



LIFE | 10-11
Blind dates spark potential romance



IN-DEPTH | 14-15

Students overcome challenges set by stereotypes



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Diabetes epidemic inspires SHS Intel Science finalist



FALCON // JUSTINE HUANG

A representative from the Intel Science Talent Search recognized senior Alissa Zhang as one of the finalists in AP Biology teacher Bob Kucer's classroom on Jan. 20. She was awarded an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., for the contest.

BY Allison Chang

Last year, senior Alissa Zhang read an article about how 350 million people in the world had diabetes. Then, reflecting on how several of her friends and family had the same condition, she decided to do something about it.

One year later, Zhang's seemingly random idea led to a discovery that has landed her in the finals of the nation's most prestigious science fair. She completed the development of a method of monitoring diabetes using tears or urine, an alter-

native from the typical blood test.

This new test may be monumental for diabetes patients, especially diabetic children, since it is much less painful than finger pricks to track their insulin levels.

Zhang's research made her one of 40 finalists in the Intel Science Talent Search. She was chosen out of 1,839 top-notch applicants from across the nation.

Each year, 300 semi-finalists are chosen and compete for those final 40 spots.

Out of these 40 students, only one will be chosen as the winner. The decision

will be made in Washington, D.C., on March 13 after a week-long judging process.

Nine students were chosen from California, the most from any state, three of whom are from the Bay Area. One was from Palo Alto High School and another from Bellarmine College Preparatory School.

All finalists will receive a scholarship of at least \$7,500 while the first-place winner will receive a \$100,000 prize.

Zhang dedicated a little over a year to the project, working through the spring, fall and part of summer on furthering her research in a laboratory at UC Santa Cruz, spending at least 500 hours on the entire project.

Her success did not come

>> **thebigidea**

Talent Search Finalist

What this means
Senior Alissa Zhang will receive a scholarship worth \$7,500 to \$100,000, depending on the outcome.

How significant is this
Only 40 out of 1,838 finalists in the nation are chosen for the Intel Science Talent Search. The winner will be chosen on March 13 in Washington, D.C.

WORLD LANGUAGES

Students to travel to China, Mexico

BY Shivani Chadha

This year, the world language department has done something new by offering not only an annual trip to Mexico, but also to China.

Despite initial enthusiasm, the trip to France was cancelled when not enough students signed up, but the trips to Mexico and China are expected to proceed.

The trip to China will occur from April 11 to 21 and sign-ups for the trip

are open to all students. Students will be visiting Beijing, Xian and Shanghai and will be staying in hotels. The trip was opened up to students the week of Jan. 23. The cost is \$2,800 for 15 students with three accompanying chaperones.

Chinese teacher Sarah Tseng is in charge with help from Chinese teacher Mariam Fan and department head, Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguez.

This is the third year the Chinese department has tried to conduct a trip to

China, but the first year that the Chinese teachers have designed the itinerary.

"We'll be staying in hotels and not with families because it's not that easy to find Chinese families who can communicate with students," Tseng said.

The trip to Mexico will last from Feb. 15 and to Feb. 25. They will be visiting Cuernavaca this year. It is the 31st time Rodriguez has led a trip to Cuernavaca.

>> **TRIPS** on pg. 5

FULL BLOCK

Arguments begin over proposed schedule

BY Cristina Curcelli & Sarah Finley

How to best schedule the school day is a topic that will be debated by teachers, students and parents in the next few months.

The big change under review: a rolling block schedule whose main goal would be to eliminate the seven-period days students now face on Mondays.

Principal Jeff Anderson proposed a draft of this new schedule for the 2012-13 school year at a Jan. 9 staff meeting.

According to Anderson, the proposed schedule would have four periods each day, every day of the week, but students would still be limited to seven classes. The current Monday schedule, in which all classes meet for 47 minutes, would no longer exist.

On one week, even-numbered classes would meet three times a week, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, whereas odd-numbered classes would only meet twice, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The reverse would be true the next week.

The schedule also features three embedded 30-minute tutorials on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, two late starts at 8:35 am on Tuesday and Thursday and a 35-minute lunch every day. While the schedule would have eight periods, students would be able to take a maximum of seven classes.

This proposal is the latest in a series of discussions that have taken place in recent years. A rolling block schedule was also proposed in 2009, but did not receive enough support.

According to Anderson, if the new schedule is implemented, there is the advantage of being more in sync with Los Gatos High, which has a full block schedule. District-wide benefits could include the possibility that students could take some classes at their respective sister school, and teachers could more easily instruct at both schools.

Yet Anderson admits there are some negatives to the proposed schedule. Students would see each teacher five times in two weeks, as opposed to the

>> **thebigidea**

Is full block better?

Pros

- No seven classes on a single day
- Two late start days

Cons

- Lunch shortened to 35 minutes
- Only two class meetings every other week

>> **BLOCK** on pg. 5



Electives Night helps incoming freshmen explore courses

Drawn by the performances and shouts of high school students, the incoming class of 2016 encountered the vast array of electives offered at the school during the Electives Night on Jan. 30.

Principal Jeff Anderson introduced performances in the McAfee Center. Juniors Ishaan Kolluri and Shauray Agrawal from the speech and debate team performed a parody of Old Spice commercials.

Drama students followed with acting snippets of some of their past shows.

"We want to show how much enthusiasm and warmth we have in theatre," senior Ariella Yendler said. "There are so many things you can do in theatre, not just on stage."

In the Large Gym, students and parents watched performances by the Winter guard and spirit squads before proceeding to the Small Gym to view booths of electives. Electives included the world languages, music programs, Media Arts program, journalism and visual arts.

Woodshop teacher Doug Muntz was present to introduce his class to the eighth graders, but there were not as many interested students as he would have liked.

"It's about what I expect for this school because everybody has electives chosen [already]," Muntz said. Janani Velchamy, a current eighth grader, expressed interest in woodshop, speech and debate and art.

"I think [Electives Night] was overall pretty good," she said. "Everything was explained pretty well, and all my questions were answered thoroughly."

—Evaline Ju

APES classes to visit Año Nuevo reserve for third year

On March 8, AP Environmental Science students will have the opportunity to come face to face with an elephant seal.

The third annual field trip to Año Nuevo State Marine Conservation Area in San Mateo, planned by teacher Kristen Thomson, will allow students to learn more about endangered species.

Thomson and 86 APES students will leave school at 8 a.m. and return around 2 p.m. While at Año Nuevo, students will break into groups led by experienced guides, according to Thomson.

"The guides will explain the history of Año Nuevo, the life cycle of the elephant seal and the geography of the area, and [the groups] will look for elephant seals," Thomson said.

The experience at Año Nuevo will allow students to learn about endangered species and the action needed to decrease the numbers of species in danger of extinction.

"The primary objective of the trip is that the students will understand what has gone on to save a species we thought was extinct," Thomson said. "Other benefits include getting the students out into nature, taking the class outside of the classroom, being exposed to our native plants, animals and geography and having fun."

Thomson, who has taught APES since it was established as a class three years ago, has taken her students on this trip every year.

"I love this trip and am planning to always take my students on it," Thomson said.

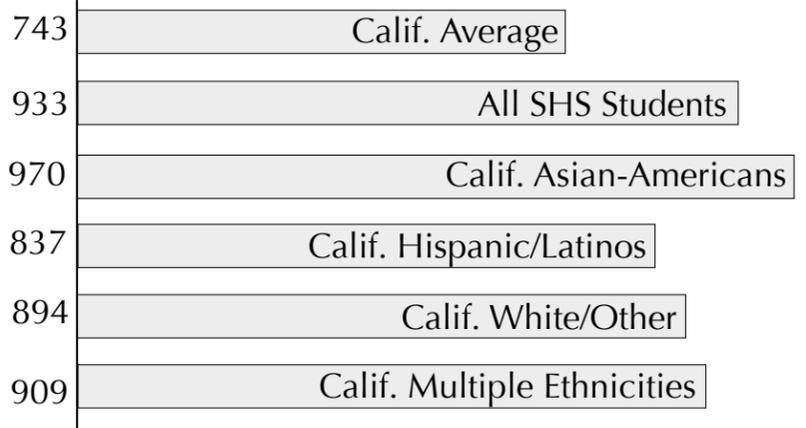
Junior Yifat Amir is looking forward to the trip.

"It will be fun to learn about endangered species outside of the classroom," Amir said.

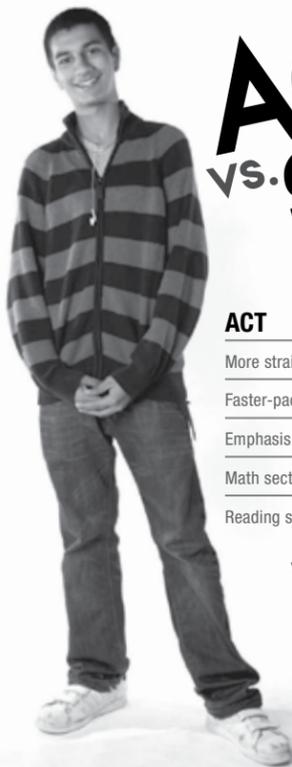
—Izzy Albert and Sophie Mattson

>> falconfigures

Spring 2011 Academic Performance Index scores



—Cristina Curcelli and Priyanka Nookala



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ACT	SAT
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SPRING TESTING

STAR earlier this year

EXAMS MOVED TO APRIL 25 AND 26

BY Will Edman

Students might be surprised to find that the STAR tests are much earlier in the school's schedule this year.

The tests, which have previously been administered during the final week of AP testing, will now be taken on April 25 and 26. Seniors do not attend school on STAR testing days.

According to assistant principal Brian Safine, the move was required as a result of school's earlier end this year.

State law requires that the tests be given within the first 80 percent of school days.

The original dates, between May 9 and 11, exceeded this deadline, and despite an appeal by the school, the state held that the dates should be moved

earlier.

"The state didn't understand our logic," Safine said. "They wouldn't budge."

Students affected by this change also include juniors taking AP tests, who will have to take STAR tests during the pressure-filled studying phase of AP test preparation. However, the consensus seemed unaffected, due to the low stress environment of STAR testing.

"I don't really care [about the change]," junior Alex Wang said. "The STAR tests are stress-relieving for me, so I don't mind having them before AP tests."

Teachers echoed students in their willingness to cope with the change.

"There's nothing we can do about it because it's state law," physics teacher Kirk Davis said. However, Davis questioned the validity of the STAR test, especially in its proximity to AP testing. "I think students get tested too much anyway." ♦

COMMISSION EFFORTS

Green Team plows ahead

STUDENT ASSOCIATION STRIVES TO PROMOTE ECO-FRIENDLY PRACTICES AROUND CAMPUS

BY Serena Chan

One project after another, the Green Team has ramped up the school's progress toward a more eco-friendly campus.

The changes are happening everywhere, from less conspicuous successes, such as the recycling logo on the Falcon newspaper, to its greatest accomplishment so far, implementing its plans for a solar thermal heating system for the school pool.

This system will pipe water from the pool to the roof of the gym building, where thermal panels will heat the water and pump it back to the pool. Aztec Solar Inc. will be constructing the project, funded by the district, and it should be completed by spring.

The plans for the new heating system began a year ago, shortly after the Green Team was formed.

Since then, the members, including seniors Mac Hyde, Anshu Siripurapu, Ruchie Bhardwaj, Zara Sheikh and Priyanka Arunkumar, have seen the project through the long process of approval by the school board and the Division of the State Architect (DSA).

"It takes a couple months for [the DSA] to review the case," Arunkumar said. "And if they say no, then the project is completely off even if the school board approved. We didn't really expect to get it passed."

But the project was indeed approved last November after the Green Team revised its presentation by taking more of the concerns of the board and DSA into consideration.

Aside from the environmental benefits that the solar thermal heating system will provide, the monetary payback will be relatively fast, according to Arunkumar.

"The thermal heating system is certainly [the Green Team's] greatest success so far," assistant principal Karen Hyde said.

But the Green Team has also implemented changes around the campus on a smaller scale.

It saw through the installation of the new filtered water fountains last May and is currently working to reduce school-wide paper usage for textbook goldenrods.

The Green Team is trying to switch to an online process and has been collaborating with librarian Kevin Heyman, according to Bhardwaj.

As for future projects, the team is hoping to get solar energy panels in at least one of the parking lots. But before any changes take place, it needs to secure funding.

"We had a conference with teachers during a collaboration to discuss what they believe are problems with our campus," said Bhardwaj. "We're going to look at their ideas, combine them with the students' ideas and then go from there." ♦



Arunkumar

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32

Percentage of students in California advanced in math

53

Percentage of SHS students advanced in math

1,026

Total number of students tested at SHS in 2011 on STAR test

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PROPOSED CLASSES

PE elective to help students remain fit

BY Aashna Mukerji

Starting the school day with an invigorating workout wouldn't sound so bad if it were followed up with a complimentary breakfast. The addition of a new Advanced Fitness PE class next year might just make this a reality.

PE teacher Peter Jordan is interested in working with the cafeteria so that students will have an option for a healthy breakfast if the class is placed in the first-period slot.

"Not only have you worked out, but you get a good meal in, and you're ready to go for the rest of the day," he said.

The Advanced Fitness PE course will only be added next year if enough students sign up. Jordan hopes to get at least 30 students interested.

"The idea, really, is that the class is for people who have completed their credits but want to continue to be fit and lead a healthy lifestyle," Jordan said. "A lot of students are finding that they enjoy the feeling of becoming more fit, so we created this class designed for upperclassmen to maintain that fitness

developed in the first couple of years of PE."

Advanced Fitness PE would also offer off-season athletes a way to work on their strength and conditioning.

"A baseball player, in spring, could sign up for the class in the fall and go into season in shape," Jordan added.

Junior David Zarrin believes that Advanced Fitness PE would be greatly affected by scheduling.

"If the class is flexible, and you can prepare for your specific sport, a lot more people would be interested because you wouldn't waste your time in it," Zarrin said.

As an upperclassman, Zarrin is worried that the new course would not be necessary.

"During junior year, it would be difficult to take because when you get home, you just want to work as soon as you can, and any free time you have is spent messing around," he said. Zarrin added that off-season athletes would be more likely to take the class during their senior year.

Although the course is aimed at stu-



TALISMAN // NOY SHAKED

Physical education teacher Peter Jordan prepares to lead a work-out in the weight room.

dents who have completed their PE requirement, it also gives upperclassmen a chance to gain credits without going through freshman-year PE.

Jordan envisions the class as a more relaxed, student-led course than PE has been in the past.

"With this more advanced class, our role as teachers is going to be more of a guide to help students achieve their own goals for fitness or athletic performance," he said.

The new course would allow more flexibility in terms of schedule, as well. Jordan hopes to have guest speakers come in and speak to students about different types of fitness, such as yoga or Zumba, a type of dance-workout.

"It would be a great opportunity for guest instructors to demonstrate a new approach to fitness," he said.

Because there are currently 10 sections of PE, it is nearly impossible to have guest speakers attend every class.

"During the 10 or so years I've taught here, PE has been thought of as a requirement to check off. You need your 20 units of PE as a graduation requirement and then you're done," Jordan said. "I think changing that would have value for a lot of students."

Advanced Fitness PE would be a class aimed at students who want to develop their own unique fitness plans.

"As teachers, we would help them achieve their goals," Jordan said. ♦

NEWSPAPER

Columbia's 'Crown' recognizes work of 2010-2011 Falcon staff

BY Deborah Soung & Sierra Smith

A constant buzz of activity almost always occupies Room 303, filled with students transcribing interviews, doing layout and typing up articles for the Falcon newspaper or the Talisman yearbook.

Recently, the hard work of the 2010-2011 Falcon staff was recognized by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA). It was nominated for a national award in the Crown competition, meaning it will win either a Gold or Silver Crown in a ceremony in March at CSPA's spring conference in New York.

The CSPA created the Crown Awards to recognize student publications, both print and online, for "overall excellence." At the end of each year, a panel of judges gathers at Columbia University to assess all Crown Award applicants on all aspects of publication including composition, layout, reporting, photography, writing and editing. The first Crown Awards were given in 1982 as Gold Crowns, and the Silver Crown awards followed shortly after beginning in 1984, according to the CSPA website.

