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# THE saratogafalcon

Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA

An Independent School Publication



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### ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

## Anderson to take district position

BY Anshu Siripurapu

Principal Jeff Anderson has announced that he will be stepping down as principal to accept the position of assistant superintendent for the Los Gatos-Saratoga Unified School District. Anderson will continue to serve as principal until the end of the school year, after which he will assume his new position at the district office.

In a press-release, superintendent Bob Mistele announced Anderson's appointment by the Board of Trustees and wel-



**Anderson**

comed him into the position made available when Mistele took over as superintendent last year.

"Jeff brings a thorough understanding of high school curriculum, our staff and the challenges and opportunities of a high-performing district," Mistele said.

Anderson is excited about the new position.

"In my career as an educator, I've always been looking for new opportunities and new

>> **PRINCIPAL** on pg. 6

### FENCE ANNIVERSARY



Students saunter past the parking lot fence during lunch on Jan. 23.

## One year later, controversial fence finally gains acceptance

BY Edward Dong

After enduring a storm of criticism early last school year, the fence in the front parking lot has slowly won a greater degree of acceptance from students.

Erected during November and December of 2010, the fence has largely succeeded in achieving its original purpose: to improve the safety of students, according to school officials.

"Before there were several palm trees there and the students would walk out behind the palm trees right in front of cars, causing the cars to just stop," campus supervisor Mark Hernandez said. "There's nothing else you could have put there aside from a fence to stop students from crossing the street [like that]."

The administration recognized the necessity for such a construction after considering

hazardous crossing situations during pick-up and drop-off periods. Hernandez, who observed "people coming late, people who weren't paying attention, and a great chance of someone getting hit," endorsed the project.

"Your safety comes first because it's our responsibility to ensure that you guys can come to school, drive to school, walk to school, whatever, and be safe," Hernandez said.

Despite the administration's intentions, students last year reacted negatively to what they perceived as a new and unnecessary inconvenience. More than 80 percent of students who responded to a poll disliked the new fence.

"The first year, there was a lot of resentment," Hernandez said. "Kids before wanted to just

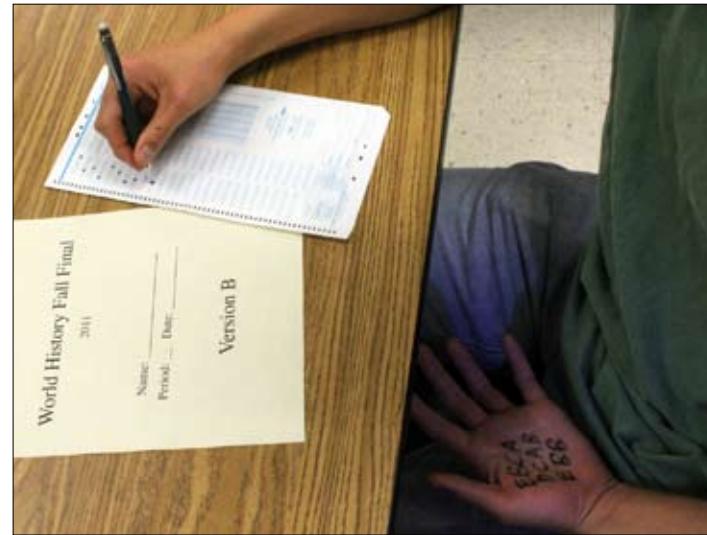
>> **FENCE** on pg. 7

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### ACADEMICS

## Is cheating on the rise?

### DISHONESTY MARS FIRST SEMESTER FINALS



FALCON // ANOOP GALIVANCHE PHOTO ILLUSTRATION



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION FALCON // DAVID ENG



FALCON // LILLIAN CHEN

Clockwise from top-left: RAMPANT CHEATING >> Various classes such as World History and AP Statistics experienced cheating incidents. CONSEQUENCES >> Assistant principal of discipline Kevin Mount speaks to a student in his office. CRIME SCENE >> During fall finals, the students in teacher Margarita Morelle's fourth-period AP U.S. History class had to stay behind after taking their final while administrators searched for a missing test copy. TECH SAVVY >> Using smartphones, students have found easier ways to cheat.



FALCON // LILLIAN CHEN

BY Edward Dong

Relieved after their fourth-period final exams on Dec. 20, most students streamed into the hallways and looked forward to enjoying their lunches. But students from teacher Margarita Morelle's AP U.S. History class remained in the classroom and looked on as first their teacher and then assistant principal Kevin Mount searched each backpack for a missing test copy.

Students claimed that cheating had occurred during finals in many classes, ranging from Chemistry Honors, AP Statistics and Anatomy and Physiology to AP U.S. History and World History. According to several witnesses, cheaters employed methods that included revealing test questions on Facebook and using cheat sheets, smartphones and other electronic devices during exams.

Four academic integrity incidents were reported to Mount during that week.

>> **CHEATING** on pg. 7

### ANDREW BEDARD (1995-2004)

## Family's decision saved lives

BY Samuel Liu

Senior Adrian Bedard leans his head back and shifts in his seat, the fluorescent lights of the journalism room reflecting off his thick glasses. He tries to remember the day his brother Andrew died, and slowly, the memories come flooding back.

Adrian was 10 when Andrew, then age 8, abruptly

passed away because of a hemorrhage in his brain.

It was the summer of 2004, and the day was nothing out of the ordinary.

"I woke up in the morning, like usual," Adrian said. "[Andrew] and his friend were playing video games. It was Pokemon on the Gamecube ... You know, it's weird. I can still remember everything about the screen. I can remember exactly what the

town [in the video game] looks like even though I haven't seen the game in seven years."

The words come out smoothly. Adrian talks as if he has told this story many times, but the sincerity is ever present.

"All of a sudden, he had a slight headache..." Adrian said. "I was sitting on the couch, watching. [He] walks 30 feet and flops down, has a seizure. 'He never wakes again.'

>> **BEDARDS** on pg. 11



**Andrew Bedard**



## Techs rock out for contest

While many students spent their winter break skiing in Tahoe or vacationing in Europe, the McAfee Center was alive with stage techs filming a music video over the break.

This music video, a remixed version of "Party Rock Anthem" featuring all new lyrics, will be entered into a contest to win an expensive top-of-the-line light board for the McAfee Center.

The contest is presented by Electronic Theatre Controls, Inc, or ETC. The contest was to "show us your ETC," meaning enthusiasm, talent and creativity.

"We wanted to portray what ETC stood for, so we came up with the idea for a music video," junior Jason Seo said.

In the video, a bored light board operator tunes out the mediocre band practicing in the Cathie Thermond Drama Center for a Coffeehouse night, and instead imagines a concert being held in the McAfee Center.

The band performing in the McAfee included junior Stephen Jensen as a DJ, Seo on keyboard, junior DJ Traina on lead guitar and singing, junior Feargus MacPhionnlaoich on drums, Redwood Middle School seventh-grade student Sarah Traina as a singer and freshmen Maddi Sloan and Natalie Miller as dancers. Sophomore Katie Burns plays the light board operator who imagines the performance, senior Natalie Berg plays a stage tech, junior Ethan Drohan filmed and edited the video and Ken Ochi provided technical support. In addition to appearing as part of the band, Jensen also wrote and directed the video.

If Saratoga High wins the contest, it would mean new possibilities for the McAfee Center and future performances. Because 40 percent of the decision is popular vote, students wishing to help out should go to [showusyouretc.com](http://showusyouretc.com), go to Saratoga High's video and click the "like" button on the lower right.

— Wren Sutterfield

## Three cheerleaders perform in London parade

Senior Sarah Hull and sophomores Abigail Small and Stephanie Tsang traveled to London over winter break to perform in London's 26th annual New Year's Day Parade as part of the All-American program hosted by Varsity, a leading cheerleading corporation. More than 500 high school cheerleaders and dancers from across the U.S. participated in the parade, which was viewed by thousands of people live and was broadcasted internationally.

The cheerleaders were invited to take part in the trip after trying out to become All-Americans at cheer camp last August at UC Davis.

"It was awesome being able to dance and just have fun, even though it was pretty nerve-wracking," Tsang said.

In order to qualify, they performed a dance, a cheer and a jump of their choice. Of those who tried out, about 10 percent earned the chance to perform in the London parade.

"It felt like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and that's one thing that motivated me to want to go on the trip so badly," she said. "All-American is also great way to show your spirit and to represent cheerleaders and dancers throughout the U.S."

"Most people would be upset about [the rain], but I thought it made the experience unique and I felt like I was in a 'Step Up' movie," Small said. "The parade was truly a spectacular way to start off the New Year; I wouldn't have had it any other way."

Prior to performing in the parade, the cheerleaders spent a few days touring some of London's most famous sites.

Both Small and Tsang agree that the trip was a wonderful experience and encourage other cheerleaders to participate in the future.

"Now that I have gone on [this trip] I can tell future or even current girls on the team how great of an experience and opportunity it is," Small said. "I hope that more girls on our team get to go next year and in the years after."

— Staff Report

## >> correction

An In-Depth article on page 16 in the Dec. 16 issue said sophomore Vivian Li is an only child. However, she has a younger brother. This error was the result of a misunderstanding during the interviewing process. Li thought that the reporter was asking questions hypothetically and gave full responses that seemed to indicate that she is an only child. The Falcon regrets the error.

## >> picturethis

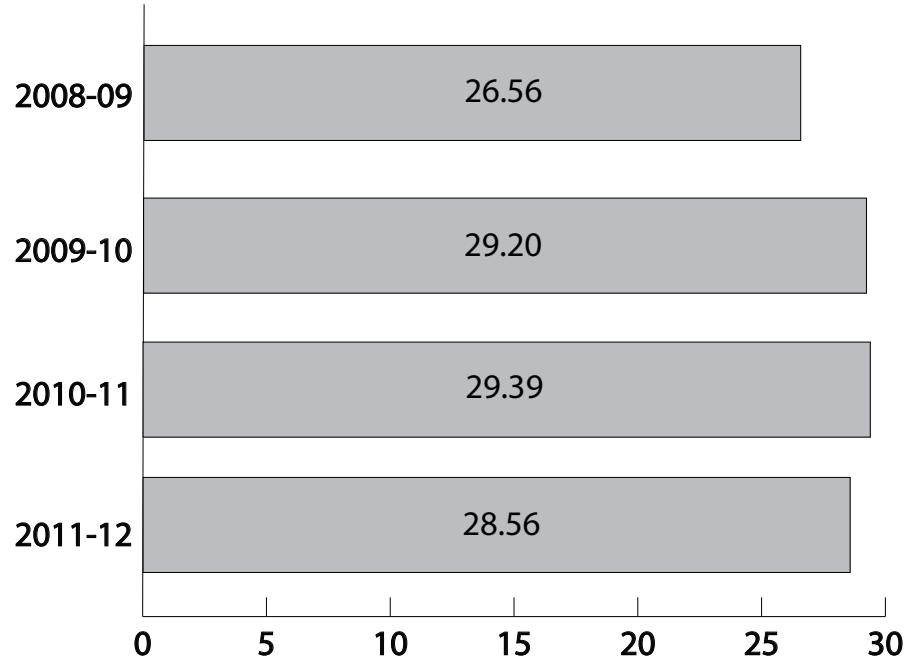


FALCON // LILLIAN CHEN

**A DRAINING EXPERIENCE** Junior Sarah Menard donates blood to the blood drive co-sponsored by the Stanford Blood Center at Saratoga High on Jan. 20. Each of the 80 donors gave about 500 mL of blood, about the size of a water bottle or 1/10 of the body's blood. This amount can save up to four lives.

## >> falconfigures

### Average class sizes of school over past four years



\*Reduction of class sizes due in part to the passage of Measure A

Data courtesy of Jeanne Jamieson  
—Mac Hyde

## >> quoteoftheissue

**If music didn't exist, I think I'd probably go crazy.**

>> Sophomore Vivian Wang, referring to her involvement in piano. Wang premiered three waltzes written by a professional composer. For the story, visit [www.saratogafalcon.org](http://www.saratogafalcon.org)

## SCHOOL POLICIES

### Hyde considers tighter dress code

BY Sabrina Cismas  
& Allison Toh

With more and more fashions pushing the boundaries of appropriateness, the school is considering beefing up its dress code to make it more specific and less open to interpretation.

Assistant principal Karen Hyde said the change needs to be introduced at the beginning of a school year and printed in the student handbook, so both parents and students know exactly what is expected.

The school's current dress code bans clothing that depicts profanities, drugs and apparel that fails to cover undergarments, according to the student handbook. The code also requires that shirts and shorts "must be at a length appropriate for the school."

According to Hyde, as of now there are no specifics as to what a new dress code will restrict; the general idea for a revised code must be approved first.

"The concern certainly is more of, can we cover more body parts?" Hyde said. "Teachers have to agree [on a standard] because a student can't go to her first-period teacher's class who says nothing about her, but it's second period that sends her down [to the office] immediately."

Laying down the rules for a stricter and clearer dress code would clear up the confusion on what attire is appropriate for school, but the change will only work if the staff is willing to collaborate, Hyde said.

"Teachers need to implement [the code]. I'm not out there enough to see so-and-so

in a shirt that my cat wouldn't wear," Hyde said. "You tend to support that which you help create, so [the support] would have to come from within the staff. It's not one of those top down things."

Hyde also mentioned that a new dress code would have to be practical as well, especially when longer shorts and more modest dresses cannot be easily found in stores.

"That's the hard part," Hyde said. "It's not like [girls] go special order [dresses] or buy something in the children's department."

Hyde said that a revised dress code would have to be practical and easily implemented, with a clear majority of both students and teachers in favor of the new code.

"Everyone has to buy it," she said. ♦

## FALCON FOCUS: EREN VEZIROGLU

# From sedentary sixth-grader to senior triathlete

BY Edward Dong

Gasping for breath, a sixth grader stumbles past the finish line with a mile time of over 10 minutes. His classmates had completed the run minutes ago.

A few years later, a high school student crosses the finish line of a half Ironman—1.2 miles of swimming, 56 miles of biking and 13.1 miles of running.

Senior Eren Veziroglu was both of these students.

Through running and other endurance activities, Veziroglu discovered the importance of discipline and determination, traits that transformed him from the slowest runner on the team to a half Ironman finisher and captain of the school cross country team.

"If you just train consistently, amazing things can happen," Veziroglu said. "When I started running, I was running 10 minutes for the mile and exhausted at the end. Now I'm running five minutes for the mile."

When Veziroglu was a sixth grader, his father encouraged him to join the cross country team at Redwood Middle School. Despite his unremarkable performance at the time, Veziroglu discovered an interest in running.

"At that time, I saw day-to-day improvement," Veziroglu said. "It's really fun to train hard and see your work pay off at the race."

**I am Ironman**

In September of 2010, Veziroglu participated with his father in the Santa Cruz half Ironman.

"If you think about the totality of

swimming over a mile, biking over 50 miles and running a half marathon ... I would think someone who did that was completely crazy," Veziroglu said.

According to Veziroglu, the only way to complete a half Ironman is to take the challenges in smaller, more manageable pieces.

"If you just have the mentality that you just do one thing at a time, it's really not that bad," Veziroglu said.

Going into the last event of the triathlon, the half marathon, Veziroglu had already engaged in essentially five hours of nonstop exercise.

"When I hit mile 9, I could feel my legs starting to cramp out. After 11 miles, I had to stop because it was too painful," Veziroglu said. Stopping, albeit temporarily, was a disappointment for him.

"I was definitely expecting it to be hard, that my legs would be hurting, but I wasn't expecting anything that would make me stop," Veziroglu said.

Nevertheless, Veziroglu successfully completed the half Ironman in just under seven and a half hours.

"By the time I finished, I couldn't stand up," Veziroglu said. "It was one of the hardest things that I've done, but it was definitely one of the most fun."

For Veziroglu, training for a triathlon consists of swimming, bike rides and long runs with friends, as well as "bricks"—two of the events in succession.

After training over several years, Veziroglu has realized the importance of discipline in achieving his goals.

"If you do anything consistently, you'll get better," Veziroglu said. "If you



Courtesy of EREN VEZIROGLU

**Senior Eren Veziroglu sprints down the home stretch near the end of the race on April 14.**

don't have the self-discipline or the desire to keep getting better, you're not going to reach your goals."

**Never give up**

Veziroglu, a second degree black-belt in Taekwondo, believes that the lessons he learned from martial arts helped him nurture his self-discipline.

"There's a saying called 'kaizen' which means constant and never-ending improvement. People think that a black-belt means you're a master in whatever art it is. But it's completely different," Veziroglu said. "A blackbelt means you're a master of the basics. From then

on, it's your responsibility to uphold all the qualities of a blackbelt. That's why a lot of people quit, truthfully. They have less guidance."

Veziroglu learned that he needed to rely on himself to achieve his dreams. Although he enjoys the challenge of endurance events, his goals lie in improvement, not in the professional realm.

"Since I don't really have any prospects of becoming a professional athlete, I want to just have fun," Veziroglu said.

Veziroglu plans to continue pursuing his passion for endurance events in college, though not necessarily on an NCAA team. ♦

**BUDGET ISSUES**

## Elementary district adopts furlough days to avoid cuts

BY Minu Palaniappan &amp; Nikil Ramanathan

Students in Saratoga's middle and elementary schools didn't have to go to classes on Dec. 23 and Jan. 13 because of furlough days resulting from the district's budget situation.

The Saratoga Union School District (SUSD), which includes Redwood Middle School and Argonaut, Foothill and Saratoga elementary schools, is separate from the Los Gatos Saratoga Union High School District (LG-SUHSD).

Foothill Elementary principal Joe Bosco said district officials reasoned that two furlough days would help alleviate some of the current budget problems SUSD faces.

Furlough days are days in which teachers and staff are not paid and do not go to work. The California government has sanctioned furlough days since 2009 in various school districts and a few universities including CSUs.

Even with support from the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and Saratoga Education Funding (SEF), SUSD is struggling to find funding for teacher salaries and school equipment.

"I think it is unfortunate that the budget situation could not be resolved in another way," said Spanish teacher Sarah Voorhees. "Those teachers lost pay and teacher work days, which are very valua-

ble to a teacher. I bet many of the teachers still did school work on those days."

One of the main differences between the budgets of SUSD and LGSUHSD is that the high school district received funding from a parcel tax last year. Bosco said that SUSD is pushing for a similar parcel tax to alleviate budget woes and, consequently, reduce furlough days.

Sophomore Jennie Werner said at first she was jealous because her little brother didn't have school.

"But I felt that the furlough day made the budget deficit seem real," she said. "Often you can't see the effect of what is happening in the news here in Saratoga, but this really made me realize that the deficit is real."

Some students also feel that furlough days are harmful because it

randomly takes away a day of learning.

"I think it is good to have days off once in a while, but a furlough day isn't that good because you can't just randomly skip school and it affects education," sophomore Rishabh Kumar said.

Furlough days also disrupt family holiday planning and forces many parents to take time off for work.

"The days were non-contact days, so I would have had to find someplace for them to go anyway," Voorhees said. "One day, they stayed with their grandma and last Friday, my husband took time off from work to stay with them." ♦

>> **the big idea****SUSD Furlough Days**

**When it occurred**  
Dec. 23 and Jan. 13 in the Saratoga elementary school district

**Why the days were used**  
To help alleviate some of the budget issues that the district currently faces

**Money saved as a result**  
Approximately \$122,000 in certified staff and \$14,000 in classified staff

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## IACP SPEAKER

# SHS Rhodes Scholar shares financial advice

BY Anushree Dugar

The Industry and Academia Connections Program (IACP) hosted a talk by alumnus and Rhodes Scholar Ankur Luthra about investing in relation to sell-side and buy-side careers on Dec. 9 in the Learning Resource Center.

Luthra presented to an audience of 36 students and economics teacher Todd Dwyer, specifically detailing his personal experience and opinions on venture capital, growth equity and private equity careers. He also elaborated on his current position as a public markets investor.

Junior Johnny Chang, who attended the talk to gain a greater insight into the field of economics, thought that the presentation was "a great learning experience."

"It was exciting to see someone so knowledgeable speak about his mistakes, which made him significantly more relatable than he initially seemed

as valedictorian of Saratoga High, a Rhodes Scholar and winner of a [Berkeley] Medal," Chang said.

One of these mistakes was a music company Luthra started as a senior at Saratoga High in 1999. His company, which used artificial intelligence, eventually flopped. According to Luthra, however, the entire experience was very rewarding.

"I thought it was an interesting idea because normally people don't say that it is OK to make all the mistakes you want," junior Sanjeev Suresh said.

