

IN-DEPTH

# SARATOGA'S SECRETS

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## Violinist shares experience

by *Kyumin Shim and Ashley Tang*

Violin virtuoso Midori has performed at concert halls across the globe, from Dublin to Budapest to Tokyo. At age 14, she recorded her first album and in 2007, was designated the United Nations Messenger of Peace. Midori has also founded several organizations that provide musical education to children who might otherwise not have a chance to play an instrument.

On Feb. 2, Saratoga musicians had the chance to listen to Midori perform the Bach Sonata and then take advice from Midori herself. During third period, she encouraged students to fully appreciate music with their whole hearts and to listen more carefully to each other. She coached the group through two pieces, Quartet

No. 8 by Shostakovich and Quartet in D by Borodin.

"There are many different ways to listen on many different levels," Midori said. "You need to listen to the texture of the music and the orchestra as a whole. Ask yourself, 'How are other parts contributing to your part in the orchestra?'"

Midori, 38, is now on the faculty at USC's Thornton School of Music as well as a professional violinist. She applied her teaching skills as she taught one of the school orchestras, Saratoga Strings. While music director Michael Boitz conducted the orchestra, Midori listened and gave tips to the students on how to improve their playing.

Said junior violist Mel Hsiang, "I liked how she talked about the emotional aspect of playing, rather than

see MIDORI, p. 7



Jordan Waite

World renowned violinist Midori leads a workshop with the SHS orchestra on Feb. 2.

## Class size increases worry teachers

by *Rebecca Nguyen and Anna Shen*

As the Los Gatos- Saratoga Union High School District (LGSUHS) continues to find ways to alleviate the worst budget crisis in its history, many teachers are beginning to worry about an increase in class sizes or the possibility of getting pink slipped.

"Given the savings from the teachers, cuts from administrators and the plentiful reserves, we find that the deficit can be cut with minimal losses to our classrooms," said District Teachers Association President Kevin Rogers and SHS teachers Matt Torrens and Kerry Mohnike in a letter to the school board. "Failure to [stray away from classrooms] risks dismantling the very excellence that enriches the communities of Los Gatos, Monte Sereno and Saratoga."

Teachers were given the chance to voice their opinions and concerns at a board meeting that took place at the Los Gatos High School Library on Feb. 9. Around 60-70 teachers from both Los Gatos and Saratoga High Schools attended the meeting to hear the school board and their fellow peers speak out.

English teacher Jason Friend was the first teacher who spoke in front of the school board. Friend, the department head for English, argued against increasing class

sizes, specifically English, in fear of some students "slipping through the cracks." Many teachers, as well as students, seemed to agree with Friend; they feel that an increase in class sizes will significantly limit students' education and one-on-one conversations between students and teachers.

"I think an increase in class sizes will decrease the amount of attention we get from teachers," said junior Daryl Chang. "At Saratoga, so far it's been really good in that teachers can give you individualized attention."

The school board will be making cuts among other things in technological improvements, school improvement, guidance, adult education, summer courses and NOVA, the district's alternative school. However, even after reductions, the district will still have to face a \$1.33 million deficit for 2010-11. The district's

initial plan was to decrease by 32 sections and let go some staff members; those at the bottom of the seniority list will likely be the first to lose their jobs.

In order to try to save about eight sections, the school board has tentatively decided to take out \$600,000 from a \$4 million strategic reserve and replace the money in the future. This was \$200,000 more than the members of the board had originally agreed upon.

This week, townhall meetings were held at the Los Gatos High Library on Feb. 23 and the Saratoga High Library on Feb. 25. ♦

**Around 60-70 teachers from both Los Gatos and Saratoga High Schools attended the meeting.**

## Cafeteria offers new choices

WEEKLY THEMED 'CART CREATIONS' BEGIN

by *Lillian Chen and Saniha Shankar*

Returning from February break, students were surprised by new lunch offerings called "cart creations." Starting this past Monday, themed cuisine carts for each week replaced the old, traditional lunch lines, with the results that a newer, more personalized lunch menu is now being offered.

According to Rick Kessler, the food consultant to the district, the first phase was to convert the mobile cart into a themed cuisine cart for each week. The themed food is freshly prepared and then plated to the student's request. For example, the first week was Italian theme with lasagna; pasta with pesto, alfredo or marinara sauce; spaghetti with meatballs; and rotini with chicken being offered. The beverage, snack and side items were the same.

The change was first proposed by

the district to enhance the school's lunch menus and improve it. The cost of the new menu is the same as the old, said Kessler.

The goal of this new lunch menu is to bring a little change and enhance the food service program.

"The cafeterias do an excellent job with the food service programs

and there are marketing tools and programs that can enhance the existing program," said Kessler. "We will work collaboratively to implement new menu ideas and programs. It is a team effort."

A team of local consultants and its regional chef have been asked to design the preliminary menu.

Both Los Gatos and Saratoga High have adopted this new menu.

"The food was really good, and it was nice to have variety," said senior Divya Singh. "I think a lot more upperclassmen will stay on campus if the cafeteria food is better." ♦

### THE BIG IDEA

#### School lunches

**CART CREATIONS:** Lunch carts now offer themed, made-to-order food

**STUDENT INPUT:** Team of local consultants will be meeting with ASB for ideas and feedback

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Improved, more student-friendly choices

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NEWS  
BRIEFS

## Staff members taking maternity leave

Guidance counselor Alinna Satake and her husband Hideyo welcomed a second child to their family. The baby girl was born on Feb. 10.

Satake will not be returning for the remainder of the 2009-2010 school year but has an experienced replacement filling in for her while she is gone, Sandra Augenstine, who previously served as a counselor at SHS before retiring.

"She's been really great about covering for me and making sure everyone is well taken care of," said Satake.

Biology and AP Environmental Science teacher and swim coach Kristen Thomson is also expecting a baby girl.

"The due date is April 24," said Thomson. "Last time, I was working up to the day I had my baby, so as long as I'm healthy, I'm planning on staying here until the 23rd."

Thomson does not know who her substitute will be but she would like to be able to work well with the person.

"It's a lot harder to prepare for this, especially the last month of school," said Thomson. "I'm trying to make it as smooth as a transition as possible for my students."

Like Satake, once Thomson leaves, she will not be returning for the remainder of the school year.

"I'm still debating whether to take off the first month of next year, but it hasn't been decided yet," said Thomson.

—by Amanda Yi

## Stoffers places in College Jeopardy

"These two men first meet in 1 Samuel 16 when one becomes aware of the musical talent of the other," said Alex Trebek, the host of Jeopardy.

After two weeks of competing on College Jeopardy, '08 alumnus Ryan Stoffers reached Final Jeopardy in the topic of Biblical Kings during the second and final game of the two-part College Finals which aired on Feb. 12, coming in second place. The night before, he had placed second, \$5,200 short of first, so he needed to make up the difference.

Although Stoffers answered correctly—"Who is King Saul and King David?"—and Nick Yozamp of Washington University in St. Louis who was in first place answered incorrectly, Stoffers's wager was only \$1,000. This put him in second place—ahead of Surya Sabhapathy from University of Michigan but behind Yozamp, who took home \$100,000.

Despite not becoming the champion and claiming the \$100,000 prize, Stoffers still won \$50,000 for placing second out of the 15 contestants. He plans to use the money to study abroad in Thailand next fall and help pay for graduate school.

"I remember going into it knowing that the minimum prize was \$5,000 and thinking how awesome it would be to get that much and I got 10 times that amount!" he said.

In the end, Stoffers was satisfied with his earnings and thankful for all his supporters, including the Facebook group with over 700 members. He said he was also inspired by games such as Trivia with history teacher Jerry Sheehy and Super Quiz with and chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu while at Saratoga High School.

"I want to say thanks to everyone who watched and cheered me on. And I recommend to everyone that they try out for the show if they have any interest; it's an unforgettable experience," he said.

—by Brandon Yang

## Mock trial team concludes its season

As the courtroom bailiff swore in the witnesses one by one, each team member was put on the spot to see if their three months of hard work would pay off. On Feb. 2, 4, 9 and 11, the Saratoga Mock Trial team competed in the county competition held at the Santa Clara Courthouse.

After the Prosecution tied against Palo Alto on Feb. 4, the tie breaker went to Palo Alto as two of the three judges voted for the Palo Alto team; the first tie in almost 30 years of Saratoga mock trial. Luckily, the defense team had secured a close win over Leland High School on Feb. 2, winning by a slight margin of two points.

The next week brought a heartbreaking loss to Mountain View for the Prosecution but Defense closed the season with a strong 13-point win over Lincoln on Feb. 11. The team's 2-1-1 record did not advance them to the next round.

This year the team welcomed seven new members to the team, most of whom were cast as witnesses. Junior Synthia Ling and senior Girish Swaminath took on the pre-trial roles—often said to be the hardest, because it involves giving a speech to and answering the questions of an actual judge.

"It was a lot of work in the beginning but, by the end, it was a lot of fun," said Ling. "I learned so much and I definitely am looking forward to next year."

—by Saniha Shankar



Jordan Waite

Junior Vania Chang and sophomore Jocelyn Takahashi learn how to swing dance with their partners on Jan. 31 in the Small Gym. The event was funded by the PTSO in an effort to teach students new ways to dance.

## Students Bop to the Top

Students learn formal ways to dance from professional teachers

by Olivia Chock  
and Pia Mishra

When sophomore Shivani Chadha showed up at the Small Gym on Jan. 31, she didn't know what to expect from two professional dancers who had been hired to teach them to dance "properly." After instruction and practice, she left with a better knowledge of dances like Merengue and foxy.

Besides these two dances, the instructor, Raul De la Torre, and his partner Stephanie McShurley from Cheyrl Burk dance studio in San Francisco taught dance styles salsa and swing dance on another ballroom dancing event in the Small Gym on Jan. 24.

The idea to teach students formal dancing started at a PTSO

meeting when a parent said students simply don't know how to do formal dancing and need to be taught. Assistant principal Karen Hyde asked PTSO for a grant and they gladly sponsored an event to introduce different styles of dancing to students.

De la Torre taught students step by step moves and had them repeat them.

"[The dance] was pretty straight forward and I thought it was really fun."

—sophomore Vineet Jain

"[The dance] was pretty straight forward and I thought it was really fun. It was an easy pace to follow and I pretty much got it on my first time," said sophomore Vineet Jain. "I would go to another session."

After students learned a couple of steps, the instructors asked them to rotate partners so they could get a chance to dance with different people. This allowed

students to make new friends.

"I was expecting something really exciting like salsa or tango but the steps were really easy and repeating them over and over again was kind of mundane," said junior Grace Kim.

The two-hour session was popular among students because many teachers offered extra credit for attending the event.

Seventy students attended the first session on Jan. 24 while 140 went on Jan. 31. On Jan. 24, the Small Gym was used. Since the students were too cramped on Jan. 31, the session was moved to the Large Gym, which was filled with students eager to learn a new dancing method.

After the session was over, the instructors encouraged students to take the dancing style they learned into school dances.

"I would probably dance like that [at dances]. It's so much fun and it's a lot different from how everyone usually dances," said Chadha. ♦

## COMMISSION CREATES SPIRIT THROUGH MULTIPLE EVENTS

by Apeksha Sharma

In the week leading up to February break, students and staff entering the office found themselves faced with a puzzle while looking at a big display with baby pictures. They asked themselves questions like, "Is that picture of Mrs. Ritchie or Ms. Brown?" This guessing game was inspired from the new competition started by the spirit commission in which students tried to match each staff baby picture to their corresponding name.

This contest is in much the same vein as previous holiday-themed events and games, such as Holiday Hunt where students were instructed to find the missing penguins hidden around school. The winner of the competition received a free ticket for the Sadies for Haiti dance.

"This was a great way to get students involved with teachers in a new and fun way," said junior spirit commissioner Shir Nehama.

The commission is also look-

ing to increase school spirit with the various points and prizes awarded to individuals with the most spirit.

"To increase our school spirit, we introduced the class point competition," said Nehama. "The grade with the most points will be honored with the 'Most Spirited' title and a prize."

This awarding of class points has motivated many students to take part in the spirit days.

"Students want to make sure their class is on top because they want to show their pride," said Nehama. "So far the sophomores are in the lead in the class points competition."

Additional prizes for winning events include things that many

students will be able to use here at school.

"We are also planning on giving away dance tickets and more class points for our upcoming events," said Nehama.

When it comes to getting involved in these various events, many students wonder what the point is in dressing up just for a day. However, Nehama

finds that there is more to spirit besides looking ridiculous for a day.

"School Spirit is extremely important. It induces a sort of unity and pride between students," said Nehama. "Spirit also provides a way

for students to get their minds off the academic curriculum and have fun with dress up days and school activities." ♦

## SPIRIT POINTS

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Juniors 37

Seniors 39

Includes Nerd Day, holiday hunt and baby pictures.

# New MAP electives further program's growth

by Lillian Chen  
and Jenny Zhang

First introduced to last year's sophomore class, the Media Arts Program, or MAP, has grown to include three engaging new electives for second-year Media Arts students: advanced animation and two video production classes: filmmaking and multimedia journalism.

In the second year of this program, students are able to choose one or more of these classes that are more specific to their area of interest and receive a more advanced level of training. The 52 juniors in this level of the MAP program share three common classes: English, history and their chosen media elective.

With a focus on learning more advanced skills, the advanced animation class is ideal for those who enjoy drawing and art, want to build their portfolios and gain proficiency in using animation and advanced technology.

To ensure that students are learning what they need to know in order to be successful, funding has even been provided for staff consultant and animation and design professional Cathy Leather, who has 30 years of experience in the field and is helping to develop the curriculum by providing MAP teachers with information on what skills industry requires today.

"Classes are doing really well for first year classes," said animation teacher Tony Palma. "I can't wait until next year because we are learning from our mistakes."

A student in advanced animation, junior Alex Chan, agrees that there has been progress.

"There's a lot of improvement," said Chan. "Animation is definitely the most organized MAP class."

Although Chan says that they are not learning real animation yet, they are building a strong foundation by honing their drawing skills with the flash program, plotting final products and drawing frames of each scene using 6x8 digital drawing pads. The more successful students are ones with an art background.

"Classes started out well," said Palma. "There has been good work from students, but there's always room for improvement."

Indeed, there are obstacles that

**"Filmmaking gives experience. It shows the students' leadership, creativity, and collaboration skills."**

—Teacher Chris Mahle

the class faces, like the difference in students' skill levels and hence needed differences in instruction.

"It's hard to challenge more advanced students and teach newer technology students at the same time," said Palma.

On the other hand, the filmmaking class gives students the opportunity to form production teams, come up with concepts, write, cast and edit in the lab in room 201, which has new iMacs with software that include Photoshop and the advanced editing program Final Cut Express. Students work on movies while focusing on film techniques, styles and production, with an emphasis on the importance of planning and coordinating with others.

"Filmmaking gives experience. It shows the students' leadership, creativity and collaboration skills," said film-



Amanda Yi

Sophomore Meghana Rao points to the video that she is editing in the MAP room.

making teacher Chris Mahle.

Senior Lauren Henderson, who is not a part of the MAP program but wanted to take a fun elective, finds that she is able to not just edit but also take part in screenwriting, developing stories, directing and reaching out to others for interviews.

"It's a really fun class. It's a lot of work—more work than I expected—but it's fun work," said Henderson.

The class is affected heavily by deadlines of the many MAP projects, which are only assigned to MAP students. As a result, students often are overloaded with projects and do not have as much time as they would like.

"You'll finish a movie and you'll be like, 'Wow, that could be so much better if we had more time,'" said Henderson.

To resolve this issue, MAP teachers are planning on scaling back its requirements so that students will have fewer projects and more time to work on each one. The MAP teachers are exploring options in incorporating media arts to already existing classes, such as government. Students next year can also choose to take a MAP elective that they have not yet taken and those in multimedia journalism can also continue with that elective. All media arts electives, however, will be taking place next year in the new \$2.5 million multimedia center, a building constructed solely for the purposes of media arts and using technology to record and broadcast student talents and abilities. With the future so full of opportunities, teachers and students are eager to continue the program's success. ♦

## Students begin to prepare for History Day competition

by Christine Bancroft  
and Kim Tsai

Saturday morning rolls around and a group of students wearily trudges up the steps to the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. library in San Jose. Juniors Grace Kim, Synthia Ling and Kevin Mu are here to complete research on the founder of Planned Parenthood, Margaret Sanger. They are working on a short document about her life in time for History Day in June.

The school competition portion of the nationwide research tournament, History Day, kicked off on Feb. 24. About 15 students will be participating this year in the project, which is headed by history teacher Matt Torrens. In the competition, students receive a topic—this year is "Innovations in History"—and create a research project on a subtopic.

"It's a great experience because it gives people the opportunity to research something they're interested in, a topic that they have a passion for and that they are curious about," said Torrens. "They get to work with their friends and they get to compete with other schools. It's kind of exciting."

Last year, several History Day participants who advanced went to the statewide competition in Sacramento, where they were judged over one weekend. Senior Layla Daryan competed at states with students from all over California.

"It's kind of like a science fair, but instead, it's history," Daryan said. "Mr. Torrens said that not many people go to states at this school, so I was pretty excited."

The first semester of work consists

mostly of signing up for the competition and doing research, while second semester is when students create the project itself. It can be anything from an exhibit board, a research paper or what Daryan and her partner, senior Haley Zarrin did: a model of a house designed by their subject, architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Students can work in groups, partners, such as Zarrin and Daryan, or alone, as did senior Cindy Chang.

"I think it was a really valuable experience; I learned a lot. There's a lot of stuff you can do and it helps you explore new levels of influences that you wouldn't have thought about before," Chang said.

After signing up, students will work for months on their projects before they enter the competition, which functions almost exactly like better known science fairs.

"There's a school competition [this month]," Torrens said. "Then there's a county competition, then there's a state competition. For each level you have to be chosen by judges to move onto the next level."

"My friends and I really want to [get to the state competition]," Kim said, "but we're not sure with the work. We still have a lot more work to do."

Students, to get ready in time for History Day, have to be focused and dedicated to their project. Junior David Wang chose to not participate in History Day because "it takes a lot of time."

"The researching part is the most strenuous I've done," Wang said. "It's a different learning experience."

"Seeing people that are actually really interested in history, it's kind of cool," said Chang. ♦

## Good Sam volunteers acquire essential skills

by Roy Bisht  
and Mira Chaykin

On most Saturday afternoons, you'll find sophomore Kevin Rezai inside and not just inside at his house but inside Good Samaritan Hospital in San Jose hurriedly rushing through the hallways and tending to the needs of the ill patients.

He is part of a group of students from local schools, formally known as the "Junior Auxiliary," who visit the hospital to assist with patient care-taking. Students can work weekdays from 4 to 7 p.m. and on the weekends, they can work mornings, afternoons or evenings. Whatever hours they work, though, a volunteer averages about 3 to 5 hours in a week at Good Sam.

"Mainly, we just go from room to room making patients feel comfortable and supplying them with anything that they need," said Rezai, who has been volunteering at Good Samaritan for about a year.

The job is more than just a baby-sitter for the hospitalized.