The Crowns awarded to the 2010-2011 school year publications will be presented in March 2012 to 56 magazines, 56 newspapers and 92 yearbooks.

"I was incredibly happy to find out the Falcon had been nominated," said alumna Uttara Sivaram, the editor-in-chief of last year's fourth-period Falcon staff. "It's such an honest, insightful high school publication and so many students put a lot of effort into it."

The Falcon has been nominated for the Crown Awards eight times in the past 10 years, receiving mostly Silver Crowns. Recipients of the Crown Award are given a plaque and recognition as one of the top high school publications in the country.

Journalism adviser Mike Tyler believes that last year's staff, led by

editors-in-chief Sivaram and alumna Shannon Galvin, delivered a consistent paper with several strong points, which made it a strong contender for the Crown Awards.

"I think [last year's staff] did a really good job on their front pages. The opinion section also impressed the judges, and so did [art editor and junior] Joanna Lee's editorial cartoons," Tyler said.

Sivaram considers herself lucky to have had such a talented staff last year; she says it made her job as the editor-in-chief "pretty easy."

"Although we sometimes struggled to meet deadlines, the reporting and writing was always of high quality," Sivaram said. "The art and graphics that accompanied these articles were as important and really improved the readability and style overall."

A news editor last year, alumnus Kevin Mu believed that strong writing was the key to creating a successful paper.

"Last year the staff wrote articles that were really in-depth and well-reported," Mu said. "To me, thoroughness is the most important element of any story, so I was very proud of the staff."

The winning high schools are featured on a CD that serves as an example to many publications and is sent out to all CSPA members, according to Tyler.

"It's kind of fun to have your school featured in [the CD]," Tyler said, "but it's more just the recognition of having done some top-quality work."

The 2010-2011 Falcon staff was also awarded the coveted Pacemaker Award from the National Scholastic Press Association (NSPA) earlier this year. The CSPA and NSPA are two of the most prominent high school press associations, according to Tyler.

Recognition for last year's Falcon staff was well-deserved, Mu believes.

"I'm really happy to see that all the hard work that the staff put in last year was appreciated by the Crown panel," Mu said. "I know I was extremely proud of the effort everyone gave." ♦



Sivaram



Galvin

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Students all tuned up for All-States

BY Ashley Tang

After spending hours perfecting each note and complex rhythm, students sent in their audition CDs with high hopes. This year, 20 students from Saratoga High were admitted into All-State Band and Orchestra out of over 2,000 CD applications that were submitted.

"This accomplishment represents years of hard work, preparation and love for their craft on the part of these students," music director Michael Boitz said.

Students left to travel to Fresno on Feb. 16 and will arrive home on Feb. 19. Although they will miss two days of school, most students say it is worth it.

"I'll make up work, but I wouldn't give up these three days of music," senior violistCarolynn Choi said.

During these three days, students in All-State Orchestra will rehearse "The Firebird Suite" by Igor Stravinsky and "Elevator Music" by Graeme Koehne.

"We have to play for many hours in a row, but I learn a lot about rehearsing music," junior trumpeter Michael Shang said. "The music is great."

All-State participants also have the opportunity to meet other students similar to them, and friendships quickly develop during this short time period.

"It's a great way to meet other musicians from California," Choi said. "I'm excited to meet new violists this year."

Students who are not participating in All-State will also have the chance to meet new musicians when the incoming freshmen arrive next fall. Boitz predicts a five to 10 percent increase in music department members next year, which translates to at least a dozen more stu-

dents in both orchestra and band. Currently, there are about 500 students total in the music department.

"Next year, I'm toying with the idea of having a freshman band and a freshman orchestra simply because the numbers are so big," Boitz said.

An increase in the number of musicians may call for the music department to be re-organized.

"The more kids that are involved in the arts, making music using the creative side of the brain, the better," Boitz said. "Students have an outlet to challenge themselves intellectually and artistically, so it is an important part of the day." ♦

>> bigidea

2012 All-State Ensembles

Orchestra

Carolynn Choi
Allison Kim
Brian Kim
Christopher Lee
Kevin Lee
Gloria Liou
Clara McMahon
Isabel McPherson
Chad Nachiappan
Tim Park
Michelle Won
Anup Kar (Alternate)

Band

Desmond Chan
Catherine Han
Justin Hang
Christopher Jones
Leo Kim
Maya Nag
Heather Persson
Michael Shang

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SCHEDULE >> Full block considered for next year

continued from pg. 1

current six times during that same time span.

The schedule is also difficult for teachers with young children because their work hours would vary more than in the current schedule.

Spanish teacher Gina Rodriguez is concerned about having fewer classes with students.

"For me, personally, I don't like teaching foreign language with this schedule, because I see some kids three days a week and others two," Rodriguez said.

Athletic director Tim Lugo said the proposed schedule would help athletes.

"Right now, we try and schedule athletes according to their game schedules in order to reduce the amount of class time missed," Lugo said. "This schedule will allow most athletes to not miss class to catch a bus, nor will they always miss the same class when they do."

But Lugo said that for students taking seven classes and also playing sports, the new schedule would not be of as much help, since there would still be several days per week when athletes would have to miss class.

AP Computer Science and Trig/Pre-Calc Honors teacher Debra Troxell believes the full block schedule would be a welcome change.

She taught under a similar schedule at another school and said she encountered no problems getting through the required material in the time allotted, calling it a "complete non-issue."

When her daughter attended Saratoga High, Troxell said Sundays were very stressful for her.

"On Sundays, we had big family dinners ... and I felt bad for her. It was hard for her to enjoy the day because she was doing school-work," Troxell said.

History teacher Jeffrey Scott feels as if he could "go either way" with the proposed or

current schedules. Scott agrees that with the proposed schedule, weekends would be less stressful for students because they only have half of their classes on Mondays. However, he also sees some drawbacks to the proposal.

"A disadvantage with the proposed schedule is that the length of classroom instructional time isn't the same every day," Scott said.

Scott also recognizes that as a result of the new schedule's alternating weeks, some students could have a certain class on Friday while others would have it on Monday.

"This could bring up issues of fairness since some students will get more time to study for a test or complete an assignment or paper," Scott said.

The scheduling decision will ultimately be in the hands of the staff, Anderson said.

"I'm not going to decree that we're going to a new schedule. [The staff] has to support it or it won't work," Anderson said.

The vote will pit the current schedule against a version of the proposed schedule, which may be revised before the time of voting. Anderson expects the vote to occur in April or May, but there is no official deadline for the process.

Anderson said the staff is trying to decide whether the switch to a new schedule is the best thing for the school.

"The move [from the daily full class schedule] to our current schedule was a good thing ... whether or not another change would be a better thing is what we're sort of debating right now," Anderson said. ♦

PROPOSED BLOCK SCHEDULE				
WEEK A				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
First period (90)	Start: 8:35 am	First period (90)	Start: 8:35 am	First period (90)
Tutorial (30)	Second period (85)	Tutorial (30)	Second period (85)	Tutorial (30)
Third period (95)	Fourth period (90)	Third period (95)	Fourth period (90)	Third period (95)
Lunch (35)	Lunch (35)	Lunch (35)	Lunch (35)	Lunch (35)
Fifth period (90)	Sixth period (85)	Fifth period (90)	Sixth period (85)	Fifth period (90)
Seventh period (90)	Eighth period (85)	Seventh period (90)	Eighth period (85)	Seventh period (90)
WEEK B				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Second period (90)	Start: 8:35 am	Second period (90)	Start: 8:35 am	Second period (90)
Tutorial (30)	First period (85)	Tutorial (30)	First period (85)	Tutorial (30)
Fourth period (95)	Third period (90)	Fourth period (95)	Third period (90)	Fourth period (95)
Lunch (35)	Lunch (35)	Lunch (35)	Lunch (35)	Lunch (35)
Sixth period (90)	Fifth period (85)	Sixth period (90)	Fifth period (85)	Sixth period (90)
Eighth period (90)	Seventh period (85)	Eighth period (90)	Seventh period (85)	Eighth period (90)

MICHELLE SHU

>> togatalks

How do you feel about a full block schedule?

"The new system looks great. I dislike having to handle every class on Mondays."

junior David Zarrin

"I don't really care, but if we're cutting lunch to 35 minutes, then no thanks."

sophomore Gloria Liou

"While I do like the idea, I don't like this particular one because the classes are different lengths."

teacher Seema Patel

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INTEL >> Senior becomes finalist

continued from pg. 1

easily, though. She managed to work through a variety of obstacles.

"In any project there are always times where things aren't working out, or you can't get whatever results you have to get," Zhang said. "However, towards the end, it was fun working on it."

However, what started her off in her career in research may have been the SHS science teachers Bob Kucer and Kathy Nakamatsu.

"[There] was a time when [Zhang and I] spoke and I encouraged her to distinguish herself from others by partaking in unique research projects," Kucer said. "Whether or not this was a motivating factor, I'm not sure, but I'm happy to see she found a mentor."

Aside from teachers and professors, her family played an important role in Zhang's achievements.

"My family has always been very supportive of whatever my interests are, including research," Zhang said. "They were also very happy for me when I learned that I was a finalist."

Zhang already has an impressive resume. She has worked at UC Santa Cruz researching clean energy sources. Additionally, she interned over the summer in a laboratory out of state.

For students who may be thinking of pursuing similar paths, Zhang believes that students should be confident and contact as many professors as possible.

"At the beginning, everyone thinks, 'I can't do this at all, I can't do anything that's important.' But you can." ♦

TRIPS >> Exposure to new cultures

continued from pg. 1

"Merida had a Mayan concentration while Cuernavaca has more of an Aztec concentration," Rodriguez said.

Students will be living with local Mexican families in groups of two or three and will attend the International University of Cuernavaca during the weekdays, with daily activities after classes.

Health teacher Amy Obenour and Spanish teachers Sarah Voorhees, Andrew Narva and Rodriguez will accompany the students.

This year 47 students are going on the trip according to Rodriguez, though many students are going for their second time.

The trip to France was planned for this year's spring break, but only four students signed up.

"[French teacher] Kim Bergkamp and I put together this trip based on students' interest in traveling to France," French teacher Laura Lizundia said. "So it's kind of disappointing that after all our work, the interest actually wasn't expressed in the end by as many students as expected."

Lizundia said she would be interested in investigating a home-stay trip to France, or a service-oriented trip to a French speaking area for next year or next summer.

"These trips are important because they supplement our classroom experience with real life exposure to the culture of the places we learn about," Parmar said. "But I think they're most important for really forcing students to practice speaking and hopefully feel more comfortable with the language by the end of it." ♦



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Simple policies needed to prevent cheating

BY SierraSmith

First offense: zero on the assignment, referral and parent contact. Second offense: loss of points or grade for assignment doubled, referral and parent contact, Saturday school. Third offense: dropped from the class with an "F" grade, five-day suspension, possibility of referral to an educational placement.

At first glance, the penalties for cheating on a test or other "assessment activity" may seem like reasonable disciplines, but are they enough? The continual rise in the number of students found cheating suggests that more precautions need to be taken to insure academic integrity.

According to the Educational Testing Service, 73 percent of all test takers, including prospective graduate students and teachers, agree that most students

do cheat at some point. In recent years, a staggering 75 and 98 percent of college students surveyed each year admit to having cheated during their high school career.

Top-notch students will do anything to survive the immense pressure placed on them by peers and parents.

Statistics also show that there has been a significant increase in cheating in the past 50 years. This unfortunate rise is likely the result of an increased competition to be admitted to universities and graduate schools and a slightly less negative view of cheating from peers and society. In a school environment such as the one at Saratoga High, students are especially pressured from their peers and parents and are constantly reminded that they must have good grades to have a successful future.

The irony is that cheating only leads to more cheating. When students cheat to raise their grades, they end up steepening the competition that led them to cheat in the first place and the trend grows. Cheating, as many students believe, not only harms the cheater, but those influenced by him or her.

Most cheating goes unnoticed, because it is very hard to catch. For this reason, the best way to stop cheating is prevention. Enforcing simple rules during exams, such as requiring cell phones to be powered off and put away, backpacks to be closed and out of reach and calculator covers to be removed, are a good start. And unfortunately, while it shouldn't be necessary, teachers must remember to keep a watchful eye on their classes while proctoring a test.

An approach that may have a deeper

impact in the mind of the students is a strengthening of the discipline system. If consequences are more severe, for even the simplest form of cheating on a first offense, students may be less inclined to compromise their integrity. Perhaps the current punishment for a second offense should be that for the first and for a second offense it would then be less severe than the third, and the third would remain the same.

Receiving a zero on an assignment, while it can be detrimental, is something of a slap on the wrist that can sometimes be recovered from.

Students should get this slap on the wrist for thinking about cheating or letting it go without interjection. Hopefully, with more severe consequences, a large portion of students will be less inclined to cheat. ♦

Anti-piracy laws overstepping authority

BY McKennaGalvin
& StanleyYip

On Jan. 18, visitors to Wikipedia were greeted with a black screen saying, "Imagine a World Without Free Knowledge." A black rectangle censored the Google logo and directed users to sign a petition against Internet censorship. Numerous other websites—Tumblr, Reddit, Craigslist, and more—all engaged in some sort of protest.

These protests were a response to the Stop Internet Piracy Act (SOPA) and the Protect Intellectual Property Act (PIPA) bills introduced in the House and the Senate. Both bills claimed to fight Internet piracy, but the vague wording of the bills essentially would have allowed outright censorship of the Internet, prompting the massive protests against the bills. It took only three days after the demonstration for both bills to be tabled indefinitely.

Supporters of SOPA and PIPA, including companies such as Viacom and the Motion Picture Association of America, claim that the bills are necessary to protect the intellectual property market and to stop copyright infringement. Granted, the movie and music industries lose millions of dollars each year to online piracy, yet these proposed remedies to the problem bring more harm than good.

The problem with the legislation

The wording of SOPA and PIPA essentially burdens all websites with full copyright responsibility and allows copyright holders to escape untouched if an accusation of copyright infringement turns out to be false. Any website that "enables or facilitates" copyright infringement would be considered dedi-

cated to the theft of property.

For example, if someone posted a video on YouTube of a copyrighted movie trailer, then the owner of that copyright can seek legal action and have the entire YouTube website shut down. When it turns out that the person was actually given permission to post it, YouTube cannot sue the owner back for the shutdown.

This means that any website with user-generated content runs the risk of being completely shut down when a user posts something with copyrighted material no matter how insignificant the content is.

Furthermore, any website that makes it difficult for law enforcement to tell if it is indeed facilitating copyright infringement would be automatically assumed to be dedicated to the theft of U.S. property, even if it was completely clean.

The Internet community quickly rallied to protest these bills and staged the largest demonstration in history on SOPA Blackout Day, Jan. 18, employing all weapons of the social media.

Reaction from companies

More than 100,000 websites blacked out logos, whole web pages, or linked to a petition against the bills, including Craigslist, Ebay, Reddit, Vimeo and WordPress. Wikipedia arguably provided the most coverage with its complete blackout of its English site; one hundred and sixty million people visited the site that day.

In just a day after the protests, numerous politicians backed out on their support of the bills, including those who originally sponsored them. In total, 70 members of Congress changed their stance to oppose these bills, enough to

>> candidcaricatures



FALCON // JOANNALEE

table them.

However, none of these bills will have a lasting effect on curbing online piracy. The reality is that no matter how many measures legislatures pass, people will still find ways to escape copyright laws. A better action for companies might be to accept online piracy as a fact rather than to unsuccessfully attempt to suppress it.

Musicians and companies have already begun to do this by providing their content free of charge, with the

option to pay to support them, services like Spotify, a social music application, which allows users to listen for free but with commercial interruption.

Though SOPA and PIPA have good intentions, these bills would severely limit online freedom of expression. It is ludicrous to try to stop the inevitable at the cost of Internet freedom. Online piracy must be accepted as a fact and worked with instead of against. Censorship, in general, is not a solution to any situation, nor will it ever be. ♦

Finals before winter break not worth additional stress

BY SierraSmith
& AshleyTang

With memories of winter break and first semester finals fading quickly, many students have forgotten the stress that plagued them as they crammed before each day of finals. The break was not as stress-free as it was purported to be, and added an even more frantic week before it. Even though many teachers had been forced to cut down the material taught, there was still little time to study.