Luthra shared similar stories about his field as a public markets investor that captivated his audience.

According to Chang, students were keen to listen to his opinions in the subject.

"His talk was a great learning experience—incidentally insightful, inspiring and informative," Chang said.

Suresh was also greatly inspired by Luthra's strong suggestion to read a lot

of books so they can learn about different opportunities that come by.

The fact that Luthra is an alum greatly helped him connect with his audience, according to Chang.

"His knowledge of the environment within Saratoga High allowed him to speak to us on a deeper level, because he understood how the highly academic [environment] influences us," Chang said.

With a similar foundation, Luthra was able to inspire students such as Chang to keep economics as a possible career choice.

"His talk inspired me to do more individual investing, to pursue my passions and to broaden my scope of knowledge," Chang said.

Luthra expressed his personal opinions and experiences on different aspects of economics, inspiring students in different ways.

"His talk really just convinced me that investment management is a hard,

but fulfilling career, and doing what you love is more important than working toward retirement in your early 30s," Chang said.

Senior Arnav Dugar, founder of IACP, was thrilled when Luthra accepted his invitation to speak, as Luthra would be the first speaker in the program to talk about economics.

According to Dugar, the information presented in the talk expanded on many of the same topics discussed in economics classes.

"The talk connected very well with the material we were learning this semester in economics. It was very educational," Dugar said.

According to Dwyer, Luthra's talk provided a unique and essential view to students about economics.

"It was good that Ankur showed up at that time to give a fair and balanced presentation of investment banking," Dwyer said. "It kind of put a human face on it." ♦

## >> togatalks

**What did you think of the IACP speaker event?**

He gave us a lot of useful anecdotes about what path to take when you go into finance."

senior Parthiv Mohan

He got me interested in looking into [investing] as a job."

freshman Vivian Roan

We learned so much. He was inspiring and informative and incredibly interesting."

junior Johnny Chang

## BREAKFAST AT HYDE'S

# ASB, new and old, reunite

BY Sabrina Cismas

Assistant principal Karen Hyde's annual Breakfast at Hyde's holiday get-together took place on Dec. 23 at her home in Woodside. The festive potluck held every year at Hyde's home brought together about 60 alumni and students from the ASB and commissions who work closely with Hyde.

"It was my first time there because this is my first year on student council as well as on spirit commission," senior Shayda Khorasani said. "Everyone just got their own food and sat down and talked to everybody else. It was a nice community event."

Junior Sasan Saadat said many guests were juniors and seniors in Leadership or the rally and events commissions.

"My favorite part was the veggie frittatas," Saadat said, "and a close second

was getting to see all the seniors from last year."

Both Saadat and Khorasani said that they really appreciated all the time and interest Hyde puts into arranging the yearly event.

"I think it is really nice because all people from past years who have gone will continue to keep on going and keeping in touch," Khorasani said. "I think it was really nice of the Hydes to host something like that."

According to senior Mac Hyde, this event was the last one his mother will host as assistant principal at the school since she will retire in June. However, she is determined to continue the tradition with alumni.

"She'll still do it to stay connected to the school," senior Shivani Chadha said. "More like a reunion since she won't be here anymore." ♦

## NEW CLUB ON CAMPUS

# Quidditch debuts at SHS

BY Jay Mulye

Students running around the field with brooms wedged between their legs and flat volleyballs in each of their hands may leave spectators perplexed as they pass by this unusual game. What many people may not know is that a Quidditch club has been formed on campus.

Sophomores Jennie Werner, Mandy Lee and Lena Jewler started the club to help students who do not participate in a winter sport to stay active during the off season.

"We were looking for a way to stay active over the winter season, and what better way than to play Quidditch?" Werner said.

Quidditch, a fictional sport played on broomsticks, originated from J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. But unlike the book, in the matches the Quidditch club plays, there is no small gold-colored sphere with silver wings buzzing around; neither are there flying broom sticks traveling at high speeds.

There are just "muggles" recreating the game of Quidditch with the use of the Quidditch Association rule book that is followed by over 300 universities and high schools in the United States and 12 other countries.

"You have to run around with a broomstick between your legs at all times," Werner said. "The game usually has a time limit, unlike in the books."

The Quidditch club meets on Mondays after school on the softball field,

but the timings might change to Fridays after school, depending on the preference of the members.

There are already 29 members on the Facebook group, and Werner expects an increase in members as the year progresses.

The Quidditch club uses certain objects to represent the different balls used in the Quidditch matches that are played in the Harry Potter books.

Red, rubber balls are used as the "bludgers," and if a bludger hits a player, that player needs to drop all the balls that they are holding and run back to their goal post, which is an elevated hoop.

Deflated volleyballs are used as the "quaffles," which can be thrown through the hoops to score points. A fit runner emulates the snitch and runs throughout the hallways of the school campus with a flag. Once the flag is pulled off, the game is over.

Werner takes pride in being an active participant in the Quidditch club because she enjoys telling others about her unique activity.

"[Quidditch] is something that is really fun and silly, since you are running around on brooms," Werner said. "It's really funny when people ask, 'What are you doing?' and you say, 'Quidditch,' and they look at you like you are crazy."

Above all, the main goal of the Quidditch club, Werner said, is to share laughs and bond with friends.

"Quidditch is a hilarious game and a great way to have fun with friends," Werner said. ♦

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# Math Mentality

## Middle school mathletes learn from high schoolers

BY Jackie Gu  
& Brandon Judoprasetijo

Walking into a Friday math club meeting, you would expect to see a group of dedicated students working diligently on problems or listening to a student-run lecture. Instead, you might be surprised to find yourself in front of a horde of squirrelly middle schoolers, working alongside the high school members on problems of equal difficulty.

Redwood Middle School students were first invited to the high school math club in the 2008-2009 school year, the club's first year of existence. According to club adviser PJ Yim, the high school's involvement in the Redwood math program inspired him to extend a hand to advanced middle school students.

"We identified who the strong kids were and invited them one at a time," Yim said. "We just wanted to have half a dozen or so who we knew were not only good at math, but who we knew would continue to do math so we could make their transition [to the high school math club] easier."

Another reason to invite the Redwood students, Yim said, was to challenge those bored with both their math class's curriculum and the content of the extracurricular math program run by the high school club.

"Can you imagine [2011 graduate and mathlete] Albert Gu sitting in an

**I like it here because it's much more open and free whereas in middle school we just listen to lectures.**

>> Eighth grader Sean Shi

Algebra 1 class? He would be bored out of his mind," Yim said. "That's essentially what's going on at the middle school. There are a room full of 20-some kids, but five or six of them are at a totally different level."

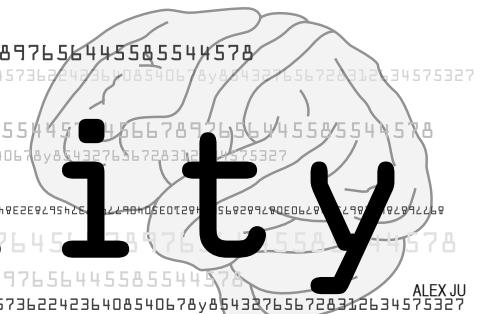
For example, eighth grader Sean Shi has been attending the high school math club since he was in sixth grade. In the years since, he has progressed mathematically beyond the level of most other students in the club. Last year, he scored a perfect score of 150 points on the American Mathematics Competition 10, an achievement most high school students could only dream of.

"I'm not that intimidated by the high-schoolers anymore, but I still mostly work with my own peers," Shi said. "I like it here because it's much more open and free whereas in middle school we just listen to lectures."

Despite progress made in recent years to integrate Redwood students into the math club, Yim still feels the difference between the younger students and the older ones is too stark.

Yet, although the younger students still have trouble transitioning into the high school environment, Yim believes their passion at such an early age will lead them to great success in the future.

"Most middle school kids don't know what food they like, let alone that they love math," Yim said. "These kids are driven. I think they're more mature than a lot of 20-year-olds. ♦



ALEX JU

## Students continue math in community college

BY Edward Dong

If a 95-minute lecture leaves you exhausted, imagine attending a 2-hour college lecture on Lagrange multipliers and vector integration.

Senior Chris Jones experienced such a class two times a week when he took a multivariable calculus course at West Valley College this past fall.

"The classes were not outstandingly hard," Jones said, though he did find them "harder than Saratoga's classes since [the multivariable calculus class] typically did two or three lessons in a 2-hour lecture block."

Senior Alissa Zhang studied multivariable calculus in the fall, but she took the course at De Anza College instead.

"The material wasn't too hard, and followed well from Calculus BC," Zhang said. "It is different from high school, though, so that takes some adjustment. Our homework doesn't count for any credit, so my grade depends entirely on tests, quizzes and the final."

Zhang, who attended classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the early evening, also had to adjust to a new teaching style.

"It's a somewhat different style of teaching, as each class is basically a 2-hour lecture," Zhang said. "It was a 12-week, 24-class course, and there were four tests and five quizzes in addition to the final. So we spent a lot of time taking tests and quizzes and going over them."

Jones also observed fundamental differences between the format of high school classes and college courses.

"There was not the type of review

and help that we had in Calculus BC," Jones said. "Although we did do a little bit of homework review in [multivariable calculus], it didn't feature explanations so much as 'Here's how you do this.'"

For Jones, reviewing homework questions in his Calculus BC class had been "a fantastic help, [because he] could get help from other students."

Taking courses with college students was also an interesting experience for Jones. In his class of 25, in which roughly eight students were from Saratoga, college students composed the majority of Jones' classmates.

"I definitely would have liked to get to know more of the college students, but the structure of the class didn't lean toward that avenue. The math was entirely lecture," Jones said. "This is a pretty strong contrast to Saratoga's classes, where there are a lot of group interactions."

Unlike Zhang, Jones is taking statistics this year in addition to his college course. However, he considers statistics "a tangent math class rather than one that goes more in depth."

"I continued math at West Valley since I had a good time in Calculus BC, and multivariable [calculus] sounded like a fun next level," Jones said.

Jones is happy with his decision to continue learning.

"I'm glad I did follow through. I enjoy learning how to do more math. It's fun and exciting," Jones said. "Now I can look at most Wikipedia pages on physics math and finally understand what all of the funny integral sign variants and other Greek letters mean." ♦

## Math: a natural talent or a developed ability?

BY Edward Dong  
& Anushree Dugar

"Ten women sit in 10 seats in a line. All of the 10 get up and then re-seat themselves using all 10 seats, each sitting in the seat she was in before or a seat next to the one she occupied before. In how many ways can the women be re-seated?" (See infographic for solution.)

The ability of some high school students to solve such problems within less than a minute fascinates peers and teachers alike. Yet many mathletes believe they are not "special" compared to the average student.

Senior math club member Evan Ye thinks that practice, rather than an innate ability in math, makes a mathlete.

"Some people tend to grasp math concepts faster, and that may be because of early exposure or whatnot, but at the end I still think it is the practice that makes the most difference," Ye said.

Exposed to extra math programs in elementary school, sophomore math club officer Priyanka Krishnamurthi also reasons that practice and an early exposure to the subject has helped her develop her strength in math.

"I enjoyed math from a very young age," Krishnamurthi said. "My parents also encouraged me to do math by putting me in programs, and I really started enjoying it."

However, according to alumnus Amol Aggarwal, who now attends MIT,

developing a strong liking for math at an early age is not crucial to becoming an eventual mathlete.

"When I was young, I did not like [math] too much," Aggarwal said. "However, as I began to learn more about math, I started to like it more."

Math club adviser P.J. Yim also stresses the importance of at least giving math a try.

"I think the initial success, and seed of success, creates the desire," Yim said. "There's somebody to say, 'Wow! You did a great job!' Sometimes that's a great motivator."

The students particularly find it fulfilling to successfully solve a math problem.

"It's the action of taking a problem and finishing it to the end," Ye said. "A lot of satisfaction comes from that, and that is what I like about it the most."

A common method mathletes use to solve complex problems is pattern recognition.

"I think it is very intuitive. When I am actually doing a problem, it's more of an automatic feeling," Ye said. "But if nothing comes to mind, I try to cut [the problem] in such a way that I can recognize patterns."

Aggarwal also finds fascinating the ways in which a complex problem can be broken down into simpler terms.

"It is interesting to see how simpler facts can be linked together to form solutions to more complicated questions,"

Aggarwal said. "One way for people to start a problem is by trying specific examples and small cases of a more general question."

According to Krishnamurthi, the most important factor needed to become a mathlete is motivation.

"You cannot push someone to like math unless they have an inclination for it," Krishnamurthi said. "A person has to have some sort of drive towards math."

Yim also sees the value of having a drive for math because he acknowledges that without it, a student would not be able to or want to solve challenging math problems.

"There's a lot of hard work involved," Yim said. "For them to tackle something so difficult and be driven, I think it really takes special people to do that."

Not only do mathletes have to be accurate while solving math problems during competitions, but they also have to be fast. Although Ye and Krishnamurthi believe that such a skill can be attained through practice, Yim thinks otherwise. According to him, the top mathletes are "naturally gifted."

Through practice, however, Ye has learned how to think outside the box, which has, according to him, helped him in math competitions. Math has taught Ye other useful skills as well.

"Math has taught me to keep a broad outlook and question things that go on and find what the best way of approaching it is," Ye said. ♦

### >> thesolution

Solution to the problem posed in the opening paragraph of article

1. Counting each solution will be too time-consuming, so we'll simplify the problem by finding a pattern.

2. Two women, two ways. Three women, three ways. Four women, five. Five women, eight. This resembles the Fibonacci sequence. (Starting with 1 and 1, the Fibonacci sequence forms each successive term by summing the previous two.)

3. Will this pattern hold? For the 5-women case, we are adding an extra woman to the 4-women case. Assuming woman 5 doesn't switch seats with anyone, we are simply counting the ways the first four women can rearrange themselves.

4. On the other hand, what if woman 5 does switch seats? She would have to exchange seats with woman 4. In this case, we are counting the ways the first three women can rearrange themselves.

5. Therefore, the number of ways to rearrange seats for five women is the sum of the 4-women case and the 3-woman case. Each case is the sum of the previous two. This follows the pattern of the Fibonacci sequence!

6. Now it's easy. Two, three, five, eight, 13,..., 89! The women can be reseated in 89 different ways.

## TEENAGE TRENDS

# Senior's Tumblr post brings brief Internet fame

BY Derek Sun

Once upon a time, she was just an ordinary student. Then one day everything changed. Senior Maddie Emery logged on to Tumblr, a personal blog site, and five minutes and 40 words later, she leapt from the bottom rung of Internet obscurity to superstar status.

The story behind her stardom lies in the negativity and critical thinkers of those around her. During the holiday season, she was constantly pestered with tedious questions and comments such as "stop singing carols!" or "shouldn't you be watching your weight?" After countless criticisms, she decided to go on Tumblr and post about her responses to these answers.

Little did Emery know that five words, "No I shan't! It's Christmas," would soon make her Internet famous. Her post received more than 10,000 reblogs, prompting it to be one of the posts on the front page of Tumblr.

"It feels awesome to know people



Emery

think I'm funny, even if they're total strangers," Emery said.

At first, her parents were concerned with her sudden rise in fame. According to Emery, when she first told her mom the news, she wasn't too enthusiastic.

Not only have people reblogged her stardom, but she has also been recognized by "strangers" at school as a Tumblr celebrity.

Fortunately, although her phrase is recognized all around Tumblr, she remains modest.

"It's nice that people think I'm funny, but let's be realistic: It's a blog post; it's not that big a deal in the long run," Emery said.

Emery said that her Tumblr is only a tool to help her relieve stress.

She made it during her junior year during AP testing and she wanted an outlet for her stress. She quickly discovered Tumblr and used it as a release from school and her real life.

"There are blogs out there that are set on gaining followers and dedicated



No, I shan't! It's Christmas.

Senior Maddie Emery uploaded this picture which reads, "No, I shan't! It's Christmas." It was reblogged over 10,000 times, making it the most popular Saratoga High post.

to being popular humor blogs and they have thousands of followers. I just enjoy blogging for fun," Emery said.

For Emery, she never intended any of this like others of fellow bloggers, but one fated day, she typed in five words that changed her Tumblr notoriety forever.

Although she appreciated the warm reception her post received, she admits that her popularity is fleeting along with the holiday season.

"It's nice to feel appreciated, but I haven't gotten any hype like that since. I think my 15 minutes of Tumblr fame are up," Emery said. ♦

## CREATIVE WRITING

# Alumna's poem published in Melbourne-based journal

BY Edward Dong

A flutter of pink in a large city, a girl hurries through the rain and hops into a cab.

Capturing this image in her poem "The Taxi," 2011 graduate Raven Sisco became an international poet early this year when Rabbitpoetry, a journal of poetry based in Melbourne, published this poem.

"I actually had no idea this was an adult publication, so when I found that out I was very surprised!" Sisco said. "I consider it an honor to have been accepted."

Sisco wrote the poem last year under the instruction of former Saratoga English and Creative Writing teacher Judith Sutton. The two first met



Sisco

each other when Sisco enrolled in Sutton's Creative Writing class in 2008.

"When I was young, I loved to read, which naturally inspired a love for writing prose. When I had to choose an elective for my sophomore year of high school, I saw that Creative Writing: Poetry 1 was offered," Sisco said. "Because I did not know very much about poetry, I was very curious and decided to take the class."

According to Sisco, she soon "fell in love with the form and had to continue the class."

Through the Creative Writing program, Sisco discovered her passion for English.

"By my junior year, when I was taking Creative Writing: Poetry 2, I realized

that teaching English really was my calling," said Sisco, an English major at San Jose State University who wants to teach high school English.

The Creative Writing elective was canceled after Sisco's junior year because of low student interest in the course.

"The fact that it's gone is very saddening because I know that kids are missing out on the opportunities it was able to provide for me," Sisco said.

Nevertheless, Sisco and several other poetry students were able to continue their poetry studies when Sutton offered to teach them outside of school. Since then, Sisco has had multiple poems published in journals such as "The Mad Hatter" and "The Storyteller."

Sisco has continued to study with Sutton and to experiment with new forms.

Her poem "The Taxi" was a shape poem in which the poem's text created the shape of a taxicab.

"I decided that I wanted to do some kind of car, and I thought it would be cute to make the car a taxi," Sisco said. I was able to keep all of the images I wanted within the limit of the shape."

According to Sisco, her poem deals with the joy of life.

Sisco expresses gratitude for Sutton's poetry program for her success with Rabbitpoetry.

"I'm very proud of myself, but this achievement also makes me very thankful for the program, my teachers, and my peers in the class," Sisco said. "Everybody has inspired me to be a better poet and try out new things, such as a poem in the shape of a taxi!" ♦

## PRINCIPAL >> Anderson to leave SHS, appointed assistant superintendent

continued from pg. 1

challenges," Anderson said. "I began as a teacher, where I could impact kids in the classroom, then became a principal, where I could impact the whole school, and now I have an opportunity to impact both schools in the district."

Anderson became Saratoga's principal in 2005. During his tenure, the school implemented a number of new policies, the most significant being the block schedule and "open access" for advanced placement classes.

"I think I've done a lot of good things here at Saratoga, and it's running pretty well," Anderson said. "We can always improve, but we have great kids and great parent support and a new principal will bring a fresh set of eyes and new ideas I haven't thought of."

Many teachers had mixed feelings about the news of Anderson's departure.

"I'm disappointed for the school, but happy for him," said math teacher Deborah Troxell. "He knew how to balance the interests of parents, students and teachers. He gave teachers autonomy when needed and was one of the best principals I've worked under."

Although he will no longer be involved in the day-to-day operations of

the school, Anderson said he will not be far removed from the school in his new role and will be around to guide and mentor the new principal.

In his new role as assistant superintendent, Anderson will manage human resources for the district, but his primary goal will be to help effect change in the district's curriculum, especially in utilizing new technologies in the classroom.

Anderson is looking to expand the MAP program at SHS, aid Los Gatos principal Markus Autrey in reforming the school's curriculum and further efforts at both schools to "flip" the classroom: using online instructional tools such as iTunes U and Khan Academy to allow students to learn material at home and use classroom time to focus more on the application of knowledge.

"Life now is a lot different than it was 10 years ago," Anderson said. "Kids are spending a lot of time on the computer and we would be remiss as educators to not tap into that."

Anderson said he will be involved in the process of selecting a new principal, a decision he intends to have finalized by the end of March.

