel it is hard to complete



courtesy of Kaitlyn Baab

Sophomore Kaitlyn Baab, a member of the ISPE program, is pictured on the left sailing during a regatta, or sailing competition, last year.

the required hours is when I get a week off of sailing, because I still need a minimum of ten hours a week."

Most athletes in ISPE have a satisfying experience with the program, and for many it simply becomes another part of their daily routine.

"I think ISPE is great," Baab said. "I would say that if you are already [10 or more hours] on a sport, then it is definitely worth taking ISPE."

ISPE might be smooth sailing for Baab, but for others it is a challenge just to qualify for the program. Freshman Ivan Lee, who practices Tae Kwon Do at a state level, hoped to enroll in ISPE this year in order to have a free first period, but because of an increasingly busy schedule, Lee is only able to practice around six hours a week, instead of the required 10.

Lee, however, still feels that he should have qualified for the program because of his efforts.

"I think I should have gotten into ISPE, considering the fact that I have won many competitions and practiced very hard," said Lee.

According to assistant principal Brian Safine, each case is "reviewed on a case by case basis because the notion of state level applies differently to different sports."

But Lee is just one of many students at Saratoga who feel that the ISPE program is too strict in its rules and regulations for student athletes.

"More students should be permitted to participate in ISPE," said Lee. "The criteria

in which students are judged for should be a little less harsh."

An increasing trend is for students to apply for ISPE hoping they can get credits for a sport they play on the side, no matter what their level is. But Safine said ISPE is a program for only students competing at the state or national level who are too busy to attend normal PE classes of the school.

"The notion of independent study PE comes from the belief that if students are going to extreme lengths to participate in high-level in a sport outside of school that they can be excused from our program," Safine said. "If a student has such a burden of time and travel that they can't possibly accommodate regular PE in their schedule, they could be approved for ISPE."

Whether students believe the ISPE standards may be set too high or too low, one thing is certain: Being a part of the ISPE program, though tough to do, is a major benefit for those who qualify. ♦

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Lynbrook deals blow to Toga's CCS hopes

by Vijay Menon
and Abhi Venkataramana

The Falcons, who stand 2-5 in league and 9-12 overall, sustained a devastating league loss to Lynbrook at home on Feb. 6. With less than a month left in the regular season, the team has dropped six of its last seven games and fallen to fifth in the El Camino league.

The team's prospects of making CCS remain low as they enter the last stretch of the season. Lynbrook is undefeated at the top of the league with a 7-1 record and must lose the rest of its games for the Falcons to even have a shot at their playoff dreams.

"I definitely want to make playoffs; that's what I want the most," said senior guard Ryan Pak. "But during these last couple of losses, we forgot how good we actually were."

Pak said the losses are difficult to swallow because he believes the team has the potential to win league, but simply "lacks confidence."

"Honestly, I feel we are the best team in the league, so we should win," said Pak. "Talented, we're probably [at the top], but it's just a matter of us playing to our best."

After losing 61-55 to Lynbrook back in December, the Falcons played a rematch against the Vikings at home on Feb. 6, hoping to win a key league game and increase their chances of making playoffs. The Falcons let the Vikings score 26 points in the first quarter while only putting up 12 points themselves. They put up a huge defensive stand

in the second quarter limiting the Vikings to only 4 points.

Strong offense by senior guard Owen Huang and junior guard Daniel Chou who each scored 10 points in the game helped the Falcons catch up to the Vikings and tie the game 41-41 going into the fourth quarter. The Falcons, however, were held to only four points in the last 12 minutes and ended up losing 52-45.

"Against a quality team like Lynbrook we can't afford to have a 1st quarter like that," said coach Trevor Naas. "But our guys did a great job to fight back and put us in a position to win the game in the fourth quarter and proved that we are capable of playing with the best team in our league; we just weren't able to get over the hump and get the win."

Prior to playing Lynbrook, the team played a league game against the 10-10 Homestead Mustangs on Feb. 3. Huang and senior forward Alvin Hsia led the team with 12 points each. Chou contributed nine points of three three-pointers. But despite a strong offensive performance, the Falcons lost 65-56.

On Jan. 27, the Falcons played the Monta Vista Matadors. They had a seven-point lead going into the second half, but weren't able to maintain that lead against a strong fourth quarter Matador run and ended up losing 65-71. Pak led the team with 25 points and senior forward Christian Biederman followed with a solid 13 points.