The unofficial "dead week" that usually precedes finals week was noticeably absent. Students were forced to study for chapter tests with little time left over to study for finals. With a semester that is two weeks shorter than previous semesters have been, it is no surprise that both teachers and students had trouble cramming in all the material. This could have been prevented if finals were given after winter break, as in years past.

Some students say that not having break before finals

didn't affect them very much, but what about the students who did study and appreciated the extra time to do so?

With two weeks of winter break before finals, students could spend a week relaxing and a week getting a head start on finals. This would cut down the stress that finals bring and many of those late-night coffee runs and frantic cram sessions could have been avoided.

And then there was Christmas. Because of the new schedule, many students had to postpone or cancel their annual holiday shopping for family and friends, leading to fewer presents under the tree, little

time to shop, decorate or prepare and less joyful time overall with the family that forms the spirit of the holidays.

Starting break two days before Christmas makes the holidays seem that much more

The unofficial "dead week" that usually precedes finals week was noticeably absent.

rushed. Students were not given much time to revel in the festivities, and the rush to get everything done put a damper on the holiday spirit.

The new schedule came

down especially hard on seniors, who, in addition to studying for finals up until two days before Christmas, had to spend most of break writing college essays. With these deadlines to meet, many seniors had a hard time appreciating the two weeks of break that were supposedly stress-free.

By moving finals before break this year, the administration hoped to give students a stress-free break. Unfortunately, the period before the break became extremely stressful and hindered the holiday plans. The schedule that was intended to bring more cheer to the holiday break ended up increasing stress and lowering spirits. ♦

FOURTH PERIOD

STAFF POLICY

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

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

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*Various contributions were also made by the third-period newspaper staff

Full block schedule would lessen stress

>> candid caricatures

It's 2 a.m. on a Monday morning, and everyone in the house is sound asleep—except for junior Aneesa Mazumdar, who is frantically scrawling down her AP U.S. History notes. Finally, at 3 a.m., she collapses onto her bed.

Mazumdar is not alone in her plight. Thanks in part to the partial block schedule, many students find themselves staying up on Sunday nights trying to finish seven classes' worth of homework. In order to lighten this burden, the school is considering a full block schedule, a welcome change for stressed students.

The new schedule calls for alternating "red" and "blue" days, each with four classes each day. If a week begins with a "red" day, which includes periods 1, 3, 5 and 7, the following week would start with a "blue" day, which includes periods 2, 4, 6 and 8. In a two-week cycle, students will have attended each of their classes five times.

The new schedule would halve the amount of homework due on Monday, reducing the amount of stress for the beginning of the week and allowing students to use their weekends to spend time with family or participate in extracurricular activities.

In addition, school would start at 8:35 a.m. on Tuesday and Thursday. The two late-start days give students more time



JOANNA LEE

for some much needed sleep, similar to the current late-start Wednesdays. This way, students will be more attentive and eager to learn in class.

Tutorials would be every Monday, Wednesday and Friday and would be embedded into the schedule after the first class of the day. The current Wednesday tutorial occurs after the school day is over, reducing its utility since many students simply leave campus because of sports or other activities. With a full block

schedule, students could use the three integrated tutorials should they need extra help or clarification. Having tutorial at a time when the most students can take advantage of it is one of the biggest positives of the proposed schedule.

The new schedule would effectively eliminate the hectic 47-minute periods on Mondays and make class time more productive, avoiding rushed lectures and tests. Teachers would see students only twice every other week, but the total instructional time spent in each class would be about same and the amount of material covered would not change.

A full block schedule would provide the relaxation necessary to remain sane in such an academically competitive school. Finally, students will no longer dread Mondays, but will be excited to learn after a good weekend's rest. ♦

>> Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

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The *Saratoga Falcon* staff voted 23-13 in favor of implementing a full block schedule.

>> shortsatire

A 'modest' proposal: the five-minute lunch

BY Anika Jhalani

There has been debate among the faculty whether to adopt a rotating block schedule for the upcoming school year, and with it have come side arguments for other adjustments to the schedule. Proposed changes have ranged from in-school tutorials to late mornings, but the issue that has most interested me is the shorter, 35-minute lunch period.

Thirty-five minutes? While some students will moan in dumbfounded disbelief at this proposal, I say why so long? Why don't we make lunch five minutes? First off, let's look at our nation. The land of the chubby, home of the plump. We have to change this attitude, starting with a shorter lunch in schools. Let's minimize the time to eat,

so before students can bite into that 14th fry or chew their greasy burger, that screeching school bell will ring.

Let's say those who want to savor and spend time eating their healthy lunches frown in opposition. Who needs chewing anyway? If anything, we should adopt IV drips as a method for delivering nutrition: a speedy way to eat, and a great way to prepare for any future hospital visits!

Hopefully, this new shorter lunch will even get people to stay on campus. And for those rebels who want In-N-Out Burger, I'm sure they will rethink their desire and choose a school lunch instead. I mean, no one at our school ever rushes to an eatery far away and speeds back to class burger in one hand, steering wheel in the other.

Why stop at a five-minute lunch?

Let's go for one-minute passing periods! That way, we could double our benefits: Not only would students have to rush to class and burn off the fat of their five-minute lunches, but we could also reduce the size (and cost) of the physical fitness program by having sprinting be a part of passing!

Time management, people! That's the key to a successful and happy lifestyle. The French, with their four-hour lunches; what are they thinking? The lengthy British meals; what a joke! It is the American—no, Saratoga—speedy five-minute lunch that will reign supreme, with its superb benefits of nutrition, potential for choking and unsafe driving, loss of flavorful food and a lack of relaxing time. Bon Appetit! Or maybe in the words to fit into five minutes ... Bon Ap! ♦

'Flipped' classroom idea still a work in progress

BY Cristina Curcelli & David Sparkman

In the 21st century, students are online from practically the minute they wake up until they go to bed. With powerful technology always at their fingertips, it is surprising that people are just beginning to use such limitless technology to educate. More and more teachers and administrators are considering utilizing technology to "flip" the classroom.

This system reverses the traditional instructional approach, requiring students to use online resources, such as Khan Academy and teacher-made videos to learn the assigned lesson at home. "Homework" then becomes classwork, and teachers spend more class time working through problems with students rather than lecturing.

This somewhat revolutionary idea may become the way of learning for future generations. However, without the

traditional lecturing system, many valuable aspects of education are lost.

In a flipped classroom system, students no longer have the opportunity to ask questions or ask for alternate explanations. If the subject matter is particularly difficult for students and they do not understand the online lecture, they must wait until the next class for the little hint that might make them understand.

This loss of personal contact during lectures could be potentially detrimental to students' learning. Initially, having someone explain a concept in person sometimes seems to make all the difference. While lecturing, a teacher can make direct connections to previous lessons and make the students think by asking them the right questions. Without that quality initial instruction, students would likely be left feeling helpless.

Another problem teachers might face with students viewing online lectures is monitoring their attentiveness. During

lectures, even the lesser-motivated students feel an obligation to stay awake and attentive in class because they know the teacher is watching. However, at home, students may lack the discipline necessary to listen and actually comprehend the new material.

The flipped classroom system will have to be fine-tuned in order for students to maintain an understanding of the material. Teachers will have to develop a system for answering questions while students are viewing the lectures. This could be made possible through email or instant messaging, both of which require teachers to devote a large amount of time to their students outside of class.

Online learning is a useful tool that will probably become more commonplace soon, but educators must overcome many obstacles before a flipped method of teaching can be as effective as traditional methods. ♦

I wish people would give me a second chance. It's not middle school anymore.

I don't know if I like my boyfriend.

Too many people work too hard and ruin my chances of getting into college.

I am afraid that I will never reach my full potential. Or worse, that I have, and this is all there is.

I got my first A- this semester.

The SHS lunch period is too short.

I watch "Jersey Shore" and "Real Housewives" in my spare time because it makes me feel better about my own intelligence.

I stalk my Facebook profile to see what my virtual self has been up to.

I like you, but I just don't know how to say it. I'm kind of scared so I hope by the end of the year I know how you feel.

I hate all the pressure at Saratoga. The only reason why I still go to this school is because of band.



TOP SECRET

In all honesty...



ALL GRAPHICS BY MICHELLE SHU

We asked you to anonymously submit a confession; something you've never told anyone. Some of these confessions are more serious than others and some bring light to issues we tend to look past. However, all of these have one thing in common: They're written with honesty.

I have a friend who is often angry at me, but she's the passive-aggressive type, so I never know how to fix it. She can almost be compared to an abusive boyfriend.

I am scared that no one will ask me to prom this year.

Friendship is magic.

I'm a Time Lord.

I like you, I really do. And I know you like me too. But you're so hard to read I don't know what to do with you.

I believe in Harvey Dent.

I strongly dislike all of my classes. I dread coming to school every day.

I constantly feel alone.

You are the first decent guy I have met at school.

I wish school was a little more welcoming.

My day looks a bit like this: I usually end up procrastinating until 10:30, get freaked out, rush my homework...then rinse and repeat for days afterwards.

I still like you even after what you've done to me. I still get butterflies.

I bumped into a car, leaving a mark, and didn't leave a note.

High school band ended my spiral into depression. I'd be a completely different person without it.

I've played frisbee on the roof.

I have a huge crush on my Spanish teacher.

I'm bisexual.

I like a guy who has a girlfriend. She doesn't deserve him; she doesn't know him like I do.



The Falcon Play

With an open mind and a little faith, two student date. In the spirit of Valentine's Day, cupids from



How did it go?

"It went great. It was really fun actually. We just ate lunch together and talked about kind of random things, like the black market."

Would you go on a second date?

"I don't think so."

Rate the date?



Matt Nobles

Freshmen

Ryan and Nobles had lunch together in the quad. Already good friends, they treated the "date" as more of a low-key hang out.

How did it go?

"We basically just talked about random things while we ate lunch together in the quad."

Second date?

"Probably not because we're already friends, so we know there's nothing there."

Rate the date?



Madeline Ryan



How did it go?

"I like how she listened. A lot of girls [just] talk a lot."

Second date?

"Not me, personally, but she is very sweet and it was chill."

Rate the date?



Tim Park

Juniors

Zhou and Park went to the restaurant Red Robin together. They chatted about a wide variety of topics while eating dinner. The two juniors shared a pizookie for dessert, which was both their favorite part of the date. They both saw the date as a good experience to get to know each other better.

How did it go?

"I enjoyed how easy it was to talk to him. [We talked about] a wide variety of things, like school, family, our future plans and our hobbies."

Second date?

"It was a great date, but we're just friends and we see this as a 'get to know you better' experience."

Rate the date?



Geena Zhou



The beginning of 'Lennex Charmato': Last year's Falcon

Last year, in a similar blind date package for the newspaper, we were assigned to find two people who didn't know each other that well. I distinctly remember the challenges of getting a couple from each grade to agree to go on a blind date. Since most people have known each other since at least middle school, it was tough to think of a couple of students who didn't know each other already.

After comparing several potential couples, I decided to take then-juniors

Lennie Char and Alex Amato as the subjects for the couple, because I knew they were both friendly people, yet they had never really talked.

However, after their blind date, I didn't really think the relationship was going to continue. The two of them each had similar responses as the other subjects from each grade we had, now sophomores Ingrid Hong and Rohan Jhalani, juniors Paige Kingston and Alex Wang and 2011 alumni Grace

Kim and Marcus Hoffman. Each couple said their date was nice and fun, but that it probably wasn't going anywhere.

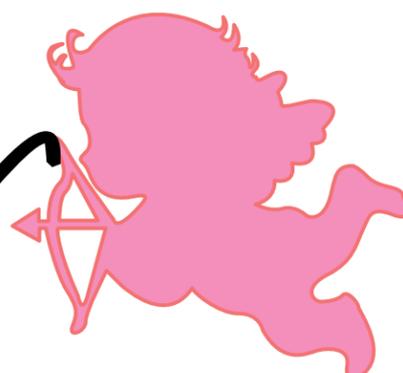
A couple months later, I was surprised by a text from Alex thanking me for setting up the date; he was asking Lennie to prom.

Shortly after prom, they began dating. I asked them how their relationship formed from the blind date set up by the Falcon.



Alex and Lennie, who have dated for eight-and-a-half months, holding the camera on Halloween.

s Matchmaker



s from each grade volunteered to go on a blind date. The Falcon staff set them up and set them off.

GRAPHICS BY MICHELLE SHU, PHOTOS BY DYLAN JEW AND OLIVIA CHOCK

Sophomores



Best moment?

"It was probably when Jane had a fly in her frozen yogurt. Her reaction was hilarious."

Second date?

"We are better off as friends."

Rate the date?



Brian Park

Park and Chang enjoyed frozen yogurt at Yolatea in downtown Saratoga. Already friends, the two treated it as a casual hangout.

How did it go?

"It was pretty fun. We are friends so it wasn't awkward or anything."

Second date?

"We have known each other for a while so we're better off staying friends."

Rate the date?



Jane Chang



Seniors



Best moment?

"The best moment for me was when she laughed at my cheesy jokes and found my boring stories interesting."

Second date?

"I think we're better off as friends."

Rate the date?



Sean Walsh

McLellan and Walsh enjoyed lunch together at Saratoga Bagels. Acquaintances but not close friends, this was a chance for the two to get to know each other better.

How did it go?

"I found out we actually had a lot in common and just a lot to talk about. We kept the conversation interesting because we're both pretty weird."

Second date?

"I'm not sure."

Rate the date?



Kathleen McLellan



Falcon blind date creates an unexpected relationship



Courtesy of LENNIE CHAR
e been dating for
hug and smile for

Q: What did you initially think when I asked you to go on a blind date?

A: Alex: I was apprehensive because I hadn't met Lennie before and was unsure how it would go.

Lennie: I was really scared. I didn't know who Alex was and I am sometimes an awkward person. I remember you begged me and convinced me because you said he was a nice kid.

Q: What did you think after the blind date? Did you continue to talk?

A: Alex: I thought it went well. Lennie was nice and I had a lot of fun. Plus, I wore an incredibly tight shirt to show off my massive muscles. We didn't talk

too much after the date, though.

Lennie: I thought he was cool, and I didn't know how I had never crossed paths with him before. We talked every once in a while over Facebook chat regarding the article, but that was it.

Q: Did you think you would continue to talk after the date?

A: Alex: I kind of figured it wouldn't work because we have pretty different groups of friends. I thought we may be friends but assumed we wouldn't date because we had different interests and

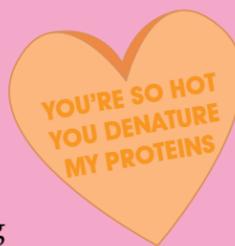
activities.

Q: How did you finally get together?

A: Lennie: He accidentally texted me around Christmas time, and we began texting back and forth. We started going on date-like things since we didn't see each other during school. We didn't really officially get together until around after prom.

Q: How long have you both been dating?

A: Alex and Lennie: Eight-and-a-half months!



- Olivia Chock



Lights, camera, action!



THE TEN BEST AND WORST MOVIES OF 2011



1. "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part II"

The final showdown between Harry and Voldemort is a thrilling and genuinely emotional finish to one of the best film and novel series of all time. Because Part I of the seventh book was made into a separate film, Part II was able to focus on a fourth of the final book instead of the whole 784 pages. The cast, a group we have seen grow since the first movie, delivered a perfect performance that deserves its recognition and satisfies Potter-fans' needs.

★★★★★



2. "Hugo"

Based on the New York Times bestseller, "The Invention of Hugo Cabaret," by Brian Selznick, this film is the leader in the Oscar race with 11 nominations. "Hugo" is thrilling and elegant. Academy Award-winning director Martin Scorsese brings this powerful tale of childhood innocence to life in his first ever 3-D movie.

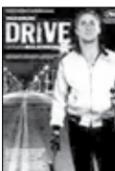
★★★★★



3. "The Descendants"

George Clooney gives the performance of his life in this comedy/drama film as an indifferent father of two daughters who must re-examine his life after his wife suffers head trauma from a boating accident near their home in Waikiki. "The Descendants" has a refreshingly original, yet depressing, script, and is one of the front-runners in the Oscar race with five nominations, including Best Picture, Best Actor in a Leading Role and Best Director.