He hopes to give the new principal sufficient time to select the replacement for current assistant principal Karen Hyde, who is retiring after this year. ♦

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## AID FOR BHUTAN

# Juniors help develop Android application

BY Minu Palaniappan

Life in Bhutan is difficult right now. Malaria has claimed thousands of lives. The infant mortality rate is at 47.3 out of every 1,000 kids and is still increasing while life expectancy is at 66.5 and rapidly decreasing, according to World Bank, World Development Indicators.

The GHRF (Global Health Research Foundation) is attempting to help put an end to these unfortunate realities by developing a sophisticated Android Application that can both document Bhutan patients with malaria and track all Bengal tigers through a GPS Program.

Cathy Leather, who teaches Digital Photography and Animated Graphics, and her husband Mark Leather, have



Garbe

taken the initiative to develop and test this application.

Since last November, juniors Kevin Garbe and Benjamin Yang have been helping the Leathers develop the Android Application for the GHRF, a prototype of which has recently been presented to the Gates Foundation.

Garbe and Yang both worked on the project during their Digital Photography class.

"I've never programmed in an Android environment before. It was a good experience for me, to try out writing a real mobile application," Yang said.

Mark, an avid programmer, wrote a lot of the program himself, but allowed Garbe and Yang to finish missing fea-

tures which includes a GPS Location and a built-in camera since the two showed an interest in programming.

The GPS location feature was developed to allow animal rangers to tag their animals and keep track of them. Garbe is currently working on this aspect of the application.

"My code gives your location using the GPS service on the tablet," Garbe said. "Testing out my program is a pain, because the computer doesn't have a built in GPS for the program to operate on screen."

This application was also designed to enable doctors to document their clients with their patients' medical records. Yang successfully implemented the phone's camera hardware into the application software so that doctors can

take mugshots of their clients.

Both Garbe and Yang have experience in Java, a common computer programming language. Yang is currently taking the AP Computer Science course and Garbe took a course on computer science outside of school.

The Leathers presented their prototype to the Gates Foundation in late November. The application displayed the GPS tracking device and medical record database features in which one can record new prescriptions a patient is on or record any new illnesses the patient may have contracted.

Yang and Garbe finished the application in late November.

"I've found a new found respect for mobile app developers since developing for mobile phones and tablet is difficult," Yang said. ♦

# CHEATING >> Four reported breaches of academic integrity

continued from pg. 1

"I was busier than I hoped to be during finals week dealing with that kind of issue," Mount said. He dealt with one plagiarism incident and three incidents involving cheating on tests.

According to junior Kabir Chandrasekher, a student in Morelle's class, Morelle discovered a missing test copy after students had completed their exams.

"Then she counted it a couple of times, and then we all looked around the classroom," Chandrasekher said. "And then the [assistant principals Mount and Karen Hyde] searched through our backpacks, but they couldn't find anything."

The incident in Morelle's APUSH class remained unresolved, since the administration "didn't have any good evidence as to where [the test copy] went," according to Mount.

Despite the number of incidents reported to Mount during finals week, he sees no cause for excessive alarm.

"My view of Saratoga is not that this place is rife with cheating," Mount said. "I think 99 percent of our kids do the right thing 99 percent of the time. I really believe that. A common denominator across all the academic integrity issues is that, almost to a kid, it boils down to enormous pressure."

Junior Kevin Chen believes the pressure comes mostly from parents who want their children to succeed.

"We develop the mindset that if we don't get good grades, we're going to fail in life," Chen said. "So people think that it's worth the risk to get a better life, even though cheating really just hurts us in the end. They don't realize that."

**My view of Saratoga is not that this place is rife with cheating. I think 99 percent of our kids do the right thing 99 percent of the time.**

>> Assistant principal Kevin Mount

as looking over someone's shoulder [and] writing notes on the desk."

Amato agrees that technology has changed the methods students use to

Senior Alex Amato also cites competitive pressure as an impetus for students to cheat.

"Students feel like they need some sort of extra edge to remain competitive and they're willing to turn to cheating for that," Amato said.

According to Amato, what students see in the world around them also influences their willingness to cheat.

"We see things, like business leaders and politicians and other people who lie and cheat a lot," Amato said. "It sort of diminishes the power of the word 'to cheat,' and a lot of people don't see it as that large of a problem anymore."

Amato believes the amount of cheating at Saratoga has increased over the years.

"There's a shift toward kids being more willing to cheat and seeing cheating as less of an ethical dilemma," he said. "When kids cheat nowadays, it's more [a question] of whether you're going to get caught or not."

Mount, however, has not seen a significant increase in the number of reported academic integrity issues.

"If we look at the spring of 2011, we had 23 incidents of breaches academic integrity," Mount said. "In the fall, we had exactly 23."

Nevertheless, Mount believes many factors, such as recent technology, have made cheating easier.

"Every \$29 phone has a camera on it now," Mount said. "Technology allows more opportunity, but we still see, all sorts of old-school stuff, such as looking over someone's shoulder [and] writing notes on the desk."

Amato agrees that technology has changed the methods students use to

## The Consequences of Cheating

as outlined in the student handbook

### Penalty for cheating on tests, exams, or any other assessment activity including plagiarism:

#### First Offense

- Zero on assignment
- Referral and parent contact

#### Second Offense in the same or any other class during high school

- Loss of points or grade for assignment doubled
- Referral and parent contact
- Saturday School

#### Third Offense in the same or any other class during high school

- Dropped from the class with an "F" grade
- Five-day suspension from school
- Possibility of referral to an alternative educational placement

**Cheating offenses are cumulative over all four years of high school.**

ALEX JU

cheat.

"I myself have seen students using their tech gadgets to cheat on tests," Amato said. "It makes it a lot easier, because if someone has a question, they can look it up on their phone."

Chen points out that technology may have led to an increase in cheating because social media allows students to share information with an entire web of friends.

"I imagine people going on Facebook and maybe telling a question, so more than one person can see," Chen said. "Instead of, back then, before technology was big, you had to actually tell each other."

Looking forward, Mount believes teachers should make sure students un-

derstand their responsibilities.

"Work with your students and be clear about what your expectations are during testing so they don't put themselves into situations where they appear to be cheating," Mount said. "As a teacher you don't want to create an opportunity for students to cheat."

On the other hand, Amato believes the solution lies with students.

"I don't think we can just address it through disciplinary measures, because right now we have pretty high consequences for cheating," Amato said. "I think something more powerful than the administration cracking down on students would be peers [telling] each other how wrong cheating is and how much it hurts others." ♦

# FENCE >> Both students and parents reflect, one year later

continued from pg. 1

walk across. Now they have to walk all the way around."

Senior Michael Zuccarino felt at first that the fence "added an unnecessary detour."

"Like everybody else, I thought they could have spent money on other things," Zuccarino said.

Junior Johnny Chang agrees that it is "tempting to take a direct and the shortest path" to one's car. However, like many other students today, he believes

safety is worth the inconvenience.

"Yeah, students need to walk all the way around, but if the trade-off is safety, forcing students to walk around is worth it," Chang said, adding that the school should not "trade safety for speed."

Hernandez agrees, mentioning that "the cost of that fence is nothing compared to a kid getting killed, a kid getting seriously injured, or possible lawsuits by parents for not having proper safety precautions."

Once opposed to the fence, Zuccarino has grown accustomed to it and now

recognizes its importance for student safety.

"I felt [the fence] was a bit of an inconvenience, but if they took it down, I'd probably start crossing the street at random points," Zuccarino said. "I don't know if I'd quite trust the parents who are playing rush hour traffic."

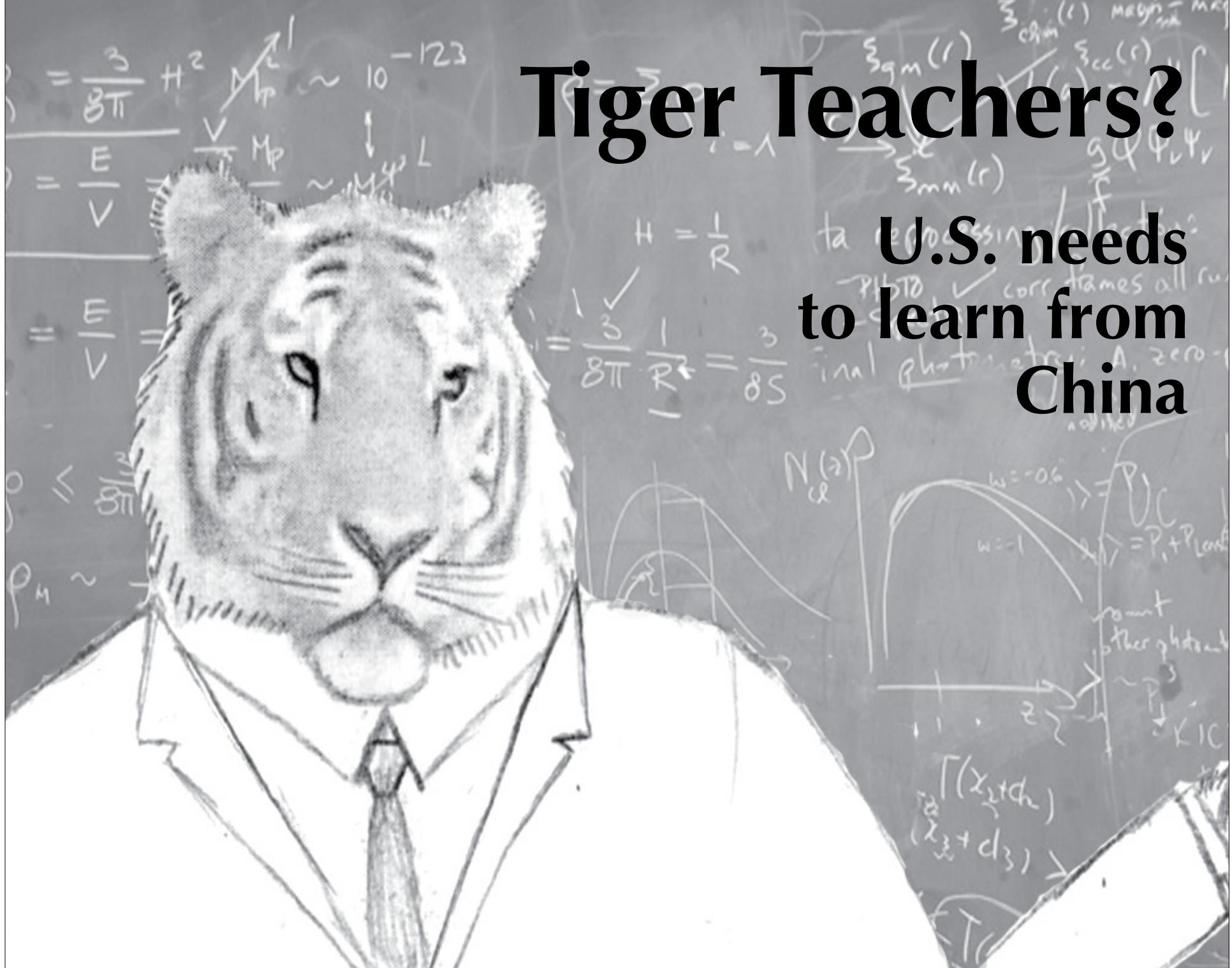
Parents, too, have expressed gratitude for the fence. According to Hernandez, they now appreciate knowing "where the kids come out, so they look to make sure there are no kids at those two points, which are crosswalks."

"Most parents I've talked to are all for [the fence]," Hernandez said. "Because they feel safer because when they drive close to the fence, they don't have to worry about kids stepping out in front of them."

Hernandez believes that as time passes, student criticism of the fence will naturally subside.

"Now it's kind of wearing out because kids are getting used to it," Hernandez said. "And by two more years, no one will even know, no one will care. They'll just know there's a fence there." ♦

# Tiger Teachers? U.S. needs to learn from China



CULLAN MCCHESNEY

I sat in my cousin's living room in the Chinese city of Hang Zhou, sipping a chilled Chinese Coke. When asked about his school, perhaps out of a lack of more compelling topics, he replied by bringing out packet after packet of homework, each one seemingly thicker than the last. He was only in the sixth grade, yet his daily dose of homework nearly tripled mine.

He then told me that he had learned physics, chemistry and biology in elementary school and completed four hours of homework each night. The competition is fierce, so the life of a "dumb Chinese kid" is painful.

"They post test scores, so everyone knows who has the worst score," he said. "It's a kind of public humiliation, but it's effective."

I can hear the outcry from Americans worried for their child's "fragile self-esteem" already.

By contrast, I remember taking a "group quiz" in my freshman English class and thinking, "Wow, I didn't read

the chapter at all and I'm still going to get an A." There's absolutely no way something so silly would ever happen in China.

From the Bloomberg News Dec. 7, 2010: "Fifteen-year-olds in the U.S. ranked 25th among peers from 34 countries on a math test and scored in the middle in science and reading, while China's Shanghai topped the charts, raising concern that the U.S. isn't prepared to succeed in the global economy."

As America struggles in its worst economic downturn since the '70s, it's hard not to glance a bit enviously at China, "the country with the fastest growing economy" that's nipping at our heels (or, as Donald Trump says, "eating our lunch") like a dreadful threat to our superiority.

Painful as it sounds, we must realize that the American culture of freedom and acceptance comes with hidden downsides. Perhaps the byproduct of freedom is the acceptance of mediocrity, and ultimately, sloth. The term "be who you are" can also be loosely translated into Chinese: "I'm too lazy to change."

There is this vast cultural divide be-

tween America and China on education. In China, the teacher garners much respect and is a powerful authority; parents always know the teacher by name.

But in America, teaching, unfortunately and disastrously, has become a fall-back option for some. There's no such thing as a furlough day in China; in fact, the topic would be laughable.

According to The New York Times, Washington, D.C., teachers rated "highly effective" can receive salary increases of 38 percent, as was the case of Tiffany Johnson, whose salary rose from \$50,000 to \$87,000 in two years. However, powerful teacher unions often block rewards for excellence for fear of competition instead of collaboration among teachers.

I agree that collaboration is an important tool for teachers. Still, it's not important enough to eliminate a drive for excellence.

In China, the teachers whose students have the highest test scores can rise in authority and respect. Top students are coveted by teachers and respected by other students—in stark contrast to the American derogatory terms of "nerd" and "has no life."

Pundits frequently talk about reduc-

ing class sizes or implementing expensive technology (perhaps to compensate for poor teachers), but they don't realize that for a good teacher, class size or student demographics matter little.

Here's my final suggestion. At least for elementary school kids, we need to have one amazing teacher per 40 kids (weed out the bad teachers and pay the good ones more), and then give the kids the same teacher for six years. A lasting student-teacher relationship is the key to building character and infinitely more important than facts and figures.

In truth, the reason that so many fiercely reacted to the tiger mom debate last year is that it touched (or blatantly slapped) at the raw nerve of American doubt: We are falling from the integrity and work ethic of our forefathers that made us a great nation.

We need to change the very core of our education system, and "band-aiding" the problem is definitely not the way, never mind cutting education funds.

If America is to compete with the rest of the world, change starts with finding and rewarding the best teachers.

Tiger teachers? The thought scares me. ♦

  
**SAMUEL LIU**

What can't he do?

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## >> togatalks

What do you think about the American education system?

 I like it. I know it's not as rigorous as other countries, but it's more rounded."



sophomore Caitlin Hung

 The education system is in fact floundering. We need to step up our game."



junior Sanjna Verma

 Compared to Asia, America is worse because Asia stresses education a lot more."



freshman Joowon Lee

**THIRD PERIOD  
STAFF POLICY**

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

# New finals schedule provides truly restful holiday vacation

During winter break in the 2010-2011 school year, senior Vivian Tsai and her family visited her grandparents in Taiwan. On her trip, she had to bring along her calculus textbook, her Barron's AP Chemistry prep book and the AP History textbook to study for finals in January.

This year, Tsai and other students had no such worries since they had taken finals before Christmas and had a real break from the grind of school. The move to having finals before break was difficult but worthwhile and should continue into the future.

Beyond moving finals to the week before winter break, the administration also prohibited teachers from assigning work for second semester over the break. This ensured that both students and teachers had literally no mandatory schoolwork until the first day of second semester.

Although students this year lost a week of summer due to the transition to the new schedule, winter vacation was also lengthened by a few days. Next year, summer vacation will re-

turn to its traditional length.

Students who use winter break to study have been negatively impacted by the change to the new finals schedule. However, these students are typically in the minority. For those students who choose not to study over break, the material they learn during first semester is fresh in their minds when finals are taken before break.

Since academic stress is likely the most significant problem for students, the new calendar is especially beneficial. In recent years, even students who did not work during the break still felt stressed about finals and sometimes even regretted not being more productive during the two weeks. With no schoolwork to think about, there is no possibility for stress and no work to regret ignoring.

Furthermore, with the aid of a genuine two-week break, students can return to class fully recharged and ready for the start of the second semester. In the past, students only had a three-day weekend after finals before jumping right into the next semester, often feeling resentful and tired.

For seniors, however, the new schedule places finals right before the end of the college application season. Although seniors now have to juggle

**>> THE bigidea****Finals before break****Pros**

Students can enjoy vacation without the dark cloud of finals and the guilt of procrastination hanging over their heads. They have the opportunity to relax and recharge before second semester starts.

**Cons**

While students don't have to think about finals over break, teachers now have to worry about grading finals quickly or having to work into their break. Seniors also must finish college application, many of which are due only a week after finals.

both college application deadlines and finals, most of them would have already been working on their applications for several months by the time winter break arrives.

For teachers, the new schedule means having to do a lot of grading right before Christmas, and in some cases well beyond. But most seemed to agree that the two-week break was less stressful than those in the past.

Thanks to this new schedule, winter break has given both teachers and students a welcome reprieve from the usual stress of school life. Winter vacation now offers exactly what everybody at this school needs: a break from it all. ♦

**>> Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board****Editor-in-chief**  
David Eng**Opinion Editor**  
Jason Wu**News Editor**  
Anoop Galivanche**In-Depth Editor**  
Jackie Gu**Webmaster**  
Aasim Naqvi

The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 38-1 in favor of having finals before winter break.

## Native language should not count as foreign

BY Sanj Nalwa

Senior Viraj Parmar takes Chinese 4 Honors. He said most of the kids in his class are sophomores. Because they speak a foreign language at home, many students often start out in the advanced levels of foreign language classes. In fact, this is the case for most of the kids who take Chinese at Saratoga High.

Students who are already well versed in any language should not take it up as a foreign language, since this defeats the whole purpose of the high school foreign-language requirement.

The reason that two years of a foreign language is required upon graduation is that it is widely believed that learning a foreign language will expose a student to a new culture.

Whereas English is offered as a foreign language in Germany and France, surely one can understand why it wouldn't be offered as one for native speakers in England or the U.S.

Likewise, students who speak Spanish at home, for instance, clearly should not be taking Spanish as their foreign language at school.

Some might argue that although the foreign language they are taking may not be completely foreign to them, they will still learn from the class (learning to read better, write better, etc.). Yet others say they want to connect with their roots and view the Saratoga High language department as the perfect medium to do this. These are all valid points.

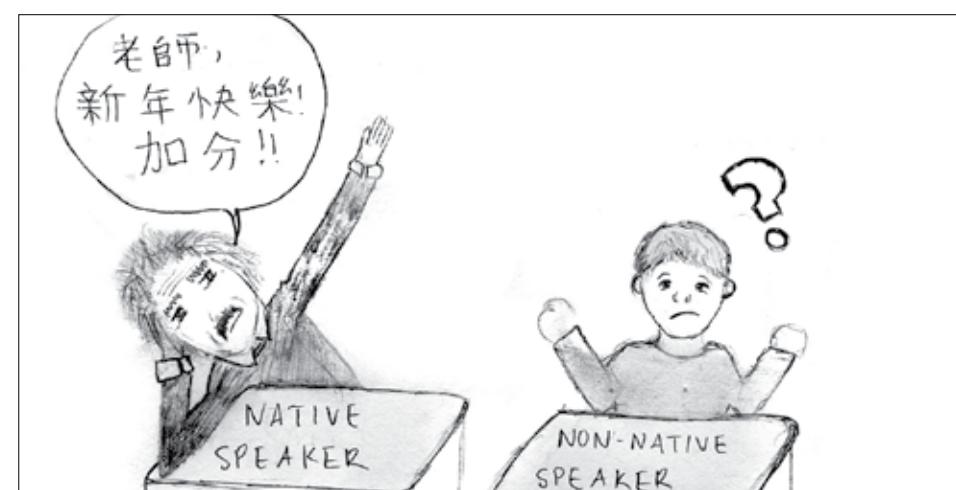
However, one must always consider what will be most beneficial in the end.