Before the Monta Vista game, the Falcons had a huge victory over Santa Clara on Jan. 23,



Theresa Yeh

SENIOR JAMIE TURLEY LOOKS FOR AN OPEN PASS, SANDWICHED BETWEEN TWO LYNBROOK OPPONENTS ON

which ended a three-game losing streak. The Falcons were losing coming into the fourth quarter, but thanks to stellar offensive play and several key defensive stands late in the game, the Falcons managed to come out ahead with a 54-49 lead.

"It was good to see our guys bounce back after the recent tough losses," said Naas. "They stuck together during the final minutes of the game, made two big defensive stands in the final minute and made clutch free throws."

Pak and Huang anchored the

team's strong offensive performance with 18 and 14 points, respectively.

After all the recent losses, Pak said the Falcons' chances of making CCS now rest in the hands of their opponents.

"We have to get lucky," said Pak. "Teams ahead of us have to start losing, and we have to win a few games."

The Falcons now shift their attention to a crucial upcoming stretch of league games. The team faced Mountain View on Feb. 10, but due to printing deadlines the Falcon could not

include the results of the game. The team will be facing Santa Clara tonight in the team's Senior Night. They will conclude league play by playing Monta Vista again on Feb. 17 and will end the regular season on Feb. 20 against Milpitas.

"We are working hard right now to bounce back from our last couple of games," said Naas. "The team is disappointed in the way we've played, but they know the keys to getting us back on track: playing tough team defense and being strong with the ball on the offensive end." ♦

New fashion trend: How about a lacrosse stick?

by Ben Clement

It's Monday morning and the halls are bustling with students clad in the usual sweat shirts and Ugg boots, but something new stands out amongst the crowd: the lacrosse sticks wielded by both boys and girls.

Lacrosse, although traditionally a boys' sport, is crossing gender lines at Saratoga High School with the inception of a girls' lacrosse team to complement the newly formed boys' team. Despite early reports that there would not be a separate team for girls, Saratoga High has added a JV girls' lacrosse team to its spring sports roster.

The team was formed because of the large amount of interest, said athletic director Peter Jordan. The school could not have accurately predicted at the start of the school year because, unlike the boys' team, there is no girls' club team in the area. A new option allowing athletes to participate in lacrosse and track simultaneous also helped

to boost the number of those interested.

Despite the chaos, the athletic department managed to quickly assemble a coaching staff and schedule games.

History teacher Rick Ellis will be the head coach along with Jordan. They have also enlisted the help of another coach, Merryl Geisse, who played girls' high school and collegiate lacrosse.

"We're super lucky to have her," said Ellis, "but, unfortunately, she's only able to be here two days a week in the evenings, so the girls practice from 5 to 7 on Mondays and Wednesdays and in the afternoons on Tuesday and Thursday."

Because Saratoga will not have a varsity team this year, some scheduling problems arose in terms of finding officials to referee the games, so the JV team has paired up with Harker's varsity team. Harker will play the opposing school's varsity team, while Saratoga takes on the school's JV team, said Ellis.

Although many of the girls are new to the sport, the level

of enthusiasm they have shown is high.

"We have a lot of girls on the team and everyone is really excited to be learning how to play," said sophomore Vanessa Block.

Practices are currently skill based, and while the girls are presently working on the basic skills of the sport, Ellis hopes

to have the girls ready to scrimmage early in the season.

With little more than a month left until the season begins, the girls are feeling confident.

"Although most of us are just learning how to play, I think the coaches have done a great job of getting us off to a good start," said Block. ♦

THE BIG IDEA | Lacrosse

PURPOSE: Having girls excel in lacrosse

TEAM BUILD: Comprised of girls ranging from freshmen to seniors

COACHES: Teacher Rick Ellis, Athletic Director Peter Jordan and collegiate athlete Merryl Geisse

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GIRLS' SOCCER

Win over Milpitas ends season on high note

by Aditi Jayaraman
and Tim Rollinson

After a 1-0 victory over Milpitas on Feb. 6 marked the end of a tumultuous regular season for the girls' varsity soccer team, the girls began to play a different, albeit less fun, game. They began to play the waiting game, anxiously anticipating the decision of the CCS Board as to whether or not they could qualify for the championships as a wildcard.

The game against Milpitas bumped the girls up to second place in the De Anza League, one spot shy of the position necessary to move on to CCS.