★★★★★



4. "Drive"

Ryan Gosling, who is quickly becoming one of Hollywood's most unique stars, once again delivers a powerful performance in this action-drama about a man who works as a Hollywood stunt driver by day and a getaway driver by night. Filled with adrenaline rushes and hypnotic slow-motion shots, "Drive" is intelligently creative with a pace similar to that of a steady getaway driver. The movie continues to escalate in terms of violence, so only watch if you can take the rush.

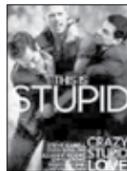
★★★★★



5. "War Horse"

This Oscar front-runner (six nominations) directed by Saratoga High graduate Steven Spielberg follows the extraordinary journey of a young horse named Joey, who changes the lives of all those he meets after being separated from his owner, Albert (played by Jeremy Irvine). The film takes place during World War I and is emotional, breathtaking and vivid in every way imaginable—the way almost every Spielberg movie is.

★★★★★



6. "Crazy, Stupid, Love"

This hilarious romantic comedy starring Steve Carell, Ryan Gosling, Julianne Moore and Emma Stone is light-hearted and filled with elements of marriage and love. Much of the movie's appeal comes from the witty humor, character dynamics and Jacob (Ryan Gosling) and Cal's (Steve Carell) changes in attitude regarding love.

★★★★★



7. "The Adventures of Tintin"

This animated adventure film directed by Spielberg and produced by the illustrious Peter Jackson hits home for those of us who spent hours in the elementary school library reading the amazing comic series. The plot revolves around the young journalist, Tintin (voiced by Jamie Bell), who puts himself in a situation of danger and adventure for a good story.

★★★★★



8. "The Rise of the Planet of the Apes"

The Oscar-winning visual effects team that created the worlds of "Avatar" and "Lord of the Rings" captures every minute detail and expression of the CGI apes in this visually appealing sci-fi-action drama about a war of supremacy between men and apes. The unprecedented effects give each ape his own personality, and the central plot is gripping and intelligently creative in this prequel to the earlier "Planet of the Apes" films.

★★★★★



9. "X-Men: First Class"

A well-rounded cast including James McAvoy as Professor Xavier and Michael Fassbender as Magneto, delivers an engaging performance about the beginning of the eternal war between the heroes and villains of the mutant world. "X-Men: First Class" is fast-paced, extremely entertaining and a perfect film for action-junkies, comic-lovers and/or fans of the past "X-Men" movies.

★★★★★



10. "Moneyball"

This movie is a fantastic representation of the Oakland A's franchise history and their ability to be successful without loads of money. Brad Pitt and Jonah Hill are sharp, funny and charismatic in this movie based on a true story about the toughness of major league baseball and working around the traditional system to out-smart richer teams.

★★★★★

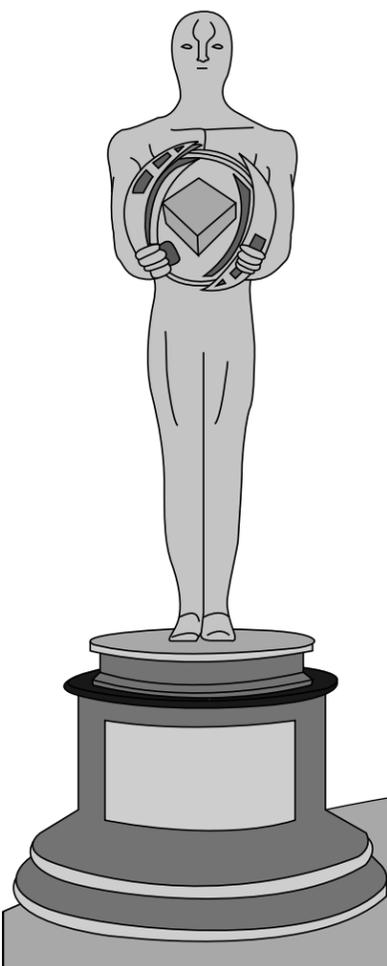
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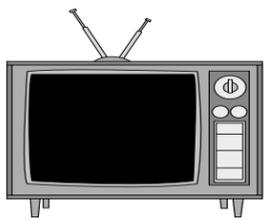
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WORST MOVIES OF THE YEAR

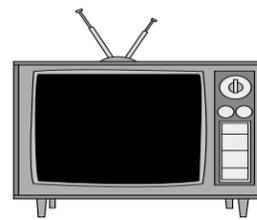
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|---|---|
| <p>10 "Season of the Witch" Further proof that Nicolas Cage needs to reconsider his acting career.</p> | <p>5 "Transformers: Dark of the Moon" Third time is not the charm.</p> |
| <p>9 "Sherlock Holmes 2: Game of Shadows" Not even Sherlock Holmes could figure out how to make this movie a good one.</p> | <p>4 "The Smurfs" I'm so glad those little blue monsters don't exist in real life.</p> |
| <p>8 "The Hangover Part II" Wait, haven't I already seen this?!</p> | <p>3 "Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked" The only small creatures that are more annoying than the smurfs.</p> |
| <p>7 "Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides" Overkill.</p> | <p>2 "Jack and Jill" I think Adam Sandler was a little bit confused about what gender he really was.</p> |
| <p>6 "The Green Lantern" We don't need more superhero movies; we need better ones.</p> | <p>1 "The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1" What does Twilight think it is, the Harry Potter series?</p> |

>>> Nikhil Goel and Elijah Yi





TV shows to talk about



ALL GRAPHICS BY MICHELLE SHU

UNDERGROUND SERIES ATTRACT AVID FANBASES



“Community”: NBC, Returns March 17



Greendale Community College is no ordinary school, especially when you have the dean popping in with a new costume every day and a Spanish teacher living in the air vents. Follow cynical ex-lawyer Jeff Winger and his band of lovable misfits as they make their way through community college, getting caught up in whirlwinds of pop culture, romance and paintball along the way. From bottle-episodes to quick-

witted, fast-paced dialogue, this show has it all. The group of seven originally met to study Spanish, but evolved into a closely knit family. “Community” will be finishing its third season in the spring, hopefully tying up some loose ends. To find out if all dogs really are blue, make sure to watch “Community” at 8 p.m. on Thursdays on NBC. This time-slot may change when season three resumes.



“The Big Bang Theory”: CBS, Thursdays at 8 p.m.

Roommates and physicists Sheldon and Leonard live across the hall from perky, blonde Penny, whose last name has never been revealed. Their lack of social skills coupled with Leonard’s innate awkwardness and Sheldon’s technobabble keep the show captivating, especially in contrast to Penny’s social

prohess and general ditziness. “The Big Bang Theory” isn’t afraid to get technical, which Sheldon proves in nearly every 30-minute episode. The show has been renewed through 2014. Catch “The Big Bang Theory” on Thursdays at 8 p.m. on CBS.



“Revenge”: ABC, Wednesdays at 9 p.m.



Amanda Clark, who switched identities with her cellmate and is now known as Emily Thorne, has dedicated her life to getting revenge on the people who framed her father, David Clark, for treason in the first season of “Revenge.” Amanda grew up as an orphan learned in the art of revenge. She then moves back to the Hamptons, where she takes justice into

her own hands. After building up her character and gaining trust in the community, Amanda takes every opportunity to make the lives of the Graysons, the ones responsible for her father’s troubles, miserable. Will she take things too far and ruin herself? To find out, tune into ABC on Wednesday nights at 9 p.m.



“Fringe”: FOX, Friday at 9 p.m.

Agent Olivia Dunham investigates events that are out of this world, both metaphorically and literally in the fourth season of “Fringe.” She has seen things from shape shifters to bacteria that can control people’s minds. She struggles to keep peace between our universe and the nearly identical alternate universe, where there is a duplicate of everyone here,

living slightly different lives. With help from the adorable mad scientist, Walter Bishop, Olivia is able to solve scientific crimes and mysteries. Recently, she has also had to deal with the return of Walter’s son, Peter, who supposedly died years ago. To see if Olivia is successful in her quest for peace, tune in to FOX at 9 p.m. on Friday nights.



“Sherlock”: PBS, Returns May



Make way, “Doctor Who.” BBC has a new resident genius. The British mini-series, “Sherlock,” which follows the familiar adventures of Sherlock Holmes and Doctor John Watson set in modern-day London, has gained an enormous and devoted fanbase both here and in the UK. Sherlock Holmes is up to his usual 221B Baker Street escapades but with a 21st

century twist. The series puts a contemporary spin on a cherished story and stuns its audience with its clever wit, emotionally jarring episodes, stunning villains and breathtaking cinematography. To find the first three episodes of the series, go online to Netflix or you’ll have to wait until May for the U.S. airing on PBS.



“Psych”: ABC Network, Wednesday at 10 p.m.

James Roday writes and stars on “Psych” as crime consultant Shawn Spencer as the show enters its sixth season. By using his strong instincts and keen observatory skills, he convinces friend and foe that he uses psychic abilities to solve crimes. Shawn’s best friend and detective partner, Burton

“Gus” Guster, is played by Dulé Hill. Together they solve crimes (and sometimes battle). The show is full of obscure ‘80s references and never-ending, bromantic witty banter. Episodes air at 10 p.m. on Wednesday nights on USA Network and will start airing again this summer.



“NCIS (Naval Criminal Investigative Service)”: CBS, Tuesday at 8 p.m.



During the show’s ninth season, Leroy Jethro Gibbs, played by Mark Harmon, leads a team for the Naval Criminal Investigative Service at their headquarters in the Washington Navy Yard solving crimes related to the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. His personable team consists of Anthony “Tony” DiNozzo (Michael Weatherly), the senior field agent known

for his ability to attract the ladies, Ziva David (Coté de Pablo), the tactical and independent Mossad agent who captivates men, and Timothy McGee (Sean Murray), the kind and sensitive MIT graduate and tech specialist. The uniquely charismatic team of special agents solves mysteries with a witty and unusual spin every Tuesday night at 8 p.m.



Images Courtesy of Goole Images

Students discuss what 'Asian' means

BY Ashley Tang

Strictly defined, "Asian" means a native of Asia or a person of Asian descent. But when people use the phrase "Why are you so Asian?" they are referring to a different, often negative, meaning of the word: someone who is only interested in receiving good grades and fattening up an extracurricular activity list to gain acceptance into top-tier colleges.

"It seems like there's another standard for Asian students," junior Brian Kim said. "I'm pressured to work a lot harder and to get into a good college."

Many Asian students complain that their parents stress the importance of straight A's and extracurricular activities that will impress a college admissions officer, while non-Asian parents may not be as strict and demanding. This

conspicuous difference formed the basis of the Asian stereotype, automatically raising the bar for all Asians and causing much unnecessary stress.

"I feel a lot of pressure from my parents to do well in school," junior Michelle Tian said. "They said that if I don't get a 2,300 on the SAT, I might as well not take it."

The meaning that is now associated with the word "Asian" can even be applied to people who are not of Asian descent.

"Some of my peers have called me Asian because I care about my grades and often do my homework in the li-

brary," senior Cullan McChesney said. "I just do what needs to get done, so it doesn't bother me that much, but I don't like how people just assume things."

Not only is it wrong to assume that all Asians are studious, but it is also insulting to other races, as if implying that they are not capable of possessing this trait.

"Anyone can be studious," senior Austin Kerby said. "It's not something that is confined to one race."

The Asian stereotype is detrimental to those who fulfill the true meaning of the word. Many students of Asian descent are ashamed of how they are so

easily identified with the vast ocean of studious Asians. They try to distinguish themselves from "those Asians" by asserting that they're not "Asian" at all or by exemplifying their sinking grades.

"There's many Asians that actually fit the stereotype," senior Kenneth Leung said. "I don't want to be automatically seen as another one of them."

Nowadays, people rarely have "Asian pride," and feel the need to cover up remnants of their background.

"I've become pretty Americanized," Leung said.

Other students believe that those who are Asian should not be ashamed of their background, no matter what prejudices may accompany it.

"Even though there are a lot of negative stereotypes, people should still be proud of their race," Kim said. ♦



Media serve to further social prejudices

BY Akshara Sekar

The "ginger" stereotype

Junior Olivia Whiting, a student of medium-height with strawberry-blonde hair (more strawberry than blonde), recalls excitedly attending a Sharks game, cheering for the home team and returning home saddened by being the object of a media-created stereotype.

An insolent male fan with a soggy hot dog covered in ketchup charged up to Whiting and yelled, "Ginger, high-five!" as the Sharks scored.

The name Ginger garnered popularity when the show "South Park" satirized that redheads suffer from a fictional disease, called "gingervitis," that causes them to be inhumane and disgusting, unable to survive in sunlight and have no souls. Whiting has been the target of a few Ginger-related redhead jokes.

"The names don't faze me anymore. People think it's funny, but the joke gets old," Whiting said.

Nevertheless, this is just a single example of how the media has strengthened prejudices in society.

Although the issue of "gingervitis" might seem harmless with its portrayal in a comedic television show, it shrouds the larger, hurtful topics that are commonly seen on the Internet, YouTube or TV.

YouTube stars suffer criticism

Recently, videos made by males in

head-to-toe female garments comically detailing typical phrases stated by females have dominated YouTube.

The stream of videos began by a user who parodied seemingly harmless phrases said by most females. But as this video, titled "S*** Girls Say" gained recognition, burlesque versions went viral that applied to certain minorities, some pertaining to racial differences.

Viewers appreciated the community feeling of these videos until they began creating a racial divide. After a video, "S*** White Girls Say to Black Girls," of an African American girl, Franchesca Ramsey, recounting phrases said to her by her Caucasian girlfriends gained approximately 8 million views, these seemingly playful videos turned into racist manifestations for the media to use as bait in their game.

"Some elements in the media are not sore subjects, because they were never in the limelight," senior Akash Kar said. "Things like 'S*** White Girls Say to Black Girls' appear everywhere with problems, because racism is still a very sore subject to many people."

Ramsey's video is proof of how even slightly provocative material is sometimes turned into something disparaging by the media.

Bloggers, news sources and talk show hosts all contribute to overanalyzing these issues and changing their perception in the media.

Innocuous videos created on YouTube

cause controversy among different communities.

"I think there's a line that shouldn't be crossed. You need to be able to draw that imaginary line from what's funny to what might hurt someone or cause sensitive feelings," Kar said. "The perfect person would say, of course, that we should never stereotype, but it's human nature to do so."

The hypocrisy of the issue

Some students find that people are willing to mock stereotypical people in the media but fearful to do so in a private.

"Some situations are really hypocritical, because people are willing to laugh in private versus public," sophomore Michael Eschen said. "People feel more comfortable laughing at others on the Internet than at classmates in public."

Junior Sasan Saadat theorized that the media feels the need to categorize all data circulating among people, which explains their frequent use of stereotypes.

"People make complications and judgments, which the media can distort," Saadat said. "It's just so wide and broad that they feel the need to make things fit into boxes. They are trying to make everything fit into these cookie cutter shapes."

This is most likely where stereotypes such as gingers, dumb blondes and faulty Asian drivers originated from-the media.

"I think it's difficult when you're stereotyping on television, because stereotyping doesn't generally fit our general population," Kar said. "Television really considers all 300 million Americans. It's unfair because we're all different and come from different backgrounds, families and societies."

Without realizing that these derogatory names are harmful, people belt them out fearlessly, protected by the false armor of the Internet.

"People can gain their 15 minutes of fame by coming up with something that's funny to bring to light—a new stereotype that not be true, but people just go along with it," Saadat said. "Then it becomes popular by getting a lot of views and gaining momentum, even though it may not be something that's necessarily true in any way."

The "dumb blonde" stereotype

Although most of the time what people say may be harmless, they should be thoughtful of the feelings of others who are mocked as a result.

Junior Megan Doles is one of the many victims of the dumb

blond stereotype.

"Usually I laugh, but it's annoying. People call me dumb blond all the time. It doesn't bother me, because they don't actually mean it. I would never take it seriously," Doles said.

Perhaps Thumper in the movie "Bambi" said it best, "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." ♦

"South Park"

The controversy
South Park aired the episode "Ginger Kids" in season 9 and quipped that red-haired children all suffered from a disease called "gingervitis."

The consequence
People began referring to red-haired individuals as "gingers," sometimes in a demeaning manner.