**Whereas English is offered as a foreign language in Germany and France, surely one can understand why it wouldn't be offered as one for native speakers.**

Yes, a student may learn more about his family's native language by taking it at school, but would it not be more beneficial to learn a whole new language and culture, one the student might be completely unfamiliar with?

In addition, isn't it easier to run a class in which all the students are of a similar level than one in which there is such a disparity in skills? Imagine a student who has spoken a language his entire life being placed in a class with someone to whom the language is actually foreign. The teacher will have quite a tough time trying to teach both students. Either the more advanced student would feel bored, or the beginner student would feel overly challenged.

Even so, students should not be disallowed from taking a language they



CULLAN MCCHESNEY

already know. The purpose of school is to give students the opportunity to take what they feel is best for them.

However, this should just not count as fulfilling any high school language requirement, and students should be prohibited from skipping levels. This change would not only ensure students are forced to expose themselves to new cultures, but would also deter any students who were going for an easy A or an easy Honors or AP credit.

If a student still wishes to take his native language, perhaps the teacher can set him on an individual track for the course of the year, so as to not disrupt the learning of the beginning students.

In other words, perhaps students should take a more active approach to their learning.

When choosing which foreign language to pursue, students should strive to expand their horizons, culturally as well as intellectually. ♦

# Who's the next Hyde?

This summer will be one of monumental change for Saratoga High School. Not only will we be losing our principal, Jeff Anderson, as he becomes an associate superintendent at the district office, but we will also be losing also one of the school's longest serving employees, assistant principal Karen Hyde (who, of course, happens to be my mom). This represents a loss of institutional memory and guidance that is unprecedented in school history.



MAC  
**HYDE**  
Street Smarts

Street Smarts

that seems inherent in the student body, the freedom—all of these combine to make Saratoga impressive, yet most of these things are not innate to the school.

These are qualities that are bred—cultivated if you will—by the leadership of the school. In order to continue its greatness, Saratoga must look for leaders who will foster the development of these qualities.

## Our new leaders' required skills

First, we need a principal or assistant principal who is dedicated to the job. The task of guiding 1,400 budding young minds down the right path is not one that takes place in the 9 to 5 realm. This task is one of mammoth proportions.

Our future leaders must be willing to attend many of these events, getting to know the students as individuals with talents beyond the classroom.

Our new leaders must also be student-centered. Education doesn't always have the most time-efficient policies, but what makes great educators great is their willingness to listen, share thoughts, collaborate and even delegate jobs to students.

Things like ASB and its associated commissions exist not to make the administrators' lives easier, but to give kids a shot at planning events and learning how to govern themselves and make relevant, binding and occasionally costly decisions.

Most importantly, our new leaders must understand the culture of the school and move to sustain it. This school was built through the community's belief that the leaders of the school truly wanted to make Saratoga a world-class institution. The pool, football stadium, McAfee Center, Thermond Drama Center, Library and Science buildings and the overall redesign of the school were all financed by the community because of the involvement of our leaders.

## The importance of the new leaders

School is about growing as a person, and our new leaders must acknowledge this and not stifle student opportunities due to such unimaginative excuses such as time or convenience. More importantly, our new leader must understand the culture of our school and move to sustain it.

The old leaders showed up at everything, worked long hours and dedicated themselves to the betterment of their students and their school. A passive leader who shows little to no interest in students activities and events will be ineffective.

This is not a time to sit back, relax and ride on the hard work of one's predecessors. There is much yet left to be done, and we need someone to tilt at windmills for us. ♦

# Student rankings unnecessary

By Michael Lee

Walking through the halls at Saratoga High, one can't help but see students talking about the last impossibly hard AP Biology test or stressing over an upcoming in-class essay. With an average of 98 percent of its students bound for college, the school is a breeding ground for academic stress. The last thing students need is additional pressure.

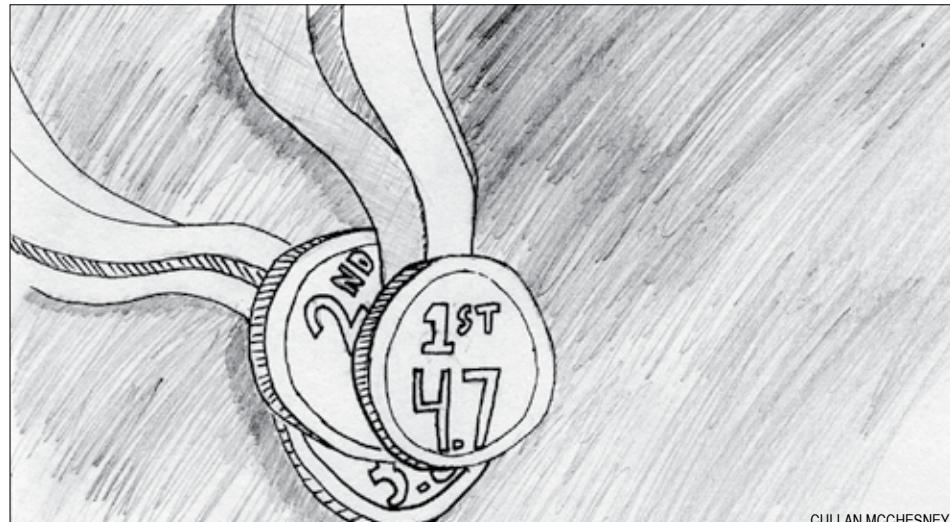
Nobody wants to hear that he or she is inferior to others. Class rankings—the sorting of students based on their grade point averages (GPA)—have the potential to crush a person's confidence, especially if schoolwork is not his or her cup of tea. To avoid this, Saratoga and other high schools do not rank students.

"The day that we handed out numerical rank was one of the worst days in my professional life," said Margaret Loonam, an administrator of Ridgewood High in New Jersey. "[Students] were sobbing. Only one person is happy when you hand out rank: the person who is No. 1."

Various colleges ask applicants for their class rank. Not only does GPA ranking sort students unfairly, but it also gives unnecessary pressure to students.

Ideally, students would study for the sake of becoming more educated. College should serve as an opportunity for higher education; instead, students at schools like Saratoga High have focused on getting into the "best" colleges. Encouraged by GPA rankings, schooling has become a rat race for recognition.

## >> candidcaricatures



CULLAN MCCHESNEY

Instead of providing college admissions officers with an objective measure of success, class rank arbitrarily gives certain students an advantage over others.

Different high schools assign grades in various ways; a 4.0 GPA at one school is not equivalent to a 4.0 at another. An individual's rank is relative to the school he or she attends, rendering class rank useless as a tool to compare students from all over the country.

Additionally, ranking students based on academic performance shifts the purpose of education from an opportunity to learn into a contest to maximize one's GPA. Encouraged by colleges to place the highest in their class, students forget

that school is supposed to promote cooperation and the value of all students, regardless of academic aptitude.

On the contrary, schools should discourage this judgmental type of thinking by removing class rank entirely. Colleges also must stop requesting student ranks—as long as admissions offices ask for them, high schools will continue to comply.

Class rank has corrupted the integrity of the modern education system by encouraging students to work simply to outclass their peers.

Ranking does little for students, teachers and officials short of providing another skewed standard of success. ♦

# Has grade grubbing ruined learning?

## CLASSES SHOULD SPUR INTEREST, NOT FEED GRADE HYPE

By Anushree Dugar

An average student spends 5,320 hours in high school with roughly 28 teachers. Teachers clearly play a large role in a teenager's life and affect how students view the world.

High school is a special period in a teenager's life when they transition from being hand-held and spoon-fed to becoming young adults. Suddenly, they go from having little or no choice in what subjects and topics they learn at school as elementary and middle school students to becoming young adults who are responsible for their own learning and future as they graduate.

Presented with an array of elective courses to choose from, students have the opportunity to begin their journey of independent thinking. Shaping this thought process are the teachers in high school who can show the path of learning to students, a path that is not just limited to the course material, but which extends to the real world.

Yet, by the time students get to high school, they sometimes form habits that can be detrimental to their education. Teachers trying to motivate and encourage students during their earlier years often give them awards such as extra credit for almost everything they do. On the flip side, when students do not do their expected work, they are "punished" with a poor grade.

As students become accustomed to having such rewards and punishments tied directly to their performance, the purpose of education is sometimes lost. Students become so caught up in the hustle and bustle between assignments that the interest in learning disappears and, instead, earning good grades becomes the only focus.

Many students participate in the National History Day competition, for example, in which they are encouraged to expand their knowledge in a particular historical subject. Since extra credit is given for entering this competition, however, the love for the subject is lost in the reward of improving one's grade.

This is where the active role of high school teachers becomes critical for inspiring their students to find a passion for the subjects they are learning. Teachers need to encourage students to explore the relevance and context of the subject beyond the immediate course material by removing the pressure of being judged on every assignment.

Spanish language classes offer students the opportunity to visit Mexico, inspiring students to speak more Spanish as they are immersed in the Mexican culture. This field trip is not required and has no effect on a student's grade, yet it provides a unique and effective way to motivate students to speak Spanish.

Such field trips teach students to embrace the language instead of simply

memorizing information from a textbook and regurgitating it for a grade. Teachers of all subjects must find similar ways to inspire students, even as they gently guide them in their personal choices.

In many English and history classes, teachers hold debates on contradictory topics so as to engage students in learning and encourage students to develop opinions of their own. This lets students connect to the material and grasp a better understanding of a topic than they would if they just had to memorize written material on the topic.

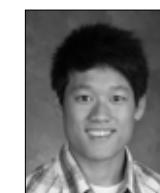
High school teachers are typically expected to teach only one subject, which is their personal specialty and passion, while elementary and middle school teachers have to teach several subjects. It is thus essential for high school teachers to share this passion for their chosen subject, and inspire high school students to find their own interests and look beyond their grades in class.

In effect, the best teachers engage students in projects that force students to think critically beyond the material in the textbooks and involve students in activities where they have to examine their beliefs and ideas. While removing the burden of earning grades based on the immediate textbook material, such projects and activities can simultaneously help students develop their thinking skills and expand their awareness of the world. ♦

## >> togatalks

Why do you think grades seem to dominate over a student's interest in learning?

They just want to get into the best school they can and do what looks best on the college application."



senior Benjamin Chung

Students don't have time to pursue interests because they have to spend all their time finishing required work."



senior Sophia Wang

## BEDARDS &gt;&gt; A family gives back after devastating loss of child

continued from pg. 1

It turned out that Andrew had a deformed blood vessel, which is expensive to check for and extremely rare. It resulted in cerebral aneurysm, in which a vessel in the brain ruptures due to high arterial pressure. Symptoms include severe headaches and vision loss, and onset is often sudden.

"You have to understand," Adrian said, "my brother had no prior medical issues, no nothing."

[His death was] ... very rare, and completely unexpected. All the proper surgeries were done, but he died just due to bad luck. I definitely thought he was going to live."

Adrian's mom, Karlina Ott, frantically called 911. They were rushed to the emergency room, but Adrian went to a friend's house to spend the night, worried, yet hopeful that his brother would be fine.

"We stayed up until we passed out watching movies," Adrian said. "The very next day my parents told me that he was going to die."

**From Andrew's death: life**

It was then that Adrian's family decided to donate Andrew's organs, since there was no chance of recovery. His organs saved lives and helped many, being especially rare due to Andrew's B negative blood type. (Only 2 percent of people are B negative.)

One of these people was a 56-year-old attorney from Fresno named Kenneth Cavin. He has Hepatitis C; he was stuck with a needle while working in a hospital.

Cavin describes himself as an attorney who specializes in helping children and often does charitable work.

"People come to our house when they lose their job, or don't have a place to live, or when their children have no place to live," Cavin said.

At the time of the liver transplant in 2004, Cavin and his wife, Deborah, had taken in three sisters when their drug addict mother abandoned them. She

had been sentenced to 27 years in California's Patton State Mental Institution for taking a doctor and his office staff hostage with a stolen pistol.

However, Hepatitis C threatened to tear apart Cavin's extended family and the help his clients relied upon.

Over 25 years, damage accumulated sufficiently to destroy his liver, and he was in the end stage cirrhosis, which is the scarring of the liver tissue. Eventually, the liver cannot filter blood and produce the enzymes that break down food into its constituent chemicals, and liver failure is usually fatal.

A gall bladder surgery suddenly triggered liver failure, and Cavin was rushed to San Francisco, where he awaited a donor.

His situation seemed hopeless; Cavin had been on the donor list for seven years, and his wife was told that death was no more than three days away. There were few available donors because of his rare B negative blood type.

"He was so close to death, he said his last goodbyes before going into surgery, because he might have never woken up again," Adrian said. "[He was] quite literally hours from death, and the next liver of proper type came in 17 days later. There is no question that my brother's liver saved his life."

As the moment of crisis loomed, worried friends turned to prayer.

"I am not religious," Cavin said, "but everyone I knew in Fresno and Clovis, California; hundreds, if not thousands of people prayed for me ... Andrew Bedard saved my life."

Cavin survived the ordeal and is doing well, according to Adrian's mother, Karlina Ott. Ott is the AYSO Regional Commissioner (the Bedards are soccer fanatics) and a volunteer speaker for the California Transplant Network Donor.

According to Ott, Cavin's new liver seems to be resistant to Hepatitis C. Although the average survival of a liver placed in someone who has Hepatitis C is 10 years, it has been seven and a half years, and Andrew's liver remains almost completely undamaged by the Hepatitis.

Since the transplant, Cavin and the Bedards have spent several holidays together, gone camping and spent a vacation in Hawaii.

"Gratitude does not describe what I feel for the Bedards," Cavin said. "I frankly believe their son should have lived, and I should have died ... [He] kept my family together."

The list of people Andrew has helped goes on. A man and a woman each received a kidney. A 7-year-old girl received Andrew's small intestine. ("She could eat for the first time!" Adrian said). And two women each received a cornea and can see again.

"Every year thousands of people die because they can't get organs," Adrian said. "So many people don't sign up because it sounds icky, but it's really useful. It's sad that so many people try to extend the life for a week or so and ruin the internal organs as the body decays."

**Coping with tragedy**

The Bedards were shocked by their

son's sudden death. As a family, they attempted to find closure in each other and the community.

"Going through grief as a family was an amazing experience," Ott said. "Everyone must walk their own path through grief, but we often talked about what we were each experiencing. The first month was a jumble of emotions. We felt like our family had shattered."

Ott and her husband, Charlie Bedard, joined a counseling group with parents who had lost children, and Adrian with children who had lost siblings.

"It helped to talk to others who had similar experiences," she said.

Friends arranged for a candlelight vigil at the hospital. Andrew was on a respirator so the family had time to say their farewells before doctors performed surgery and recovered the organs. That evening, more than 200 people lit candles for Andrew.

When they got home from the hospital, friends had cleaned their house. Families from the school brought food.

"In the depths of grief, it is often hard to eat and harder to plan anything," Ott said.

Friends helped to organize a memorial service on Andrew's birthday, less than four weeks after he died. Saratoga Elementary (Andrew's school) allowed them to use the assembly area. Gene's Market supplied most of the things that they needed to serve lunch after the service. Time Deli supplied trays of food.

The Bedards may have made great progress in adapting, but there will always be permanent scars.

But Ott says that she is not comfortable with the word "closure," which implies finishing something.

"There is no closure, no ending to grief. There is acceptance and adaptation," she said.

**Andrew's short, sweet life**

Andrew, who would have been a junior this year if he had lived, was a "very happy and optimistic person" and a big fan of the San Jose Earthquakes, a local professional soccer team.

"When I think of him, I remember his joy," Ott said. "Even when things upset him, he was never angry or sad for long. He loved animals and thought of becoming a veterinarian. He adored cheetahs and was dreaming of going to Africa to see them in the wild. He was kind and gentle, but also stood up for his friends."

"The story that I tell most often is about his last fall season of soccer," Ott said. "Andrew loved soccer and liked to play goalkeeper."

Andrew's team "tried very hard," but did not score a goal until the season was almost over. Not surprisingly, they also did not win any of their games.

After an especially tough loss, Charlie, Andrew's dad, asked Andrew how he was feeling.

Andrew replied, "I feel great. It doesn't matter what the score is, if you have a great attitude, you are a winner."

Two months after Andrew's death, the next fall season started. Charlie and Ott talked about starting an award to honor Andrew's attitude. Ott narrowed the focus to the Under-10 division, which was where Andrew would have been playing.

Ott said she noticed an overall im-



Courtesy of ADRIAN BEDARD

**Andrew Bedard, 8, played as the team's goalie during an AYSO soccer game in 2003.**

provement in the game play.

"It seemed that the players and coaches started to be more aware of positive ways to play the game," she said. "I think that Andrew would be proud."

Andrew had also been a fan of Pat Onstad, a goal keeper for the San Jose Earthquakes. Andrew had always lined up to get autographs after the game.

"They had an away game," Adrian said. "But even so [two wives of the players] came to the funeral because they knew him so well. [The "turnout from the community"] was awesome. Unless you've ever lost a family member, you'd have no clue what it feels like. It just felt good to have people around."

Onstad dedicated the next game after Andrew's death to Andrew's memory.

"We still keep in touch with some of them," Ott said. "We have gotten to know so many nice people in the Earthquakes organization and the larger soccer community."

In 2008, Soccer Silicon Valley, a supporter group for the Earthquakes, asked if they could name their community-service award after Andrew.

Ott designed the award plaque and helps determine which Earthquakes player receives the award each year.

**Of all the awards I've ever won, this one hits home the most. I was touched by Andrew's story and receiving this honor means more to me than wins, losses, goals or anything else.**

>> Chris Wondolowski,  
Professional MLS player

**Looking back**

Adrian is preparing to go to college; he applied to Cal Poly and is looking into studying aerospace engineering.

But he will always remember his brother, who, to Adrian, will forever remain 8 years old.

"I definitely suffered some post traumatic stress," he said. "I have days where I think of my brother and just have this terribly sad feeling. Sometimes it's really hard to do homework and function."

He continued, "What hurts a lot is when people say 'My brother is so annoying. I just wished they'd die.'"

He grimaces at the thought.

"Trust me, death hurts more than anything they can do to you." ♦

## &gt;&gt; the big idea

**Organ donation**

**Number of patients currently waiting to receive organs:** 112,657

**Number of organ donations performed in 2011:** 10,558

**Which organs can be donated?**

A deceased donor may give a kidney, pancreas, liver, lung, heart and/or intestinal organ. A living donor may give a kidney, portion of the liver, lung, intestine or pancreas.

**Most needed organ:**

Kidney

**How to become an organ donor:**

If you are 13 or more years old, visit [donatelifeCalifornia.org](http://donatelifeCalifornia.org) and create a profile to register. Or, simply check "yes" when asked "Do you wish to register to be an organ and tissue donor?" on the driver's license application.

**Requirements for organ donors:**

Cannot have HIV, actively spreading brain cancer or certain other infections. Any person of any age can donate an organ, but minors need consent from a parent or guardian.

- [donatelife.net](http://donatelife.net)

>> Invisible Children  
Q&A with Club President  
Junior **Haley Wong****Q: What is Invisible Children?**

A: We help the children in Uganda that are being attacked by the Lord's Resistance Army.

**Q: What is the Lord's Resistance Army?**

A: They capture children normally between the ages 6 to 12, take them and train them to kill their own community. So pretty much, they're trying to make their army a lot bigger and kill off everyone that is trying to fight back.

**Q: What's going on with the club?**

A: There have been a lot of rumors that the Loggy dance is being canceled, or it's totally fake but no, it's actually real. We just had a lot of problems because of basketball season starting up, so the gym is not always open.

- Allison Toh

## &gt;&gt; Interact

Q&A with Club Treasurer  
Junior **Evelyn Lee****Q: What is Interact?**

A: We're a community service club that serves several different organizations.

**Q: What's going on with the club?**

A: We just had a park clean-up and barbecue at Quito park. We raised money through buying food and cleaned up the park together. We have also recently had a bottle drive to raise money and a Caroling for Cans event. In February, we will have a benefit dance to raise money for Mary's Meals and Free the Youth.

- Cecilia Hollenhorst

## 'Twas the season to give

BY DylanJew  
& NikilRamanathan

The holiday season was a time of giving back to the community, and many clubs on campus were in the holiday spirit. National Honors Society, Red Cross and Interact all did activities to help the needy this holiday season.

Interact went caroling door to door around the Golden Triangle, asking for cans to donate to Second Harvest Food Bank on Dec. 10.

"It's a tradition," junior Interact events commissioner Derek Chao said. "Interact had been doing 'Caroling for Cans' since before we got here."