"I transfer patients from room to room, check them out and take them to different rooms. I transfer labs and pharmacies to certain floors and patients," said senior Sonia Siganporia, who has been volunteering at Good Sam since her freshman year.

Of course, with such hefty responsibilities comes certain restrictions.

"I'm not allowed to touch anything medicinal, so I wear gloves," said Siganporia. "I'm not allowed to wheel patients

to their car; someone has to pick them up."

Even though they are just volunteers, the students can play important roles in the hospital.

"One time, a Hispanic family came in and needed some help and medical attention but no one was able to understand them. Another girl and I used our Spanish knowledge and helped them get through the process," said Siganporia.

There are several reasons students begin working at Good Sam.

Some desire the community service hours that accompany the position. Others, like Siganporia, take advantage of the hours but have additional reasons for applying.

"I started because I wanted to see if I should be a doctor and if the hospital was the right environment for me," she said.

Siganporia is not the only experienced volunteer from SHS. Seniors Haley Zarrin and Gautam Srinivasan also act as shift leaders to guide and help the younger volunteers.

To apply to the program, students must visit Good Sam and fill out an application, which is reviewed and returned to the students during fall.

If the application is accepted, they are called back for a formal interview from which their fate at the hospital is decided. Interested students must apply quickly because space is limited.

Even though the volunteering is mainly done for community service hours, some of the students, including Rezai, feel that at the hospital, what they do becomes something bigger. ♦

# Winterguard thrives at first competitions of season

by Alex Ju

Both the JV and varsity Winterguard teams took home first place trophies at their first two competitions of the season on Jan. 29 at Clovis East High School and Jan. 30 at James Lick High School. The wins were a promising start to the competitive season for the 23 members of the JV team and 12 members of the varsity team.

New instructor Tony Crapo said it is rare for a guard to win first in two different circuits. A first place in one circuit can easily become a fourth place in another circuit, with different judges using different criteria.

The first shows displayed much promise for the revamped Winterguard. Last year, the Winterguard placed fourth at the California Color Guard Circuit (CCGC) finals.

"It's really exciting to win. When Mr. Otani first told us we had gotten first place,

I didn't believe him!" said sophomore Stephanie Poo.

The Winterguard had not competed in the San Joaquin Valley Colorguard and Percussion Review (SJVPCR) in Clovis before and left many of the guards there speculating as to their identity.

"The most-heard quote of the night was, 'Where's Saratoga?'" said Crapo, who was happy with the wins but warned guards not to get too confident.

"So far this season has been a lot more exciting. We're making a lot of progress," said junior Nikki Fukuda.

The guard competed at SJVPCRCG competition at Buchanan High School Feb. 12, with both guards placing third and then competed in the Winter Guard International (WGI) Power Regional at Clovis North High School Feb. 13. JV took first place in regional A, and varsity placed sixth out of the twenty competitors in their division. ♦



Courtesy of Paul Sakamoto

Sophomore Stephanie Poo flashes a smile while performing at a competition on Jan. 30 at James Lick High School in San Jose for their second competition of the season.

## FALCONFOCUS

### Pianist prioritizes music

by Parul Singh  
and Christine Tseng

Christina Wu sits down at her Yamaha C-5 grand piano at home, turning the metronome to a fast pace of 176 beats per minute, then a burst of sound as Wu starts her daily warmup: several scales, going up a fifth each time until she reaches the top, then coming back down.

Wu, a junior, has been studying piano ever since she was six after discovering a liking and skill for the instrument.

"I've always been very intrigued by piano," said Wu. "I had a natural talent for it."

Wu has already passed the Certificate of Merit Advanced level test and is preparing to go to a panel in February for "pianists who are artistically and technically polished to a near-professional level." Interestingly enough, Wu has never been able to take part in competitions because of her constantly changing teachers. As well, Wu said she did not take piano as seriously before her sophomore year.

"My parents were never pushy; my mom even rejected my teacher's invitation for me to compete when I was seven, because she thought piano was just a fun thing for me to do," said Wu.

Wu is currently studying with Santa Clara University's Hans Boepple, a soloist with about 40 years of experience.

Boepple believes that Wu still has a chance to "catch up in the competition experience, and as he is a member of the

Music Teacher's Association of California (MTAC), Wu is participating in the MTAC competition this year, a big deal with people from all over California.

However, she does not only aim to win competitions. Wu hopes to go on to a conservatory or music school later on and become a teacher or performer.

Her lifelong dream is to play in Carnegie Hall and Wu wants to go to the Curtis Institute of Music, Eastman School of Music or Julliard.

Wu also plays the oboe, the guitar and, previously, percussion. She played in the Redwood band and El Camino Youth Symphony (ECYS) but stopped due to her heightened commitment to piano.

"Although I've always wanted to do band, I couldn't because of my devotion to piano. That's why I had to quit ECYS this year," said Wu.

To excel in piano, Wu takes classes that allow her to have less homework and instead practice three to four hours every day. Her school and social life is also affected by her love of piano and the time that she dedicates to it.

"My schoolwork is a lot easier," said Wu. "I basically take easy classes—no APs or Honors—so I can practice. That gives me time to express myself elsewhere. I don't really go on family vacations because I can't practice there."

As others are immersed in evening studies, Christina finds herself back at the keys. A classical melody flows from the keys, enveloping the small room. She is at peace in her element. ♦



Wu

### MUSICAL OVERCOMES ILLNESSES

by Christine Bancroft

During third period of the day the spring musical "Anything Goes" opened, junior Mikaela Burton received some news: one of the female leads, senior Hannah Brown, would not be able to perform the role of Mrs. Harcourt that night for medical reasons and Burton would have to fill in.

After scrambling to learn some 50 lines and several singing solos that day, Burton pulled her new role off and the Feb. 4 opening night was a success under the direction of drama teacher Chris Mahle.

Brown returned to her role for the rest of the shows, which ran smoothly, despite widespread illness among the cast.

"I think the show went very well," said stage manager and sophomore Natalie Berg. "I think it was better than 'Grease' or 'On the Razzle.' Everyone pulled together to get it done."

The lead roles were played by seniors Erin McCroskey, Brown and Natalie Tkalcevic, as well as juniors Chaz Main, Jae Lee and Hannah Harter and sophomore Joshua Harris. All of the cast members learned tap dancing in preparation for the show, which was choreographed by Susan Dini, who by day works as the principal's secretary.

"Learning to tap was intense," said sophomore Penny Burgess, who played one of the Angels, the back-up singers to Erin McCroskey's role of Reno Sweeney. "Just watching tap dancers, you might not realize how tiring it is, but it's exhausting. Ms. Dini was great at teaching us all the moves. But

in the end, tap dancing is really fun, so I think it was worth all the work."

Music and lyrics for "Anything Goes" were originally written by Cole Porter, based on a 1934 book by Guy Bolton and P.G. Wodehouse. First performed in 1937, this production is set in 1934 on the S.S. American and follows the bizarre antics of several characters, including Harter's role of Bonnie and her second-rate gangster comrade, "Moonface" Martin, played by Harris.

"This was such an incredible show to work on," said Harris. "I'd never had such a big part in a show, so this was especially exciting to me. It was just a great experience."

Along with the cast and crew that brought this show together, singers were accompanied by a live student orchestra with more than 20 instruments and directed by music teacher Michael Boitz.

Carrying on despite the illnesses that swept the cast, the show met positive reviews. "[McCroskey] was really sick Sunday, but she stayed after the show to help take apart the set," said Berg. "I was impressed with the perseverance and teamwork."

In order to bring a larger audience, the drama department put many signs throughout Saratoga and Los Gatos. With a show that wasn't well known, word of mouth wasn't enough, they said.

As a result, larger audiences than usual attended, especially the weekend shows.

"We were unsure about 'Anything Goes,'" said Burgess, "People didn't know about it. Everyone knows 'Grease,' but this show had so much

# Alumnus in Bhutan educates, learns new culture

by Anoop Galivanche  
and Abhi Venkatarama

Class of '06 alumnus Andrew Suci is redefining what it means to get a world-class education. Suci chose to delay entering his junior year at Stanford University to work in Thimphu, Bhutan, where he is helping the Royal Education Council to develop a national education framework for Bhutanese public schools.

"It's a nice opportunity to do something good in a really neat environment," he said. "Also, compared to the average Bhutanese worker, I have an impressive skill set and can take a fun job without any work experience. It's better than fetching coffee and filing papers."

Suci first learned about this oppor-

tunity when he traveled to Bhutan on a school trip during the winter of 2009.

"I started to feel like it was time for a break from school, so I asked the professor I went with if he could find me a job there," he said.

His work is primarily focused on developing standardized curriculum goals for public schools.

"The work I am doing is basically the institutional manifestation of the King of Bhutan's desire to be 'the education king,'" he said.

Though it was a difficult decision to delay his junior year, Suci is happy about his choice.

"Though it was pretty tough—I miss out on a year's wages, that's about \$50,000, but I do get to have an absolute blast while I'm here and probably become more competitive in the workplace thanks to my job experience," he said.

However, the hardest part for Suci is not missing a year of education, but being away from his family and friends.

"Of course, the big deal is leaving friends and family behind," he said. "I won't see a lot of my classmates graduate and I'll go without mom's cooking for a year—not just a month or so. Everyone will still be around when I get back and the opportunity seemed too good to pass up."

**"I'm not too sure the British royal family's Bentley would impress anyone here."**

—Alumnus Andrew Suci

The trip has come as a largely eye opening experience for Suci, who has since immersed himself in Bhutanese culture.

"I'm just happy to live in a totally different culture, do a job that no one in the states would trust me to do and build my tolerance for spicy food," Suci said.

As Suci has discovered, Bhutanese culture is quite different from what he is used to—and it's not just the spicy food. The cultural rift is especially evident in the lifestyle of royalty. When asked about the King, Suci said, "His Majesty and all government high-ups get driven around in navy blue Toyota Land Cruisers—the luxury car here. They're always shiny, despite traveling on some of the most rugged roads and mountains I've ever seen. I'm not sure the British royal family's Bentley would impress anyone here." ♦



# FINALS BEFORE OR AFTER WINTER BREAK?

by Saniha Shankar

In recent years, Monta Vista, Lynbrook, Terra Linda, Pioneer and Leland High and other nearby schools have all decided to end their first semester before winter break. Now, after years of complaints from students and parents alike, it looks as if the idea has become more of a possibility here, though many hurdles remain before Saratoga and Los Gatos High Schools can make this switch.

"There has been less momentum in the past, but Saratoga is becoming more dramatically involved as more and more schools move to this new schedule," said assistant principal Brian Safine. "It makes it seem more practical."

A proposed schedule was recently posted as a survey to collect opinions from parents, teachers and underclassmen. The possible schedule would allow students to

start a week earlier and take finals before break and end in late May or early June. Since the schedule for the 2010-11 school year is already finalized, any possible changes would occur for the 2011-12 year, Safine said.

Many underclassmen say they would support the change.

"I think it's a good idea because I feel so much stress during break to study, but I never actually study, so I end up forgetting everything," said sophomore Priyanka Arunkumar. "Plus, after break it is really hard to go back to studying so it would be a lot easier to just take finals before break."

Safine said surveys have been put out for parents and teachers to allow input over the possible change. Most parents and teachers seem to be in favor of the new finals schedule.

Teachers are in favor with a ratio of almost 2 to 1, according to Safine. Many

teachers of advanced placement classes favor the proposed schedule because it would allow for more time before the AP tests.

Supporters say a new schedule would allow families to take their vacation more peacefully without having to worry about the upcoming stress of finals. However, before any changes are made, Los Gatos High as well as the local middle school and elementary schools and the district committee would have to the very different schedule.

Other difficulties include the possibility of an unbalanced schedule between semesters something that can make teaching a semester class such as government or economics more difficult.

Even so, principal Jeff Anderson said ending school before winter break would be a good way "to show to our students that we want them to go out and actually enjoy their break." ♦

## THE BIG IDEA

### Change in fall semester finals

**THE PLAN:** District explores a new finals schedule for first semester, similar to ones at Monta Vista, Lynbrook and other nearby schools.

**PROPOSED CHANGES:** Students would start and end school a week earlier.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** If the plan is finalized, it could be implemented for the 2011-2012 school year since the 2010-2011 school year has already been finalized.

**SUPPORTERS:** Students, parents and two-thirds of the teachers are in favor of this proposed schedule.

## Saratoga S&D teaches middle school students

by Saniha Shankar  
and Abhi Venkataramana

Forty Redwood Middle School students got their first taste of speech and debate at the high school level Jan. 24 at a short camp organized by speech and debate captain Varun Parmar—the first such meeting that has occurred in many years. The camp included an overview of high school speech and debate, an explanation of the events available and an introduction to public speaking.

"I decided to have a camp for middle school kids because I wish that I had the opportunity to start speech and debate early on, since it's an important skill to have that often isn't emphasized in school classes," said Parmar.

Senior captains Saniha Shankar and Rishabh Jethanandani helped coach the students and offer tips. The camp also featured an extemporaneous speech given by sophomore Viraj Parmar and a Humorous Interpretation speech by junior David Mandell. After spending the first half of

Qualifying Tournament, team members are looking to end the season on a high note.

"We've had a lot of success in our recent tournaments," said Parmar, "so hopefully we can continue to do well in our final tournaments of the year."

At the Stanford Tournament, held Feb. 6-8, the team had one of its best performances of the year in what was arguably the season's most competitive tournament, said coach Erick Rector. Junior Vance Lindholm won first place in National Extemporaneous Speech and semi-finaled in Domestic Extemporaneous Speech. The teams of juniors Vijay Menon and Abhishek Venkataramana and Daryl Chang and Nikhil Maheshwari both advanced to octa-finals.

At the James Logan High School Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Tournament held from Jan. 18-20, almost all of the team members advanced past

preliminary rounds. In varsity parliamentary debate, the team of juniors Keerti Shukla and Venkataramana advanced to quarter finals and the teams of junior Karthik

Annaamalai and Jethanandani and sophomores Anoop Galivanche and Anshu Sirapurapu both advanced to double-octafinals. In extemporaneous speech, Lindholm and sophomore Viraj Parmar advanced to semi-finals. In Humorous Interpretation, Mandell advanced to semi-finals.

The team also fared well at the Santa Clara University Tournament on Dec. 10. In varsity public forum debate, sophomores Parul Singh and Michael Chang placed third. Annaamalai and Jethanandani advanced to octa-finals. In Congress, Shukla placed first, while sophomore Vishal Goel placed fifth. ♦

**"At the end of it, I felt that some students had the skill to compete at even the novice high school level."**

—Senior Varun Parmar



Amanda Yi

Junior Jay Lee and senior Joe Stevens perform their scene for the epilepsy benefit concert, which was on Feb. 10. Performers raised around \$3,000 from the concert.

## Concert helps children affected by epilepsy

by Olivia Chock

Talented singers and performers—both students and staff—sang their hearts out on the stage of the McAfee Center in a fund-raising effort to provide money for epilepsy on Feb. 10.

The event featured singing groups such as the Glee Club, students Lauren Henderson, Connor Clarke, Hannah Harter, Olivia Chock, Eric Wang, Chris Renalds, Maddy Renalds, Adrienne Eller, Jan Iyer and Eric Jung and a five member acapella group, the Ritards, with one member from Saratoga, junior Jason Shiaun and staff members including assistant principal Karen Hyde, history teacher Kim Anzalone and principal's secretary Sue Dini.

David Mandell performed his humorous interpretation from speech and debate, which was an interpretation of a Frankenstein play by Christopher O'Neal. Forinbras with members Natalie Berg, Penny Burgess, Jay Lee, Joe Stevens, and Dylan Teter performing a short skit.

Renalds said her goal was to raise \$10,000 for the diagnosed teens. With the tickets being just \$5 for students and \$7 for adults, Renalds said

\$10,000 was extremely ambitious.

Renalds said there may have been as many as 250-275 attendees, and the benefit concert made roughly \$3,000. Renalds was pleased with the results, since more donations are still coming in for the cause.

"I was extremely impressed with performers and the amount of people that turned up. It was stressful but I had really good feedback of what everyone thought about the concert. In general, I'm very happy with how the concert turned out," said Renalds.

The purpose of the concert was to help teens that are diagnosed with epilepsy, a brain disorder that causes spontaneous seizures among tens of thousands of teens each year.

"This topic is really close to my heart because I was actually diagnosed with epilepsy before. There's nothing you can really do to cure it but there's some medicines and treatments to help prevent more seizures from happening," said Renalds. Audience members seemed to enjoy the show.

"The concert was so fun! Even though I had a bunch of tests to study for this week, it was worth going. Everyone performed really well," said sophomore Christopher Vu. ♦

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Jordan Waite

Music director Michael Boitz listens as internationally-renowned violinist Midori instructs the high school's third period orchestra on Tuesday, Feb. 2 in a workshop.

## MIDORI | Violinist inspires

continued from page 1

the technical part, unlike other guest conductors we have had in the past."

Although Midori was only on campus for a short amount of time, many orchestra members felt that her visit was a positive influence on the orchestra.

"Everyone was really trying to apply whatever she told us as soon as we started to play," said sophomore cellist Connie Chien.

Both the students and Boitz were excited to meet Midori, although Boitz was a little nervous at first.

"I'm always nervous in these situations because I want to do my best," said Boitz. "At the same time, I was extremely excited for the students to meet this world-class violinist."

Midori also shared with the musicians a new perspective on how to play in orchestra.

"The orchestra is the conductor's in-

strument," said Midori. "He expresses what he's trying to convey to you."

After the workshop, students had time to ask Midori any questions that they had for her. One student asked if practicing violin was a chore or if she really enjoyed it.

"Most of the time, I enjoy practicing," said Midori, "but sometimes when I'm really tired and worn out, I tell myself that I still have to practice. For me, the best time to practice is right after I perform at a concert, when I am free from any disruptions for a couple of hours."

P.J. Woolston, the admissions program manager of USC, helped organize Midori's visit. After rehearsing, students in orchestra took a photo together with Midori and Woolston to preserve their memory of the famous violinist.

Hsiang said, "It was very cool. I'm sad I didn't get her autograph, but it was still very nice meeting her." ♦

**"The orchestra is the conductor's instrument."**

—Professional violinist Midori

## Youth Commission considers having more dances

by Kevin Mu

Although the Saratoga Youth Commission stopped hosting dances for middle school students several years ago, the Commission decided at its Jan. meeting that they are looking to host dances once again, this time for high school students.

The Saratoga Youth Commission, or SYC, is a local student commission made up of 18 students who, in addition to recommending policy and participating

in civic projects, plan events for teens in the Saratoga community.

The dances would be like those hosted by Saratoga High School; however, the SYC would host these dances in Saratoga's Joan Pisani Community Center, attracting a larger base of high school students from all over the area to join the event, according to commission member and senior Tara Fatemi.

Previously, the Youth Commission had held dances for Redwood middle school students but due to an increasingly sporadic

attendance, the Youth Commission ended its middle-school dances, Fatemi said.

"After the Warner Hutton House stopped its after-school program, the next generation of middle school students weren't able to experience the Saratoga Youth Commission," she said. "They couldn't really know what we were about, so interest in the dances dropped pretty steeply."