Head coach and history teacher Kim Anzalone, however, felt that after completing a strong season and battling a number of obstacles, including multiple injuries to key players senior co-captain Hana Pruzansky and freshman forward Courtney Brandt and a mid-season coaching change, the girls deserved a chance to play in CCS.

Due to publication deadlines, the Falcon was unable to print the results of Anzalone's meeting with the CCS Board yesterday. Still, despite their dubious chances at making CCS, the team accomplished a lot this season, learning to work together in the face of adversity.

Anzalone recently filled in for ex-coach Tulin Mendoza after he was let go after being unable to attend enough practices. The administration seems to have provided the girls a smooth transition between coaches.

"We all absolutely adore [Anzalone]," said senior co-captain Hana Pruzansky. "I think her personality [along with] her outstanding coaching skills allowed us to improve a lot."

The girls spent their last few practices focusing on what has been their main goal throughout the season, increasing communication with each other out on the field. Anzalone expressed her feeling

that the girls made a huge improvement in communication towards the end of the season.

"We have some great leaders on the team who really [brought the girls] together," said Anzalone.

Aside from this, the team also worked on playing more calmly during games. Anzalone worked with the girls on anticipating the opposing team's strategies in an attempt to encourage them to think one step ahead.

"I think the girls just need to work on finishing their shots, and need to continue to trust each other," said Anzalone.

The girls' hard work paid off during their game against the Milpitas Trojans on Feb. 6; they worked in tandem, clearly showcasing the improvement they made throughout the season.

The game was especially special because it was the team's senior game. A large contingent of the team is graduating. Seniors Kelly Darchuk, Katie and Claire Marsh, Hana Pruzansky and Satomi Ishikawa will be sorely missed next year.

To commemorate the seniors' four years of dedication to Saratoga's soccer team, the younger members of the team celebrated the last game by dressing up to an angel theme. The seniors were "angels," decked in bright gold spandex, shirts that said "I'm an angel" in gold spray paint, haloes and wings. The younger members wore t-shirts that said "Angels in training."

The senior day ceremonies were interrupted by rain showers, but the banners with names of the seniors hung proudly on the bleachers. The seniors left their mark on the playing field, with the only goal coming from Darchuk on an assist from K. Marsh.

"It was a great way to end the season and even if we don't make CCS we ended the season on a great note," said Darchuk. ♦



Melody Zhang

Senior co-captain Claire Marsh dribbles down the sideline against Lynbrook on Jan. 7. The 1-0 victory helped the team finish the season second in the De Anza League.

WRESTLING

Underclassmen help team to defeat Wildcats; CCS awaits

by Guy Quanrud and Holden Sparacino

The Wildcats vs. the Falcons, a classic showdown, one that more often ends in disappointment than triumph for Saratoga. This year, however, several Saratoga teams, including girls' tennis and girls' basketball, have stood up to their power-house rivals and prevailed. Now, wrestling has joined the ranks with its dual meet victory over the Wildcats on Feb. 5.

The team's 48-22 triumph was due, in part, to shining younger wrestlers, including freshman Kyle Clark, who competed in the 125-pound weight class.

"I haven't wrestled any other freshmen this year," said Clark, who has been wrestling since sixth grade. "You get more experience [wrestling older opponents], but you have to learn to ignore the pressure when you step onto the mat."

Several injuries and illnesses confined older members of the team to the sidelines, allowing underclassmen to make up for the absences.

"A lot of the lineup is underclassmen," said senior Jasper Loren. "They are really stepping up, [and] we wouldn't be doing so well without them."

The team also received sup-

port from seniors Jeff Chu, Nathan Nguyen, junior Chris Hui and sophomore Sam Muholand.

Fresh from this upset, the team is going into the league championships, which starts today at Palo Alto High School. It has been five years since the last time the Falcons qualified for the upper division Santa Clara Valley Athletic League championships, and they hope to prove their success was no fluke.

"We are looking to do well in junior varsity and varsity," said head coach Kirk Abe. "We did pretty well last year in leagues [and we want to improve on that]. We want to place as many guys as we can in CCS."

The Falcons also wrestled in the Mission San Jose Tournament on Feb. 6 and 7, with one half of the sent wrestlers placing.

Loren took second place overall, while Nguyen and junior Alan Yen both took third place, in their respective weight classes.