About 15 Interact members dressed in festive holiday garments, including reindeer antlers and Christmas hats, sang Christmas carols to residents to collect donations and spread holiday cheer.

"It was fun visiting all the houses dressed up for the holidays," Chao said. "It felt great to bring the festivities to their front doors."

Interact was able to collect about 550 pounds of cans. Members handed out

fliers in the neighborhoods where they were going to carol beforehand so that people knew to have cans ready to donate.

"I think that this year we were able to have more success than before because people knew that we were coming," Chao said.

Red Cross also spread holiday cheer. Members sold and delivered candy cane grams on campus. They also held the Operation Care and Comfort drive, which collected DVDs, CDs, batteries, pens, pencils, stationary, stickers, books and more.

National Honor Society (NHS) also decided to bring out the holiday spirit in people by caroling. NHS visited Good Samaritan Hospital on Dec. 22 and 23. This was the first year that NHS did the event, but they hope to have started a tradition that will last.

"Our goal in this event is to bring joy to the patients and families," NHS co-president Rachelle Kim said. "The hospital is not a place anyone wants to spend their holidays in, and we just want to cheer them up and be there for them." ♦

## Using MLK day to help

78 STUDENTS SPEND TIME VOLUNTEERING  
ON CAMPUS FOR A VARIETY OF CHARITIES

BY Karen Sung

On Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, 78 students spent three hours volunteering on campus for a variety of charity organizations.

Organized by 22 PTSO members led by parents Sujatha Mudupalli and Nirnala Nookala, the day had students gardening and landscaping, assembling care packages for troops deployed overseas, making Valentine's Day cards for a senior center and cooking full meals for a local church and family shelter.

Using the PTSO budget that came from donations made by the school community, Mudupalli and Nookala purchased supplies from Costco and Smart & Final for volunteers to package and prepare, such as food, toiletries, books and DVDs.

The inspiration to create a school-wide volunteer day first took root two years ago, after President Obama urged everyone to take part in the national day of service.

In comparison to the previous MLK community service day at Saratoga High, a large number of students signed up this year. Nookala believes the sign-ups reached maximum capacity due to "students coming back from a good holiday

after finals" and wide support from the school in spreading the word. The PTSO also sent out emails to parents, made announcements on the intercom and created a Facebook event to even further inform students.

Parent volunteers were able to communicate easily with one another with the help of walkie talkies, provided by custodial supervisor Ever Guzman. This made for prompt problem solving and easier management, according to Nookala.

Sophomore Gloria Liou, who helped assemble care packages, said participating in a school-wide community service event was a good experience.

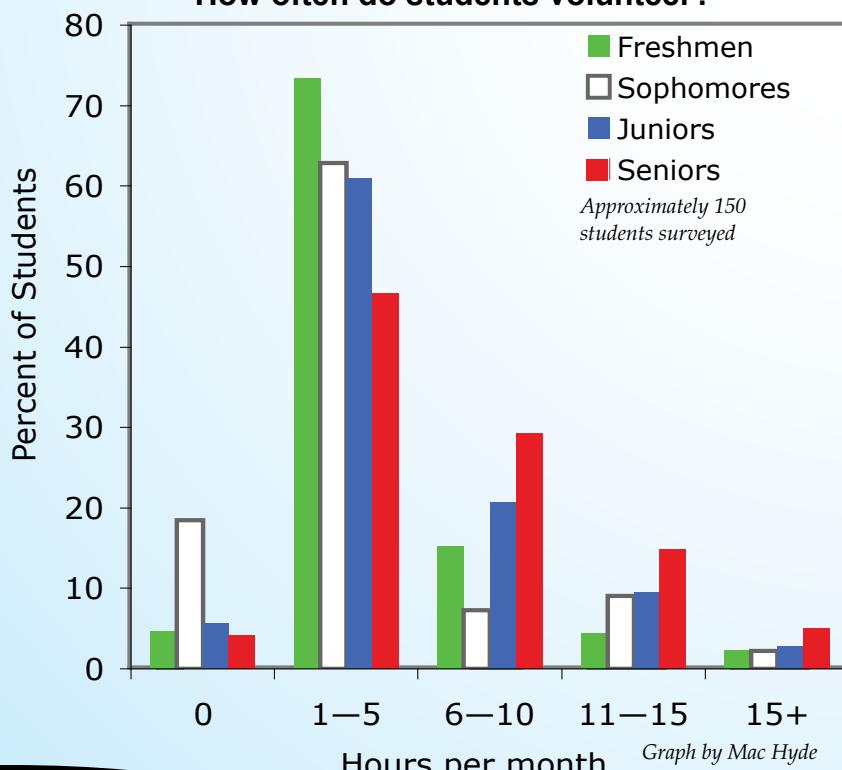
"It was nice to be able to help others just by doing simple activities, while also spending time with friends," sophomore Nina Jayashankar added.

Junior Joanne Sturge was surprised at how quickly the process went while making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to give to the homeless. By working in an assembly line, the volunteers were able to complete all their tasks well within the allotted time, according to Sturge.

"And like any other kind of volunteer work, it always makes you feel a little better about yourself when you're done," Sturge said. ♦

## Lend

## How often do students volunteer?



For more information about service clubs on campus, visit [saratogafalcon.org](http://saratogafalcon.org)



27, 2012

## Volunteering changes columnist's perspective

**A**s the year 2010 came to a close and 2011 was only a few seconds away, I quickly closed my eyes and made a New Year's resolution: to help out the community. And, what better way to give back than through community service?

From the beginning of July through November, I volunteered every Tuesday at the Sub Acute Children's Hospital in Quito as part of Bay Area Women's Sports Initiative (BAWSI), a program in which local athletes help children with disabilities stay active.

Many children, spanning all age groups, at the hospital are wheelchair-bound due to an array of disabilities—mostly physical.

At first, I was reluctant to go because of my naturally lazy attitude; however, I immediately bonded with a sixth-grade boy named Jose, who is in wheelchair because of respiratory issues, causing him to need an oxygen tank at all times.

Within a few minutes of talking, I could feel a strong bond growing be-



DEREK SUN

Sunnyside up

tween us. Our mutual obsession over the San Francisco Giants and the TV show "Family Guy" were just two of our strikingly similar interests that fueled our initial conversations.

During my first volunteer session at the hospital, I played a game of roller soccer, a hybrid of soccer, except with a huge blown up soccer ball.

The sheer joy that emerged on Jose's face was incredible when he played, especially when he nudged the ball past the goalie into the goal. A huge smile, stretching from ear to ear, erupted onto his face. I could do nothing but smile and high-five him.

He rolled over to me in his wheelchair to receive my high-five and grinned, "My chair is faster than yours," and then rolled away. I couldn't help but chuckle.

His competitive spirit was much like mine, further solidifying our friendship.

On Thanksgiving day, I spent the whole morning at the children's hospital

talking to Jose and his group of friends. Jose decided to show me his room. A butterfly-adorned room was filled with electronics and littered with dirty laundry, much like my room, but what caught my eye was the PS3 sitting on his dresser. As I started to ask about his favorite game, Jose interrupted me and

answered, "I love Little Big Planet, wanna play?"

We soon struck up in a friendly competition and were quickly enchanted by the game. We hurled friendly insults at

as he smashed me, 7-1 in wins.

Times like these remind me of the brother-like bond I have formed with him, despite our age difference, as well as the satisfaction in carrying through with my New Year's resolution to volunteer and help improve the community that I live in.

The months that have passed since I met Jose seem like only a few hours. I cherished every minute that I spent with him, as I realized that not only was I brightening his day, but that he also helped mold me into a better, more ap-

preciative person.

Before my experience with Jose, I took for granted what I have and did not always think about those who can only dream of having what people in Saratoga expect.

After my first day volunteering, I returned every week to visit Jose and, though it may sound cliché, I feel that this volunteer experience allowed me to grow into a more appreciative person. After my weekly visits to the hospital, I often reflected on how lucky I am to have a fully functioning body.

After this fulfilling opportunity, I enter the holiday season feeling enlightened and satisfied, but also unfinished. After my time with Jose, my perspective has changed significantly, and I hope to not only improve my community through service, but also impact communities all around me. Along with that, I hope that I can persuade others in my community to help those around us and better not only the lives of a few, but of many.

No matter how I continue serving the community, not just in 2012, but throughout my life, I know I will never forget what Jose said: "Never let what you are unhappy about make [you] forget what you really have." ♦



## Sophomore helps animals through service

by Ingrid Hong

Tails wag rapidly as sophomore Laura Rea walks through the Furry Friends shelter on Sunday afternoons in Fremont. She bends over to pet the many panting puppies and frisky felines in their chain link enclosures. After acknowledging all the staff members with her dimpled smile, Rea quickly gets to work.

Rea has been volunteering at various charities for five years and "loves every minute of it."

"I started volunteering in the beginning of middle school when I was looking for a dog to adopt," Rea said, "I saw all those poor cats and dogs in cages and that sparked my passion."

As a member of National Charity League (NCL), a mother-daughter phil-



Rea

anthropic organization, Rea has the opportunity to work with charities such as the Humane Society of Silicon Valley (HSSV), Nike Animal Rescue Foundation (NARF), Sacred Heart and more than 20 other charities served by NCL.

Although she volunteers for many charities, Rea enjoys helping animals the most.

"I really want to be a vet when I grow up because I'm really passionate about animals," Rea said. "It makes me upset to see so many homeless, malnourished and abused animals come into shelters. I love the feeling of helping animals find homes."

Although Rea does simple tasks that every pet owner should do, she also gets exposed to what it's like to be a veterinarian.

"I mostly just feed, clean and play with the animals that come in. But some-

times I get to shadow a procedure like a colic or a pregnancy," Rea said.

One of the events that sparked Rea's passions to work with animals occurred when she interned at her aunt's horse rescue, Thoroughbred Rehab Center at Winner's Circle Ranch in Los Angeles over the summer. They had been driving on the highway and spotted an injured German shepherd.

The pair immediately stopped and checked on her and saw that she was completely malnourished and "on the brink of death, with bare patches of scarred skin." They rushed her to the closest vet hospital and after "waiting what had seemed like hours," the vet told them that she was pregnant and that they were going to have to do an emergency C-section.

The veterinarian allowed her to watch the procedure and, although the mother died during the process, she had

three healthy puppies.

Though Rea and her aunt found homes for all of the pups whose births they witnessed, not all animals are so fortunate. Out of the 6-8 million cats and dogs that enter shelters every year, Rea said that the winter season is when the most animals get abandoned, so shelters need more volunteers. People like her are crucial to the maintenance of shelters.

According to Rea, doing volunteer work that one finds meaningful and interesting can be a relaxing and energizing escape from one's day-to-day routine of work, school or family commitments.

"Volunteering gives a bittersweet feeling," Rea said. "It warms my heart to know that I'm keeping animals safe and out from the cold, but then again saddens me that so many people abandon their pets." ♦

# YouTube offers outlet for students

BY Lillian Chen  
& Anushree Dugar

Within the game Call of Duty, one of the most popular war games on the market, soldiers are shot down as they try to defend their bomb sights from the enemy.

Junior Tavius Woods, an avid player of the game, figured out how to defeat the troublesome spots, offering suggestions and techniques on what types of guns to use in certain situations.

This is the kind of help Woods offers the viewers of his YouTube channel on Call of Duty strategies. He has more than 720 subscribers.

Woods, like many high school students, loves to play video games such as Call of Duty, a popular first-person shooting video game usually set in the time period of a World War. But Woods has taken his passion a step further than the average video game aficionado.

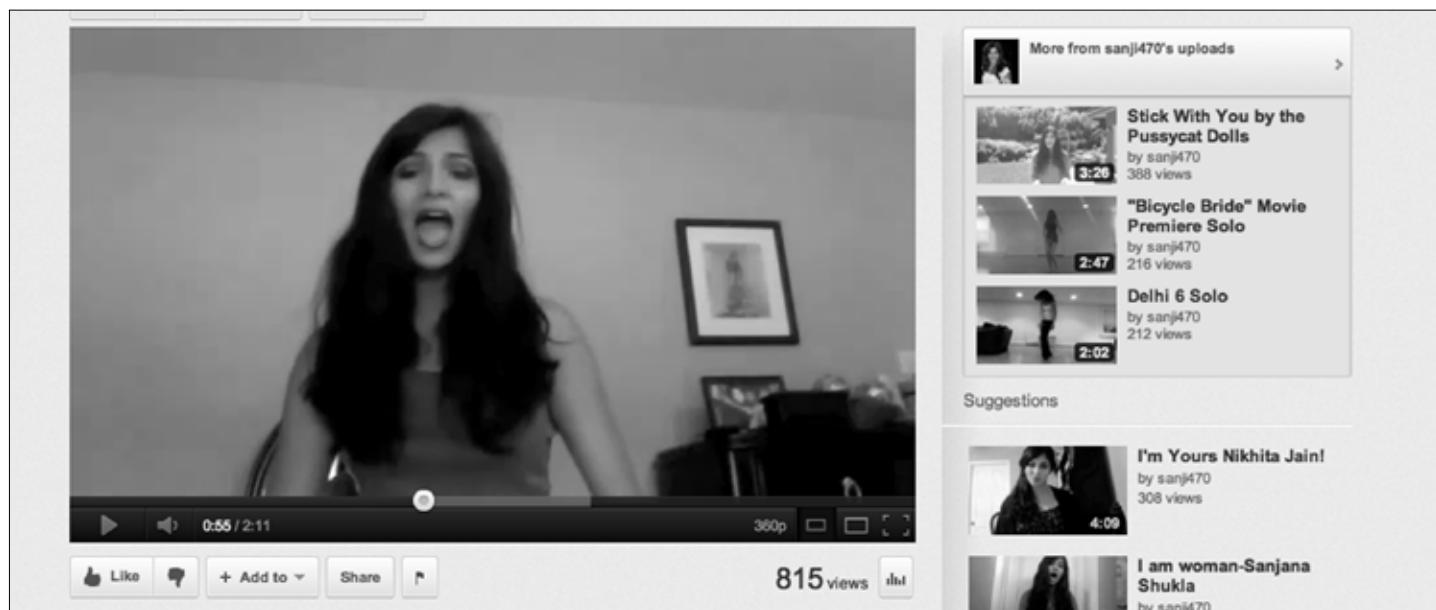
Ever since his sophomore year, Woods has been creating commentary YouTube videos on Call of Duty so as to help his audience defeat certain levels of the game.

"I basically help my audience do better in Call of Duty," Woods said.

Woods was first inspired to create these commentary videos after seeing similar helpful examples on YouTube.

"I saw a bunch of videos on Call of Duty and people commentating on all of them, and I just thought I'd give it a try," Woods said.

Using an HD PVR Hauppauge, a video game play recorder, Woods has created 33 videos that are dedicated to helping his viewers advance through Minecraft and the Call of Duty games:



Junior Sanjana Shukla sings "Rolling in the Deep" by Adele on her channel. She has uploaded 10 videos with over 3,000 total views.

Modern Warfare, Modern Warfare 2 and Black Ops. He has hundreds of subscribers following his YouTube channel.

According to Woods, it takes him a couple of days to gather all the clips he uses in each video he makes, and an additional couple of hours to edit and overlay his commentary.

Due to his large audience of 26,000 viewers and 720 subscribers, Woods was invited by email to become a YouTube partner and get paid a certain amount of money for his videos depending on the number of views he gets.

Lately Woods has not been posting many of his Call of Duty videos since he is concentrating on schoolwork, but hopes to get back on track soon.

"I don't post that much anymore be-

cause of junior year, but I'll try and get back on that," Woods said.

Woods hopes to create commentary and game-play videos for League of Legends in the near future as well.

Other students have also dabbled in the art of creating YouTube videos, such as junior Sanjana Shukla and senior Kevin Lee.

Shukla, who used to be in the choir program at Saratoga High, has created 4-5 videos of herself singing songs such as "Rolling in the Deep" by Adele and others by Alicia Keys.

Although she does not want to pursue music as a career, Shukla says that it is a big hobby.

According to Shukla, her family forced her to put up videos of her sing-

ing because they think she does not use her talent enough, but she has grown to like it.

"It's kind of fun because you get feedback and you can improve," Shukla said.

Inspired by other YouTube channels, Lee has created three channels of his own. Lee no longer uses his first two channels, but learned "you can make a funny and good video out of a plain webcam and just being yourself on camera."

Lee currently updates his latest channel with different videos he makes in the school's media arts program.

"I upload them so I can show them to my friends and relatives," Lee said.

Lee plans on majoring in film and will "always continue to make videos." ♦



## MUSIC IN THE

# Internet radio: the good and the bad

BY NIKIL RAMANATHAN

A common misconception about Internet radio and programs like Pandora: They are sometimes thought to be illegal and similar to programs like Limewire, Frostwire and Bearshare. Not so. They are completely legal and have good value.

Internet radio started in 1994 with the first live broadcast of a Seattle space-rock band called "Sky Cries Mary" and has greatly evolved since.

It has become more popular since 2003 with the introduction of programs like Pandora, iHeartRadio and, more recently, Spotify.

Apart from letting you listen to music for free, some Internet radio services also recommend different artists and other songs of the same genre that you might like to listen to.

"Internet radio is a great tool for finding new music because it lets you listen

to songs and artists you may never have even heard of before," sophomore Alex Renda said.

Beginning in 2005, Pandora has constantly asserted its dominance as one of the largest Internet radio websites available.

This is how Pandora works: The listener types in a song or artist that he or she wants to listen to, and Pandora plays a song with the same genre or artist. Based on the feedback of the listener on the song that Pandora has recommended (in the form of a "thumbs up" or a "thumbs down"), Pandora caters its song choice to fit what the listener wants to hear, allowing it to make more personalized recommendations in the future.

A similar program to Pandora is iHeartRadio.com. With iHeartRadio, one can choose a local radio station that he or she would like to listen to, and it plays the music that is going on in the radio station live, as if one was listening

to it in the car.

There is also a feature in iHeartRadio called "create your own station," where a listener may choose an artist and it will play a medley of songs from that artist as if it were a playlist from that artist's album.

One of the newest Internet radio/music streaming websites, called Spotify, has also experienced a rise in popularity since 2008.

Initially only available in Europe, Spotify launched in America this summer and has received enormous praise.

The program hit 10 million users in September 2010, and since November 2011, has been usable in 13 countries, while Pandora can only be used in the United States.

SHS students have taken a liking to Spotify and use it while doing homework and studying. Spotify allows the user to create playlists and listen to music free and legally.

One of the most popular features of Spotify is its integration with Facebook. Spotify users can choose to sign in to Spotify with Facebook, allowing Facebook friends to see the music that their peers are listening too, and listen to it for themselves.

"Spotify is great because it lets you customize play lists with a seemingly infinite collection of free and legal music," Renda said.

However, Spotify does have its downfalls: annoying advertisements interrupt the music, and it is not free on mobile devices, so those who wish to take Spotify on the go must purchase a premium membership.

One of the main downfalls of Internet radio is that there are often restrictions when using the free versions of Internet radio programs, but in the end Internet radio is a great way to listen to all of your favorite songs and artists legally and for free. ♦

## >> togatalks

What do you think of Internet radio?

I like it because when I do my homework I can listen to it and have more variety."



sophomore Izzy Zuccarino

It's great because when people browse the web they can always find new songs."



junior Cody Cai

I like that there's more variety and you have more choices on Pandora than in the car."



sophomore Nadia Roopparvar

# The best high-end headphones

RAPPER LUDACRIS JOINS THE HEADPHONE RACE AGAINST BOSE AND DR. DRE

BY Ingrid Hong

It's not hard to design headphones that win raves from bloggers and customers. Just give people a big, fat bassline and you can expect to be showered with praise for phenomenal beats, exceptional sound quality, and blissful, skull-vibrating pure bass.

It's a much trickier task, though, to design headphones that actually give users all of the above, deservedly winning plaudits for the booming basement—while sounding just as good in every other department.

Rocking the house and stomping the beats one moment, bringing out the best in fragile folk and spine-tingling sonatas the next—that's the real trick that few headphones manage to perform.

The Bose "QuietComfort 15" headphones, sold at \$300, currently get the most attention among noise-cancelling models. Reviewers say the QuietComfort 15 (also known as the QC 15) headphones do a great job of filtering out ambient noise, especially low tones like the drone of airplane engines.

Although they are much more comfortable than the "Beats Studios" by Dr. Dre, the Bose headphones are not as light or portable as their brandmates, such as the Bose "QuietComfort 3," priced at \$350. The Bose sound tends to be muted and laid-back, so the QuietComfort se-

ries might not be best for those seeking the highest audio accuracy.