These dances, although viewed by many to just be yet another festive SYC event, will be another way to in-

crease student interest and participation within the community, Fatemi said.

While the organization may be known as little more than a party planning committee, the SYC has promoted the opinions of countless Saratoga teens to the City Council since its inception.

Proposed dates for the dances would be in late spring or fall of this year. Visit to [www.saratogateen.com](http://www.saratogateen.com) or join SYC on Facebook to stay updated about the dances and find about other Youth Commission events. ♦

## Driving without year dangerous, common

Poll shows majority of teen drivers have driven other teens in their first year licensed

by Girish Swaminath

On Jan. 26, in extremely rainy weather, four cars driven by four upperclassmen returning from lunch collided on Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road. None of the students was injured but the accident called attention to the problem of students driving without "having their year," thereby breaking a state law known as the "year rule."

State laws dictate that a driver may not transport other people with the exception of siblings or adults 25 years or older within his or her first year of having a license. In addition, these young drivers cannot drive between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.

The accident showed how widely young drivers ignore this law. Out of 100 seniors polled by The Falcon, 71 said they have driven others at least once without "their year," while only 29 have never transported anybody within their first year of having their license. Most said the year rule is totally impractical.

"Almost everybody breaks the year rule," said senior Tommy Mednick. "It's really not an effective or realistic rule, since driving other people around does not endanger other people's lives."

Other students, however, said they follow the law.

"The risks of taking [other people] off-campus and potentially getting into an accident are greater than the benefits of simply driving others," said junior Harshil Sahai. "It's simply not worth it."

Administrators gave some of the students involved Saturday school. Assistant principal Joe Bosco said the accident was a reminder of the importance of following this law.

"I think [the year rule] helps students concentrate on their driving and prevents them from being distracted by other people in the car," said Bosco. "Driving is a privilege and a huge responsibility and, hopefully, others will learn from [the accident] and drive slower."

Deputy Dan Cutforth, a sheriff's deputy who dealt with the accident, said, "[Legislators] made the law because they want to make the roads a lot safer and to encourage students to remain more focused while driving. In addition, laws like [the year rule] keep everybody else on the road safe." ♦

## World's fair captivates students | by Amanda Yi



Freshman Ally Nilane-Axline describes the culture of Brazil to history teacher Kim Anzalone while she savors a Brazilian nut cookie at the World's Fair on Feb. 22. The biannual fair, a massive cultural exhibition, is put on by world geography classes.

### FALCONPOLL

Have you ever driven others in your first year with a license?



71% Have  
29% Haven't

The Falcon polled 100 juniors and seniors on Feb. 9th.



## Torrent of criticism emerges from Pandora's box

BLOCKBUSTER "AVATAR" PROVIDES FERTILE GROUND FOR DEBATE; CRITICS PICK MOVIE TO PIECES

by Parul Singh  
and Nandini Ruparel

The recent release of the multi-billion dollar movie "Avatar" has become the highest grossing movie of all time but it has also sparked controversy from varied interest groups around the globe.

The blue men with golden stripes. The lush, beautiful, and green environment. It seems like the Na'vi's world in the movie is a paradise to be envied especially since here on Earth, the innocent world is under fire for about every controversy there could be about a movie.

### Global displeasure

It seems as if every group from the Marines to the Vatican has some problem with the sci-fi thriller, either because they themselves were represented wrongly or because they weren't represented at all. Every movie shows stereotypes and gets some amount of criticism but it almost seems like all of these representational groups are lining up to take shots at "Avatar." Isn't it a little bit much to ask to fit every single type of person into a single

movie, no matter how long it is?

### Evil Cameron

Even if only one of these groups were correct about the reason for their dislike of the movie, it's overly paranoid to suspect evil designs to offend each of the many indignant associations. Either writer and director James Cameron is as heinous a villain as his own Colonel Miles Quaritch, or just a regular person who wanted to create an awesome sci-fi movie and ended up with a complaint-riddled mess.

### Vatican's aversion

"Avatar" has even attracted criticism from the Vatican's newspaper L'Osservatore Romano for promoting the worship of nature and thus being anti-Christ. While the Vatican has a right to dislike the movie, many other movies have also portrayed the worship of nature but have not been subjected to such scrutiny and pressure as "Avatar."

### China's beef

In China, the government has banned "Avatar" from 1,600 cinemas due to fear

of popular revolt, since the movie deals with overthrowing authority figures. Rather than merely taking it off the Chinese silver screens, the government has instead decided to replace it with the more historically relevant biographical production about Confucius, which, while staying a respectable distance from themes like rebellion, is also a homespun Chinese production.

### Racist tinge

The movie has even been dubbed racist by some people because the plot of the movie consists of a white man saving a native race.

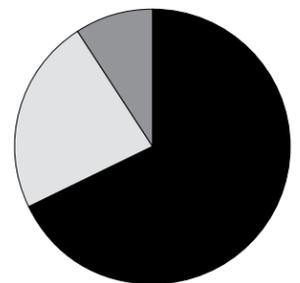
### Pocahontas steal

But "Avatar's" problems don't stop there. Excluding all racial allegations, the plot of the movie has also been put under fire. Cameron has been accused of stealing the story of the blue-skinned Na'vi from "Call Me Joe" by Poul Anderson to the Disney story of "Pocahontas."

Cameron says the real theme is about respecting others' differences. Viewers should just enjoy the movie. ♦

### FALCONPOLL

Did you like "Avatar"?



68% Loved it  
23% Liked it  
9% Hated it

The Falcon polled 118 students on Feb. 8-9.

## Limbaugh's comments undermine Haiti crisis

by Vijay Menon

In life, there are certain events and tragedies that transcend the bounds of politics and bring people together for a common cause. Without a doubt, the recent devastation in Haiti qualifies as one of these events. Unfortunately, conservative radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh seems to be incapable of feeling, choosing to downplay the tragic event throughout his commentary in the aftermath of the earthquakes.

On Limbaugh's radio show, the commentator urged viewers not to donate money through the White House Red Cross fund, insinuating that the money would instead be used to fund President Obama's campaign. Furthermore, he

stated that the Obama administration was using the Haitian tragedy as an opportunity to curry favor and credibility within the black community.

Rather than encouraging his viewers to donate to Haiti, Limbaugh used his power to make a couple of cheap political points. Limbaugh's primary comment, urging listeners not to donate through the government due to its alleged unreliability, is completely unfounded and has no basis in reality. The notion that money donated through the government as opposed to private channels

**Rather than encouraging his viewers to donate to Haiti, Limbaugh used his power to cheap political points.**

will not make its way to Haiti is absurd and the American people should know that their money will be safely assigned by the government's Red Cross fund.

The tragedy in Haiti has sparked a massive outpouring of support and a rigorous governmental program to encourage ordinary American citizens to donate through innovative means, such as text messaging. The Obama administration and the American people should be praised for their unprecedented response to aid the ravaged region.

Limbaugh further went on to suggest that the Obama administration was using the Haitian tragedy as a ploy to gain support. To suggest that the government's primary incentive for aiding Haiti was simply to gain support is a cheap and unfair accusation and in no way accurately characterizes the good-willed, humanitarian intent of American aid to Haiti. Although Limbaugh is no stranger to controversy, his latest comments cement his legacy as a man who panders to party politics. One can only imagine how Limbaugh would have responded had Obama not reacted to the Haitian tragedy as efficiently as he did. However, in consistently searching for any way to damage the Obama administration, Limbaugh may have done more devastating damage to his own floundering reputation. ♦

## The Saratoga Falcon

### STAFF POLICY

The Saratoga Falcon is published five times per semester by the Advanced Journalism classes of Saratoga High School, 20300 Herriman Ave., Saratoga, CA 95070.

Views expressed in *The Saratoga Falcon* are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the administration, faculty or school district.

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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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## CANDID CARICATURES

by Kyumin Shim



## DRONE ATTACKS RAISE ISSUES

by Kim Tsai

Over the past months, the usage of drones as a weapon of war has become increasingly popular, most notably against Taliban leaders in Pakistan. Drones, unmanned aerial vehicles, are shipped out to Pakistan while being remote-controlled from places such as the Creech Air Force Base, a location not far from Las Vegas. This poses quite a gamble when it comes to human life; namely, the mass destruction of the weapon.

Last year, President Obama allowed the increased usage of drones in Pakistan. Since the beginning of Obama's presidency, the number of deaths by drones has climbed steadily higher. In 2009, the number of deaths was estimated to be over 700 compared to the combined 221 deaths from 2004 to 2008 according to MediaMouse.

It is not difficult, however, to understand and empathize with the logic behind drone strikes.

These vessels can be used to enter dangerous areas, un-navigable by piloted vehicles. The versatile and relentless na-

ture of drones could very well be a match for the Taliban's violent and degenerate ways. It is also important to note that with the incorporation of drones in the army, fewer military personnel would need to be trained when using drones.

With the rapid production of new and deadlier weapons, sending virtually defenseless troops into unfriendly territory becomes an extremely risky decision. Thus, by replacing troops with drones or other remotely controlled mechanisms,

the worry of fighting to the death is eliminated and American casualties on the battlefield have been and will be greatly lessened. With this in mind, more men and women could go

about their lives normally. One can readily sympathize with an attempt to decrease the number of widows and orphans in America.

New technology also means that conflicts will be resolved faster due to the advantages it brings. All in all, drones are just another mechanism to help achieve a goal by no uncertain means.

But while the detrimental effects of drones today may pale in comparison to the advantages they provide, the unmanned aircrafts will have a dramatic

effect on the wars to come. Psychologically, drones dehumanize the acts of war and cause increasingly violent attacks. The disturbing scenario of non-army personnel sitting in lounges and gunning down civilians with a remote, their eyes glued to an LCD screen, cannot readily be justified. Killing civilians should not be reduced to the equivalent of a late-night Halo game.

While the drones will limit unnecessary deaths on the United States' side, civilians in Pakistan are being killed left and right in these attacks. An opponent of drone strikes, Robby Diesu, says that for each terrorist suspect killed, there are an additional 100 civilians murdered. The U.S. may have become more effective in rooting out Taliban leaders, but it does so at a staggering collateral expense.

On the other hand, war rarely comes without civilian deaths. Deaths are a significant factor in wartime and cannot be exchanged for other alternatives. More caution should be considered when dealing with drones, but in the end, the possibilities drones bring are endless.

In a few decades, robots could very well be fighting all the wars over the world. But this advancement toes a very fine line between genuine warfare and needless murder. Drones are a force to be employed, but not to be misused. ♦

**Deaths are a significant factor in wartime and cannot be exchanged for other alternatives.**

## Restrictions on viewing tests educationally counterproductive

In the interest of reusing test questions in the future, some teachers do not allow students to look at their graded tests. As much as this decision benefits these teachers, who are often swamped with tests, homework and projects to grade, it undermines a key component of a good education: self-learning and reflection.

Tests provide teachers with a proven method of assessing a student's mastery of subject material, but they also allow students to pinpoint their weaknesses and, consequently, to improve in these areas. A graded exam can reveal the concepts that students have mastered and, more importantly, those they haven't.

In subjects such as math, where an understanding of material must be paired with adequate practice, failure to target these areas of weakness at the appropriate time can slow a student's progress.

In fact, teachers who do not allow students to see their graded tests may be violating the basic education rights of students under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. This decrees that graded papers, exams, quizzes and other assignments are considered part of the student's educational record and must

be returned to the student in a manner designed to maintain confidentiality.

And while students cringe from saying it in class—no test is invulnerable to machine or human error, the latter being a particularly contentious wedge between students and their teachers. Very often, a mistake has been made in the questions

themselves, especially when the test is multiple-choice. Teachers may accidentally program the Scantron to mark a correct answer as incorrect, and while this is an innocuous and easily resolved mistake; locking tests away give these errors a particularly long life and shorten that of the average "grade-grubber"—who, at that

point, will be prematurely graying from the stress of a bad grade.

It is the nightmare of every teacher to have to deal with these nervous students, who undoubtedly want to go over every single question missed. Pardon them. When their understanding of an entire course is reflected by one letter, you can bet that they will bite, scratch and lunge for every point of every test.

Denying students from keeping a graded test is reasonable. To be sure, the creation of a school-wide, black-market would certainly ensue—smuggling old tests would be the new cheating fad.

But seeing tests is far different from keeping them.

Many students in Saratoga High are complacent about their test grades—the score they get is the score they keep, and life goes on. But for the (arguable) majority of the school, reviewing a test is nearly as important as taking them. And while disclosing every test and quiz to students will surely be a headache for teachers who do not already have this policy, students are begging for this privilege.

Because a test is a terrible thing to waste. ♦

**STAFF EDITORIAL**  
Opinion of *The Falcon*  
editorial board



## Budget gap needs fixing

by Mac Hyde

Red Tape. In the hole. Strapped. Whichever phrase you use, it doesn't soften the blow of a \$3 million budget deficit for 2010-11. In this crisis, Saratoga and Los Gatos High Schools can be considered an airplane. The projected budget is the landscape it's flying over. The number of electives, extracurriculars, class sizes and other costs represent the weight of the plane's cargo. Right now the plane is being dragged down with the load of debt, and school officials must start tossing weight overboard. The question is: What stays and what goes?

### Inevitable cuts

Increasing the size of English classes, specifically those for freshmen is one of the solutions that has the best shot of being implemented next year. Also discussed has been cutting several less popular electives, in order to save some money for the district.

While these may be least-harmful cuts, there must be a more conservative way to preserve the diversity of Saratoga's and Los Gatos' opportunities. Cuts must be made and they must be a) across the board, and not concentrated in certain departments, and b) have the least impact on students and staff alike. However, perhaps at least part of the answer to the district's deficit is multi-faceted and does not only include turning a scythe to programs or classes.

### Sponsorships and summer camps

The entire school can be transformed into a revenue-earning gem, benefiting not only students but also the community. Hosting camps over the summer could garner some revenue: for instance, there could be a MAP summer camp in which kids from Redwood would have the opportunity develop their multimedia skills before they even reach high school. This would further the quality of the programs while earning revenue for the school.

This would create monetary support and human interest in preserving programs. Developing corporate sponsorship for classes could also gather some green; suppose the journalism room was to be sponsored. The school would approach a corporation (most likely Apple, due to the many Macintoshes used in the room) and say something to the effect that the school is in financial trouble, and would greatly benefit from their sponsorship in return for a re-naming of the room, say, the Apple Journalism room. These would not be permanent name changes, only on a per year base.

### Taxes and donations helpful

The school could also consider trying for a parcel tax in the next couple of years but there is no guarantee that two-thirds of local voters (the needed number) would vote yes when so many people are also hurting financially.

Then there are donations. Fundraisers and galas are popular always a fall-back options, especially if student-produced. The Saratoga community has always been very giving when it comes to the school—the \$2 million pool was built entirely with donations, the \$8 million McAfee Center, the football field, lights, and stadium were all made possible by private donations.

The feat of raising \$3 million or even \$1 million to help erase the debt is a daunting one. However, in order to preserve Saratoga's and Los Gatos' reputation for quality athletics and academics, it may be the best option.

No matter what the solution or combination of solutions, it's definitely about time for some creative thinking when it comes to school funding. ♦

## CAMPAIGNS STILL FAIR AFTER RULING

by Anoop Galivanche

Both Bill O'Reilly and Keith Olbermann showed segments of President Obama's State of the Union speech lambasting the Supreme Court for its landmark decision regarding political financing, heavily emphasizing Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito shaking his head in disapproval and mouthing the words "Not true" in response to Obama's shortsighted criticisms of the ruling. The ubiquitous broadcasting of the clip was probably the most bipartisan thing to occur on Capitol Hill all year.

Unfortunately, little has changed in the past 20 years or so in the realm of campaign finance. The government's attempts to regulate the financing of political campaigns date back to the founding of the nation, and effective attempts to control donation dynamics are at least 100 years old. So it was a big deal when the Supreme Court recently invalidated crucial and definitive portions of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA), otherwise known as the McCain-Feingold Act, that banned corporations from using their own money for political endorsements.

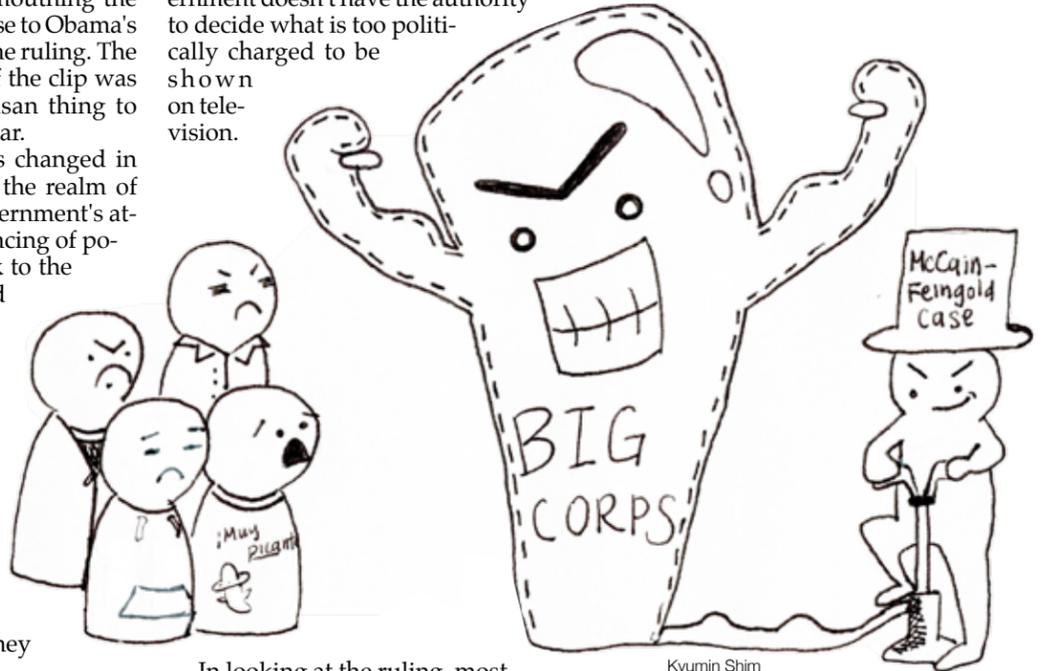
Many liberals across the nation are marking the ruling as a major defeat for financing regulation and are scrambling for recourse. But they are wrong. The decision reaffirms our right to free speech and sheds light on other pressing issues in campaign finance.

While signing the BCRA into law, former-President Bush conceded that the legislation was "far from perfect." The inherent flaws in the legislation, namely, brazen violations of the First Amendment, were only theoretical at the time, but constitutional law experts around the country raised red flags.

These flaws evinced last year when a documentary of Hillary Clinton deemed

so politically charged that it was considered a political campaign ad, was prohibited from being shown before the election. The makers of the documentary, a conservative organization called Citizens United, immediately sued and appealed until the case finally reached to the Supreme Court. However prejudiced the documentary may have been, the government doesn't have the authority to decide what is too politically charged to be shown on television.

term "special interest groups" has grown to encompass everyone from environmentalists upset with dilatory progress in pollution laws to African-American culture groups worried about their kids not getting into college. Regulating the lobby has become a complex entanglement of legality and ethics, and the short-



In looking at the ruling, most

liberal commentators have missed the point. Popular wisdom is that special interests groups will overrun Washington, causing the common man's voice to be forgotten, and ignored in times when it needs to be heard the most. This is a reasonable worry—and relevant legislation should be introduced to mitigate the clout of special interest groups in politics—but the negative effect of lobbyists has a negligible correlation with the weakening of the BCRA. Even with the abolished articles in place, lobbyists were, and would, still powerfully exert their influence in Washington.