The reaction
"The names don't faze me anymore. People think it's funny, but the joke gets old," junior Olivia Whiting said.

"S* White Girls Say to Black Girls"**

The controversy
In a YouTube video which garnered over 8 million views, an African American woman, Franchesca Ramsey, recounted phrases her Caucasian friends said to her. Some felt that the video was racist and hurtful.

The reaction
"Things like 'S*** White Girls Say to Black Girls' always create problems, because racism is still a very sore subject to many people," senior Akash Kar said.

Reporters tear down gender barriers

Myth 1. game addicts

If you've ever been in any high school across America, you've probably never gone a day without hearing about someone on an Xbox or PS3 playing "Call of Duty" or "Skyrim" or some other video game. And you'd notice that the vast majority of these people are male; thus, the assumption exists that guys are addicted to video games.

Like many of the other prejudices, this belief only holds true for a select



NICK CHOW
In a Nick of Time

few people. While there are many people who enjoy video gaming, it's wrong to assume that all guys are constantly plugged into their video game consoles.

I think that it is quite unfair to label the entire male population as gaming-obsessed. When people think of a hardcore gamer, the image of a social outcast spending endless hours glued to their consoles inevitably appears in their heads. It is wrong for a few gaming obsessed guys to portray the entire male population in a negative light.

Myth 2. sports fanatics

I don't think that this prejudice is applicable so much at Saratoga High, but many times when I'm watching a movie or television, the high-school-aged male characters seem to always be athletes with low academic standards—a "jock," in essence. These examples further reinforce people's belief that all men must be athletic.

The "jock with low grades"



stereotype notwithstanding, beliefs that manliness are based in dominance on the field or a cult-like following of all things athletic incorrectly characterize a large portion of the male population.

When people hear about a guy, they think "masculine," which immediately equates to dominance in sports. Not all men enjoy watching sports either. While it is true that many men enjoy playing, watching or discussing sports, myself included, it is unfair to assume that all guys are sports fanatics and athletic.

Myth 3. illegible writers

I remember during numerous occasions in elementary school, my friends would ask to read one of my handwritten assignments. When they handed back my work, each of them said something along the lines of: "Wow, your handwriting is so girly. It's so neat."

Even my elementary school teachers would take a minute to be im-

pressed with my handwriting. I remember thinking about it and asking myself why neatness, especially for handwriting, is associated only with girls.

Granted, I do know some guys who write illegibly, but they do not represent the entire male population. There are girls whose handwriting is just as bad, or worse, than that of most boys. Assuming that something neat and orderly automatically belongs to a girl is one of those small, unfair prejudices that really irritates me.

Myth 1. preening narcissists

So maybe this particular stereotype rings partly true for some people. After all, putting a good outfit together does take time. I, however, am one of those who rolls out of bed around 7:25 and leaves the house 10 minutes later looking like I just rolled out of bed. And I



CRISTINA CURCELLI
It's Just CC

know there are other girls out there who do the same.

And even for some girls who do spend excessive time in front of the mirror, are we really expected to believe that some guys don't do the same? After all, it's not like that excessive amount of hair gel just flies into their hair magically. And don't forget those guys who you pass in the hallway in a suffocating cloud of cologne.

Myth 2. helpless weaklings

This is just one of the many messed-up parts of modern society that never really gets fixed. It is common knowledge that female athletes do not get paid anywhere near what male athletes do. And unfortunately, there is not a women's football league, and the women's World Cup gets about as much press as Earth Day does. But who says that girls are weaker or more

fragile because of any of this?

I remember back during those middle school push-up tests, most of the guys collapsed around 20 or 30, but every year it was a girl who kept on going until the obnoxious voice on the pre-recorded tape stopped counting.

When the 2012 London Olympics roll around, just take a few minutes to watch some of the women's swimming or gymnastics or track and field events. So kudos to all the female athletes out there who defy these stereotypes.

Myth 3. chatty gossipers

I like to talk on the phone about as much as I like talking to a wall. Why people assume that girls in particular enjoy talking on the phone more than others is beyond me.

Making a call to ask homework questions makes plenty of sense, as does a call to make plans for the weekend or something of that sort. But I imagine it would be difficult to find a girl, or anyone for that matter, who enjoys engaging in mindless chit-chat for hours on end when you can't even see the person's face.

Myth 4. math&science illiterates

This stereotype that girls are just not as apt to learning the sciences as guys is, I suppose, partly perpetuated by the fact that there are fewer women working in the math and science fields

than there are men.

For a while, there was even speculation as to whether or not males had a "math gene" that made them more inclined to study math. Big surprise: The "math gene" does not exist. In other good news, there seems to be no shortage of female math whizzes at our school.

>> togatalks

What stereotype do you think is the most harmful to our community?

"That Asians study really hard, because it puts pressure on everyone to do the same."



freshman Nishant Agrawal

"I don't know if there's a particular one that's harmful; it's the culmination of them all."



junior Doug Jones

"LGBT stereotypes, since they encourage incorrect assumptions about some people."



senior Varsha Ramesh

'That's so gay'

Students, teachers question if the use of homophobic slang is ever justified

BY Rohan Rajeev

"You're so gay, and you don't even like boys."

Singer Katy Perry recently released a controversial single titled "Ur [You're] So Gay," setting many critics off, as they labeled the song "homophobic and offensive."

However, Perry might actually have been hinting at something deeper.

Recently, words such as "gay" and "queer" have been ingrained in the language of youths and have begun to assume negative connotations,

such as "stupid" and "foolish." Perry sarcastically and subtly bashes this informal definition, addressing someone as "gay" but not actually as a homosexual.

She imitates the frequent, nonchalant and often insulting way the word is thrown around.

Junior Feargus MacFhionnlaioich believes that the word "gay" has completely changed its meaning in the colloquial sense.

"The word 'gay' has transformed from meaning homosexual to meaning 'stupid,'

just like the words 'lame' and 'dumb' changed from their original meanings," he said.

Despite this different meaning, MacFhionnlaioich believes that using the word "gay" to describe a stupid situation is homophobic and still inappropriate.

"The word is still new enough to offend sensitive persons, and it can be very harmful if intended to be derogatory," he said. "Even if it's just tossed around casually in everyday vocabulary like it usually is, people can still take offense."

Because some teens have started using the word "gay" to mean stupid, there is some homophobia present in this colloquial version of the word, according to MacFhionnlaioich.

English teacher Natasha Ritchie prompted a similar discussion late into the first semester as her English 11 Hon-

ors classes read Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn."

"I think that when the word 'gay' is used casually at school in a derogatory manner, it is for sure considered homophobic, as it makes the word synonymous

I think that when the word 'gay' is used casually at school in a derogatory manner, it is for sure considered homophobic.

>> Teacher Natasha Ritchie

with what essentially means stupid," Ritchie said. "Just because it has come to mean something else, as in used to be a negative reference word, does not mean that this is OK, just that we have become immune to it to a certain extent."

Junior Tiffany Zai takes a

different approach, accepting the fact that a completely new word with a different meaning has been created.

"I don't think that using the new word 'gay' is homophobic, especially because it's just used so much and comes out without prior thought," Zai said.

For Zai, simply using the word gay to describe an unfavorable situation negatively, for example, is not enough to indicate homophobia. Nevertheless, she does not condone the random, erratic abuse of the word.

"I still think it's an inappropriate word, as opposed to a word like 'stupid,' to use during most situations," Zai said.

All three can agree on one aspect, though: that the word gay is an unnecessary addition to the everyday language of teenagers. ♦

A fresh look:

The Falcon spotlights often forgotten members of the class of 2015

>> LIVING MOTION PROGRAMMER ANIMATES GRAPHICS

The word "animation" usually brings to mind children's movies, like "Beauty and the Beast" and "Up."

But for many teenagers, animation also refers to the hours of time dedicated to playing a multitude of video games.

What they don't realize are the many hours spent programming the games, working out the glitches and providing the best playing experience possible.

One such programmer, on a small scale, is freshman Tony Holt.

Holt is a member of the animated graphics class taught by Tony Palma and enjoys creating games and animations using Flash.

He first became interested in programming because of his father, who creates games.

"He started game-making for Playdom and Disney, so now I want to follow in his footsteps," Holt said. "[I want to] do something to do with computers."

Holt took a computer class in eighth grade, but said it wasn't nearly as interesting as the one he is in now.



Freshman Tony Holt works on his animation during animated graphics class in the Multimedia Lab on Feb. 8.

"Back then we just played with different software, like GIMP and a bunch of other stuff, but we didn't really do anything useful," Holt said.

Holt enjoys not only the technical side of his class, but also the new friendships he has forged as he adjusts to high school.

"I made a bunch of new friends," he said. "Some of them are only in my animated graphics class."

The class provides a time to enjoy programming with Flash, one of Holt's favorite programs.

"It's basically just Photoshop and Flash," Holt said. "[We use] Photoshop so you can learn how to use the tools that you need for flash later on. It's really fun." ♦

—Wren Sutterfield

Irish dancer expands interest past her roots

For freshman Siobhan McMillan, Irish dancing and rowing are two sports very close to the heart.

"I have been doing Irish dancing for the last eight years," McMillan said. "It's not a very common sport, which creates a tight-knit community that I take pride in and love being a part of."

McMillan also participates in the Los Gatos Rowing Club, where she has formed lasting bonds with teammates.

"Rowing takes up most of my life," McMillan said. "Because of our heavy practice schedule around 18

hours a week, our team is extremely close and I've acquired numerous relationships from being part of the club."

In spite of her busy schedule, McMillan has been able to enjoy her high school experience.

"Hearing about [upper classmen's] individual experiences during their high school career made me more confident and comfortable at SHS," McMillan said.

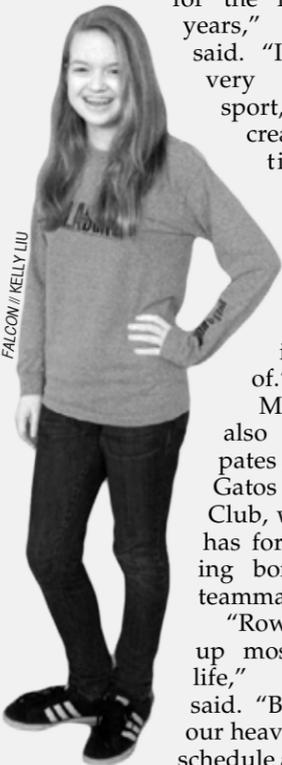
McMillan feels high school gives her a new level of independence and the opportunity to choose more of her classes. McMillan feels that her high school career is off to a promising start.

"So far my experience has been pretty positive," McMillan said. "There are quite a few pros and cons, but I've gained a lot of new friends and I enjoy most of my classes ... Overall I'm pretty content."

McMillan tries to enrich her experience by also participating in the school's Cantare choir and volunteering with the National Charity League.

"I feel empowered to help others and inspired to share the joy each day brings," McMillan said. ♦

—Priyanka Nookala



FALCON // KELLY LIU

Former Harker student excels at higher math

Some students find math to be a tough subject, but freshman Jackie An does not have this problem. She is currently taking Trig/Pre-calculus Honors.

"I wanted to get ahead in math and I figured it would give me an easier time my junior year with all the other APs I'll have to take," An said.

Although An is comfortable in her math class now, she was initially hesitant about the 95-minute long periods.

"A big difference from last year would probably be the block schedule. I was expecting [the classes] to be boring since they are really long, but they go by faster than I thought they would," An said.

Since An attended Harker Middle School, she had to adjust to the large increase in students.

"At first, it was kind of over-

whelming since Harker had half as many people in each grade," An said. "But overall, the transition was pretty easy, since it's not really that different from middle school."

After An was able to settle into high school life, she began to enjoy the perks of high school.

"We get more independence than we did in middle school, so that's really nice," An said. "I'm looking forward to the rest of high school." ♦

—Jennifer Jin



Freshman Jackie An solves a Trigonometry problem on Feb. 8.

TALISMAN // KYLIE TSENG

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BOYS' SOCCER

'Dream team' on a roll



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

Senior midfielder Nabil Arbouz dribbles the ball down the field in the 3-0 win against Palo Alto on Jan. 13.

BY Nikhil Goel

The boys' varsity soccer team continues to live up to its "dream team" status with only conceding one goal in the last six games. The Falcons' road to a CCS title looks promising as the team builds up more momentum with every win.

The forward momentum started with a 3-0 win against Palo Alto on Jan. 13. Goals were scored by senior midfielder Rajiv Ramakabir and junior midfielders Amin Mirzadegan and Rohan Rajeev. The diversity of the goal-scorers is a key aspect to the Falcons' success.

"Considering [senior Troy Doles], our usual goal-scorer, isn't able to play [due to injury], I feel the position of forward has opened up to many different people," senior defender Stan Ho said. "The juniors and underclassmen, especially, have stepped up to the challenge."

A 0-0 draw against Los Altos on Jan. 18 did not deter the Falcons' momentum.

"It was a tough game," senior defender Manish Raghavan said. "It has only made us work harder, though."

Spectators at the Jan. 20 game against Milpitas saw the Falcons' drive as the boys took a 3-0 win with goals scored by senior midfielder Nabil Arbouz, senior forward Jonathan Junqua and junior midfielder Fred Feyzi.

"There is a ridiculous amount of talent on the team, and our work at practice allows us to become better," Arbouz said.

Three days later, the Falcons beat Homestead 2-1 with goals scored by Junqua and sophomore defender Nikhil Goel.

On Jan. 25, the Falcons played Mountain View for the second time and ended the Spartans' 22-league game winning streak with a 1-0 victory. The goal was scored by junior forward Keaton Matusich off of a long ball from Ho early in the game, and the Falcons defended with vigor until the final whistle.

"We knew we could beat

them," Raghavan said. "And that mentality, along with our drive to beat a powerhouse team like Mountain View, helped us come out on top."

Three games in one week couldn't keep the squad from winning as the Falcons demolished Gunn on Jan. 27 with a 4-0 win. Goals were scored by Mirzadegan, junior forward Eric Martin, sophomore defender Will Guy and freshman midfielder Komdean Masoumi. Masoumi also had an assist to Martin, which took a bounce off Martin's head and over a defender near the right sideline.

"It was without a doubt one of the greatest goals of the season," senior defender/midfielder Max Dorling said.

In order to be successful in the upcoming CCS campaign, the boys need to keep striving to be better as a team.

"We know we can win CCS, but in order to do so, we must continue to work hard as a unit, be aggressive and play unselfish soccer," Raghavan said. ♦

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Tsao's summer practice benefits team

BY Will Edman

During the summer, the outdoor basketball "Courts of Dreams" next to Benny Pierce Field were used by a diverse group of people, from middle school students to SHS alumni to adults searching for recreation. However, among the many different people who frequented the courts, one person seemed to be ever-present: junior Arthur Tsao.

During this basketball season, Tsao, a 5'10" small forward, has been an impact player who considers his role to be "to make open shots and keep the defensive intensity up." Tsao has gained accolades from his teammates for his contributions.

"He brings us a shooting threat off the bench," starting point guard senior Brandon Pak said. "He helps us spread the defense because defenders have to stay on him around the three-point arc."

Tsao is currently the second-leading scorer off the bench, averaging over 3 points per game. However, his value lies not in his points per game average, but in his ability to make shots in streaks. Before this season, he was not expected to have such a large impact, but Tsao found a means of improvement through his summer practice.

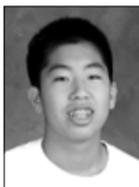
Through pick-up games with his siblings' friends, Tsao improved his game and made new

friends.

"It was a good learning experience for me to play with other people who love the game of basketball too," Tsao said.

Participation in the pick-up games also enabled Tsao to create new strengths in his game.

"By playing over the summer, I was also able to pick up some passing ability," Tsao said. "The older guys didn't want to play point guard, so I often took the role of a distributor and play-maker."



Tsao

Due to his summer practice, Tsao admitted that his 3-point range and his defense were improved. Teammates agreed that Tsao had stepped up his game.

"I think playing every day got him ready for the flow of varsity basketball," Pak said.

Tsao's improvement did not end on the outdoor courts: as the season progresses, Tsao continues to refine his game.

"I keep trying to get more shots up before and after practice," Tsao said.