One of the most popular headphones are "Beats Studios" by Dr. Dre. As for accurate reproduction of music, the only genre they seem to reproduce properly is rap and pop. Other genres, such as classical, rock, blues, electronica, sound artificial with these headphones.

Here's what you get for your money: First off, the "Beats" are actually more than just a pair of headphones. Thanks to a built-in microphone in one of the two provided cables, they also double

as a headset for mobile phones and fit a majority of today's phones, including the iPhone.

Secondly, the "Beats" offer a certain amount of noise isolation and are clearly intended to compete with Bose's Quiet Comfort models that are particularly popular with travelers and command an equally high-flying price.

It seems like every major musical artist is coming up with his or her own line of headphones; now joining this trend is hip-hop rapper Ludacris. His new headphones, the SL300 "Soul" by Ludacris, claim to "deliver such a high quality of pristine, balanced sound that they are appropriate for use by music professionals."

While the bass of the SL300 is definitely raised for that extra oomph and punch (best suited for listening to Hip

Hop, Pop and R&B), the bass region is controlled enough to sound balanced with a variety of music including Rock, Metal and Jazz.

Now the ultimate question: Which is the headphone worth spending on?

First things first: If you hold the SL300 in one hand and the "Beats" in the other, you may be as surprised to feel just how much more well-built the SL300 look and feel. It's not something that can be noted in pictures, but the difference is very apparent in person.

The SL300 headband is also slightly larger and feels more impressive than the Beats Studios. In terms of noise-cancelling and call quality, the SL300 and the Beats are on par with each other; however, the SL300 edges out the Beats just slightly in the amount of ambient noise it is able to eliminate. Nonetheless, the QuietComfort 15 offers the best noise-cancelling capabilities hands down out of the three.

The comfort on the ears is about equal, but the extra padding on the headband allows the SL300 to rest more comfortably on the head compared to the less padding on the Beats and QuietComfort 15.

Overall, while all three headphones

## >> headphone options



**The SL300:** For a balanced sound and quality build, Ludacris' new headphone line is a smart choice.



**Beats by Dr. Dre:** The immensely popular headphones have become a pop icon, but leaves much to be desired.



**Bose QC15:** Bose sacrifices audio quality for outstanding comfort and noise-cancelling in the QC15, a sacrifice worth making for some.

boast similar sound quality expected from high-end headphones sound, the SL300 was able to produce better sounds for more genres, making them the better headphone.

It's difficult to compare the QC15 to the SL300 and "Beats" because they specialize in different categories. Bottom line is, if you want noise-cancelling headphones to drown out the baby crying next to you in the airplane, the Bose QC15's are the ones for you. However, if you're looking for headphones that bring out the best sound from your music, I'd recommend Soul by Ludacris. ♦

# MODERN DAY



GRAPHICS BY ALEX JU

## Students embrace rising techno trend

BY Matt Foley

After a hard day of school, freshman Saha Ghafouri slams the door behind him and makes a bee-line for his bedroom. From that point until late at night, loud whoosh and vibrations echo from Ghafouri's bedroom, traveling through the house and ruining his parent's peace and quiet.

"Sometimes my mom gets mad because the whole house vibrates from how strong the bass is in the songs that I play," Ghafouri said.

Ghafouri is a fan of dubstep and techno, deep, throbbing music whose bass and synthesized musical instruments have created a dedicated following.

These types of music have seen immense success in Europe in recent years, and are only now beginning to pick up steam in the U.S. The scene for these genres has been mostly underground until recently, when songs by American artist Skrillex, Canadian artist Deadmau5 and English producer Flux Pavilion found their way into mainstream music.

"I like to listen to mainstream pop songs that are remixed into a dubstep version because they are very catchy," Ghafouri said.

Arguably the most popular dubstep artist, Skrillex, excels at producing these types of remixes and has recently been nominated for five Grammy Awards.

According to sophomore Raiza De Vera, she was introduced to dubstep music in eighth grade when she was searching for a mainstream pop song on YouTube. In the related videos, she saw a thumbnail with an interesting cover art that she clicked on.

"The video wound up being a dubstep remix of the song I was just listening to," De Vera said. "It ended up being a really bad remix,

but I looked up more from the person who uploaded it and eventually fell in love with dubstep."

Many people have first experiences similar to De Vera's when they are first introduced to the dubstep genre, saying they do not like the style of music right away. This is because most people are not accustomed to the deep hard-hitting bass.

De Vera also claims that she has quite a few phases that she goes through when listening to music, such as her more relaxed mood in which she likes to listen to alternative and Indie music

rather than head-banging dubstep.

"For my more upbeat moods, I like to listen to dubstep and house. I really like this music because it gives a catchy beat, unlike all the pop songs. I like artists like Skrillex, Bassnectar, Nero and Wolfgang Gartner."

For those who simply cannot handle the lows that come with dubstep, techno is an alternative genre with a similar feel that has also been gaining popularity at a rapid pace.

The techno genre picked up many followers when DJ Tiesto began producing techno music. Tiesto was voted the world's number one DJ for three straight years and many people in the techno scene consider Tiesto to be a "god".

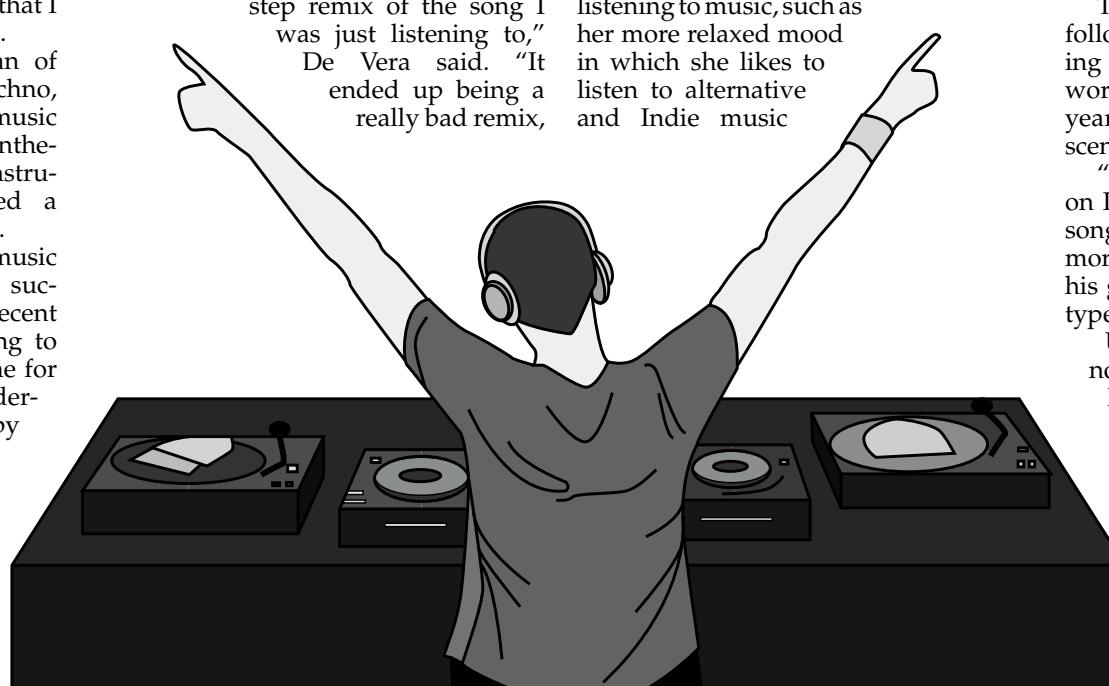
"I remember listening to a station on Pandora and hearing one of Tiesto's songs play for the first time," sophomore Neel Tiwary said. "I looked into his genre of music and now listen to all types of techno songs."

Unfortunately for Tiesto fans, he has not been producing as many hits as he had been in the past. However, his departure gave way for many new artists to become involved in the scene.

"I've expanded my techno library to more than just Tiesto," Tiwary said. "It doesn't matter if it's Deadmau5 or any other artist anymore as long as they produce good music." ♦

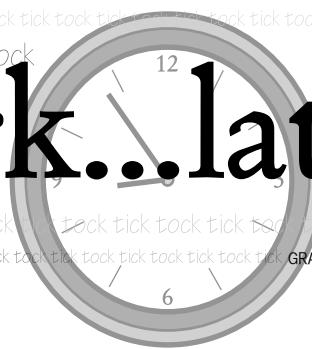


**Ghafouri**





**“I’ll start my homework...later.”**



# Wake-up calls end students' bad habits

BY Vivian Le Tran  
& Vivien Lu

People usually do not change unless an event is significant enough to have a real impact on their daily lifestyle. Eventually, as students journey through life, they will receive some sort of wake-up call that will change and shape their habits for their entire lives. People tend to miss the obvious; the conundrum here is how in-your-face the epiphany has to be before they actually see it.

## Anything, but just not homework

**S**leep may be enough of a motivation for any upperclassmen to finish his or her homework promptly; however, freshman Amanda Le has other priorities.

"Procrastinating makes me sleep later, so I wake up later, making me get a lot of tardies every week," Le said. "My lack of sleep always leaves me grumpy for the rest of the day, and I'm usually too tired to get good grades because I'm always asleep in class."

Le tries to sleep by 11 p.m., but she usu-

ally starts her homework at 10 p.m., and even though she usually finishes pretty quickly, she still does not go to bed until anywhere from 12 a.m. to 4 a.m.

Freshmen are known for having the least amount of stress, yet Le admits she still manages to avoid doing the little amount of homework she has.

A black and white portrait of a young woman with dark hair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a light-colored top. The background is plain and light-colored.

homework she has.

"I put off my homework because I get distracted easily," Le said. "I am never in the mood to do homework until late at night."

Le spends her time browsing the Internet, cleaning her room, doing laundry or doing "really anything other than homework."

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This was her wake-up call. Before, Couch used to be struggle with juggling all the standardized testing, college applications, extra curricular activities and "everything else under the sun," and it took only four years for a reality check.

"Staying up late doing work is never fun, but pulling multiple all-nighters forces you to change," Couch said.

Couch has altered her entire schedule as she spends more time planning her day isolating herself to

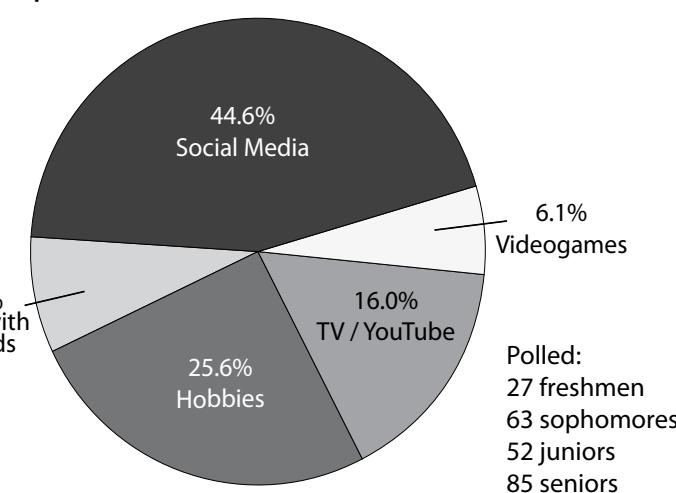
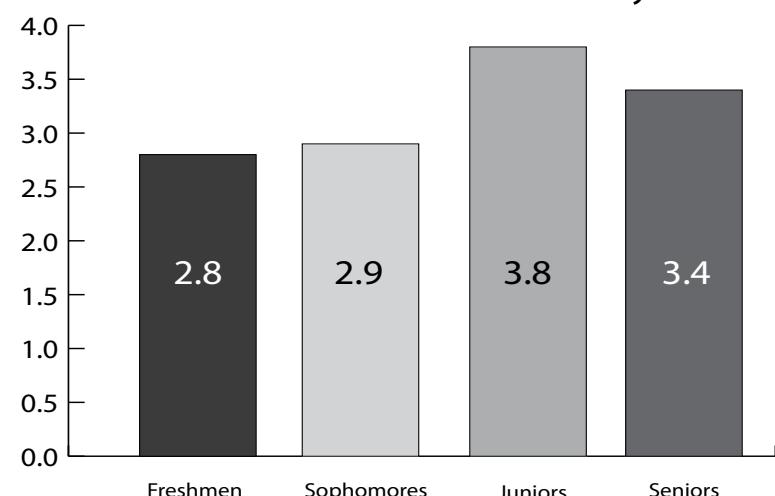
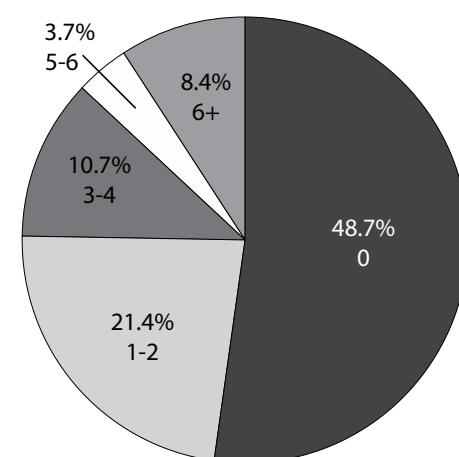
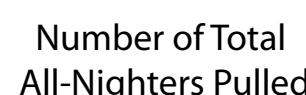
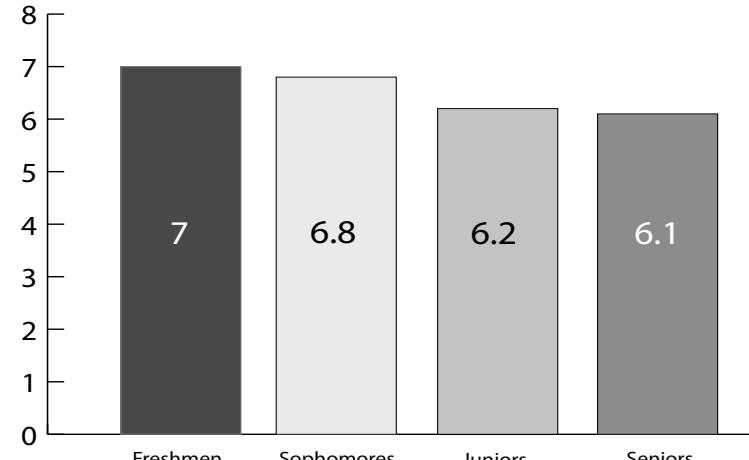
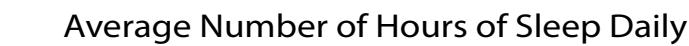
“Of course spending the entire day [until] sundown working is no fun,” Couch said, “but it sure beats watching the sun

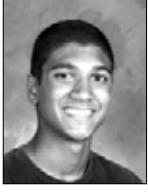
her up until 1 a.m. almost every day, and

Yung sacrificed her study hours for sleep. Occupied with the busy workload, Yung never checked Aeries and did not know of the grades that were below her usual standards. It was not until her counselor, Alinna Satake, tracked her down did Yung have a wake-up call.

"[Satake] told me how worried she was about my sudden bad grades," Yung said. "I was so shocked and scared."

junior Tiffany Yung  
for her classes and her grades improved.  
“I have to find a balance between my  
abilities. I’m not a bad student,”



	<b>home work time</b>	<b>sleep time</b>	<b>out of school activities</b>	<b>worst procrastination experience</b>	<b>most productive experience</b>
	<b>1-2 hours</b>	<b>8-9 hours</b>	soccer and water polo	"In eighth grade, I didn't write my essay on Bill Clinton until the morning before the essay was due. My school started at 8 that day so I woke up at 5 to finish it."	"The multimedia project for Romeo and Juliet for English 9 Map."
	<b>2-3 hours</b>	<b>7 hours</b>	orchestra as cellist, water polo, piano and singing lessons	"I pulled an all-nighter doing an English project because I forgot about it until the day before it was due."	"When I get time in any class to work, I always take advantage of it and that is when I feel I get the most work done."
	<b>2-3 hours</b>	<b>6 hours</b>	band as flutist, orchestra as violinist and volunteers at temples to distribute food	"I had to make 30 comics for the Greek myths for core class [in 6th grade,] and I didn't start it until the last day, so I ended up staying up the whole night working on that, and the next day in all of my classes."	"When I got a Saturday school from [science teacher Lisa Cochrum,] I had a huge packet on kingdoms and phylums and I spent four hours on the packet. That is the only time I would have gotten to work on it."
	<b>2 hours</b>	<b>8 hours</b>	football, track and lifting	"Every day is a new worst procrastination experience."	"Over the summer last year, I had to work really hard for the AP U.S History project which I needed to do in order to take the class."
	<b>3-4 hours</b>	<b>6-7 hours</b>	band as trumpetist	"Freshman year's cell project [in Biology.] I didn't do it until the last night before it was due, so I woke up really early in the morning to finish it off."	"When I go to the library, I get a lot of studying done. I go after school and I finish all my homework."
	<b>5 hours</b>	<b>5 hours</b>	band and County Honor band as tubist, mock trial, piano, various drama productions, LIVERight Club and Team HBV Council at Stanford	"I thought I could study a good 3 hours [for the AP Biology test]...Somehow I got distracted by various people and Facebook and Tumblr...I procrastinated until around 1. Tried to study, but fell asleep like seven times."	"In my junior year ... Around a quarter of the [marching band] bus brought along their APUSH notes and we all finished our weekend homework, which was especially long for some reason...something like three units..."
	<b>1/2 hour</b>	<b>7-8 hours</b>	club softball and basketball	"[For the] poetry project last year [my group] needed to make 30 copies for the class.... When it was our time to present, [my group member] was still making copies."	"The night before the US history test: I covered so much material and that same night, I had to plan softball senior day. Somehow I managed to feel really prepared the whole time during the test."

# Online groups gain popularity

BY Katherine Chang  
& Brandon Judoprasetijo

With an estimated 750 million users as of July 2011, Facebook accounts have become quite common among most high school students. And while the site often leads to time-wasting, it also has many features that help education.

History teacher Jeffrey Scott has his classes use the site's group feature.

"It's a place they could ask questions about things that were unclear and it's also a way for them to study as a group without actually being in the same room," Scott said.

Sophomore Brian Lyu feels that the group is indeed the online equivalent of the classroom Scott wants it to be.

However, Lyu believes that turn-

## classes

ing to the group for help is not always ideal.

"People don't work as hard if they study together because they just get the answer from other people and nothing else," Lyu said.

In addition to teachers, seniors Megan Kao and Peter Hsieh have found a variety of benefits from using a Dance Club group on Facebook.

"Dance Club mostly revolves around dancers who dance almost every day," Kao said. "Facebook is really convenient for us to share videos, new master classes or anything that we think that other members might find exciting with each other."

Kao also recognizes Facebook's online publicity as plus toward spreading club awareness. The openness of the site allows not only

club members but also public Facebook friends to see the links shared in the group.

At the same time, the lack of public restrictions on the site have caused problems for the club in the past.

"The openness is one of the bigger loopholes," Kao said. "Everyone on Facebook can see a member's posts, and a while ago we had an issue of regarding—for lack of better words—flame wars."

According to Kao, Facebook automatically sets a newly created group's privacy settings to "public." As a result, the club had to manually change its privacy settings after the incident.

"Facebook is a great way to share ideas, our passions, pretty much anything," Kao said. "But if we're not careful about this social tool, communication could go awry." ♦

## >> togatalks

### What do you think is the most useful feature on FB?

Being able to contact a lot of people that you otherwise wouldn't be able to.



junior Christine Xue

I guess the groups ... although Tetris is my favorite.



senior Connie Wang

# the facebook

## Does anybody actually need 950 friends?

BY Edward Dong  
& Grace Ma

Just seven years after founder Mark Zuckerberg introduced the site to his fellow Harvard classmates to study and share notes for an art history final, Facebook has now expanded into an international website with more than 800 million active users. With the average Facebook user connected to at least 80 groups, community pages and events, Facebook has become the largest social media network in the world.

This surge in popularity and everyday use has revolutionized, to some extent, the ways in which students communicate.

"I think [being so dependent on Facebook] is a good thing in general for social purposes," sophomore Gloria Liou said. "Honestly, you don't really have the time to go to someone else's house and have a nice face-to-face conversation anymore."

Facebook allows students like Liou and junior Ashley Joshi to maintain friendships online.

"Nowadays with homework, classes, extracurriculars and sports, I don't think we have as much time to hang out with our friends," Joshi said. "Facebook just makes it a lot more convenient to keep in touch with the people we know."

But because of the ease with which one can become "friends" with another on Facebook, many fear that friends are no longer what they used to be.