With the obscuring of exactly whose best interests the government acts in, the

comings of this regulation is the fault of no one in particular—certainly not the Supreme Court.

The free speech rights that comprise a fundamental tenet of our Constitution, are the very rights that were being violated by the BCRA. Policies that try to control the influence of money in politics are well-intentioned but futile. And when they infringe upon our First Amendment, they're wrong. After all, the First Amendment is at the core of what makes us Americans: It's what allows stations like Fox News to continue operating. God knows what Americans would be doing on weeknights without the insights of Mr. O'Reilly. ♦

## Coach displays poor judgment, locks injured player inside closet

by Roy Bisht

On Dec. 17, 21-year-old Adam James, a player on the Texas Tech football team, was forced by coaches to sit in a dark, secluded and guarded storage closet. He was threatened with suspension if he were to try and escape. No, this was not the armed forces or a Middle Eastern kidnapping. It was coach Mike Leach's way of "curing" James's concussion.

Leach forced James, a redshirt (a college athlete who sits out one year but is allowed to practice with the team without losing a year of eligibility) sophomore receiver, into the darkest available room—incidentally, a claustrophobic closet. For three hours, James could not sit down, stand up and, worst of all, leave the pitch black closet.

This could easily have been another ignorant Texan faux pas if Leach hadn't (allegedly) told James that if he were to leave the "room," he would be removed from the Red Raiders football team. Roughly two weeks later, Leach was fired from his position as head coach for poor handling of James' injury. Adding to the controversy was that James is the son of former NFL great Craig James, who is now a television sports commentator, and many Leach defenders said the wide receiver got special treatment due to his famous father.

College football is arguably the most

intense and popular of the collegiate sports and it is tradition for coaches to condition and work their players to extreme measures. But when a player is injured, coaches should leave their demanding attitudes on the field. Football is, without doubt, the most dangerous competitive sport in the world. According to the National Center for Injury Prevention, around 47 percent of high school football players suffer concussions each season.

Leach has recently been dubbed, "Dr. Leach," an ironic stab at his embarrassing lack of medical knowledge. Letting people who dedicate their lives to situations like this would be the safest option when dealing with a football injury.

In general, injuries must be taken with caution in sports, especially with a game as rigorous and violent as football. Lacking proper medical attention could not only end an athlete's career but also his life.

For the safest possible outcome during an injury, not just in football but for any other sport, leave the medical treatment to the medical staff. Coaches are hired to

manage the team and leave the medical staff to deal with any injuries that possibly may occur. This is the best method to prevent any type of mistake similar to the one made by Leach, especially when he locked James in a janitorial closet, attempting "to cure" him of his concussion. ♦



I'm a cheerleader

Ally Doles

TRUE  
LIFE

by Denise Lin

At age eight, Ally Doles loved the view from the bleachers next to the high school football field, where she could witness the nimble maneuvers, spins and twirls of cheerleaders in the heat of the football game, fully illuminated in fluorescent glory.

Amid the whistle blowing and touchdowns, spirited chants echoed as Doles watched spellbound, as the girls threw one of their own in the air and caught her perfectly.

By the end of the game, when all the cheering had died down, something had become quite clear: She was going to be a cheerleader.

Doles, now a senior, has come a long way from the 8-year-old watching from the bleachers.

She not only takes part in football games and cheer competitions but goes to a separate cheerleading class and helps coach younger athletes outside of school as well.

"I take tumbling classes outside of school, which is when I do flips and stuff," said Doles. "I've definitely improved on that throughout the years."



Doles

**Up until now, Doles has broken her thumb, dislocated her shoulder and still suffers from a permanently fractured spine.**

But the dangerous stunts have come at a price. Up until now, Doles has broken her thumb, dislocated her shoulder and still suffers from a permanently fractured spine.

"We were running through a routine and one of my stunts was falling, so I curved underneath it," she said. "As I did that I heard a huge snap and it was instant pain; the muscles around my lower spine completely swelled up."

Her injury is something she needs to deal with on a daily basis.

"It's not like tons of pain all the time," said Doles, "but it definitely acts up every once in a while."

The surgery to fix her spine would be very risky and could possibly result in paralysis, so Doles just tries to deal with it the best she can, because "it's either that or not cheer."

She has been cheerleading for 10 or 11 years now, and still enjoys the thrill of competition, as well as the great



courtesy of Ally Doles

Senior Ally Doles was on an all star cheer team known as the Legacy All-Stars in seventh grade. Doles is seen at the center of a routine at the USA All-Star and Dance competition in Las Vegas.

energy.

"I like being really spirited," Doles said. "I like being loud."

She loves the challenges of tumbling and stunting, which is when the girls are thrown in the air.

"I'm a base so I hold the other girls in the air," she said. "I love throwing [them] in the air and trying new things with that."

Doles puts her skills to the test out-

side of school, too. In fact, she recently had tryouts for cheer camp of a well-known cheer organization, Universal Cheerleaders Association, known as UCA, whose staff asked her to work for them next summer.

As for life after high school, cheerleading is still in the picture.

"No matter what college I go to, I think I'm going to tryout for the cheer team," said Doles. ♦

Can you...?

... PULL A 'TWILIGHT' FAN BACK DOWN TO REALITY FOR GOOD?

by Christine Bancroft

Stephanie Meyer's 2005 novel "Twilight" has created a phenomenon among female readers all over the world. It has grown into a multi-million dollar franchise including film adaptations and has launched the author and the actors portraying her characters into super-stardom.

The fans, or "Twihards," obsess over the series with something similar to a cult following. Critics of the series and the fans call the Twihards "deluded and rabid" in the words of one blogger.

After observing the outbursts of many of these "Twilight" lovers, I, a vehement critic of the series, was assigned to see if I could get a fan to back down from her stance. I compiled a list of arguments from different bloggers and critics and set out to find myself a Twihard.

After finding three possible interviewees, to no avail, I found junior Erika Lowdermilk. When asked why she likes "Twilight," she said she has always enjoyed vampire stories.

"But," Lowdermilk said, "for 'Twilight,' I'm not a vampire person. It goes against the original concept. But, I don't know, I kind of like it."

Many Twilight haters consider "Twilight"

to be a bastardization of the Victorian-era vampire. Traditional vampires killed humans, burst into flames in sunlight and drank blood but "Twilight" vampires sparkle in sunlight and only kill animals.

Sophomore Nicole Fetsch said many girls like "Twilight" because of the "perfect" relationship between Bella and Edward.

"Bella doesn't really have a character," said Fetsch. "So I think that makes it easier for girls to put themselves in Bella's shoes and have this perfect relationship and this perfect guy."

However, one valid criticism of the series is that the focal relationship between Bella and Edward is abusive and unhealthy, a negative portrayal of the dream couple.

For example, Edward breaks into Bella's room and watches her sleep. Another instance is that he slashes her car tires and ruins the engine.

Bella even isolates herself from her family and friends once she meets Edward. The books and movies are targeted at young girls and teenagers, a particularly impressionable audience, who are already questioning what an ideal relationship is supposed to be like.

In stark contrast to most die-hard fans that I've seen rant on the Internet, Lowder-

milk was open and welcoming to opposition and my arguments.

She called Edward's character "controlling and over-protective." She also calls Bella a "wimp and lacks self-confidence... a terrible role model. The relationship is hilarious, though." She says girls shouldn't look to "Twilight" as a relationship guide and, as a Washington native herself, tells fans not to move to Forks, the book's setting. "There's nothing there. Just old houses, old people, and a little tiny town."

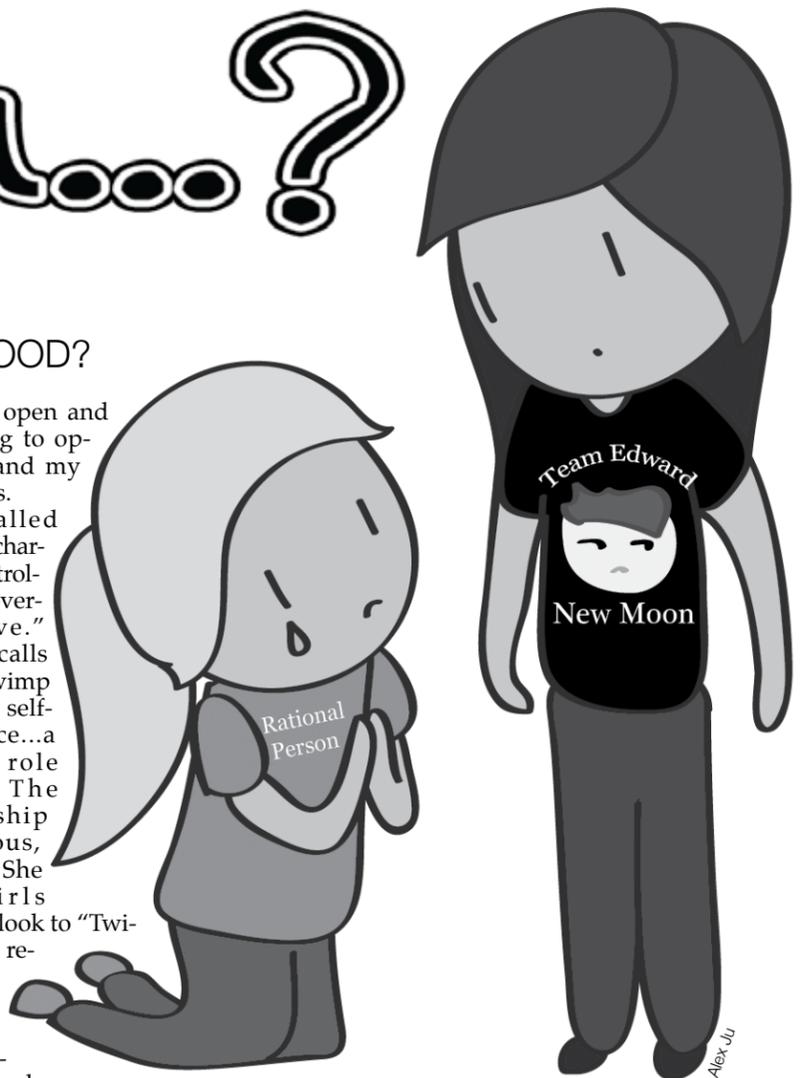
After speaking with Lowdermilk, I feel that I can say that my mission was a success. You can bring a relatively sane

"Twilight" fan, such as Lowdermilk, back to reality.

However, for the more devout Twihards in the country, I'm afraid that there is nothing I can do to fix their fascination with the franchise and their worship of Meyer's creation. ♦



Lowdermilk



Alex Ju

# SKINNY JEANS, VANS DOMINATE STUDENT STYLE

by Alicia Lee

With every new time period comes a fashion transformation. Whether it reflects the economic standards of the people or the strife of the

country, fashion is always affected by its surroundings and the people who make it.

The 2000s were no exception to this as trends ranged from skinny jeans to leggings; slip-on shoes to the infamous Crocs. But when the current generation reminisces about the past 10 years, fashion will be a major component by which to judge the decade.

Obvious emblems of the 2000s include

bright polo shirts and popped collars among young men across America, while girls had a stage of leaning toward the revivals of Bohemian-inspired tops and leggings of the '80s.

Though leggings can be worn with almost anything, a major fashion no-no was simply wearing leggings as pants. Uggs also became popular with girls even wearing them as late as spring. Trendy between both genders entail skinny jeans, Ray-Ban sunglasses and Vans shoes.

However, in the fashion world, originality is pretty rare and trends rise out of constant copying: the classic monkey see, monkey do. With young celebrities walking around town getting constantly photographed, the average people of the world have every chance to imitate those trends on their own.

## FASHION

From this observation, fads like over-

sized sunglasses and handbags and high-waisted skirts were made popular by celebrities like Paris Hilton and the Olsen twins.

Trends that stemmed out of music scenes and evolved into hipster territory included plaid flannel, hipster scarves and slip-on shoes. As they rose in popularity, people could be seen wearing these fashions almost anywhere.

When catastrophe hit the U.S. economy, however, people opted for cheaper sources for clothing. Yet not all brands were hit as they utilized the holiday season to have large sales. People took these chances of discounts to stock up on clothing for the year to come, doing anything to be more frugal.

Fashion trends tend to depend on the market and the people buying products, yet everyone is guilty of partaking in a fad or two.

While the current generation looks back on the 2000s, people will agree there were plenty of hits and misses, all the better to spice up fashion history. ♦



# DEFINING THE

A LOOK INTO THE PAST DECADE REVEALS THE BIGGEST CHANGES AND TRENDSETTING THEMES

## From 'Superfoods' to 'Super Size Me'

by Synthia Ling

As the decade came to a close, it was clear that Americans were fatter than ever. A startling two-thirds of Americans, or 190 million people, were overweight or obese, according to CBS News, and the obesity rate has more than tripled in the past 30 years.

Fortunately, a larger and healthier America has resulted in a more health-conscious society. Organic foods invaded grocery store shelves as Americans feared the harmful effects of consuming pesticides. In an attempt to tap into a more health-conscious market, companies began advertising foods containing antioxidants, which could help lower cholesterol or support the immune system.

People started trying "superfoods" like acai or blueberry to gain their powerful health benefits. Some restaurants began offering lower-calorie foods to their menus, and fast-food restaurants like McDonald's added healthier items such as fruits and salads. Many people this decade became less willing to eat foods with a high calorie count and transfat.

Despite the grease and the calories, many people still could not resist fast food for a cheap cheeseburger or french fries fix.

"My favorite fast food places are Taco Bell and Burger King," said junior Talia Balma. "They taste good. I only eat it once in a while, so I'm not worried about being

unhealthy."

Even with the popular 2004 documentary "Super Size Me," which portrayed McDonald's in an unappetizing light and heightened a concern for healthy food, fast-food restaurants thrived during the decade.

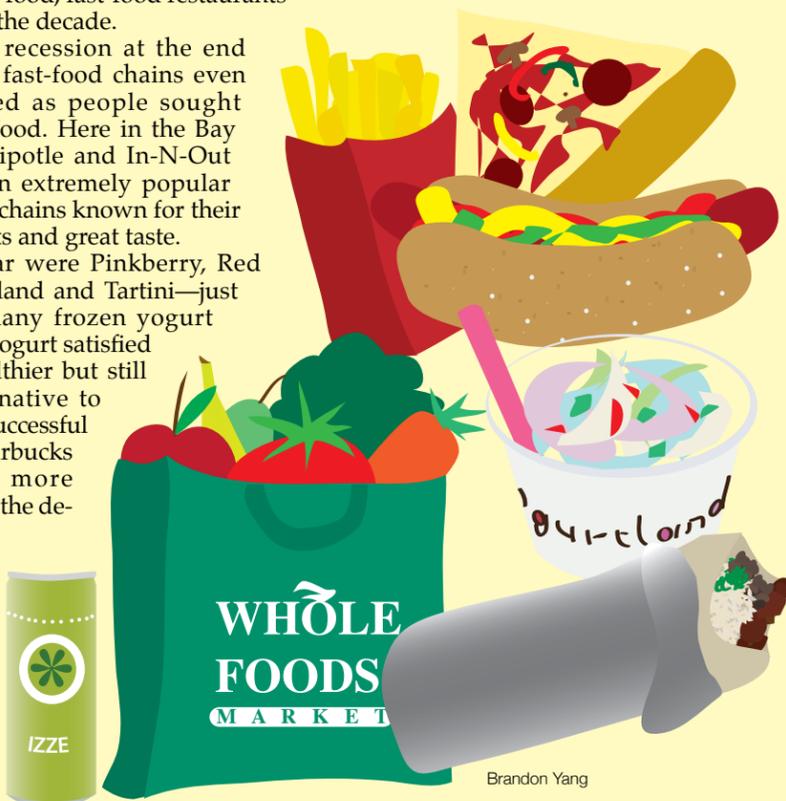
During the recession at the end of the decade, fast-food chains even flourished as people sought cheaper food. Here in the Bay Area, Chipotle and In-N-Out have been extremely popular fast-food chains known for their fresh ingredients and great taste.

Also popular were Pinkberry, Red Mango, Yogurtland and Tartini—just some of the many frozen yogurt stores. Frozen yogurt satisfied eaters as a healthier but still delicious alternative to ice cream. The successful coffee chain Starbucks became even more popular during the decade. Adults and teens alike across the nation go to Starbucks every day. The decade was a time of people still loving junk food and fast

food while trying to eat healthier and living on caffeine.

"Well, I ate a lot, so I loved the food trends of the decade," said junior Grace Kim. ♦

## DIET



## ADMISSIONS

by Saniha Shankar

There are three things that nate almost every Saratoga senior's mind as winter to a close and spring gradually its way: college, college and, college.

"March Madness" brings stre excitement to anxious seniors have awaited their acceptance for months. Where did you go? How did your interview go? What your major?

It seems as if college is all v about, but while we are all waiting for these letters, let's sth think: is there life after college? answer, surprisingly to some, In fact, it wasn't until this decac college has become as big a dea currently is.

There was a time—not lo ago—when the question wasn't about getting into college, but n importantly, it was about the process that came after the co experience.

"When I applied to col- lege in 1971, I would say 30 percent of

# Classrooms embrace advances

by Parul Singh



Phones, netbooks and hybrid cars are just some of the technological innovations that have come about in the past decade. Technological advances that have become so commonplace in the past 10 years could not have even been conceived of in the '90s. The school has also experienced changes in these past years and many teachers who have been teaching here since the '90s can recall a simpler time when the school only owned three computers total.

Assistant principal Karen Hyde remembers a time in the '90s when the staff would do the scheduling on a huge board and it would take hours and hours but now they can just plug the students into a program in the computer and the schedules are more or less automatically made.

In the early '90s, most teachers used overhead projectors and (in some cases) chalkboards to display information to their classes, math teacher Debra Troxell said. "Each teacher was not even guaranteed a computer and if they did get one they were often very slow," said Troxell.

The journalism program has also experienced drastic change in the past 20 years. Mike Tyler, the adviser of the Falcon and Talisman staffs since 1996, believes that biggest revolution that the

program has gone through is the change to digital photography. Before that the students used to have to get all the pictures developed and then physically scan them on to the computers.

Kerry Mohnike, who was the adviser of the Falcon and Talisman staffs for the five years before Tyler, remembers that students had to print out their stories in columns and then physically paste them onto boards before the boards got sent to the printer as opposed to just typing them on a computer and doing layout on the computer as students do now.

## TECH

Mohnike, currently the MAP coordinator, also recalls a time in the English department when all essays used to be handwritten except for the final draft which used to be done on a typewriter. "It was pretty old school because if they made a mistake on the typewriter, you can't go back and edit," said Mohnike.