"It was good to wrestle teams that we don't normally see," said Loren. "Different areas usually have different styles, so it helps you prepare."

Due to publication deadlines, the Falcon will not be able to print the results of the season ending match against Palo Alto on Feb. 12. ♦

SCOREBOARD | Wrestling

1/29 Saratoga 37, Wilcox 34

The match was tied all through the night as Saratoga battled it out on the mat. Sickneses and injuries poked holes in Saratoga's lineup, and each win proved vital as the night came to a close, nearly ending in a tie.

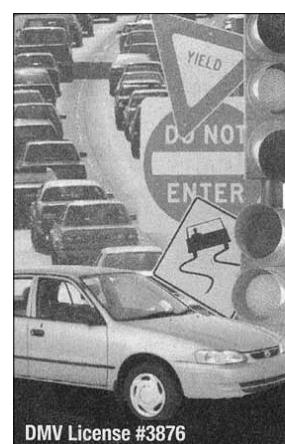
2/5 Saratoga 48, Los Gatos 22

Saratoga wrestles against Los Gatos for the first time in over five years, taking a victory from the Cats in the first time in over a decade. After multiple injuries and sicknesses, underclassmen step up to varsity spots, filling the holes and getting the job done.

2/6-2/7 Mission San Jose Tournament

With four of the six wrestlers making it to the second day of the tournament, and three of the six placing, Saratoga gained valuable experience by wrestling mostly teams from Northern Coast Section instead of the usual Central Coast Section teams. Senior Jasper Loren placed second, senior Nathan Nguyen placed third and junior Alan Yen placed third also.

—by Holden Sparacino

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GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Lunches, YouTube motivate Falcons



Pro Image Studios

Coach Mike Davey talks to the girls' varsity basketball team to get them in the right mindset before the game. The team's meetings have led to more success.

by Alicia Lee

The girls' varsity basketball team just may succeed in CCS this year—that is, with the help of some YouTube videos and bagged lunches.

To promote the team effort before games, coach Mike Davey has had the team meet at lunch on game days to go over plays and the scouting reports. At every meeting, one team member shares a motivational video or quote with the group to encourage and motivate everyone as a whole and to bond everyone with the common goal of winning the game.

"The inspirational speeches and clips that we watch on YouTube really get us revved up for the game," said senior guard Melissa Lin.

These meetings help the players get in the right mindset before games. It also helps when they watch videos of their previous games.

"[We watch our videos] to find our weaknesses and improve on them the next game," said Lin. "And whatever goals we set for the game, we see if we met them or not."

Davey has seen the team step up.

"I think we're improving as a team," said Davey. "We've temporarily lost two of our best players [due to injuries] but we are defensively much improved. The girls believe, assist and encourage each other."

Before winter break, senior Sheeva Hamidieh tore her ACL during a practice. Despite her wishes, she will not be able to play for the rest of the season.

Senior Alex Sclavos had knee injuries at the beginning of the season that put her out for a few weeks, but she is now back on the court playing.

At the Lynbrook game on Feb. 6, the girls stole the home court by winning 56-47. From the beginning, the team established a good lead over the opponents ending the first quarter at 12-5, but the score came close in the second quarter.

From then on, however, the Falcons had the lead. Toward the end of the second quarter, Sclavos' knee gave out and she fell to the floor in pain, but she soon reclaimed her position.

On Feb. 4, Saratoga visited the Palo Alto Vikings on the Vikings' home court, where the Falcons lost in a close game, 48-47.

The Lady Falcons thumped rival Los Gatos on Jan. 28, 65-48. Sclavos led the team with twelve points and six rebounds. Senior Ashley Cole had ten points and five steals while Nielson also added in ten points.

The girls are already qualified for CCS and should make it as long as they are seated among the top 16 teams. They still have four more games left, however, two of which are against highly ranked Gunn High School and Wilcox High School.

"It would make a difference if we beat one of those games or lost by a point because then the CCS would say we're playing very well right before going into CCS," said Davey. "I think we're going to get in no matter what, but that will affect how we're seeded."

BOYS' SOCCER

Another season over, some things to consider

VARSITY TEAM ENDS SEASON, HOPES TO PUT MORE EFFORT INTO TEAMWORK IN THE FUTURE

by Lyka Sethi
and Tim Tsai

The boys' varsity soccer team is looking back with regret after enduring a rocky season that ended with a loss to Mountain View on Feb. 6.