With Tsao contributing, the team scored a two point victory on Feb. 3 against Wilcox, with forwards Steve Berman and Kyle Dozier and guards Brandon Pak and Alex Wang scoring the vast majority of the points in the team's win. They then avenged an early season loss by beating Monta Vista 50-31 on Feb. 10. ♦



sports
>> shorts

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Girls' soccer: new league proves tough

A tougher league, injuries and questionable refereeing have all contributed to the team's 1-2-6 record and last-place standing as of Feb. 6. The team has a slim chance at going to CCS, with one tie and two wins, and must win its final three games to move on.

Despite a rough season, the girls remain positive and if they do not make CCS, aim to keep their spot in the De Anza league for next year.

"I think considering that we moved up a league, we are doing all right," sophomore center-midfielder Stephanie Ho said. "The teams are much stronger, so it is tougher to win, but we are hanging in there."

The team has scored eight goals with 17 goals against in the first nine games.

"We have had to deal with a lot of pressure moving up to the A [De Anza] league. There is a huge gap between the skill of the B [El Camino] league and the A league," junior goalie Alyson Nilan-Axline said. "But I feel like we are adjusting well. We have to be a better team on and off the field, and I feel like we are."

The team played its last two games against Los Gatos, which was also the senior game, and Monta Vista on Feb. 10 and 15 respectively.

—Shivani Chadha

Seniors improve girls' basketball

Sometimes leadership can make or break a team's successes. For this year's varsity girls' basketball team, the seniors have helped the team to a 9-0 record.

Senior forward Talia Sisco, guard Taylor Jessen and center Campbell Oreglia have worked to propel the team to victory in each of its league games.

"We aren't much different from last year—we're winning in our league again, and the team bond is just as strong," Sisco said.

With only three seniors on the team, strong communication and teamwork has played an important part in improving the team's game.

"I think our closeness is a huge strength; most other school teams aren't nearly as close as we are and we always have such a good time together," Sisco said. "Of course on the court we work well together and have each others backs."

On the court, the seniors encourage their team to work hard until the last minute, a strength that has helped the team win many close games.

—Anika Jhalani

Wrestling team hindered by injuries

The Saratoga Wrestling team has recently suffered at meets due to numerous injuries on the team. Though the team works hard, they are forced to forfeit many matches for lack of competitors.

Significant wrestlers on the team include senior Alfred Murabito, who is ranked 8th in the 138 pound weight class in CCS, and sophomore Graham Grant, who is honorably mentioned in the 195 pound weight class.

Six wrestlers on the team are injured, out of about 20. Though the team is small, they concentrate on setting a high bar to condition all team members to be the best wrestlers they can.

"We set the bar high at Saratoga, so the men are always prepared," coach Joe Pele said.

Despite setbacks, morale is still high as the team prepares for each meet.

"I know the team's working really hard, I've been going to the practices to watch," Grant said.

Recent meets have been disappointing for the team, with losses such as 77-3 to Gunn and 75-6 to Palo Alto. All the wrestlers work hard to strengthen their team and win meets.

"This is a core group of wrestlers working to rebuild the Saratoga wrestling program," Pele said. "They are dedicated and leave nothing undone."

—Wren Sutterfield

Girls' Swimming

Coaches: Kristen Thomson, Courtney Crase, Brett Slayton, Nick Berg

Last year's record (results in League/CCS): Leagues: fourth, CCS: 21st

Graduations: Debbie Lin, Caroline White, Sophie Heyman, Lauren Gardanier

Key returning players: Rebecca Chen (12), Natalie Cheung (12), Stephanie Chen (11), Janey Heyman (10)

Key additions: Yayla Sezginer (9), Amanda Moriarty (9)

Key statistic: One-third, the increase in number of swimmers compared to last year (almost 40, compared to last year's 27).

Quote: "We are building depth versus having individual stars this year, and I am very excited about a lot of freshmen coming into the team," Thomson said.

Prognosis: It will be a strong team in general, with more swimmers throughout all grade levels joining the team for the first time. They might not win first place in as many events, but they hope to earn more points overall.

—Serena Chan



Girls' Lacrosse

Coach: Eric Wong

Last year's record (results in League/CCS): 2-10

Graduations: Vanessa Block, Kat Nobles

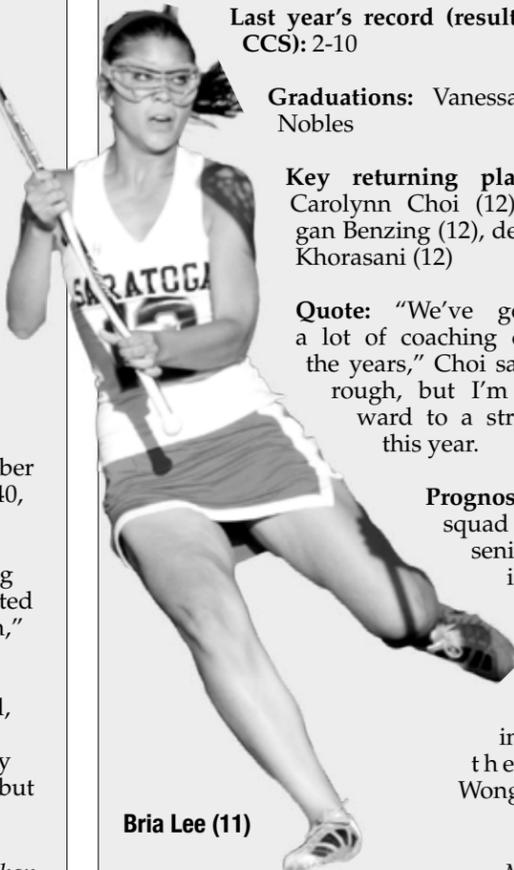
Key returning players: Attack Carolyn Choi (12), goalie Megan Benzing (12), defense Shayda Khorasani (12)

Quote: "We've gone through a lot of coaching changes over the years," Choi said. "It's been rough, but I'm looking forward to a stronger season this year."

Prognosis: "While the squad has only four seniors, the team is stacked with young athletic talent and a number of players looking to prove themselves," Wong said.

Bria Lee (11)

—Megan Benzing



FALCON // JORDAN WAITE

Softball

Coach: Ray Sisco

Last year's record (results in League/CCS): 2-8 League; 3-18 total

Graduations: Megan Brading, Heather Gummow

Key returning players: Catcher Mandy Lee (10), catcher Tivoli Sisco (10), pitcher Hera Tang (10)

Key additions: Pitcher Analisa Ruff (9)

Star player: Tang

Key statistic: 50 percent, the winning percentage the team hopes to have

Quote: I'm really excited. I feel like we have a very talented group of players and I think we will have a great season," sophomore catcher Mandy Lee said.

Prognosis: Although the team lost its starting pitcher Megan Brading to graduation, the loss will be offset by the addition of Ruff, who has been playing softball for past three years. With strong leadership and incoming players that have softball experience, the team is looking forward to a successful season.

—Jennifer Jin

SPRING SPORTS

MICHELLE SHU

Boys' Golf

Coach: Dave Gragnola

Last year's record (results in League/CCS): 12-0 (League), 10th (CCS)

Graduations: Kent Paisley, Andrew Cho

Key returning players: Christian Galvin (10), Robbie Parden (11), Michael Chen (12)

Key additions: Freshman Robert Gragnola has joined, and the team has a new home course at the Saratoga Country Club, which is more ideal than the previous one in Gilroy. "We're getting one really good player [and] the new course [gives us] a very strong home course advantage," Galvin said.

Star player: Parden

Key statistic: 148. Parden won the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League (SCVAL) championship with a two-round score of 148.

Prognosis: Although the team anticipates challenges when playing road matches on longer, unfamiliar courses, particularly against rival teams (Milpitas and Los Gatos), the season looks promising, and the team hopes to continue its success in the league and have a strong performance in CCS.

—Priya Nookala

Boys' Volleyball

Coach: Daniel Lopez

Last year's record (results in League/CCS): 0-12 (De Anza League)

Graduations: Garrett Huening, Brandon Pierce

Key returning players: Brandon Pak (12), Paras Unadkat (12), Salmaan Javed (12)

Star player: Pak

Key statistic: Zero League wins

Quote: "We are going to be senior-heavy as opposed to last year, so we'll be more experienced on the court. Hopefully we'll see an improvement over last year's record," senior Alex Amato said.

Prognosis: The boys' volleyball team has been known during the past few seasons for its inferiority. However, due to its record in last year's season, the boys' volleyball team has moved down to the lower El Camino Division. Since the level of players is extremely different between the De Anza and El Camino divisions, there is a good chance that the team will be able to move back up to the De Anza division by the end of this year's season. However, the team will begin its season without key basketball and soccer players such as seniors Brandon Pak, Salmaan Javed and Paras Unadkat.

—Allison Chang



Zach Hewlin (10)

FALCON // SARAH HULL

Boys' Tennis

Coaches: Tom Uyehara, Florin Marica

Last year's record (results in League/CCS): League 9-3, overall 15-6

Graduations: Nikhil Jayashankar, Deepak Sabada

Key returning players: Kial Kaiser (10), Henry Shen (11)

Key additions: Neel Bedekar (9)

Star player: Kaiser

Key statistic: Only two players did not miss matches due to injury or other conflict

Quote: "We're still pretty strong and we have some strong freshmen and sophomores, like [No. 1 singles player] Kial Kaiser," Shen said. "Obviously it's not going to be as strong as the last two years because we lost [most of] the entire team. [But] I'm going to play my best and contribute to the team."

Prognosis: This season will be a rebuilding season for the Falcons, after losing No. 1 singles player Jayashankar and No. 2 singles player Sabada to graduation. However, returning singles players Kaiser and Shen and the addition of Bedekar will still allow the Falcons to remain competitive in the league.

—Nick Chow

Boys' Lacrosse

Coach: Larry Boehm

Last year's record (results in League/CCS): 4-12, seventh place in SCVAL De Anza Division

Graduations: Gavin Peake, Rick Wilson

Key returning players: Midfield Eric Van Noorden (12), attack Pablo Parker (11), midfield Nick Doyen (12), attack Wade Troyer (12)

Key additions: Midfield/attack Huy Tran (12), goalie Addison Polcyn (9)

Star player: Van Noorden

Quote: "I am quite confident that with this excellent staff combined with the continued desire of the team to learn and improve that we will make the 2012 SCVAL playoffs," Boehm said.

Prognosis: The lacrosse team is experienced at midfield and attack but is rebuilding the defense and the goalie positions. The school's support for the boys' lacrosse program is evident in the coaching staff that the administration has hired. Stan Hsu returns from an excellent season as last season's head JV Coach. New staff additions include Bill Kurz, who has founded many successful club and high school programs, and Luke Langon, who joins Saratoga after a successful WCLL career at Cal. Kurz and Langon will coach the offense together.

—Andy Fang

Boys' Swimming

Coach: Christian Bonner

Last year's record (results in League/CCS): Third in the CCS 200-yard medley relay behind Los Gatos and Bellarmine College Prep.

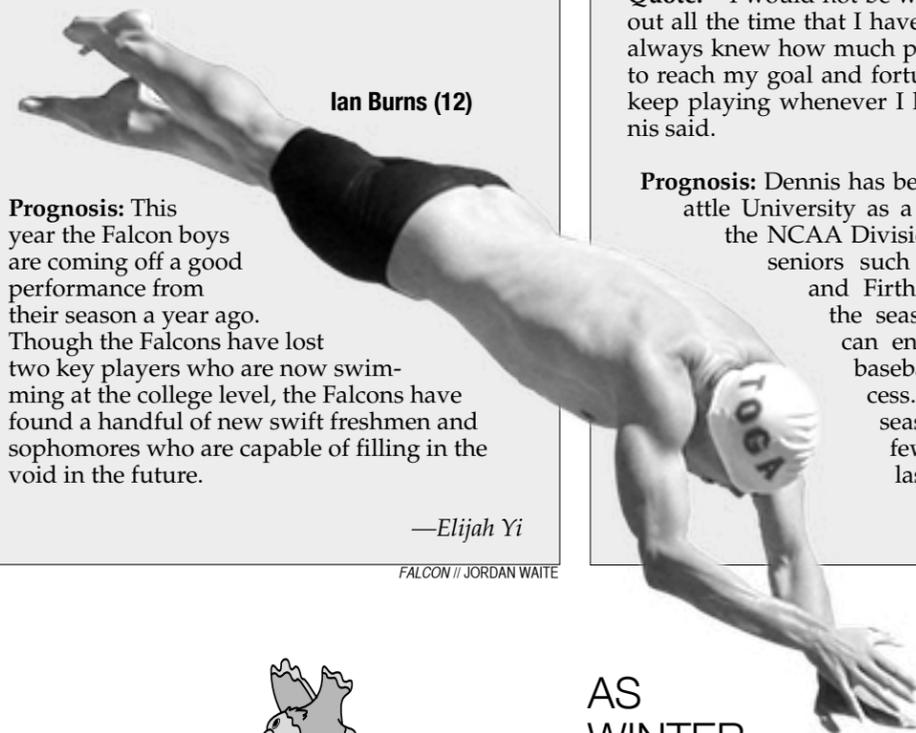
Graduations: Adam Hinshaw, Justin Chung, Tim Rollinson, Will Tang

Key returning players: Ian Burns (12), Mitch Miller (10), Sasha Samoilov (10)

Key additions: Aidan Burns (9), Patrick Wang (10)

Prognosis: This year the Falcon boys are coming off a good performance from their season a year ago. Though the Falcons have lost two key players who are now swimming at the college level, the Falcons have found a handful of new swift freshmen and sophomores who are capable of filling in the void in the future.

—Elijah Yi



Ian Burns (12)

FALCON // JORDAN WAITE

Baseball

Coach: Manny Steffen

Last year's record (results in League/CCS): 12-19

Graduations: Dillan Pak, Kevin Darchuk

Key returning players: Will Dennis (12), Brady Horn (12), Kyle Dozier (11), Thomas Ishikawa (12), Austin Firth (12), Stevie Berman (11)

Key additions: Trevor Hanks (11), Jared Spang (11)

Quote: "I would not be where I am now without all the time that I have spent on baseball. I always knew how much practice it would take to reach my goal and fortunately I was able to keep playing whenever I had free time," Dennis said.

Prognosis: Dennis has been admitted into Seattle University as a two-way player for the NCAA Division I program. Other seniors such as Ishikawa, Horn and Firth wait anxiously for the season to start so they can end their high school baseball careers with success. The team awaits a season with hopefully fewer injuries than the last did.

—Akshara Sekar

PREVIEW

AS WINTER SPORTS WIND DOWN, SPRING SPORTS TEAMS PREPARE FOR SEASONS OF IMPROVEMENT, COMPETITION AND WINNING

Badminton

Coach: Alex Chan, assistants John Phung, Steve Chang

Last year's record (results in League/CCS): Fourth in CCS (tied with Lynbrook) and second in Leagues

Graduations: Gavin Chu, Kevin Mu, Jasmine Lee, Allison Shen

Key returning players: Jeffery Kuo (12), Derek Chao

(11), Bryan Chow (10)

Key additions: Junna Shimokawa (9), Julie Han (9)

Star player: Kuo

Quote: "There is a huge cognitive, component to badminton that makes it different and unique from other sports. I'm looking to help the players think, improve and work on their weaknesses, then hope-

fully pull through and win," Chan said.

Prognosis: Expect fiercer competition from Cupertino High, who recently gained new talent. Additionally, Gunn and Monta Vista High will have much stronger girls teams, despite losing many graduating seniors. Chan also hopes to improve the team's stats by stressing teamwork and a unified mindset.

—Justine Huang

Track

Coach: Archie Ljepava

Last year's record (results in League/CCS): Third overall in SCVAL, ninth overall in CCS

Graduations: Kyle Fukui, Garrick Chan

Key returning players: Crystal Yen (12), Michelle Cummins (12), Melodie Bellegarda (11), Rocky Lee (12), Mitch Casas (12), Will Guy (10), Sam Guy (10), Ailene Nguyen (12)

Star player: Nguyen

Quote: "Competition is going to be tough so we need to be ready to jump right into the vigorous training in order to be ready for the first meet," Bellegarda said.

Prognosis: This year, the team will move up a division to the De Anza League, so competition will be harder than ever before. However, with the track resurfaced, track and field is certainly a team to watch this season.