"Usually, [being] friends on Facebook means that you two have seen each other," freshman Mounika Narayanan said.

## friendships

"Sometimes you don't even have to have talked with them."

Joshi agrees that Facebook has somewhat altered the meaning of friendship.

"I guess

Facebook has kind of lessened the value of friendship, since now you can be friends with anyone just by clicking a button," Joshi said. With nearly 950 online friends, Joshi estimates that she would consider only 90 of them good friends outside of Facebook.

Liou has also noticed the growing distinction between the online friend and the traditional friend.

"There are friends you talk to online and then there are your normal friends," Liou said. "There are some people that you talk to a lot online, but in person it's really awkward."

Liou admits that only a fraction, around 20, of her 800 Facebook friends are actually true friends that she hangs out with. The majority are people she met through classes and summer camps.

Nevertheless, Liou made a long-lasting friend through Facebook when she came to Redwood Middle School in the middle of seventh grade.

"My shadow buddy was [sophomore] Stephanie Chu, and we added each other on Facebook first. Then we met, and

**Friends**

Jeffrey Smith Do I know you?	Dylan Purcell I wish I didn't know you
Anne Hutchinson Actual friend	Ken Yamaguchi Hot guy I stalk

See All

now we're friends," Liou said.

Junior Kevin Chen sees Facebook's influence in a positive light.

"I think [Facebook] only strengthens friendships," Chen said. "I have never started a good friendship on Facebook, and the strong friendships I already had only got stronger because of how easy it is to share opinions."

For Chen, another plus to Facebook is how easy it has become to share information and organize school-wide events.

"When I tried to advertise for Philosophy Club, I didn't think first of fliers, but rather the event organizer," Chen said. "A lot of students on campus check Facebook much more often than they do the walls of school."

The event organizer features additional qualities that make it more convenient than traditional fliers.

"It is more 'green,' and it lets me know how many people to expect, something that fliers cannot do," Chen said. "On Facebook, people can also ask questions about the events and have them answered efficiently."

According to Chen, Facebook's ability to connect students extends to helping

them express their emotions.

"I don't think you can hide your personality whether you're online or not," Chen said. "Although people often say, 'Haha' or 'LOL,' those are an online translation of the laughter and smiles they would have if you talked in person. It seems like people are 'fake' online, but it's just how emotions translate into text that seems different."

Narayanan agrees that Facebook can sometimes allow people to express themselves more freely.

"On Facebook it's always easier to talk to someone you don't know too well behind the computer screen," Narayanan said.

Nevertheless, Narayanan acknowledges that online friends often stay only online friends.

"In real life we know we only have a certain set of close friends," Narayanan said.

Joshi agrees that her circle of closer friends has remained as it always was, without much impact from Facebook.

"Even though I have 'friends' on Facebook, I don't really have that many true friends," Joshi said. "Facebook kind of makes me feel more accepted."

Although Chen also claims that not all of his Facebook friends are genuine friends in real life, he appreciates his new ability to network with a vast number of people.

"I think Facebook has become essential to our social lives, especially in our generation. The features it continues to add only help us connect more with people we might have never known," Chen said. "We all get to know each other better, and I don't find that detrimental to any relationship." ♦



## Has the Internet hampered this generation's ability to focus?

Sophomore Henry Ling glances at his Facebook home page. Without scrolling down, a quick count reveals around 80 links, but he quickly ignores them and switches to another tab.

Although seemingly routine and mundane, this action reveals a subtle ability to scan information quickly and subconsciously, never focusing on anything for a sustained time.

As a result of these tendencies, pundits suggest that the Internet generation may have lost the ability to ponder information.

Bill Keller, the former executive editor of the New York Times, puts forward this opinion in a piece called "The Twitter Trap."

"The pocket calculator, for all its convenience, diminished my generation's math skills," Keller writes. "Navigating by G.P.S. has undermined our mastery of city streets and perhaps even impaired

our innate sense of direction. Typing pretty much killed penmanship."

The plethora of information available on the Internet, although some of it useful, may also have detrimental effects, according to Keller.

"Twitter and YouTube are nibbling away at our attention spans," Keller continued. "And what little memory we had not already surrendered to Gutenberg we have relinquished to Google. Why remember what you can look up in seconds?"

Ling, whose parents immigrated from China, said that his father can concentrate longer on his work longer than he can.

"I think that, as a child, he had less distractions, so naturally he learned to focus," Ling said. "Besides, if he couldn't focus, he probably wouldn't [have made it to] America."

Ling also thinks that the Internet is responsible for the shortened attention span among young people.



SAMUEL LIU

*What can't he do?*

"If you go on a site like Yahoo [News], 99 percent of the information you don't actually read," Ling said. "You just click on the more interesting headlines."

To escape the constant stream of information, guests at hotels such as Post Ranch Inn in Big Sur pay partly for the privilege of not having a TV in their rooms.

In Pico Iyer's "The Joy of Quiet," he writes that "the future of travel, I'm reliably told, lies in 'black-hole resorts,' which charge high prices precisely because you can't get online in their rooms."

In South Korea, there are even Internet Rescue Camps, sponsored by the government and completely tuition-free, according to The New York Times.

"It is most important to provide them experience of a lifestyle without the In-

ternet," said Lee Yun-hee, a counselor. "Young Koreans don't know what this is like."

Students express difficulty focusing because of Facebook and have had to work around the temptation.

"I quit Facebook whenever finals week comes," junior Alex Wang said. "I would probably delete it if it didn't have all of the academic groups and stuff ... that's what I use it for primarily, but News Feed pops up and I sometimes get distracted."

Perhaps most revealing is the poll in last year's Falcon senior magazine.

"How many hours do you spend on the Internet every night?" the question asked.

The majority, 29.2 percent, of seniors answered, "I can't find the logoff button." Only 3.6 percent of seniors said that they spent less than an hour online each day. ♦

# How Mark Zuckerberg's idea changed the way we interact generation

## Social media impairs student productivity

BY Karen Sung

When senior Lisa Asai comes home from school, one of the first things she does is log onto her Facebook account and check her newsfeed before starting homework. She often has the habit of also checking Facebook periodically on her iPhone whenever she's bored, sometimes even while in the bathroom.

Over the past decade, an increasing number of students, like Asai, have incorporated social media websites into their daily study routines. With 96 percent of high school students using Facebook, it's clear that these powerful websites have become an important part of most students' lives, shaping the way students learn.

Although Facebook does have its advantages, such as utilizing groups and events, a study done by Ohio State University showed that 68 percent of students who use the website have significantly lower GPAs than those who do not.

Asai, who spends at least an hour on Facebook daily, admits that she finds it difficult to resist the temptation of constantly checking Facebook for updates.

"It's so easy to go on Facebook at any time, especially when I'm tired or want a break from homework," she said. "It's pretty much a daily routine." Before Asai had a Facebook account, she would start homework immediately after coming home, but now she intersperses her homework time with breaks by logging on to Facebook.

She finds one of the reasons that

makes the website so hard to stay away from is the stream of notifications and the ability to always see what everyone else is doing. She said that by now, she automatically "logs on without even noticing" whenever she becomes distracted while using the computer, which she realizes can harm her grades.

"It can be like a disease," Asai said. "I feel empty without checking it; it's as if I need to be updated every day."

She is not alone in feeling this way. A study conducted by Intersperience, a research firm, showed that

53 percent of social networking users felt upset and lonely when deprived of the Internet. This similarity to withdrawal symptoms has prompted many psychologists to compare social media, dubbed "digital dependence" by the study, to that of a drug addiction.

Tumblr, another social network website, has rapidly grown in popularity since it was first launched in 2007 and is known for its blogging purposes.

By scrolling through a constant flow of posts from the blogs she follows on her "dashboard," sophomore Jessica Pham finds Tumblr to be even more addictive than Facebook and spends around two hours daily on the website.

"I used to be able to just sit down and work, but now I can never stay focused,"

*[Facebook] can be like a disease. I feel empty without checking it; it's as if I need to be updated every day."*



senior Lisa Asai

Pham said. "It's like I need something to entertain me while I do homework."

A healthy balance between school-work and these websites is difficult to achieve. Trying to multitask between the two leads to 20 percent lower grades on average, according to studies.

Although many students realize that social networking media websites are not beneficial for their grades, they find it difficult to break the habit.

While sophomore Brian Lyu mainly

uses Facebook to connect with friends he doesn't see often at school, he knows many peers who are constantly online. He avoids logging on until he's finished with homework, but he believes that many students go online as a way to "temporarily forget about homework and relieve some stress."

For those who are determined to spend less time online but don't want to delete their accounts, both Asai and Pham suggest asking a friend to change and keep the password.

"No one wants to get rid of their accounts permanently, so ask someone to change the password for you," Asai said. "Think of it as someone babysitting it for you." ♦

### procrastination

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"I used to be able to just sit down and work, but now I can never stay focused,"

### top ten

#### WAYS TO STOP YOURSELF FROM PROCRASTINATING

- 10 Instead of reading celebrity blogs, read your APUSH textbook cover to cover ... oh wait
- 9 Ever heard of ChromeNanny? It'll block Facebook for you if you can't stay off
- 8 ... But if SOPA passes, everything you love on the internet will be gone anyway
- 7 Playing Tetris on Facebook might prevent you from mass-chatting
- 6 Or Fruit Ninja (it's free on Facebook!! You're welcome)
- 5 Even reading a book is more productive than Tumblr, unless that book is Twilight
- 4 Parental internet controls? Too bad you're not twelve
- 3 Replace your browser with Internet Explorer; you'll immediately stop wasting time online
- 2 WILLPOWER! Willpower will power willpower willpower willpower willpower ...
- 1 Just give up. Let's be real, there's no hope

>> Samuel Liu

## BOYS' BASKETBALL



Senior point guard Brandon Pak gathers the ball before a pass.

## Pak evolves into strong teammate

BY Dylan Jew  
& Jonathan Young

"Falcon! Falcon!" yells senior point guard Brandon Pak as he calls out the play and directs his teammates. As a captain and a point guard, Pak has a multitude of responsibilities on and off the court.

"Brandon is like the quarterback of the team. He announces what plays we run," said senior center James Huang. "He's the playmaker."

During games Pak is expected to bring the ball up the court every time, often while being pressured by the opposing team's guards.

He also shoulders the responsibilities of setting up the team's offense and making sure everyone on the team is in the correct position during plays.

"The point guard has to stay calm and composed," Huang said. "It's a job where you get pressured a lot."

Even when he's not on the court, Pak is a positive influence on the team and to the players. He constantly advises and encourages his teammates.

"In games, even when he's on the bench he is giving advice and helping people so they know what to do," Huang said. "In practice, he is always encouraging everyone to work hard."

Pak has not always been the unselfish team captain that he is today, however.

In the past, Pak had a shoot-first mentality and was not known for his inclination to pass, which is very detrimental for a point guard in charge of distributing the ball.

According to Pak, he was even called a "black hole" when playing for frosh-soph at Saratoga.

"I have become more of a pass first player since a team cannot win [with] only one player scoring all the points," Pak said.

His current teammates be-

## >> scoreboard

Jan. 6

**Saratoga 56, Los Altos 28**  
Saratoga outscored Los Altos 13-6 in the third quarter and coasted to the win.

Jan. 11

**Saratoga 60, Santa Clara 55**  
Junior guard Kyle Dozier scored 20 points.

Jan. 13

**Saratoga 56, Wilcox 51**  
Junior forward Steve Berman scored 23 points.

lieve the new player Pak has become is much better than the one who only looked for his own shot and did not pass as much as he does now.

"Over the years he's made a great improvement in being unselfish," Huang said. "Instead of looking to score himself, he's embraced

the role as a play-maker and is always looking to help his teammates score."

This season, Pak expects the team to do well and continue to succeed throughout the season.

The team has been performing well in league so far, currently with a 4-0 record in league, besting league favorites Lynbrook on Jan. 4, 53-41 and Los Altos on Jan. 6, 56-28.

Pak attributes this phenomenal start to league games to solid offensive execution and pushing the ball up the court.

"I think we're getting a lot of easy points from fast breaks and executing our offense really well," Pak said. "We still need to work on our defense against dribble penetration and also getting boards."

If the Falcons can improve in their weaker areas, they will have a strong shot at winning league and finding success in CCS, according to Pak. ♦

**Brandon is like the quarterback of the team. He's the playmaker.**

>> Senior James Huang

## GIRLS' SOCCER

# Shivkumar looks to lead

BY Aanchal Mohan

Senior right mid-fielder Sneha Shivkumar jockeys for possession of the ball with an opposing player in the 30th minute of a Jan. 5 game versus Mountain View. She manages to fend off her opponent nevertheless, passing the ball off. Tweet! The shrill chirp of the referee's whistle indicates a penalty. The girls stop and stare. In the midst of her struggle for the ball, Shivkumar had shoved her opponent to the ground, garnering a red card and ejection from the game.

"I didn't shove her down on purpose," Shivkumar said. "It was a delayed impact, which should have only resulted in a yellow card at most."

The team had to play a man

down for the rest of the game as Shivkumar watched helplessly from the sidelines. The team managed to hold off Mountain View from scoring until the second half. The game ended in a 3-0 loss.

"I felt so bad that my team had to play the rest of the game with one less player," Shivkumar said. "It says a lot about our team that even with 10 players we still managed to hold our own on the field."

The Falcons failed to score after her ejection. Shivkumar credits her ability to handle the ball to her multiple years of constant practice.

"I love soccer," said Shivkumar. "I've pretty much been playing soccer my entire life."

Shivkumar has been on the varsity team for two years now

and has come to love the team.

"I love all the players on the team," Shivkumar said. "We all have really good teamwork which benefits us on and off the field."

Shivkumar hopes to help lead the team to CCS this year.

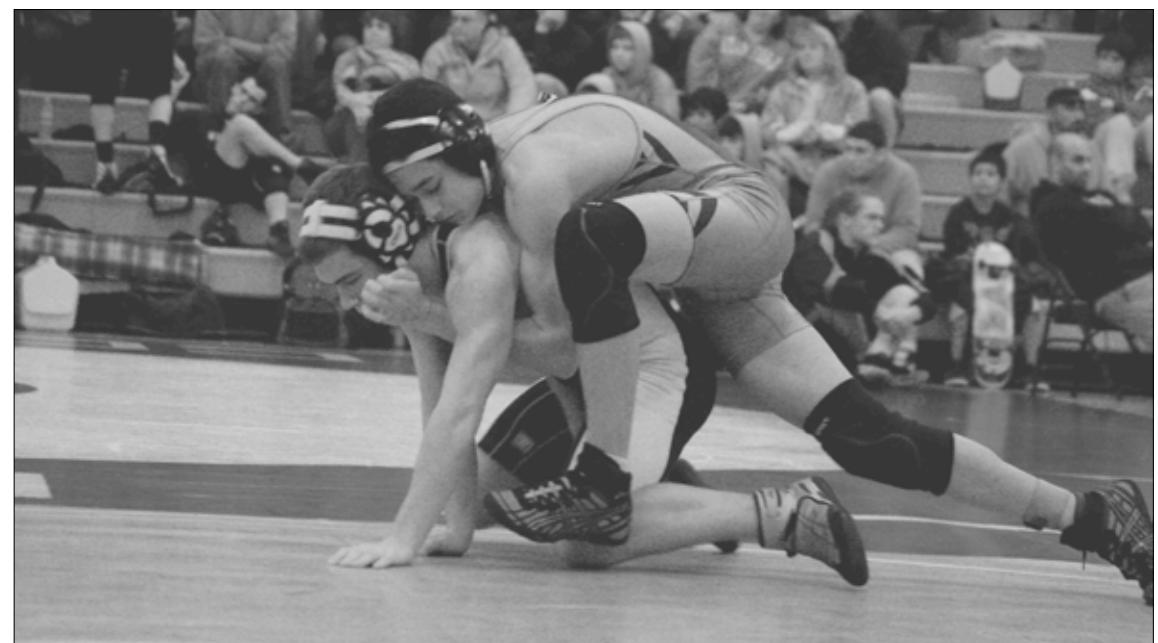
"Even though we have moved up a league I think we still have a chance to make it to CCS," Shivkumar said. "We have a lot of great players who really work well together."

Having lost their first league game against Mountain View, the team went on to beat Gunn 3-2 and lost to Palo Alto 1-0 the following week.

The team will now have to win the rest of their games in order to qualify for the CCS tournament.

"It's going to be difficult to win the rest of our games," junior Evelyn Lee said. ♦

## WRESTLING



Senior Connor Mullaney takes down a Palo Alto opponent on Jan. 12. The Falcons would go on to lose 75-6.

## Senior takes down adversaries

BY Brandon Judoprasetijo

To become fearsome on the mat as a wrestler, one must not only have a conditioned body, but also a strong mind. According to wrestling coach Joe Pele, having a strong mind-set is what separates senior captain Connor Mullaney from the average wrestler.

"Connor's intelligence gives him the ability to absorb information, then instantly turn it into physical performance," Pele said.

Mullaney said he simply tries to wrestle smart and plays to his advantages based on his body type and wrestling style. Consequently, Mullaney is one of the highest scoring wrestlers on the team and will often "run his matches into double digits," according to Pele.

Mullaney's skills are made even more impressive considering that he only began wrestling in his sophomore year. He became interested in the sport when world history and government teacher Kirk Abe recruited him.

"Every year he pretty much recruits everyone to come out to wrestle," Mullaney said. "Some

of the other guys that wrestle also encouraged me to try it out."

Since then, Mullaney has demonstrated admirable work ethic and mentality. He has won the "most improved" award for the past two years and currently wrestles in the 138-pound weight class, 17 pounds more than when he first started wrestling.

Accompanying Mullaney's hard work is his passion for the sport.

As time passes by, both his skills and his love for wrestling increase.

"It's kind of a love hate thing that's kind of addicting," Mullaney said. "It's just hard work to get better, and it can get a little monotonous at times, but it pays off."

Currently, Mullaney feels that the team's biggest weakness is its inexperience and small size. Consisting of just 20 members and lacking heavyweight and lightweight wrestlers, the team is often forced to forfeit during matches.

Despite the obvious disadvantages the team has against bigger programs, Mullaney thinks the Falcons have the

potential to become more and more competitive.

"We have a lot of new guys, so I just hope that a lot of guys stick through this season," Mullaney said. "Towards the middle [of the season] a lot of people quit, so I just want them to stick it through because when people quit, the worst thing is regretting it."

The effects of the team's insufficient numbers were clearly visible in the team's 75-6 loss in a dual meet against Palo Alto on Jan. 12. According to senior Alfred Murabito, the team had to forfeit over half of its matches.

Besides not being able to fill all its weights, the Falcons have been fighting injuries to its top wrestlers: Alfred Murabito has been battling an ACL injury, sophomore Graham Grant has an injured ankle and freshman Christian Murabito has trouble with his back.

Even with the problems, Pele has seen his wrestlers make progress since the season started.

"We are a young team, and every day the men are improving," Pele said. "I could not be more proud of a group of young men." ♦

## BOYS' SOCCER

# Senior midfielder never falls short on field

BY Matt Foley  
& Jay Mulye

At 5'5", senior center midfielder Rajiv Ramakabir is not the biggest player on the field, nor is he the fastest or the strongest. But this lack of size has not stopped him from being one of the star players on a talented varsity boys' soccer team.

Ramakabir began playing soccer in second grade. After excelling in a recreational soccer league for a couple of years, he decided to take his game to the next level by joining a competitive club team.

Keeping an open mind, Ramakabir has traveled to different clubs in his competitive soccer career in an attempt to find the team that suits his style of play the most.

"I started out playing for De Anza Force and then I went to a team in Santa Clara and I came back to Force before joining Adam Clarke's [the school's boys' varsity soccer coach] club team in Sunnyvale," Ramakabir said.

Ramakabir has been contacted by the coach of UC Santa Barbara, which is a NCAA Division 1 soccer team and is known for having an exceptional soccer program. Ramakabir is keeping that option open as he evaluates different colleges.

"I have a chance of walking on there [UC Santa Barbara] if I choose to attend that school," Ramakabir said. "It's a great school with a great program so I think that it would be pretty cool to go to UCSB and play there."

**We still need to develop [team] chemistry with the current sophomores and juniors.**

>> Senior Rajiv Ramakabir

Looking toward the season, Ramakabir is confident that the team still has a shot at achieving their first place hopes in league despite the team's lackluster start.

On Jan. 13 the team took on Palo Alto at home. The game ended as a 3-0 win with goals scored by junior midfielder Rohan Rajeev, junior center midfielder Amin Mirzadagen and Ramakabir himself.