Mike Davey, who teaches history and government, believes that technology has changed his teaching style more than anything else. Before digital projectors, he used to lecture by using an outline on a chalkboard but now he uses colorful PowerPoint presentations with images and videos integrated into them.

"The technology allows for more creativity from the students," Davey said. "The library's resources make everything much easier so students can focus on other things." ♦

2000 - 2009

# DECADE

## COLLEGE PRESSURES REACH INSANE LEVEL

domina High comes makes yeah, According to the website CollegeSurfer, there has been a giant leap in the number of early decision applicants and an overall increase in the number of students who choose to go to college.

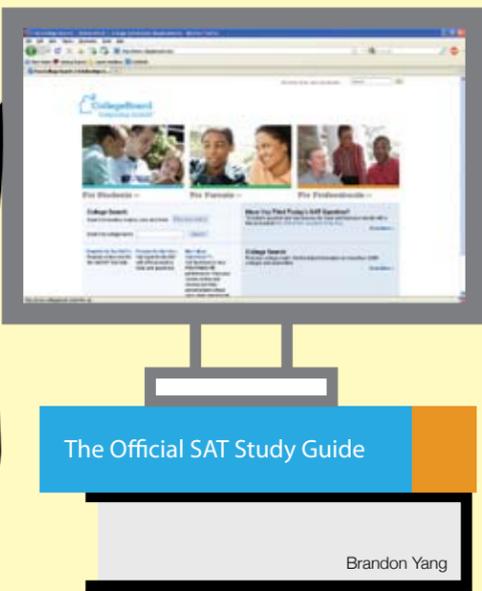
This shift in thinking has greatly affected how teenagers view college. Few seniors consider where college will take them and are more concerned with getting into the prestigious universities. Colleges such as Harvard, Princeton, Dartmouth and Brown have seen an increase of more than 40 percent during

the last decade. "They [students] put too much importance on the 'prestige' nature of the school rather than putting importance on the school that would be most appropriate for their goals and needs," Chaykin said. "Choosing a college is important but for the right reasons, not for the wrong reasons."

According to people who attended a college a decade or more ago, they agree that college was a only step on the way to get a job and going to a good college didn't necessarily guarantee a good job.

"It's how you apply your college experience that most determines financial success. There have been ivy league graduates who think the prestige of the school would carry them through to success," said Chaykin. "Life does not work that way." ♦

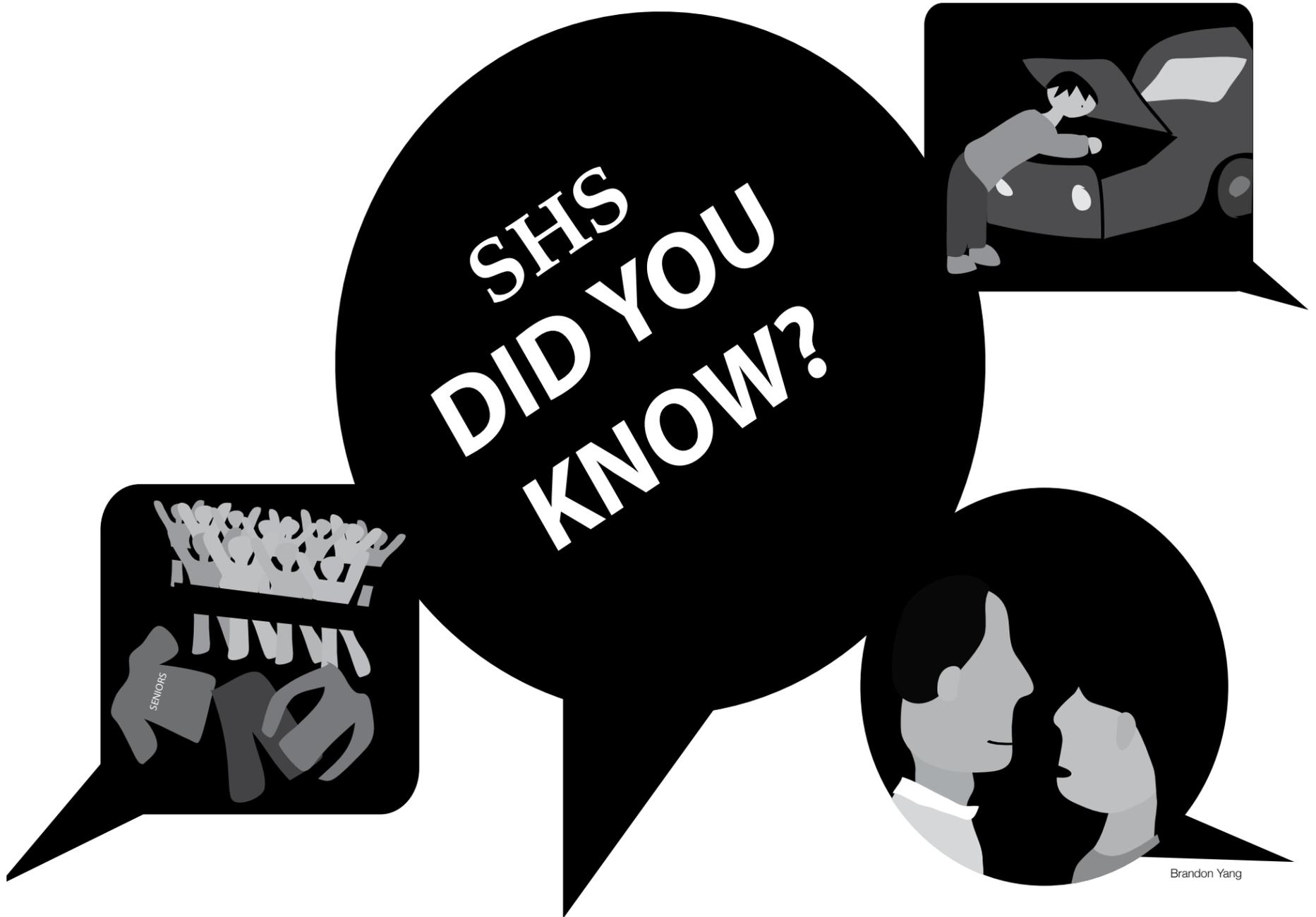
## COLLEGE



## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DECADE

- 2000:**
  - A new millenium
- 2001:**
  - 9/11 attacks
  - First Harry Potter movie released
- 2002:**
  - Kelly Clarkson wins American Idol
  - U.S. invades Afghanistan
- 2003:**
  - U.S. invades Iraq
  - Human Genome Project completed
- 2004:**
  - Facebook is established in Cambridge, Mass.
  - Cancer support popularized by LIVESTRONG bands
- 2005:**
  - Hurricane Katrina
  - Twilight saga begins
- 2006:**
  - Wii is released in North America
  - Twitter is founded
- 2007:**
  - Nancy Pelosi first female speaker of the house
  - iPhone invented
  - Virginia Tech shooting
- 2008:**
  - XXIX Olympic games in Beijing
- 2009:**
  - Obama becomes president
  - Taylor Swift is Kanye'd at VMAs

—Denise Lin and Parul Singh



## The secret behind Saratoga's history of pranks

by Mac Hyde

The Senior Prank. Often a long-standing tradition at high schools all over the nation where the minds of tomorrow have one last face off with the keepers of today. They are often harmless yet ingenious stunts designed with one thing in mind—to stun the rest of the student population with their creativity and shear impossibility. At Saratoga, however, the senior prank has been absent from school life for close to a decade.

“What started off as cute and harmless became dangerous and harmful,” said Vice Principal Karen Hyde, “to the point that a student at Los Gatos lost part of their arm in a prank.” There was a cherry bomb placed on a palm tree, which blow off a large frond. Since then

the district has taken a tough no tolerance policy towards these stunts.

Most students are confused as to why the school has disallowed students from senior pranks ad infinitum for a

prank that was pulled before the current student body was out of elementary school. Hyde justifies the policy by stating “society has become micro litigious, and any kind of tacit approval of a prank opens [the school] up to lawsuits.”

Had students remained with harmless, clever pranks like the classic deconstruction prank, where a car or other large object is disassembled and

reassembled in an impossible to achieve location such as in a class room, or on top of a gym roof. One memorable prank at SHS is the prank of 1979.

A senior boy in Mr. Drennan’s physics class concealed himself in the storage room during class. He remained hidden until later that evening when he opened the door to let a well-re-

hearsed group of senior boys and girls into the room. While some students stapled Dixie cups together, others began filling them with water. Their goal was to cover Mr. Drennan’s entire floor with water filled Dixie cups. To ensure that the school knew who was clever

enough to plan and execute the event, the center Dixies were filled with red food dye and designated their year of graduation.

This group was aware that the school had hired security to prevent such a prank, so they had a third group of students, armed with walkie-talkies who were the diversionary team. If security approached Mr. Drennan’s room, students on the roof notified others at the gym via walkie-talkie to knock over garbage cans or honk horns. Unfortunately the students were caught right as they were finishing up, but all they had to do was clean up.

While students no longer have permission for such stunts, that doesn’t stop them from developing other ways to go out with a bang as graduating seniors. ♦

**“What started off as cute and harmless became dangerous and harmful.”**

—Assistant Principal Karen Hyde

## Outgoing administrator ran into trouble with law

Eight years ago, Nichols charged after being accused of pursuing and annoying a minor

by Anoop Galivanche  
and Mira Chaykin

Although Saratoga High is not exactly scandal ridden, it does have a few shameful occurrences that have been buried deep within the school’s history. John Martin Nichols, a former assistant principal in charge of discipline, got in trouble with the law in 2002 after he was accused of allegedly making advances toward a senior boy. Months after resigning from the



Nichols

forementioned capacity for unrelated reasons in 2002, Nichols was arrested in Orange County by officials for making unwanted sexual advances toward the struggling student. He was charged with two counts annoying a child.

According to a San Jose Mercury News article from 2002, Nichols met with the boy on at least two occasions outside of school. The boy was not openly homosexual. The boy was doing poorly in

his classes, and the Mercury News said Nichols took him under his wing.

But apparently, Nichols made advances toward the boy twice during that period of time. The boy later reported Nichols to sheriff’s deputies, who proceeded to take the case and the investigation into their own hands.

The charges against the charismatic assistant principal soon after he resigned both stunned and greatly disappointed the community.

The Falcon was unable to determine how the charges were settled and where Nichols resides now. ♦

### THE BIG IDEA

#### SHS Scandal

**ALLEGATIONS:** Nichols approached a male student and made inappropriate offers to him.

**RESULTS:** Nichols charged with annoying a minor. His whereabouts are currently unknown.

## Weight room once hosted school's auto shop

by Vijay Menon  
and Abhi Venkataramana

When students enter the weight room, they probably don't realize that they are entering territory that was once vastly different. The building that now accommodates varsity athletes in addition to P.E. students was once home to an auto shop class located directly on the school campus.

English teacher Bill Peck, who graduated from the school in 1971, said students would frequently bring their cars in for repair during the time when he attended school as a student.

According to Peck, the kids enrolled in the program would work on the vehicles all day. They performed a variety of tasks ranging from fixing basic mechanical errors to learning a variety of valuable auto skills. In the process, students were educated in automobile mechanics and repair.

"Kids used to be in here all the time," said Peck. "We could just bring our cars in if they needed repair and the students would work on them and get them back to us."

One of the former teachers of this class is current Media Arts Program teacher Tony Pal-

ma. Palma reintroduced the auto shop class as a student elective in the late '90s. He continued to teach the class until it finally ended in 2003.

"I wanted students to understand the basic concepts and principles of automobiles," he said. "We talked about the basic history of cars. We also discussed ideas such as how cars were made, how the engine works and the basic fundamentals of cars."

The class was taught partly in the wood shop and partly outside in the area that currently comprises the weight room. This posed various problems for students when there was bad weather because such an event would prevent hands-on work.

"The bad part about [holding the class outdoors] was that if there was inclement weather, we couldn't head outside to do work," said Palma. "But in the majority of circumstances when we were able to work outside, we had the kids work-

ing hands on with the vehicles. They were able to learn and perform basic tasks like changing

the car's oil and also learning about basic car maintenance."

The green Volkswagen and Oldsmobile that remain outside the weight room are remnants of the time when



Olivia Chock

PE Teacher Tim Lugo instructs and observes his students in the weight room. Evidence of the old auto shop is apparent in the large rolling door at the back of the building visible behind the students.

**"I wanted students to understand the basic concepts and principles of automobiles."**

—MAP Teacher Tony Palma

students could submit their cars to the campus auto shop in hopes of getting a repair.

Although it is not known for certain by administrators, it appears that the automobiles still on campus were left behind at the old auto shop. They were simply abandoned or forgotten by their legal owners. The cars were never towed away so they ended up remaining on campus since the time that they were entered, a period that spans over several long years.

Some cars that were left

behind in the auto shop, however, were not lucky enough to have been ignored by school officials. During Peck's days as a student at the school, he drove a 1940 Chevy which needed to be fixed. He chose to submit his automobile to the campus shop.

"It was a great car," said Peck. "It meant a lot to me to have that type of car when I was back in high school because it was the type of car that was in all the movies back in the day."

However, Peck allowed time

to pass before going back to reclaim his car. After neglecting the vehicle for several days, he returned to find out that his car had not been repaired. Not only was his car not fixed, but it had been towed away and destroyed. The vehicle was marked as unclaimed and Peck was unable to get his Chevy back.

"You could say that was the lesson that I learned from [auto shop]," said Peck. "Never leave your car in the auto shop for too long," Peck joked. ♦

## The naked truth behind the senior streak

Nude runs were once an annual tradition and were mostly tolerated by the community until the 1990s

by Ben Clement  
and Sulmaan Hassan

Saratoga suburban legend sometimes alludes to a tradition known as the senior streak. From the mid-'80s until 1995, seniors left their legacy in the form of a streak through the high school while covered in body paint some time during the year. Many participants drank alcohol as way of working up courage for the streak.

Even more surprising than the lifespan of this tradition was that teachers and administrators mostly seemed to view it as a harmless activity.

In 1991, then-rookie history teacher Kim Anzalone was shocked the first time she witnessed the streak.

"It was really weird seeing my naked students running through the hallways," said Anzalone. "Kids would crowd around the doors, the teachers would be in the hallways, and it was totally accepted."

Assistant principal Karen Hyde spoke

of another occasion when the faculty heard the students were coming through the school and quickly closed the front gates. When the crowd of painted seniors reached the quad they were confronted with a big sign across the gates reading "Gotcha!"

The seniors then shredded the sign and proceeded to exit campus by the pool.

The tradition met its demise in 1995 when the senior class decided to bring the streak to Redwood Middle School.

English teacher Erick Rector, then in eighth grade, recalls the day he noticed a crowd of "painted people" running through the campus.

"It was right before lunch, so most of the students were in class; I, however, was in P.E.," said Rector. "It really wasn't that big of a deal because it happened so

fast, and they didn't come up and shake your hand or anything."

Although this was already enough to elicit condemnation from the community, the fact that the intoxicated crowd did not run but instead drove to the middle

**"I would definitely like to see more senior bonding activities, something with legacy value."**

—English teacher Erick Rector

school ultimately pushed administrators to take action. Then principal Kevin Skelly declared at the start of the following school year that any students who

participated in the streak would not be allowed to walk at graduation.

Many students were upset over the halt of this tradition and began promoting a sober streak. In 1997, a relatively small group of seniors of 20 or so streaked through the quad sober. Those who were caught were not allowed to walk at graduation as promised.

This punishment generated a large

amount of controversy within the community with various parents and even members of the district board siding with the students and their desire to go through graduation ceremonies. In fact, the topic was so noteworthy that even the San Jose Mercury News printed stories on the subject. Despite the backlash, the punishment held, and the senior streak never again returned to campus.

Since the end of this tradition, however, Rector feels there has been a lack of spirit among seniors. While he does not support the revival of the streak or any other pranks, he does have other more productive suggestions.

"I would definitely like to see more senior bonding activities, something with legacy value," said Rector. "For example, we have a lot of gray walls here, and I think it would be great if the senior class painted a mural on one of the walls as a donation. That's something that is positive, enforces school spirit and will leave a lasting mark." ♦

### TOGATALKS

What is your opinion on the ban on school pranks?

I'd prefer that pranks be kept out of school as opposed to having them at Saratoga High.



freshman Neil Prasad

I don't have a strong preference. I wouldn't participate but I am not against others doing it.



sophomore Vishal Goel

I think pranks would be a good way to relieve stress in this academic environment.



junior Kenny Song

meet my

Students from abroad find new experiences at SHS



Olivia Chock and Jenny Zhang

## Quadrilingual Croatian feels at home

by Kim Tsai

The way sophomore Tonio Galoic sees it, his ability to speak Croatian and English is no big deal.

At first glance, Galoic seems like just another student looking for his next class. Even when he speaks English, it sounds as if he has lived in the U.S. for his entire life. Without being told, it is doubtful that anyone could know that Galoic came from Croatia.

Galoic also said he feels right at home in such a diverse high school, where languages besides English are commonly spoken at home.

Galoic arrived in California one week before the start of his freshman year from Croatia, where he studied English for about nine years.

Even with this background in the language, moving to the U.S. was a little weird and difficult. He said that the people here are really different from Croatians

because they are nicer.

Along with English and Croatian, Galoic also knows a bit of German and is currently taking Spanish. He learned German for about a year, taking private lessons in Croatia.

Galoic feels that his English has improved because he has had to practice it every day at school.

Because of the singularity of his native language, Galoic can only speak Croatian to his family, including his cousin, freshman Anthony Bilic.

Galoic also prefers to eat Croatian food such as pastas with tomato sauce because he is not accustomed to American food. He and his family often go out to restaurants to eat Croatian food rather than eat the typical food that American culture brings.

**“School is much easier here because everyone is so helpful. The system is easier too.”**

—sophomore Tonio Galoic

Although there may be various language barriers, Galoic has not had too much trouble making friends. He said, “there are other people who are like me and are very nice.”

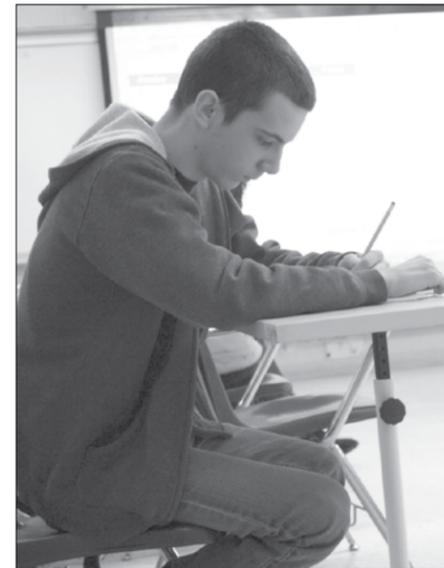
Galoic, although having moved here two years ago, plans to return to Croatia after he has graduated from Saratoga High. By then, he will have

completed four years of high school. He is also thinking about going to college here, but is not sure about it yet.

“School is much easier here because everyone is so helpful,” said Galoic. “The system is easier too.”

Bilic said it was cool to have his cousin come here.

“He didn't even know what In-N-Out or root beer was,” Bilic said. “But it's really cool, because he's like a brother to me.” ♦



Olivia Chock

Sophomore Tonio Galoic believes his speaking Croatian to not be that big of a deal.