—McKenna Galvin



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polaroids



FALCON // JUSTINE HUANG

Winter guard performs "Juxtaposed," impressing parents and incoming freshmen at Electives Night on Jan. 30.



FALCON // DYLAN JEW

Freshmen outline Harsha Mohan to create a poster displaying the effects of drugs and alcohol on the body on Feb. 9.



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

Kathy Nakamatsu enjoys a lunch prepared by the PTSO on Feb. 3 in celebration of Chinese New Year.



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

Junior Maya Nag aims a sock at her opponents during an APUSH simulation of trench warfare in World War I on Feb. 2.

If your house were burning down, what would you save?

Whenever the ever-popular question, "If your house were burning down and you could only save one thing other than your family, what would it be?" appears in a conversation, my peers always seem to be so sure of the correct answer.

Many students immediately answer that they would choose to save an old photo album, while others would take a favorite electronic. Maybe they would run back into the burning house to grab their laptop computer, video game system, iPod or cell phone.

Yet when it comes to cleaning the house and ridding it of unwanted or unnecessary items, the decisions no longer seem so simple. Everywhere you look, things are filled with sentimental value, and it comes time to decide which items are worth hanging on to and which ones are not.



SARAH FINLEY
Fincelli minus celli

While it seems a no-brainer that family pictures from years past should be kept for old times' sake, where is the line drawn when it comes to memorabilia? How important are old birthday presents from younger siblings and favorite toys from childhood? Will elementary school teddy bears and third-grade soccer trophies really be missed?

These questions come up every year after the holidays, when my family tries to do a major Goodwill run with items that are no longer needed or ones that were replaced by new presents from that year.

The process is always much harder than it seems, because items one member of the family is ready to get rid of may still be important to another. Getting everyone to agree that an object can be given away is so close to impossible that by the end of the process, not much

progress has been made.

This issue always raises the question of how we can become so attached to material goods. How can they carry such meaning in our lives? Is it good that we are able to remember the past through each of these items, or bad that we are superficially attached to things with no real meaning?

From shopping for the newest brand name clothes to buying the coolest technology, we as a society are dependent, perhaps even obsessed, with items of these kinds. For some reason, acquiring these things has become a priority in our lives.

We have all become much too materialistic, in my opinion. Things should not hold so much value, for they are mere items which, in the scheme of things,

matter nothing at all.

While memories are undoubtedly important, we should not need items to allow us to reminisce about both the good and the bad of the past years of our lives. It's time that we try to let go of these material attachments.

That begs the question, "what would I choose to save from a burning house?" To me, the answer is quite simple: Instead of risking my life for some

fraying, old picture or fancy, expensive electronic, I would merely get out of the house alive.

In other words, I would make certain that I had a more dependable way of storing memories at my disposal for the years to come. Unlike items, memories can not burn down. Nothing is ever truly forgotten. ♦

How can material goods carry so much meaning in our lives?

topten

WAYS TO STAY SINGLE

- 10 Stop using deodorant. Respect the man-stink.
- 9 Be completely honest when a girl asks you how she looks.
- 8 Ask a girl to make you a sandwich. Or ask her why she left the kitchen.
- 7 Always reply with one word answers. K?
- 6 Quote Star Wars as much as possible. "Do or do not, there is no try"—Master Yoda.
- 5 Wolf-whistle. A lot.
- 4 Insult people in Shakespearean. "Thou bootless decayed wagtail!"
- 3 Become a level 85 Frost Mage in the World of Warcraft.
- 2 Call a girl the wrong name. "Hi Angelina! ... I mean ... Gwenyth."
- 1 Give a girl your razor and say, "You need this more than I do."

>> Nikhil Goel & Rohan Rajeev



buzzworthy >> APUSH class re-enacts World War I with socks

BY McKenna Galvin & Jennifer Jin

Any person walking by history teacher Matt Torrens's class on Feb. 2 or 3 may have encountered a scene that was far from ordinary. But what appeared to be utter chaos was actually a simulation of trench warfare in World War I.

Torrens hosted his first annual "sock war" about 10 years ago when he began teaching summer school.

"I had these students for four hours a day, so I wanted to do something that would make the class interesting and break up the lectures," Torrens said.

In each of his three AP U.S.- History classes, two sides of the class fought against each other using socks as ammunition. Students stacked desks together to serve as trenches in which they could hide.

"It was a fun way to learn about trench warfare," junior Nandita Sampath said.

To reproduce tank warfare, one student from each side got in a "tank" (a desk with a blanket over it) and attempted to break the wall of desks on the other side of the classroom. To simulate the poisonous gases used in the war, students brought old, smelly socks and threw them at the other side. Anyone within a yard of the thrown

"gas bombs" was announced "dead."

"The tank round was really fun," junior Henry Shen said. "The whole room went into total chaos with all the desks falling, people yelling and stinky socks being thrown around."

Students in some classes became especially invested in the game.

"Watching [junior] Jason [Chen] tear down a barricade of chairs like a relentless tornado pummeling everything in its path was one of my favorite parts," junior Michael Shang said. "The look on [junior] Priya [Nookala]'s face as this massive beast charged at her desk was priceless."

Torrens provided each class with two pies from Marie Callender's, which each side had to hide in its trenches away from the other side.

"Our strategy to steal the pie was to play defense until the opponents' sock ammo dwindled," Shang said. "We then charged at them, hoping that they would be overwhelmed by the number of people."

At the end of the simulation, students were allowed to eat the pies, which included apple pie and berry pie.

"The pie was delicious," junior Caroline Chou said. "It was a great way to end the period." ♦



>> THE specialtysection



What will you choose?

STUDENTS DISCUSS HOW THEY CHOOSE BETWEEN HONORS, AP AND REGULAR

BY Edward Dong
& Jonathan Young

A student stands where two roads diverge. He looks down one as far as he can, savoring the potential fruit of hard work after a year in an honors (or AP) course. He gives the other one a look—less stress, more time for extracurriculars. “Honors or regular?” he asks himself.

Students are often torn by this question. While they want the credit for taking the honors (or AP) course, they don’t necessarily have the time or the desire to put time into the class.

Freshmen or sophomores who have taken biology have to choose between Chemistry Honors and regular chemistry.

Sophomore Margaret Maccoun decided at first to take Chemistry Honors; however, due to a lack of time, she chose to switch into the regular course.

“I thought that I would do OK even though there are stories that people don’t do well,” Maccoun said. “I switched out because I didn’t have enough time because of band. It also seemed to be too fast.”

She said that choosing between honors or regular really depends on a student’s schedule.

“[Students] should consider how much time they have on their hands, because it’s not going to take 15 minutes to study everything,” Maccoun said.

Sophomore Gloria Liou, who decided to stay with the honors curriculum, agrees that students must balance their schedules. In her opinion, taking the honors course for honors credit simply is just not worth the trouble.

“It depends on if you want to sleep or not. If you’re in sports and orchestra and music, you have to be very careful when you pick what classes,” Liou said. “But I think if you want to do chemistry, if you’re interested in science, you have to take it.”

Another decision that students tend to struggle with is choosing between Trig/PreCalc Honors and Trig/Math 4.

Sophomore Michael Eschen wanted to take Trig/PreCalc Honors straight from Algebra 2 regular, but missed the required grade by 0.3 percent. From Trig/Math 4, he intends to switch into the class during second semester. Eschen believes the transition will definitely be a challenge.

“[The transition] will probably be difficult,” Eschen said. “Trig/Math 4 doesn’t cover Chapter 7, and it was challenging to learn that by myself based off of [Trig/PreCalc Honors teacher Debra] Troxell’s notes. And you have to deal with Trig/Math 4 at the same time.”

Nevertheless, Eschen believes that he can make the transition because it is his own choice to switch; no one is forcing him to make the change.

>> **HONORS** on pg. S4

A guide to course selection



Guidance department offers advice to students unsure of class choices

BY Katherine Chang
& Ashwini Velchamy

With the dawn of a new year and a new semester, students have started to consider their options for the upcoming school year. These options range from whether to try a completely new experience like Middle College to just choosing the right classes to take. When it comes to class choices, the school’s guidance counselors have plenty of advice.

“It depends on the student, what they’re interested in, what their other time commitments [are], and what [graduation] requirements they still need to take care of,” counselor Alinna Satake said.

Satake said that her recommendations are often based on how well a student is doing in his or her current courses. She cautions students who

struggle in AP courses from taking the same path the following year and points students who “breeze through their courses” to adopt a more rigorous schedule.

“The key is to take as many rigorous classes as possible without compromising the quality of your work,” Satake said.

She compared this strategy to working out and exercising.

“You need enough resistance to grow and develop, but not so

much that you break something,” Satake said.

Satake also advised students about the importance of planning out their courses beforehand, considering it a display of initiative.

“Instead of getting into the year and getting overwhelmed, look now and see what [you] can fix in [the] schedule,” said counselor Frances Saiki.

“Now is a good time to think about it.”

Remembering her own experiences with a four-year plan as a student at Saratoga High, Satake added that she had to “be flexible and recognize where [her] original plan was not going to be the best idea.”

Satake said that students should start thinking about their course options now as course offerings are available.

As was done last year, the procedure of signing up for classes starts with a grade meeting with guidance counselors in the McAfee Center. There, the “scope and sequences” are discussed, Satake said.

Afterwards, students go on their Aeries accounts to sign up for desired courses.

In late February and early March, guidance counselors will visit each of the non-senior English classes to verify transcripts grades, as well as to collect the necessary paperwork, and wrap up the class registration process. ♦

The key is to take as many rigorous classes as possible without compromising the quality of your work.

>> Counselor Alinna Satake

Science classes cater to different skill sets

BY Samuel Liu

A quick glance at the 2011 AP Score Summary for the AP Environmental Science test reveals an interesting statistic. Of 68 Saratoga High students who took the exam, only six received a full score of 5.

Eighty-eight percent of students scored 4s and 5s on the AP Biology test, 83 percent for AP Chemistry, 80 percent for AP Physics, and 53 percent for AP Environmental Science (APES).

Although APES is sometimes regarded as the easiest of the school’s four AP science classes, its corresponding AP test is reportedly harder.

“What I have heard is that APES is the hardest AP test,” APES teacher Kris-

ten Thomson said, “primarily because its range is so broad. It covers biology, earth science, chemistry, physics, economy, sociology, demography and soil.”

Choosing classes based on a friend’s assessment of difficulty, according to Thomson, is faulty because the difficulty of a class depends on the student’s ability.

“Every class is what you make it,” Thomson said. “In my experience, people who apply the material to their lives learn more and generally do better. People looking for an easy AP, I don’t really think you can find an easy AP.”

Albert Gu, a 2011 alumnus who took AP Biology, AP Chemistry and AP Physics, compared AP sciences to freshmen and sophomore science courses.

Gu said that high school freshman biology and sophomore chemistry honors are “pretty representative” of the AP Biology and AP Chemistry classes.

“Obviously it depends a lot on the person,” Gu said. “Chem Honors is pretty close in difficulty to AP Chem, while AP Bio is much harder than freshman biology. AP Physics is pretty similar to math.”

Gu said AP Physics was the easiest for him because it is so mathematical.

“There is not much memorization because if you understand the concepts and know calculus, you can derive almost everything yourself,” he said.

AP Physics teacher Kirk Davis said

>> **SCIENCE** on pg. S4



The U.S. History decision: AP vs. Regular

BY GraceMa

When springtime comes, current sophomores will be faced with the dilemma of choosing which U.S. History class to take. Although the extra grade point given to students taking AP U.S. History (APUSH) may seem tempting, APUSH requires students to be very proactive and organized, according to APUSH teacher Kim Anzalone.

The main difference between regular U.S. History and APUSH is the amount of curriculum covered. APUSH students have to study from the colonial period to the 20th century before the AP test in May. In contrast, regular U.S. History's curriculum does not cover the colonial period, so students have less material to cover over a longer amount of time.

"The main motivation for teaching the colonial period to the APUSH students

is because the students would miss out on more than half of the [questions on the] AP exams if we didn't start in the colonial period," Anzalone said.

Starting from this year, both regular and AP U.S. History classes' grades are weighted. The three categories are classwork and homework, assessments and participation.

APUSH teacher Margarita Morelle says that grades are now weighted so that the teachers can easily gauge where the students are in the class.

"All of us AP teachers sat down and talked about how we can make the course better and more relevant for the students," Morelle said. "This helped us [see] where to really help and support them and weighted grades is the best way to do that."

All juniors must learn a new style of writing called a scholarly essay. Scholar-

ly writing is based on proving a certain statement with evidence and is often a foreign style to students when they first enter the class.

"[Scholarly essays] are emphasized more in APUSH. There is some writing in regular but not at the level or depth that you see in [the AP classes]," Anzalone said.

According to Anzalone, organized students are often the most successful in her class.

"I do not care how smart [the students] are. If they can manage their time and keep themselves organized and on track, then they will be successful in this class," she said. "[If] the average student makes sure they get everything done, they will pass this class."

Although some students would be attracted to take the class for the extra grade point, senior Sofia Chang was not

one of them and instead opted to take regular U.S. History.

"Even though everyone I knew was taking APUSH, I decided that it wasn't really something that I wanted to invest all my energy into," Chang said. "I like it better when I can work harder on a few classes and not take 5 different AP's and struggle along and not learning anything."

Despite the differences in U.S. History curriculum, Anzalone claims that the whole history department has the same goal—to teach students how to "think."

"It sounds obvious, but so many people just blurt things out; they'll say something, it happens, and they never even ask the why or the how," Anzalone said. "That's what all our assignments and lectures are geared towards: why something happens and what effect it has." ♦

AP Statistics offers practical application of mathematics

BY AshwiniVelchamy

What happens when students want to explore a more practical side of math?

One common route taken by seniors and juniors is AP Statistics, a math class that deals with designing and conducting experimental studies, as well as analyzing data. This class is taught by teachers Jennifer Mantle and Seema Patel.

"All kinds of kids take AP Statistics," Mantle said. "[Students] from Trig/Math 4 all the way through Calculus BC."

Junior Eugene Che has found the class to be challenging to some extent, but not to an extreme.

"Having a bunch of seniors in the class might seem intimidating, but it really isn't," Che said.

Students are motivated to take AP Statistics for several reasons.

"Some [take AP Statistics] because they have no other course to take and some because they want to enter a field of study in college where statistics is needed, as opposed to calculus," Mantle said.

Senior Michael Chang took AP Sta-

tistics because he could not fit multivariable calculus, which would have had to be taken at a community college, into his schedule.

On the other hand, senior Kristal Kung joined AP Statistics without taking calculus. Kung advises



Mantle

students who enjoyed the math they were used to in algebra and precalculus to take calculus and stated that AP Statistics is a "more applied math that requires a lot more common sense."

Looking at the two AP math courses, AP Statistics and AP Calculus, Mantle believes that choosing the right course depends on what field the student wants to pursue in the future.

She said that those desiring to earn a degree in mathematics, physics or chemistry are generally expected to take calculus, while those pursuing degrees such as English, history or a foreign language, usually need statistics more.

"To students who cannot decide between the two," Mantle said, "students should choose a course that sets them up for college math requirements." ♦

Calculus success requires strong math background

BY JonathanYoung

The decision between Calculus AB and BC can be like night and day for upperclassmen. BC is regarded—and rightly so—as the more rigorous class.

But little attention is given to the finer distinctions between the AB and BC.

Senior Jonathan Junqua, who took Calculus BC as a junior, said, "I think a self-motivated and patient student would be most suited [for BC] because when a

problem doesn't work out the first time, you have to re-try it."

Beyond a student's willingness to work hard, other factors must be considered when choosing between AB and BC. Senior Michael Zuccarino said students who want to learn calculus but are heavily involved in other activities should take AB instead of BC.

"Calculus BC is really Calculus ABC, you have to do topics A before you do topics B and C, so there's an extra chunk of topics that we have to cover," Calculus BC teacher Audrey Warmuth said.

In calculus BC, students learn about sequences and series as well as polar coordinates, while AB skips these subjects

completely.

Calculus AB tends to be a slower-paced class. "We have actually a lot of freedom in AB because we don't cover as much as BC, so we have the luxury of being able to take our time," Calculus AB teacher Michele Drouin said.