The second league game was scheduled to be an away game against Gunn; however, due to confusion in the scheduling of the game, the Falcons failed to show up on Jan. 6. The game will be counted as a 3-0 loss for the Falcons unless the game is able to be rescheduled.

In the team's first league game on Jan. 4, they faced off against Mountain View at home. The game took place over the winter break and as a result, eight starters were out of town and on top of this, senior goalie Kyle Clark was unable to play. Facing steep odds, the Falcons fell 5-0.

Even though the Falcons have dropped to 1-2 in league, they are still 5-3 overall and think that their talent can carry them for the rest of the season.

"We have a lot of talented seniors on this team that has been with us since they were sophomores," Ramakabir said. "I think that this helps us a lot in terms of depth and we also have a lot of talent in the younger players as well."

Ramakabir said that there is still great room for improvement for the team.

"I think that the main thing that we



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

**Senior center midfielder Rajiv Ramakabir dribbles the ball against Palo Alto on Jan. 13. The Falcons beat the Palo Alto Vikings 3-0. Ramakabir scored later in the game.**

## &gt;&gt; SCOREBOARD

**Jan. 6**  
**Gunn 3, Saratoga 0**

After miscommunication, the Falcons didn't show up, leading to a forfeit. The game will count as a 3-0 loss if they cannot reschedule the game.

**Jan. 13**  
**Saratoga 3, Palo Alto 0**

Junior midfielder Rohan Rajeev, junior center Amin Mirzadagen and Ramakabir all scored goals.

**Jan. 18**  
**Los Altos 0, Saratoga 0**

The Falcons played a strong defensive game against the Eagles.

## GIRLS' BASKETBALL

# Sophomore looks to help team to league title repeat

BY Sanj Nalwa

All of the starters on the girls' varsity basketball team are upperclassmen. All but one.

Sophomore Dharini Ramaswamy is a starting power forward on the team.

"She is only a sophomore and is the best shooter we have had," junior forward Hannah Johnson said.

"Since last year, she has played a lot of basketball and greatly improved her confidence and strength. Dharini is definitely one of the best on the team."

Ramaswamy has been playing basketball since the third grade. While she was not very enthusiastic about the sport at first, she quickly fell in love with it.

"I wasn't really sure, 'cause I was like 7," Ramaswamy said. "And my mom was just signing me up for everything, like AYSO and NJB and I just tried out and I started to like it and I've been playing a lot."

In addition to power forward, Ramaswamy plays shooting guard and point guard. Ramaswamy said an outstanding moment in her basketball career occurred recently when she connected on four three-pointers against Hillsdale on Dec. 31.

Ramaswamy said rebounding and executing defense are the main strategic tactics being employed this season.

"We have fewer players this year so we all have to step it up," Ramaswamy said. "But it's not intimidating because everyone's really nice and we all joke around. Our main thing is defense; that's

what our coach says."

Johnson said Ramaswamy's personality is one of the things that make her a great teammate.

"Dharini's goofy personality makes her even more lovable," Johnson said. "She is someone that you can't really stay mad at."

Ramaswamy said the necessary teamwork is her favorite aspect of basketball.

"It's a team sport," Ramaswamy said, "and even when you mess up on one end of the court you can always make it up on the other end."

The Falcons beat Cupertino on Jan. 13 and 67-35, Santa Clara 41-29 on Jan. 10, Los Altos 46-36 on Jan. 6 and Homestead 55-25 on Jan. 3.

The team now has a 15-game winning streak in league dating back to Feb. 16, 2010. After going 11-0 in the El Camino League last year, the Falcons are looking to continue their success.

In addition to playing well in league games, the girls also had a strong run in the Susie Nagpal Saratoga Shootout. They beat Hillsdale 46-36 on Dec. 31, beat Half Moon Bay 55-49 on Dec. 30 and lost to 67-45 Palo Alto Dec. 29.

Johnson said she thinks all the teams they have played so far have been pretty strong.

"We have won all of our league games and our next game is against a team we are tied for first with (Monta Vista)," Johnson said. "We have been working together really well so it has been a great start!" ♦

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# Going strong from third grade on

BY Brandon Judoprasetijo

A single season of sports is often a powerful enough catalyst to transform two individuals from strangers into best friends. Every moment of triumph or defeat bonds members of a team closer to one other as each match or practice passes.

Seniors Brandon Oliveri-O'Connor and Mitchell Casas have been experiencing that same spark of synergy many times from being teammates in a variety of sports since the third grade.

"It all started in elementary school at break. He was a complete ball hog," Oliveri-O'Connor said jokingly. "He still prefers to keep the ball to himself, but occasionally will throw it."

Oliveri-O'Connor and Casas continued to team up together outside of the games played during break or lunch at Saratoga Elementary.

After school, they also played Little League baseball and club soccer together.

Through their middle school years, the two were both part of the wrestling team.

"Really, we were always playing sports together no matter what," Casas said. "[Wrestling] was very time consuming, which led us to hang out more through sports."



FALCON // ROHAN RAJEEV

rival at all, but we do push each other as often as we can," Casas said. "We are both looking to play college football so that means we have to improve in every way possible. If we have to call each other out on something we will."

"I wouldn't consider him a

together, they have pushed each other to work harder as athletes and achieve their goals.

"There have been many situations where Brandon will be lead blocking as many people as he can for me on a run play," Casas said.

Casas and Oliveri-O'Connor have found that their long friendship has helped them become better teammates.

Casas has earned the trust of Oliveri-O'Connor as a teammate and the two have rarely run into altercations after being teammates for so long.

"We typically don't disagree on a lot," Oliveri-O'Connor said. "I respect him as a football player and trust what he says is right."

Both players have found celebrating their victories and enduring their hardships together to be rewarding experiences.

"There are tons of memorable moments I've had with Brandon, but one of the most memorable was celebrating

cer.  
"Freshman year we did field hockey and club soccer at the same time, so we would go to half of field hockey, sprint to the car, change in the car, and run to soccer and it was just very memorable because it was so stressful and we ended up spending a lot of time together," Schwartz said.

When the two are not at

field hockey or soccer, they are still seen together very often. Schwartz and Leonard hang out a lot after school and during the weekends, and they are almost always with each other during lunch and break at school.

"A funny memory is when her dad was driving us to soccer practice and we were talking about Oregon and Oregon State. (Mr. Leonard is a huge OSU fan)," Schwartz said. "Someone made a comment about Oregon and he pulled the car over and lectured us



Courtesy of DAVID MCMATH



Courtesy of DAVID MCMATH

the Los Gatos win last year with him," Casas said. "On the other hand we had a lot of tough defeats this year along with last year."

After being teammates for so long, Casas and Oliveri-O'Connor have evolved into the best of friends and a dynamic combination on the field.

"We're both trusting and hard working," O'Connor said. "We rely on each other to give a best effort, and as a result we put everything we have into games and practice." ♦



# TEAMMATES

## Soccer, field hockey brings juniors closer

BY Allison Toh

When juniors Rachel Leonard and Amanda Schwartz met through a mutual friend while playing in American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) when they were only 7, they never thought they would one day end up becoming as close as they are now.

"We were never on the same team because she was always on the same team as [junior] Hannah Johnson, so we weren't super close, but we knew who each other were," Schwartz said.

According to Schwartz, she and Leonard grew close as they moved up to California Youth Soccer Association (CYSA), which is a more competitive soccer league.

"We became close when we first joined our first CYSA team, De Anza Force White. Her dad coached in the beginning. We called it the dream team," Schwartz said.

During their freshman year, Leonard and Schwartz juggled school field hockey and club soccer during the fall season. The girls also participated in school soc-

cer.

"Freshman year we did field hockey and club soccer at the same time, so we would go to half of field hockey, sprint to the car, change in the car, and run to soccer and it was just very memorable because it was so stressful and we ended up spending a lot of time together," Schwartz said.



Rachel Leonard <> Amanda Schwartz

for about 10 minutes about how Oregon is not even comparable to OSU. We were almost late to practice."

Whenever Leonard and Schwartz are on the field, they both can make a major impact on the game. As sophomores last year, the two excelled on the

varsity field hockey team. Leonard also performed well on the girls' junior varsity soccer team while Schwartz played on varsity, where she has been playing since her freshman year.

Leonard and Schwartz cheer each other on through both of their sports. They've become so accustomed with each other on the field that they cannot imagine playing a game without having the other alongside them.

"I honestly can't imagine getting through some of the tougher practices without her because, no matter how awful it was, she would always make me laugh. And she still does [outside of sports],"

Schwartz said.

Teammate senior Anna Ashe has noticed the close bond that Leonard and Schwartz share. Because Ashe also plays field hockey and soccer, she sees the two frequently.

"Rachel and Amanda are one of a kind," Ashe said. "They are awesome teammates, in both soccer and field hockey. They're a lot of fun to have around in sports and at school."

A mutual friend and teammate in both soccer and field hockey, junior Paige Kingston also adds in that Leonard and Schwartz "bring a lot of fun and energy to the team and have great chemistry with each other."

"They are both really great team leaders and they help bring us together sometimes," Kingston said. "They work really well together because they understand each other, and they are a lot of fun to be around and play with because they're always joking around on the field."

According to Schwartz, she and Leonard always have fun together as both friends and as teammates.

"A favorite moment, well there are a lot, they are called Rachel moments and sometimes she just asks not-so-bright questions," Schwartz joked. "Like recently, she asked me during a school soccer practice, 'Amanda, do astronauts have to wait until it is a full moon to land?'" ♦

# Lee, Sisco co-star in varsity spotlight

BY Jay Mulye  
& Karen Sung

When sophomores Amanda Lee and Tivoli Sisco first met on the softball field playing for the Los Gatos-Saratoga Magic travel team back in elementary school, they never imagined that they would become close friends. Now, their friendship has been solidified after six years of bonding, both on and off the field.

Both Lee and Sisco play for the school varsity team at the positions of shortstop and catcher, respectively, and they share an connection every time they step onto the field.

As two of the only three freshmen on the team last year, the two helped each other adjust to playing on the team. Lee said "it was a little tougher being freshmen to gain their teammates' respect, which they could only do if the freshmen respected each other."

"We have [our game] worked out," Lee said. "We can always pick each other up. We know how to support and encourage each other."

Although the team had difficulties winning throughout the season, both Lee and Sisco would prevent each other from becoming frustrated.

"Playing on the school team was a really fun experience nonetheless," Sisco

said. "We spent a lot of time together during the season, especially at practice."

Lee and Sisco were among the team's best last season, placing with the team leaders in many offensive and defensive categories. Lee led the team in batting average and hits, with .362 and 25, respectively. Sisco also played well offensively, hitting .286 and scoring 17 runs over the course of the season.

The two also shined defensively with Lee maintaining a .910 fielding percentage and Sisco following with a .902 fielding percentage.

Sisco said that it helps that they have been playing softball together for so long. Long friendships always have their rough patches, but Lee and Sisco find ways to push past them.

"Every friendship has its ups and downs, but we've always pulled through," Sisco said. "We always end up being friends again."

Lee and Sisco agree that they get



FALCON // LILLIAN CHEN



FALCON // SARAH HULL



FALCON // SARAH HULL

**As two of only three freshman on the varsity softball team, both sophomore shortstop Amanda Lee (pictured on the left) and sophomore catcher Tivoli Sisco (pictured on the right) were key players last season, playing in each of the team's 21 games.**

along very well, whether it's on the softball field or outside of school, despite no longer playing on the same travel team. Their families are also good friends, and Lee goes to Sisco's house often for barbecues and to socialize with her siblings.

Sisco says that she has had countless memories with Lee over the years as friends off of the field.

She recalls one memory where the two "just sat on the couch together watching TV and eating a whole box of Whoppers." Lee adds that they've had countless funny incidents while hanging

out and waiting in the dugout.

"There was also this one time when we were at In-N-Out with the whole softball team, and a couple of us walked up to the drive-through and pretended we were driving a car," Lee recalls. "We were wearing the In-N-Out chef hats, so it was pretty funny."

**Every friendship has its ups and downs, but we've always pulled through.**

>> Sophomore Tivoli Sisco

Throughout their entire friendship, the two can't remember ever getting into a serious argument. Throughout all the years playing softball together, "it's always just somehow worked," according to Sisco.

"We understand each other really well," Sisco said. "I'd say we have good chemistry with each other." ♦

# R O L L I F E

## Boys bond through baseball, basketball

BY Dylan Jew

As freshmen Sachin Bettadapur and Andrew Ferguson walked to the bullpen mound to practice pitching during off season, it was not the first time they had been on the same team. The first time the pair had played catch had been on their sixth grade baseball team.

The two have been together on and off the field ever since.

"It's fun to play with him," Ferguson said. "Over the years, my relationship with him has evolved from teammates to friends."

They had known each other before sixth grade, but were not close friends at that point. They have played together in sixth grade baseball, sixth and seventh grade all-net, and the Redwood basketball team from sixth to eighth grade.

"If we didn't play sports together, we would still have known each other," Bettadapur said, "but we wouldn't have been as close as we are now."

One reason for the tight bond between them is that they play the same positions in most of their sports. Both are pitchers, so they

get to spend the majority of their time on the field with each other.

"We like to pitch to each other," Ferguson said. "Because we're friends we work hard to push each other to get better."

Ferguson was injured during football season, but was able to recover with the help of Bettadapur and his o t h e r t e a m - mates.

Their favorite moment together in sports was winning championships together in basketball in seventh grade, which helped connect them

as friends, according to Ferguson. Although their favorite moment was in seventh grade, their favorite team to play on with each other was basketball in eighth grade.

"Our eighth grade team was definitely the most fun," Ferguson said. "We had great team chemistry."

Ferguson and Bettadapur also played on a Saratoga Little League Majors division team in sixth grade with freshman Billy Vithanage. Vithanage also believes that the two would not have been as close without sports.

"Their friendship has been built over the years because of them being on teams together," Vithanage said. "Being close friends helps them communicate better and play better."

Vithanage also believes that their competitiveness not only drives each other, but that it also drives the rest of their teammates.

"Whenever we see them competing a lot on the field, we want to work harder too," Vithanage said. "It's really cool to see such great friends act so fierce on the field, and it makes the rest of their teammates want to be part of that too."

Now that Vithanage is able to participate in high school athletics with them, he is looking forward to spending the next four years on the same team as them.



FALCON // LILLIAN CHEN



CULLAN MCCHESNEY

### >> falconfigures

6

The grade that Bettadapur and Ferguson met in

7

The amount of teams that the two have played together on

2

Sports that both boys will play this year in high school

1

Championship won by the two, during seventh grade basketball

"It's going to be fun playing with them since they're so talented and always have fun," Vithanage said.

With a great history together on sports teams, both Bettadapur and Ferguson are looking forward to their next few seasons in high school.

"Now that we're freshmen, I want to keep playing on teams with him," Ferguson said. "Hopefully we can improve our friendship on and off the field." ♦

# polaroids



TALISMAN // KYLIE TSENG



TALISMAN // JASON LI



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

Senior Anika Jhalani pumps up the crowd during the boys' basketball game against Monta Vista on Jan. 20.

Senior Shayda Khorasani jams out in the quad on Dec. 16, joining into a flash mob created by the leadership class.

Senior Cynthia Huang smiles bravely as she listens to instructions to donate blood on Jan. 20.

On Jan. 12, Saratoga alumnus Kyle Barisich came to tell choir students about his experience on Broadway starring in *Phantom of the Opera*.

## In a noisy world, junior finds peace in silence

Hello noise, my old friend. Now that winter break is over, I have resumed back to my daily life of clamor: chatter in the school hallways, music playing constantly in my room, rings and pings from the phone and computer, et cetera, et cetera.

The sounds of silence seem to be of the distant past, just like privacy or paying attention to one thing at a time. My newly acquired iPhone—thanks, Mom and Dad!—can vibrate to notify me of numerous updates in my apparently eventful life.

Such time-and-soul-sucking gizmos and gimmicks conspire to keep our eyes glued to them, monitoring our friends' activities and recording our own. Why

do we bother? For all we know, we are most likely missing everything, thinking we'll miss nothing.

I didn't reflect on the beauty of silence until my winter break. It began with me, utterly bored and home alone, flipping channels on the television. Nothing had really grabbed my attention until I came across a black-and-white silent film.

I was transfixed. In those three hours of stillness, I picked up the muted messages from actors that spoke volumes, subtleties I've never bothered with. The fluttering of her eyelashes. The raising of his eyebrow. The slow path a pair of eyes traveled.

Did I not see past the booms, bangs

and gripping orchestral music in modern movies? I immensely enjoyed the film, taking it as an opportunity to let me hear nothing—absolutely nothing—for once, except perhaps the sound of me breathing, which certainly freaked me out a little.

With that being my day one of break, I proceeded to spend the following days reading, studying and sitting in a 12-hour car ride in silence. It was as if all the disarray in my mind had vanished and left me in a serene state.

I cherished this tune instead of my raucous dubstep, trance and indie rock music. My family noted the tranquil ambiance our household gained, and thanked me for not playing the "cacophony" they detest.

Although I had spent an inordinate,

but also healthy amount of time without sound, I realize shortly that unfortunately, I do have to crawl out of my hermit shell and assimilate back to the hustle bustle of the every day at some point. That point being the start of second semester.

Afraid that I'll be sucked back into my addicting electronics ableeping and ablurping, I've been spending more time in the library to do homework. There I can have none of that static and work efficiently.

I was thinking in calculus class about how the number "0" is like silence. People disregard both of them as nothing, literally too, but they are actually very powerful. So don't disregard, but rather embrace the silence. After all, "silence is golden." ♦



KELLY  
LIU  
*You Jelly?*

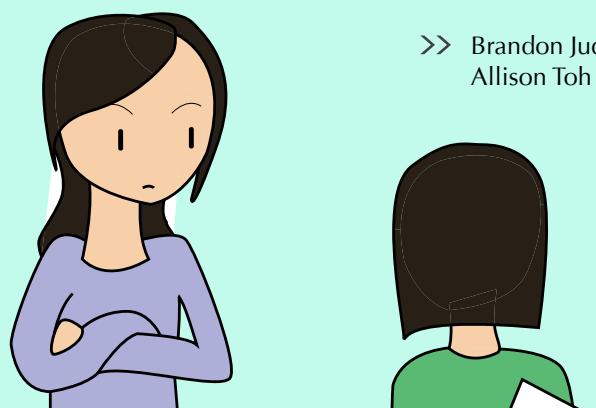
## top ten

### WAYS TO TELL YOUR PARENTS ABOUT YOUR GRADES

- 10** Don't.
- 9** Forget your password.
- 8** Let them know the truth. Then be like cactus.
- 7** Tell them the school reversed its grading scale.
- 6** Say you were sick during finals... With Bieber fever!

- 5** Ask them what their grades were. Then run.
- 4** "I had four A's ... but then I took an arrow to the knee."
- 3** "B IS FOR BOSS!"
- 2** "This is my fiance, and these are my grades." They won't know which one to kill you for.
- 1** Tell them Aeries is down to protest SOPA.

>> Brandon Judoprasetijo  
Allison Toh



## buzzworthy >>

### Students deliver holiday card to 'Mighty' Drennan

by Paul Jung

As retired physics teacher Bill Drennan drove up to his house on Dec. 28, he may have sensed something was amiss. Once he parked his car in the garage, a group of five figures ran behind his car and began caroling "Oh Rabbit Tree," a version of the song "Oh Christmas Tree" created by senior Jimmy Zheng.



Zheng and four of his previous physics students paid Drennan a visit over break to deliver a large 18-by-24 inch Christmas card after the topic of the retired teacher came up several times in AP Bio teacher Bob Kucer's class.

"Early in the year I treated the class like a Drennan-style class where we just had fun," Zheng said. "One day Kucer suggested we get [Drennan] a big card, so that's what I did! It's arguably the biggest card I've seen, suitable for someone as high and mighty as Mr. Drennan."

The card was signed by several stu-

dents and was originally supposed to be birthday card.

"We all thought his birthday was sometime near Christmas, and I swear that's what Kucer told us, but apparently his birthday is in May or April," Zheng said, "so our card was just a Christmas card."

According to Zheng, Drennan took them on a tour of the house after receiving the enormous card.

"It was a grand tour," Zheng said. "He showed us some of his eight-ball pool moves, including the Massé curve shot, told us many stories about intense encounters with stupid students and neighbors, and we helped him install a new printer so he could print out rec letters."

Drennan's house was high up in the mountains, which made the adventure very exciting according to Zheng.

"The whole trip was about two hours long, the most exciting two hours of my break," Zheng said. ♦