## School resources help ELD students succeed

by Lillian Chen

Tonio Galoic raises his hand, confused about the English words he has never learned that stare back at him. Teacher Sara Tseng walks over and spends time with Galoic, helping him to comprehend what he is reading.

Galoic is a foreign exchange student from Croatia who is learning English and one of 15 students taking Tseng's English Language Development class, or ELD. The class focuses on developing students' English reading, speaking and writing skills.

Tseng has been teaching the ELD class for the past two years. Her students come from many diverse backgrounds and speak a wide range of languages such

as Spanish, Thai, Japanese, Korean and Mandarin.

“We use a textbook and many other different supplementary sources for them to learn,” said Tseng. “There is not an actual, strict curriculum that ELD students need to follow.”



Tseng

For teachers to be able to have English learners in their class, they need to complete an authorization called CLAD, which stands for Cross Cultural Language and Academic Development. Many teachers in the district did this last year after being audited by the state and found to be out of compliance with requirements.

Besides having a faculty that is now much more legally able to teach these students, the English department has sought to help English learners by creat-

ing a library of simplified independent reading books. Books range from first grade to high school level books for the students to read depending on their own individual level.

In addition to the library of independent reading books, writing assessments and rubrics are used to assist them for doing well in the regular English classes they take. English teacher Natasha Ritchie said the school also offers simplified novels as well as original novels, but it is all up to the student on whether or not he or she wants to use it.

Many of the ELD students came to the United States around two to three years ago and are placed into the class due to non-fluent English skills, which is determined by a test that many students take with the permission of their parents, and each of the students has individual

needs.

With English also being her own second language, Tseng is able to understand almost exactly how the students feel. Tseng feels that it is “still very challenging” to teach the students because she needs to meet each student's different needs, but she feels a special connection with them.

“I put myself in their shoes, and I can understand how they feel,” said Tseng.

Tseng tries to talk one-on-one with each student to see how they feel and to figure out what they need. “Having such a small class of 15 students definitely helps because each student needs individual attention,” said Tseng.

“It's been challenging but very rewarding. I have learned a lot from teaching this class, and I am glad to have the chance to teach this class,” said Tseng. ♦

## Chinese teen author writes from her soul

by Sabrina Cismas

**T**ime is like the waves on the shore, slipping away quickly, only leaving the memory of sound and shadow in our hearts. They used to make our life colorful, but now they're only forever remembered."

And so ends the English translation of the first story in the Chinese anthology, "The Story of Walking."

Filled with wise messages and meaningful life stories, "The Story of Walking" seems to be a book from ancient China,

written by a notable philosopher. Actually, it was written by a teenager.

Sophomore Mei Gao recently moved to the United States from Beijing, China. She has loved writing autobiographical short stories since she was a child.

Gao's book, which is available in China and on select Chinese websites, is a collection of her personal short stories that she wrote between the ages of 12 and 14. The book was published in 2008 by the Chinese Sanxia Publishing Company when Gao was 15.

"The book is a story of my walking, growing up and getting mature," she said. "It actually does not have a specific

theme. It's just all about my life, my experiences."

The Story of Walking was officially published after three months of revising and binding the whole book under a controversial cover. Gao said that the publishers came up with several covers for the book until she decided to make one herself.

"The publishers thought I was a kid. Their cover was really childish, with many shades of pink and a cute tree." Gao said. "When I saw it I told them, 'this is not a fairytale book!'"

Gao ended up drawing and Photo-shopping stepping stones for the cover as a symbol of the book's title.

Friends and family responded positively, saying Gao's writing was very mature and heavy for a teenager. They said [Gao] was thinking in mature ways, and they felt inspired by her stories.

Besides her mom, who has always been there for her, Gao says that two Chinese teachers have been an undeniable help in the whole process.

When she was in elementary school, Gao found herself writing a random passage about a flower she saw.

"At the time, I wasn't really sure if

my writing was good or not, so I showed the passage to my Chinese teacher," Gao said.

Her teacher's response flattered Gao, as the teacher said, "You know, Mei, you are really gifted, this is great. Keep on working."

Gao was inspired by her teacher, and began writing profusely. Gao recalled that she didn't learn many writing techniques from this teacher, but nevertheless, the teacher was a big encouragement.

"She sent me on this road," Gao said.

In middle school, Gao met another mentor, her Chinese teacher, who taught her a lot about the Chinese language. She also taught Gao life lessons that really helped her with her writing.

"There aren't a lot of fancy words in it, but the result turns out really fancy because the stories are so down-to-earth and touching," she said.

Gao has never read her whole book diligently, as she says she knows all the stories in it by heart. However, just out of curiosity, she sat down one night in December and cracked open the book. To her surprise, she noticed how light and soft her words and feelings were.

"There are melancholy elements in there," she said. "I figured out that when I was writing all those things, I was trying to catch my childhood."

When she was writing the book, Gao said she felt that she was maturing, and

**"My writing right now is so heavy and realistic, not even close to how innocent and pure it was when I was younger."**

—sophomore Mei Gao



Amanda Yi

Sophomore Mei Gao is an author who loves to write autobiographical short stories.

seeing the world in its true form.

"I was actually really touched when I read it," Gao said. "My writing right now is so heavy and realistic, not even close to how innocent and pure it was when I was younger. I was almost brought to tears that night while reading." ♦

For the full version of this story, visit [www.saratogafalcon.org](http://www.saratogafalcon.org)

### Foreign languages spoken at home and the number of students who speak them

—courtesy of registrar Jeanne Jamieson

### FALCON FIGURES

68	Mandarin	11	Japanese	6	French	3	Vietnamese	2	Hebrew	1	Croatian	1	Punjabi
24	Korean	10	Cantonese	3	Russian	2	German	2	Hindi	1	Filipino or Tagalog	1	Turkish
15	Farsi	7	Spanish	3	Taiwanese	2	Gujarati	2	Thai	1	Pulosh	6	other non-English

## Japanese student assimilates to American life

by Alex Ju

**S**aki Kitagawa may seem at first like a regular individual at Saratoga High. She works hard in all her classes, has many friends and participates in a variety of activities. However, Kitagawa is much more than an ordinary student.

Junior Saki Kitagawa is an exchange student from the Saitama Prefecture in Japan, located in an area next to Tokyo.

Like many others, Kitagawa came here to further her education and garner new experiences. While it may be stressful for her to complete her junior year in English, Kitagawa felt the experience would be beneficial for her in the long run.

"I wanted to study English and know more about American culture," Kitagawa said.

Kitagawa finds the most predominant contrast between Japanese and American culture is the two countries' foods.

"The food in Japan is very healthy," Kitagawa said. "But I like American food too."

She has tried a variety of American activities, including marching band. While common in the United States, marching band does not exist in Japan. She played a variety of instruments, including the base drum, gong, tamtam and cymbals, as a member of the pit percussion.

Meanwhile, she has also had to adjust

to the rigorous schoolwork.

"I've been academically challenged," said Kitagawa. "[Saratoga High] is very different from Japanese schools."

However, her teachers have been very understanding.

"English and History are still hard for me, but if I have hard homework, my teacher tells me to just do my best," Kitagawa said.

She still keeps in close contact with her family back at home as well. Both her mother and sister were exchange students in the past, her sister having attended a school in Wisconsin four years ago.

"I've wanted to come here for five years. When my sister came back to Japan from America, I was so surprised! She spoke English fluently and told me about her exchange student life. And then I wanted to be a exchange student," Kitagawa said.

She communicates with her family through e-mails and letters, obtaining advice from her mom and sister from their past exchange experiences.

"Before I came here, my family was worried about me because I couldn't speak English at all," Kitagawa said.

Kitagawa has been learning English in the ELD class, taught by Sara Tseng.

"The class is really helpful. Mrs. Tseng teaches us a lot of things," Kitagawa said. "I love the class very much."

Before coming to America five months ago, she attended a three-week language camp in Canada to work on her English, arranged by the American Scandinavian Student Exchange (ASSE).

She and her family met her host family, the Allens, in Tokyo over the summer.

"My family loves my host family very much," Kitagawa said.

In familiarizing herself with America, Kitagawa's host family plays an important role. They help her immensely in improving her English, and often introduce her to new, unique experiences.

"They are very nice," Kitagawa said of her host family. "They take me on trips to places like Los Angeles and Hawaii."

Her host family consists of the Allens, who have two children currently at Saratoga High; Marianna, a sophomore, and Matthew, a freshman. Both help her with her homework and English.

She has also made many friends in her

**"I was very nervous when I first went to SHS, but students came to me, and I made lots of friends."**

—junior Saki Kitagawa



Amanda Yi

Junior Saki Kitagawa loves learning the English language and American culture.

time at Saratoga.

"I was very nervous when I first went to SHS, but students came to me, and I made lots of friends," said Kitagawa.

Kitagawa feels that her English is gradually improving and that she is adapting well to American culture.

"I love America," said Kitagawa. ♦

For the full version of this story, visit [www.saratogafalcon.org](http://www.saratogafalcon.org)

### TOGATALKS

**If you could speak any language, what would it be and why?**

Korean because I think it's a cute language and Korean entertainment is becoming more popular.



senior Jennifer Li

Probably Croatian because I've always wanted to go there and they have really nice beaches.



freshman Kendrick Bauer

French, so I could order food in France. Or maybe Arabian. Can you imagine me speaking Arabian?



sophomore Sarah Lum



Making it big in the entertainment industry

## A passion for sound: singer/songwriter Vienna Teng encourages students to cultivate their love for music

by Christine Tseng

In today's society, simply wanting to be an entertainer is not enough; aside from being talented, getting noticed takes a lot of effort too. One such persevering entertainer is Saratoga High alumnus and singer Vienna Teng, the stage name for 1996 graduate Cynthia Shih.

She sings from four main genres: folk, pop, indie folk and chamber pop. Since her debut in 2002 she has produced four albums, including "Waking Hour" and "Warm Strangers," which once reached No. 2 on Amazon.com's bestseller list.

"[Music] was my first love, I think," said Teng. "My parents tell me I was always singing as a toddler."

She continued to nurture this love in her high school years with the piano.

"I found the piano endlessly fascinating," she said.

"Through high school and college, I'd play and write songs as an escape from everything else, and as a way of working out my understanding of the world."

Teng joined Stanford's a capella team, Harmonics. She also pursued her interest in music when she began to record her own compositions at Stanford, planning to distribute her recordings on campus and continue her music along the way.

Teng didn't always want to be a singer, though. She studied computer science at Stanford and worked for Cisco Systems as a software engineer before pursuing music.

"I studied classical piano (and a bit of jazz/composition) in high school and college, but didn't attend music school or major in music," said Teng. "Most of my real training came from playing gigs in coffeehouses."

Teng managed to get these gigs through perseverance and hard work. All her gigs

came from open mics, nights where she signed up to play a song. She also sent demo CDs to coffeehouses but received little response.

"I'd sign up to play one song, and sometimes I'd get invited back the next week to play a longer set," said Teng. "On the basis of those sets, I'd get offered a weekly slot, or someone who ran a house concert series would offer to host me, and so on. I tried dropping off demo CDs at coffeehouses and making follow-up phone calls, but I didn't get a single show that way."

Teng's path to fame wasn't completely smooth either. Though her parents supported her, they still had doubts about the stability of a music-oriented career. Teng was rejected many times; her phone calls were unreturned, her demo tapes were spurned and her performances were more often than not given to sparse,

uninterested crowds. However, Teng maintained a positive attitude, saying that "it's the 'yes' in a pile of 'no' answers that matters."

Teng continued to pursue her musical career and signed on with Virt Records in 2002, which was a big jump for her.

"It was exciting, but also felt like a gamble. We were two unknowns, a new independent label and a recent open-mic graduate, trying to make something happen together. Fortunately, it paid off for both of us," said Teng.

Because of her music, Teng has also appeared on many shows such as The Late Show with David Letterman, the CBS Saturday Early show and CNN's NewsNight with Aaron Brown. Though she has had so much exposure, performing is still a different experience every time.



Courtesy of Vienna Teng

Vienna Teng poses for the cover of her 4th album, *Inland Territory*, released in April 2009

### THE BIG IDEA

#### Vienna Teng

**Graduated:** 1996

**Albums:** four studio albums; *Waking Hour* (2002), *Warm Strangers* (2004), *Dreaming Through The Noise* (2006), *Inland Territory* (2009)

**Favorite Song:** "Harbor" from *Warm Strangers*

**Favorite Verse:** "sail your sea, meet your storm/all I want is to be your harbor/the light in me will guide you home/all I want is to be your harbor."

"Every night is a little different," said Teng. "Sometimes I'm nervous and it's like a piano recital—I'm just praying to get through it without messing up or saying anything stupid. Sometimes we play well but don't fully connect with the audience. Sometimes the performance is sloppy, but everybody has a good time. And once in a while everything falls into place and we get something transcendent. Live music can be both entertainment and spiritual practice at once, and I'm always trying to get the whole room to experience that."

Teng loves the musical opportunities that her profession brings and she also enjoys the experiences that come along.

"[The most interesting part of my job is] meeting people with a wide variety of careers, interests and life stories, and having a starting-point for conversation—if a song of mine has connected with them, we already know we have something in common," said Teng.

Many singers change professions when they become too old to sing, since their voices may become weak over time. However, Teng plans to continue singing for as long as she can, but might also consider a switch in her career.

"I'm interested in other fields as well—sustainable enterprise and technology in particular—so I might make a career switch at some point," said Teng. "But creating and playing music will always be part of my life."

Teng advises young, aspiring musicians to keep loving music.

"Do whatever keeps you in love with music—whether it's devoting your life to it, or keeping it a 'hobby' so you never have to rely on it to pay the bills," said Teng. "Find like-minded musicians; learn from and support each other. Do things that scare you a bit. Dare to ask for help from people you admire. Feed the other parts of your brain. It'll make your music better." ♦

## Lady Gaga plays 'love game' with American audience

by Apeksha Sharma

"I'm obsessively opposed to the typical."

Truer words have never been spoken by Lady Gaga, who created an unprecedented change in the entertainment industry by reshaping music for the new generation. Unlike many of today's popular musicians, Lady Gaga can give an eye-opening performance that is always completely different from what other artists offer.

Lady Gaga, born Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta, began her musical career as a songwriter for many famous artists including Britney Spears and the Pussycat Dolls. She soon proved that she too had talent and transformed everything that music stands for. Her songs explain the truth of everyday life while put against a catchy beat. She continues to raise the bar for her musical competitors, even though

she is relatively new to the business. Still, she doesn't let the fame get to her and continues to respect the boundaries and expectations of her fans.

By far, Lady Gaga is the most bold, fearless and courageous artist out there. She is original and never afraid to be put

on any demeaning list that the Hollywood media churns out. She continually jokes about her bizarre wardrobe stating, "My grandmother is basically blind, but she can make out the lighter parts, like my skin and hair. She says, 'I can see you, because you have no pants on.' So I'll continue to wear no pants so that my grandma can see me (One Source Talent)."

Even with her unique fashion sense,

pairing a leotard with high rise boots in the frigid London weather, Lady Gaga still manages to dominate music award shows, such as the Grammys and American Music Awards, with the most nominations of any artist. She has a total of 27 nominations in award shows around the world,

**By far, Lady Gaga is the most bold, fearless, and courageous artist out there. She can always give an eye-opening performance**

winning nearly half of those awards. But how does she continue to impress in Hollywood? With her adventurous outlook on living a famous lifestyle, Lady Gaga proves that she has the chops to survive

within the harsh realities of Hollywood.

On the other hand, many reality TV "stars" with no real talent manage to make their way onto television in a desperate attempt to gain or extend their 15 minutes of fame. MTV's notorious new

reality series, "Jersey Shore," features young Italian-Americans living large in Sea Side Heights, New Jersey. These self-proclaimed guidos and guidettes insist that their controversial show gives them the right to charge an enormous amount of money for a single appearance at a club or talk show. Unlike the talent that Lady Gaga displays, these egotistical attention seekers have no talent and therefore should not be allowed to parade around New Jersey insisting they are the best thing that has ever happened to the state.

So what does it take to be successful in Hollywood? Well, for starters, people should leave the hairspray and plastic surgery at home and focus on being an individual. Being unique and coming out with a new version of music is key. Like Lady Gaga, they should focus less on the fist pumping like champs and more on catchy beats. ♦

# Shows return in '10: previews and recaps

## HOUSE

**Recap:** In season 6 of "House," we follow House and his team who get back on track with their unique patients after House's stint at a rehab center in the previous season. This season, however, it seems as if the medical aspects of the series are overshadowed by the dynamic relationships between the main characters. House, for now, seems to have given up his chase for Cuddy and respects her relationship with Lucas. We also find out more about Wilson's "soft spot" for his patients, especially after he donates his liver to a terminal cancer patient, and witness his propensity for guilt trips.

**Preview:** This season still holds many more riveting medical mysteries yet to unfold. It seems that some closure must be reached between Cuddy and House and, with Lucas in the way, their lives will get even more hopelessly complicated. The side plots including Foreman, Thirteen and Taub will only be enough to distract the viewers from the main plot, or to provide comedic relief, as with the trick the team attempted to play on Foreman.

## GLEE

**Recap:** The unity of the Glee Club started to fall apart when Quinn finally admits that the real father of her baby is Puck and not her boyfriend, Finn, who becomes disillusioned. Members of the club desperately try to prevent Rachel from finding out who the biological father is but eventually Rachel finds out. This leads to complete chaos within the club. They manage to temporarily set aside the drama and focus on winning the sectionals. Despite the unexpected disqualification of their teacher, Mr. Schuester, the McKinley High School Glee Club wins the Sectionals. Amid their celebrations, Mr. Schuester realizes his feelings for Emma and the season ends with their first kiss.

**Preview:** There is the possibility of Finn and Rachel getting together in the future episodes, now that everyone knows about the real father of the baby. The kiss between Mr. Schuester and Emma will push the story forward with their complicated relationship. As always, Sue will try

## GOSSIP GIRL

**Recap:** Serena is not going to see Trip anymore. Instead she gets closer with Nate. Serena's dad tries to contact her, but her mom hides his letter. Olivia gets jealous of Vanessa and Dan's relationship therefore making Dan feel awkward. After Olivia's departure, Dan expresses his true feelings towards Vanessa. Blair and Chuck learned to appreciate the sentimental qualities in each other. Their relationship continues to flourish and mature as Chuck deals with his emotions regarding his father and supposedly dead mother. Lily and Rufus find out that Scott is their biological son and become part of his life again Rufus begins to question Lily's actions. Jenny continues to serve as "queen bee" of Constance. Her relationship with Eric continues to deteriorate.

**Preview:** The drama is on a temporary hiatus but will return on March 8. There are many spoilers, including one that involves Chuck and Blaire going through a "potentially irreparable rough patch" and possibly breaking up, floating around the Internet but many of them

—by Kyumin Shim

## TOGATALKS

What show are you most excited to have back?

"I'm excited for House because I love watching the mysteries unfold as the episodes go on."



junior Michelle Wang

"Glee! The last season ended so well that I can't wait until the new one."