The boys lost 6-1 to Mountain View after playing a difficult game with two key players out: junior left center defender Matt Marshall and freshman left forward Jon Jonqua.

"Having some players missing meant we had to replace them at the last minute," said senior goalie Alex Yen. "Also, [Coach Brock Woodard] gave us an awkward line up which was confusing for some players who were used to their normal positions."

This loss came at a particularly devastating time for the Falcons as things had started to look up for the team over the last few weeks of the season. Despite the fact that the team's hopes of making CCS were already shot, the team enjoyed a three-game winning streak after losing 2-0 to Lynbrook on Jan. 7. The streak ended on Jan. 30 after the team's victories against

Los Altos 3-2, Wilcox 4-0 and Homestead 3-2. The Los Altos game ended closely with goals scored first by junior center mid-fielder Sean Ashe, then by senior captain Chris Chung and the last by senior captain Hoffman Hibbett.

"We definitely started playing harder close to the end of the season," said Chung. "We put in a lot of effort, playing physically as a unit and improving our technique."

The team ended the season with a league record of 5-6-1.

Thinking back on the season, the boys have acknowledged their weakness in executing their tactics smoothly. Next season, they hope to exert more effort into planning and coordinating as a team now that their technical skills have improved.

"I just wish we had clicked as a team earlier in the season," said Yen. "We made a solid comeback mid-season when we beat Los Altos, which is ranked second in the league, and Homestead, which is ranked third, but our loss to Mountain View overshadowed our wins." ♦

"We made a solid comeback mid-season when we beat Los Altos, which is ranked second in the League, and Homestead."

—senior Alex Yen

fort into planning and coordinating as a team now that their technical skills have improved.

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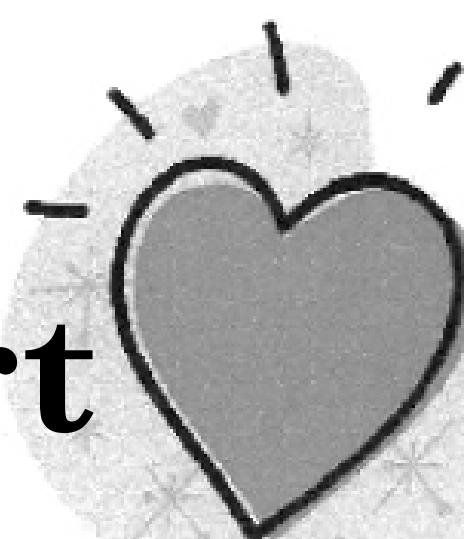
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Newspaper nominated for prestigious award

For the first time since 2007, *The Saratoga Falcon* student newspaper has been nominated for a Crown award from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association.

In March, Falcon staffers will learn whether the 2007-2008 Falcon will receive a Gold Crown, the top award, or a Silver Crown. The Falcon's editors were Katrin Cooper and Angela Chiang.

Falcon adviser Mike Tyler said, "The award is an honor because the judges view our publication as one of the top 40 or 50 in the country out of all the thousands that are published."

The Falcon has been nominated for the Crown awards many times, but has not received a Gold Crown award in recent years.

"[The judges] have to draw the distinction somewhere," said Tyler. "We've always been on the side that receives the Silver Crown."

Although the newspaper staff is hopeful for the Gold Crown winner announcement, Tyler said the competition among the qualified schools is tough. The winners will be announced at Columbia in March.

"A school may win the Gold Crown once in 20 years," said Tyler, "but it's very difficult to single out the winners in a given year since all the nominated schools have excellent publications."

Editor-in-chief Dorey Schranz, "I think it's great that we're finally being recognized for all the hard work we've put into publishing this paper."

ASB to launch site

Some time in February, ASB will launch their first website in the school's history. Created by senior ASB officers Felix Chu, Corey Rateu, T.T. Tu and Ketaki Shriram, the website hopes to be student friendly, providing users with as much current information as it can.

"I think that the website is pushing us forward and getting us closer to the school," said Tu. "The website is an accomplishment for the ASB and it's a big leap."

The site will include a broad spectrum of information involving all student activities. Including updates, student elections, school requirements for running for student office and more. The Saratoga High School constitution will also be posted. Drafted by a student committee, the constitution includes all regulations regarding the student body and clubs in Saratoga High School.