Drouin and Warmuth stress that a strong math background is essential for success. Algebra, in particular, is required for success in calculus.

"Students often struggle in calculus not because of calculus concepts, but because their algebra isn't quite up to snuff," Warmuth said.

Drouin said along with strong algebra skills, a student has to have good critical thinking skills and enjoy problem solving to succeed. ♦

THIS OR THAT
Math

>> **thebigidea**

Guide to Calculus AB/BC

Prerequisite: Trigonometry/PreCalculus Honors

Scheduling suggestions: Too many AP's can make handling Calculus homework difficult

Course topics: Calculus BC covers all of the AB material plus polynomial approximations and series

toptwelve

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>> Katherine Chang and Parul Singh

A new type of Language

AP LANG DELVES INTO PHILOSOPHY TO EXAMINE, DISCUSS 'BIG QUESTIONS'

BY Sabrina Cismas

The typical stereotype for English classes brands them as such: students reading books centered on the course's theme and writing essays or taking tests based on the books. Once students reach their senior year, however, they have the opportunity to break away from that pattern and take AP English Language and Composition (Lang), a course that approaches material in a different style than the average literary analysis class.

"AP Language is a nonfiction-driven course, which primarily focuses on philosophy as the central type of nonfiction," AP Lang teacher Jason Friend said. While most English classes are heavily based on novels and plays, AP Lang delves into the nature of reality.

"Students have to think through their assumptions in deeper ways than before," Friend said, regarding the philosophical readings that draw examples from real life and offer ample basis for introspection.

Senior Alexander Chiang decided to switch from AP Literature to AP Lang early first semester specifically for the philosophy emphasis.

"My favorite unit [so far] was the personal freedom and identity unit,"

Chiang said. "It has a direct effect on how you live every day life." This unit explores questions regarding the existence of free will and what factors, if any, can be used to define what it means to be a person.

"We examine big philosophical questions like how much control we have over our lives and how much we can be sure of what is the truth," Friend said, regarding the unit.

Along with a regular in-class essays, rhetorical analysis discussions and Socratic seminars, students in AP Lang study philosophers ranging from ancient Greece to modern times, including Plato, Freud, Rorty and Russell.

Friend suggests that the students who should consider taking AP Lang are those who are interested in thoughtfully discussing philosophical questions and big ethical decisions.

"AP Lang is incredibly difficult because of the philosophical material and I think that people who take the course simply because they think they're going to get an easy ride are going to find themselves in for quite a surprise," Friend said. ♦

We examine big philosophical questions like how much control we have over our lives.

>> Teacher Jason Friend

THIS OR THAT English

AP Lit focuses on poetry, plays, novels, short stories

BY Vivian LeTran

AP Literature (Lit) follows previous English classes' structure as students read novels, short stories, poems and plays, but the course is not just a continuation of the first three years of high school. The class delves further in-depth and students read at a faster pace.

AP Lit is a course that covers a wide breadth of literature, from Greek tragedies to Shakespearean dramas to Hispanic Poetry.

"I like how we read the [literature] chronologically," senior Katya Simpson said. "It's interesting to see the transitions between old, middle and so on."

While each night's homework is different, students can expect to read books, such as the "Odyssey," "King Lear" or "Heart of Darkness," in one or two weeks. Lit is definitely a step up from English 11 Honors, but AP Lit teacher Catherine Head feels that the class is still accessible for all students, for both students who took English 11 Honors and English 11.

"The real key to taking AP Lit is whether or not you like reading literature because there definitely is a lot of reading," Head said. "The student must like reading literature and talking about literature with other people."

Simpson enjoys the more concrete and critical view of literature that AP

Lit includes in discussions.

"In addition to discussing themes, we have very in depth discussions about the structure and the style of writing," Simpson said. "[It is] a more intense view of literature, almost like a scientific approach to literature."

While a noticeable difference from previous English classes is the increase in analyzing poetry, the key difference lies in the material students will cover.

"In AP Lit, you're reading and writing about the literature and in the discussions, you're discussing the ideas [found in] the literature," Head said. "So we discuss the philosophy of the literature, but we are not reading philosophy, like in AP Lang."

While students do write a lot of essays, including the personal essay, throughout the year, Head's essay system allows for student experimentation and improvement without fear of damaging their grades. Generally, students will write an in-class essay that follows the AP style prompts. Students will peer and self-evaluate the essay and after three to five essays, students then choose and turn in the essay they feel has the most potential to get the best grade.

In the end, the most important factor in choosing between AP Lang and AP Lit is preference for which subject.

"When choosing an AP English class, the choice depends on the fact that you have to like the work that you are going to do," Head said. ♦

>> togatalks

How did you fulfill the applied arts requirement?

I took AP Comp Sci because it seemed like an interesting class to take and I come from a family of programmers."



junior Shabab Siddiq

[Journalism] is a lot more helpful than [other classes], because you take it and after that you can do a bigger production."



sophomore Vanessa Wang

I took child psych because you get to go off campus a lot and it's mostly hands on stuff."



senior Raphael Kohler

MAP: the right choice for motivated students

BY Anushree Dugar

The decision to join the Media Arts Program (MAP) is tough for students to make. The prospect of integrating technology and new software in classes attracts many students to the program, but scheduling conflicts often cause students to avoid MAP altogether.

Senior Jocelyn Takahashi faced a few of these problems herself when she enrolled in the MAP program her sophomore year. According to Takahashi, she temporarily dropped out of the MAP program for a week and a half at the beginning of the year due to scheduling conflicts.

Takahashi was persuaded by conversations about how MAP students developed group work skills and are able to understand whole group dynamics. As a result, she decided to rejoin the program.

"My mother was really emphasizing how much it will help me in the workforce and later in life when I have to work with other people," Takahashi said.

After being part of MAP for three years, Takahashi believes that MAP has in fact helped her work in a group more effectively.

"It really does make a difference when you know how to work in a group," Takahashi said. "MAP teaches you how to work differences out and somehow create a product that you are proud to present."

Students generally join the program sophomore year and take a MAP Eng-

lish, World History and media class. The integration of these different classes creates a close-knit community since the same students are in every class.

Besides improving one's interpersonal skills, students generally learn the same materials in MAP classes as regular English and History classes. Because the curriculum taught in English MAP and History MAP are interlaced, however, many students feel that they are able to grasp a better understanding of units in MAP than they would in a regular class.

According to Takahashi reading "All Quiet on the Western Front," in her English MAP class, learning about World War I in her History MAP class and doing multiple projects relating to both the book and historical topics in her MAP elective class made understanding and remembering the unit easier.

"It helped a lot in so many different ways having the classes all combined together and all interconnected," Takahashi said. "It really made me feel more engaged in what we were learning."

Students in MAP also have the opportunity to learn programs such as Adobe Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, Flash and Final Cut Express.

According to senior Meghana Rao, it was nice to be introduced to such software that she would have never heard about had she not taken MAP.

Despite the many opportunities and experiences MAP provides, many students are not inclined to take MAP because of the required MAP elective class.



FALCON // DYLAN JEW

Juniors Chelsea Miller and Henry Wei utilize their MAP skills in Multimedia Journalism.

Freshman Preethi Ravi for one, who is currently in MAP English 9 and enjoys the class very much, does not plan on continuing the program next year thanks to such schedule conflicts.

"I don't really have the elective room to take the Media Arts class," Ravi said.

However, according to Takahashi, the benefits of MAP outweigh any pos-

sible scheduling troubles.

"I've been really happy with class schedules and so maybe I could have had a different schedule, but I really like having MAP people in my classes," Takahashi said. "It makes me feel really comfortable and I feel like I can participate more. It's literally like we are a family." ♦

SCIENCE >> Teachers, former students advise

the class includes a lot of concepts, problems with critical thinking and very little rote memorization. The difficulty often lies in concepts that are hard to grasp.

"When you walk in a circle, you feel [a force] pulling you outwards," Davis said. "But that's not true. There are a lot of concepts in physics that are counter-intuitive, and people can have trouble with that. The advantage of learning physics, however, is that concepts can often be observed through common activities.

"People experience the laws of physics every day. You don't experience [biology] concepts like the Krebs cycle or ADP conversion," Davis said.

AP Biology is 60 percent concepts and 40 percent critical thinking, according to AP Biology teacher Bob Kucer.

"[The student most suited for the class is] a student who enjoys reading and who retains information quicker than the 'average' student," Kucer said. "One who is resilient, one who has excellent time management skills and one who has a sincere interest in learning the details of biological processes [will do well]."

According to senior Myron Zhang, who has taken AP Chemistry and AP Biology and is currently enrolled in AP Physics as well as AP Environmental Science, AP Biology is about learning and retaining a large amount of material while AP Chemistry requires more critical thinking.

AP Chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu warns of the class's difficulty as

it requires prerequisite understanding of chemistry from regular chemistry or honors chemistry.

"People coming from regular chemistry have to work really hard," she said. "I have heard juniors tell sophomores that [AP Chemistry] is easy so sophomores have to suffer as much as they did."

Kucer has general advice for students choosing AP sciences.

"If you think you will go into the sciences, you should take a physics course," he said. "Regular physics is easy compared to Chem Honors. And if you plan on doing engineering, then I think AP Physics would be the better choice."

However, he believes all AP science classes, except for APES, should be taken with a first-year introductory class.

"I think there are too many students who take AP Physics but really need the regular course first," he said.

The non-AP Sciences

"At the beginning of the year I ask students why they joined [my course]," Anatomy and Physiology teacher Michael McQuade said. "A lot of people say 'I want to be a doctor'; others want to be paramedics."

Anatomy and Physiology is a non-honors class that focuses on the human body and its various systems. The class is heavy on vocabulary, and classwork and homework are assigned a 45 percent value.

The highlight of the class, McQuade said, is the dissection of a cat near the end of the year.

>> falconfigures

60

Percentage of AP Biology focusing on concepts

45

Percentage weight of homework/classwork in Anatomy and Physiology

2

Number of low-stress upperclassmen science classes

53

Percentage of AP Environmental Science students scoring 4s and 5s

intent by allowing students who are overwhelmed by other classes to turn in assignments or take tests on a later day and still receive full credit if they ask for prior permission. She also curves grades to help achieve a "B" average.

"Honestly, I have no idea whether the current administration knows that this was the original intent, but it is still what I do," she said.

As for the content, Astronomy covers the sky as viewed from earth, the scale of the cosmos, the moon, the history of astronomy, telescopes, the solar system, the sun, stars and galaxies and a unit on current astronomy where students read several current articles and discuss the latest happenings.

Field trips include a star party where the local astronomical society brings their telescopes to Saratoga High at night and a trip to the De Anza Planetarium to watch a show on black holes and learn about the night sky.

Marine Biology covers oceanography, plate tectonics, waves, currents, tides, marine ecosystems and marine animals. Students do many labs, many of which are dissections of animals such as sharks.

Students have a field trip where they go kayaking in the morning and then go to the Monterey Bay Aquarium in the afternoon.

In the end, Nakamatsu encourages students to follow their hearts when deciding their schedules.

"Take what interests you," she said, "not what you think you should do." ♦

Other science electives include Astronomy and Marine Biology, both taught by Jill McCrystal.

These two courses were originally designed to be low stress classes in order to counter the number of high stress classes, she said.

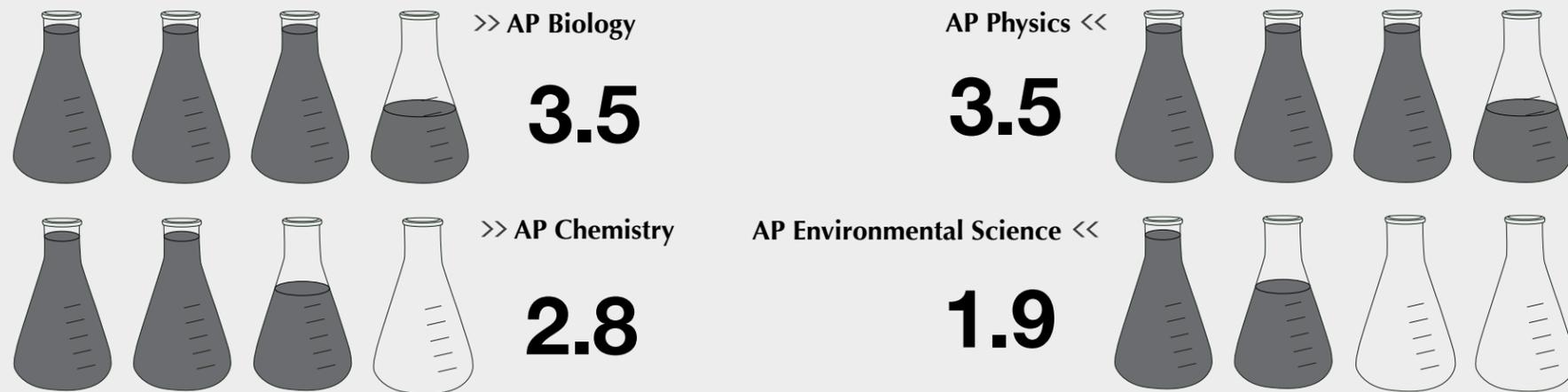
According to McCrystal, former principal Kevin Skelly wanted a science class where kids could get quality and rigorous material but not be buried by it.

"He wanted me to pretty much guarantee a 'B' average, while still creating a class that offered engaging and high level material," McCrystal said.

McCrystal has kept to this original

Students rate relative difficulty of AP Science courses

The Falcon conducted a survey of 32 students who rated each AP science class they have taken on a scale from 1 (easy) to 4 (difficult).



HONORS >> Students consider whether honors is worth it

"You have to want to do it more, whereas in regular classes [you're] just doing it because you have to do it," Eschen said.

Junior Candice Suh completed this transition last year.

"I started off the semester with Trig/PreCalc Honors but went back down because I had a rough start," Suh said. "When I went down to Trig/Math 4, I really enjoyed the class, but it wasn't challenging for me at all. I ended up raising my grade to an A, so I went back to Trig/PreCalc Honors."

Suh learned an extra chapter and completed homework assignments over holiday break, but she found the work worthwhile.

"I definitely made the right decision. The class was still a little tough, but I got more out of the honors course than the regular course," Suh said. "I don't think we should worry so much about the difficulty but instead take the challenge and try our best."

A regular Trig/PreCalc class will be offered beginning next year in addition to the two existing options.

According to Troxell, the regular Trig/PreCalc course and the honors equivalent will use the same textbook. However, the honors course will explore

theoretical aspects in more depth.

"Trig/Math 4 was always intended for students in their senior year who wanted to be responsible and complete a fourth year of math in high school but were probably not going to major in a field that required much math," Troxell said. "The new Trig/PreCalc course will be appropriate for students who do well in Algebra 2 and would like to keep the door open to go to calculus, whether taken in high school or in college."

In addition, Troxell warns that the honors course will become more difficult.

"Students in the honors course should be those who have a natural talent or passion for math and will major in a math-related field in college," Troxell said. "The level of difficulty will be a bit more challenging than the course has been in the past."

For current sophomores, another tough decision is their English selection.

Junior Andy Wong left his English 11 Honors class for the regular equivalent after considering his odds of succeeding in the honors course.

"English [is not] my best subject. It's safer to take a regular class that you can get a better grade in than trying to risk yourself trying in order to get a really

good grade in honors," Wong said.

Wong also took his other courses into consideration.

"If you're struggling in honors, you might have trouble in other classes," Wong said. "It really depends on how well you do with that subject."

Junior Todd Nguyen began the year in regular English 11 because he feared he would overload himself. However, he decided to move into the honors course when he received his schedule and discovered he had English on days with relatively easy courses.

"I decided to challenge myself a little, and I asked for advice from some seniors who took English 11 Honors last year," Nguyen said. "They said that English

11 Honors isn't that much to handle if I don't have a lot of other stuff on the same day."

Nguyen does not regret his decision.

"I think it was a pretty good decision. Even though I have more work to do, English has been helpful for me this year," Nguyen said. "I think I've improved a lot."

Nguyen and Wong agree that students must be prepared for more work and if they choose to take honors.

"If you're doing it just to get the honors credit and not really trying, you might have a hard time trying to get a decent grade. But if you know you can do well in honors, then take honors," Wong said. ♦

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