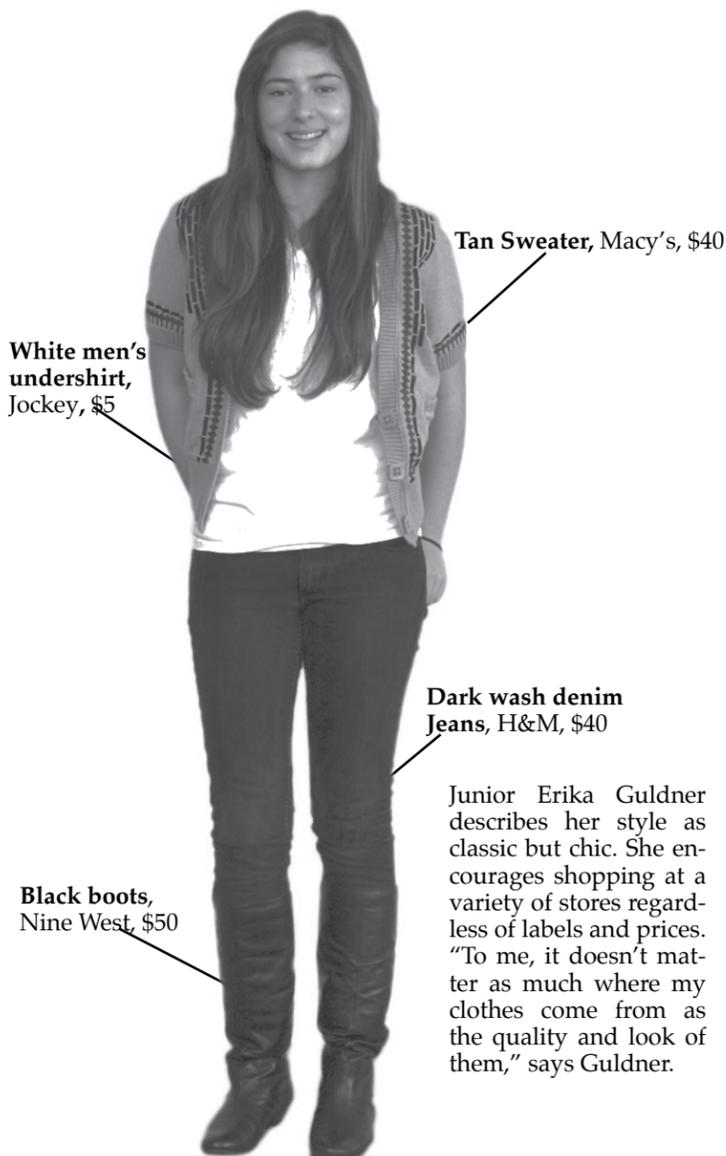
sophomore Sneha Belkhale

"Gossip Girl because I have a feeling the producers have something up their sleeves."



junior Emily Hsia

## STYLE FILES



Junior Erika Guldner describes her style as classic but chic. She encourages shopping at a variety of stores regardless of labels and prices. "To me, it doesn't matter as much where my clothes come from as the quality and look of them," says Guldner.

## Too many 'Lost Symbols' in Brown's new thriller

"Brown makes it hard to keep track of the timeline of the book."  
Nandini Ruparel



Starting with "Angels and Demons" and going on to pen the best-selling "Da Vinci Code" author Dan Brown has made a name for himself writing smart thrillers involving fictional college professor Robert Langdon. Brown has a lot of hopes riding on his latest installment in the Langdon series, "The Lost Symbol," which came out last September.

"The Lost Symbol" follows Langdon as he goes to visit an older friend named Peter Solomon in Washington, D.C. After getting there, he realizes that both Solomon and his sister are in danger and must follow a series of symbols and clues left by a madman in order to save them. Along the way, he encounters a psychotic CIA agent, a secret society called the Freemasons, and a tattooed freak.

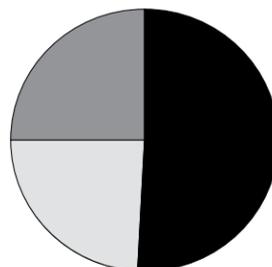
As shown in his previous books, Brown has a love affair with a convoluted plot and shocking revelations at every turn. Similarly, "The Lost Symbol" is structured in a way that keeps the reader in the dark and teases him or her with little hints of the truth. As if this isn't confusing enough, Brown also employs the tactic of flashbacks, which makes it hard to keep track of the timeline of the book. If one is able to read the whole book in a single sitting, "The Lost Symbol" makes for a great read. However, it is 528 pages, and that makes it a bit more difficult—if you come back to read it after dinner, you'd better remember exactly what you were reading about before because it's very easy to get lost between the pages of this book.

That's not to say that "The Lost Symbol" is poorly written. Brown is a magnificent writer; he draws the reader in with amazing descriptions and his prose is very well developed. No matter how confusing the book's plot is, the writing is clear and the sentences are succinct and to the point. Brown employs a unique style; it is fun to read his books.

The bottom line? While "The Lost Symbol"

## FALCONPOLL

What is your favorite Dan Brown Book?



- 51% The Da Vinci Code
- 24% Angels and Demons
- 25% Haven't read Dan Brown

The Falcon polled 50 juniors and seniors on Feb. 8.

BOYS' SOCCER

# Falcons score chance at CCS playoffs

by Roy Bisht  
and Aanchal Mohan

Just a few months ago, when the season started, few would have ever guessed that the boys' soccer team, led by a new coach and made up mostly of sophomores, would even be able to scrape up a few wins, let alone compete for a league title and a spot in CCS. However, after finishing with a 13-6-1 record and a league title, they are ready to compete in the playoffs.

"We've played some really close games, some we've won, and some we've lost," said sophomore defender Stanton Ho. "For a team with as little varsity experience as we have, we've done really well."

To end the season, the Falcons went 6-1-1, beating Homestead 4-2 on Feb. 18, losing to Fremont 1-2 on Feb. 16, tying Santa Clara 2-2 on Feb. 11, beating Lynbrook 4-1 on Feb. 9, Cupertino 4-0 on Feb. 4, Wilcox 2-0 on Feb. 2, Santa Clara 2-1 on Feb. 1 and Homestead 5-1 on Jan. 26. The wins have helped the team rebound from losses early in the season against Fremont on Jan. 21 and Cupertino on Jan. 12, and helped them finish in first place with a 13-6-1 record over the course of the season.

"There have been some tough losses earlier this year where we played poorly but after those games we've been able to get back onto our feet and perform well the next game, and that's been a key to our success this year," said sophomore midfielder Rajiv Ramakabir.

The ability to bounce back after a loss has proved to be a savior for the Falcons, who have not lost consecutive games yet

this season. Ramakabir credits this to the leadership and focus of coach Adam Clarke, who has stepped up in his first season as head coach at Saratoga.

"[Clark] really understands everything about the game, he really knows how to coach a team and how to treat us after a poor game and get us prepared for the next," said Ramakabir. "Overall, he's really a coach of tremendous caliber."

Sophomore defenders Manish Raghavan and Jonathon Junqua, and senior forward Sean Ashe have also acted as team captains to assist Clarke.

"[Raghavan], [Junqua] and [Ashe] have really been key leaders for us this year," said senior goalie Kevin Benzing. "Their leadership has really helped us step up our game."

Another key to success is the team's approach and strategy for each game, which, according to Ramakabir, is "to just score".

"The defenders and midfielders work together in trying to get the ball up the field to the forwards so they can score," said Junqua. "When we keep it that simple, we have a lot of success."

After finishing in first place during the regular season, the Falcons will have a bye for the first round of CCS playoffs, then they will play in the quarterfinals on Feb. 27, against an opponent to be determined.

"We are proud of what we have done so far but we are still going to have to be more consistent down the stretch if we want to be successful in CCS," said Ho. "Even though we have played well recently, it's a whole different game once we reach playoffs." ♦



Amanda Yi

The Falcon boys played Santa Clara on Feb. 11. Clockwise from top left: senior Dale Everett jumps up for a kick; junior Alan Wang scrimmages with an opponent; teammates congratulate Troy Doles after he scores a goal.

BOYS' BASKETBALL

# Team fails to qualify for CCS, looks to rebuild team

by David Eng  
and Jenny Zhang

You win some, you lose some.

No one understands this more than the boys' basketball team, which saw its hopes of a CCS berth fade away in the waning seconds of a Feb. 12 game against rival Lynbrook Vikings.

Entering the crucial game with a 4-6 record, the Falcons had hopes of defeating a Lynbrook team they had obliterated 61-38 on Dec. 18 and edged 76-61 more recently on Jan. 22.

After Lynbrook made a half court shot at halftime, the Falcons were down by two points heading into the locker room, but they managed to claw their way back and had a three-point lead with just 15 seconds remaining in regulation.

However, a victory was simply not in the cards for Saratoga, as the team's narrow lead disappeared on a last-second desperation three-pointer by Lynbrook to tie the game and send it into overtime.

Early in the extra period, the Vikings took control and never

looked back, handing the Falcons a 70-63 loss.

Last year, Saratoga had a meager 4-8 league record, but boasted a 7-6 preseason win-loss count, which ultimately earned them their CCS bid. This year, however, the Falcons went just 4-8 in non-league games and had no chance of pulling to an even .500 in league after the loss to Lynbrook.

"We just didn't win the games we needed to, which was disappointing and really killed us," said freshman center Stevie Berman.

To Saratoga's credit though, they put up a good fight against the Vikings, who were 6-3 in league and 6-1 at home prior to the match up.

The Falcons nearly survived a career night from Lynbrook guard Justin Chen, who tallied an incredible 35 points on eight three-pointers.

Saratoga's own scoring machine, senior shooting guard Daniel Chou, managed 19 points of his own on two shots from downtown but had to sit out three of the four minutes of overtime due to a concussion from the opponent as Chou went up

for a lay up.

"After they made a buzzer beater to send it to overtime, our team kind of lost momentum," said Chou. "I don't know how much [my injury] actually affected the team, but I was disappointed that I wasn't able to stay in the game and try to push through to win."

The team, however, finished their season with a strong win over Santa Clara on Senior Night. Before the Feb. 17 game began, Saratoga recognized the efforts of four varsity seniors: center Vinnie Carstens, guard Daniel Chou, forward Andy Johnson and guard Shawn Ra. Saratoga won in blowout fashion 65-51 with contributions from the four.

According to Chou, the team's 5-7 league record was not exactly where anybody wanted to be by the season's end but the basketball program seems to have a lot of room to improve for next season.

"I think we will be good, just a lot smaller but hopefully quicker," said Berman. "We are losing some really good seniors. They were our leaders and captains and they basically controlled our team." ♦



Amanda Yi

At the Feb. 10 basketball game against Monta Vista, junior Chris Guengerich shoots the ball, just missing a defender's blocking hand.

GIRLS' SOCCER

## Tie ends 8-year CCS absence

by Olivia Chock  
and Ren Norris

It all came down to the results of the Feb. 18 Fremont and Wilcox game. If Fremont tied or lost, the Saratoga girls' soccer team would be league champions and head to CCS for the first time in eight years. A win for Fremont would push Saratoga to second place and dash their dreams of CCS. As fate had it, the two teams tied, allowing Saratoga to just barely slip into the first round of CCS.

Saratoga won the El Camino division with a final league record of 7-1-4 and play the first round of CCS on Feb. 24 against Santa Catalina high school.

"It sucks to have our place in league rely on the results of another game but the girls are really excited since we haven't been to CCS in seven or eight years," said senior co-captain Sam Li.

On Feb. 13, the girls tied Milpitas 1-1 due to a shot by senior Adele Perera. Perera scored another goal off of senior co-captain Jordan Leonard in the Feb. 11 game against Santa Clara that also ended in a 1-1 tie.

On the team's Senior Day on Feb. 9, the seniors played their last home game that ended in a 5-0 victory against Lynbrook. In the first five minutes, sopho-

more Kari Clark scored off of an assist from Perera. Later on in the first half, sophomore Courtney Brandt scored off an assist from junior Ren Norris. In the second half, Clark added another goal. Li also scored a goal off of an assist from senior Sarah Guy, who also added in a goal.

The girls had a 2-0 victory against Wilcox on Feb. 2. In first half, Leonard scored a goal off an assist from freshman Evelyn Lee. Brandt also scored a goal in the second half.

On Feb. 4, the team beat Cupertino 3-0. Perera scored a goal in the first half off an assist from Brandt. Li scored a penalty kick after Leonard was fouled. In the second half, Perera scored again off across from Clark.

"[The girls] have such positive attitudes and are fired up for every game. Even when we're playing weaker teams, they play at the same high level. We can definitely do well in CCS," said Anzalone.

The girls faced Santa Catalina in the first round of CCS on Feb. 24. For results of the game, visit [saratogafalcon.org](http://saratogafalcon.org).

"I don't really know what to expect [from Santa Catalina] but we have all of our starters healthy and ready to go," said Anzalone. "All we can do is give it our best shot." ♦

ATHLETE OF THE ISSUE

## Junior dives with discipline

by Anoop Galivanche  
and Jason Wu

To watch junior Lauren Gardanier diving on the three-meter springboard is to see an athlete who is supremely in control of her body. As her dive begins, she immaculately positions herself to achieve the maximum height, striving for the perfect angle. Springing upward, Gardanier is like a ballerina in air, her body spinning, her legs adjusted accordingly until she splashes cleanly and straight up through barely splashing water. But this exhibition of talent isn't a rare occurrence. It's a consistent skill that Gardanier draws upon every day during her diving practice. Gardanier gained this skill through nine years of focused practice during which time Gardanier has acclimated to the unique airless feeling of diving.

"[The sensation of diving] not as foreign to me as it used to be," Gardanier said. "I've gotten used to the feeling of flying."

This acclimation to diving is a result of Gardanier's many years of daily practices at the International Swim Center in Santa Clara, where in addition to practicing just diving, Gardanier spends a considerable amount of time conditioning.

"We need to be in good shape in order to dive properly," Gardanier said. "You can't competitively dive if you aren't physi-



Courtesy of Lauren Gardanier

Junior Lauren Gardanier dives with great form during a competition.

cally strong."

The discipline she has built up has impacted not only her outlook on life but also the way she tackles problems at school.

"Just like a test, you have to keep at it and work like crazy to get results," Gardanier said.

Bearing the importance of conditioning in mind, Gardanier acknowledged that form is the deciding factor. She would know, having attended numerous prestigious diving competitions, including nationals and a recent meet in Ohio in earlier this month where she competed against many soon-to-be Olympic athletes.

"The conditioning is just tedious work but the form is an art," she says.

The mastery of this art is what compels Gardanier to

push herself, even at times when diving can be overwhelming.

"I think the fact that I have to dive better than people who may very well go on to compete in the Olympics makes the competition a bit scarier," Gardanier said jokingly. But on the springboard, she insists that maintaining one's composure is imperative as diving is as much a mental challenge as it is a physical one.

"Every time you step on the board, you have to be mentally aware because one mistake could result in an accident," she said.

But this test of equanimity and physical strength, which would seem daunting to the average person, is what keeps Gardanier going.

"Knowing that you did a great dive when you hit the water is a great feeling." ♦

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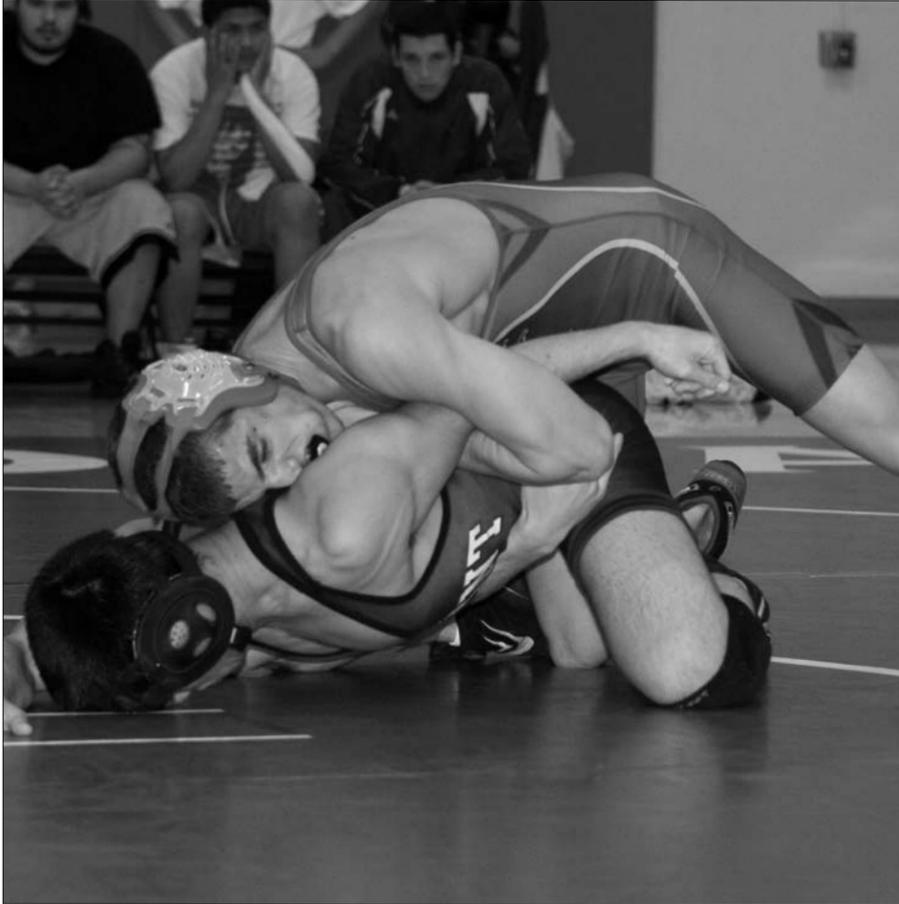
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## BOYS' WRESTLING

## Falcons end season with disappointing CCS finish



Courtesy of Alfred Murabito

Sophomore Alfred Murabito pins down his opponent during a CCS tournament on Feb. 19.

by Tim Rollinson

The wrestling season seemed to be taking a turn for the better as the Saratoga team headed into its CCS meet on Feb. 19 and 20 at Independence High School.

Team captain Allan Yen hoped for one more chance to finally compete again after recovering from a severe foot injury that kept him out of the majority of this season's regular meets.

In addition, sophomores Alfred Murabito and Nick Marshall and freshman Zach Hansen, who were all previously ranked in the top 10 for their respective weight classes, were predicted to place in the top ten at CCS.

This momentum came to a sudden halt when Yen was not even given a chance to wrestle. His left foot, which was broken earlier in the season never fully healed and he was forced to miss CCS. The injury ended Yen's hopes of competing in the state meet.

"I came back after five weeks out but my foot was still hurting," said Yen. "I went and got an MRI and the doctors said it was still broken."

The CCS squad now consisted of all

underclassmen. However, the team's chances of success seemed to be resting on the shoulders of Murabito. Murabito, seeded sixth and coming off a successful first-place finish the previous weekend at SCVAL finals, was projected to be a possible prospect for the state meet upon entering the tournament.

Surprisingly, he was pinned by Kamyar Sharifi of Santa Clara, a wrestler he had already defeated twice before during the regular season.