"Hopefully, kids will be able to plan what they want to do and where they want to go," said assistant principal Karen Hyde. "I think it's everything you need to know on how to succeed in high school." ♦

—by Karthik Annaamalai, Guy Quanrud,
Kavya Nagarajan and Andy Tsao



TOPTEN

THINGS TO DO OVER THE BREAK

- 10 Keep in touch with the exchange students from Costa Rica, they're the coolest thing to happen to Saratoga since Starbucks.
- 9 Study for the March SAT. Remember the last time you crammed on the car ride? Not smart.
- 8 Cry more about how you didn't get any Rose Grams. Loser.
- 7 Catch up on all that homework you missed the past two weeks. The semester just started, you slacker.
- 6 Bug newly married teachers on their honeymoons. Actually that would be crossing a very inappropriate line.
- 5 Do some laundry. You're starting to stink.
- 4 Start playing WOW with Jason Huang and company. +10 charisma, -10 coolness.
- 3 Get a makeover. Maybe you'll get some more Rose Grams.
- 2 Build a cool snowman. Maybe he'll come to life. Look at Frosty go.
- 1 Take your time going to lunch. Jeanine (the campus supervisor) won't be there to bust you.

—by Sulmaan Hassan and Alex Song

FALCON FREEZE FRAME



Amanda Yi



Amanda Yi



Amanda Yi



Amanda Yi



Theresa Yeh

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: **LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION** SEVERAL STUDENTS FILM THE QUAD FOR THE MAP PROGRAM ON FEB. 9. **BREAK A LEG** SENIOR JUSTIN EL-DIWANY AUDITIONS FOR SARATOGA IDOL ON FEB. 9. **LET'S GO TOGA** A GROUP OF SENIORS GET PUMPED DURING THE BOYS BASKETBALL GAME AGAINST LYNBROOK ON FEB. 6. **TOUGH DECISIONS** ASB HEAD COMMISSIONER HALEY ZARRIN AND SECRETARY MAGGIE LIN DELIBERATE OVER SADIES BIDS DURING A MEETING ON FEB. 9. **WE GO TOGETHER** SENIOR EDDIE ZHANG AND JUNIOR MADDY REYNALDS SING THEIR HEARTS OUT DURING THE GREASE PRODUCTION ON FEB. 7.

Columnist not so sure about a safe future in driving



Nandini Ruparel
So Many Worries

The engine is running, and my clammy hands grip the wheel as I slowly press the accelerator. My mom, who's sitting next to me, gives a small yell of fright as I swerve out of the way of a tree on the side of the road. Suddenly, there's a crash, and when we get out of the car, the whole front is smashed through—the tree, however is completely unharmed. I have officially destroyed the family SUV.

This is how I have always imagined my first time behind the wheel.

I've always been scared of the whole concept of driving. It isn't that I've been in any major accidents or have any other serious reasons to fear getting behind the wheel, but it's more that I think that I will crash. This makes me feel even more pressure while

driving, or doing something similar to it.

One of these situations is the ever-familiar riding of my bike. I don't have a problem with my beautiful baby blue bike, but I do have one with my inability to control it. I have to say that I've had quite a few crashes on my trusted bike. Most of the time,

I'm going to be getting my permit this month and apparently the man didn't trust me to be in control on the road with "normal people."

it was because I forgot to brake or I wasn't looking in front of me. When I took my bike to the repair shop, the mechanic took one look at it and said, "You aren't going to be driving soon, are you?" As much as I would've liked to say no, I'm going to be getting my permit this month and apparently the man didn't trust me to be in control on the road with "normal" people.

I have also become accustomed to the problem of go-karts and bumper cars being at every amusement park. All of my friends and family love them, and so I unwillingly go along, hoping that maybe I can sit next to someone who actually *can* drive.

That never happens as the theme park is not the place for following the rules of the road.

So, unhappily, I'll get into the miniature car, mentally reinforcing where the brake, the accelerator, and the nearest employee is. Then, one of two things will happen. Either I will drive in circles in the corner for the whole time (because I'm unable to control the wheel), or I will drive so slowly that all the other cars will drive past me in a blur, and everyone who was unfortunately placed behind me will honk or swear at me. Needless to say, I'm not one to do that type of thing more than once every six months.

Since I'm getting my permit in February, I have some time to get over my phobia of driving. Some people have licenses for hunting. Others, a license to drive. James Bond has a license to kill. Me? I have a license to fear. ♦