"All the wrestlers are so evenly matched," said Murabito. "You may beat someone one day and they may beat you the next."

Hansen and Marshall had disappointing meets as well. Unexpectedly, Hansen fell to Abraham Espinoza of Everett-Alvarez and Santosh Swaminathan of Harker. Marshall fell to the eventual CCS champion Jorge Barajas of Saint Francis in the second round, in a disappointing loss.

Other CCS qualifiers included sophomore Kyle Clark and freshman Anthony Billic. Clark lost in his second match to Kyle Venell of Prospect. Billic fell during his first match to Hubert Tsai of Los Gatos.

"The team really missed [Yen] as a leader," said Murabito. "We were really young and inexperienced as a team." ♦

**"The team really missed [Yen] as a leader. We were really young and inexperienced."**

—Sophomore Alfred Murabito

## GIRLS' BASKETBALL

## Girls squeak by to make CCS

by Apeksha Sharma

Although the Falcons made it to the CCS playoffs, they had a rough time getting there. With a 49-41 loss against Lynbrook on Feb. 12, and a 66-57 loss against Monta Vista on Feb. 9, the girls still had many weaknesses to improve upon before playoffs, which began on Feb. 23, with a game against Seaside.

"We need to focus on finishing shots because we have all struggled at one time or another on that," said senior Nicole Gagnola. "Also we just need to play hard and smart throughout the entire game and put all our effort into the game because that's the only way we will be successful in CCS."

C o a c h  
Mike Davey believes the

key to beating Seaside is to end the team's poor play by eliminating turnovers.

"We need to work on turning the ball over less," said Davey. "[During practices] we run what other teams play to be prepared but we need to work on turning the ball over less."

Though the team's recent dry spell of losses has been disheartening, the girls are currently trying to build up their confidence before playoffs start.

"We need to work on our confidence and keep up our basic basketball skills," said senior point guard Anna Schroeder. "Every player on the team has the skills to play, we just need to keep up confidence in each other and ourselves so that we can use those skills to beat other teams."

A big confidence booster for the team has been the performance of

sophomore guard Shriya Nagpal and freshman guard Hannah Johnson, who have both proven that they have the skills to compete with the upperclassmen.

"The underclassmen have been playing really well throughout the season for sure," said Gagnola. "[Playing Varsity] can be really intimidating because we have so many plays and defenses to memorize and execute, but they have definitely figured it out and now they are doing really well in games."

The new found confidence proved successful as the girls defeated Wilcox on Feb. 16, with a final score of 54-43.

If the team wants to have a shot at winning playoff games, all the players on the team must focus on fulfilling their specific roles during games, said

Gagnola.

"Everyone plays a part in every game. We need our outside shooters to be confident and take smart shots, we need our posts to work hard on defense and work on finishing shots and rebounding," said Gagnola. "Rebounding is huge for our team because we are shorter than most teams so we need to fight for every rebound because they won't come easily."

While skill is the most important factor in securing postseason wins, the girls also have an advantage that many other teams seem to lack.

"Because our team is so close and we trust each other so much, our teamwork will definitely help us in the playoffs," said Schroeder.

For complete results for the Seaside game as well as other playoff games please visit [www.saratogafalcon.org/sports](http://www.saratogafalcon.org/sports). ♦

**"We need to focus on finishing shots because we have all struggled one time or another on that."**

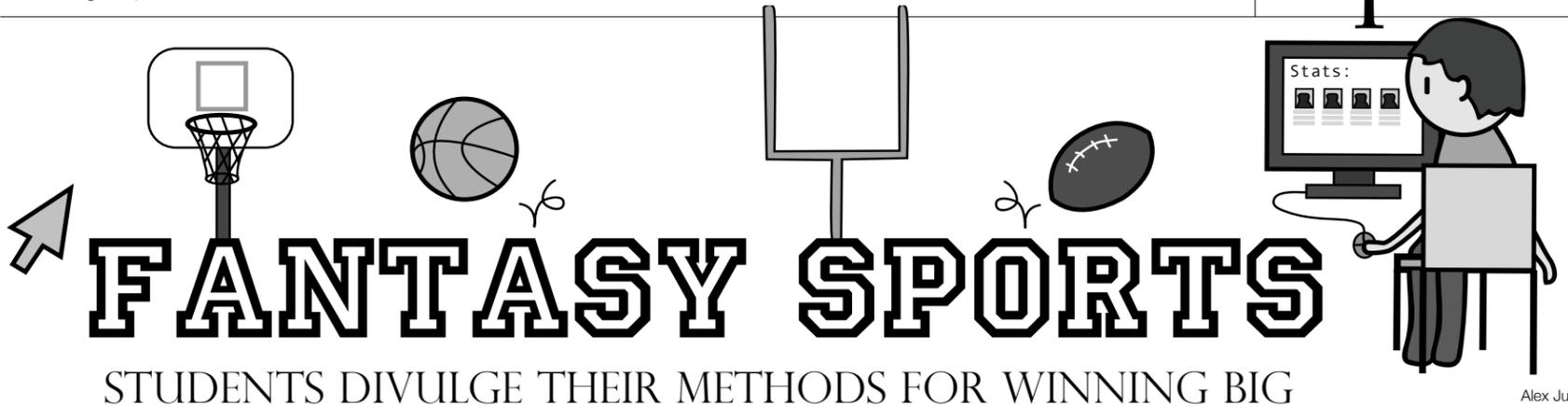
—Senior Nicole Gagnola

## Falcon Photo of the Issue | by Amanda Yi



Amanda Yi

Sophomore Courtney Brandt dribbles the ball down the field during a game on Feb. 16.



STUDENTS DIVULGE THEIR METHODS FOR WINNING BIG

Alex Ju

## Expert shares winning strategies

by Girish Swaminath  
and Abhi Venkataramana

For junior Tim Lycurgus, as recently as three years ago, playing fantasy football was merely a recreational and fun way to stay up to date with the NFL. However, over the years, Lycurgus has turned his simple recreational activity into a competitive hobby and has picked up many virtual trophies along the way.

"At first, I just used to play fantasy for fun and I would always lose to my friends," said Lycurgus, "but then our leagues became more and more competitive and I started to do my research and I started winning."

Lycurgus, who has won first place in five fantasy football leagues over the past three years, attributes his success to his drafting strategy.

"The order of the positions you draft is really important,"

he said. "I draft running backs first instead of quarterbacks, unlike most people. Then, I stack the rest of my teams with wide receivers."

Lycurgus knows that wide receivers can be the deciding factors in close fantasy match-ups.

"I really like using good wide receivers since there are three in a league and they can put up a significant amount of yards to get you a win in a close situation," he said. "Usually, the team with the better wide receivers comes out on top."

His favorite wide receiver to draft is New England Patriots wide receiver Wes Welker.

"Welker runs about 80 to 90 yards and scores a lot," said Lycurgus. "He's a solid offensive player for a fantasy team because he is consistent and plays well against every

team."

In addition to his drafting strategies, Lycurgus believes that his NFL knowledge helps him remain at the top of his leagues.

"I read articles on Yahoo! Fantasy Sports and analyze the weekly rankings," said Lycurgus. "I am also a really big NFL fan, so I watch a lot of games and draft players who I see are doing well in games and putting up big numbers."

Lycurgus's biggest piece of advice to amateur fantasy players is to remain determined to win and to not give up.

"It's really easy to give up on fantasy football because it's challenging to win and when you lose, your friends usually make fun of you for it," he said, "but if you keep playing, you'll eventually get better at it." ♦



Lycurgus

## Draft strategically, dominate league

"Just make some room for some extra virtual hardware."



Vijay Menon

Nothing is more humiliating than constantly finishing last in a fantasy sports league and then being forced to deal with the ensuing ridicule from friends. But for the past six years I have been playing fantasy sports—including everything from the traditional basketball to other more unusual sports like cricket—I have learned some important strategies that will help you avoid embarrassment and win the first place trophy in your league as well as everlasting bragging rights with your friends.

Winning your league all comes down to one thing: the draft. The strategy behind the draft is tricky for newcomers because it goes against logic. The main rule of fantasy sports is that a superstar in real life is not necessarily a superstar in fantasy. For example, in a fantasy basketball league, those with the first draft pick might be

tempted to choose a bonafide superstar such as Kobe Bryant or Carmelo Anthony.

However, slightly less-known stars such as Kevin Durant, Dirk Nowitzki and Chris Paul all rank higher in terms of fantasy. To understand what makes a player valuable in a fantasy draft you have to look beyond the highlight reels and instead closely analyze the player's likely statistics. In a basketball league, a good fantasy team might have a good balance of players who specialize in specific areas

But the real key to creating an invincible fantasy team occurs toward the end of the draft. Make sure you draft the best available player even if you will have an empty position to fill later on. Even if the positions on your roster are not as balanced, these "leftover" players can be used as leverage to get the players you need through trades later on, and ultimately, it will contribute more overall to the team.

Following this advice will guarantee you a win in any league. Just be prepared to make room for some extra virtual hardware in your fantasy sports trophy closet. ♦

## TOGATALKS

What do you think is the key to fantasy success?

Learn the player's role on the team, and the team dynamics before your draft. Don't rely on rankings.



junior Dean Stavropoulos

Set your roster everyday according to how the players are playing at the time.



junior Keerti Shukla

## 2010 All Star Fantasy Showdown



Tim's picks

**aARON rODGERS (QB) pACKERS**

Rodgers had a tremendous year, scoring 35 TDs with only 11 total turnovers. His ability to run and poise on the field make him the best QB option out there.

**Adrian Peterson (rb) Vikings**

Peterson showed his skill again this season, benefiting from the arrival of Brett Favre and a new passing game. His 1383 yards 18 touchdowns make his trip to Miami a no brainer.

**Desean Jackson (wr) eagles**

Desean Jackson is the prime receiver in the NFL. He is explosive, he gets in the end zone and rarely falls short in the yards category.

**Ryan Longwell (K) Vikings**

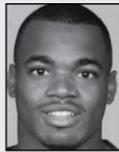
The biggest qualification for kickers is a good offense. With Favre and Peterson on his team Longwell certainly has that in Minnesota.

**Vernon Davis (wr) 49ers**

13 touchdowns. Enough said.



**QBS:** Though Shaub has the best athlete to throw to in A. Johnson, Rodgers holds the advantage in this contest. The Texans lack a true rushing attack in order for the passing game to open up. Rodgers can take advantage of the play action.



**RBS:** This season, no running back has been able to compete with C. Johnson, a monster of an athlete. Even though Peterson is a solid option every week, Johnson simply gets more carries.



**WRs:** The clear edge is held by D. Jackson. Although Roy's receivers performed well this year, they are too streaky to be true #1 options. D. Jackson performs every week, earning his fantasy owners yards as well as touchdowns.



**Ks:** A classic case of accuracy against power. Most fantasy owners would choose Bironas not only because he has a stronger leg, but because the Titans often do not score once they get into the red zone, meaning Bironas has more opportunities resulting in more points.



**TEs:** Davis holds the clear advantage since he tied the record for most touchdowns by a tight end. Gates had more yards, but Davis made up for this deficiency by producing in the end zone



**Matt shaub (qb) Texans**

He may not have the reputation of Peyton Manning, but he trailed Manning by only 3 points. With Andre Johnson running the sidelines, he is all a fantasy player could ask for.



**CHRIS Johnson (rb) Titans**

2,006 Rushing Yards. 329 Points. Flat out boss.



**BRANDON MARSHAL (WR) bRONCOS**

Marshall has a poor attitude and has conflicts off the field. That doesn't matter in fantasy sports. He's a fantasy stud who is a sure bet to tack down a good number of points.



**Rob Bironas (k) Titans**

Bironas is just average for accuracy, but he has one of the strongest legs in the game. Ranking third in 50+ yard field goals this season, he is one of the most consistent fantasy kickers.



**Antonio Gates (TE) CHARGERS**

Gates is always a favorite amongst fantasy owners; he can block, he can catch and, most importantly, he can get points.



Roy's picks

-by Karthik Annaamalai

## The Skinny

**What's Hot Online**  
saratogafalcon.org

**-Opinion:** "Arenas should stick to shooting threes, not teammates" by Abhi Venkataramana and Vijay Menon

**-PC:** "Will it lead to trouble? Redwood card remains in senior's wallet for years" by Karen Lyu

## TOPTEN

### PLACES TO GO FOR LUNCH

- 10 Pizza My Heart. They dip the pizza in oil so you don't have to.
- 9 Jake's Pizza. With Domino's crusts no longer tasting like cardboard, something has to fill the void.
- 8 J&J's Hawaiian Barbeque. Our favorite place to eat when we don't want to take a test.
- 7 Panda Express. Would you like some McNoodles with your soy sauce?
- 6 McDonald's. Now 100% real chicken!
- 5 Los Dos Compadres #2. Order the saliva burrito with the chips and spit.
- 4 Chipotle. It's totally healthy. It's only like half the amount of recommended daily calories.
- 3 Burger King. In their pledge to take a huge step forward in healthier nutrition... they locked their doors.
- 2 Taco Bell. They have a new drive thru diet. In a related story, light cigarettes give you clean lungs.
- 1 Smoke Eaters. If you can afford the cut, go here and get the inferno wings. It's not spicy at all...

—Ben Clement and Sulmaan Hassan

## THECRITIC

### "Jersey Shore"

MTV's new hit features eight strangers living together over the summer in a house near Atlantic City. Minor strife between them differentiates one housemate from another, but the characters basically have the same goal: they all want to have intercourse with as many people as possible, and do it while being as intoxicated as possible. Snooki's disgusting tantrums and Pauly D's inappropriate dancing, which legal experts would classify as sexual assault, made for an awkwardly enjoyable TV show. MTV enthusiasts will be accustomed to the concept, but to my fellow C-SPAN aficionados: Jersey Shore isn't much more of an insult to American values than any recent Congress session. ♦

—Anoop Galivanche

# Saratoga Snapshots



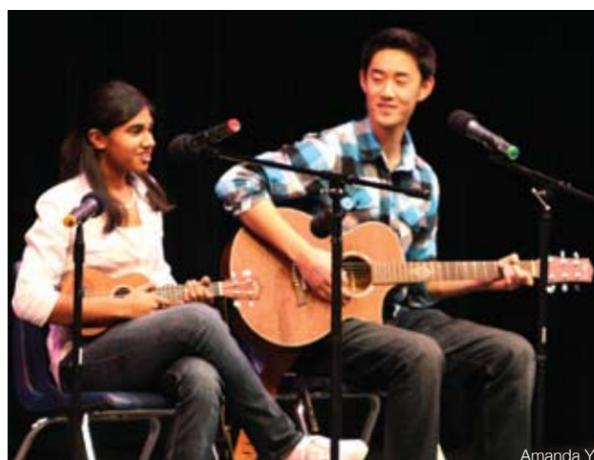
Olivia Chock



Amanda Yi



Kevin Rollinson



Amanda Yi

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: WILL YOU GO WITH ME?** using soccer balls and safety cones, Sophomore shivani chadha asks CIASSMATE MANISH Raghavan to sadies' on Feb. 22. **MARDI PARTY** sophomores emma vaillant and eva johnson celebrate mardi gras in Laura Lizundia's french class on feb. 12. **LUCKY I'M IN LOVE** SeniorS JAN IYER AND ERIC JUNG BELT out A DUET AT THE CONCERT FOR CURE ON feb. 10. **GRABBIN' A BITE** sophomore krishnan raman, junior amber arroyo and Sophomore steven sun help a young boy at the souper bowl hosted by ceramic classes on feb. 10.

## 'Vlog' addicts aren't stalkers

**"I sound just like their grandmother. But this is what the videos do to you!"**



Kyumin Shim

There seems to be a trend among the YouTube community of people starting their own daily video blogs, or "vlogs." These intriguing videos are snapshots of popular YouTube stars' lives, which create a vortex that I've been trapped in.

### I'm not a creepy stalker

I've been religiously watching these vlogs of the Shaytards, CTFxC, Breaking NYC and peron75 to name just a few, for about half a year. I pride myself in knowing their children's names, their dogs and their schedule... kind of creepy, I know. But the thing is, I don't feel like a complete stalker while watching these videos because of the way the YouTube stars speak to the watchers. They ask for suggestions on baby names, pranks to pull and even what they should do in their next video. It has become such a normal part of my life, like catching up with old friends via YouTube.

### Watching people's everyday lives

What makes these videos so appealing to me is there's an orderliness to the plain lifestyles of these YouTube stars. I'm sometimes amazed that these people who attract hundreds of thousands of subscribers lead such normal lives. It's like watching a "behind the scenes" show where I get to see their real lives and personalities. For example, I've watched the Shaytards, an idiosyncratic family living in Los Angeles with a hilarious bearded father, warm-hearted mom and three adorable kids. I've watched them long enough to know certain things about each child.

OK, yes, it's weird, but trust me, this is the side effect of watching these videos. Sontard can break into dance moves anywhere, Princesstard acts crazy, just like her dad and Babytard is the cutest thing ever. I sound just like their grandmother. But this is what the videos do to you! I feel as if I'm part of their lives. When Charles and Alli from CTFxC got engaged, I cried with them. When I saw Phil from PhillipDeFranco and his new puppies, I just about died from an overdose of adorableness. When I saw Shane Dawson hit a million subscribers, I was so happy for him.

### Indifferent friends

My obsession sometimes goes too far. Once, I was over at a friend's house and wanted to just browse through her computer. But I suddenly logged into YouTube and watched a vlog. My friend gave me weird looks when I tried to explain the what was going on in the videos. Then she pried the computer off my hands. She's not the only one I've tried to convert to a vlog addict. Just about all my friends don't know or don't care about these YouTube entertainers.

Although videos eat up about an hour of my life each day, I see no harm in them. I've been trying to inspire my friends to join me in watching these addictive videos. Until they all join me, or no longer acknowledge my existence, I will be watching Charles and Alli get married, Ray from BreakingNYC get together with Tessa from meekakitty and see the newest "tard" member grow up. Have no idea what I'm talking about? Ask me about those people. Really. Ask me anything. ♦

## buzzworthy

### The English are coming! (for Torrens)

On Feb. 11 during seventh period, English teachers Natasha Ritchie, Suzanne Herzman, Catherine Head and Kerry Mohnike exacted their revenge on history teacher Matt Torrens for the many pranks he had played on them in past years—executing an elaborate joke that had Torrens go on a school-wide scavenger hunt to find his students.

Ritchie was originally compelled to play the prank on Torrens after an incident the week before, in which Torrens convinced Ritchie's fifth period class to hide in her office while she was in the bathroom. When she came back, she found more than 30 students cramped in her small office.

"After realizing that Mr. Torrens was behind the prank and not a student, Ms. Ritchie really wanted to get him back," said junior Nina Mohanty, who was in

both Ritchie and Torrens' classes.

Instead of going to Torrens's seventh-period APUSH class, his students hid in Ms. Mohnike's room.

After 10 minutes of confused searching, Torrens eventually found his students by following a series of clues.

He had to sign a contract promising he would not seek revenge and had to admit that "English is sexier than history."

"The expression on his face was of complete disbelief," Mohanty said. "I think "I think he was shocked because he's usually the prankster, not the prankee." ♦

—Anoop Galivanche



Torrens